# Tale Of The Underground

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## Tale Of The Underground

**by** [AutobotNightStrider](http://archiveofourown.org/users/AutobotNightStrider), [Silverwingprime](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Silverwingprime)

### Summary

The barrier had been destroyed, monsters set free from their century-long prison. They had freedom at last, yet Monsterkind was slow to accept this truth. The idea of freedom after so long was almost surreal- But there were still the few monsters that wanted to go, to see just what their beautiful world came to become. After a long discussion between the great king, accompanied by his great advisor, and the officials of the cities closest to the great mountain that hid the monsters away, Monsterkind was given the opportunity to grow under the warm sun, within the safety of foster homes.

But that is not all. Along with dealing with the reintegration of monsters into society, and fighting for them to get basic human rights, the barrier dropping released concentrated magic back into the world. For those humans who descended from monsters, it poses an interesting problem when long dormant magical genes and cells are reactivated violently. Humans and monsters really aren't all that different- but not everyone can see that.

**Book 1:** Chapters 1-75.

**Book 2:** 76-155
Strider's notes: So this is a collaboration between Silverwingprime and myself, and it's actually being done in the form of an RP. It's... surprisingly easier to write out like this, rather than sitting down and actually belting out chapters. Odd, huh? Anyways, welcome to TOTU, chapter one. There's probably going to be a lot of sex that happens, a mild bit of horror at one point or another, racism, and a whole other slew of shenanigans. :D Welcome folks, and I hope you're in for the long haul. As it's being done in RP style of writing, it does take some time to get it written out, edited, and whatnot. As it's also in RP style, you can probably expect some odd... thought mixes, or what have you. You'll know them when you see them.

SilverWing Notes: Almost nine years of roleplaying and this is the first time I ever actually publish my writing, I couldn't have chosen anyone better than Strider, as we also had a second story a long time ago that we wanted to publish. I can't wait to see how things go along as this story develops.
Chapter 1

The barrier had been destroyed, and monsters set free from their centuries-long prison only a short time ago. They had freedom at long last, and yet Monsterkind was slow to accept this truth. The idea of freedom after so long almost surreal to them- and the idea of monsters to most of humanity was a terrifying prospect.

But there were still the few monsters that wanted to go, to see just what their beautiful world came to become, just like there were some humans who weren’t as terrified, and intended to welcome Monsters to their world with open arms. After a long discussion between the great king, accompanied by his great advisor, and the officials of the cities closest to the great mountain that hid the monsters away, Monsterkind was given the opportunity to grow under the warm sun, within the safety of foster homes, protected by their human guardians.

Papyrus Aliquam Gaster was proud to wear the royal guard armor he donned on this day. Armed with a bone spear, he happily escorted the latest group of monsters to the clan camp being constructed for the monsters. It was the beginning of a simple village by the Mount Ebott River.

He walked through the camp, even after the carrier carts stopped, greeting builder and pre-settled monsters alike as he approached the largest of the homes. This home belonged to the kind woman who had donated her land to Monsterkind to build and grow on. Many called her an angel, others a miracle worker. He called her his friend, and was honored enough to call her that.

He soon came to the door and reached up, rapping his bony knuckles against the wooden door. He had a warm smile on his face, and a cheerful orange gleam in his sockets as he waited for her to answer.

Tokiko Nara was the first grandchild of the Nara clan heads- and had inherited the large plot when her grandfather had passed away, despite the fact that she wasn’t full blooded Japanese. The family had been here for a long time- probably since the days before the barrier had been erected. As such, she’d been able to do what she wanted with the plot of land, since it was the newer age. No one was required to stay at the clan compound anymore, and so all eight of her brothers, and her mother and father had moved out once she’d reached the age to which she could have run it on her own.

For the most part, the hundreds of sprawling acres of forest, rivers, and fields had been mostly untouched. Some of it was being logged for more housing- the compound itself was not nearly large enough to house all the monsters that she really would have liked to in the long run- but a lot of it was still undisturbed, or being used for her Apiary. Other than her passing hobby as an author, Toki
had to make money somehow. Making honey was a lucrative pastime- and she had a natural talent for not being stung.

Since the barrier dropped, the magic that had been released had made the bees ultra busy. As a result, she was kept even busier between helping purchase food for the new monsters arriving, and tending to her hives.

It was little wonder why she was feeling so run-down by everything. She was growing ever more pale, even for a half Japanese woman, as the days wore on. But she wouldn’t trade it for the world. The tales of yore had been true- monsters did exist, and they were an absolute delight to talk with. Of course, not all humans were in agreement with her.

Speaking of monsters- she recognized the sound of bone on wood by now. A smile stretched her lips, and the spindly woman came to answer with a happy gleam to her dark eyes. She pulled back the door, opening it with a welcoming grin. Toki had taken the time to actually make something of herself this morning- though that only amounted to pulling the inky locks of her hair into a loose ponytail and making sure that the bags under her eyes were sufficiently covered by a careful application of some foundation. “Papy!” She beams, overjoyed. “Come in, come in. I trust you’ve gotten everyone here safely?”

"Haha, indeed Miss Nara!” He said happily, entering the home once he ducked his head enough to get inside. Being seven foot six was a little... merciless to your head if you forgot to duck. "It's good to see you are doing well, even with everything you've so kindly done for us monsters. I’m certain you've been very busy- you must be exhausted!"

Her doors were tall- her father, according to her mother, had been a giant of an American, before she’d remarried another, shorter man. When Toki had shot past her mother’s meager height by age ten, they’d agreed to remodel the house to something a little more height friendly. At six foot tall, Toki had readily needed it. And, watching Papy duck into her doorway, Toki was pondering the need for yet another expansion to make it a bit more monster-friendly.

“Oh please, Papy, you know I prefer being called Toki.” His joy is met with another smile. “Would you like to set your things in your room? And yes, I’ve been doing well. It’s been very busy, between my hives and everyone here, but it’s nice to see the compound being put to good use again.” She tried to keep everyone fed and happy- but it was cramped quarters until the actual full sized houses could be built around the modernized compound. “I’m glad everyone’s gotten here safe though.” With the rumors she kept hearing over the radio and news stations on the television… The novelty of the monsters was fading off for some people across the world, and, naturally, the bigots and racists had to rear their ugly heads and cause problems.

Those kinds of people brought shame upon the human race.

"No need, mi'lady! Duty calls and I packed light.” He replied with a soft 'nyeh heh heh', before he pulled a small closed Tupperware from his pack and offered it to her. "Here!"

Of course he did. She shakes her head at his antics- he took his job more seriously than a lot of other people she knew- and gives him a fond smile. The smile shifts to befuddlement when she’s presented with Tupperware, to which she lifts up so she can peer in it. “Spaghetti?” She blinks, before her smile grows. She would pay for it later, but she would most definitely try it. “Ah! You told me you would bring me some of your famous spaghetti! I’ve been so excited to try it.” She gushed happily.

"I certainly hope you enjoy it, Miss Toki! It's only fair that the great caretaker of Monsterkind has fine dining once in a while to keep her on her feet." he said with a smile, "That, and I kinda made too much last night, so I had leftovers.” He admitted, rubbing his head with a soft laugh.
She gives him a wide smile and laughs alongside him. “I don’t know, Papy. Can there ever be too much spaghetti?” It tasted damn amazing, but never agreed with her in the long run. She chuckles gently and motions for him to follow her to the kitchen. “Come- I haven’t had lunch yet, and I’d wager you haven’t either. Care to share some with me? I’ve got some pastries I made that we can put some honey on to go with it. Sound good to you?” Toki would need the sweet sugars to keep her energies up, after all. She had some stuff to get done today- and most of that rhymed with cleaning out all of her hives and making sure the bees had food.

"Oh, I would love to!" he said happily, "But only for a little while, I do have to hurry home, after all!"

Of course he did- he was so busy, like one of her bees hustling from flower to flower to make it home in time. “Of course,” She smiles widely. He’s guided into her kitchen, which is much more monster friendly. It’s obvious she does a lot of babysitting of some of the young ones in the houses around them. A children’s table has been purchased, and has colorful drawings on it and draped over the chairs that surround it in one corner of the kitchen. She guides him to the granite counter top, surrounded by tall chairs, and carefully goes to put the Tupperware into her microwave to heat. She dances to the counter next to it, grabbing some simple tarts she’d made, and grabbing one of her many jars of honey she makes. She sets herself to preparing the tarts- more than they need. The rest are going out to the monsters and workers outside that are so diligently building houses for them.

“Hey, Papy? Can you grab me the plates please? I had one of the taller monsters helping me in here a while back, and they forgot I’m not quite as tall as some of you. It’s in the cupboard above the sink.” Which was well above her grabbing range. She usually had to grab a chair to get it- which is hilarious, because she’s tall for a human.

He smiled at the sight of her happiness, and then he blinked, "Ah! Of course, Miss Toki!" he reached to the cupboard and pulled the door open, reaching in and collecting them with little hassle. "Here we are!"

Toki thanked him with a smile, and began piling tarts onto many plates. She left two plates empty- and soon she put the steaming spaghetti on the plates, not bothering to split it evenly between the both of them. She took the lesser amount, and collected a few extra tarts to make up for taking less, before fetching forks. The plates are set on the table, before she wraps the other honey-tart filled plates up to be sent outside later. “Well, lets eat. It smells amazing,” she admits, her stomach growling eagerly. She takes a seat on one of the tall, wide chairs, and motions for her friend to join her. “How have you been in the Underground? Besides busy, I mean.”

"I've been good! Father has been a fantastic leader for the western districts, and Brother has really stopped being so lazy!" He said happily.

“That’s good.” She nods. The mouth full of spaghetti sends pleasant tingles down her throat, and she hurries to swallow it down so she can eat more. In-between bites of pasta, she takes bites of her tart, enjoying the sweet flavor of the honey and the bland, moist cake that it’s spread on. “My little brother is perpetually lazy too.” She grins, watching him happily. It was always so cool seeing the monsters eat- some swallowed whole, some chewed, it always varied. And how a Skeleton ate without having a stomach was a magical mystery to Tokiko, but she always enjoyed mysteries. “It always took so much prodding from my siblings to get him to get into mischief with us. I’m very convinced that laziness is not something that goes away forever.”

He let out a happy 'nyeh heh heh heh!' at that. "They are pesky, but brothers! Fantastic regardless?"

“Fantastic regardless.” She nods with a laugh. “Nara as a clan are generally lazy though. It comes in varying degrees of severity. My dad always said I was high strung- I enjoy lazing about with the best
of them, but I much prefer to be doing things.” Her stomach cramped a bit as she finished her spaghetti, and finished up her tarts. “Your spaghetti was fantastic, Papy. Did you enjoy the tarts?”

"They tasted fit to be eaten by a king!” He replied with a happy 'Nyeh heh heh!

“Good.” She smiles. “Because I was thinking of sending back a crate of honey with your caravan, if you’d like. I think everyone downstairs,” She taps her foot on her floor, silently referencing his home, “would love to get a taste of what the outside can offer. Is that okay with you?”

"Oh, that would be wonderful! I know Father will enjoy the offer of something sweet!"

She nods with a smile, and collects the plates once he’s finished eating. She settles them into the sink to soak- because Honey is many things, and a bitch to get off of the china is one of those things- and turns around to offer him a hum. “I'll make sure a crate is ready for when you leave then. When do you depart?” She’d need to get it packed- she had all the supplies, and she could get it done pretty fast. Not monster-fast, but human fast was good enough.

"Well... I don't think I had a specific ordered return time." he said with a cheeky look, almost one to match that of his brother's.

She can’t hide the laugh that eases her soul. He was always so busy, running to and fro. “Then I’m going to ask you stay and relax a bit. You’re always so busy- but lets get that honey packed up for you first. I’ll get busy and completely space out on doing it otherwise.” She edges past him in the kitchen, and then laughs lightly. “Make sure you leave your spear out here, yeah? Honey jars are fragile, and I will be very grumpy if I have to try and mop up spilled honey. It sticks worse than glue, I swear.”

That said, she leaves him to follow as she leads them to her pantry. The door opens, and on one side is normal foods. The other is loaded with jars and jars of honey, some aged, some still needing time to age to the perfect sweetness. She moves to drag out a travel crate, and begins collecting jars for the trip back. The constant up and down motion makes her head spin some, but she toughs it out to work on packing them safely.

"Nyeh heh heh... Alright...! I suppose I shall help you! A royal guard must also do his best to be a gentleman! Especially to one such as yourself!" He left his spear out, coming into the room to help her.

“You are very sweet,” She smiles. “Probably sweeter than any honey I could make, really.” She stays lower, letting him hand her the jars from the upper shelves. She packs them in, padding them with biodegradable- and edible- packing peanuts. The crate fills up quickly, and soon she’s settling the lid on and using her packing tape to make sure that the top wont open, and the side panels wont open up under the weight. Glass is tremendously heavy with honey in it.

Once it’s together, she hefts it into her arms and stands. She staggers lightly as her head spins, and she sighs as she braces against the shelf behind her. The crate wobbles, but she steadies it with a heft of her arms. Stood up too fast- she hated doing that. “Well, here’s your honey, mister gentleman.”

With a startled noise, he moved quickly and carefully took the crate, "Now, now!" He said quickly, setting it down nearby, before he checked her worriedly. "Are you alright? You staggered pretty roughly there!"

She let him take the crate- idly noting that he didn’t struggle with its weight like she did, much to her amusement. Toki swallows and nods with a smile. Her head swims a bit more, but she’s fine enough as she reaches out to pat his arms reassuringly. “I’m alright, Papy. It’s a human thing- if we stand up
too quickly we get dizzy or if we’re not feeling well. It’s not a constant thing, and we only sometimes fall down. I’m pretty used to it.” She admits. “I’m alright, I promise.”

"Regardless! I say you rest!" He insisted, proceeding to pick her up next.

Well, that’s not what she was expecting. She squeaks, fingers looping into his armor as she’s snatched up. “Ah… Thank you? I’ll rest for a bit, but I do have more honey to collect today, and hives to clean.” And many other things too- but she didn’t have the heart to tell him all of them. So Toki smiles and laughs softly, feeling hilariously tiny in the large skeleton’s hold as he hefts her upwards. “I’m not a feather, Papy, so let’s go park it on the couch. You remember where the living room is, right?”

"Of course I do! The great Papyrus has a fantasti-!" He's promptly cut off as his head runs into the arch over the door.

“Ah! Papy!” She leans up, using one arm on his armor to heft her upper body up so she can reach and puts her hand on his skull. Toki gently rubs over where he clocked himself something good, making a soft clucking noise in the back of her throat. “[If you keep running into doors, you’re not going to have such a fantastic memory, you goofball. Let me see- I don’t think you hit hard enough to hurt yourself, but I don’t want to see you hurt.”

The solid wood of her doorframe hardly has a dent- but that sort of sound on bare bone did not sound pleasant. She’d broken a toe on these frames- she could only imagine what they could do to a bare skull.

"Nyeh... I-I'm okay!" he insisted, smiling at her gently as he carried her to the couch. "The great papyrus cannot be so simply defeated! Not even by a door-frame!" he assured her, carefully arranging her on the seat and then sitting beside her.

Once she was seated, she was up on her knees anyways, carefully tugging him down as she eases lightly against his chest. She can see the spot he bonked- a little bit of the stain from the wood had tinged his skull. “Still, Papy, you need to be careful. I don’t know about you magical skeletons, but hitting our heads as hard as you tend to could seriously hurt us. Our bones aren’t as strong as yours are. Speaking of, your skull doesn’t look cracked- but still be careful.” The concerned look on her face is, she hopes, enough to sway him to be a little bit more careful.

He smiled a little, and wrapped his arms around her. Armor certainly wasn’t the most comfortable to recline against, but bone wasn’t much better. ”Tut tut! I'm worrying about you. I don’t want you getting concerned about me! The great Papyrus can take more than just a simple hit on the skull!”

“Still, Papy, you’ve got to be careful.” She relents, and relaxes down against him. Papyrus was a very cuddly person. Toki was too- she’d grown up the eldest of six boys, and all of them had loved big sister cuddle times. It was practically unavoidable, sort of like now. She just sighs and settles as best she can, idly humming. “I always worry- and I’m realizing I’m going to need to renovate the house again. Taller doorways is rapidly becoming a must have.”

"Nyeh heh heh... I'd pity our wonderful king if he was to hit his head!" he laughed softly, "But he'd be so kind, he wouldn't care!"

She laughs softly. “Asgore was very kind,” She nods in agreement. “But he didn’t come inside. He couldn’t get through the front door. We had our lunch out on the lawn. I never thought I’d meet a king, y’know. He was really cool though.” And he had enjoyed her tarts. Honey, as she gathered, was not something the Underground had in spades.
She sighs and settles her head against his shoulder. Inky hair spills over his armor, and she notes that some of the strands fall between the bones of his arms.

He let out a soft laugh, and then he smiled and reached, gently pulling her hair from his arm. "Mm~"

"Sorry about that." She gathers her hair from his fingers, and leans back enough to coil it up into a bun. A quick shift of her hair tie, and soon it was in a sloppy pile, but out of dangling reach. "Hair sort of goes everywhere. I should probably get it trimmed again, honestly."

He smiled and tucked a few strands behind her ear. "Nyeh heh heh! I think it's nice like this!"

Toki can't help but laugh softly, watching as he tucks them behind her ear. The gloves over his fingers brush against the cartilage hoops that decorate the rim of her ear, and she smiles lightly. "I enjoy having long hair." She admits. "But it does get in the way, and sometimes I don't have the energy to braid it every day. The bees like to get tangled in it if I leave it laying flat."

"Why don't I braid it for you?"

His offer was really unexpected, and she blinks up at him in befuddlement. "You know how to braid?" Not all humans knew how to braid- let alone a magical being that didn't even have hair. "You're welcome to braid it if you want!"

"Don't mind if I do!" He repositioned her in a comfortable seat, grinning happily at her back. "May I take your hair tie?" He asked.

She nods softly, and reaches up a tired hand to untangle it. Messy black hair falls free, pooling about the middle of her back. She offers him the white elastic band, and gets settled so he can work over her hair. "Of course you can!" She laughs gently. Facing away from him as she is, she takes the moment to reach up, rubbing at her eyes with a hidden yawn. Welp. There goes her foundation. Eh. Makeup was cheating anyways. Most humans had the dark circles- it wouldn't stand out if she did too.

He smiled and took the band, running his hands through her hair even so gently. He pulled her hair into a long ponytail, and then stroked her hair a little longer before starting to braid it.

Her hair was pretty easy to work with in the long run of things, really. Toki’s hair was pretty straight, only some of the shorter hairs curling and frizzing. She relaxes as his fingers work, propping her chin on her palm as she slouches. He’s better at it than she thought she would be- and Toki finds her eyes drifting shut pleasantly as his fingers work over her hair.

Who’d have thought that skeletons could be good at playing with hair? Or at least making it relaxing, particularly with his battle gloves on.

After skillfully twining the lengths of hair together, he secured it. Papyrus smiled and moved it to drape it over Toki's shoulder. "There we are! All done~"

Her eyes lifted again, dark circles visible below them, once her hair was braided and draped over her shoulder. She shifted back, turning to face him once more, and a smile stretching her lips. "Thanks, Pap. I guess there's nothing that the Great Papyrus can't do, is there?" There's no sarcasm in her voice either- he'd proven capable of doing most anything. Except ducking through doorways.

She shifts and leans back into the couch, slouching into his side with a warm smile. Her back makes a series of popping noises- slouching always did something odd with her spine, but it always felt heavenly after keeping a much healthier posture.
He let out a quiet 'nyeh heh heh' as he wrapped his arms around her. "My dear lady, you must rest!" There might have been some quiet scolding in his voice. "I'll gladly stay here while you sleep, so use me as a pillow if you so wish!" A bright smile widened on his face.

She laughed softly and leaned into him. "Alright, Papy, alright. I'll nap for a little bit- but I do have stuff I need to do today. Wake me in an hour?" She motions to the clock on the wall, where he could check the time if need be. Toki’s legs curled up onto the couch, and the tall woman did a wonderful job of folding up into something much smaller than she actually was.

The bones against her side weren’t the most comfortable to nap on, but Toki was a Nara. She would surely bring shame to her ancestors if she couldn’t manage to nap anywhere, any time, at the drop of a hat.

He looked up at the clock. Once he figured out the time, he smiled and nodded once. "Of course, Good night, Miss Toki~" He said happily.

She can’t help the laugh that bubbles forth. "It’s not even noon, you great goober. But I’ll have a good nap. If you want to turn on the television, the remote is to your left.” Noise wouldn’t bother her, really. Already her eyes were drifting closed, and she was content on snagging a nap leaning against him. She shifts, snuggles closer, and drapes her arms around him so they don’t get squished against her chest.

He smiled down at her, and returned the 'hug' that seemed to be given to him, before he reached and took the remote into his hand, going to take a peek at what was on TV.

The first thing that comes on is cartoons; as the television and all of it’s human marvels seemed to mystify the monster kids, it proved to be an effective way to keep them out from underfoot for hours at a time. She hadn’t changed it over from the last time that she had watched the young ones.

The Amazing World Of Gumball began to play quietly from the speakers.

“Dude, have you noticed that your voice has changed?”

“What, you mean how I sound like a man and you squeal like a piglet on helium?”

True to the context, the voice cracked upon the next sentence. “You take that b-back!”

“Sure, when you ask me like a man.”

“I AM a man!”

“Really? Because right now you sound like a mouse who’s parachute won’t open.”

Toki settled to sleep to the hilarious sound of whatever critter it was lose it’s shit in the highest pitched tantrum she had ever heard.

This was hilarious. Papyrus let out the quietest, 'nyeh heh heh heh~' he could muster.

Toki wouldn’t even stir. Her breathing evens out, dark lashes framing the dark circles under her eyes, and a soft snore wafts up from where she’s cuddled to his armor.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: So, chapters are going to be updated as we get them done. Some might be cranked out in days- some might take a week or more. Also from the 26 to September 3rd, we won’t be posting any updates. I’ve got a friend from out of state coming, and I’ll be spending a lot of my time with her. If we think of it, we’ll save a chapter for Silverwing to post while I’m gone.

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Silverwing Notes: So far I love how this is turning out, but to clear up any confusion you may gain while reading

Caeruleus is the name of the Sans in this story, though it’s his middle name used as a first, so ‘Sans’ may occasionally end up being used instead throughout the story. Chapter 2 in particular, ‘Sans’ starts being used about halfway in, but rest assured, it’s the same character.

Same with Aliquam being used for Papyrus

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Strider Editing Notes (6-10-18): We’re going through slowly and editing the story. Caeruleus is going to stay as Sans’ middle name, so eventually the whole story will just have Sans written as the first. Same with Papyrus- with Aliquam as his middle name. It’s going to be a process though, because there’s a lot of chapters, and only two of us to edit it. Anyway, enjoy reading. Don’t be confused if you see Caeruleus somewhere though, or a Quinn or an Ali- I’m trying to get them all, but it’s not feasible for one person.

Papyrus had managed to stay for dinner that night, which she had mildly demanded after his sweet self had helped her move the bee hives and get them damn near spotless in nearly half the time it usually took, but had had to leave shortly after. She’d sent him out with his crate of honey, and seen the caravan off when he’d had to go, before retreating inside to handle some more legal stuff over the phone. She was also thrilled that she did, indeed, manage to keep from him the lack of good reactions her body had to some tomato-based products.

The following week went smoothly enough- they only had two hiccups. One had been an incident with a worker who reported some less than stellar wood that had been delivered. She’d handled that swiftly over the phone, giving the company CEO the ass chewing of a lifetime, and switched to ordering the stuff they couldn’t get local from over seas. More pricey, but some of the foreign companies were eager to interact with monsters. Some even offered deals on bulk supplies. The second had been a nasty phone call from some people from the Humans Against Monsters, warning her against accepting more monsters. She’d told them where to stuff it, and then hung up.

And at the end of that first week, the first sector of actual housing was up. It was nearest the compound, and the first families that had come there got first pick of the houses. The next sector was scheduled to be finished in a few more weeks- but Toki was enthusiastic. Winter was three or four months away- and the summer nights were pretty chilly. Having heating and proper housing for everyone would be better.
Everything was on a roll, and going well enough that she only had minimal stress. To her
disgruntlement, the dark bags under her eyes continued to grow and grow, until she looked damn
near bruised.

Naps didn’t seem to help, either. Though the naps were usually amazing, and she did feel more
rested after. Toki sorely needed the rest- she was supposed to baby-sit tonight. The adults- monsters
and some of the human workers who were building- were gathering in one of the houses tonight to
play some card games.

Naturally, Toki had offered to watch the kids for the night. It was a nickelodeon show marathon
night anyways, so they would all be engrossed in seeing the new episodes coming out.

So it was little surprise when she woke up, face down at her kitchen table, with some billing papers
stuck to her face, and her dark hair spread over the table. She had only closed her eyes for a
second… But with a Nara, a second was all it could take.

"Heheh... S’Bout time you woke up, Doll." Came a voice from nearby, before an empty pair of eye
sockets came into sight, accompanied by a wide, fixed grin on the monster's face.

The noise that comes from her throat is nothing short of a deflating whoopee cushion- because half-
asleep Toki is not a fully aware Toki. The stool she’s been seated on dumps her out as she flails
backwards, sending papers flying.

She lands with a thump, and a muffled curse as the eye sockets and grinning skull disappear over the
top of her table.

“That’s even better than the whoopee cushion in the hand trick!” The skeleton laughed as he came
around the counter top, kneeling beside her to check on her condition. "Hey, you okay?" He asked
next, speaking clearly despite his teeth not moving from their closed position.

That was… weird. But magic was strange- how he talked without opening his jaw was beyond her.
Toki pressed a dainty hand to her chest to calm her pattering heart, the other bracing on the ground.
“You probably scared a couple years off my lifespan, but other than that, I’m good.” Dark eyes
peered up at the kneeling skeleton, making the dark circles under them stand out more. Other than
being bone tired, she wasn’t harmed. Startled and spooked, yes. But sometimes skeletons could be
spooky and scary when they were unexpected. “Maybe a bruised tailbone too. And… uh, I think
you’re standing on one of my billing papers.” They were, she had to admit, a great instant-wakeup
though. Better even than a cup of coffee.

The empty eye sockets were filled with light as pupils appeared in the skeleton's eyes, and he gave a
chuckle, the grin growing on his face. He slowly then stood up and peeled the paper from his foot.
"This looks complicated."

“Sans Caeruleus Gaster, I swear to everything that is holy, you are going to be the death of me if you
keep scaring me. And then you have to deal with Papyrus when you do.” She huffed, and shifted
onto her knees. Still, the smile on her lips takes the sting from her words. Agh. Her ass. The wooden
floors were unforgiving to human flesh. Toki doesn’t bother getting up- she hides a wave of
dizziness by picking up the scattered papers. “Ah, bills aren’t really that hard. At the start yeah, but
it’s all about how you balance your money to make it stretch. These are bills for the lumber I’ve had
to import.”

"Oh yeah, I’m so scared." he chuckled, watching her to make sure she wasn't too badly hurt. Other
than the dark bags under her eyes and pale tinge to her skin, she’s relatively healthy looking.
Once they’re all collected, the pale woman plants a hand on her table and hauls herself up with a
tired groan. She steadies herself on the surface, and then sets her papers down. “What prompted this
visit?” She’d officially met him once, but he had only popped up on occasion to scare the bejeebus
out of her, or to let Papyrus know he needed to be back sooner. “Oh! Did the crate of honey I sent
with Papyrus make it to the Underground alright?”

Upon being given the questions, Sans grinned.

"Just thought I’d come deliver some supplies for you." He told her. "As for the honey, yeah. Al
made sure to share it well enough with everyone."

She fixes her seat and takes the bill back from Sans with a tired smile. She nudges another over for
him to take a seat upon, and then wanders to the fridge to collect a drink for herself. “Would you like
anything to drink? I bet your mouth is bone dry if you were waiting for me to wake up. I’m glad the
honey got there though. It was awfully sweet of you to deliver news and supplies.” She’d need to
prepare another crate to send to everyone. But it could wait for now; she had an unexpected guest to
entertain after all. “Did you get to try any of it? If not, I could make up some honey tarts for you to
try.” She could whip him up some honey tarts if he wanted- she needed to make some for the kids
anyways.

Monster kids were enamored with the honey tarts- though apparently they weren’t as energizing or
rejuvenating as the magic infused ‘monster food’. Toki hadn’t actually tried any of that yet- she
wasn’t sure it was good for human consumption, and would rather the kids get the meals better suited
for their own nutrition.

He chuckled at that, "Sure, why not. Love that you've been practicin' your puns, by the way. " He
said, sitting down with a grin. "Got any ketchup?"

“I’ve been trying, but I’m not very good at them yet.” She admits shyly. She putters around the
kitchen, and collects a few tarts, slathering a good helping of honey on top. She doesn’t bother
making any for herself- she’s too run down to really benefit from the sugar at this point. She does, in
fact, have ketchup. She fetches her bottle from the fridge once the tarts are finished- including the
extra ones for the hoards of little ones that she’s going to be watching later- and sets in front of him
his tarts, his ketchup, and a glass for him to pour the ketchup into. Toki settles across from him, a
glass of water in hand, and casually scrubs her fingers across her eyes tiredly. “It’s probably not as
good as the type you’ve got in the underground, but store-bought ketchup isn’t bad.”

"Well I'm proud of you, regardless, sounds like you're really putting your funny bone to good use." He purred, taking the ketchup and poking the nozzle into his mouth. "Mmh."

“Well aren’t you just humorous, sugar.” A smile tugs at her mouth and she can’t help the snort that
leaves her. “Guess you didn’t need the glass.” She laughs softly, and turns back to her papers so he
can eat without her ogling him. It was rude to stare, after all- and she hadn’t seen him open his mouth
since they met.

She purses her lips, finding another company who would have liked to jack up the price. She
scanned down the price, comparing the quality of goods with where she was getting from in other
places, and frowned. Ugh. She must have missed this one earlier. She was only recently teaching
herself what was good lumber and what wasn’t- she was a beekeeper, not a forestry nerd after all. A
drawn out sigh leaves her, and she sips her water as she scans the page, frown growing. She’d need
to make the call to them shortly.

He chuckled softly, enjoying his ketchup for a little longer before he lowered it to the table. "Is
everything okay?" He asked after noticing her upset aura.
“Nothing’s ever fully okay.” She sighs. Idly, she waves the paper. “I’m a beekeeper by trade, so I’ve had to do research on the types of wood and materials I’ve been buying to build houses for everyone. All of this stuff is pretty new to me. I’m finding out that some of the places I’ve made orders to be less truthful about the quality of the wood. I managed to cancel those orders and gotten them switched to a better supplier. Well, except this one, apparently. I’m going to have to call and have a word with whoever runs the business. This sort of wood here isn’t something that would survive the winters here. First time a branch slams into it, we’d have a hole in the house.” She groans, head thudding down onto the table. She was pretty run down, doing all of this on her own, and it showed in her posture and energies. “I’ll work on it though. I’m going to have to double check all of my orders and keep an eye on them.”

"I could see about makin’ a couple o’ deliveries for you." He offered. "Plus I could ask around for some hints or advice. I happen to know a few things about buildin’ and keepin’ a house.”

Toki blinks up at him slowly for a minute, before she nods hesitantly. “The deliveries of goods would be helpful. Any advice you hear along the way would be infinitely helpful too, really.” She does motion a finger out the window though, pointing at the large number of builders skillfully putting together houses in a plethora of sizes. There were some massive monsters, after all. “I think we’ve got the building bits down though. The only thing I need to actually schedule to be remodeled is my doors- because I swear to god your brother is going to brain himself one of these days.”

She props her elbow on the table and her chin into her palm. Dark, tired eyes gaze at his eye sockets and she hums a small thoughtful sound. “Sorry about any grumbling you might hear- I’m just a bit run down. Keeping up with everything and keeping it all in order on your own is exhausting.”

He laughed at that. "Hey, don’t worry about it!" He assured her. "Also, if you think it’s bad with Pap, you should see how my old man suffers.” He snickered as he remembered how much his father would abhor going through doorways before they fixed the house.

A fond smile crosses her face, and she chuffs a soft laugh. “I haven’t met your dad yet, but I imagine he’s probably in the same boat as King Asgore was. We had to have lunch on the lawn- he nearly got stuck in the door.” She had never seen a goat-monster blush before, and it was a sight ingrained deeply into her brain. Toki hums, and gives Sans a more serious look. “Hey. I want you to be careful while you’re out and about making deliveries or getting information. Spread the word to Pap, and the other caravans. I got a call a few days ago- from some anti-monster group. I told them where to shove it, but humans can be terrible creatures. I just want you all to be careful, okay?”

"Hey of course, Doll." He winked at her. "Humans are scary and all, but they can’t do shit against a Boss Monster like me!” He laughed.

“You haven’t seen some of the advanced weapons.” She smiles dryly, pale cheeks dusting a light pink at his wink, but keeps a serious look on her face. She idly points a finger to the honey treats that he had yet to consume, reminding him in passing that he did have treats to nibble. “Guns for one. They’re probably faster than you can move. But anyways, not all of you are boss monsters, you know? It’s the monsters that can’t defend themselves well that should be warned. The guard’s here know- they’re keeping an eye out for me but we’re keeping it quiet so as not to scare the children and parents. Still… You guys have been underground for a long, long time. I don’t think you understand the capacity for cruelty that humanity can have.”

He glanced at them with a soft ‘oh yeah...’ and took one. He listened to her as he started to consume the sweet treat. By the end of her speech, he shook his head. "Oh, trust me, doll... You’d be surprised just how well I do when it comes to dodgin’ blows." The assurance came easy from him. "Well, once we get more residents up here, I may just take up role as a guard.” He told her cheerfully.
“You’d be welcome here as a guard.” She nods with a hesitant smile. “We’re growing larger here every day.” Eventually they’d probably become a legitimized city in their own, if the population kept growing. Or at least considered a small town- and would probably need to name it if it came to that. Still, she frowns at him. “If you’ll be here long today, I’ll show you my rifle. Bullets are hard to see, and even harder to dodge if the one wielding the gun has good aim.”

"I've gone up against a knife before," he shrugged loosely, "a gun cant be that bad." He chuckled, before he patted her shoulder. "Well, don't worry about not-so-little old me," He purred, "I'll make sure to come out on top if it means protectin’ everyone, especially you.”

The large, bony fingers that patted her shoulder did nothing to ease her nerves. He really didn’t understand the concept of guns, did he? She would definitely need to teach him about them- and all of the monsters as well, come to think of it. They needed to be prepared for what they would come up against. It took her a moment to register the charming purr that accented his last words- and the brilliant flush that blossomed over her face embarrassed her. She wasn’t anyone worth protecting, really.

Toki didn’t get the chance to expand upon the importance of gun-knowledge and his lack of it. The back door opened, and the quick pitter-patter of paws announced the arrival of a little houseguest.

Thumper was one of the monster children she habitually babysat. The little boy was as sweet as he was fluffy- but he had a stubborn streak a mile wide. Thumper was clad in a pair of overalls, his gray fur standing out against the dark denim. His feet were bare- and she was glad of it as he barreled into her middle with almost enough force to bruise her skin.

She hid a pained grunt, and instead stroked a hand over his head as he whimpered in her lap. She smoothed his ears down, blinking at purple eyes as his soft nose twitched in distress.

“Miss Nara, I was bad. I dared Twitch,” Who was another bunny monster she babysat, “to climb one of the trees…”

“The ones I told you not to climb?” She gave him a firm look, eyes briefly glancing to Sans to let him know that their little gun-safety talk was not over. She didn’t hesitate, standing up and propping the heavy child onto her hip. He settled easily- she’d gotten wide hips from her dad’s side of the family- and nodded into her neck.

There were some trees in her ‘back yard’ area of sorts that were ones that had been there for centuries. They were ‘family heirlooms’ of sorts, and were impossibly tall and hard to climb. They also offered the best view of the little village that was sprouting up- so naturally it had several children wanting to climb them.

“Yeah… Twitch is stuck. She’s afraid to climb down now.”

“You did good in coming to get me, Thumper. Lets go get Twitch, okay? I’ll be right back, Sans.” And then she’s heading out the door, mind shifting gears onto getting Twitch down.

"If this is a rescue mission, then I don’t see why I have to stay behind.” he chuckled as he followed her, knowing his magic would make this job a lot easier.

“It’s not so much a rescue mission as a retrieval one. Again.” She didn’t particularly care if he followed- but it was presumptuous to assume he would in the long run, hence giving him the option to opt out. Toki hefts Thumper slightly higher, and her long legs make the trek through the house and out to the family trees easily. There’s a small gathering of bunny monsters at the base, and they’re looking upwards.
She spots Twitch near the top, her light pink fur a sharp contrast to the bland green leaves of the tree. Pursing her lips, she sets Thumper with the rest of the little ones and makes her way to the trunk.

The young rabbit monster didn’t linger with the others- he latched onto the nearest other adult he could cling to. Which happened to be Sans’ leg, as the little rabbit watched the top of the tree nervously.

“Twitch, sugarplum? You stuck up there, baby girl?”

“Uhuh… ‘s far down.”

And it was. Toki had grown up getting into similar such situations, until she got tired of watching her dad get the ladder every time she had climbed up. She hadn’t climbed it in years- but honestly, how hard could it be? “Alright, Twitch. You stay put, all right? I’m coming up for you.”

Toki cracked the knuckles of her fingers loudly, discarded her house slippers at the base of the trunk, and then began to work her way up the tree through long familiar handholds.

How hard can it be… Sans rolled his non-existent eyes and then chuckled and reached to ruffle Thumper's fur. "Be careful, Toki."

“Ha! I’ve only fallen out of here twice! I’ll be fine, Sans.”

Toki made her way up swiftly, slipping a couple times when the old bark gave below her bare feet. She squirmed up until she could reach Twitch- but was unprepared when the terrified rabbit monster leapt into her chest with an upset sound when the wind rattled the branches roughly. She didn’t even need to coax her- the rabbit wanted down, obviously.

Sharp claws caught on her ribs as the young monster latched onto her chest, driving the air out of her lungs with the force of her grasp. Toki braced herself with one hand, the other coming around the trembling bunny. She managed to snag a thin dangling branch, but otherwise would have gone over backwards out of the tree.

“Hey now,” She smiled, “I’ve got you. You, ah, you’re going to be alright, Twitch.”

“Not comin’ up again…” The sulky words were muffled by Toki’s chest, but she got the gist of them easily enough anyways.

“See to it that you don’t,” She chuckles softly, tugging on the branch to try and pull herself upright again.

There is an ominous crack as the branch breaks, and then a shrill noise of Twitch’s cry, which is mirrored by the bunnies tittering down below. Toki doesn’t scream- but she does curl her arms around the child and hold on because OW those are branches whipping across her back and sides, and that is the ground rapidly approaching.

There might have been a startled noise that came from between his teeth. With the realization of the danger, Sans’ eye socket lit up bright blue and he lashed a hand out, power whirling outwards and turning both Toki’s and Twitch’s souls blue as he caught them in his magic.

The sudden stop from their fall was jarring- but it was more so the sheer burning that overtook her soul that hurt the most. Whatever Sans was doing- whatever it was that was making his eye glow like that- it burned to high hell, like something was shoving a hot spear through the very center of her person. She shivered, gooseflesh pebbling up across her pale hide, pain flashing briefly across her face.
Her arms tightened around Twitch as a thin sheen of sweat broke out across her forehead. She was upside down, but she shot Sans a shaky but grateful look as she was lowered down.  

“That… WAS SO AWESOME!” Thumper all but bounced next to Sans, watching the skeleton save Twitch and his babysitter with the blue magic.  

He slowly lowered them to the ground and let them go once they were close enough to the ground.  

"Are you alright?"

Toki landed with a soft thud on the grass, and her breath whooshed out of her lungs. She sat up, taking deep breaths as the burning sensation lingered. The little rabbit’s claws had scratched her through her shirt, but she hurt more inside than she did outside. Her arms trembled faintly, and she stroked a hand down Twitch’s back with a soft croon. “We’re alright.” She nods shakily to Sans.  

“Thank you. Twitch? Sugar? You alright?”

“U-u-uhuh.”

Ah. Tears. Toki gives a fondly bemused smile, and simply strokes a hand down the little one’s back. She makes a vaguely aborted motion to get up, but instead just stays sitting until her limbs stop feeling like overcooked noodles.

“That was AWESOME! How did you do that? Is that blue magic? That’s SO COOL. Can you lift anyone? Can you lift me? Is it FUN?” Thumper has pulled the gaggle of little ones into bouncing around near Sans- all of them mirroring his excited cheers. Now that the danger had passed and no one had splattered on the ground, the trauma was out of sight and out of mind.

"Hang on there kiddos, lemme check on Toki real fast, then I’ll answer your questions.” He moved for her, slightly faster than his usual lumbering gait.

The kids pouted, but did stay put. They knew better than to crowd around a monster that had gotten scared- bunnies could be ferocious when they felt cornered.

Toki focused firstly on Twitch, soothing the bunny until she let her go. Once the pale pink bunny had settled back in her lap, Toki smoothed her hands over her cheeks and looked her over firmly.  

“You look like you’re alright. Are you going to do it again?”

“N-no, Toki…”

“Then I’m not going to scold you. That scare was punishment enough. But if I find you guys climbing them again, I will tell your parents.” And it wasn’t an idle threat either- Toki was a notorious ‘tattler’ when it came to misbehaving little ones. When Twitch simply sniffed, Toki gently patted her head, and let the bunny up. “Go play, okay? I’m going to lay here and let my heart catch up with the rest of me.”

Twitch got up, hugged Toki roughly around the neck for a moment, and then hopped to her friends. The children were sufficiently distracted from the adults as they began to grill Twitch on what it felt like to be levitated, and what it was like up that high, and the like.

Toki lay back in the grass with a grimace, hair and clothes askew, and peered up at the tall skeleton.  

“Looks like you’ve got fans.”

Sans sat besides her, his ever-present grin revealing nothing. "Very true by the looks of it. But first I’m gonna at least make sure you're okay."

“I’m alright,” She smiles at him wryly. “I’m laying down- nothing can be bad when you’re laying
down. I have some scratches from Twitch, but scratches heal. Besides that… Is your magic supposed to burn? Blue doesn’t make me think fire- but that was sure warmer than I expected it to be.”

"No... That shouldn't have hurt a bit." The tilt to his smile changes, and it takes her a moment to translate that to meaning that he was worried. “Any idea why you'd have some sort of reaction to it?”

“No? Besides me being under the weather… Maybe magic just isn’t supposed to be used on humans like that?” She shifts and sits up slowly, face flushing lightly as her vision wavers. Alright, that’s not normal. What the hell. “I am mildly dizzy.”

The silence is alarming. Sans looked at her, pupils small and faint. Planting his hand on her shoulder, he guided her down onto the lawn again. "Easy... easy..."

“Sans, really,” She gave him a dry look. “Humans get light headed at random. I did spend several seconds upside down and floating- that does odd things to the human body. I’m not going to break if I sit upright.” Still, she closes her eyes with a sigh, air rolling from her nostrils as she remains flopped in the grass. It’s summer, and the patch of shade they’re in is practically chilly.

He looked down at her, and then he sighed. "I'm going to get you somethin' to drink, alright?" though he didn't really wait as he stood up to go back.

“Make sure it’s not Ketchup, and I’ll take it.” Of course Toki isn’t likely to remain laying there while he’s gone- but as he heads back for the house, she contemplates not moving. Still, laying there like a lout wasn’t going to make her any better. She rolled over and clamored onto all fours, waving at the kids lightly. “Go play, you guys. Sans and I need to talk- and you lot need to stay away from the trees.”

“Alright, Toki!” The mob of children bounced from the yard, and she had an inkling that they probably were not done with Sans.

She watches them go, and then wobbles up onto her feet.

He came out after a little with some lemonade, a worried frown now on his face rather than his trademark grin.

She hadn’t technically moved from that spot, though she was upright now. Ish- more like bent at the waist staring intently at some grass, and wishing it would stop doing strange things in her vision. The door opening and closing draws her gaze, and she waves faintly. “Lemonade? Good choice.”

He came over and sat beside her, holding the straw out to her, “Here, thought you may need this...”

He didn’t know much about this feeling, but he had some knowledge about this... plus a straw was always helpful.

Toki stayed standing when he sat- she was wobbly and had a feeling she probably should sit somewhere that she didn’t have to get up from any time soon. The lemonade is appreciated, and she leans to take a sip from it. She’s not dumb enough to take the glass- she’d probably drop it with as unsteady as her limbs feel. “The sugar always helps.” Toki agrees lightly. It was sweet and tangy and delicious. “Thanks, Sans. For catching me, and for the lemonade. I’ve fallen out of that tree before- the landing sucks.”

He nodded gently. "You're doing monsterkind a great service, I’d hate to let anything happen to ya’." He assured her warmly.

She swallows another mouthful, and then makes to straighten up. “Eh, something’s bound to happen sooner or later. I am only human, after all. Trouble tends to follow us in spades. Thanks for your
concern though- you're sweeter than you let on, y'know?"

Toki grimaces lightly as she straightens, and then offers a wobbly hand to help him up. “C’mon, lets go inside before the kids remember their questions and mob you.”

He laughed and nodded, declining her hand before moving to get up by himself. "I'm admittedly a bit of a softie," he smirked, following her inside. "Heh, but uh, don’t worry about the kids, doll."

She makes it to the kitchen, and collapses down onto the stool. She shivers, goose bumps running rapidly up and down her bare arms as she watches him shut the door behind them. “I’m softer than you still- in more ways than one. Hence why I’m usually volunteering to watch the kids, monster and human alike.” She takes the lemonade glass from him, setting it carefully down on the table, and lets her head thud onto the cool wood. She groans quietly.

"Careful now," He hums. “You know, my old man is a doctor, I could see if he’d be alright with making the journey to come see you.”

“Isn’t he usually busy though?” She lifts her head to give him a tiredly curious smile, hair spilling over her shoulders in messy loops. “I mean, if he doesn’t mind, sure. If not, it’s no bother. I have to get another doctor in the city anyways.” The one she’d had since she had become an adult had proved to be horrifically monster-phobic, and she wasn’t going to support such bigotry. "It's probably easier for me to drive to town than it is for him to make a several-day trip here." Though with the dizzy spells, it was probably not nearly as safe.

"He can shortcut like I can. It'd only be a day at the longest.”

“Shortcut- Oh! Your instant-Toki-scaring trick.” She snorts lightly and laughs. “Again, if he’s busy, it’s not a problem. Would he know how to treat a human patient? Monsters and humans are similar, but we’ve got our differences.” Like them being composed of magic- and humans being fleshy, meaty squish bags that bruised easily.

"I'm sure he would." He nodded once more. “Yeah.”

“Then if he’s got a free moment when you head home, I wouldn’t mind you asking.” She smiles wryly. “Having a magical teleporting doctor would be nifty. No more three hour drives to the city, yeah?” They were a long ways out from most civilization. The fire department was an hours drive away, and the police just a little farther- but she did have neighbors between there and her estate.

Smiling, Sans made a mental note as he nodded a few times. "Of course. And my old man is a good doctor. A damn good one, really. I'm sure you'll like him."

“I’m sure I will. Think he’ll like me?” A smile is given to him, and she shifts in her seat, finishing her lemonade and then going to put the glass in the sink. To her credit, she doesn’t wobble, though her legs feel weak and unstable. Taking a deep breath, she steels herself, and turns to him with a wry smile. “Now back to our previous conversation. If I was feeling better, I’d take you out back right now and show you just what guns are, and why they should not be placed anywhere near the same category as a knife fight. Right now, I’m more likely to probably shoot myself in the foot again, so for safety’s sake, we’ll have to postpone that.”

She leans over to instead turn on the kitchen television, which is tuned to the news station. This particular channel is mostly about the monsters and some monster named Mettaton- who was apparently a rapidly growing celebrity among the humans- so it’s no surprise when it clicks over and general talk about monsters happens. She puts it on mostly for background sound- to drown out the loud sound of someone using a jackhammer to break up some rocks.
The volume is low- but Sans is closer to it than Toki was, so she doesn’t bother turning it up. She’s not sure how hearing works for skeletons, but she doesn’t want to deafen him.

The news caster looks perturbed by something, and she strains her ears to hear what he’s saying. “-been cases of humans coming down with what looks to be like radiation poisoning in the area around Mt. Ebott. The doctors say that some of the earliest cases seem to be… I don’t even know how to describe it.”

A picture of a little girl flashes on the screen- sickly, pale, with dark circles under her eyes- and then it’s the same girl obviously sometime later, but with scales blossoming across her cheeks. She looks healthier, like whatever happening is healing her.

He noticed and cocked an eyebrow that seemed to just linger over his face. ".... Magical mutation?" He questioned quietly. He then realized something suddenly, and he looked over his shoulder to look to Toki... This... this was definitely a plausible variable.

Toki looks befuddled. “If there was some actual radiation happening, it would be happening to everyone within range of the mountain. Radiation isn’t selective.” Her bees would have rapidly died off, a sure sign that something was wrong. She leans over to turn it up slightly.

“Akitoki Akizawa is the brilliant MD who began to notice the changes. He’s unable to be here with us today, but he did send us a few bits of information. It says here, that they don’t actually have any detectable radiation. He also says that those afflicted with monster mutation have a genetic difference from those not afflicted. Akitoki has yet to release information concerning what this difference is, but he thinks he might be able to pinpoint the exact genetic anomaly if he can get a base test from what he hypothesizes is the cause of the mutations.”

The lady next to the man clears her throat, and shakes her head. “No word on if King Asgore has been made aware of this, or of Akitoki’s desire for a sample of monster DNA.”

"There was a request of a monster doctor sent to the king, and he has answered that he indeed has a doctor he can offer to give advice, however, there has been no word from said 'Doctor'.”

Sans clenched his fists slightly and he sighed, turning away from the TV.

Toki grimaces and turns it off. It’s not hard to see that it’s upsetting him- and she’d rather not deal with an angry skeleton. Papyrus she isn’t sure is capable of ever getting angry, but Sans… Well, the ones that smile are the ones to watch out for.

She hesitates, wobbling in place, and then steps forward to place her hand on his shoulder. “He’s probably busy, Sans. Humans don’t do well with… radiation poisoning. Or poisoning of any type, now that I think about it. I imagine he’s swamped trying to keep all of those poor children alive.” It all seemed sort of unreal- and she was obviously confused, despite her attempts to soothe the larger monster.

"They’re talking about my dad... I can tell..." he growled quietly.

“Well… They’re probably concerned for a good reason. The sort of symptoms those people are dealing with are sorta… scary, to be honest.” She recalls the sharp burn of his magic in her body, and the hand on his shoulder trembles slightly. “I don’t see what’s bad about them mentioning your dad though. They didn’t say anything bad about him.”

"By mentioning he's given only silence could easily be twisted to say he doesn't care about humanity.”
“Technically they said they had no word yet- which means that Akitoki hasn’t released everything to
them yet. They had only a few notes- which means they’re very vague at best.” The room seems
darker to her, and it takes her a minute to figure out why. She steadfast ignores it, and gently bumps
his shoulder with her fingers to distract herself away from it. “Why don’t you pop home and let King
Asgore know about the news broadcast?”

Sans blinked once, and then he nodded. “R-Right... I’ll tell Pops to stop by when he gets the
chance.” He then turned and gave her a gentle hug, smiling in a softer way. “You be careful, Toki”
he told her firmly.

As he looped his arms around her- even with his plush jacket, she could feel the hard bone and
magic what was his body below- she shivered faintly and returned the hug warmly. She never really
noticed- but like how humans radiated warmth, the monsters seemed to radiate a type of heat too.
“I’ll be alright, Sans. I know my limits.” She gives him a wide smile. “Tell Papyrus I said hello, and
to not be a stranger. It’s awfully lonely without you guys around sometimes.”

He chuckled at that and pressed his closed grin to her forehead. The smooth bones left a small dent in
her soft skin where he left his kiss, before he took a step back away from her.

"See ya, Doll~"

He didn't move, but the next time she blinked, he was there no longer.

Toki lasted a few more minutes in the kitchen, before her stomach clenched and she had to scurry to
the bathroom as it rebelled.
Toki made it through the night of babysitting by the skin of her teeth. Thankfully the children believed that she was sore from being tackled up in the trees, and were on their best behavior. She spent the evening between watching them, and hiding frequent trips to the bathroom while they watched the news about all of the people who were getting sick.

She’s not certain they believed her about the heat bothering her insides- and it occurred to her much later that night that they could probably hear her retching in the bathroom.

The woman was fine enough the following day though, and that seemed to calm the innocent worried titters that the children’s parents kept making. Tokiko was not the only tattletale- and children were known to gossip when they were concerned with something. She had many adults checking in on her through the day- and the honest kindness of these monsters warmed her soul.

She was watched well into the evening, when she finally convinced them that she was all right, and that it was probably just stress eating at her.

Toki was glad too, because come the following day after- marking two days past Sans’ visit- a large clump of inky hair came free from her head and spilled across the floor. She had been quick to pick it up and toss it away, worry nibbling at her soul. With the constant chatter of dubbed ‘MRS’, she was beginning to doubt that it was just stress. Cases of MRS, or Monster Radiation Sickness, were growing in number as more and more people had contact with the area around Mt. Ebott, and the monsters that ventured further and further to foster homes across the county.

She made the decision early in the morning that she’d make the trek to the doctors in a couple days. If Sans’ and Papyrus’ father hadn’t visited by then, it was obvious he wasn’t going to.

Despite the fatigue and lightheadedness she kept experiencing, and lack of appetite from continual nausea, Toki still had things to do. So she set out around noon to go check on the beehives, toting out a bottle of water to stay hydrated, and her large container of supplemental honeybee food for her colonies. Her stomach churned, her vision swooned, and her legs shook, but damn it all, no one knew her bees as well as she did.

She waved to one of the wolf-like guards that patrolled the forest as he was heading back towards the house, getting one in return. He would keep an eye on her, she figured. Toki might have been an
adult by human standards, but all of the adult monsters still treated her like she was a fragile child at times.

They swarmed her clothes as she approached, lingering for a moment before giving her space. Some still brushed through her hair, fuzzy bodies tickling along her skin as they investigated her. She didn’t doubt that they could smell that something was wrong with her- there were studies that had bees trained to detect cancer by the smell of someone’s breath, after all. She set to pouring out the measured amounts of food, leaving it atop each hive as she made her way down the rows.

Toki made it down the rows and back to the start of her hives, before her stomach lurched. A sour taste filled her mouth, and she hurried to set her supplies down and get away from the hives. She made it a few steps, before she gagged, and vomited.

Thick and irony, a wave of blood filled her mouth and spilled down into the pale grass.

"TOKI!" Without warning a worried yell cut the air and the familiar form of Sans was at her side, a hand on her back as he squatted to see her face. "Holy shit, are you okay??" It wasn’t so much a question as it was a demand, and the worry in his voice was palpable. "That's not normal for humans, is it?!!"

She had a hand curled into her hair, keeping the dark strands out of the way. Toki would probably have jumped out of her skin if she hadn’t been mid-heave, and it took her a minute of choking to clear her throat enough to answer him. “Humans aren’t supposed to vomit blood.” Her voice is raw, teeth and lips red with stuff that’s supposed to be in her veins, not in her stomach. She chokes again, gagging on another wave, and nudges him away so he doesn’t stain his footwear with the growing splashes of blood.

Toki at least manages to avoid splashing him with it, and regrets sucking a breath in through her nose. The rich, tangy stench of blood does not belong with the sour odor of stomach acids. It leaves her coughing, struggling to stay standing against a rush of fatigue.

"Tsk... How unfortunate..." There was a new voice speaking now, a man’s voice, deepened with great age and greater concern. This voice definitely belonged to someone older than Sans.

"It seems the situation at hand is more dire than you had explained, my son." A pale white hand reached and gently hooked two knuckles on her chin, tilting it upward. She’d come face to face with a monster she could only compare to a beast. He was currently lowered beside her, but if he were to rise to full height, she’d guess he’d easily pass Sans by a foot at the least.

"We don’t want any of that going up your nose. Stars above know that would burn something nasty, hm?" Soft purple eyes maintained eye contact with Toki as he raised a handkerchief up in his unoccupied hand, carefully wiping her face so the smell of blood was residual alone. He then turned the cloth in his hand and held a part of it over her nose. "No doubt some went up your nose, blow please."

Toki could only presume this man was Sans’ father- particularly when he calls him outright as his son. They didn’t really look similar, but she imagines it’s hard for a skeleton to really look like anyone. She swallows thickly as her face is cleaned, and gives him a curious look as she leans into the cloth. Blowing her nose into someone’s hand was not something she ever expected to have to do again- not since she’d been but a toddler with a cold. Still, she does, and there’s some relief to the burning in her throat and nose, and to the smell that she can’t shake from her nostrils.

“I wasn’t this bad when Sans left. This is the first time it’s been blood that I threw up.” She rasps, a shiver trembling over her. The addition to new people out and about has stirred the bees, and a few
of them wander close hesitantly. She’s not sure if they really know her as safe or not, but she’s not
eager for them to decide they don’t like the extra people around. Her brothers always got stung
whenever they came out with her. “And, ah, yeah. It’s burns pretty bad anyways.”

Toki’s stomach hurts- but there’s nothing left for her to heave up now that it’s all splattered on the
ground. She coughs though, and shakily straightens. Her water bottle is in her pocket- and she takes
a moment to take a mouthful, swish, and then spit out the pink tinged water. “You might want to
watch your feet. Human blood stains something fierce.” And she’d feel bad if either of them got it on
them- how would one even get blood off of living bone?

"Then it means that perhaps I still may be able to do something about it." He said softly. At the
warning of the blood, he only chuckled softer yet. "I'll be alright. Blood on your feet is only as bad
as mud; a good scrubbing will get it out of skin with no issue. However, right now I’m more
concerned about you." The handkerchief was tucked away and he instead moved his hands into a
supporting position to hold her. "Come, we must get you inside. If your case of MRS is this severe,
than I have only so much time before you become immune to my treatments."

“Blood doesn’t come off floors half as easy as it does your feet then.” Wood was absorbent- and
carpet even more so. Toki isn’t ultimately hard to support- she might be tall and wide-boned, but she
was mostly a twig. Didn’t make her wobbly legs any stronger, but probably made it easier for him.
She hesitated, and made use of Sans’ shoulder to step around the puddle of gross on the ground. “It’s
treatable?” Toki wobbles, and her bottle of water falls from her fingers. Oh well. The grass needed
watered anyways. “Is it even MRS?” She hadn’t shown any signs of change- no extra hair in places
it shouldn’t be, no new body parts, or scales, or anything of the sort.

Sans ended up picking her up, holding her close, as he made sure she could see his father who
indeed was a good two feet taller than his son.

"That is what I suspect it to be. Your symptoms seem to be consistent enough. It could not be
radiation poisoning alone, due to the concern that it indeed would cause an effect on more than just
you." He explained, "I need to further look into this, into you, before I’ll be able to come up with any
more conclusions."

Toki could not help but feel that she was surrounded with horrendously strong giants. “You are all
ridiculously tall.” She coughs slightly and bites her lip as she leans into Sans. Being carried by a
skeleton is not a particularly pleasant experience in this circumstance- but she makes due. Besides, he
can walk straighter than she can. “The humans that I’ve heard of on the news didn’t have any actual
signs of radiation.” She adds lightly. “Uh… If it helps your conclusions any, it got worse when I had
to be caught with magic. It, ah, burned to be snagged with it.”

The purple gaze moved to Sans, questioning him silently.

"Yeah, Pops. I had to catch her last time I was here with my magic."

"I see.” That was all that was said by the taller, before he strode ahead. In gaining distance ahead of
them, it revealed a long skeletal tail that followed behind the taller monster, armed at the end with a
strong, sharp looking blade.

Toki watches him walk ahead of them, and then looks up at Sans. Blood is flecked on her lips again-
no doubt brought up from her throat when she coughed. She’s warm in his arms- but she feels cold
too. “What does he prefer to be called, by the way?” The one holding her was pretty fluid between
being called Sans or Sans as far as she knew. He never hinted that one or the other bothered him.
The tail on the taller one worried her briefly- because that was sharp, and long, and he was probably
going to knock over so many things in the slightly cramped floor space of her house.
He smiled down at her. "You could call him Gaster if you wanted to. In his career, you've got a few
to call him, knowing him, though; he won't insist you call him 'Doctor Gaster.' You're a good friend
of his boys', so chances are he won't mind you using his first name."

After making sure the taller monster didn’t run into the door in that moment, Sans looked back to
Toki. "His name is Tenebris."

She smiled up at him sweetly, but it faded to a grimace as her empty stomach twisted and cramped.
Looping her arms around her middle, she gives him a pale-faced smile. Nothing left to vomit- but if
she gags in his arms, she’d never live down the puns. “Tenebris huh? Pretty sweet name. I’ll stick
with Gaster for now though, until he says otherwise.”

She watches the taller monster for a minute, as they all file inside her house, and squirms slightly.
“Where are you going to put me at?”

"Well, he'll either want you on the couch or the table. Either way, he'll have a bucket for you in case
you get close to puking again."

“Couch.” She says lightly. “We can move the coffee table to give you all more space.” She was also
cold- and her shivering was growing noticeable, and it felt like it was shaking her down to her bones.
There were blankets there that she could wrap around herself to keep warm with. “Gaster,” she calls
out a bit louder. “Bucket’s are in the closet next to the hallway.”

There was an 'Ah.' from the doctor as he got into the closet and pulled out a pair of buckets, keeping
one nearby as he brought the other to where Sans was laying Toki down on the couch.

"Where’re the blankets, doll?" The younger of them sounded so worried about her while helping
Tenebris move the table back so he could have enough room to kneel down.

However, she no longer needed to answer as the taller shed his coat and draped it over her, the coat
immediately embracing her with the gathered body heat of the doctor.

Her smile is flashed to Gaster as well- though she’s certain it is not a pretty one- and she tucks his
coldest coat over herself. She can still taste the blood on her teeth. His coat is warm, and the large size of it
pretty much swallows her. “The blankets are there, behind the glass door- but I’m alright for now.
Thanks, Gaster.” It was an entertainment center that had once been a case for holding her brother’s
stereo system- and it now kept the dust off the plush blankets inside.

Toki kicks off her slippers and tucks her legs in under her body, thankful she had decided to wear
pants today instead of shorts. The short-sleeved shirt was unpleasant though. Her slippers are shoved
under the couch where neither of the boys will trip over them, and she takes a minute to pull a hair tie
from a table next to the edge of the couch. She’s got little doubt she’ll be puking again. The
cramping sensation keeps tingling over her- and she wont deal with getting blood in her hair.

Her fingers come away holding another clump of black hair, and she sighs.

He reached and slowly mimicked her action, combing his gloved hand through her hair, though he
donned a surprised look when the hairs came all too easily. "Oh dear..." he looked at the threads,
then he brushed them off his gloves and opened his medical bag, pulling out what he needed to get
her vitals. Starting with her pulse, a stethoscope is put over non-existent ear canals before he rested
the other end on the inner crook of her elbow.

Her pulse is quick and fleeting- a rapid *dubthubdubthub* sound through the stethoscope. “I looked up
some symptoms of radiation poisoning- and they really do line up with what’s happening.” She
admits quietly. She rolls the inky locks between her fingers, before brushing them out of her hand. Some of them drift, and cling to Sans’ shorts as hair is wont to do. “The vain part of me is going to miss my hair- the sane part says it was time for a hair cut anyways.”

He let out a quiet chuckle at that, before he took her temperature using an old mouth thermometer to gage the heat.

She obediently stays silent and keeps it under her tongue. Eventually, it shows her internal temperature to be resting a little over one hundred degrees. “You know they make more accurate ones, right? They go in your ear and beep once they’re done.”

"Yes, I know. But I’ve been trapped underground for over three hundred years. I don’t exactly have the most up-to-date medical equipment by human standards.”

She grimaces. “Ah, sorry. That was insensitive of me.” She shifts, burrowing deeper into his coat. A soft clicking noise leaves her as her teeth chatter in a shiver, and she tucks her fingers into her armpits.

He chuckled softly and dismissed it with a soft shake of his head. Gaster then began to dig into his medical bag, finding what he brought with him. "Now, if the symptoms are consistent with radiation poisoning, one would think that you use the same remedies. Unfortunately, that isn't the case for this. This is magical in origin.”

“Well, I’m getting the feeling that it’s definitely magic.” She shifts, dark eyes wandering between the both of them. “There are chairs if you’re more comfortable sitting, or you can take up the other half of the couch, Sans. Crouching can’t be comfortable. Anyways, I started feeling tired after the barrier went down. I sort of assumed it was stress- I’ve been working a lot. What do you think can help at this point?”

"The best I can suspect off the bat is taking a magic suppressant into consideration. But there are side effects to look into as well..." He said, thinking about it. "Never once before did a human have an issue with magic intake or discharge..." he murmured, "It’s fascinating.”

"Yeah, Pops. It’s also fuckin’ nervewrackin’ seeing how bad it’s affectin’ Toki." Sans commented from where he was pulling himself a chair, seeing how Tenebris was comfortable enough where he was.

“Well,” she sniffs slightly, “It’s not like the human doctors can help me- so you’re welcome to try what you want to on me. Everyone needs a place to start when dealing with something new and foreign.” She shifts, groaning faintly as her stomach twists. “The doctor from the news cast said he thinks it’s something in our DNA that sets us apart from the other humans. He’s tested us against the other humans.” It’s left unsaid that he hasn’t tested the MRS affected human DNA against a monsters. Do monsters even have DNA? “Think the magic causes us anomalies to… I dunno, irradiate?”

They both tensed at that, and exchanged a look.

"Do you think it’s possible?"

"You tell me, Pops..."

The older man sighed through his teeth, his brows furrowing in thought. "It's possible,” he concedes, “but this would be countless generations of genetics we’re looking into..."

“Humans breed fast. Up until recently, we died pretty young, so we had a lot of kids early, and our
kids would have kids, and so on and so forth.” She adds lightly, knowing they’re probably not up to
date on all of the human histories. “I… Think I have a family tree in the attic, if it would help you.”

"Where can I find it?" Sans asked.

Her brow furrows, and she actually has to pause and think. When HAD she last seen it? It probably
had been back when her grandparents still owned the house. She didn’t go up there often— but she
remembers her grandpa telling her tales about how their family used to be super strong, and that they
could fight with inhuman abilities and the like back in the ye-old days of yore. It…”Should be in an
old trunk on the green rug. He used to tell us about it when we were younger— said we were
descended from a ‘demon’ or something of that sort. Back in the old days, everything was a demon if
it looked weird enough though."

He nodded and disappeared quickly, coming back about ten minutes later with the book. "A
demon… could be a monster…"

Ten minutes is a lot of time for one to be gone, but not much had changed. The bucket at the side of
the couch is closer than it was before Sans had left, and Toki’s curled tiredly into the back of the
couch, nearly hiding her face in the jacket. She was heavily nauseated— but her body wasn’t quite
ready spew.

The paleness of her skin is accented with a flush to her cheeks and forehead, and her eyes are slightly
glassier as she looks up at him. “It’s possible. There are no pictures in there, but there are names and
dates of death, and who was born from whom. It hasn’t been updated in years— my brothers and I
should be the last entries.”

Tenebris took the book once Sans returned. He opened the book, looking back four hundred years,
muttering names as he scrolled through them until he came upon one that stopped him. “Ah…”

Toki doesn’t really respond besides a groan. That telltale sour taste is finally bubbling up into her
mouth, so she’s quick to carefully disengage from the coat she was loaned. It pools around her legs
as she leans over the bucket with a displeased noise, entire body shuddering until she heaves. The
once pristine bucket stains red again, and she groans quietly. “This is officially worse than the time I
got hung-over and ruined my mother’s collection of silk fans. Wha- what does it say, Gaster?”

"Naria Vaega. Does that name sound familiar to you?"

She spits bloody spittle for a minute, coughing against a wave of agony from her middle. “Y-yeah, ‘s
one of my ancestors, right? She’s around the first pages. Never thought much of it— thought she might
have been a foreign bride in the family. Why?”

"The Vaega family was a family of skeletal monsters."

Toki just… squints. Suspiciously. And is getting mental images she probably should not be having of
her infinity times great grandmother. “Okay… How do… Skeleton monsters even… Er…” She
doesn’t even finish that thought. She shifts, and wipes her mouth on the bottom of her shirt for the
lack of better places to wipe it, and then settles back down gingerly. “I guess that solves the question
of having a monster in the family?”

He nodded, "That means you possess Monster genetics... you could be going under a mutation that
flared when monsterkind and our magic was freed."

“And how does a human become a skeleton? I’ve already got one inside of me.” Would her insides
become her outsides? What a… daunting thought. Toki huddles under the coat again and shivers
heavily. “I… Wonder if my family’s dealing with the same… Might be different. I’ve got a slightly
different genetic makeup than my siblings. Different dad than them.” Who’s to say she didn’t get the
monster gene from both sides? Her dad wasn’t around anymore, so she couldn’t really ask, but…

"... Only time will tell, I’m afraid."

Well... There was nothing to do with that, it seemed. She grimaced and rubs her arms lightly, and
another shiver takes over. “I guess so. Here’s to hoping I survive that long, then. Humans aren’t
designed to... well, deal with this sort of stuff long term.” She moves a hand in a general motion of
her body.

He nodded slowly, then he sighed and reached, setting a hand on her shoulder, "Heh..."

Toki sighs softly and offers the both of them a tired smile. “Heh.” She mirrors Gaster’s sound with a
soft hum. “Probably going to need to let the government official people know what’s going on.” And
to make sure that the land is KEPT by the monsters if something happens and she dies trying to make
the change. Going from a human to a skeleton is not physically possible while still living- she’d have
to die, decompose, and hope her corpse reanimated.

Well... Not in the sense of a zombie, but something similar. It’s not like she can just grow new body
parts. She’s still got flesh, and vessels, organs and tissue... All things that a skeleton lacks completely
in its entirety. “Aw man, I still need to go clean the hives...” She had things to do, darnit. She
couldn’t just spend all day vomiting blood into the blood bucket.

"If something is going to happen to you, make it that you give your land to all of Monsterkind in
your will... there is no leeway for interference that way without inflicting worldwide extinction of
monsters." He murmurs softly.

“That’s my intention.” She gives him a crooked smile. “I’ve got to get it cleared through all of the
government loopholes though.” Technically as the sole owner- and with no heir to claim it- she could
do whatever she wanted with her hundreds of acres. “Might as well do it before I get worse... Can
you guys give me ten minutes alone to get this done?”

She needs to grab her cell phone. She’s got Simmons on there somewhere- he’s the one acting as her
connection into the various governments.

He nodded and stood. "Sans."

"Course, Pops." And the two stepped out for a while, giving her space to get this handled.

Toki’s soul throbbed once they left- because damn it, she didn’t want to die. She wanted to stay, and
to be happy, and to just... be. But this wasn’t something they could stop- and it wasn’t something
she could have prevented. Like her mother used to say, there’s no use crying over something broken.
Clean it up, and move on as best you can.

So, she takes a deep breath. Steadies the quivering breath that escapes. And digs out her phone to
make the call.

“Hey, Simmons...? I’ve... Well... I’ve got MRS. I need to make some changes to my will. I’ve
been looked at by Doctor Gaster- and well, it’s up to him to share what we’ve found, but... Y-yeah.
It... might be fatal. It’s not the sort of change that a human can safely make.”

Scales and fur was one thing- that could grow, that could form. How could you lose the things that
keep you alive and still function?
“Can you call my brothers? I don’t have the energy to deal with my family right now. Yes— I’m sure I want to leave the land to the monsters— my family didn’t want to run this place anyways. Better it go to someone who needs it, rather than someone who would abuse it. Yes. Yes. I want everything— even the bees— to go to them. The house, my finances, everything. I mean, if I survive, obviously this would be pointless but…”

“It’s alright, Simmons. Shit happens, you know? I’d rather it be me dealing with this sort of change than a little kid. I’ll be alright.”

“I promise.”
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Strider's Notes: So shit's going to get pretty serious here soon. As in like, super, super shitty type of serious. Fires happen, and just... Jebus. :D I'm so looking forwards to writing it out, you guys have no freaking idea. Silverwing is amused at my eagerness to torment characters. Anyways, enjoy this little bit of relaxing fluff. We've decided that we need mandatory fluff chapters every so often, so this is mandatory fluff number one. :)

Strider Editing Notes (6-10-18): Again, if ya'll want to help, I would love it. It's going to be a long process working through this, and I honestly don't know how long it's going to take me to do this, or if I'll give up half way through and just end up fixing only names. There's a lot of editing to do- but if we can get it fixed up, TOTU will probably one of the finest stories on the dark side of the internet.

"I really must thank you for inviting me back, Madame Toki." Tenebris said with a smile. He was seated in the grass not far from the beehives, his black coat missing from his frame to reveal a light cream-colored turtleneck that hugged his form. He held a thermos in one hand, resting it on his lap as he watched her tend to her bees.

This was also a business visit, to make sure she was doing okay, but he wasn't about to tell her that, and give her a reason to remember why she was worrying so much.

The two scant days since the blood incident had not boded well for Toki- someone at the government station had leaked her condition to the public, and therein the monsters in the compound found out. They treated her like she was cracked china- and that the slightest mishandling would shatter her. Of course, she didn’t let it bother her. To monsters, humans must seem hopelessly fragile.

"It’s good to have you back.” Her face was pale and drawn, dark circles bruising under her eyes. She had a black beanie pulled over her head- most of her hair was gone, and her scalp was cold- and she was dressed in a green sweater and long pajama pants to ward off her constant chills. Still, she smiled with a brightness that shined like the moon as she leaned against one of the hives. She works on untangling a ball of bees from a spider web. The mass is buzzing and humming in her hand, and it tickles her palm slightly. Once they’re freed, she lets them fly off. Dusting her fingers, she pads slowly back towards him, intent on resting. She could do her normal stuff- she just had to take breaks often. “I haven’t gotten to see much of you lately. How are things in the Underground?”

He offered her the thermos, having brought some of his favorite Orange Blossom tea to share with her. His purple eyes were glowing gently and his smile was one in the same. "Things are well. My sons are as busy as ever, but I suppose it could be considered a good thing with how things are going now. I myself am hard at work as well, but I’m glad I was able to put time in for coming to see you."

She takes a seat next to him in the grass, the dry blades tickling her toes as she kicks off her shoes. Toki accepts the thermos with a smile, and takes a small sip. She can’t stomach much today- but liquids have been all right. “This is quite good tea. Orange Blossom, right?”
She takes a droplet of the sweet tea, and lets it sit on her finger for a wandering honeybee to visit. It lands, and gathers the sweet droplet gently. It always mystified her brothers how she could do this—they called her the bee charmer. “It’s better that they’re busy. It’s not easy seeing your friends sick and being unable to help. I’d rather they not have to see me like this— but I’d never tell them no to a visit. What’s your latest project? If you can tell me, that is. Without tarnishing some confidentially act, or something.” She blushes in embarrassment, takes another sip, and hands the thermos back once the bee leaves her finger.

He nodded. "It is my favorite. And trust me, my boys wont hesitate to visit when they have the chance. Sans more often than Papyrus."

He then took the thermos and took a long drink before he leaned back, "As for my project, I suppose I can tell you, there’s no harm. I am currently working on a project to aid my own health. Though I am awfully close to a breakthrough, I can feel it.

“Papyrus has a long way to travel. Sans can just pop in.” She smiles lightly, and shifts. She eases down onto her elbows, grimacing as her insides ache, and then sprawls boneless in the grass. She watches him lightly, and then smiles. “I didn’t know you were sick, but I’m glad you’re close to a breakthrough if you are. You’ve got my best wishes for you to succeed, Gaster.”

"It's less an illness and more a minor physical condition. However it will not be an issue soon enough." He chuckled softly.

“That’s good.” She smiles warmly. She wouldn’t pry further than that— it was rude to do, after all. Toki stretches out further in the grass, arching her back as she enjoys the sunshine warming her. It was probably too hot to be out in such winter gear in the middle of August- but Toki would be careful. If she started to overheat, she’d urge him into the shade with her. “Out of curiosity, can you get overheated? You or the boys both, for that matter actually."

"They are mostly immune to the elements. I cannot overheat in the traditional sense, so to speak, but I still have a dermal layer that can sustain burns. However I don’t have as many nerve endings, so it would not hurt as badly as it might for a human."

“Huh. So no heat-sickness for you then! That’s probably for the best- I don’t think I could haul you inside if you got heat-sick.” She blinks up at him, and then laughs softly. “So you can’t get as bad of a sunburn? You’re one lucky monster, Gaster. Humans burn after prolonged exposure to sunlight, and it’s a terrible experience. We get all red, our skin hurts, and sometimes it even blisters and peels. We usually use a lotion called sun block to help block the sun’s rays, though.” She didn’t own any though— Toki was usually pretty tan by this time of the year. “Sunlight can even change our skin tone. Check this out!”

She tugs the bottom of her shirt up, exposing pale and creamy flesh of her belly, and rolls her sleeve up. Even as sickly as she looks, her arms are a noticeably darker shade than her middle. “I’ve got what people call a ‘farmer’s tan’.

"Epidermal burns caused by the ultraviolet rays of heat expelled by the sun." He repeated gently, examining her tan line with great interest. "Fascinating."

Toki laughs softly, making her middle bounce against her arm, before she shifts and tugs part of her loose sweater down. The neck stretches— so she can free one shoulder out to show him the definitive line where her tank-top strap usually rests. “That’s the most scientific way to ever explain a tan, Gaster. But yes— and once the skin is pretty tanned, it doesn’t burn as badly. It only gets darker.”

He let out an interested purr as he slowly reached up, but had hesitated before his gloved hands made
contact. "May I examine it further?" he asked, looking to her with a small smile.

"Sure." She squirms lightly, making sure the shirt wouldn’t snap back up if she let go, and then relaxed slightly. Her skin would be slightly smooth- though with odd, pebbly spots on it. They were old scar tissue; from when she had been a dumb kid who hadn’t wore proper clothes to go swimming. She’d blistered horribly, and had never gone swimming again in anything less than a t-shirt.

He ran his hands over them, then let out a discouraged hum and backed up. However it was only to remove his gloves. It revealed his ghost-white hands, each finger tipped with a sharp claw. The most noticeable feature of his massive hand were the matching holes in his palms. "I sometimes forget I’m wearing these." He murmured, giving a chuckle. "And by sometimes, I mean very often."

He slowly neared once more once his gloves were tucked away, and his hands returned to her shoulders. His touch was now more gentle, but also more thorough as he took in the texture of her skin. "Fascinating…" He whispered gently.

Her curiosity is evident in her face. How the heck did he function with those holes in his hand? Things just had to fall through those- eating popcorn would be so frustrating. Or holding a can of soup- would it get stuck? Still- Toki was raised better than to blatantly ask how he got them. “Well, if you wear something long enough, it becomes second nature to have it on. You begin to not notice it.” He’s gentler with his claws than she thought he’d be- but she’s thankful. The monster kids sometimes forgot their own strength- and her scratches weren’t healing anymore. One of the kids had offered her ‘monster candy’ or something to help heal them- but she had to turn them down. If it was magical food, she had no idea how it would respond to the MRS.

“Humans can be pretty cool.” She chuckles. “The little bumps you feel are scars. I wasn’t always the most careful kid, and I got badly sun burnt one summer. I learned my lesson about swimming in proper swimming gear.”

"Mmm... I wear my own scars, though I am not sure we inherited our scars in the same way." He chuckled, reaching up to tap against the scar on his face under his left eye, or rather, beside what was actually a crack in the bone-like facial structure.

The hard sound that comes from his face is startling. Almost like tapping porcelain together- or some type of pottery. Stone maybe? It’s some sort of hard noise that she doesn’t bother trying to really identify. “I don’t want to come off as rude, but... How did you even get those?” And the holes in his hands- but that’s left unsaid. “Did you get those in... I think the monster kids call it a confrontation? They were practicing safe ones a while back.” The glowing hearts that had been visible were... Weird.

He chuckled, "It's not rude, nor an issue, it's not a scarce question I receive." He then sat back and reached up, a hand holding over his chest. "No, these are not the result of a confrontation."

After a moment his hand glowed and he slowly pulled it from his chest, pulling from it a light lavender soul. It hung upside down, as monster souls do, but his was damaged. There were two small holes in the soul, matching the two holes in his palms. "You see... I may be the father of Sans and Papyrus, however, I did not have a mate birth them."

And hopefully, after this, she wouldn't see him, or his boys, differently.

"I created them in my laboratory.”

The look on her face is only describable as puzzlement- because she has no idea what the hell the
upside down heart is. It's pretty and lavender, though. Still, she sits up slightly, tugging her sweater back into place as a shiver shakes her. Blasted chills. “Oh. Well, there’s nothing wrong with that. Humans do something similar sometimes when couples can’t have children on their own. You love them all the same- it doesn’t matter how they’re made so long as they’re loved.” A warm smile is given to him, and she tilts her head curiously. “So this is probably a pretty dumb question, but… What exactly did you just pull out of yourself?”

He smiled gently at her kind words, and his soul glowed a little with his happy emotion. However at the next question, he chuckled. "That which makes a monster everything they are... their soul.

His… Soul? Huh. A lot of humans didn’t think the soul existed, and there were some who did. And here, before her, was proof that souls- at least monster ones- did indeed exist. “Wow.” She looks a little in awe of it- mostly because he literally just popped his soul out like it was nothing major. “That’s… Actually really cool. The color matches your eyes- it’s really pretty. It would make sense then, the children using those in their confrontations. Do souls tie into… I think they called it ‘Hp’, or something. Health points?” That sounded like something out of a video game, to be quite frank. But magic was real- so whose to say that magical beings didn’t operate on a different spectrum than non-magical beings do? “Do humans have souls like monsters do?”

"Thank you, Miss Toki. That is quite sincere of you. It’s Hope Points, actually. Some call it health points, but for the most part we refer to it as hope points. If a soul has a certain condition, however it could cause problems with one's Hope Points." He then held a hand over her chest, “Yes, humans have souls too, though they are far more different... if you’d like, I can show you”

“Problems?” She blinks. “That sounds alarming.” The hand that hovers over her chest is… Well, probably disconcerting to anyone who wasn’t curious about his or her soul. She nods vigorously, and shifts to an easier position. “I’d love to see it. It’s not going to hurt, is it?” It isn’t hard to recall the feeling of Sans’ magic burning through her body when he caught her- and imagine that it would probably be infinitely worse being directly on her soul. Speaking of… Would it even be human shaped? Or something in between, since MRS was actively trying to change her body into something other than human.

"No, it wont hurt at all." he assured her. His fingers twitched before his hand glowed and he slowly began to pull her soul outward, coaxing it out gently.

It was a slightly uncomfortable tugging sensation behind her breastbone, before the skin began to slow. Slowly, an upright green heart slid from her flesh, and floated out towards him. It pulses brightly, though it has more than just a few dim spots in it that signify the general pain that her body is in most of the time now, and hovers in place. It’s warm, and seems to radiate heat outwards like a small space heater.

She blinks at it. “It’s… green and upright? Huh… Really kind of cool looking. Are all souls different colors?” Hers didn’t match her eyes- She had brown eyes, instead of green. That sort of vivid green would make for weird eyes on a human anyways.

"More or less. There are different traits in a human's soul, and whichever trait is dominant is that which dyes their soul." He explained, cupping her soul in his hand gently. His gaze was focused on keeping the soul in a stable aura, but it, and his smile, was very gentle.

She… can feel that? It doesn’t touch him directly, but she can feel him cupping it. Sort of like holding a blanket tight, and feeling someone brush against it. It’s very detached, and sort of strangely muted. Toki figures it’s whatever he’s using to hold her soul out of her body like that. A shiver runs down her spine. “Any chance you know what green means then?”
"I do." He smiled at her. "Green is the color of kindness."

Toki smiles back up at him, but her eyes remain on her soul. "Somehow, that really doesn't surprise me." A soft laugh leaves her- kindness, of course. Given all that she’s been trying to do, it really does not surprise her in the slightest. "What are the dark spots on it?" she inquires, lifting a finger to point at one of them. She doesn’t touch it- because she’s not really sure what will happen if she touches her own soul.

"I have concern that those dark spots are the result of the conversion caused by the MRS you are suffering from."

Her soul gave a thoughtful pulse, and she watched it intently. "That would make sense, actually. It seems to pulse when I’m thinking… it’s probably representing what it’s doing to my body. MRS isn’t a walk in the park, sadly."

"Unfortunately. I do wish there was a way to make this easier for you, but this is a new epidemic…"

"Nah," she waves a hand lightly, and sits upright. Without her soul in her chest, she feels… cold inside. It’s weird. The longer she looks at it, the more she thinks she can see a… health bar? She’s not certain on that. "Being sick isn’t supposed to be easy- and neither is completely changing your body’s form. At least by studying it, we can be prepared for if this sort of stuff happens in other parts of the world too, once monsters start to spread past this part of the country."

"We are everywhere, even other countries." He chuckled, carefully returning her soul to her chest. "I meant in mass amounts. Currently, we’re the ‘monster capital of the world’." Toki gives him a wry smile, and shivers as her soul enters her chest again. A yawn pulls from her lips, and her wry look changes over to a tired smile. "So, how common are green souls?"

He chuckled softly, and offered her his hand. "So far, since monsterkind was sealed underground, you're the second I've seen."

"Really? Huh. Guess we’re fairly rare then. That’s kind of sad, actually. The world needs more kindness in it." She took his hand, and let him help her up. Without the gloves on, his hands felt weird. Warm, solid, but weird compared to a human hand. Tokiko eased onto her feet, and grimaced as her legs trembled and her head spun. She really wished her legs wouldn’t shake. She could take everything else but the leg shakes… Okay, not being dizzy would be great too. Going from sitting to standing always made her feel faint. "Ready to head indoors? As nice as the sunlight is, I probably shouldn’t be getting too much of it with my inability to heal." Blisters can lead to blood poisoning, after all. "Ah, feeling light headed too. I enjoyed being outside though."

"I wouldn't say rare, more that I just haven’t gotten out enough yet." he chuckled, but he noticed her shaking legs and he reached to support her. "I've gotcha... Yes, let's go inside..."

She gives him a soft laugh and a bright smile, and leans into his support. She's not going to turn it down- because darn it all, going weak at the knees is so cliché that it makes her want to laugh at herself. "Well, we’ll have to get you out more. For now, let's go inside. I can make us some honey-tarts, and we can finish enjoying that thermos of tea."

"Mmm, Honey Tarts sound divine." He rumbled happily. "Thank you very much." Carefully lifting her up, he carried her in to the house, and pushed the door closed behind him with a careful foot. Once in the kitchen, he knelt and carefully set her down on the ground. "There we go." He purred. She gives him a smile as he simply totes her inside, and goes from using him as a support, to using...
the counter. “Sans told me you enjoyed the honey I sent back to the Underground.” She gives him a wide grin. “I’ll make a big plate of them for us then.” Weak or not, it’s not hard for her to get the tarts, and start slathering copious amounts of honey onto them.

And weak or not- Toki enjoyed cooking for friends. She could nap later- she had food to make, and good company to enjoy.
The days rolled on and on, with Toki handling various things as they popped up. She didn’t get to take much time to relax, even as sick as she was. She had interviews with newscasts that she’d had to do- arranging for a small time pro-monster news crew to be here for the big unveiling of the first completion of an entire monster-home district had not been an easy feat. The unveiling also doubled as a celebration for the monsters coming in- a welcome to their new home in the human world.

Everything would be wrapped up and finished today- and monsters would be moving in and officially choosing which house they wanted during the celebration come dusk.

With the threats coming in more and more often from the group ‘Humans Against Monsters’, or HAM as Toki called it, they’d had to recruit extra security. The news of her condition had spread of course- and she’d answered several small news stations that she didn’t look different outside because it was suspected she was to become a skeleton monster- and HAM had caught wind of that news really fast.

Naturally, they left very cruel messages scrawled on the walls of her compound in the middle of the night.

They’d had to take more precautions- because it only took one escalation for threats and graffiti to become something much more violent.

So for the upcoming celebration, Toki had enlisted the help of several human guards, and monster guards to help keep the peace. The last thing she wanted was for someone to sneak in and cause trouble- but she had an inkling that it would happen anyways. There was no plausible way to run background checks on everyone who would be there.

It was simply too tiring, and she didn’t have the energy or the resources to do it herself.

All of her energy was being used in scrubbing the walls of the outer gates- because someone had drawn some very lewd and crude things pertaining to her, the builders, and some of the very nice wolf-guards. Despite the entire extra help from both humans and monsters, whoever was causing mischief knew what they were doing. They struck between guard shifts, and the wolf-guards could never seem to catch the scent.

Behind her, filed carefully along the road, were a few blatant protestors doing what usual protestors did. It wasn’t a big crowd- but they seemed gathered because of the news van that was lingering in one of the parking spaces.
Toki tuned it out, and focused on scrubbing. She wanted these walls to be spotless for when King Asgore and his entourage got here. They’d kept quiet about the King coming- because high profile monsters were a new favorite target of HAM. For the most part, she had the walls scrubbed clean- but there was a very persistent and poorly drawn monster penis that would not get off of the wall.

"Tsk. Now that’s just insulting." There was suddenly a sour-toned voice beside her as Sans appeared. He stepped into her field of vision before glaring at the graffiti. His gaze drifted to hers shortly after. "Here, take a breather, doll. Lemme take care of this."

To Toki’s credit, she didn’t startle as badly as she thought she would. She manages to keep a hold on the scrub brush, and casts him a wry look. "It was worse before I started. If they want to graffiti my walls, at least they could do a good job with the art, you know? I know plenty of children who draw better than they do." She hesitates, but hands over the scrub brush without too much of a fuss.

Drying soap-damp hands on a towel, she reaches up to adjust her beanie. She was missing so much of the total amount of her hair now that it was just simply easier to keep the bald patches hidden than to try and cover them with what remains. “Thanks, Sans. I’ve been at it for a couple hours now. Getting a little bit tired.”

The protestors behind them shift, making noises with their pickets, and a chant picked up as Sans is recognized. “Skeletons belong Underground! Skeletons belong Underground!”

He nodded gently and leaned to gently press his teeth against her forehead. At the chanting, his left eye flickered for a moment before a wall of bones suddenly rose upward to form a blockage between the protesters and the duo.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk, so impolite." Sans' pupils appeared and he looked up to see Papyrus walking closer, the younger brother having been the one to summon the wall of orange tinged bones.

The touch of his teeth to her forehead was a cool relief against the fever that persisted in plaguing her. She smiled up at Sans, gaze flitting to the side and completely missing the flash of eyes as the orange-ish wall of bones created a nifty blockade.

Papyrus was in his armor again once more, but he had a serious look to his usually bubbly expression. He was no doubt in the royal guard state of mind.

"Miss Toki, I am very sorry you have to deal with such a hoard of ignoramuses." He sighed as he reached them, giving a small bow and offering a hand to her. "But it is good to see you are well."

"Papy,” She smiles at him, and takes the offered hand, “It’s good to see you too. I’m doing as well as I can, really.” She didn’t actually look well at all- she looked like death. Her face was drawn, cheeks sunk in, eyes dark and tired, and she was paler than the creamy walls that made up the entrance to the compound. Her hand was even thin in his- her skin pulled tight over her bones with almost a dehydrated look, since she was hurling up blood fairly frequently. She looked and felt almost like fragile porcelain. "Don’t mind them, please. They’ve been at it since this morning- they’ll tire themselves out sometime or another."

The protestors let out some disgruntled noises, but chattered among themselves. They weren’t quiet- but Toki did well to ignore the steady chatter of slander that reached her ears. Being called a monster in human skin didn’t bother her- because technically she was becoming one.

Lifting her hand, he pressed his teeth to her knuckles before he slowly let her go again, he then turned and strode over to the bone wall. Naturally, he was able to see over it with his height. "You are all actively immature and rude, I must ask you to leave us in peace, and do not return." he requests calmly.
Toki just smiles to herself—because these skeleton boys can be right gentlemen when they try—and goes to try and snag the scrub brush back from Sans. If he wasn’t going to actually remove the faded dick from the wall, she was going to finish it before the sunlight drove her to fainting. If she could get it done and get inside, the protesters wouldn’t have anything to fuss over, and eventually would grow bored and hot in the heat of the day. “Gimme the brush, Sans. Lets get this done, and then go inside. They can’t bother anyone inside of there from out here.”

Behind the barrier of bone, the protesters look equal parts amused and disgusted. “It’s talking to us.” One of them murmurs to the other.

“The road isn’t private property, skelefreak.” One of the larger men calls back. He hefts his picket sign, and taps it on the edge of the road. “You and your monster squad can’t do shit to make us go away. We’re not breaking any trespassing laws yet.”

"Pft. Fine.” He reached and instead of just giving it to her, Sans put his hand over hers and began helping her with scrubbing the graffiti off.

"You are correct. However, though you are not trespassing, you are disturbing the peace of the residents upon said road. I would hope to assume you are mature, responsible humans, even with this childish ploy you have going on, and you would come to realize the error of your ways if confronted properly.”

Toki can’t help a small giggle at Papyrus’ words. He sounded like such a disappointed teacher, and most humans are not ready to handle that sort of tone. She pauses though, as the graffiti pretty much just wipes away with Sans’ help. She frowns, and looks at her hands once it’s gone. She really didn’t have the arm strength she thought she did anymore, did she? A few moments with the monster’s help, and it was gone. She’d been scrubbing that dick for the better part of fifteen minutes.

The protesters just pause, because… Well, how exactly were they supposed to respond to that? The majority of them shift uncomfortably; picket’s lowering slightly as they look to each other. Only one speaks up, and it’s the tall man from before. “The only resident that’s supposed to be on this stretch of road is about to become a filthy mother fucking monster like the rest of you heathens. Once she abandons her human skin, she’ll be no better than the beasts that she houses.”

"At least she is still kind and considerate towards those around her. She's been dealing with your unorganized banter this long, has she not?” He replied simply.

“We all know that once your kind are out of the foster system, you’ll be taking over our homes, and our jobs. Hell, looks like you’re already taking our men, our women, and our children too. Everything would have been fine if your kind hadn’t stepped foot from under that mountain. Kind and considerate mean nothing. You can be kind and considerate to a dog, but it will still bite you on the ass when you turn around and think you’re safe.”

Toki’s lip curls, and she gathers her stuff. The wall is clean enough, so she lets Sans carry things, and heads over to Papyrus. She loops her arm through his and tugs lightly. Very lightly- she’d tug harder, but she’d probably lose her balance and fall. “Come on, Pap. Lets go inside- if they want to stay out here in this heat and act like numbskulls, let them. They’ll be gone this evening when the monster security comes by anyways.”

"They will only turn and bite if you strike them.” He replied simply, turning with her. "Very well, let us return inside.”

She tunes out whatever is said next, as she leans into the skeleton slightly, and reaches out to tug Sans with them as well. The sounds of the irritated protestors fade as the walls block the sound out,
and she releases them with a quiet sigh. Her beanie is pulled off so she can run a hand through what’s left of her hair, before she stuffs it back on her head. She looks tired and drawn, dark eyes sad. “I’m sorry you guys had to see that. They’re pretty riled up since the first district is fully completed. Eighty houses can hold a lot of monsters. Are you guys excited to see the big unveiling?”

"Damn right we are."

"Father was thrilled when he heard about it."

"He said he’d be here to see it."

She’s glad that they handle the change in conversation well enough, and takes her supplies from Sans. She goes to place them in one of the sheds, and then leans on the wall to catch her breath. “I’d offer you guys a peek at them, but that’d be unfair to everyone else who hasn’t seen them all yet. Speaking of- I thought you both were supposed to be here later tonight with the rest of the group that’s coming?”

"Pap couldn’t wait." Sans shrugged with a laugh, shoving his hands into his pockets with a simple grin. He watches her lightly, white pinpricks in his eyes keeping careful watch perchance she were to drop.

“Miss me that much, huh?” She teases him with a warm grin, eyes twinkling lightly. “I’m joking, of course. I’d be excited too. You three are getting a house too, right?”

Papyrus let out a quiet 'nyeh heh heh' and nodded. "Of course! Father might stay underground, but I know that brother and I will certainly take up residence here!"

She nods and smiles slightly. “I figure your Dad might have made trips back and forth, if he didn’t end up just picking one spot. Out here is a bit out of the way for a lab, or any of the science stuff that he does. Would you boys like something to drink?” She was starting to get light headed again, and was in dire need of some water. She’d love something besides water, but anything else but the occasional drink of tea seemed to send her running to spew up blood.

Toki shoves off from the shed, and ambles slowly for the house. She needed some water even if the skeleton boys didn’t, and she had full intentions of at least getting some of them, and then getting a start on the tarts. She’d asked what everyone wanted her to bring for the celebration- and her honey tarts were literally the only thing they asked for, if she had wanted to bring something along.

"Are you sure you should still be up, Toki?" Sans asked after a little of watching her, his grin deflating slightly with concern for the human.

"Yeah. You look like you’re ready to pass out." Papyrus agreed, stepping forward and carefully resting his hands over hers, his form coming to cup her own.

She pauses when the boys speak, and tilts her head up to give them tired smiles when she’s pulled to a stop. She rubs her fingers gently over Papyrus’s gloved hands, and grips them with the strength that she has. There’s a lot she’d like to say- that it’s probably time to face the reality of the fact that she’s not getting better, and it’s starting to look like she probably wont get better- and some of it probably flashes in her eyes. But she sighs- she’s not going to ruin their night by making them face the truth of what’s happening to her body. Instead, she gives them a warm smile, and a soft laugh. “I’m just dehydrated. Once I can get some water in me, I’ll be right as rain, I promise.”

Sans gave her a weak, sad smile.

Papyrus just shook his head. "No, Miss Toki... You won't be... You're so sick... And we're both…"
honestly terrified for your sake.” He whispered, turning her to hold her close, one arm moving to support her in case she felt weak or faint.

Toki doesn’t fight his hold. She leans into him with a slight tremble- and part of her wants to cry, because it is honestly scary what she’s had to go through. She gathers herself instead of crying, and loops her arms around him in a gentle hug. If she were to break down, she’d give up. Keeping busy and keeping herself focused on anything but what was coming was what kept her from shattering. “I know, Papy. I know. It’s… It’s scary to be this sick. At this point in time, I’m trying to do what I can with the time that I have left. Humans don’t come back from being this sick.” Humans just didn’t turn into skeletons either. Not even magical skeletons.

His hold didn’t loosen, but it began to tremble as he held her tighter. "Don't try to do it alone, please..." He pleaded quietly.

It occurred to her that the skeletons were not used to seeing a sick human. She knew that it had been a human that broke the barrier- but as far as she knew, the kid was healthy and happy up at the mountain with the King and Ex-Queen. When monsters got sick, it obviously wasn’t anything like what they were seeing in the sick humans, or he might not have been so terrified. She bit her lip, and gently rubbed her hand down his back. His armor was hard under her fingertips, the bones rattling below it with his trembles, and her dark eyes watered insistently as her soul ached for her friend’s plight. “Papyrus.” She said softly, trailing her hand up to gently stroke his cheek. The bone was warm under her fingers, and she gave him a reassuring smile, trying to soothe him as best she could. “I’m not alone, am I? I’ve got you, and Sans, and everyone here.”

He let out a few soft sounds as he tried to keep his composure, always having been the emotional one, but at her words, he gave a smile and a small hiccup, a hand reaching up to sandwich her own between his cheek and his palm. "Nyeh heh... you also have our father... and the King..."

“I do,” she smiles. Her fingers gently rub against his cheekbone as he keeps her hand trapped, and she makes a soft, soothing noise to help keep him composed. She’s not sure how a skeleton can hiccup, but that was the most adorably heart-wrenching sound she’s ever heard. “I’ve got everyone, and everyone has me too. For as long as I’m here.”

He nodded slowly, and then felt Sans trap them both in a hug, his skull nuzzling into Toki’s neck. Well there go the waterworks. As Sans traps her between them, Toki shivers, and buries her face into Papyrus’ chest. The armor is hard and unforgiving, but she needs it to center herself and help calm her down. Her eyes sting, and she’s thankful that armor doesn’t absorb tears like cloth can. Monsters really are too kind for this world, she thinks. “Are you both okay?” To her credit, her voice is steady, and she manages not to let a sniffle escape.

"We're fine... don’t worry about us.” Sans said softly, before he sighed and slowly turned her, giving her some fabric to cry into as he held her close, his warm hoodie now her pillow.

She’s not hard to turn, and she latches onto him with a shaky sigh. The hoodie is softer than Papyrus’s armor, and she simply lets herself have a short cry into the warm and plush surface. It doesn’t help much- just makes her eyes sting and her middle ache- but it eases some stress in her. Toki never was one for masks- she was generally an openly honest person. But even she needed to keep up the façade that everything was alright- because if she cracked too much, she’d break down and not know how to build up again. “I always worry,” She says softly once she manages to bring herself under control. “You monsters… you’re all too kind for this world, you know that?”

"Heh... shucks kid." Sans chuckled, stroking her head slowly. "Thanks."
Papyrus let out a soft laugh, hugging her tighter from behind. "Nyeh~"

Toki lets out a soft laugh, and squirms softly between the both of them. Humanity did not deserve the kindness of these monsters, honestly. “Okay. Before I start crying again, I really do need to get some water and get started on tonight’s Honey Tarts. I’d hate to put you to work since you just got here, but do you both mind helping me in the kitchen today?"

"We'd love to help!" Papyrus exclaimed with a smile.

"Anything for one of our favorite humans." Sans commented with a chuckle, his grin returning to its usual placement.

Toki smiles and laughs, and manages to wiggle free of them to head for the front door. “I’d love the help of my favorite skeleton brothers. C’mon. I’ve got twelve trays of tarts to make. Think that’ll be enough? Papyrus, remember to duck, please."

"Should be. Each tray is about... twenty tarts right?" Sans questioned as he followed, while Papyrus let out a soft laugh at her warning.

“Each tray can hold twenty five tarts, actually.” She guides them in with a wide smile, and leaves them to shut the door. Toki’s first stop in the kitchen is to grab a glass of water and down it, before she goes to fetch the jars of honey that they’ll need. The tarts themselves are already made- and are piled up on the counter. They just need to add the honey, which she needs to fetch from the pantry.

Sans and Papyrus eventually got her to sit down and let them take over finishing up the tarts while she enjoyed some ice water and a couple nibbles of some saltine crackers. She was glad when the crackers managed to stay down- because Papyrus was already far too upset with this situation for him to witness her painting the porcelain throne a gory red. With the help of the skeletons, they managed to get the trays of tarts done in an hour or so. After the tarts, Papyrus had commandeered her kitchen, and begun making his specialty.

So while he made probably more spaghetti than she’d ever seen before, Toki had hijacked Sans and had him help her clean up a couple of the spare bedrooms on the upper floor. As the night wore on, the kids would need someplace to crash that was warm and away from the festivities, so Toki had already agreed to play host to all of the children for the night, while their parents were busy enjoying life and getting their houses picked out and moved into.

Come dark, when the party was ready to start, Toki was beyond exhausted. Her eyes were dark, and her body slow, but there was a glow about her, lit beneath her skin that showed just how happy she was about getting things done and spending time with the skeleton brothers. She had a tray of tarts balanced in one hand, and was holding the back door open for the brothers to exit with their armloads of goods. It was a short jaunt from her compound out to the newly completed one, but it was a walk she was excited to make.

Already, she could see the soft glow of lights that had been strung high above the newly made streets, and her soul sang eagerly in her chest. She couldn’t wait to see everyone’s faces when they saw their new homes.

“Papy, really, I’m not broken- I can carry a pot of spaghetti, I promise!”

"No, no, Toki, it's perfectly fine! I will get it myself" he insisted, "I want to anyhow." He assured her with a smile to combat his brother's grin.

"On that note, you sure you got those tarts, doll?" Sans questioned, looking back over his shoulder at
Toki rolls her eyes with good humor, and nudges the door closed again after they step out. “I’ve got the tarts just fine, Sans. If you’re that worried, you can do your little shortcut for the rest of the tarts once we get there. Now c’mon, you’re going to love it.”

She’d guide them out of her compound, and to a side one. It opens up into wide roads; each road laced with strings of lights that hang overhead. The houses would be large, built for even the biggest of monsters to visit, and she would guide them through them down towards the heart of the ‘neighborhood’. She’d asked that they leave a good hundred feet of grass, which could be used to make a park of sorts for the kids. For now, it served as a great way to host the celebration. As she goes, she keeps an eye on the skeletons to see their reactions to the lights.

The duo looked around, their eyes glowing with joy and awe as they saw the beauty of the new neighborhood. "Oh wow..." Sans murmured under his breath.

Toki just smiled wider. Their excitement was obvious, and the human hummed happily. She guided them to several long tables that had been brought out of storage, and carefully got things situated. Several monsters were bringing stuff out too- she’s not sure what all sorts of food was being made, but it was being brought out and set on the buffet table all the same.

“Welcome to the start of a new life, boys.” She laughs.

Her laugh is interrupted by an exuberant young rabbit running right into her leg, and latching on like a leech. Thumper grins up at her. “Toki! You made honey tarts, right?”

“I sure did! Why, you excited?”

“Well yeah! Your tarts are almost as good as monster food!”

“Well, that’s a high compliment isn’t it?” She ruffles his ears gently, and shoos him away. “Once everyone’s here, you can have as many tarts as you want. For now, go play. I heard that Mister Dubros is bringing in a swing set for you guys- why don’t you go help him get it set up?”

The rabbit just beams at her, nuzzles her leg, and goes bounding off to go find the friendly builder.

Content, Toki watches him run off, before turning to the skeletons. “So, which house do you two have your eye sockets on?”

They exchanged a look, and then looked towards a home that had closely resembled the one they had underground. "I actually handed in the blueprints for that house... If we wanted to move anywhere, it'd be there.”

She watches for a moment, and then nods. It was pretty near the park, but closer to the main street than anything. “Then it shouldn’t be a problem. Your dad should be getting here with the King soon, right? Everyone will be free to start choosing houses once everyone’s here.”

"Wonderful!” Papyrus said happily, clapping his hands together eagerly.

Sans chuckled warmly, his eyes catching on something approaching. "Hey, speak of the devil." Sans pointed for his brother and human companion to see the familiar tall, thick silhouette of Tenebris, his tail swaying back and forth behind him as he approached. However, Asgore was nowhere to be seen.

“Gaster!” Toki cheerily smiled at him, and moved to meet him half way. “I’m glad you could make
"Well, yes," he rumbled, "Unfortunately, there was a small complication. Young Frisk had grown ill, and Asgore had to stay behind to take care of them. As a result, he sent me to begin our festivities."

She nods slightly. "Frisk probably caught a summer cold. They’re pretty common near the mountains. Poor dear. They should be okay in a couple days. Well… Asgore will just have to make it to the next big event. Maybe he can bring Frisk next time too.” Ever cheerful, Toki beams up at Tenebris and tugs her beanie further down onto her head. “C’mon, Gaster. Once everyone knows Asgore won’t be here, we can kick off the festivities and everyone can eat.”

“And drink!” One of the larger wolf guards had asked to have the day off to be with his family, and Toki had never been one to deny them the right to taking time off. He had two large barrels of some sort of alcohol- Toki could vaguely make out the word Grillby’s on the side of the caskets- slung over each shoulder. Behind him was his mate- a sweet little sheep monster, and their little rug-rat clinging to her wool. “Can’t forget the alcohol. Grillby makes the best booze. You still on for watching the pups?”

“Of course, Wolfen. I don’t mind watching the children at all.” She smiles, waving as he goes to deposit the kegs next to one of the tables.

Gaster smiled once, and lets her lead him closer to the table.

"Hahaha" The sheep gave a giggling bleat. "Wolfen, remember you promised to baaahave yourself." The tone of her voice was playfully stern, and she gave another soft laugh.

“I’ll show you how I baaahave myself later tonight.” Thick furry brows waggled down at his mate, and he nuzzles his snout to the puff of fur at the top of her head.

Toki giggles. “Keep the PDA down, you two. You’ve got kids you don’t want to traumatize. Anyways, everyone’s here. Gaster? You want to make the announcement that it’s time to eat, and let the celebration begin?”

She squeaked in surprise and reached up, patting his face with one of her hoof-like hands.

Tenebris gave a nod, and then smiled as he approached the podium, clearing his throat before he opened his arms. Everyone had begun to gather, having spotted Tenebris easily over top of the shorter monsters and humans. "Ladies and Gentlemen! If I may have your attention for just a moment!"

Toki smiles as the chatter of the growing crowd dims down. More monsters begin to hedge onto the grass, and they all look up at Tenebris eagerly. Toki hedges out of the way- because it’s going to be stampede for food once he’s finished his speech- and goes to settle gingerly against the base of one of the park’s few trees. Papyrus and Sans are on their own out there, but she figures they’ll find her once they’ve gotten their food and are ready to eat.

"I must speak for His Majesty Asgore, as he was forced to stay home so his dear child would not be alone in their time of need. Therefore I, Tenebris Gaster, welcome you all to the beginning of Monsterkind's new home!"

The undulating crowd around the makeshift podium lets out a loud cheer, and mirth and happiness is visible on several faces. Once they’re dismissed, they pretty much swarm the buffet. Sometime during her chat with Gaster, Sans must have went and got the rest of the tarts, because the where there had been one platter, a stack was in it’s place.
Toki laughs, propping her hand in her chin as she watches excited children and adults take portions of both the magic infused monster cuisine, and the none magic human food. Happiness bubbles in her soul- because how can one not be so happy when there’s such hopeful faces and happiness among the masses?

Tenebris was proud to see everyone so happy. He took up a cup of tea and approached Toki, smiling warmly at where she lay under the tree.

"Toki. I cannot thank you enough for everything you've done for us."

It doesn’t surprise her that Tenebris is the first one to make it to her. She gives him a smile, and pats the spot next to her as the crowd ebbs off with their food. “Any decent human being would have done the same, Gaster. I’m glad I could help though. Seeing everyone so happy… It’s all worth the struggle to see it done.” She motions to his lack of plate with a thin hand, and chuckles as the smell of his tea wafts down to her. “Are you not hungry? Papyrus made some spaghetti. It’s near the Honey Tarts.”

He sits down and chuckles. "No, I’m not hungry, thank you though..." He sipped his tea with an odd rumbling purr. "I just thought I’d check on you before I went to take a walk." he murmured.

“That’s sweet of you.” She smiles slightly. “Between you and the boys, I’ve got eyes on me everywhere, yeah? Oh! When you got here, there weren’t any protesters outside, were there? I figured they’d have gone home before dark, but sometimes humans break from the norm.”

"I do not think so, but I can never be too sure when it comes to humans." He sighed.

“If they’re still there, it’s not a big issue. The protesters just stand around and hold up angry signs. It’s the graffiti that’s a problem- children’s eyes don’t really need to be seeing the sort of stuff they keep doodling on the walls.” Toki tugs her bottle of water from her pocket and takes a sip, scrubbing a hand down her face. “How have you been, by the way?”

"I've been well, very busy, but well enough regardless." He replied. "Though I am very glad I had the chance to come see you again."

“Busy is better than being bored. Bored minds wander to strange places.” Toki reclines against the bark of the tree, nearly dropping her water bottle as her fingers slipped. “I’m glad you came to visit again, and that you got to be here for the grand opening of the first settlement. You said you were going to go for a walk, presumably after your tea?”

"Indeed, my dear." He purred. "Must enjoy the little things before I dedicate my time to a long walk."

She nods along dutifully. “Of course, of course. Might I suggest a walk along the river when you go? It’s a bit of a jaunt, but this time of night leaves the stars reflecting on the water in a wonderful way. I used to go swimming there at night with my brothers when we were younger.”

"Oh yes. Of course." He smiled around his tea. "I'll definitely stop there..."

Toki just smiled, before the wind was driven from her lungs. She coughed slightly, and looked down at the impromptu dog pile she was under. Thumper grinned up at her unrepentantly, with Twitch and a whole gaggle of other children draped across her legs. Most of them have obviously finished eating- and some of it is clinging to the whiskers on their faces. “Didn’t Mister Dubros have you guys for a while?”

“He forgot some of the tools he needed for putting it together at home.” The soft pout on the bunny’s
face was far too cute to be legal, but here it was nonetheless. “He promised he’d bring them tomorrow and we’d get to help build it then, when it would be easier for him to see. Do humans have trouble seeing in the dark?”

She affectionately pats his head, and is content under the pile of children. An amused look is flicked to Gaster, because she knows she looks most at home either surrounded by kids, or bees, and both tend to be an amusing sight. Her glance is also an apology- because he probably did not expect for their quiet talk to get bombarded by oodles of children. “We do, yes. Why do you think we have lights everywhere? Unless the moon is at it’s fullest, humans can’t really see very well. It can be pretty scary in the pitch black.”

“Really?” Twitch leans up, nose twitching curiously. “Then how come you live all the way out here? It’s really dark for a human to be out here.”

Toki smiles. “The dark never bothered me, sweetheart. I’m very careful when I go outside at night, and always take something that provides light when I do.”

Tenebris chuckled and snapped his fingers. Long tendrils lashed out and wrapped around the monster children, swinging them around as if they were on swings. "Hopefully this will prove as a decent collateral to the delay." he chuckled.

Toki caught her breath once the children were lifted off, and her smile bloomed wider at the peals of laughter that left them. Obviously the children approved- and their laughter was acceptance of his words. “Magic is so cool. You can just create instant entertainment for kids- sounds like perfect babysitter material there.”

"I haven't taken care of small children in centuries," he chuckled, "but it seems this old dog knows some good tricks." Tenebris gathered himself off of the ground, walking over to one of the nearby trees. He tested some branches, then the shadows looped around a especially strong one and left the children to swing on them.

“At least a few, right?” As the gaggle of monster children are entertained, Toki gathers her feet under her, and staggers upright. She dusts off the seat of her pants, and flashes him a quiet smile. “Thank you. They’ll be entertained there for at least a few minutes.”

At least, until they decided they wanted Toki to dust off her collection of Disney movies again. She figured that’s how they’d pass the time until it was time for the kids to sleep. The rooms were all prepared of course, and the parents would be bringing the children to their new homes in the morning. It gave them time to get things set up, and spend time as couples in their new house.

Tenebris smiled to her, "Do you want me to accompany you to take care of anything?" he asked, "Or would you prefer I go ahead and take care of my own thing first?"

She just laughs softly and shakes her head. “No, no, you go ahead and go enjoy your walk. I’ve got the kids- we’ll go watch a movie. I was thinking about-”

“LION KING!” She’s not certain which of the kids shouted it, but Tenebris’ shadow tendrils are abandoned as they flock off of the makeshift swings to bounce at her feet. It was a tossup of which were the kid’s favorites thus far. Lady and the Tramp was one they watched a lot- and Lion King. They hadn’t even made it to the sequels of either movies yet.

“The Lion King works!” She covers another laugh with a soft cough, and lets the excitable young ones tug at her fingers. Monster children are stronger than most human kids- so they’re slowly beginning to herd the sickly woman away from the festivities and towards the road to her house.
“Don’t worry, Gaster. I’ve got the kids- you go enjoy your walk, and enjoy the peace and quiet. Will you tell Papyrus and Sans that I’ve been kidnapped to a night of movies by adorable little monsters?”

"Chances are they'll join you." He chuckled, the tendrils returning to his cloak, "But of course. You enjoy your movie."

“You enjoy your walk, and tell the boys to get settled into their house before they come looking for me- Ah, Thumper, gentle please, you’ll dislocate my thumb if you keep tugging on it.”

The gray bunny makes an impatient noise, but relents, and soon the tall human is being tugged out of sight. The gaggle of children fade off, and the lights inside of Toki’s home turn on again. When the children are gone, the adults head for the kegs, and begin filling tankards so they can drink and begin choosing their homes.

They end up watching through The Lion King, and half way through the second one before the yawning of the children makes Toki grow tired herself. The collection of kids are herded up the stairs, put through nightly rituals, and then tucked into the prepared guest rooms that had all the extra beds in them. She didn’t even have to read them a story- they’d tuckered themselves out with the day’s excitement, and with the sugar from the treats at dinner burning out of their systems, they were ready to drop like logs.

Toki wasn’t far behind them- she stopped only to go downstairs and let one of the guards passing by know that she and the kids were off to bed, so that their parents would be able to be told.

Once she’s in bed though, Toki finds herself tossing and turning. She’s tired, but she keeps getting too warm, and then too cold. The sounds from the district are louder than she was used to. Booming laughter, someone singing, and no doubt a lot of drunken shenanigans did not make for a quiet night. It drowned out the usual silence of her household, though she didn’t mind at this point. Thumper was a loud sleeper.

It was probably an hour or more after the kids were set to bed that Toki was beginning to drift off. The day had been good, for all that it started out long. The children were happy, the parents were happy, just… Everyone was happy. It made her happy. She’d enjoyed the smells of freshly finished paint, and the smells of the food. Even if she couldn’t stomach it, everyone had put their best foot- or paws and hooves in some cases- forwards and displayed a large variety of food for everyone to try.

Something tingled at her nose, and Toki stirred. What… Was that? That wasn’t…

Was that gasoline? And smoke?

She sat up sharply, eyes taking in the dark substance rolling up from under her door. The moonlight shows a reflection of some sort of liquid on her wooden floors, and panic hits her.

Toki scrambles out of bed, and throws the door open. Her nightgown was singed as flames billow inwards, drawn by the sudden access to fresh oxygen.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: I personally enjoyed writing this. It was a lot of fun getting the fire scene done- because really, it is absolutely horrifying to even envision it. It pleases me that i managed to get it down accurately. heh. If i had any artistic talent, i'd draw Toki holding the beam up, in all of her gruesome horrifying appearance. Me doth think that the little monster children are going to need several months of therapy- and that the adults are probably not going to be much better.

The hallway was wreathed in flames, floor and ceiling burning. The crackle of it filled her ears just as the smoke flooded her lungs. The wood was old, and old wood burns fast. Already the support beams were groaning, splintering with showers of sparks and raining pieces of burning tinder. She choked and coughed, and painted the floor red for half a second as her stomach upended against the sudden surge of smoke and pain from the fire on her gown.

Her first thought was of the children in the rooms down the hall. Her second was of how to get the children out. Obviously if the fire was up here, going down was not an option. The guest rooms had small windows- suited only for small children to make use of- but one of them had been sealed a while back due to some rain leakage. She would handle it when she got there.

But the hall floor was a sea of fire, and the smoke was making her gaze swirl. Toki didn’t have long to think about it, seconds at most, before the green of her soul tinted a different color as a burn of magic and determination filled her and made her choice for her.

On shaky legs, she thrust her feet into the burning puddle of liquid, her mind focusing on only one thing. She had to save the children. She was scarcely aware of a high pitched keening noise- it made her ears scream and her stomach churn, only until she realized that it was her own voice making those noises. The flames felt like they were being intentionally drawn to her, being sucked towards her like some vortex hell-bent on turning her into the human torch.

It burnt the insides of her throat when she involuntarily gasped, and it was all she could do not to rush over the unstable floor.

Under her feet, the floor creaked, and she had to step fast and carefully through the agonizing liquid fire rolling over her toes as sections of it gave way, and the fires of below reached up to lick at her feet. Shortly, that pain faded as the nerve endings in her feet were simply burnt away.

She shoved her shoulder against the first door, and wrenched it open when it proved that the knob wouldn’t turn under her fingers. The fire burned up her back, and her gown seared to her flesh as she opened the door to frightened children. The burst of oxygen spent, she wasted no time in bustling into the room.

Blackened fingers curled around the lip of the window, and she yanked it open. Her lungs heaved, and she hacked and coughed, managing to lift each terrified child up and shoving them through the window.

“Go down, go down,” She rasped to them in a panic, not even certain she was actually speaking
words so much as forcefully thinking them- she had another room to go to, another room of children to save, and she needed to go faster. Toki willed the shaking of her limbs to still, and shook off a crust of skin that fell from her fingers. Below the drop off of the slanted roof below should have been shrubs- they would be okay. “Go, go, go.”

In record time, the room is empty, and ablaze. Below her, she can hear panicked shouts, and monsters, forced sober by the sudden shock of something so unexpected, are crowding around. She can see one of them reaching up and taking children from the roof- and it’s Wolfen, his gaze panicked as he fails to spot his pups amongst the ones on the ground and on the roof.

“Floor isn’t stable,” She catches herself rasping, “Stay down, stay down, I’ll get them, they’re in the other room.” Rasping or mouthing, she can’t tell. She has more to get- and she meets the wolf-man’s gaze as the fire swallows her lower body and bursts out the window to engulf the roof.

He looks positively horrified at her visage, but hope is there in his yellowed gaze.

It fills her with determination.

She turns back, body numb to the fires that have scoured her pale flesh to a hellish black, and disappears into the flames again to go to the other room. This door gives easy, and she has to stop the panicked movements of one of the children. It’s Thumper- he tries to dart into the hall, but she has to stop him because…

The fire bursts over her back, and he screams in her stead as the fire burns through her middle. She can feel something hot dripping down- blood, she thinks, as the fire catches inside of her. Toki can’t breathe, can’t think- because she’s running on that single-minded motivation.

Save the children.

The fire bursts from inside of her ribs, and she pays it little mind as she loops blackened fingers around the child’s arm. Her fingers are thin and hard- little more than burnt bone now, she sees. Whatever magic she had in her veins was doing its purpose of making her last wish done.

The children scream- some at her, some at the fire, some at the ghastly colored flames that are spewing from between ribs that should never have been visible. Some form of ghastly magic is drawing the fire and twisting it into something more- something that fits the rushed deeds of wild magic.

The window is a problem- it won’t open, and she can’t make it do what she needs it to. She can vaguely see her reflection- and something white and distinctly bone is bubbling from her head. Her scalp is burnt, and it sloughs off in rapid flakes as what she thinks are long prongs beginning to sprout. They seem to be growing from the fire that’s bubbling out of her eyes and ears, searing away any sort of charred flesh she has left.

She doesn’t care. There is a shattering of glass, and she’s shoving lambs and pups and little bitty singed bunny monsters out the window as fast as she can. When she comes to what she thinks is the end, she glances back on a whim and spots the singed gray fur of Thumper.

He gazes at her with something caught between horror and terror, and Toki can’t bring herself to feel bad in this moment. She misses out on voices calling to her, begging her please to come down, to get out of the fire- because she has to lunge for the little rabbit.

His shrill scream echoes again, as the main support for the roof caves. The burning log comes down, and agony splits her skull for what feels like an eternity. Her legs brace with what strength she has,
and she looks down at him with eyes that are no longer there. The beam sits perched between two long horns, and wedged in a crack that splits open the black-burned skull.

Her mouth opens, fire-warped teeth letting out a billow of flame that sears her face black, and she tries to speak. Burning green eyes seem to terrify the boy more. “Get… out… Please…” She can’t hold the support beam forever.

Over the roaring din of the fires around them, the sound of claws on wood was unable to be mistaken for anything else. The wood of the window frame cracked and rumbled, before it burst inwards.

"TOKIKO!" A beastly roar was unleashed as burning wood was shattered under the weight of impact, and Tenebris came into her vision. Purple eyes were glowing brightly with the surge of magical energy running though his body, but as he came closer, a look of shock painted his expression and dimmed the brilliant glow just faintly.

This woman, it was Toki... but it wasn't... Then he realized... Her transformation was nearly complete; all that was left was...

His thoughts quickly were torn away from that as he crawled forward and snatched the child from under her, holding him in a few tendrils against his chest as he grabbed the beam. "Is Thumper the last child? Are there any more in the house?" He demanded.

She didn’t even flinch, though Thumper cried out and had tried to shy into her leg. His fur burnt, and she couldn’t get him off until Tenebris managed to pull him away. Thumper’s screams were growing weaker as he was unable to get the air he needed to supply them. The support from the larger monster helped ease the beam’s weight off of her, and she pried her skull free with an awful sound of bone grating against wood. The crack glowed a vague green as the last of her eyes melted free of their sockets, leaving behind glowing green dots that stared at him as she remained with her arms and body holding up the other half of the burning beam.

She didn’t speak, as the burnt flesh of her throat fell down to the floor. Instead she nodded. The fire billowing from her mouth garbled something, but it was tangible enough to be understood. “He is the last.”

Good enough to be heard... But this was terrible, her magic was literal fire and in this situation, it was overwhelming her body and everything around them... she had to get secluded, but he had to get her out...

... He had never done this before, but to hell with it. It was his only chance

"Toki, You need to climb into my abdomen!" he ordered. "My torso is hollow, and you're small enough to fit with Thumper, but you need to hurry!" His hands were searing with pain, and his feet were in the same, but for their sake, he held on... he had to get them out of here. "Do not question me, just do it!" He barked after a surge of fire sent heat through his cloak and into his back. OW.

Toki wasn’t fully there. The dull glow of her eyes made it obvious that she was very lost to her magic- but there was enough of her left to give him a firm look. She reaches out to take Thumper into her burnt black claws, leaving the support beam to splinter and fall. It cracks against her humorous as she takes the weakening rabbit- and as ordered, Toki clamors inside of the long, dark slit that split open the front of Tenebris.

There was a brief part of her that wondered how he managed to hide such a long hole in his body under the fabric of his turtleneck, and if it rubbed awkwardly or not.
Once she's cleared from the danger, he helps her climb into the cavity, and then lowers his turtleneck around them. Behind him, the beam brings the wall down, leaving him to create a new exit. "Watch Thumper, I need to cut off the oxygen to put you out... You can lift the hem of my clothing, but only when we're out of the smoke!" he told her. It took a flex of his magic, and there was the burning agony of fire being trapped inside of his body with no way out. It lasted only for a few seconds, before smoke furred out from under his tunic.

His words are lost on her ears- all save for “Watch Thumper”. She doesn’t breathe, she doesn’t move, and the rabbit trapped in her ribcage is hardly jostled as he moves.

That handled, Tenebris was quick into lowering onto all fours. He ducked the beam as it fell, and charged the wall that would put them in front of the house...

Outside, the wall exploded outward as Tenebris flew out of the second story hallway, a massive wave of fire coming after him.

He flew a short distance given his velocity and hit the ground hard, no doubt breaking something as he landed and rolled a few times before he stopped, limp and on his back. Though that look like it could have seriously hurt those inside his chest, the powerful shield over his chest protected them from the outside, and a layer of ectoplasmic flesh cushioned the inside.

Upon Tenebris' body coming to a stop on the ground, Aliquam and Caeruleus appeared and came running for him, both of tem shouting to their father in hopes that he was all right.

When he falls still, and her magic gutters and dies off inside of her chest, Toki follows through with the rest of his orders. Her flames are spent, having sucked up what oxygen was inside of his body rather rapidly, and it leaves her dull and blackened inside of him. Her claws reach out, and she eases the turtleneck up from the inside, to let air in for Thumper. It takes a bit of rousing, but soon he’s gasping again, and crying as he clings to her sternum. Her bones are hot and brittle, and it feels like he’s burning himself, but she can’t seem to make him let go.

She’s so tired… But she has to get out. One arm around the trembling rabbit, Toki uses the other to try and ease herself out of Tenebris’ abdominal cavity. She can’t find anything to grasp… Without her magic to urge her into action, it seems impossible for her to move. She doesn’t manage to get his shirt all the way up, before she’s drawing her arm back in to ease Thumper out of her ribcage, and onto the outsides of her ribs.

His little claws scratch at her bone, but Toki doesn’t have the energy to fuss.

The movements under Tenebris’s clothing were noticed and while Caeruleus lifted up the turtleneck further to allow more oxygen into his chest, Aliquam worked a hand into the burned cavity and came upon the singed fur of Thumper first. Coaxing him from Toki wasn’t as easy as he hoped, but the lure of fresh, cool air was enough to have the rabbit loosening his hold after some gentle coaxing.

Papyrus pulled him from his father’s abdomen, cradling him close for a moment. "Miss Toki, hang on!" Thumper was then passed to Cae, who set him down slowly, letting him catch his breath.

Ali knew he had to be careful with moving her, so he started by pulling her feet out. However he hissed in pain as the heat radiating off of her bones burned through the gloves covering his own.

Wait... *Bone*?! He tensed and moved with a more panicked vigor. He was gentle still, ignoring the burn of heat through his gloves as he eased first her feet, then her legs, and then up to her rear out of the long cavity. "SANS!"
Cae came around the other side of his father’s large frame and kept her body moving until finally her head was removed. She was laid carefully on the ground next to Tenebris, and the brothers sat back a moment and just looked at her in shock.

"Oh my god... oh my god..." Caeruleus whispers of horror filled the silence.

Toki’s sockets had drifted shut sometime during the extraction. She was so tired, and everything hurt... She hardly felt a thing as she was guided out, her bones and joints limp and nearly lifeless as she was extracted from Tenebris.

There were spots of white bone, the color that it should be, smattered here and there on her form. The vast majority of her body was burned so black that she nearly blended in with the grass. Around her, it sizzled slightly, burning under the extreme heat of her bones. Her humorous was cracked, where she’d caught it on the burning beam, but it did not glow like the large split curling around her left horn.

Jagged teeth were interlaced, charred skin still clinging to the bone of her face and to various other parts of her body. The green glow of her irises was faintly visible beneath the bone-lids of her eye sockets. A large strip of skin- and what was obviously the remains of her night gown- stretched across a couple of her ribs, literally seared to the bone. Behind her sternum, her soul pulsed brightly, still agitated into view by the recent use of her magic.

It was a dim green- and on top of the massive amount of damage to her body, her soul’s hp bar was on display. It read horrifyingly low- ten hp, out of a thousand. If Tenebris had been any later, she would have turned to ash. It refused to be coaxed out of her chest cavity.

Almost immediately Aliquam's hands began to glow and he leaned down, hugging her without moving her from the ground. His hands moved and from behind her body his magic took hold of her soul, unleashing healing magic that would raise her HP back up. While he did that, Caeruleus checked on their father.

Tenebris wasn't dusted, so he still had HP left, but his hands and feet were burned, the inner lining of his torso cavity was irritated with lesser one-degree burns. He no doubt had broken the shoulder he landed on, but looked like his head was all right. He was just unconscious.

"SOMEONE COME HELP US!" the older brother turned and yelled to the nearby crowd.

A good portion of the crowd was in motion, rushing to get buckets to keep the blaze from spreading. They were bringing water from water taps, from the river, from wherever they could get it to try and stop the blaze from crossing the dry grass and burning everything to the ground. The camera crew that Toki had hired to air parts of the celebration were dropping their gear and rushing to help the monsters in putting out the blaze.

From the crowd, Wolfen’s mate came bustling. She’s harried, wool a mess, as she rushes towards the group. Obviously she’s been running, and she’s got her soot-covered children tightly entangled in her wool to keep them safe and with her. She bypasses Thumper’s mother, who had come to collect the hysterical boy, and drops to the ground beside the wounded. Sharp eyes look over Papyrus and his work, and deems him good enough to keep the wounded soul stable. From a basket she has with her, she pulls linen wraps, and burn salves. “I’m Bo. None of us know healing magic good enough to treat either of their wounds,” She says in a soft, apologetic tone, “But I can bandage and set his shoulder. Aliquam- can you keep her stable until I have finished your father?” She’s already in motion, lurching the large monster’s shoulder bones back to where they needed to be, and then binding them tightly so the broken bones don’t drift apart again. His hands are next, and she’s using steel wool to scrape the burnt flesh off.
Best to be done while he’s unconscious. The burnt flesh peels off, leaving behind raw, bleeding wounds, that are rapidly slathered in burn salves, and then tightly wrapped in clean linens.

Ali nodded slowly and stayed close to Toki, his hands staying firm against her as he poured as much healing magic as he could into her body.

Tenebris thankfully was deep enough in unconsciousness that the worst of his reactions to the pain were a few mere twitches of his hands. Though that pain would no doubt worsen when she did the same to his feet.

And worsen it would. She wouldn’t even bother with pretenses- Bo would sit astride his legs to keep them pinned, and scrub his feet down to the soft, un-burnt flesh. Once his feet and hands are all wrapped and bound, she would coat the inside of his chest cavity with the same burn salve, and then wrap him with bandages to make sure it stays covered and so nothing can get in. “Papyrus is the best we have in terms of healing magic right now,” She says softly. “Until we can get healers here, this is all we have to work with. Sans- take Tenebris to my home. He needs to rest and remain immobile.”

Tokiko isn’t quite as lucky to remain unconscious. As her hp is brought up slowly, her eyes crane open, and dim green peers up at Aliquam. Her teeth part, sharp surfaces grinding slightly as she exhales. Magic is still creating all of the organs that she would need access to, so her breath is shaky and unstable. “Pa-py-rus…” She rasps, ash drifting out of her mouth with her exhaled words.

"...!" He pulled back at hearing her and he looked down at her, eyes glowing a distressed orange. "Miss Toki... oh my stars," he whispered, "It's gonna be okay, you're gonna be okay…"

"We need to get them back to the underground, where they can heal under the constant supervision. We can bring the healers back with us, but it'd be better to get them where they'll be safe." Caeruleus told Bo, "I'll see to it that a proper caravan wagon is prepared, but I’m not risking either of them.” he growled.

Toki isn’t sure she believes him- because everything hurts, and she feels so tired. Her eyes dim for a moment, before she forces them brighter. “They… okay? Ch… children?” She’d gone through all of this to make sure they were okay… They had to be okay…

Bo gives Caeruleus a firm look. “Under any other circumstances, I would have you take them on one of your shortcuts… But I don’t think Miss Nara would survive that sort of trip. It’s not gentle, and her soul is not strong enough after such a violent change over to handle it. Please. I will watch your father if you want to go get one of the caravans set up, but you either need to bring a healer here and make due with what we have, or set out now. Magic or not, if infection sets in, neither of them will be in a very good place. Fires are not good things to have happen.”

Caeruleus nodded, and in the blink of an eye, was gone to prepare the caravan.

"The children are okay, you saved them all!" Ali praised as he pressed his forehead to hers. "You're a hero."

Toki’s sockets dimmed as he pressed to her, and a pleased noise leaves her. The kids were safe. “Good… Good.” The determination that drove her fades off, and exhaustion and agony take over. Her eyes dim to black, and then the sockets close again. Hero? No, she wasn’t a hero.

Bo watches her with a sad smile, and gently brushes her fingers up one of the long horns of the Nara. Her eyes train on the skeleton’s chest, and she examines her heath bar. “It’s steadily going up, but not at the pace it should be. She needs to get all of this off of her bones.” The black burnt substance on the woman’s body was disconcerting, but it was also not healthy. It was seared to the bone- and
the woman didn’t have the hp currently for her to try and scrub it off with the steel wool.

Aliquam kept one hand working on healing her while the other reached to start and pick the remains of the flesh from her bones.

That makes Toki stir, and a pained groan leaves her. She squirms slightly, joints grinding with the gunk mucking them up. “Hurts…”

Bo nudges Aliquam’s fingers away, and gives him a firm look. “Not here. Focus on raising her hp first. When she’s in a more sanitary location, you can remove the burnt parts. The air is filled with smoke and no telling what nasty things- it will get on the bone and do her no good if you clear it away now.”

The soft sound of hopping draws near, and Thumper’s mother approaches. Her son is on her hip- his burns are bandaged, and his eyes watery and upset as he gazes down on his rescuers- and her other arm is laden with two large blankets. “It’s not much, but… It should help to lay them on something softer.” She rests the blankets by Tenebris, and looks uncertainly to the Skeleton at his side. “Is… that really Miss Toki?”

“It is.” The sheep collects the blankets and carefully begins to ease Tenebris over one. He’s large, but she’s stronger than she looks. “We knew she was changing- and I think her magic did this to her to save her. Aliquam- put her on the other blanket. Her bones should be cool enough now not to burn it.”

He nodded once and laid the blanket down. Carefully moving her, Papyrus tried to make sure that she wasn’t jostled. "I've got you." he whispered gently.

Bo let Papyrus move Tokiko over, and tended to her own patient. She curled his tail up on the blanket so it wouldn’t drag the ground, and took a moment to sit back.

The house behind them was mostly fallen down. Black smoke curled into the air, but the monsters had been successful. The fire hadn’t spread, and the ground between the burning house and the rest of the compound was soaking wet. Bo stands, and glances to the younger skeleton. “Your brother should be back in a few moments. I’m going to go make sure no one else got burned- will you be alright to stay with them until Sans returns?”

He nodded, leaning down and pressing his teeth against Toki's skull in a soft, worried-sick kiss as he waited for his brother.

Toki’s too out of it to even feel it. Her soul dims as her consciousness fades, leaving Papyrus essentially alone with two unconscious monsters as he waits.

Caeruleus returned after a while, a caravan set up to transport both wounded back to the underground. Toki was easily moved, but they had to get help to load Tenebris in with her. The other monsters were more than eager enough to assist, and with several of them lifting him, Tenebris was settled in just as gently as the lady skeleton was.

After a few hours on the road, though it could have been more, Caeruleus could see Tenebris’ eyes starting to open. He looked groggy and dizzy. "Pops... easy...." He rested his hand gently on his uninjured shoulder to keep the large monster from sitting up.

"... Sans... T-Toki..."
"She's alive... so is the kid... you saved them both, you know..."

"... Good..."

Toki wouldn’t be far from him, if he were to glance around. She looks much the same as when she went in, minus the flames billowing from inside of her body. There are wet cloths draped over parts of her bones, trying to soften up some of the char that is stuck so tightly to her, so they can remove it without damaging her. Her hp is a little higher, but keeps fluctuating, edging up and down as her body tries to heal itself over time, and as her wounds keep preventing it. A long, wet cloth is covering the glowing wound bisecting her skull, and wrapped around her humorous to keep movement from fracturing the bone further.

The steady rasp of her breathing is the only sound she makes.

"..." Tenebris could see her, and he didn't like what he saw... He slowly tried to sit up, but Cae kept a firm hand on his shoulder to keep him in place.

"Don't move, Pops... We think you broke your shoulder..."

"Sans... Where are we going?"

"We're going back to the underground."
Chapter 7

Strider notes: So we managed to finish this, and i had a little bit of time while my bestie is here for me to upload it. The next chapter will probably be a week or more out- We need to plan, plot, and have time to execute it.

A speedy few days of traveling and the caravan arrived to the Underground castle. Aliquam carried Toki inside with utmost caution, while His Majesty, Asgore Dreemurr, carried in Tenebris. As he was one of the scarce few capable of carrying the massive monster, it was up to the king to heft the scientist.

Both wounded were treated, and then moved to a recovery suite inside of the castle. Toki was rested gently atop the large bed in the middle of the room, while Tenebris rested in a recliner against the wall of the same room.

She hadn’t woken up since she’d fallen unconscious, and it had unnerved some of the doctors. Monsters who fell down like this did not usually wake up- and they had hoped that she would have roused during the scrubbing of her bones.

Alas, she hadn’t. She’d remained still and silent, save for the occasional flexes of her limbs as they scrubbed into her joints. She came out looking better than before. She was mostly a pristine white now, save for a few spots where the bone was permanently scorched. Her horns were one such thing, the long arcs of ivory stained black at the ends. Her claw-like fingers and toes were another. She was mostly healed as well, though the large crack that split her head would not fully close. It scarred over, leaving a forever mark of the incident in which she made her final change.

They had rested her on the bed and left her bare, more out of desire to let her bones get some fresh air without being covered in the burnt remains of her human flesh.

Tenebris couldn’t sleep... not like this... He’d occasionally stare at his hands, before looking to Toki, scolding himself on how he could have done better... He didn’t even realize the danger until it was too late.

The fire had been unexpected- he’d patrolled around, and he wasn’t even sure how the humans managed to get past him. It wasn’t until the column of smoke lifted into view above the trees that he realized it wasn’t just fire-place smoke that he was smelling.

No, the place where the children and their human host were housed was burning unnaturally fast. He made use of his long legs to shorten the distance between him and the crowd of monsters taking children down from the roof. He scanned over them quickly, and found that they were missing one.
"Where is Toki?"

"She helped the children out safely, but she's still inside!"

"WHAT?!"

Tenebris could hear his soul speed up with those last three words, and he turned, running towards the ground floor. The doors were burning- but they were barricaded too. He didn’t have time to tear through it- or even wonder who would barricade a female and children inside of a house that was on fire- not with the base support structure of the house beginning to creak and groan.

He managed to get himself on the second floor roof when he felt the house tremble, he could then feel a powerful wave of magic, one that told him that's where he would find the human. A child’s scream echoed- that had to have been the reason that she hadn’t tried to get out, it had to have been- and his body lunged forward, roaring the name of the woman who he had come in to save.

"TOKIKO!"

He grit his teeth, then sighed and pressed his face into his hands. Tenebris had been healed, yes, but the healed parts of his body were raw and tender and still wrapped in bandages.

He wasn’t alone to his musings for long. Toki stirred, and the soft clack of bone on bone sounded as her legs shifted and bumped together. Her teeth remained clenched tight, but a groan pulled out from behind them. In her chest, her soul sped up, rousing to an awareness she hadn’t had since she had gone under.

Her skull rotated as she woke, the long horns scraping on the pillows she’d been rested against, and it was the unfamiliar sensation that had her socket’s opening. Her pinpricks were a dark gray color, and they blearily focused on the ceiling above her.

He lifted his head as she made a noise, glancing to her, before promptly sagging his shoulders and sighing in relief. "Oh thank the stars..." He scrubbed his palm over his face briefly, before he smiled at her from his seat, "Toki..."

“Gaster…?” Her teeth remained closed despite her words, and the skeleton shifted to sit upright. The rattle of bones was unfamiliar- and it took her a second to remember that last time she’d seen herself she had been on fire- burning hot, fire, oh god it had burned and how was she still alive she had been-

The rattle of bones shaking disturbed her inner panic, and her pinpricks settled on her lap as she struggled upright. Her bones were trembling, and something was rapidly picking up pace behind her sternum as panic flooded her. She… She… She was bone, but she wasn’t supposed to be bone.

She’d made the change…?

He noticed her trembling and for a moment moved to comfort her, though quickly found himself regretting it as pain erupted from his bandaged feet. "Ghnn... damnit...." he slowly sat back again, just kept his gaze on her. Soothingly, Tenebris murmured to her. "Easy now, Toki, it's okay." he told
her. "You're safe now..."

"I was... I was on fire. Everything was burning, and it hurt..." Her rattling doesn't stop, and she stares down at her fingers. The bones didn't look human- they tapered to sharp, claw like points and were black at the tips, like a burnt candle. "You got us out. Th... Thumper and me, that is. You got burned... Are you okay?"

She traced her fingers up her femur, and made note that she could still feel everything, like she still had nerves in her fingers. The bone under her palms was warm and smooth, if slightly scratched from the rough scrubbing it had gotten to remove the burned on pieces. It tickled, her touch, and she was made very aware that she was very, very naked sitting on this bed. She's not sure if it's easing her panic or making it worse. "... Why am I naked?"

"Your clothes were burned and sticking to what flesh remained, it had to be removed. But, there is clothing waiting for when you're ready to get around again." he answered. "As for me, I'll be fine..." he then chuckled and lifted his hands, displaying the bandages. He might have been mostly healed, but everything was raw and it still hurt like the blazes. "Just may need a little help lighting my pipe for the next few days." he jested.

A shaky laugh pulls from her, and her mouth opens the first time. The interlocking teeth are spaced evenly apart, some of the fangs longer than the others, but each paired with an equal sized one on the other side. As her laugh fades and her mouth closes, her teeth make a peculiar noise, like flint on stones. Sparks burst from them for a split second, before disappearing.

She grimaces, the sharp fangs of her mouth flexing as her expression shifts, and she covers her mouth with her hands as the pinpricks of light disappear from her eye sockets. Her chest glows a soft, distressed green, and she tries to cover it with her other hand. Toki adjusts herself on the bed, and carefully comes to sit at the side. She feels very exposed, and absolutely terrible about the burns on his limbs, and completely uncertain about the fact that her mouth just emitted sparks. "I think we can cover your pipe being lit. Ah... I'd like to get dressed all the same. I don't... know if it's different for monsters, but being naked in front of someone is not usually comfortable for a human." Unless that someone was their lover- then that was different.

He noticed the sparks and blinked once. That was... odd. Sighing, Tenebris carefully flexed his feet, putting them against the ground for a moment before he shakily got up. "Very well..." he sounded in pain as he limped over to the bed, leaning against it for a moment to steady himself. "I shall have someone bring you some clothing, once I can get out there..." he said the last part quieter, wincing in pain still.

Okay, yeah, no, panic aside, that was a sound of pain and it made her soul wrench tightly in her chest. Toki scrambled up, and realized that she was more top heavy than she expected and remembered ever being, and ended up stumbling onto her hands and knees as she attempted to assist him. "Gaster, you sit down!" Her voice wavers slightly, but is thankfully firm, and her pinpricks are back as she peers up at him. "Just tell me where clothes are, I can find them! Or have someone bring them or whatever, just sit!"

"Ngh..." he slowly sat down on the bed, then he sighed and looked at her. "I'll give someone a call, they'll bring something over."

Toki took a moment to get her feet under her, and then wobbled upright. She glanced down at her body- at the bare bones with nothing holding them together- and let her mind burn with befuddlement. Magic was so... odd. "If you have your phone on you, you could use that..." She murmurs softly. Her fingers wander up, and she checks out her face as best she can.
“… Do I have horns? Or did I hallucinate that in the fire?”

"You do have horns." he told her with a smile, "They are rather amazing looking." he reached up and gently took one of her horns in his hold in one hand as he pulled his phone from his coat pocket.

Toki reached out to take his phone for him, as she remained standing before him. Really, she needed to get used to this new center of gravity. She’d always been a human to adapt and roll with what happened to her- and she could have a good cry over her trauma later, when no one was around. His bandaged hands around her horns were an odd sensation, and her spine rattled in what she supposed was the skeleton equivalent of a shiver. She located his contacts easily enough, and held it out for him to select whom he wanted to call. “… How exactly am I going to get clothes? All of… all of my stuff went up in flames.”

It seemed to hit her then, the gravity of what happened- it was all gone. Her home, her memories there… Gone, lost in the flames that had consumed her body and soul. Her pinpricks dimmed, despite her attempts to hide her sadness, and her soul quivered behind her sternum. The bright green, still human shaped soul pulsed with a sadder tone.

He reached and set a hand on her shoulder to comfort her, before he pointed to 'Caeruleus'.

She shifted a little under his hand- because it felt strange to have his hand on bare bone- before she tapped Cae’s name. It took her a moment to get it- claws are not conductive to proper phone use- but soon she had it ringing, and settled it carefully into his hand so he could talk privately. She took the moment to calm herself, gathering her emotions and soothing them as best as she was capable of.

He took it and held the phone to his head, cradling it against his skull. "Caeruleus? Yes, she's awake."

Without warning, the door to the room was pushed open with a loud BANG, and the familiar large boned form of Caeruelus came bustling in. "TOKI!"

Toki spooked at the sudden bang, sparks flying from her teeth as her name was shouted. She reached a hand up and rubbed at what she thought was where her hearing originated. How loud. “Channeling your inner Papyrus, Cae?” The tease falls from behind her mouth without her attempting to stop it, and she hesitates as she turns to face him.

She looked a lot different now- and she couldn’t really recall him after the fire. Had he seen what she’d been turned into? The only face she swore she saw had been Aliquam. He’d been right up in her face, she thought. With his hands… warming something in her chest, or something. She wasn’t certain.

He doesn’t reply, just comes over and hugs her tightly. "You're awake" he whispered, voice tired and relieved. "You're awake... thank the stars.”

She shivers as her bones are pressed to his jacket, but she doesn’t squirm away. Toki leans into him, and loops her arms around the width of his chest. “I'm awake,” she murmurs back softly. Her face burrows into his shoulder, and she hesitates, realizing she has horns and should probably be careful not to poke his face with them.

He didn't look to care. He was too busy holding her close as he stroked her head, between her horns. "... Aw Toki.... F-Fuck..."

“It’s okay,” she soothes softly. Her fingers cling tighter to his jacket, and a rattle escapes her body, betraying her unrest. “Ah- ow. Easy on my skull please. There’s a spot that’s sensitive.” It would be
the large scar that runs over part of her skull.

He noticed and moved his hand to the other side, stroking there instead as he pressed his teeth against the front of her skull, "I was so fuckin’ worried, Toki..."

“I… I’m sorry I worried you…” She whispered quietly into his jacket. Her rattling continued, and her teeth ground unintentionally, making distressed sparks pop across his coat.

There was a soft sound that bubbled out of his chest, and Toki was unable to identify what it was before his arms tightened around her more. "... It's not your fault."

“I know it’s not.” Her ribs protest the tightness of his grasp, and she wiggles slightly. “It's not yours either, Sans. I’m okay now. I feel better than I have since the barrier dropped. The fire… was not okay, but… it did solve one problem?” Namely, it forced her through the rest of the change, and she wasn’t wasting away anymore.

His teeth clacked against the top of her skull again, and he nuzzled them against her shortly after. "It... heh... it did..."

Her rattling eases off finally, and she risks a chance to peek up at him. Soft green pinpricks expand and contract at him as she flicks her gaze over his face. “So… Ah… did you bring clothes per chance? It’s a bit drafty in here.” He was very warm, but it was still a principle thing. Monster she might be, but she was human on the inside. Er. Soul side, rather.

He nodded, shedding his hoodie and handing it over. "Here.”

That wasn’t quite what she had in mind, but Toki wasn’t going to be turning down clothes at this point. She accepts it, and slips it over her shoulders. Given the size difference between her build and his, it swims on her. She zips it up, and buries herself in the warm fluff inside. The excess fabric that isn’t being held up by her bones dangles down, and hits about mid-thigh. There. A little bit more proper than being completely in the nude. “Thanks, Sans.” A pleased noise reverberates inside of her rib cage, and it makes her pause. A… purr? Or a bone rattling like a purr. Whatever it is, it is a pleased noise and she likes making it.

He smiled down at her and both males seemed to repeat the sound back at her. "You look so cute in that~" he chuckled, Tenebris nodding in agreement.

Her cheeks light up with a green glow, and she ducks her jaw into the edge of the coat to hide her flush. Her chest makes the noise again in response to the two monsters in her company, and Toki can’t help but smile regardless. “It fits you better, but it’s comfortable. The lining is very soft.” She shifts, and pads back towards the bed. She pats it- because there’s more than enough room on it for the three of them to be seated- and then draws her limbs up into the coat. Effectively leaving only her horned head and hands visible, Toki peers at him and hums. “So… What happened after Gaster got us out? I’m a little… foggy after that. I remember seeing Pap’s face.”

"We immediately got you two to the underground.” Sans answered, not bothering to sit. His hands slipped into the pockets on his shorts.

“Well, I figured that. I don’t know any human facility that looks like this one. This is far nicer than any hospital I’ve been to. But… I meant, did the fire spread? Everyone’s houses are okay, right? Did anyone find out who set the fire? There was gasoline all over the floor when the smell of the smoke got me up.” She recalled Pap telling her the kids were alright- but now her concern fell with their homes. They weren’t homeless, were they? She hoped her beehives were alright too. Her apiary was her livelihood- without it she wouldn’t be able to afford to have her house rebuilt.
"The homes are alright. Everyone managed to stop it before it could spread- they even managed to save your bees," he chuckled softly.

By his lack of answer for the latter part of her question, Toki perceived that no one had been found yet. Her mouth curled into a frown, and then opened with a sigh. “I’m glad that no other homes were burned, and that my apiary is alright.” There are too few bees left in the world now- they need all the care that they can get. Toki shifts under the coat, her femurs brushing as she adjusts her legs against the warm lining. “How long have we been here?”

"A couple of days." he answered with a shrug.

“Days?” The ridges of bone above her sockets lifted, and she gave him a befuddled look. “I’ve been asleep for days? Is that normal for monsters?”

"No."

She frowns, and rubs her arms through the jacket. Her bones rattle again, and her pinpricks flick down to stare at her hands. “That’s usually called a coma in humans.” She mutters quietly. “Not all of them wake up from them.” She might never have woken up.

"It may have just been the time your body needed to finish the transformation," Tenebris explained softly, “It may have been necessary for your body.”

She rubs her arms again, sinking down more into the fluff of the inner lining. “It might have, yeah.” A sigh leaves Toki, and she glances back to Cae. “I’ve been out of it for a few days- I’m going to need to get back. I have to handle the insurance claims for the fire, and organize a cleanup. I doubt anything survived it, but I’d like to see if any of the stuff in the attic survived.” She had a lockbox in there with her most important things- and those were designed to handle fire. It also had emergency cash- because her bankcard had probably melted into a lump of plastic in her wallet.

"You're not going anywhere." Caeruleus informed her sternly.

Her mouth opened slightly, as she processed what he said, and then her brow ridges furrowed at him. “Excuse me? I do need to go home, Sans. I can’t just leave everyone to deal with the fallout of the fire. My hives have to be tended, things need to be cleaned, and I have to call my family to let them know I’m okay… I can’t just stay here.”

"You're not going yet is what Sans is trying to say," Tenebris reassures her easily, casting his son a sharp glance. "We'll return home together, alright?"

"The longer I wait, the harder it’s going to be to get the insurance going." Her gaze flits to Tenebris, and the green dots slide down to the bandages around his hands. Guilt gnawed at her- he was only singed because he came to save her. Toki sighs, crossing her arms over her knees and resting her chin on them. The action is familiar- but the way her chin sits in the space between her radius and ulna is almost alien in comparison. “I also do need to find my lockbox. It has emergency money in it, along with important files. The money would be useful at this point- I cant exactly just keep your jacket and go commando under it, can I? But alright- I can wait for you to get better, Gaster.”

"They wont give you flack for the time if we say you were comatose." Caeruleus commented with a snort.

Tenebris simply sighs.

Toki nods, and glances to him. Hesitantly, she opens her arms, requesting a hug from the larger skeleton. “Thanks, guys. We’ll just have to keep it quiet that I was awake. Insurance people are
Caeruleus was all too eager to step forward and embrace her again, hiding his face in the fabric over her shoulder.

It was a little awkward, with him kneeling on the bed to join her hug. She rubs her small fingers over his shoulder blades, the bone feeling strange without his coat to cushion them. “I’m sorry I scared you guys.”

“You’re okay now, though...” Tenebris rumbled, “That’s all that matters.”

“I suppose so.” Her agreement is light, and she nuzzles her face into Sans shoulder with a quiet sound.

Sans is quick to nuzzle her in return, too relaxed, too happy, to do anything more than that.

She shifts and gently nudges him so he sits on the bed. Toki’s an affectionate person by nature- so she ends up snuggled into his side, with her head against his shoulder. “If I’m gonna be here for a while, I am going to need actual clothes. Your jacket is warm, but it is a little short for my tastes. Don’t need to be flashing people if I bend over, y’know?”

Boy did he ever know. Sans laughed quietly. “Yeah... I’ll go and get those for you.” He released her, getting to his feet and glancing over to Tenebris. "You need anything, Pops?"

"I’ll be alright. Just get her the clothing she needs."

Toki retreats back inside of the jacket, and watches them quietly. The green glow in her sockets is warm, as she looks on. “I’d tell you what size of clothes I wear, but I don’t actually know now that I don’t have meaty parts. A long shirt or something that has draw-strings will work well enough.”

"Don’t worry about it. I’ll figure something out for you."

She nods. “I’ll keep the jacket until you get back, if it’s all the same.”

"Hey, no problem, doll." Caeruleus flashed her his usual grin, and turned to stroll casually out of the room.

Tenebris reached and set a hand on her shoulder. "We were all very worried about you, Toki." he said gently.

With Sans gone, Toki sighed again. She eased Tenebris’ hand off of her shoulder, and cradled the bandaged limb gently so he wouldn’t hurt himself. “I know you were. I was pretty worried too. I wasn’t sure I was going to make it out of that fire- but I had to save the kids. I don’t even think I could have stopped myself from trying to save them, even if I had tried.”

"You saved every last one of them, you know.” Pride was there in his voice. "My wounds are nothing. The pain of the loss of even a single child is far greater than that which I am suffering right now,” He murmurs.

A soft laugh leaves her, bubbling from behind sharp teeth. “I had your help with Thumper, if I recall correctly. But I tried.” Her fingers gently explore his hand, the bones touching lightly over the bandages covering them. His hands were massive compared to her own hands- she’d always had lady fingers, as her mother used to call them. Her fingers were not much thinner without the meat on them, actually. The skin over her knuckles had always been pretty thin. Probably why they had burnt off so fast. “Heh. Burning alive only hurts for a short while, until the nerve endings are burnt away. I
would do it again and again to keep those children safe. Children are precious. I actually wanted to have a couple of my own some day- but I never found the right guy."

He nodded gently, smiling at her. "Just because you are a monster does not make it impossible, you know. There's still a chance."

“I know that,” she chuckles softly. She releases his hand, and fists her own in the jacket covering her knees. “I’m just not sure how that all works. I’m sure you’ve seen how human biology works by now. I know other monsters have kids. I’m just not certain how a skeleton is supposed to have more little skeletons.” She pauses, ponders for a moment, and then shakes her head. “Or how any of that stuff works, actually. I’ve only knowingly been a monster for a short while. I’m not even sure how I’m actually going to eat. I know we can, because Papyrus inhales his spaghetti like it’s the last meal he’ll ever have, but the actual doing so is very befuddling.” She went from being made of fleshy bits of skin and muscle, to being made of bone and having absolutely nothing that she knows how to work.

"I will explain these things to you in time," he purred gently, "Rest assured, my dear, once things settle down, I will inform you of all you need to know."

If she had lips, she’d have pursed them. Instead, she furrows her brow ridges at him, and nods. “That’s not ominous at all. But thanks, I guess. Hell, I thought thirty two was too old to have ‘the talk’, but I guess one is never too old to learn basic biology.” Accepting most of his answer for now, Toki instead switches gears. “A serious question though- Do skeletons actually need to eat, or is that just a social habit?” It had taken serious prodding on her part to get Sans to eat solids- but he was always down to hijack her ketchup and guzzle it.

"Thirty two, huh? In skeleton years you're but a youngling," he chuckled, "As for eating, it's merely a social habit, not necessary to our survival." he explained.

“In human years, that’s over half of a lifespan. For some, they can live longer. My family lived to be quite old- probably from our heritage, now that I think on it.” She flashes him a vague smile, and tilts her head. She braces her chin on her palm, stretching her neck and- ahh, sweet relief. The not so quiet crunch of her vertebrae crackling sounded loudly. A pleased noise leaves her. At least she can still do that as a skeleton. “Huh. That’s... Well, that makes sense. I suppose food wouldn’t really do anything for something not there. So how does that work? The eating, that is. Does the magic or whatever just dissolve it?” Because she was actually hungry- but she had a human soul still. Humans had to habitually eat- and if she had a stomach, it would certainly be growling.

He didn't react as badly as his boys would, but Tenebris shuddered at the popping of the bones, "Nh... W-Well... Monster food is a lot more different than human food, it dissolves into pure energy upon reaching the 'stomach', whether it's a physical stomach or one of figurative speaking." he explained.

Toki prided herself on being observant, and she noticed that shudder almost immediately. What on earth could have caused that? She arched a brow at him in silent inquiry, rotating her wrist to stretch and crack joints that had been still for far too many hours, and nodded along to the rest of his explanation. “I see... I never did actually try monster food. That sounds a lot more efficient than human food.” Human food required a lot of digestion, and most of it came out the other end. She frowns slightly. How on earth did they eat human food then? Because she knew for sure that her honey-tarts were not magic infused- and she’d seen Papyrus eat one before.

Monsters were so confusing.

More tiny flinches and shivers at those.... sounds... "We all thought that." He chuckled softly, once
he recovered from his reaction.

“I can understand that. I guess I can understand why Sans likes ketchup so much. Non magical liquids are probably easier to handle than solids.” That was twice now. What was- was it her bones making those noises that disturbed him? “Uh… Gaster? Does popping my joints bother you?” It was louder now, without the blood and muscle to mask the noises that they had used to make before.

Gaster shakes his head negatively, and chuckles softly. "No, no, it doesn't bother me." he assured her, smiling gently. "It's just an odd sound for us."

“Oh. I’ll try not to do it too often around other monsters then.” She gives him a wide smile, and plays with the zipper of the jacket. The metal is slick against her bones, and it takes focus to be able to grasp at it with the smooth bone.

"Oh, no. Not around all monsters, just us more... Skeletal entities." he assured her, before he smiled wider. "You look adorable in his hoodie."

“It’s, ah, really big. Or I’m really small now. I feel a lot smaller without all the flesh on my bones.” She flushes though, brilliant green spreading over her face and teeth grinding as she clicks them together. Toki buries her face in the fluffy lining of Sans coat, and hides her flush.

He laughs gently and reaches to pat her shoulder. "There, there, you'll get used to it."

Toki captures his hand again, and gives him a surprisingly dirty look as she settles them gently in her palms. “Gaster, your hands hurt. Patting my bones is probably not the nicest thing in the world- you’re going to hurt your burns if you keep doing that. But yes- I’ll get used to it. It’s probably going to suck- now I don’t have skin in the way to keep me from breaking my toes when I stub them on the corners of coffee tables.”

He let out a soft rumble as she caught his hands and he took her words into consideration, lowering them to rest them in his lap once he was let go. "Thank you for your concern, miss Toki." he purred softly, leaning instead to place a soft tap of their foreheads together. "Unfortunately, since you don’t have that skin, there's nothing to stop said toes from disconnecting upon impact." he then laughed quietly as he sat back, tail swaying slowly beside him.

“Someone’s got to watch out for you goons.” She quirks a smile at his words, and leans forward to let him press his forehead to hers. The smooth curve of her horns had very little feeling in them, but near the base of them was proving to be quite sensitive. When he leaned back, Toki paused, and her feet poked out from the inside of the jacket. “Wait, wait. My toes can literally pop off? Does it hurt?” Could it even go back on? Because she had a hilarious idea if limbs could pop on and off without much pain, and her target lay with her brothers. Whenever she got to see them again, that is.

"I had to comfort Papyrus many a times when his arm came off. It was painless, both in removal and replacement, but it scared him every time.” He laughed.

She chokes on a laugh, and wiggles her toes. Huh. They were pointy like her fingers were. “I can imagine so. Thanks for warning me. I’d probably have been spooked if it happened without me knowing it could.” She shifts, and finally squirms one of her legs free from the jacket so she could investigate it. She looked mostly like a human skeleton from what she can see. Except for these pointy bits. Human finger bones and toe bones round off and are generally not claw-like. Investigating her kneecap with her fingers makes her ribs rattle, and she cant help laughing. Of course- her knees had been ticklish as a flesh being, so they had to be ticklish as a bone monster too. “Speaking of Papyrus- I’m surprised he hasn’t burst in here yet. Is he still in the Underground?”
Tenebris just chuckles, watching her as she investigates her limbs. "Yes, but I last saw him in the kitchen."

"Of course he’d be in the kitchens." She laughs softly, and carefully hops off the bed. Rolling her ankles curiously, she hums, and moves around. “My center of balance is off.” She notes curiously. “I feel very top heavy.” Probably because there were no muscles or organs helping hold her rib cage up- now everything was on her spine.

"You'll get used to it, your magic will aid in stabilizing you."

“I’m not entirely sure how to work my magic, to be honest. I can sort of feel a… hum? It feels like a hum in my bones. I dunno how else to describe it.” It was sort of like when one’s heart got to racing, and they could feel the blood rushing through them. Only, it wasn’t going ninety miles per hour- only a slow, calm pulsation through her. She wondered if it responded like a heart rate.

"Your pulse, no doubt." he chuckled, reaching and holding his hand over her chest once she wandered closer. "We more skeletal entities don’t have blood to pulse, but we do have our soulbeat, so you are no doubt feeling, and hearing, that."

“That is actually fascinating.” She glanced down where his fingers hovered over her sternum. It was really weird- she could actually see all of her feet. She hadn’t seen all of her feet since puberty hit. “So how do I call up magic? I’d rather not have any accidents. I’m not even sure what sort of magic I have, now that I think on it.” She pauses, and her sockets narrow. Brows furrowing, Toki places her hands on her hips, and stares off at nothing. “I… Remember burning from the inside during the fire. Like the fire was being drawn inside of me, and then being made from inside of me at a later time. Was that my magic?”

"That was your magic, yes. You look to possess an elemental capability. Fire, to be specific.”

Toki’s mouth popped open, before a dry laugh left it. A shiver rattled up her spine- she really didn’t want to have fire based magic, considering she had been alive, conscious, and unable to resist the urge to help children while she had burned alive. She sighed, and her hand came up to cradle her forehead for a moment as she went back to pacing and trying to get her legs to work properly in conjunction with her new center of balance. “That is morbidly ironic, you know.”

"Sadly." he agreed quietly.

“Horribly, terribly ironic.” She repeats tightly. God, what the hell was fate thinking with that- she’d rather have water or something else besides fire oriented magic. Fire could do so many terrible things, and she’d witnessed them first hand. Yeah, she’d saved all of those kids- but that sort of experience stuck with you.

In more ways than one, in a horrible twist of ironic humor that fate seemed to have. Another rattle travels up her spine, and reverberates in her ribs. She was literally going to be stuck with fire-based magic for the rest of her existence. She couldn’t ever escape that. She’d be stuck with the thing that had burnt her home, burnt her body, and probably damn near killed her. She’d felt her flesh bubble and scorch away, charring into lumps of coal that were shed like the scales on a snake. She might not have felt pain after a certain point- but one is always aware when their insides spill across the floor.

It took her a few moments to realize that she was going to have a panic attack no matter what she did. Slowly, Toki sunk into a seated position by one of the walls, and did a very good job of disappearing inside of the coat until she could calm herself. It did little to muffle the rattling.

Why did she have to retreat where he couldn't reach her painlessly... with a groan, Tenebris moved
onto all fours, coming closer before he rattled quietly, pressing against her gently.

The thick coat did well to block out the outside world, but Toki still felt when Tenebris pressed against her. The thick thrum of her soul drowned out most of his rattling, the pulses coming fast and erratic. Toki had never had a panic attack before- but she’d seen them often enough to recognize the signs.

She wasn’t entirely sure how to handle having one- and hiding away until she calmed down seemed to be easier. But… “You shouldn’t be up,” She manages to stutter into her knees.

He smiled and nuzzled her gently, wrapping his arms around her as he settled down. "I know. I don’t care."

She wasn’t sure if skeletons could cry, but if they could, then Sans jacket was going to have a glowy mess of tears staining the inner fur. She kept her sockets shut so she didn’t have to see if she was making a mess or not. “You monsters,” she murmurs, “you’re all too damn kind for this world. I… I’ll be okay, I just… I need a minute. It’s… The thought of…” Of her magic being fire based.

"I'll see if I can come up with a magic suppressant." he murmured, "Okay?"

She sniffs- and marvels briefly because she should not be able to make those noises without a nose or the ability to produce snot- and shakes her head. “I… I need to know how to use it eventually. It… it’s probably not good to use a magic suppressant for the rest of your life, is it?” Particularly when your bones were held together by your magic.

"It depends on the HTM..." he murmured softly, hugging her firmly, "You don’t always need your magic."

“I don’t even know what HTM is.” She sniffs again, and ends up leaning into the larger monster. Her arms slowly fill out the sleeves of the jacket again, and glowing green eyes peek at him from under the hood. Yes- skeletons can cry it seems. Magical glowing green tears, in fact. “I know I don’t… But I don’t want to be afraid of it either.” Being afraid of yourself was not healthy- for you, or for anyone around you. "If I'm afraid of it, it'll be that much harder to control. I don't want to hurt anyone."

"It stands for 'Human turned Monster.’” He told her, reaching and using the bandages on his hands to wipe her eyes. "Then once I have recovered, I will help you hone your magic abilities,” he purred gently, "You will learn to overcome your fears."

She flaps her sleeves at his hands in a scolding manner, and ducks her chin into the jacket. Magical tears probably weren’t sanitary for wounds, even covered ones. “Ah, gotcha. I... don’t imagine a magical blocker on a skeleton is a good thing. Aren’t our bones held together by our magic?” Very slowly, the rattling of her ribs was dying down and calming as her panic faded off.

“... Well yes that is true." he chuckled quietly, "though I’m sure that isn’t the same kind of magic we are talking about.”

“Probably, yeah. I don’t know much about magic, to be honest. Just that it exists, and apparently people can be elementally inclined with it.” Toki shrugs, and glances down to her chest. “And that it’s tied to the soul… Out of curiosity, is my soul still human?”

"Mostly." he answered, "There is modification that came with your transformation, but for the most part, you are still human at your very core."

That just raised a whole slew of questions then. How did a monster body operate with a human soul?
Would she die at a human age, or monster age? So many questions, and hardly enough brain space to ask and retain the answers to them all. “Huh… That’s actually pretty nifty then.” She peers at her chest, and taps her breastbone with one of her fingers. “How do I pull my soul out? It was pretty nifty last time you showed me it. Think all the dark spots are gone?”

"You think about it, and hold your hand in front of your chest, releasing magic from it as to coax your soul from its place. It'll be easier since it will be yourself trying to summon your soul." he chuckled, before he took a moment to think. "The spots will probably be gone, but I cannot promise anything pre-examination."

She nods. Brushing the hood of Sans coat off of her head, Toki straightens. She’d been more aware of the soul thing after Gaster had showed her the first time- and she recalled the feeling. Cupping her hands about the middle of her sternum, she feels for it, and urges it out into her hands with the pulsing that she feels through her bones.

At first, it doesn’t move. It takes a few tugs mentally, and then her soul slips from behind the coat like a bubble. The shape of it is still upright- and undeniably human instead of monster- and looking better than before. It’s the same green as before, but… brighter? Brighter, she thinks. It’s like the green of the grass on a warm summer day, glimmering with several sun-lit hues. Green isn’t her favorite color- but damn, that was a decent looking soul. There are a couple spider web cracks on one edge of it- and they’re tinted a suspicious red that makes her think she knows exactly what caused them- but overall it looks healthy. She holds it out to him, and catches a flash of some numbers. “Hp… 1000/1000?” She isn’t sure if that’s a decent number or not, but she nudges it out for him to take. “At least the dark spots are gone? It looks brighter too. It was actually easy to get out.”

He looked at the marks, and then blinked slowly. "1000? That's rather impressive for a HTM..." he said quietly, before he reaches and carefully cups the soul in his own magic so that he could examine it. "These cracks are concerning..." he murmured.

“They weren’t there before the fi… the fire.” She watches him take her soul, and decides that it is an odd sensation to have another’s magic tracing along it. “Is it? I haven’t heard much about the other HTM’s that made it. I know the little girl made the change without too much problem. What’s the average HP that you’ve been informed of so far?”

"The highest I saw before was in the 700 range." he replied.

Toki nodded. “That seems a bit more normal. Do monsters run in that usual range too?” She reaches out a finger to her soul, and brushes her claws over the cracks slightly. Her arm darts back with a hiss as a sensation akin to her experience with fire flashes over the culmination of her being. “Okay ow, ow, ow, no touching the cracks, good lord.”

"Yes..." he watched her reaction of pain and he set a hand on hers. "Perhaps we should put that away for now." He suggested gently.

She stills when he set his hand on her own, so he didn't hurt his fingers. Glowing pinpricks flit to his face, and she nods. Her fingers are quick to take her soul back, and she edges her soul back into her body. "I... didn't expect that to hurt. Is that normal for cracks to hurt?"

"No... Those cracks aren't normal either..." Concern laced his voice thickly.

Her soul flutters in her chest, and she gives Gaster a nervous look. "Souls are pretty serious business. Will the cracks heal?" Or did she just end up with a faulty soul from the change over?
"I hope so, this is... new." He murmured, "Perhaps development and accommodation to your body will either heal them, or help us find out how to."

Toki nods and sighs. She leans into him again, fully uncurling from Cae's jacket. "Perhaps... I guess I'm in your care until then. You guys know souls pretty well. There's no soul specialist among the monsters, is there?"

"I'm your best shot for one." he admitted, his arms securing around her comfortably.

She just leans into him, taking the comfort he has to offer. "Then you and I will work on it. Ah... let's keep the cracks quiet from the boys for now, okay? They worry too much."

Tenebris nodded once, and sighed gently. A smile tugged at his mouth as he nuzzled her head, "You're very brave, you know that?"

"Am I?" Her defining feature was kindness, according to what he told her before. "Sometimes I sure don't feel it."

"Well you are," he purred, "I'm proud of you."

A warm smile tugs at her mouth, and she allows it to blossom. "Thanks. I'm proud of you guys too. You all managed to handle this better than I thought you would." now that the panic is gone, she feels otherworldly exhaustion settle over her bones.

Gaster smiled softer and pulled her close so she could rest against something softer than the wall behind them.

She wasn't exactly heavy to move, and so she was settled gingerly against him. Toki yawned, teeth clicking together and making sparks. "Is it okay if I just... close my eyes for a bit and rest here?"

"That's okay," he purred gently, "Go on ahead."

She just sighs softly and nods. Her head tucks into his side, mindful of her horns, and she closes her eyes. Toki hadn't ever been the type to feel narcoleptic, but damn did she feel it then. Panic was exhausting, and she found herself drifting off swiftly.

Tenebris smiled gently for a time and held her close while she rested. Slowly, he lifted his head and looked out with a frown towards the door. "I know you're there, my son. How much did you see?"

“A bit.” Sans stood there with a small selection of clothes in his arms. He scratched the back of his neck nervously, fingers dragging over his spine and along his skull. His usual grin was turned down into a frown. "Those cracks, pops... those aren't fuckin’ normal..."

"I know."
Strider's Notes: Heh, thanks for being patient, guys! It took us some time to get the chapter finished after my bestie left, but we've got it done. :D Anywho, Toki's shutdown is actually based off of a PTSD experience I had to help a friend through. He shut down- and it took gentle touches, talking, and a change in location to bring him out of it. He went catatonic on me- It was actually kinda scary. Anyways, enjoy!

Snip

With the last cut by his medical scissors, Tenebris unwrapped the bandages from his hand to examine the thicker scar tissue that now donned the underside of his claws. A small flex of them, and he smiled, before he lifted up one of his feet, going to remove the bandages from them next.

He took a moment, though, to look up at Toki, who had stayed with him for some tea and to talk with a familiar face.

"How do you feel, miss Toki?" he asked.

"I should be asking you that." She's not sitting far from him. Rather, she's watching him intently to make sure that he’s actually okay enough to be taking those bandages off. Monsters heal fast, she muses as she sips at her tea.

She crosses her legs, and worries her claws at the hem of her shirt for a moment. It’s a bit big on her-and the v-neck is designed for a monster with breasts, obviously- but she enjoys the dark navy. She’s got a pair of pants on, and they fit her wide hips nicely. Bare toes wiggle at her as she glances to them. “I’m alright. I feel a bit… cooped up, I guess. I haven’t seen much of the Underground. I’m a naturally busy person, so all of this being stationary is driving me a little batty.” She was always doing things at home- and there wasn’t much she could do here in the castle.

He hummed softly in thought, and set to unwrapping his feet. "Well, how about while I look over the surface town with Aliquam, Caeruleus shows you around the Underground?"

“I’d enjoy that.” She nods. “Do you think he would mind showing me around though? I heard from some of the topside kids about a place called Waterfall… Something about glowing rocks? Oh! If you’re going back to the topside village, can you check on my bees please?”

"He won't mind at all!" he said with smile, "and of course, I’m not sure if they'll like me, but I’ll check on them."

“If you’re sure… I’ll ask him when you’re done with your feet.” She adjusts herself in her seat, and resumes watching his progress. “If you’re worried about getting stung, you can check the main shed. I’ve got bee suits in there- though I don’t… really think you’ll fit.” He had a tail, and was much, much larger than she was. Toki nods, and finishes her tea. She was still befuddled on how she ate, but chocked it up to ‘magic’. She certainly enjoyed her tea- she might not have needed the food, but it was something normal for her, and right now, normal was much needed. She still felt like she was 'hungry' at times- and wondered if that had something to do with her being a HTM, verses an actual
monster. Humans needed food—maybe she did for powering her magic? She hadn’t gotten around to
talking to Gaster about it though. “All you need to do is see if the food dishes are full. If they’re too
low, you can top it off with some of the food from the shed. If they’re at least half full, they’ll be fine
for a while yet.”

“Duly noted,” he rumbled softly. "Thank you." Once his bandages were undone, he rested his feet
on the floor and sighed lightly.

“Do your feet feel alright?” Toki sets her cup on one of the tables, and gets up. Moving in front of
him, she offers her hands to help him up. She’d rather he test his weight safely, rather than falling
and hurting the scars on his hands.

"Yes, they feel quite fine." he rumbled again, reaching to take her hands. Tenebris slowly pulled
himself up and adjusted his footing as he tested his legs.

He was quite heavy, but she didn’t really have muscles to strain under such weight anymore. Once
he was up, Toki let him balance as needed, and then gently gave a tug on his hands. “Lets see how
you walk. Moving is an entirely different challenge from standing.” She would know- She still
sometimes wobbled and lost her balance when walking. Being top heavy was really, really shitty.

Tenebris nodded and took a few steps, flexing his claws between each step.

She watched him carefully. He was doing pretty well, she wagered, and he didn’t seem to be in pain
with his steps now. Guiding him along as he and Sans had done for her, Toki worked him in a small
lap around the room. She let him on his own once they made one round, and let him practice as he
saw fit. “Are you going to be alright on your own for now? I’d like to go find the boys…”

"Yes, I’ll be alright, I need to go and find his majesty at any rate.”

Toki nods, rocking slightly on her heels as she shifts her footing. She hasn’t bothered with shoes-
mostly because they didn’t have any that would fit the sharp ends of her toes- and she’s not going to
bother with it even if she’s leaving the castle. “Alright. I’ll send Pap your way when I find them.
You take it easy on your legs, Gaster.”

"Thank you" he smiles to her and leaves the room, heading down the hall to the left.

When she’s certain he’s safe enough, and isn’t going to face plant in the hallway, Toki exits the room
and makes her way down the hall to the right. The castle is pretty big- but all of the rooms are pretty
open, and she’s bound to hear where the skeleton brothers are as she walks along.

It isn’t long before she comes upon them- in a place she’d been told was the ‘Judgment Hall’. She’s
not entirely certain what it was used for, but Toki honestly didn’t care. They’re talking quietly next to
one of the pillars, and Toki does her best not to sneak up on them.

The bare bones of her feet are slick on the tile, and she has to sink her claws into one of the
beautifully sculpted support pillars to keep her balance when she stumbles on a small flight of stairs.
Her fingers make a shrill screeching noise, like fingernails on a chalkboard, and her fall is stopped
abruptly by her firm grip. She gives the boys a sheepish look. “Sorry if I startled you.”

They both looked surprised, but they both were also quick to come over and check on her, make sure
she was okay. "Hey, it's quite alright," Aliquam said with a smile, "Are you okay?"

“Guys, really, I’m fine.” She flaps her hands at them lightly, and makes her way down the rest of the
stairs. Each skeleton gets a warm hug, and a gentle smile. Much like Sans, she’d found that keeping
her mouth closed while speaking was generally easier- turns out her teeth were a lot like flint. “Bare
bone is pretty slick on tile. I really need to sweet talk someone into getting me some flip-flops or something so I’ve got steady traction.”

She really needed something that had traction, but that she wouldn’t ruin with the sharp parts of her feet. Toki had an inkling that she couldn’t just trim away the points of her toes. They weren’t actual toe nails, after all. That was her bone. “Anyways, I came to find you both. Gaster went to meet with the king- his hands and his feet look much better, and he’s walking around just fine without his bandages now- and I told him I’d send you up when I found you, Pap.”

"I’ll getcha’ some slippers. They're the best." Sans smirked, a chuckle bubbling from his chest. "I bet I have a pair somewhere."

"I suppose I could go and find him." Papyrus murmured ponderously, before he gave a nod. "All right, thank you~" He gently nudged her skull with his with an affectionate clack, and then began at a swift stride for the throne room.

Toki watched the tallest of the brothers’ leave with a warm look, before casting a green gaze over to Sans. Rocking on her heels, she stuffs her fingers into her pockets and flashes him a warm grin.

"So… I was talking to Gaster today, and he might have hinted that maybe you’d show me around the Underground if I asked nicely. So… will you?"

"Like you even need to ask!" Caeruleus rumbled in reply

“Well, I sort of did need to ask.” She gives him a wry smile. “You’ve all been keeping a pretty close eye on me. Anyways, is there any way we can check out Waterfall? Some of the topside kids told me about how it has glowing stones and flowers that can talk. Is that actually true? Or was I given a tall tale?"

"Of course!" he said with a laugh, "C'mon, I know a shortcut."

She links her arm with his, which is odd since he doesn’t have any definitive biceps for her to grasp, and arches a brow made of smooth bone up at him. “I know your shortcuts. Instantly teleporting there is cheating though, Sans. I want to see everything I can- not just instantly be there. Walking is fun- and I could sure use a good long walk about now. Unless it's like, a day-long walk there. In that case, teleport away, and I'll get my walking urges out of the way while we're there."

He chuckled, letting her link arms with him easily. "Alright then, fine, we'll walk."

She nods up at him, pleased. Letting him guide her along, Toki tunes out most of the castle view. She’d seen most of the view from the castle- and a vastly empty city was not all that interesting to keep looking at in the long run of things. “So, I’ve heard only a little about some of the places here- what am I gonna see when we get to Waterfall?"

"Well, I guess we’ll see the glowing pools, the Echo flowers?"

“Echo flowers? Those are the talking ones, right?”

“Yeah."

“They sound really nifty. I really want to see the glowing rocks. One of the kids says there’s a room that looks like the stars- I’d love to see that too.” The walk to the elevator goes pretty quick- they’ve both got long legs, after all. As they’re entering it, a thought crosses her mind. “So how exactly do you guys have power down here?"

"The CORE" he answered, "I'll show it to you when we pass through Hotland."
Hotland must have been another one of the places Underground. “Huh. The CORE sounds pretty nifty if it can power everything here.” She leans against him as they go down, and she picks up the vague din of… A restaurant? Or some sort of busy place. When the doors open, it looks like… A hotel? “… You guys have a hotel?”

"It’s a Geothermal Generator, we actually just cut through the upper parts of it." he chuckled, before he looked at it with a nod, "Yeah, the MTT hotel."

“That’s actually super cool. Humans don’t have anything nearly like that. We’ve got nuclear reactors and that sort of stuff- but nothing so… environmentally friendly, I guess?” She eyes the place curiously- because everything was square and completely tacky looking- before spotting the exit. Discretely, she tugs him towards it. “Well… This place is… nice?” She tries to be polite about it- but there is no saving grace for that square robot fountain that was making a mess of one of the carpets. All of the robot memorabilia was actually a little intimidating, and made her more than just a little uncomfortable.

"Hehe, you can be honest, it's kinda homely." he chuckled deeply. "Mettaton was sure he was doing things right. Hint: he wasn't."

“I, ah, don’t want to be rude.” She makes a face, elbowing him gently. “But yeah, he’d do well to visit some of the human ones for references. It’s… a good effort though?” Guiding them around the puddle, she eyes the door. It’s… vaguely shaped like him too. Goodness, this Mettaton had some weird obsessions. She nudges the door open, and guides them out.

Heat hits her like a bulldozer, and she realizes that this must be Hotland. Unless this was like Greenland and Iceland, and this was actually Coolsville or something like that, she was very certain that they had walked into Hotland.

Air in the cavern was scorching, and it warmed her bones almost pleasantly for a moment. It was dry and desolate- but not as dark as she’d expect for a cave. “This must be Hotland, huh? Well, whoever named this place named it very literally. It’s very…” It takes her a few steps out to realize why- and she locks up, sentence cutting off abruptly.

The red glow of the magma bubbling and hissing looks very, very much like how her floors did, and now the heat around her is similar to that night as well. Each bubble and pop of the magma over the edge reminds her of how her skin had boiled away, warping and charring until there was nothing left.

Panic flutters through her chest- and she has no where to go, no where to run, because the hotel was in Hotland and fire was everywhere, she could feel it over her bones, in her bones, burning her from the inside and reducing her to nothing but ash all over again-

Empty sockets stared out at the magma. The stillness of her bones was not matched by the panicked fluttering in her soul.

Sans had chuckled at her commentary and almost didn’t realize her panic until he detects her soul flutters. When she stilled from tugging him along, he’d taken a couple steps forwards, assuming she’d been looking at something. "Hey, Toki?" he asked, doubling back and reaching up to cup her cheekbones. "Are you okay?"

Under the low v-cut of her shirt, the rapid fire fluttering of her soul is visible. She’s still, almost like a mannequin, and her sockets are empty as his hands cup her cheeks. She rocks slightly in place, balancing unconsciously to keep from going boneless. Toki is not present.
"Hey... HEY!" he stepped forward and picked her up effortlessly, carrying her back to the cool atmosphere of the Hotel. He set her down on the cool stone-esque floor and set his hand on her cheeks again, leaning in to press his forehead to hers as his eye began to glow, "Toki, snap out of it...!"

She was limp in his grasp, like a marionette without it’s master, or a monster that had suddenly Fallen. The panicked fluttering of her soul speeds up for a moment, nearly thudding right out of her chest as her body recognizes the change in temperature from outside to inside. Cooler air. Still warm, still scary, but cooler than the fire’s that had ensnared her. The bone that touches her own is even cooler. Toki’s sockets remained empty for a while, until the glow from Sans’ eye all but barged it’s way right into her very skull.

Slowly, her pinpricks appeared- pale and colorless, but still there none the less. The cooler temperatures were helping ground her- and the sensation of fire crawling up and down her bones was fading.

Thankfully the lobby was mostly empty- only a few disinterested though curious employees peering at them over the counter. No one would bother them- leaving the skeletons to sort themselves out as they saw fit.

He patted her cheekbones a few times, then he sighed and he pulled her into a tight hug. "Toki... It's okay..." he murmured, "I'm here, and there's no danger."

Her eyes remained dim, and her frame limp as she was eclipsed into his hug. Her arms hung limply. The familiar plush coat of his jacket was warm- but not a bad warm. Slowly, she rubbed her cheek on it, mind latching onto the feeling of the fibers of his jacket against her bones. “H...Heard it...” She murmured faintly against his coat. The burbling of the terrible fountain was driving away the hissing pops of the magma- and with the flash of the terrible memory fading, she was returning. "Was so..."

"Shh... shhh..." he stroked her skull a few times, giving an occasional clack to her forehead and cheekbones with his teeth to keep her attention away from unpleasant thoughts. "That's enough, you don't need to think about it anymore... I'm right here and you are too..." he assured her.

The stimulus draws her mind away from its unpleasant places, and her pinpricks brighten to a light mint color. She wasn’t burning- she wasn’t burning, and neither was he. They were okay. It was cooler in here- she could feel the damp stone under her feet from the leaking fountain. She could feel him holding her- feel his bones against her bones. Slowly, her arms come up and she clings to him tightly.

“I... I’m sorry... I don’t... know why that happened...” The magma hadn’t even done anything except do what it does. The bubbling and the popping and the crack- NO. No. She couldn’t draw back down onto it. No, no, no, no. “I... I cant. The magma. I cant.”

He shook his head gently, "I know, I know... I should have realized that it would affect you..." he murmured, clacking her head again with his teeth. "I'm sorry, Toki..."

“S’not your fault,” she murmurs. It wasn’t- it wasn’t his fault that magma was a problem. It’s not like she knew- and most people don’t know their triggers until they stumble upon them by accident. She shifts in his arms, and spots the clear glass door that makes up the front of the hotel. Through it, she can see the fires and the glow from the magma. She sucks in a hurried breath, and tucks her face back against his chest. “Ah... Can... Can we... We skip here please?”

"Yeah, Doll... Don't worry" he loosened his arms own to a gentle hug for her sake, then his grin
slowly returned. "I know a shortcut."

Him and his shortcuts were exactly what she needed at this point. Toki nodded, and remained clinging to him. “I’m s… sorry… I’ll… I’ll be okay once I’m away from the fire.”

He nodded once with a reassuring grin. "Of course" He scooped her up and turned towards the door to the resort. A flare of his magic, and he took a step towards the doorway, but the end of that step, they were in a cool laboratory, the tile cold under them, instead of in the Hotland Resort.

Her eyes had darkened again, and the disorienting sensation of a teleport after a panic made her nauseated. Can skeletons even get nauseated? Apparently so. Toki shivers at the sudden change—because holy crap, this was freezing compared to Hotland. “Thank you.” She mutters lightly. Slowly, she glances around, eyes lightening some. “Where’s this place…?” It didn’t look like waterfall— but in hindsight, if she was in his position, she probably wouldn’t want to be lugging a flighty skeleton around places to sightsee either.

"This is the Laboratory, it's in Hotland, but it's air conditioned, so you can't really tell." he told her, "I just needed a checkpoint..." he sighed, "Shortcuts can be hard work."

“It’s cooler down here.” She admits quietly. “It… wasn’t the heat that initially got me out there. The temperature change is nice though. Makes the sensations go away.” Dim green orbs peer up at him, before flitting around the laboratory. “I know you don’t like hard work- if it’s easier for you to just return to the castle, we can do that instead.” She’s not going to argue if he decides it’s less hassle to take her back.

"Nah, I’m about halfway right there. It’s just another shortcut."

“If you’re sure… then I’d love to still see waterfall when you think you can handle another shortcut.” Until then… She got herself as comfortable as she could while clinging to him, sort of like an extremely leggy koala. It was easier to cling to him this way- she felt more stable, safer, with the larger skeleton practically eclipsing her frame with is.

"Of course!" he hugs her tightly, making sure not to drop her, then he chuckles and turns around. "Hey Alphys!"

There was suddenly a pair of yelps and a loud clatter of something- or someone- being dropped.

"NGAAAHHHHH! YOU SKELETAL PEICE OF CRAP, HAVENT YOU HEARD OF KNOCKING!?!"

"Oops, looks like Alphys had Undyne over." Sans grin only grew.

"U-U-Undyne! Sans is o-okay to come here too, y-you know."

Toki couldn’t help it- she had to peek. She squirmed, giving up being a koala on Sans for the time being. Setting her feet back down, she turned and peered at what appeared to be a very, very angry fish monster. She sort of reminded her of a betta fish- if a betta fish had shark teeth, an eye patch, and a long patch of red hair. Briefly, Toki missed her hair, but she brushed it aside before she could get too upset over it.

“Uh… Sorry.” She responds, scuffing her toe bones lightly on the floor. “Sans took me here because it was cooler. Sorry for intruding?”

The Red haired monster folded her arms as she glared down at the rest of the lab from the upstairs that served as Alphys’ room. Literally all that could be seen were her head and her blue-scaled
shouders as she glared down at the both of them.

"Take it easy, Undyne, kid had a panic attack so I brought her here on the way for Waterfall." he explained.

"Ah." her eye narrowed slightly, and she gave Sans an 'I'm watching you' gesture, before disappearing again

"Pfft, Undyne get dressed and come say hello." Caeruleus laughter floated up.

She elbows Sans, and huffs. “I’m not a kid, Cae.” She arches a brow ridge at him. “Thirty two is old enough to not be considered a kid. At least in human years.”

Alphys titters gently to herself as she scrambles to toss on clothes. Her tail doesn’t want to work with her today, and her spikes are all jumbled, and she has the worst case of bed-head in a long time- but she gives Undyne an apologetic smile. She speaks softly, though she knows her voice carries down to the two below. Damn her nerves. “S-sorry, Undyne… We… We can continue after they leave?” She had really enjoyed the larger woman’s affections- but she just couldn’t continue with Sans and an unknown down below.

"Sure..." Grumbling that Sans 'ruined the mood', she got on her jeans and tank top, coming down the escalator to meet them.

"Oh, by the way..." Sans started, trailing off momentarily with a blank look crossing his skull. "... I was gonna say somethin'... But I forgot."

Toki didn’t really want to just ask Sans what was wrong in front of whoever these people were, so she tugged her fanged mouth into a smile, and stepped forwards to offer the still irate looking fish woman a handshake. Sans would either remember what he was going to say, or he wouldn’t. “I’m super sorry about this. I guess he can only go so far with his shortcuts. Anyways, I’m Tokiko Nara. You can call me Toki!”

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Alphys wasn’t far behind Undyne, but she was more hesitant in approaching Toki. Instead, she sidled closer to Sans, and glanced to him. Quietly, so that the skeleton woman wouldn’t hear, she murmured to the big skeleton. “I... is that one of the HTM’s? Her name is f-familiar. R-r-really familiar.”

"Yep. She's the Guardian Angel..." he murmured to Alphys.

Alphys eyes got wide, and she let out a pleased little ‘eeeee’ noise. “She really is? She’s that Tokiko? I heard her h-house got burned, but I haven’t seen it on the human news if she m-made it or not…”

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"Heh, Tokiko Huh? Sounds like an Anime name!" Who in the stars knew why this terrifying fish woman was a anime fan.

Sans had long ago put his money on the factor of the Otaku Girlfriend.

“Well, I am half Japanese, so I should logically have a Japanese name.”

"Well it's nice to meet you, Tokiko, I'm Undyne, Captain of the Royal Guard!" She said, reaching and gripped her hand, giving a strong shake.
"Oh! I just remembered" Sans said out loud, "Undyne has a really hard handshake, so there's the chance that-

Her grin is wide- right up until the vigorous shaking of her hand causes her arm to *pop* off at the elbow, and fall out of her sleeve. "Well, it’s nice to meet you too, Undyne. Would you, ah, mind unhanding my hand? It’s kind of handy and I really do need it back at some point…"

Surprisingly enough, Undyne lifted the arm up, looked at it for a moment, before she started to laugh. "Holy shit! This hasn't happened since Papyrus!"

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That went better than he had hoped. Knowing now that Toki wasn't going to freak out, Sans returned to addressing Alphys. "It did. To the ground, and nope, Pops saved her and we brought her back here to recover." Sans explained, before he chuckled. It was hilarious how Toki took that so well.

Alphys smiled nervously, eyes flitting from her girlfriend to the smaller skeleton woman. Her fingers fiddled with themselves, but she managed a tittering laugh once Undyne began to cackle. “Ah… it’s good to see that she made the change. There was an older human who didn’t manage to survive her change on the news this morning… I w-was hoping the G-Guardian Angel would be all right… Is she handling it okay? Fire’s are s-scary.”

"That's unfortunate..." He sighed, before he turned his grin to Alphys. "Well, she recovered well enough, but she's got a bad fear of fire until she can get the incident out of her head." he explained, watching Undyne reach out and help re-attach the bone to the skeleton woman’s arm.

“I h-heard you say she had a p-panic attack.” The yellow dinosaur watched the two of them quietly, happy that Undyne hadn’t decided that she disliked the skeleton. Alphys had never seen a female skeleton before. “W-was it the lava in Hotland?”

Sans nodded. "She locked up in panic. I had to drag her back to the hotel to snap her out of it.”

The reptilian monster nods faintly, running a sweaty hand down her shirt to wipe it clean. “T-that can happen. You d-did good. The best thing you can do with that is g-get her some place cool, and away from whatever c-caused it, and r-remind her where she is at p-p-present.”

Giving another nod, Sans watched the two talk with a grin as he fell silent.

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Toki laughed with the guard, her mouth falling open. Her teeth grinded, sending sparks across her and Undyne, as she laughed. “I heard it happened to Papyrus too. Super glad that I got warned before hand.”

Once her arm was back in it's socket, the skeleton rolled her shoulder, and grinned up at the sharp-toothed fish lady. “Thanks, Undyne. You’re pretty cool. So what does the Captain of the Royal Guard do?”

"Well before the barrier was broken. My job was to hunt down humans.” She said with a loose shrug.

“It was? That sounds… fun?” Hunting humans wasn’t her idea of fun, but the monsters were desperate to get out of the barrier. They did what they had to- and she wasn’t going to judge them for it. “So… Alphys? Is Alphys your giiiiirlfriend~?”
Undyne stiffened slightly, single eye inspecting her critically, and then she huffed. She gave a sharp-toothed grin. "Yeah! She is!"

“It’s really cute.” She smiles up at her calmly. “Again, I’m super sorry Sans and I interrupted your, ah…” Well, her face flushed a silly green, and she scrubbed her claws against the back of her skull awkwardly. “Well, your fun.” Well, wasn’t that embarrassing. “Heh. We’ll head out when he thinks he’s rested enough for another shortcut. I still want that tour of Waterfall, even if Hotland didn’t turn out so well.”

"You had an issue with Hotland? Heh that makes two of us." She said with a 'fufufufu'.

“Ah…” She tucks her hands into her pocket, and scuffs her toes again. “You could say that. Heh. Magma makes me think of less pleasant things. Don’t mind the heat, since it really just goes right through me now, but what comes with it… not so good with it.”

She nodded in agreement, and cast a glance to Sans. "Well, you should stop dragging your feet" She cackled,

"Yeah, yeah, Undyne." He chuckled, "Alright, I’m going. Come on, Miss Toki."

Toki nodded, smiling at Undyne again, and approached the skeleton and the little yellow dino. She smiled, and waved slightly. “Sorry about not properly introducing myself- your girlfriend is very nice, Alphys. I’d love to hang out with you guys later, when we’re not intruding on your time.”

“I-I-I-it’s n-n-no problem, I a-a-a-assure you.” She gave the HTM a nervous smile, and shakily offered her hand. When Toki shook it, Alphys relaxed, and giggled quietly. “I h-h-hope you like Waterfall.”

“I’m sure I will.” She smiles wider, and lets the yellow monster go. Padding to Sans, Toki links arms with him, and braces herself for the teleport. “Also, what’s this Miss Toki stuff, Sans? That’s what Papyrus calls me- you always call me Toki.”

"Heh, don't worry about it." he looked to the girlfriends, then cackled, and flared his magic, sending them to where the heat of Hotland met the gentle moist air of Waterfall.

The change of temperature was jarring- and it was this sort of weird, hot and chillingly wet sort of air that was surprising. She blinked, feeling that she was probably going to end up soaked to the bone from condensation at one point or another, and eased herself from his arms. She glanced around- the fires of Hotland were obvious, and she only flitted her gaze over them for a moment. The opposite direction must be Waterfall then.

She grins at him, and pads off, tugging the legs of her pants up as the floor got soggier and soggier. No need to get one of her few pairs of clothes completely soaked. “You’re going to get your slippers soaked.”

"Nah, i’ll be okay" he chuckled, "My Pantlegs are gonna get wet too, so why sweat it..." Though he doesn't mean it as he quickly got his slippers off and into his hand, holding them close as he started into the water.

Toki rolls her eyes, and chuckles. She slips into the cool water, and shivers. Something churns in her bones instinctively, and the water around her heats. Brows furrowing, she looks perplexed, and steps down into a colder spot. The same churning feeling, and then the water was warmer. Huh. “Eh, a little water never hurt anyone.” Not anyone that she knew, anyway. She places a smile on her face anyway, and plods through the water regardless of her warming it instinctively. “The water’s a little
cooler than the river behind the house. It’s actually— is that glowing coming from down that way?”

He nodded, smiling. ”Just you wait.” Walking with her through waterfall, the large skeleton couldn’t hide his chuckles. ”Though... I've gotten something special in mind to visit before the pools.”

“So cryptic,” she chuckles. A grin tugs at her teeth, and she half-lids her sockets as she peers at him. Mischief bubbles in her chest- and then she’s kicking a small splash of water in his direction with a lighthearted laugh. “And where did you have in mind?”

He looked at her with a chuckle, then he turned, dodging her failed attempt at a splash easily enough. ”Oh... heh... Just you wait.”
"You're kidding me." She stared down at the small collection of them at their feet.

He chuckled. “I am not kidding you."

"What did you say these things are called?"

Caeruleus chuckled softly. "Temmies."

“They’re… adorably creepy.” And they were. They reminded her of something akin to a dog, or a cat. Maybe a fox? But that face… it kept moving and just… It looked disjointed. She shivered, which was slightly from the chill of the wet moss sinking into her toes. She sinks down in front of one of them though, a kind smile tugging at her teeth. Creepy or not, everything deserves a chance at kindness. “Ah… hello, Temmie is it?”

"hOi! I'M TEMMIE!"

“Hi Temmie. I’m Toki. How are you?”

"hOi! I'm G00d!" they yelped happily.

“That’s good.” Toki smiles at the Temmie kindly, and then straightens. She latches onto Cae’s jacket, and peers up at him. “You said the Temmies ran a shop…?” Not like she could buy anything- she didn’t have monster currency.

He nodded once, and pointed a nearby entrance in the cave.

She stared at it, and shook her head. “Good gracious.” Curiosity made her want to look around inside- but she knew that going in just to sate that was rude. The cave didn’t look very big- and she’d block other potential customers if she just loitered inside and didn’t actually buy anything.

"Come on, let's see if they're having a sale on Temmie Flakes” Sans joked, heading inside of the small cave.

"hOi! Welcom to the TEM SHOP!” Squealed the Temmie inside.

Toki wasn’t sure of going inside of the shop, but if Cae was going to go in, then she supposed that she was going to as well. Besides… “What the heck are Temmie Flakes?” She ducked in after him, pinpricks flicking here and there as she examined the shop curiously.
"Hey there, Tem, just came to see what you had in stock." Sans greeted casually as he took a look at the few/only things the store offered

"Tem Has TEM FLAKES!"

Tem flakes reminded Toki of some sort of off brand cereal. She eyed it curiously, and glanced to Cae. “Tem flakes, huh? You eat them, Cae?”

"Not exactly." he said in reply. "The taste is kinda bland, but at least the texture is decent enough." he shrugged, flicking a gold piece in Temmie's direction before he picked up one of the strange flakes.

She tilted her head and watched him curiously- though regretted it as her horns scraped across the ceiling. She winced. That was actually uncomfortable. She came closer still, and peered at the flake. “It… doesn’t look very good, to be honest.” Toki was vaguely hungry, but that looked unappetizing.

Noticing her horns, he stepped back and guided her outside where she'd have plenty of room to move. "Honestly, it could taste better." he shrugged loosely.

She followed him out of the little shop easily enough, waving good-bye to the Temmie managing the shop. “I might be pretty hungry right now, but that doesn’t sound at all appetizing. No offense meant to the Temmies, of course.”

"Well then lucky for you I have just the place, we'll check it out after we've gone through Waterfall." He said with a chuckle. He pocketed the flake, and walked out of the odd village with Toki.

Toki stuck close to Cae- because Temmies were cute, but their little faces disturbed her greatly. She shivers slightly, and steps back into the mire that makes up the ground of Waterfall. “Sounds fine by me. I want to see the glow-pools first.”

"Consider us there." he chuckled, and with a flare of magic, they shortcut past the crystal chamber and the glowing paths, coming closer to where a bright, gentle glow was emitting from pools of water.

She hadn’t been expecting the shortcut, so she stumbles and shoots him a dirty look. “Little warning, please. That’s disorienting when you’re not expecting it.” Still, her ire doesn’t last.

Instead, she gasps, and heads for the pool. Good gracious that was pretty.

He lets her go admire the marvel of the pools, and gives her a few minutes before wandering over. A chuckle shakes his ribs. "Pops says the minerals in the rocks that make the water glow is also really healthy for monsterkind, so there’s actually a few pools near here that are used for washing. They’re a bit cooler than the pools here though, because the water is actually circulated, so you never bathe in the same water twice."

“That’s actually really cool.” She blinks up at him and grins. Regardless, she dips a toe into the glowing water, and hums curiously. “I may have to heckle you into teleporting me out here one of these nights so I can give it a go in soaking in the glowing stuff. I wonder if it’s good for former humans too? Cold water isn’t going to be an issue, I think. I keep warming the water I step in.”

"That'd make you one hell of a bathing partner, warming the water just by stepping in it. That'd sure feel nice."

She rolls her pinpricks at him, and enjoys the glowing water for another moment. It soaks into the rims of her pants- but oh well; now her pants glow. “I suppose it’d be handy- but I guess that means
no more swims to cool off in the summer.” She huffs a soft laugh, and leans down to run her fingers through the water. It was denser than regular water- probably from all of the minerals it had been stewing in. Part of her wondered how it would taste.

She tilts her head with a curious noise, but pulls away from the pools edge. “So where did you want to show me next?”

"The place where Pap and I grew up, actually.”

“Really? Huh. I’d love to see it!”

He nods once and offered her his hand. "Come on, we'll walk this time.”

Toki nods, smiles wider, and takes his hand. “Lead the way then, Sans.”

He nodded once and smiled, leading her over the bridges to the exit of the great tunnels.

And right into what appeared to be a snowstorm. Toki blinked, squinting against the sudden chill that froze over her damp clothes. “… You lived in a blizzard? I know the cold goes right through skeletons, but this is a little excessive.”

"It's just a fog layer. Trust me" he took her hand firmly and began into the snow.

Fog layer. Riiiight. They called this sort of weather a blizzard on the surface. She sighs, but trudges down into the white stuff. Well, starts to. The dampness of her bones makes them even colder, and she ends up bouncing from foot to foot through it, an unpleasant feeling creeping up from her heels and toes. “Coldcoldcoldcoldcoldcoldcoldcold.”

He walked with her quietly through the snow, before smiling to her as they finally passed through the layer of cold to reveal...

A small, snow-covered village.

The small village was quaint- a small handful of houses settled alongside an icy river. Kids ran here and there, until a voice called them into what she realized must be a school- or a library. Both? Probably both, with a settlement this small. Toki shuffles on her feet in the deepening snow, and tugs a smile on her face. “Well, it’s cold as balls down here, but it’s certainly pretty. You lived here?”

"Yep, c'mon." he led her into the town, greeting those who remained to call this 'home'. Soon he stopped at a larger home, a two-story cabin.

She peered at the cabin that she was led to, and tilted her head curiously. “Nice house. Yours and Papyrus’?”

"And Pops too..."

Toki nods slightly, crossing her arms and rubbing her palms against her bones lightly. For a skeleton, her feet were damn cold. “It’s a nice looking place. Looks like the one you guys had made up top- but I think you told me you’d modeled the up top house after this one. The one up top looks a little bigger though. Taller doors maybe? Either way, you guys have a nice place.”

He chuckled, "Thanks." he then unlocked the door and pushed it open, looking around before he flicked the switch to turn on the light.

Toki stepped in behind him, shaking the ice from between her tarsal bones and off of the edge of her
clothes before she slips inside. A shiver rattles her bones, and she squints as the lights blind her slightly.

He looks around, then he lets out a quiet sigh, "We'd been here... What... Fifteen years? Twenty? It's almost weird to be imagine I won't be calling this home for much longer..." he chuckled weakly.

“I’ve never moved from my home- I was born in the house you got to see, and I lived there for all of my life. I can’t imagine what it’s like to just up and move- but... at least you’re doing it with your family, right?” She pats his arm gently, and peers at the place. “Humans have a saying that home is where your heart is. Yours, I wager, rests with your family. So long as you’ve got your dad and your brother, you’ve always got your home.”

He hesitated, an odd look ghosting over his face, and then he sighed. A soft laugh bubbled up in his chest, even as his shoulders trembled. Cae’s sockets welled with something liquid.

Toki isn’t quite sure what to make of the fact that skeletons can cry, but she’s not above tugging Cae down to tuck his face into her shoulder. She pets the back of his skull with gentle claws, and rattles soothingly in her chest. Her eyes glow a soothing emerald. “’S alright to be upset. A change like this is pretty scary, I know. Up top is a big world.”

"H-Heh... t’s... Not the reason I'm cryin'... but thanks a lot..." he murmured, reaching up and wrapping his arms around her. "Shit... I'm supposed to be a grown-ass skeleton, and I'm cryin’ like a bittybones here..."

“Men are all the same- monster or human. There’s no shame in tears, for whatever reason that causes them. Bittybones, bigbones, tears aren’t a bad thing.” She hugs him all the same, tilting her head lightly with another soothing rattle. “What’s made you cry, if I can ask? Is it anything I can help?” She’d seen an almost haunted look cross his face for a split second- and if he wanted to share, then he would. If not, then she’d just help him as best she could.

"It's nothin’... Just some old nightmares coming to bother me again, I don’t need that shit right now, but you're doing a damn good job at distractin’ me from it." he chuckled, nuzzling her softly.

She thrums again and nods. Her claws trace gently over his skull, and her other hand rubs circles on his scapulas. “Nightmares are terrible things.” She hums softly. "Glad I’m helping though. Do you want to step outside?” If the house caused nightmares, it was probably best to keep him out of there. At least, by her way of thinking, it would help to ease him out of whatever was flashing through his skull if they stayed away from the cause.

"Nah.” Cae nuzzled her again, and then let her go. He steadied himself, and headed for the stairs.

Toki watched him walk with a quiet sound, but followed him to the stairs. She’s not one to snoop- so she’ll just follow him rather than wander where she shouldn’t be. “Did you want to grab some things while you’re here? I can help you carry some stuff back.” The inside of her ribcage made a great place to stuff things.

"May as well take a look at some old memories.” he chuckled softly, going to the door that was his room.

She followed closely behind, peering at this and that with soft sounds. Her feet were beginning to thaw out again, and the cold bones creaked as they began to warm. That odd churning sensation filled her bones again- and she was beginning to suspect that it was probably some sort of instinctive magic. She did have fire-based magic, after all. “Mkay. This your room?”
“Yeah, you wanna go in first?” he asked, gesturing to the darkness of the room.

“Sure!” The darkness of the room was a little odd, but it’s not like her eyes wouldn’t adjust in time. She slips in, feeling her way along the floor with her feet so she doesn’t stub her toes on anything.

And she keeps walking... and walking... and walking... even after the light of the hallway disappeared.

“Okay, Cae? What the hell? It’s really freaking dark, and there’s no way your room is this big.”

After a while of silence, she turns to try and find him, only seeing darkness around her. If she had skin, it would be crawling.

"Caeruleus?"

Suddenly a light clicks on, and she hears something.

The whirring of mechanical function. More specifically...

The treadmill she was just walking on.

Standing by the light switch, Cae gasped loudly, before he burst out laughing.

Toki just... She blinks, and lets herself be carried off of the treadmill. She crosses her arms, and shoots Cae a dirty look, though her ribs rattling loudly in amusement ruins her expression and betrays her amusement. “That was a dick move, Cae, really. Just how long were you going to let me walk on this thing?”

"Don’t ask because you would not like the answer." he cackled.

She sidles closer to him and socks him in the shoulder with a mock offended huff. “Hmph. Well, if that’s how you want to be, I guess I’ll wait for you downstairs.” She gives him a vague grin, and heads towards the door.

"Now hang on a second." A snap of his fingers and her soul is turned blue, before he pulls her back into his arms.

That was a unique sensation that was also strangely uncomfortable. She’s felt it before, she realizes- he hadn’t used this on her since the incident with Twitch and the tree. She’s tugged back across the room and into his grasp, and is thankful that it doesn’t burn so painfully this time. “I was just joking with you, Sans.” she chuckles all the same. The glow in her chest had changed- and she peeks under the collar of her shirt in confusion. “What the hell? Why is my soul blue?”

"That's what happens when I use my magic on ya'." He hums slightly, arms looping around her. "It gets turned blue."

“Huh.” She doesn’t mind as he loops his arms around her, and she trusts him enough not to kick up a fuss over him using his magic on her. “This is the same magic you used when I fell out of the tree, yeah? I recognize the sensation. At least it isn’t painful this time- last time it hurt a lot when you grabbed me.”

He nodded once against her, pressing the grin of his skull against the back of her own. "I'm just glad I wasn't wrong when I guessed it wouldn't hurt this time."

“It’s a little uncomfortable- sorta feels like you’re holding me really tight all over? But it’s not like
before. Before, it burned. Glad to know you were experimenting though.” She chuckles softly, and
squirms faintly. “You gonna let me go? I promise I won’t walk out.”

He contemplated it for a moment, but ultimately nodded. "Sure." he let her back up on her feet and
let her soul go.

She rubbed her chest as the feeling faded, and casually peered at the glow of her soul. She couldn’t
see the cracks from here… She was a little worried- she wasn’t sure that the cracks would hold up
against magic against her soul. She didn’t really want to check though- Cae didn’t know, and he
certainly did not need to worry about it. “Thanks, Cae.”

He nods, smiling gently. However he saw her look and his face belayed his worries. "Yeah...

She rubs her fingers against her collar nervously, before letting her shirt drop. She takes a deep
breath and steadies herself. If something had gone bad, she’d have felt it for sure. “So, besides
playing a trick on me with your treadmill, what did you want to look at up here?”

"Just had to get something," he said, going to his dresser and pulling out a key. "Here it is...

Toki blinks. “A key? Huh. Okay.” She glances around again, passively letting him do with it what
he needed to do, while she-... was that a trash tornado?

Self sustaining, it appeared. How on earth…?

"Alright, you can go ahead and wait on the couch." he told her, "I won’t be long.”

At the dismissal, she nods and offers him a cheery wave. He could do what he needed to do- she’d
behave herself while he was busy. Heading back down the stairs, Toki doesn’t bother sitting on the
couch. Rather, she goes to wait by the window, and watches the snow. Her toes had warmed up
again, but she wasn’t eager to go trouncing back out into the chill again either. Hm…

Well, when he got down here, she had a plan that would work to keep her toes from freezing again.

He was gone for a while, but soon came back, smiling softly, "Alright... If you wanna head home?”

He’d find her in the same place as she was before, watching the snow. “I’m ready to head back,
yeah. I think I’ll go raid the Castle kitchens for some tea.” She could really go for some of her honey-
tarts… But all of her honey that hadn’t been shipped had been in the house, or in the process of
being bottled. She sighs softly, and pulls away from the window to meet him at the front door. “But
first, before we go back out in the snow…”

"Hm?” He glanced to her. "What’s up?”

She grins at him, and trails her fingers along his shoulder. Toki steps around him gently, heading
towards his back. “Well, since it’s so bloody cold outside, and no one thought to warn me about it…
I had an idea. Rather than demanding your slippers- I thought maybe I’d just hitch a ride until we got
out of the ice and snow. You familiar with a piggyback ride, Sans?”

At first he wasn’t sure that he heard her right. But turns out he did indeed- Sans chuckled quietly,
and crouched down slightly. "Alright, c’mon you.”

Toki just beams at him. She hadn’t had a piggyback ride since she’d outgrown her step dad’s height
years ago. Looping her arms around his neck, she clamors on his back. It’s a little awkward, looping
her legs around him- because it’s literally her bones looping over his pelvic bones- but she manages.
Resting her chin on his shoulder, she chuckles against his skull. “At least I’m not that heavy?”
He chuckled and looped his hands behind her femurs. "I’d say you’re light as a feather, except you’re more like light as a bone."

“Heh, light as a bone. Good one.” She chuckles. She yawns, her imaginary stomach rumbling silently with the hopes of getting something to eat back at the castle. Her teeth click together, and sparks flick over the side of his skull. “Agh, sorry. I keep forgetting that my teeth spark like that. Hm… Thinking I might pester the cooks to let me make some pasta.”

Cae gave a soft rumble that vibrated up into her back, and left the house with her. After she nudged the door shut for him, he plodded out into the snow.

Toki giggled as a thought crossed her mind. She leaned closer, leeching off the warmth of his jacket as she whispered to him. “Hey Cae? Sometimes I feel like such a whore for pasta. I just want to eat all of it. Does that make me a… pastatute?”

"I wouldn't put it pasta you~"
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Strider's notes: heh, hell, it's hard to believe we're already at chapter 10. Fuck, time goes fast when you're having fun writing. :D Be prepared for some random ships to happen-SilverWing is a huge Kingding's shipper, so that's going to appear here and there pretty frequently. heh. Skelegoat fun. Anywho, this chapter hedges into some theories on how skeletons have 'mass' under their clothes. The running theory here is that once their magic settles and sort of builds up, it lingers around them and takes whatever shape they'd have as a 'body' of sorts. So, Pap is this buff hunk of yum, Sans is gonna be a pudgy butterball of smex, and Toki's going to have dat ass.

SilverWing notes: I am a filthy Kingdings shipper and i love the idea of these giant bara dads just being cute together. Also, here's the list of monster heights with character's thus far.
Toki - 6' without horns, 6'9'' with horns
Caeruleus - 6'6''
Aliquam - 7'6''
Tenebris - 8'6''
Asgore - 10' without horns, 12' with horns.

She was finally getting to go home again- well, soon. It was going to be a long trip by cart, but it was better than Cae trying to teleport them all back one at a time. He’d probably exhaust himself with that amount of effort. Regardless, Toki was ecstatic. Yeah, home was burnt to the ground- but it was high time that she gets around to cleaning up the ashes that remained.

Everything would be made again- it would just take time. She’d see about cleaning out the shed and staying in that until she could get a house built. Or just use a tent- whatever was easiest, she supposed.

Toki grunts, accepting a crate that was handed to her and toting it to the back of the wagon. She was tasked with arranging the crates- which wasn’t all that bad of work, and it made her feel marginally less useless than usual. Problem was, she was running out of stacking space rapidly- and the cart was filling up. She pitied the horses that would be pulling it. “You know, if you could sweet talk your brother into teleporting my truck here, we could get all of this moved and back to my place in like six hours?”

"I'm afraid I don’t think he'd be able to transport something as large as a truck..." Aliquam replied.

She ducked her head out the back of the transport to give Aliquam a smile and a soft laugh. “Well, that does make sense. Trucks are big and pretty heavy.” And her truck wasn’t a small rig by any means. She takes another box, puts it in place, and then hops out the back when she’s run out of standing space. “Ah, I can’t wait to get home. I’ve got so much to get done.”

"Indeed" he rumbled, "And thankfully, we've got a simply solution to our current residential dilemma." he said with a smile. "So we can move you back home, then rebuild what was lost."

“Indeed! I wonder if my camping tent is still good… The weather should hold through the rest of this
month, for camping outdoors.” She finishes packing the back of the cart, and gives it a content look as she passes her sleeve over the front of her skull to collect the few drops of sweat she’d earned. Lots of supplies for the monsters back home, which was very pleasing indeed. “I think we’re done with this one. Any more, and it probably won’t roll.”

"Miss Toki.” He moved over to her and took her hands, smiling at her warmly. "That’s not what I meant.” he said simply.

It took her a moment, before her eyes brightened. Her fingers curled over his gloved hands, and she beamed at him just as jubilantly. “Oh! Oh Ali, you’re so sweet. I couldn’t impose though- you guys just got the house, you’ll want to settle in and get acquainted with it without guests, I’m sure.”

He shook his head and pulled her hands closer, beaming at her happily. "I don’t think I’d have it any other way, Miss Toki!”

“If you’re sure your brother and father wouldn’t mind, then I guess it wouldn’t hurt if I stayed with you three until I can get my home rebuilt.” She could take the couch, if need be. She’d be less likely to ruin someone’s pillows that way. “Well, that’s settled then. Should we go tell the King that we’re ready to head off?” It was getting to be more towards evening- the darkening skies above hinting at a possible summer rain storm- but setting out in the dark wasn’t really a problem. Flashlights existed for a reason.

He nodded eagerly, straightening and releasing her fingers with a broad grin. "Very well, let's go find Father!"

Well, Gaster and the King did both need to know. Either way it worked. She shrugged faintly as he let her fingers go, and smiled broadly up at him. “We’ll check the garden first.” She knew it was just a bit off from the Judgement Hall. She hadn’t gone in there often- it seemed like such a private place to the King, even if the Garden also doubled as his throne room. “Asgore sure loves his flowers, doesn’t he?”

The walk to the throne room was thankfully short. "Indeed he does. He loves gardening.” Papyrus all but chirped. Laughter floated up to them from the throne room, and the tall skeleton slowed with a confused sound. "Nyeah?"

Toki tilted her head curiously. “Should we wait? Sounds like Asgore has a guest.”

"... Well, perhaps...” Papyrus murmured in consideration. "Father did say he wanted to talk to Asgore."

She nods. “Then we can just send him a text to let him know we’re ready. You have your phone on you?”

"Of course.” The larger skeleton was better at texting than she was- but he had more practice.

Without warning, a ringtone went off from down in the throne room, and there was an ’Ah!' from that general direction.

“Well, that tells us where your dad is.” Toki snorts. Idly she rolls up the sleeves of her sweater, settling the rolled cuffs about at her elbow.

"Should we still wait to go visit?”

She sighs, and shakes her head. “Nah. Lets go down- we’ll just be quick.” She gives a wide smile and heads down the stairs to the throne room cheerfully.
He chuckled and followed her, listening as they went.

"Who was that?"

"Ah, just my son. He was letting me know we're ready to go."

"A Pity, old friend. I'd so hate to watch you go."

"Your majesty, I'm a busy man, and you know that..."

"Oh yes, I know~"

"A-Asgore!"

The sound of Tenebris' laughter rang out into the hallway and Papyrus felt a quiet chuckle grow in his non-existent throat.

"It's been a while since I've heard Father that happy." he commented in a quiet voice.

It left little to wonder exactly what they were doing- and Toki was pretty sure they were going to walk in on something dirty. She swallows down non-existent saliva, and flashes a smile to Papyrus. “He sounds very happy… Maybe he wants to stay when we go back?” She wasn’t sure that he would actually stay if she mentioned it- they were still uncertain about the cracks in her soul, and Gaster was the only soul specialist she knew of.

"Perhaps, I’m not sure though." he said quietly, "He cares about your health greatly." he then smiled at her. "Don't worry, I’m sure he and the king are just having a moment to themselves before Father leaves."

Toki doesn’t have the chance to really respond- she peeks into the throne room and pauses, blocking Aliquam from going inside with her body.

Tenebris had his back to a wall, his head tilted up as he was still laughing, his hands entwined with the king's mane-like fur.

Asgore was standing over him, large furry arms trapping the smaller monster between him and the wall. His grinning face was currently buried in the scientist's neck, tickling him by nuzzling him with his furry snout between soft pecks on the white skin. At that moment, he seemed to grant the other mercy and as he pulled his head back.

Tenebris was able to catch his breath. "I- hahaha... I'll never understand h-how you're able to do th-that... normally I’m not ticklish!" The sound from Gaster was undeniably a giggle of some kind.

"I have my ways, old friend." Asgore then leaned his head up and rested it on Tenebris' forehead, letting glowing purple eyes gently look into loving blue

The snuggly pile of monsters in the flowers has her stepping right back out. Her face burns- because she just had the oddest sensation similar to walking in on her parents in the act, even if Asgore and Gaster hadn’t been doing anything dirty. She doesn’t let Aliquam go far enough to see, before she tugs him back and towards the stairs. “We’ll give them a little while before we go bother them. They’re, ah, pretty busy in there. So how about you and I go raid the kitchens? I dunno about you, but I’m kinda hungry."

"Nyeh...? Well, if you're sure..." Papyrus didn’t fight her as she urged him back up the stairs. "I could make you a batch of my famous spaghetti!"
Toki links her arm with his, and gives him a wide grin as they head back up. Going up stairs is easier than going down, and thusly goes faster. Once they’re back in the hall, she’s tugging him quietly towards the kitchens. “I was actually thinking I could cook up a noodle dish for us both. It’s one of my favorites concerning pasta. It’s probably not as good as your spaghetti, but I think you’d like it all the same.”

"Might as well give it a try, yes?"

She nods. “If all else fails, we can scrap it and you can make spaghetti. Heh. You mind helping me make it? I’m not very good at dicing onion and garlic up as small as I need it to be.”

"But of course!" he grinned proudly. "No one dices onions and garlic up quite like The Great Papyrus!"

She poked his bicep playfully, and laughed whole-heartedly. The kitchens loom ahead of them, and she finds them blessedly empty. Good. “I look forwards to seeing your dicing job then.” Toki takes the time to hunt down a large pot. She couldn’t find any chicken here, but she could just make it without the meat added in it. It would still taste good either way. “I am surprised the kitchen actually has the noodles that I usually use. I wouldn’t think that you’d have Ziti here.”

"We have a lot of different kinds of food, More than what a human would assume!"

“I am impressed.” She grins happily. It takes a little bit to find what she needs, but soon she’s got chicken broth simmering in the pot, and she’s finished cutting the broccoli that has to go into it. She’d handed Aliquam two onions and a couple cloves of garlic for him to dice up. “Once you’ve got it all diced, just dump it into the pot.” She starts grating the asiago cheese, grumbling as her bones catch on the grater. Really it shouldn’t be surprising that they had all sorts of food here. The king probably ordered some of practically every item so that the monsters could try all sorts of human foods.

Which would explain why they had twelve kinds of cheese in the fridge.

"Yes Ma’am!" He grabbed a cutting board and a knife, and once he rolled up his sleeves, and washed his hands, he started chopping the veggies with the skill of a professional.

She watches him from the corners of her eye and ends up smiling quietly. He was very at home in the kitchen- probably even more than she was. “I used to make this all the time for me and my brothers before they ended up moving out. They loved it. Like me, Roshi has problems eating tomato-based sauces, so he was always so excited when I would make this on my turn to cook for family dinner night.”

"Oh dear... I didn't realize you had a problem digesting tomatoes..." he now had a light frown on his face. "I wish I had known sooner."

Toki edged over to bump her hip gently to his as she finished the cheese. The feeling of bone on bone was expected, but it was slightly muffled. Weird. She chanced a glance down- was she filling her clothes out more? It appeared to be so. That was... weird. Perhaps it was a skeleton thing- after all, Cae was just bone, but he still managed to be quite ‘round’. “I never exactly put it out there. I still enjoy your spaghetti regardless, you goober. It was quite alright, I promise.”

He smiled at her, and bumped her hip back before he picked up the cutting board, going to the stove and pushing the cut onions and garlic into the pot. Once his hands were washed once more, Aliquam dried them and donned his gloves once more, flexing his fingers in the comfortable fabric.
She grinned at him, and hummed contently. She slid over to the pot, stirring it gently and watching it boil. It took a few minutes, but she was pleased with the resulting smell that wafted up. Adding in the broccoli and the noodles, Toki carefully poured in a little bit of heavy whipping cream, adding a pinch of salt and pepper, and sat back to let the broccoli and the noodles cook. The aroma that was wafting from the bubbling pot was heavenly. “We’ve got probably ten minutes before the noodles are done.”

"Alright, wanna chat until then?"

“Well of course!” She chuckles. Toki sidles up next to him, content to lean on the counter as she keeps track of time. “Are you excited to finally get to move into your house? The whole incident kind of put a damper on the mood.”

"Of course we are! With you living with us, it’ll feel that more at home too."

“You are so unbelievably sweet sometimes, you know that?” Gently resting her head against his upper arm, Tokiko hummed softly. “I’m excited to get back. It’s going to be pretty cool living with you guys for a while. I promise to try and not put any holes in your couch with my horns.”

He reached up and began to stroke her head gently. "Don’t worry about it," he murmured softly, "It's an old couch."

“Old couch or not, I still don’t want to poke holes in it. My horns are a bit obnox- ow, Pap, careful with the crack. It still hurts.” It wasn’t a stabbing pain when he touched it- but more of a dull ache. It was getting better, thankfully- but touching it still was unpleasant. Toki hums faintly. “I doubt horns are like finger nails… Too bad- it’d be easier to keep them short.”

He watched out for the crack, stroking the smooth, unaffected bone around it instead. "They may be, but I don’t know."

“I’d rather not test it. They’re not always sensitive, but I’d still rather not risk it.” She glances up at him and sighs softly. The soft strokes over her skull is horribly relaxing, and she finds herself slumping into him slightly. Idly, she steals his other hand, and examines his bones above his gloves. He had such large hands- but she wasn’t sure if that was just glove, or the actual bone under the material. The bones of his wrist and forearm were a lot thicker than her own- but she was a human proportioned skeleton. Papyrus was pretty much a giant.

He watched her then let out a soft ‘Nyeh heh heh’ and flexed his hand for her, causing the fabric over his arm to flex with it. "See something you like?"

How… How did that even work? It looked as if he had muscles under the fabric, but there was just bone. She looks perplexed, until his words register, and she flushes a bright green. “Ah- well, I was noticing that you have very nice arms, so I suppose I do indeed see something I like.” The flirt falls from her mouth before she can stop it. Toki clears her throat faintly, and examines his arm again. “I was also noticing the difference in our bones. You have really thick bones- mine look like twigs next to yours.”

He laughed at that. "I always made sure to be tip top with my physical stature. As a royal guard member, I must always be at my best."

She nods slightly, shifting to face him. She investigates his arms again- and realizes that most of his shirt fits a torso, and not just actual bone. “This defies so much logic, Pap. You’re a skeleton. But you look like you’ve got muscle under your shirt. This makes no sense. Unless you have an actual body under there?” Inquisitive fingers brush up his arm and to his bicep- but she doesn’t go further.
She doesn’t want to invade his privacy too much—she was already feeling up his arms as it was.

Damn, he had nice arms.

"Oh but the answer is so simple, my dear." he chuckled, "The answer to your worries." he then turned and lifted up his shirt, revealing only his spine and the bottom few of his ribs "Magic!"

She felt that this was probably the equivalent of being mildly flashed, but laughed softly anyways. Her finger passed through what had been solid with a shirt on, only to feel nothing at all where his abdomen would be. She idly touches one of his lower ribs—holy crap, it’s like nearly three fingers wide. He was built like a rather tall tank. “This is honestly fascinating. But Magic I suppose is the simplest answer— and it’s going to be the answer to a lot of my questions as time goes on, I wager.”

He tensed and shivered as she touched his rib, "N-Nyeh..." Thick, powerful, and apparently sensitive.

And like lightning, her fingers retreated, and her face exploded into a flush. “I am so sorry about that. Curiosity gets the better of me sometimes— I shouldn’t have touched.”

"Nyeh, it... it's okay... I'm just a little sensitive..." he murmured.

“It was a little insensitive of me just to shove my digits in your ribs though.” She grimaces faintly, and urges him to let his shirt back down. “Very sorry about…” Fondling his rib? “About disregarding your personal space. I’ll make sure not to do it again, I promise.” She’s a flustered mess—so she steps away to check on the pasta on the stove while he collects himself.

He smiled gently and shook his head, "Ah, don’t worry about it." a small rub over the rib she had touched and he lowered his shirt, letting the energy pooling in his right eye fade away before he settled down and walked up to stand beside her. "It's alright, you'll learn that our ribcages, including yours, is rather sensitive..."

“I’m pretty sure I’ve got a lot to learn about being a skeleton.” She flashes him a shy smile, stirring the pot with a soft hum. She dumps in the cheese and the last of the whipping cream, and leaves it to simmer for the last few minutes that the noodles need. She’s aware of him being close, and gently bumps his hip with her own. “Good thing I’ve got you to help me learn, yeah?”

He blinked, and then he chuckled. He bumps her back again just as gently as she did him. "Of course, miss Toki~"

Her face cools, and she’s glad her blush is fading. When the dish is properly thickened, Toki makes a pleased noise and turns off the burner. She doesn’t bother with oven-mitts to handle the hot pan—instead she just carefully nabs it about the bottom and lifts it. It tingles unpleasantly against her bones, but only reminds her of holding a slightly overly warm mug of cocoa. It was, she figured, a nifty trick of her magic—she’d figured she could handle extremely warm things for a short amount of time.

Too long, and it burned regardless of how she handled it. She settles it off of the burners, and grins up at Aliquam. “Will you snag some bowls please? This pasta is too saucy for plates.”

He tensed up for a moment, watching her worriedly. "A-Aren’t you worried you're going to burn your hands?!"

She blinks at her palms, and shakes her head. “Well... if I hold on too long it burns, but I figured it was something to do with my magic? Or something related to it. Could be my high HP making me not notice it? I don’t really know.”
Once he hands her the bowls, she sets to dishing up two decent portions of the noodles and sauce. There’s plenty left over, so the other denizens of the castle would no doubt get several meals from it as well. She offers him a bowl with a spoon, and cautions carefully. “It’s hot- you’ve got gloves, but still, don’t burn yourself.”

"They're called mitts." he rolled his eyes and cackled, then he took a spoonful and blew on it, before he put the spoon behind his teeth.

She watched him intently, hopping her backside onto the counter so she’d have somewhere to sit. She didn’t have a desire to flop into the dining room adjacent to the kitchen- so the counter worked just fine. He had an easier time working the spoon no doubt- she had to work it between her fangs. Interlocking teeth meant she had to widen her mouth further to open it for things- and she really didn’t want to make a mess of her sweater if she dribbled sauce down onto it. “Mitts, gloves, hand-shoes, whatever they are, they work for blocking heat.” She winks at him, enjoying her mouthful. The garlic blended well with the chicken and the onion, and the cream and cheese made the sauce thick and rich. Hells yes, she had missed this.

Her eyes glow brighter, and following an unconscious instinct from when she had been human, a glowing green tongue forms to pass over her teeth and keep her from making a mess of her face.

He smiles proudly, "Already summoning your ecto-tongue!"

"Eh- whut?" She pauses mid bite, and peers at him curiously. “Ecto-tongue?"

"Look!" he pointed to her mouth, then he laughed. "You summoned one of these!" he then opened his mouth and his own tongue stuck out.

It was glowing orange, like the gleam in his eye, and Toki paused for what was probably a rude amount of time. She just stared. That… Could all Skeletons do that? Hell, that’s actually really cool, and explains how skeletons might eat ‘nice cream’. “I… huh…” She focuses, recalling the urge to make sure she didn’t have any of their meal lingering on her teeth, and summons it again. She sticks it out, and peers down at it. “Mine is green? Really weird.” She reaches up to poke at her tongue. Well, she could certainly feel her fingers touching it. It sort of reminded her of very firm jelly, or a soft rubber. “Well, alright then, I’m learning new things every day.” With that, she shoves another spoonful into her mouth, and makes a pleased sound.

He laughed again, then took another spoonful into his mouth, "This tastes fantastic!"

She laughs happily, and downs her meal fairly quickly. It was best when it was hot, or cold. Not in-between. In-between in an odd lukewarm state had a weird taste- so she was intent on devouring it before it cooled too much. “I’m glad you enjoy it. Is it almost as good as your spaghetti?"

"It tastes almost as good as it!" He announced happily. "Emphasis on 'Almost', nyeh heh heh!"

She laughed softly as she finished hers, tipping the bowl up so she could drink the last of the sauce. It warmed her core as her magic converted it to energy, the energy solidifying around her bones. Her magic was still ‘settling’ as it was. “Well, I think that’s a high compliment then! Nearly as good as your spaghetti is probably the best I could hope for.”

He smiled down at her, and he gave a soft laugh as he pulled her close into a gentle hug. "Haha..."

She leans into the hug, holding her bowl out to the side so their clothes don’t get dirty from it as she returns his hug with one arm. How he could feel so solid and not like bones was beyond her. “You done, Pap? I’ll handle the dishes if you want to put the rest of the food into some Tupperware.”
"But of course!" He replied. He gave her a squeeze, and then let her go as he went to collect the Tupperware.

Toki took his bowl as she hopped off the counter. She headed for the sink, turning the water on as hot as it would go. She rolls her sleeves up past her elbows, settling it around her upper arms. The cheese in the dish liked to stick to whatever it was in- so she had to work to get it off of the utensils and bowls. The pot would be a mess- but she wasn’t going to just leave dishes here for someone else to handle. Her mess, she would clean it.

Idly, she hums a quiet tune, content and happy to keep herself busy with the dishes. Bubbles from the soap clung to her radius and ulna, and she couldn’t help giggling at the odd sensation. It was pretty ticklish.

He came back after a little with the Tupperware, humming a tune as he loaded the food into the bowls. "One, two, and three, all nicely sealed up to keep the heat in. Nyeh heh heh!"

“I’m sure someone will enjoy it.” She smiles over at him, and comes to collect the empty pot from him. She sets it under the running water, letting it fill up as she adds soap and gets to work. The clean bowls are set to the side on a drying rack where they could air-dry. “Ah, I had forgotten how the noodles like to scorch to the bottom of the pot when I make this dish.” Her claws scrape burned bits of noodle off the bottom of the pot, and she tosses it into the trash so it doesn’t clog up the sink.

Once the pot is clean and rinsed, she sets it to the side and sets to work rinsing the bubbles out from between her bones.

"Mmm, that's always annoying." he huffed, stacking the tubs of food carefully on the counter before he smiled at her, "You just need a good wire brush and it'll come right off!"

“True, but some pots and pans you can't use wire brushes on. It ruins the inside of the pan.” When she’s bubble free, Toki turns off the water and watches her arms. They shimmer green for a second as the churning sensation strikes again in her bones, and she focuses it. Steam wafts up from her arms, and suddenly she’s dry again. Heh. "I guess fire magic has its uses…” She muses quietly, watching her palms thoughtfully.

He blinked once, then he let out a 'Nyeh heh heh heh heh!' "Very impressive!" he exclaims proudly.

“It sort of does that on it’s own.” She informs him quietly. “Not sure how to control it yet.” Idly, she rolls her sleeves down and tucks her fingers into her pockets. Toki gives Papyrus a smile and leans against the counter. “Hopefully it doesn’t go beyond steaming away water.” If actual flames happened, she would probably figuratively shit herself.

"Well, you'll no doubt get the hang of it, you're already doing so well with your magic!” he assured her cheerfully.

She wasn’t so certain. Her eyes dim, and she sighs softly behind her teeth. “I sure hope so.”

"Don't be discouraged, Miss Toki! Stay determined!"

She arches a brow at him and chuckles softly. “I’m not discouraged, Pap. I’m just… nervous. My magic is fire based, and, well… Fire and I don’t really get along very well now.”

"But facing your fear, and harnessing it for yourself, is the best way to conquer it!"

He looked so certain of that, so absolutely sure that it would work. She gave him a soft smile, eyes glowing affectionately at him. Sometimes he was just so… so good and kind that it blew her away.
“Sometimes it doesn’t work like that, Pap. Sometimes when something traumatic happens, it’s harder than just facing it and getting over it.”

"I know, but still, there's no point in feeling pity for you when I KNOW you can overcome this, even if you need a little help from a friend."

She simply chuckles, the sound a soft and quiet murmur against his exuberance. “Sometimes problems like this don’t ever go away, Papyrus.” PTSD wasn’t something that really went away permanently, she knew.

He looked at her for a moment, a small frown growing to his usual previous look. Aliquam sighed after a moment, and rubbed his skull softly as he looked away. "Yeah... I gotcha..." he then looked back to her, gaze locking with her own with a firm resolution. "But you know what? I'm still here for you, and I’ll be here if you ever feel ready to face your inner demons."

Inner demons seemed to be an apt name for it. She smiles at him kindly, and opens her arms in a silent request for a hug. “I know you will be. I’ll try- but there’s other things I have to worry about first, before I start conquering personal demons.” The cracks in her soul took top priority. She didn’t want to leave him without hope though. She’s hesitant- that much is obvious by the glow of her eyes- but she speaks with a calm honesty. “You and I can work on conquering my fears though. I don’t know how, but we’ll work on a way, okay? Maybe start with something small… A candle or something.”

Taking a step closer, he hugged her and nuzzled his skull to hers, avoiding the cracked scar between her horns completely as he did. "Heh... Yeah, A candle sounds perfect to start with." he agreed.

Toki sighed softly, and relaxed into him. Her arms looped around his middle, and she tucked her face against his collarbone. She’s grateful that her horns slope slightly, or he’d have a face full of them with his current position. “We’ll work on it when we’re at home.” Where she could feel safest, more or less.

"Safe and sound..." he agreed gently, rubbing her back softly.

She shivers as his mitts rove over her back, rubbing over the back of her ribs and spine. “Safe and sound.” She echoes softly in agreement.
After the gentle pep talk from Papyrus, Toki found herself feeling light-hearted and made the effort to be more positive around the skeletal monsters, if only so she didn’t keep worrying them. The wagon that was started by Papyrus and Toki had been filled with resources for the townspeople, and the escort accompanying Toki set out to return to their growing, young village.

It was a two-day travel, as they did have to stop for frequent rests for their escort’s sake, but they made great time and were nearly there now. One could only walk so long before they tired out. Ever one to persevere, Papyrus led the wagons with bone spear in hand. He kept an eye on the right side of the road and roadsides with a watchful gaze, while Sans watched the side that Papyrus could not see.

There was a second wagon behind the first, with an open back so the riders could see anything approaching from behind. Anymore this road was mostly free of cars, because people didn’t want to risk running across monsters on their own. The second wagon wasn’t so much of a guard wagon as it was a transport wagon- and on it sat Toki, Tenebris, and one more. One who was currently in the middle of a silly story where the one telling it was the punch line.

"And so I pull back, my mane and face is soaking wet, and I have lilies caught on my horns!"
Asgore laughs, "Then, when I think it couldn't get any worse, the froggit leapt right onto my nose, as if to rub it in that it clearly bested me!"

Toki’s eye sockets beaded with tears as she laughed into her sweater sleeve. Asgore had proven to be surprisingly good at telling stories, and his humor always seemed to fit right in with whatever he was telling. The long ride had been made bearable with his stories. “Oh my god, Asgore, if I still had lungs I’d be dying! What happened next?”

"Well then it's certainly a good thing you don’t have lungs, I’d so hate to see someone so young perish like that." he said with a heaping pile of concern in his voice.

It took him a bit before Tenebris patted his shoulder, finding his voice between his own bouts of laughter. "Old friend, it's a figure of speech” the king was quickly reassured, "She wouldn't actually die."

"Oh... That's good to know." the king sighed, before he smiled at Toki, going to resume his story now that he was reassured that there were no lives on the line. "So, thankfully not too many people
saw it, it allowed me to sneak to my room and dry off properly, though I smelled like the courtyard pond for a few days," he chortled.

Toki laughed, dabbling at her eye sockets. She didn’t bother correcting Gaster- because certain humans could die from laughing too hard, if it triggered an asthma attack- and instead tuned in for the rest of the story. “Heh, well, smelling like a pond isn’t too bad. There are worse things to smell like, trust me. Skunk is one of them. Heh. Speaking of. I have a skunk story- if you guys know what skunks are?”

The two exchanged looks, and then they looked back at her. "No, I’m afraid I don’t"

"If you'd please, fill us in so we know what we're missing."

“Okay, so, skunks are a mammal in America. They’re short, pretty close to the ground, and are black with a white stripe. They’re actually really cute, sort of like a strange shaped cat, and make great pets if you can get the scent glands removed as babies. Anyways, they have these scent glands under their tails that they can shoot a rather pungent odor from. It’s such a bad stink that it takes weeks to wear off.” She grins at them.

“So my family and I took a trip to America when I was little. We were there for a week to visit the other side of my family. My eldest little brother, Ryushi, was a pretty animal friendly kid, meaning he could charm practically any animal he got his hands on. He was playing out back of my dad’s grandparents place. Lo and behold, he gets a hold of a skunk, and manages to sway it into relaxing in his arms. He had a habit of showing my mom any animal that he found, so he brought the skunk inside the house- where naturally, it freaked out at the number of people in the kitchen. We smelled like skunk for the entire duration of our visit.”

"Oh dear." Tenebris smirked at that, covering his mouth with his fist as he resisted a cackle. Asgore allowed his to escape, chuckling with mirth. "My my, that's quite unfortunate..." He commented.

"It really was,” She laughed, glancing at the trees around them. They were thinning out- and she could see a familiar stretch of road ahead. Her eyes brightened eagerly. “Ryushi was so upset that he refused to leave the bathroom for three hours. He thought he was bringing in some sort of strange cat.”

"Oh that's unfortunate..."

"Ryushi... He's one of your siblings..." Tenebris questioned, folded his arms as he took a moment to think. "Hm..."

“Yeah. I’m the eldest of nine- he’s my eldest brother. I’ve got seven other brothers.” She grins at him. “I had a pretty big family. Heh. Sometimes the house would get lonely without them. Before the barrier broke, I had been living by myself for probably eight years. Maybe nine?”

Tenebris eyes narrowed slightly, and he let out soft ‘hm’.

"Tenebris, are you alright, old friend?"

"Yes... Just... had a thought..." he assured him, before he smiled gently, his arms returning to resting calmly in his lap.

Toki tilts her head up at him curiously, questioning slightly with her gaze. She doesn’t outright ask, as her attention is divided. The trees open up, and the compound wall comes into view. There’s no
reporters outside, no humans, and no graffiti. From around the wall that surrounds the housing community proper, she can hear the laughter of children.

Her eyes brighten, and her mouth splits in a happy grin, soul singing in her chest. She was home! “We’re here!” Ish. They had to turn in the front gates, but they’d be home in a few minutes. She was half tempted to jump from the wagon- but safety was important, so she kept her seat.

The wagons entered the compound shortly after Papyrus jogged ahead to announce their return, and almost immediately the wagon carrying the three passengers was swarmed.

"Miss Tokiko! You've returned!"

"Your majesty! An honor to see you!"

Asgore gave a light chuckle and gave a small dismissing wave of his hand, "Please, give more attention to Miss Nara."

Or not give attention to Miss Nara. Toki simply smiled wider as she made her way to the edge of the wagon. “It’s good to be home,” She smiles wider. “I’ve missed you all dearly.”

“Come on guys, you’ve got to let her down!” Two large paws gently nudged monsters out of the way, and cleared a spot for everyone to dismount from the wagon. Wolfen offered a paw up to the skeleton woman, and grinned up at her. Bo’s smaller body was visible next to him in the crowd, and she waved sheepishly up at the three in the wagon.

She accepted the hand down, and turned to offer a hand up to the King and Gaster. “Thanks, Wolfen. It’s good to be back.”

“It’s good to have you back, Miss Toki. The kids have been besides themselves with worry.” The adults had been too, but that was left unsaid. The sheep woman turned a bright smile to the King and to Gaster. “It’s good to see you back in perfect health, Doctor Gaster. It is likewise good to see you here to visit, your Majesty.”

Tenebris let Asgore go first and he watched with a smile as the large king stepped on the cool grass with almost a sigh of relief, like he had been waiting for this for a long time.

"I couldn't resist, after all that my dear Doctor has spoke of it" he rumbled happily. He then turned and reached, offering a hand to Tenebris.

Taking the king's offered hand, he stepped off the wagon onto the ground. The claws on his feet flexed, and then retracted into their relaxed position as the grass tickled his toes. The doctor offered a smile to the crowd. "Thank you for your kind words, Miss Bo. I'm glad I was able to recover so quickly," he rumbled in reply, before smiling up at Asgore as the king patted his shoulder.

"Not injury nor illness could keep Tenebris down. I know this from experience!" He guffawed merrily.

“We’re all glad that you’re both okay.” The sheep smiled warmly. “And that you’ve managed to return. It’s been a lot quieter without Miss Toki around- and we can finally show the King Nara Village! We’ve got a lot done during the time you’ve been gone- we even have a little market in one of the squares now.”

“Nara Village?” Toki blinks. That was the first she’d heard of that- and of the Market too. It was good that things were moving along- monsters settling in finally, and starting up their old trades, or finding new ones.
The sheep flushes, and it’s her mate that answers. “Eheh, It’s just a little nickname for the town. The kids came up with it after you had to go to the underground, and it kind of stuck. Thumper was pretty adamant that it stay that way until you came back.”

She could read between the lines- in case she didn’t come back, the little rabbit had wanted to make sure that she wouldn’t be forgotten. She smiles warmly. “That is very sweet of him, and of all of you. I think it’s really cute.”

"Adorable indeed!" Asgore agreed, "Come then! Let's not waste any time!" he announced cheerfully, before looking to Tenebris.

The Doctor offered him a gentle smile. "Your Majesty, I’ll be walking with my sons to our home, we have much to unpack."

"Alright, Tenebris, I’ll meet you again later, alright?"

"Of course, your Majesty." they pressed their heads together, sharing a loving gaze for a moment, before the phantom monster went to join his boys with the first wagon.

Looking to Toki, Asgore offered her a smile and a warmly inquired question. "Would you like to accompany me on the 'tour', Miss Tokiko?"

Toki did indeed stare a little bit- but to her credit, so did many of the other monsters. Open displays of affection were often adorable and awkward- but that was pretty genuine. Well then. She chuckles softly to herself, watching as Wolfen urges everyone into motion. They swarm the other cart, helping to unload it in record time.

Asgore’s question is given a moment of deliberation, before she shakes her head softly. “I would, but I need to see if there’s anything salvageable from my house. I’m hoping my lockbox and gun safe made it. I’ve got important documents in there that I really need to get.”

Bo gave her a gentle smile and patted her arm. “We haven’t touched the wreckage of your home, Miss Toki. We weren’t sure what to look for… But the human public guard has been here already and taken pictures and documented things. It was cleared the other day for people to start to clean it… But we weren’t sure how to start.”

The police huh? At least it was documented. She gives the sheep a smile. “Thanks, Bo, for handling everything while I was gone. I know it was probably tough. I’ll get to work getting what I need out of the ash, and then start clearing the debris.”

"Oh dear..." Asgore's look changed, and his eyes flitted over her thoughtfully. "Will you need some help?" he inquired.

Toki shook her head and smiled up at him kindly. “I think I can handle some burnt husks, Asgore. I’ll be okay! Besides, I don’t want to interrupt your tour. Bo’s really nice- I’m sure she wouldn’t mind taking you…?"

“Oh certainly not!” The sheep flushed, her tail flitting excitedly under her clothes. It wasn’t often one got to give royalty a tour, after all. “Oh! Will you need a place to stay? That’s to both of you, that is.”

“Papyrus has already insisted that I stay with them until I can get a house rebuilt.” She shakes her head and smiles quietly. "I will be alright. Tenebris said he's already got a place for me to sleep." Asgore replied to Bo, before looking to Toki with a smile stretching his muzzle. "Miss Tokiko, if you ever change your mind, I
am a gardener so I’m used to getting my hands dirty.” he assured her with a warm chortle.

“Still, Asgore, you don’t need to come out here and work. Besides, dirt is different than ash. Ash makes a nasty mess when you try to rinse it out of hair. Or fur, rather.” She shakes her head, and offers him another smile. “Heh. I have the feeling that the house is going to be very full.”

Bo simply smiles shyly, and moves to let Toki slip around her. “I’m glad you both have some place to stay. Alright! Let’s get the tour going before the kids know you’re here, Majesty. A lot of them remember your trips to the school classrooms- I’m certain we will be swarmed when you’re spotted.” The short sheep bids the skeleton a farewell, and motions to the cleared path towards the village. “Shall we?”

"Ha! Of course, Miss Bo!” Asgore chuckled happily. "Let us go and face the children head-on!"

“Good luck!” Toki waved them off with a grin. Once the King and the kindly sheep were off, she headed off for her house. She bypassed the first wagon, which was mostly empty now, and gave the boys a nod as she went.

The remains were burnt and withered- and very little of it was left. Some beams had survived, but they were blackened and pinning down whatever was underneath. She had the sinking feeling that her gun safe was under one of them. The front steps were mostly intact, which let her pad up into the great, big piles of ash and debris that had once held her home. To the left, she could see the burnt remains of her television, and to the right, the largest mound of burnt debris.

She was glad she no longer had a throat- sadness would have clogged it. Seeing her home in ruins wasn’t easy… But she had to move forwards. Toki headed for the large lump, rolling up her sleeves with a sigh as she set to tugging on the beams. The ash was deep- nearly up to her knees- but it made for great traction as she pulled on the hollowed remnants of her home.

With a grunt, she hauled a burnt beam over, and coughed as the resulting ash cloud flooded her face. Under the beam, she finds her gun safe. It’s large, and the top has partially melted inwards. The door is in tact though, and she thanks the stars for that. She manages to roll it out, and leaves it by the stairs.

Finding the lock box was harder, but a couple of moved beams later, and some ones that fell apart while being handled, had her holding the large box. As heat resistant as it was, it was partially melted along the bottom. The hinges worked, and she couldn’t see anything wrong with those. Under the lock box was a melted family photo album- and she had to leave it behind quickly before it got to her. Her soul throbbed sadly as she returned to the gun safe. Rolling it carefully down the stairs, Toki sighed and went to clean off herself and her remaining belongings with the hose near the shed.

When both boxes and her bones were clean from ash, Toki opened up the gun safe. An unhappy sound leaves her- the top of her gun has been fused with the top of the safe. God damn it. “At least the paperwork didn’t burn up…”

"Toki…” A large hand slowly came to land on her shoulder. Giving a slow soothing stroke with his thumb, Tenebris slowly stepping into her field of vision. The monster slowly knelt down, and his gentle purple gaze met her eyes.

She blinks up at him quietly and tilts her skull. “Ah, Gaster. Have you finished getting everything moved to your house?” Her eyes flit back to the mess at hand, and she gathers the messy files at the
bottom of the gun case. It’s too clunky to carry home- and the gun is ruined anyways. There’s no
telling the damage done to the inside of the barrel- and most of the shells had gone off in the heat
anyways. She sighs through her nasal cavity.

"Yes." He looked at the case and reached inside, grabbing the gun. A powerful surge of strength
later and the gun was forcefully pulled from the inside of the case. "Tsk.... I haven’t seen one of these
in over six hundred years... yet I still remember it's..." he seemed to shutter, and dropped it, watching
it land with a clatter on the ground. "Capabilities."
The screech of metal had made her cringe when he’d torn the gun free. Well, now it was definitely
ruined. “Guns now are a lot more powerful than guns from back then.” She flicks her gaze up to
him. “Cae and I have already had a talk about this, and he’s pretty certain that he’s faster than a
bullet. I’m pretty certain he’s a bit over confident. Guns are scary. I was going to show him what
they could do, though I wasn’t feeling up to it. I was gonna do it now that we’re back, but… Well,
there’s no sense in it now. Buying another gun would be pointless.” The kickback from a gun would
probably knock her arm off. Literally.

She sighs, scooping the gun up gently, and tucks the gun right back into its case. Better if the kids
don’t try to play with it. She locks it up again, and leaves the gun safe sitting there. Another sigh
pulls from behind her teeth, and she straightens up with a grumble. Holding the files in and her
lockbox in one hand, the other props on the magic-padded part of her hip. “Well… I guess we
should return, huh? I’ve got to sort through papers, make sure everything is here and undamaged. I
need to call my family at some point… Stars above, my brothers are going to have words at me for
pretty much disappearing off the face of the planet.”

He nodded, and he turned and looked into the ruins of her house. He was silent for a short time,
simply looking over it quietly. Eventually Tenebris then sighed and tugged a smile on as he looked
back at her. "Yes, you deserve something to eat, plus a good night's rest.”

“Deserve? Nah. Could I use something scrumptious and a good nights sleep? Hell yes.” She hefts
the lock box under her arm, and smiles. She turns away from the ruins first, shoving the sadness
flitting around her soul away. Not all was lost- she was still here to rebuild. “Lets go, Tenebris. No
use staring at the ghost of what was, y'know?”

She heads away from the ruins, heading for the streets. Her clothes are soggy from the water she
used to rinse them off, but her magic wont churn to dry them off. Idly she wonders if it is from her
mood about her house. Regardless, soggy clothes clinging to her bones is probably indecent. “I need
to change clothes anyways. Wet cloth feels really weird on my ribs.”

He simply ends up nodding and following her, seeing to it that she was changed and fed, left in the
care of Sans and Papyrus.

While the three of them were busy, he stepped outside again to have a pipe. His smile grew wider as
Asgore approached the home, a tired smile on his face.

"Asgore, how did it go?"

"The children are still lively as ever. It was wonderful!” the king chuckled gently, snagging Tenebris
in a warm embrace.
"I'm glad, old friend." The hug was returned, before he stepped back. "You're free to get comfortable inside, one of my boys can see to getting you some food, but I have something I feel like I must see through..."

"You wont hurt yourself in the process will you?"

"Not physically."

That answer didn't satisfy the tall king and he gave a few gentle pats to Tenebris' cheek, getting a laugh from him before he reached up and cupped the king's fluff-covered cheeks.

"I promise, I'll be alright... I want to do this for Miss Toki..."

"Alright, Tenebris. I trust you on this... But when you're all done, I'll have a warm lap waiting for you."

"Oh Asgore, you're always so kind to me." Gaster leaned up and placed a soft kiss on the snout of the king, that which immediately wrinkled as he gave a chuff.

"There wouldn't be anything between us if I was rude, now would there?" he remarked after a moment, before he nuzzled Tenebris' neck, "I'll see you inside, then" He rumbled softly.

"Of course~"

Toki would have been bundled in her fluffiest sweater, her softest pants, and a pair of borrowed socks that were three sizes too large for her. She’s stretched out at the end of the couch, hardly taking up any of it with the size of it, organizing her folders in her lap when King Asgore entered the house.

Her lock box is open and balanced on one leg, and she’s got a phone tucked against her skull as she sorts through the things inside. Lots of important paperwork, and a few of her more sentimental photographs are amongst the many things stuffed in the box. The boys had stepped out long enough to give her some privacy to handle this phone call, and had also been kind enough to lend her one of their cell phones. “Yes, I’m fine, Simmons. I did make the change. No, I don’t need you to contact my family- Simmons. Simmons, stop, seriously, I’m alright. I’ll call Mom and my brothers when I’m settled in. I’ve got to have the house rebuilt before I can have everyone over- yes, damn it, you can relay that to Mom too, I know you’re going to call her after. Please inform her that she’ll need to wait to invade until I actually have a house for her to invade. N- SIMMONS. Jesus Christ, I’ve covered that I’m staying with someone already.”

A laugh leaves her, and she wiggles her fingers at the King in a quiet greeting. “I’m safe, I promise. Listen, I’ve got to get off for now. I’ve got all of my paperwork, all of my banking information, everything is still golden. Yes, yes, no, no, definitely not. Leave the will the way it is- that way, even if something does end up happening, the monster community will have something to fall back on. No, I don’t care what Dad says about it. That’s not really his business.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Alright. Have a good night, Simmons.” She hangs up, and sets the phone beside her. “Hi, Asgore. 
Did you have a fun tour?"

"I did indeed." He rumbled, hanging up his coat. "It was very fun, but also rather tiring." he sighed, taking a seat in the large recliner chair. It was big for Tenebris, which meant it was perfect for his majesty to settle down in. "Oof."

“Ha, I bet.” She tucks her legs under her, and thumbs through the papers. She’s got everything in order now, and all of the important paper is tucked at the forefront. She tugs out the few pictures she has, and her smile softens. Ah, she remembered these. Most of them were of her and her siblings as kids, but she had a couple of them from them being older. “Boys!” She calls out over the back of the couch. “Thanks for giving me a minute! You can come back in now!”

They came back in when called and the taller of the two smiled at both Toki and Asgore. "Welcome home your majesty!"

"Thank you, Papyrus. I hope you could tell me if you are able to make some tea right now? After all the fun I had today I’d just love a warm cup if it wouldn’t be too much of a bother." Asgore replied with a cheerful, tired purring noise.

"Of course, sir! I'll go put on the teapot!"

Toki tilts her head curiously as Papyrus ducks back into the kitchen. She shifts on the couch, and smiles wider at one of the photos. Ah, Dom had such a grumpy face sometimes. “Your phone, Cae.” She holds his cell phone up to he can take it back. “Thanks for letting me borrow it- I’m going to have to get another one here soon.” She’d also need to call and deal with the city about getting her license renewed, since her old one was for her human self… and it had burnt up in the fire.

He took it with a soft 'Yoink' (Yes, the funnybones actually makes the sound), and he pocketed it before flopping onto the couch beside her with a sigh. "Yeah no problem... Aaahhh, I'm exhausted. I think I'm taking the next few days off." he huffed.

She has to hurry and tuck some of her papers into the box so he doesn’t squish them. She shoots him an amused look, and shifts on the couch so she can flop her legs across his lap. That's what he gets for taking the space next to her when the entire other half of the couch was open. She spreads the pictures out again, and gently frowns at a tear at the edge of the one with her nephew on it. Blasted claws. “The next few days off? Off from what?”

"Working," he chuckles, before he reached and began to play with her toes. "Where's Pops? Have you seen him?"

“Well he went outside to smoke or something a little while ago. He still out there, Asgore?” Her feet twitch, and she casually pokes him in the ribs as vengeance while she tucks her things back into the box. “That tickles, you know.”

Sans grunted and began to chuckle mischievously as he continued to assault her toes. "Oh so that's how it's gonna be?"

"Actually, he said he had something to take care of, so he'll be out for a while." Asgore answered, amusement glinting in his eyes as he watched them.

“S-Sans!” She scolds, tucking her feet away from his mischievous hands, and hiding them under her femurs. “If you're going to be naughty, you can sit on the other end, mister.” Her bones crawl with the odd lingering sensation of his attacks, and she glances to Asgore. “Oh really? Well, I hope he’s not up too late. He could probably use a good nights rest too- Sans, don’t you dare. I see your fingers
moving. Don’t even.”

Sans chuckles and gives her a cheeky grin, "What are you talking about? I’m completely innocent, heh heh heh..."

The king watched them fondly. "I agree, Miss Tokiko. He always would overwork himself back when he was the Royal Scientist, poor man would be dead on his feet." the king sighed.

“Workaholics enjoy what they do though.” She points out. “My brother Utaka is like that. He’s a lawyer, and his wife is always making sure that he takes ample breaks so he doesn’t overwork himself.” Toki gives Sans an amused look, and forms her tongue to stick it out at him teasingly. The lockbox is settled carefully on the floor and out of the way of any possible shenanigans. The last thing she needs is to kick it and send it flying. “Nyeh. Innocent my ass, Sans.”

Asgore chuckled quietly as he gave no reply, letting the conversation fade as he watched the two skeletons interact.

"Yeah, completely innocent!" Cae said insistently, before he looked down at her with a chuckle. "’Nyeh’, huh? You’ve been hanging around my brother too long."

She lets her tongue dissipate as she laughs. “I hang around you both probably too much. At least I haven’t started drinking ketchup.” That was a completely nasty habit. She squints up at him playfully, and replaces her legs in his lap. “If you can behave, and not tickle me, that’d be great. I’d feel terrible if I stabbed your finger on accident.” The pointed bones of her toes were pesky- and if she kicked him, it’d likely hurt.

He chuckled and reached out to stroke her leg bones instead, his thumbs putting pressure to make this as if it was a massage.

She relaxes contently as he rubs at the wider bone of her tibia. Folding her arms over her ribs, Toki watches him rub along her shin through her pants. The cotton material is soft and feels nice against her bones. A rumbling rattle trembles up her rib cage, and she realizes that’s the skeletal equivalent of a purr. “I think you missed your calling, Cae. Masseuses are very sought after.”

"I'm not sure if anyone would like the feeling of my bones against their skin." He chuckled. "I'm not sure yet." He continued massaging with one hand. With the other hand, he reached up to stroke the smooth side of her skull. "Tell me, Doll... You feelin' any better yet?" he asked gently.

Toki leaned her skull into his fingers with a quiet sigh. “Your bones never bothered my skin when I still had it. You might have an issue doing deep tissue massages, but I’m sure you’d work out how to do it.” The bone lids slide over her sockets, and she relaxes into his fingers quietly. “Better?” She inquired, not sure what he meant.

"Feeling better physically, better handle on your magic, emotionally; fuck, anything would work."

“Ah. Uh… Well, physically I feel fine. More than fine, if you keep rubbing like that. That feels amazing.” She hums. Bone lids open, and she peers at him quietly. “I don’t really have a handle on my magic, Cae. It sort of just does what it does. Emotionally I am… sad. A lot of things were lost in the fire- and I had a lot of things saved for my family here too. Thirty years of memories is a lot to lose in one night. It hurts right now- but it will get better with time, I promise.”

He looked at her, then he sighed and he leaned over to loop an arm around her back, before pulling her so instead of her legs on his lap, it was her rear. He wrapped both arms around her tightly and nuzzled his face into her neck. His eye sockets closed as he almost seem to expel air through his
nasal hole. "Well... If it helps, imagine how you may have lost thirty years, but you may end up with thirty more years of good memories, of everything you've done for us. Of the new family you've earned."

Without warning, another pair of arms came around them and Caeruleus let his grin grow, as there was a soft 'Nyeh heh heh' by their non-existent ears. "That's for damn sure, Brother. But you never know, it may be more than just thirty years, it may even be thirty decades, now that she's one of us."

Toki was relaxed in their arms. Being shifted over wasn’t that much of a surprise, though the second pair of arms was. She smiled, and lifted her hand to gently grasp Papyrus’ arm and run her fingers over his arm through his shirt. “Thanks you two. I look forwards to making more memories with all of you. She nestles back into Cae’s front, back reclining comfortably against the swell of his stomach. “I suppose we’ll see if I have thirty years or thirty decades, huh?" She had a monster body, but she had a human soul. Who knew if she’d grow old without them? She shook that thought from her mind for now- because that could go down a dark road, and it was not a road she wished to travel. “If you’re finished with the tea, Pap, you should join us on the couch. You can keep your brother from misbehaving.”

"Of course. Let me just serve his majesty and I’ll have a seat." he agreed.

Once Asgore was given his tea, Aliquam was all to eager to join his brother and fellow skeleton on the couch, rejoining the cuddle effortlessly. "Nyeh~"

They probably looked a bit silly there on the couch. Two large skeletons with one much more fragile looking one draped across them. She relaxed, shifting so she could drape her legs across Aliquam since Sans had a hold of her torso. “You know, Cae, you make a great backrest.” Her fingers teasingly prod his middle, and she beams up at him warmly.

"I'm big-boned, so I'm gonna be soft." He joked with a soft laugh, watching as Aliquam reached up to start massaging her feet.

Her toes twitched, and she hid a grin. The massage both felt good and tickled slightly. His mitts were warm against her bones though, and felt good. Toki simply grins up to Sans. “Big boned indeed. Both of you are pretty big.” She nabs his hand, and splays her fingers against his own. His fingers are probably twice as thick as hers are. “Or I am just very small. That might also be a possibility.”

She pauses, and frowns. “You know, I never used to be considered small. For a woman, I was really big according to society’s standards.”

His hand was too adorned with gloves, but they were black, and fingerless, cutting off near the middle of his Proximal Phalanges. His Distal Phalanges, much like his brother's and his Father's, were pointed at the end.

"That may be true, I mean hell you're almost as tall as I am." Cae chuckled gently, "But you're still a human originally. That means you may not get as tall as we do.”

“Human females stop growing at around fourteen years old, sometimes fifteen. I’m pretty much double that age. I’m well past the age where I have to deal with growing pains.” She bumps her finger tips to his, humming as her sharp digit tips touch his. “Even without gloves, you all have giant bones. Heh. Sort of wish humans had bones like this- would make breaking them even harder.”

"Heh... Yeah... You're pretty thin.” he commented, reaching and pinching her arm between his fingers. "I can see your struggle."
She grimaced at the pinch and patted his fingers. “Hey now, gentle with that. You press too hard and you’ll get those sausage fingers of yours stuck between my radius and ulna. At least I won’t be getting my fingers or hands stuck in things, with as thin as they are.”

He laughed at that, and his hand let her go for a moment. "Sausage fingers? That's only if I was a fleshy." he then lifted her arm up, grinning at her. "So, uh... would I get in trouble if I got something else stuck... liiiike..." he then stuck out his tongue, poking it through the two bones, "Bleeeeh~"

It took half a second before she realized that he actually did it. Her bones rattle, and her cheeks tinge green- that was the weirdest sensation, and she’s not entirely certain that it is innocent. “SANS!”

Yes, he gets in trouble. Much trouble- because she’s flushing and squirming out of his lap and into his brother’s instead. She rubs her arm, squeaking at the sticky blue saliva that makes her bones shiver. “I can’t believe you! That felt so freakin’ weird!”

He laughed at that, while Aliquam pulled Toki close, holding her protectively. "Sans!” he scolded, letting Cae have his laugh while he cradled the smaller skeleton to his chest.

She sticks her tongue out at Cae, and tucks herself neatly into Papyrus’ lap. “Hmph. Well, you’ve lost your snuggling privileges for tonight. Pap gets all of your snuggles.” Leaning up, she loops her arms around the biggest skeleton, and nestles close. “And this way you can’t lick my arm again.”

"Awww WHAT?!

"Nyeh~" Aliquam smiled and nuzzled his face down into Toki’s neck.

Toki grins at Sans. “That’s what happens when you’re naughty. Besides- I might not know much about what touches are considered inappropriate with Skeletons yet, but I am almost certain that it is improper to lick the inside of someone’s bones in front of the King.” Her gaze flits to Asgore, still watching them from the recliner. “So yes.” She snuggles into the big skeleton, and her eyes glow merrily at Sans.

He pouted slightly, then he leaned back and sighed as he closed his eyes to relax.

"Mmm..." Aliquam did the same, hugging Toki firmly as he held her to his chest, stroking her head where the crack did not mark.

She relaxed against him with a sigh. The house was quiet, and the smell of Asgore’s tea was drifting here and there through the room. The relative calm and quiet was very soothing, and she slumped against Aliquam. Nestling her head to his chest, she let her sockets close.

The emotional ball in her chest loosened as she relaxed, and she found herself feeling tired and drained as she shunted the sad feelings off to be dealt with later. Being sad always made her tired- and she wasn’t entirely sure if it was her heritage as a Nara or the long trip that day, but she was ready to nod off in Aliquam’s arms. Between his soft touches and the thrum of his soul in his chest, she was fighting the heavy sensation of sleep.

“Mm… Going to end up falling asleep here. You can put me down if you prefer, Ali.”

"I don’t care. You can fall asleep there, Miss Toki." he whispered, smiling warmly against her.

She hums contently, and sighs softly. She nestles closer, her magic pulsing lazily to warm her under her bones, and then she’s out like a light.

Flesh or bone, determined or not, no one can fall asleep at the drop of a hat like a Nara can.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: We get to meet a couple of the Nara boys! :D Woot!

Also don't forget to visit the official blog! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Somehow, somewhere, there was a leak in some form of information system. Or someone was watching the property- for some reason, Toki was damn sure it was the latter. Three days after she got home, it was all over the news that she’d reappeared, and had apparently made a successful change.

She hadn’t heard a peep from HAM- but then and again, her phone had melted in the fire, and she hadn’t gotten another one.

Either way, she was glad when they didn’t call. She’d had to handle reporters and a few news channels that had all but demanded to see her, or to get the chance to pester Asgore. Toki ran interference for the King, so he didn’t have to spend his few days off being hounded by the masses. He’d come out here for a break- and damn it all, she was going to make sure he got a break.

Between keeping the press from ruining Asgore’s visit and cleaning up the remnants of her house, Toki was busy. She got it arranged for the same construction company that was building the monster houses to rebuild her home. It would be larger, more up to date, and not made entirely of wood. She was shelling out for it to be made of brick- which was more resistant to fire per chance she had a magical accident.

She found it easier to manage being so busy now that she wasn’t horribly sick, and found joy in doing her work again. Keeping busy kept her too tired to be upset about everything- and she slept too deeply at night for it to ruin her rest.

Sadly, today was the day Asgore was set to return to the castle. She was going to miss having him around- he was tremendously helpful with the kids, and kept them busy and out of the ash while the adults cleaned up everything and worked around the hazards that lay below the soft ash. The wagons were being prepared to be sent back to the castle- some of the wolf guards were changing out, heading back to visit family still underground. The skeleton brothers were picking up the slack for the monsters who were taking time off.

“Miss Nara?” One of the wolves caught her attention, and she padded to the gate while the others helped pack up the empty boxes. “That’s not a car I know, and those are not humans I recognize. They do not appear to be with the news crew- but surely rioters would not bring children with them?”

Children?

Toki picked up the pace, and stepped outside the front gates. Parked a bit off from the entrance was a minivan, and spilling out of the minivan… Well, two men and a short woman were making their way out of the car. The woman had a little girl propped on her hip, and had her hand around a boy’s.
“Halt”! The guard spoke. “State your business.”

“Ah- Wait, these ones are okay! Those are my brothers.”

The taller of the two men stared at her for a moment, and recognition flitted across his eyes. He didn’t wait long before charging her with a whoop. She didn’t bother dodging as he caught her around the neck, making her stumble back into view of the wagons. She hit the dirt with a grunt, but didn’t stay there long. He yanked her into a rough headlock. Fist finding her skull, the dark haired man ground his knuckles into her skull until she yelped.

“Fucking hell Han, okay, okay, you win! Let me up you big brute!”

“Watch your fucking language Toki, there’s kids here!” Han replied tartly. “And not fucking likely! You right bitch- you told Simmons to tell mom to tell us not to visit until you had a place for us all to stay? What sort of idiot are you? Last we heard, you were dyin’ from whatever the fuck radiation shit, and then we find out you pretty much burned alive? The fuck, sis?”

And standing by the wagons was Caeruleus. He watched Toki go down with the human and for the most part panicked. "HEY!" He roared out, taking a shortcut to close the distance before he turned Han's soul blue. Lifting him away from Toki, Cae gave the human a dark look. "Do we have a problem here?" he growled, his left eye lighting up warningly, before he looked to Toki, "Hey, are you okay?"

Toki took the reprieve to get to her feet, rubbing her fingers gingerly over her skull. Han had scrubbed over the crack- and damn had that hurt. She glanced to her brother, still hanging in the air. His hair was crew cut like usual, so it didn’t hide the gob smacked look on his face. ‘I’m alright, Sans, I promise. You can let him down- that’s one of my brothers. Han’s an asshole- but that’s how he shows his worry.”

“I’m an asshole?” The man in the air kicked his feet, arms flailing as he scrabbled mid air. “Says the bitch who didn’t let us come care for you when you were sick, and who apparently doesn’t want us here until you have a house.”

“Oh shove off, Han. It’s not like we can go back in time and change it- you’re an adult, so deal with it. The only reason I told Simmons to relay my message was so I didn’t have to deal with the entire clan descending upon the compound.” She gives him a dirty look, but sighs. “I’m sorry I scared you guys. I’m okay though, I promise.”

“Yeah, well, you’ve got to make up for scaring us like that, Toki.”

He lowered him slowly, but didn’t let him go yet. Rather he took a second to focus on Han's soul, checking his LV, wondering why the man had been so aggressive right off the bat. He already had one idea as to why... he just had to be sure...

Hans soul would be sporting a whopping LV of 8, with his attack sitting around ten and his defense at about a fifteen.

Toki shot Sans a glance when her brother was lowered, but not released. Probably to make sure that he didn’t attack again. She glanced to her brother, and sighed. ‘I’ll work on making it up to you guys, I promise. You need to behave though, Han. Everyone’s pretty on edge with aggressive humans- and I know you’re as gentle as a lamb, but you made a terrible first impression.”

“Oh don’t pull a Mom- I’ll apologize when he stops using the ‘force’ on me. And of course I’m gentle- I’m a music teacher, not a heathen. But you’re my sister- and I am fully within my right to
noogie you into oblivion for scaring the hell out of us. You made Luna cry.”

“Well… shit.” That definitely made her feel bad. She glanced to her other brother, who was staying sheepishly out of the way.

Ryushi waved at her, having no desire to get in the middle of his brother’s skirmish with a monster.

"A music teacher doesn't just have a LV 8 soul." he growled quietly, but let the human go after a moment.

“A what soul?” Toki blinked. She waved to her brother as Han was let go, and the other approached hesitantly. Her nephew had no such regards, and she found herself with an armful of grumbling eight year old.

Han didn’t look much better- confusion filled his face as he got his bearings. “LV 8? What’s that mean?”

"... T'be honest, I'd rather not discuss this in front of th' kids..." he said in a lower voice, turning his head slightly before he shortcut away from them, returning to the wagons.

Well that was just grand. Toki watched him go with a frown on her face. “I'll ask him later.” She says to her brother, grunting as Dominic tugs on her hand. “I missed you too Dom. If you yank any harder, you’re going to yank my hand off.”

“You’re a butthead.” The boy says firmly, latching tightly onto her wrist. Blue eyes stared up at her balefully, framed by the same dark lashes that make up his short hair. “But I still love you, Aunt Toki. C’mon. You gotta go apologize to Luna.”

“She’s really upset, isn’t she?”

“She caught sight of part of the news cast that showed you on fire. It wasn’t pretty.”

Toki grimaces, and goes to fetch her Niece. Sarah hands her over easily, but remains quiet. Sarah was a quiet woman who spoke very little, but saw most things. How Ryushi landed someone like her, Toki would never know, but she doesn’t really care. The American woman goes to collect Han, and make sure that he hadn’t gotten too roughed up in squabbling with his sister.

Luna is pressed into her arms. At three years old, the little girl was the spitting image of what Toki looked like when she was that age. Minus the lack of color- Luna was entirely albino. She pouted up at Toki, eyes glimmering wetly, before she shoved her face towards Toki’s own.

Eskimo kisses were Luna’s thing- and obligingly, Toki leaned down to brush the ridge of bone that remained of her nose against the pudgy soft one of the little girl’s. “Am I forgiven, my little Lunatune?”

The toddler sniffed and nodded. She clung onto Toki, wiggling her fingers into her cloths and effectively becoming a leech. “Yeh.”

“Good.” She smiles. Keeping one arm supporting the clingy toddler, the other still trapped by her nephew, Toki nods to her brother and motions to the inside of the wall. “C’mon, guys. We can all go sit- and Dom can meet some of the monster kids. I think you’ll like Thumper, Dom. He’s like Mirou.”

“I’m sure Dom’ll behave.” Ryushi ruffles his son’s hair, and leans in to kiss his sister’s cheek. “You look healthy, Sis. Better than you did the times we saw you on the newscast. These monsters have
been good to you, haven’t they?”

“Yeah, they really have.”

Upon seeing the tense hold of his brother's shoulders, Aliquam had come to see what had upset Cae, though he looked in surprise at the family. "Who are these humans, Miss Toki?" he asked.

Toki looked relieved that Papyrus hadn’t taken on his brother’s grouchiness too. She beams at him, and hefts her Niece higher. The toddler tilts her head and peers at the massive skeleton timidly. “Ah, these are my family. This little lady is Luna, and this big fella is her big brother, Dominic. They’re my niece and nephew. The shorter man is Ryushi, that’s his wife, Sarah, and my other brother Han. Guys,” she addresses the lot of them, “This is Papyrus Aliquam Gaster. I’m living with him and his brother while I get my house rebuilt.”

Obligingly, her brothers and her sister in law say hello, but ultimately do not wander very close. First impressions are important- Han had made a terrible one with the other skeleton, and this one here was much larger than the last.

“Papyrus Ali-Ali… Papyrus.” Dom peers up at the big skeleton, and resolutely clings to his aunt. “You’re really big.”

“He’s really nice though.” Toki beams. She nudges Luna gently, and turns so the little girl can better see the skeleton. “Say hi, Luna. Ali’s really nice, I promise.”

Little ruby eyes glimmer up at the tall skeleton. Luna is curious- but she’s not as brash as her brother all the time. She loops one hand around Toki’s collarbone, missing her Aunt’s wince at the odd sensation, and waves a pudgy hand at the big skeleton. “Ah… Ahli… Quinn? Quinn. Hi…”

"Hello there, everybody" he greeted, before he looked to Luna, hearing the new nickname, he let out a cheerful, ‘Nyeh heh heh’. "Oh how adorable! Quinn, that's a new nickname for me!" He announced happily, "I'm gonna be Uncle Quinn." he giggled, "Do you like the sound of that, little human?" he asked.

“Uncle Quinn, huh?” Ryushi began to grin, ignoring the flush that began to grow on Toki’s cheeks. “Well, I’ll be darned. Mom’s going to be so sad she missed the wedding, Sis.”

“Unca.” Luna nods firmly. “Unca Quinn.” Pleased with herself, she reached out to change grasps to her newfound ‘uncle’.

Dom on the other hand leered up at his Aunt. “I didn’t know you got married, Aunty. Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Ah… We’re not married, sweetie.” She offers him a wry smile, adjusting her hold on Luna so Papyrus could take her if he wanted to.

The large skeleton paid them little mind. Chuckling, Aliquam reached and slowly took Luna, holding her close and stroking her hair, "Well hello there, little one.” He purred.

The fluffy white bits of hair would be soft like downy feathers. Pudgy arms reach up for his face, and she scrunches hers up. He had to do the nose thing. He just had to.

With her arm free, Toki leaned down to hug Dom. “I’ll explain what that means later, okay?”

“Alright…” The boy huffs slightly, but accepts it. He shifts, and hugs her tighter, before letting go. “Now that you’re okay, and we know you’re not gone, can I go play?”
“Dom,” His father murmurs softly, “It’s rude to go wandering off so soon.”

“Children will be children, Ryu. It’s okay. Alright. We’ll go find the other kids here soon, I promise.”

He leaned into Luna’s hands and softly turned his skull so a smooth part of it rubbed against the tip of her nose. "Nyeh heh heh! Nuzzle nuzzle~" Aliquam chuckles softly, before glancing over to Dominic. "There are many children here, they will be finishing school soon so you need not wait too long." he explained.

Luna is thrilled by the nuzzles she receives, and giggles happily. Her fingers seek out his bones through his clothing and she latches on, much like she had done to Toki. She reclines into his chest, content to be a koala.

Dom makes a face, but nods at Papyrus. “I can wait for them to get out from school.”

“You’d better.” Ryushi ruffles his son’s hair again, and then tugs his sister in for a quick hug. He flicks her one of her horns playfully, and then peers at the crack in her skull. “Hey Sis? Why does your skull have a crack in it?”

“It’s from the fire. It didn’t quite heal properly, so it scarred- can you not touch it please? The crack is still sensitive.”

“It is? Shit.” Han is there too, gently yanking her down by her horns so he can look at it. She can see his face, and guilt glimmers in his dark eyes. His teeth worry at his lip as he brushes gentle fingers around the crack. “I am so sorry- did my noogie hurt you? I didn’t make the crack worse, did I? It’s so big… Oh shit- is it hurting you tugging on your horns?”

“Ack- Han, it’s okay. I know you were upset with me, and I really did deserve the tackle- no, the crack isn’t worse, and no, you’re not hurting my horns.” She remains stuck as her brothers investigate her skull. When it’s deemed that she’s not going to die, they let her straighten. Her ribs rattle with a sigh. “I’m okay, I promise.”

“We almost lost you once- you can’t blame us for worrying. We’ll spread the word though that the crack isn’t life threatening.” Ryushi gives her a smile.

“Yeah- otherwise you’re gonna have to go through all of that again. Mom’ll be worse than us.”

She grimaces. “Yeah, I know. Mom’d have my skull wrapped in bandages to hold it together before I could get a word in otherwise.”

“You can’t blame her though, Sis. You’re her only daughter- even if you’re the oldest you’re still her little girl.”

She smiles wryly, her head tilting as she picks up the sounds of children approaching.

The monster kids flood out of the housing district, obviously having been let loose from their classes. It wasn’t an official school yet- that hadn’t been built- but they rotated houses through volunteers to host the kids for classes. After school it became a game to see who the kids could find first- Toki, or some other form of entertainment. For the last while, that entertainment had been Asgore.

“Hey, Han? You usually bring your violin with you everywhere. You have it today?”

“I do, yeah. Why?”
“Why don’t you go get it and entertain the kids with it? They haven’t had the chance to really be introduced to much human music.”

Han looked aghast. “Seriously? I should disown you. You’ve had your hands on these kids since they moved in, and you haven’t given them a proper musical education? Shame on you, Toki. Shame. I’ll be right back- make sure they don’t steal Dom without me!” He turns on his heel and jogs back for the car.

She watches her brother go and flicks her gaze over to Ryushi. “Did you want to see the village?”

“We do, yes.” Sarah steps up to bump shoulders with her husband. “We can wander on our own though. Why don’t you go see if your other friend is all right? He seemed pretty upset by Han.”

Toki nods. “I’ll talk to Sans. Hey, Pap? You might wanna hand Luna back. She gets cranky when Sarah leaves her with anyone and goes off someplace else.”

“She just doesn’t like to miss anything.” Ryushi smiled up at the big skeleton, and opened his arms to accept his daughter. “She likes to be included in our little adventures, don’t you Luna-loo?”

The toddler glances to her dad, and huffs. “Yuh.”

"Music, huh?" Papyrus had grown interested as he slowly disentangled Luna from his body and handed her over. "I play the violin as well. Sans and Father can play instruments too.”

“Toki’s got the musical inclination of a tone deaf walrus.” Ryushi informs the tall skeleton cheerily, hefting his little girl up into his arms.

“Yeah, but Sis can carry a tune better than any of us.” Han was striding back about the same time that the mob of monster kids swarmed out.

“Toki!” Thumper bustled to her, and beamed up at her. “Who’re these humans?”

“The one with the fiddle is my brother, Han. He’s going to be showing you guys music- and Dom’s gonna hang with you too, if that’s alright. He’s a little bored with the adults. That’s Ryushi, my other brother, his wife Sarah, and their daughter, Luna.”

“Nice to meet all of you!” The enthusiastic rabbit offers them all a grin. “I don’t blame him. All you adults talk about is weird adult things.” The rabbit glances to the smaller human, and bounces over to take his hand. “C’mon! We can play tag. You can run fast, right?”

“Faster than you, I’d bet. C’mon, Uncle Han! You can serenade us while we race.”

Toki watched the kids steal away a good portion of her family, and laughed quietly. She stayed near Papyrus, and shook her head. “Dom’s going to sleep the whole car ride home. Thumper’s got a never ending well of energy.”

“It’ll do him good. He’s been so cooped up with school and the problems in the city that he hasn’t had the chance to run wild. Han could use the energy too. There’s been some stuff happening in his neighborhood, and he had to stay with us for a while. Kids have been setting off firecrackers-”

“Ah.” She grimaces. “Say no more. Yeah, it’s fine. Let him go relax- he’s in his element with the kids. You three enjoy your walk- definitely check out the market too.”

“Oh, a market? Well, I know where we’re stopping first. Come on, Ryu.”
“But that means I have to carry the bags.”

“That’s what husbands are for, dear.”

And soon she is alone with Papyrus. She sighs. Naras. Here one moment, gone the next- or asleep the next. Fickle creatures, her family was. She glanced up at the tall Skeleton with a smile. “I didn’t know any of you played. So what does Cae play? The trombone? Bone-gos?”

The sound that accompanied his face palm was surely loud enough to be heard across the town. "Oh my god."

Toki laughed brilliantly, mouth opening as she pressed her palm to it. “I’m so sorry, that sort of slipped out. Heh. Will you forgive me? I know my jokes are terrible.”

"He likes Brass instruments, so yes, trombone." He chuckled, "And Father plays the Piano."

She’d take that as a yes. She nods up at him quietly, snags his arm in a small hug. “It takes talent to make music of any kind. As my brothers said, I cant play instruments to save my life. Heh. Speaking of your brother- I’m going to go talk with him real quick, okay? He was in a foul mood about something with Han. Something about a LV 8 soul, or something. I don’t know what that means. Your dad and I haven’t really gone deep into lessons about souls yet.” She was still learning how to skeleton, let alone how to deal with souls.

"Oh dear... An LV 8?" he asked. "Are you sure?"

“Yes? That’s what Cae said.” She blinks up at him, confusion furrowing her brow. “I don’t understand. Is a LV 8 bad?”

He looked at her, then looked at the rest of her family as they passed fully out of sight, before he gestured her closer. He knelt down and gave her a serious look.

“... You're really freaking me out here, Pap.” Toki’s soul flutters nervously, but she draws closer willingly. Her eyes flit over to where the kids had taken Han and Dom, hearing noisy laughter and the merry tune of a fiddle playing.

"A soul is able to gain something called EXP. When it gets enough, it's LV increases. LV 20 is the known cap... and by far the most dangerous."

She blinks. “Huh. How is that a problem then? It doesn’t sound bad... Well, except the dangerous part. I don’t know how LV makes you dangerous. Just be honest with me, Pap. I’m still learning about this stuff- and I’d rather not blunder into something horribly offensive if I can help it.”

"LV... It’s an abbreviated name for an Acronym... LOVE...” He said softly.

“I get the feeling that LOVE is different from love, and not in a good way.” She hesitates, and peers at his face intently. “Would you be more comfortable if I asked Cae about this?”

"... He's... More used to it...” The tall skeleton looked upset. “I think so...”

She nods, and leans up to gently tap her teeth against his forehead in a soft kiss. For being uncomfortable with the subject, Papyrus had done a better job than she thought he might. Didn’t answer everything, but gave her enough to pinpoint what she needed to be directly informed of. “Okay. I’ll go talk to him about it- thank you for trying though!” She gives him a smile, and makes a beeline for the brooding skeleton near the wagons. “I’ll be right back.”
He sighed, and watched her go, before he put on a smile and went to entertain the children with Han.

Toki padded up to Cae, and snagged his jacket sleeve. She tugs him over towards the wall, away from the other people, before turning to stare up at him. “Alright. Explain please. Paps made an attempt, but he’s not comfortable with it, and I don’t want him to be upset trying to explain something. We got as far as LV being an acronym for LOVE, but not what any of that means, or how it and EXP are bad.”

He looked at her, grinding his teeth for a moment. And then he sighed. "EXP stands for Execution Points. Get enough, you gain LOVE. LOVE stands for Level Of Violence. Just how comfortable someone is with killing. Do you get what I’m saying?" He grit his teeth slightly, a tight grin that wasn’t really a grin being given to her. His sockets were dark. "Your brother has a LV of 8. There’s blood, and potentially dust, on his hands. He’s killed a lot of people, Toki. A lot."

Her mouth dropped open, understanding blooming in her eyes. Oh. Oh, that’s what this was about. He thought… She reached up and tugged his hands gently into her own. Slowly, she spoke so that the other monsters couldn’t overhear. “Han is ex military.” She explains softly. “In the military, you have to follow orders. He was in the military for several years- and he was good at what his superiors had him do. Sometimes what he was ordered to do was not always a good thing. Han is by nature a gentle person- he retired as soon as his superiors would let him go. He has nightmares and freezes up at loud popping sounds. Blood on his hands, yes. Dust? Definitely not. He can’t handle killing an insect now, let alone doing something so heinous as to kill a monster.”

She peers up at him quietly. “I understand your alarm- but I know my brother probably as well as you know yours. Han isn’t a threat to anyone here. He’s rough and tumble with me because I’m his sister, and siblings often scuffle. It’s a human thing, I think. We’re all rough little hoodlums when we’re little. His signature way of letting me know I’m in deep shit is to tackle me and noogie me.”

Cae looked at her for a long while, processing just what she was saying. Well. He’d made a complete ass of himself, hadn’t he? He sighed, which was followed by a frustrated groan. The lights return to his sockets, and his grin loosens into a frown. "Shit... I’ve made an awful first impression, haven’t I, Toki..."

“Well, to be fair, your first impression of him was a mildly violent sibling scuffle. It was just a bad way to introduce each other.” She offers him a quiet smile, and rubs the backs of his knuckles soothingly. “Just apologize to him, yeah? You don’t have to go in depth- just tell him you and I talked, and we explained some things, and that you had needed some reassurance. I need to explain to Papyrus what I told you, so he isn’t too alarmed either. Lets not mention the LV thing to Han though. He beats himself up enough over it as it is, yeah? The last thing my brother needs is to know it made a permanent mark on his soul.”

He sunk slightly into his coat, and glanced away. "Yeah... Wanna help me go find him?"

“Well, he might bite if you asked him nicely, but I doubt it.” She lets his hands go, and heads off in the direction of the music. Really, it wasn’t hard to find them. Her brother could be such a show pony when he wanted to be- he was in the park, prancing around like a fool and playing some
amusing show tune. The kids were laughing and clapping along, while some of them played tag in the back ground.

Dominic was among those running, and he looked completely exhausted, though determined to catch the fleet-footed rabbit monsters that dashed circles around him. Twitch was having a blast, bolting around him like a fuzzy blur, while Thumper ran circles around Papyrus.

Toki stopped a little ways away from her brother, and motioned Sans to step forth.

When she gave the gesture to approach, he slowly did, smiling with his stuck grin. "Heya... Han?"

Han glanced over when the big monster approached, and offered a hesitant smile. His music faded off, and he faced the kids for a moment. “Hey, munchkins, I’m gonna rest my fingers for a second and talk to the big guy here. Why don’t you go see how many of you can cling to Papyrus before he falls over?”

Challenge accepted apparently, as the hoard of kids swarms the taller skeleton. Han can see his sister failing to hide her laughter, and counts it as a win. Free, he turns to the skeleton in the blue coat. “Ah… Sans, right? I’m sorry if I spooked you guys. I forget that you monsters aren’t used to human roughhousing.”

Upon being swarmed, there was a shrill "NYEH!" of panic from Quinn. The tall skeleton goes down, disappearing under a hoard of clamoring monster kids. "NO! The great Papyrus' greatest weakness! CHILDREN!"

"I'm sorry I jumped to conclusions." he said in return, reaching up to rub his skull awkwardly. "I think we should try t' start over..." He mentioned, before he chuckled softly. "Hey uh, Han... Do ya' know how t' greet a new pal?"

Han heard the laughter of his sister ringing out alongside the various noises of panic from Papyrus, and he let a chuckle escape himself. He looked at Sans, a hesitant smile tugging at his lips. "I have a guess, but in case I’m wrong, you mind telling me?"

"Heh, No problem. Hell, it'll be a life lesson for ya. You greet a new pal..."

He then held his hand out

"By shakin' their hand."

Han looked at his hand- his claws moreover- and for a moment Cae could guess the human was expecting it to bite him, which would be rather amusing... But after enough consideration, Han extended his own hand. "Screw it. To new beginnings, Right?"

"Yeah. Heh... The Name's Caeruleus." Cae reached and gripped the human's hand firmly, met with a firm handshake in return.

Perfect. The whoopee cushion hidden in his palm flattened, the air escaping in a very crude, and very loud-

BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRTTTT

Hans' eyes went wide as his cheeks tinged red, and he sputtered out a laugh.

Sans' eyes gleamed in amusement, his grin widening as a loud chuckle escaped him. "And you just got dunked on, pal."
Chapter 13

The day went good. Gods above, it went good. They laughed and laughed, and Han decided that he was going to come back often for music lessons with the monster kids. He’d do optional weekend lessons outside of school hours.

The kids played outside with the adults for hours- and everyone got dragged into the biggest game of tag that most of them had ever participated in. It was fun- it was light and warm, and something that every one of them had needed.

A little bit of play in the day could remind anyone that you’re never too old to play tag- and that even a King can play with the regular people. Everyone was in high spirits with no incidents and the day having been devoid of any and all reporters or outsiders. The high spirits were infectious, and there wasn’t one face that had gone without a smile. Between Han’s music, the children’s laughter, and the ambient happiness in the atmosphere, the day proved to be most joyous despite the return of the King.

They’d all taken a break for a late dinner- Papyrus made a fantastic spaghetti, and ended up wearing some of it when Luna decided that it was time to fling her food- and then had been right back out there for another hour or two of play out back in the river. They’d all gotten soaked, but a bit of Asgore’s fire magic had managed to dry out pretty much everyone’s clothes.

The sun was starting to go down though, and the day’s fun was coming to an end. The kids were tired, the adults were exhausted, and everyone was getting ready to send the King off for his trip home. The wagons were loaded up tighter as the guards returning to the Underground packed up their travel belongings, and the wagons all but groaned at the added weight.

As her family lingered back with Asgore- attempting to disentangle Luna from the goat king’s beard- Toki recalled that she hadn’t checked her mail in an age. The box was probably overstuffed- and she cringed to think of all of the junk mail that she’d have to dispose of.

She waved off her family for a moment, excusing herself to go and collect it from the boxes outside the walls. Toki waved at guards, all but bouncing out the shadowed opening. Dusk was settling over
the compound, making the trees change to darker hues. Shadows danced here and there, the lights of houses combating the dark.

Toki bounced around the corner with a hum, heading towards the mailbox by her brother’s car. A grunt left her as she ran into something hard and metal- it clacked against her bones, and it took her a moment to recognize what she was seeing.

Her hands lift upwards, eyes flitting up to the walls with the hopes that one of the guards would see. There was no one up there- they were all down saying their goodbyes to those of them that were leaving to visit their extended family Underground.

Before her stood a man in dark clothes. He wore all black, except for the mask on his face. It had interlacing red lines- and as she stared into it, she recognized letters layered over each other. H. A. M. The gun against her sternum didn’t keep her from gasping- behind him were many others in the same outfit. Black body suits, with the mask emblazoned with red letters adorned every single face that stared back at her.

Every single one of them had guns.

"Well, well, well... If it isn't the monster sympathizer herself... The one who loved those freaks so much she became one!" the masked man chuckled lowly. “It wasn’t enough for you to just take them in, allow them into our world- no, you had to go and become one of those filthy beasts.”

She swallowed, nerves making her eye glow a pale green. By nature a fairly calm person, she found her nerves being tested by the sheer number of black clothed people. She couldn’t tell how many there were- they were too tightly packed, lingering and blending into the dusk around them. There had to be at least forty, if not more. “You guys are with HAM, aren’t you? Please, there’s no need for such... drastic measures. Surely you guys have something better to do than terrorize people on such a fine day, right?”

"People? HA! There's no 'people' here. They're walking dust-piles keeping real power from us humans, just like you are now." He put pressure on her sternum by pushing his shotgun forward. "If they want to be 'people', they should have stayed underground where they belong."

“What if it was us under there, and we emerged to hate like you people have? How would you feel? They’re not very different from us- they laugh, they love, they cry. They’re just people, but with magic and different shapes!” The gun on her sternum makes her bones rattle. Her magic churns uneasily under her bones. Toki goes to take a step back from the gun to give her more standing space.

“Nuh-uh, you move, you get dusted, bitch.” One of the others spoke, hefting a rifle and cocking it threateningly.

Toki swallows again, eyes flaring a lighter color. Theoretically the guns might not do much to her bones, if she can manage to be lucky enough for them to not be good shots. At point blank though, she might not be all right. It wouldn’t matter if she could get the bullet to go between her ribs instead, but the barrel of the shotgun was pressed to her sternum. “Why are you here? Tonight of all nights? Why now?”

"Isn't it obvious?” The first man laughed quietly. His voice was low, so as not to attract attention. “The king’s here. With him gone? The world is ours again, and monsterkind will be reminded why they were put underground in the first place. But if you're going to get in our way... You'll just have to be the first casualty.”
“So your end goal is to kill the King?” Fuck, she needed to get all the information out of him that she could. “Why? If Asgore falls, another King will take his place, and another after that. That’s a senseless cycle of violence and hate- Asgore is a really nice person! He doesn’t deserve that. No monster deserves what you have planned. Please, there’s no need for this. You don’t have to hurt me, or anyone- just go home. I wont even say anything to the others if you turn around and leave right now.”

"I'm afraid we can't do that. You monsters are a blight on this world, and you've already gotten way too fucking comfortable.” The man snarled. “First you come into our world, then your fucking magic starts transforming us humans into your freakish kind!”

“I-It’s more than just magic,” she stammers. “It’s something tied into the DNA of humans who have monster ancestors. It’s literally not their fault that some of us have undergone the change, or are in the process of changing. It’s in our DNA. Please. This is senseless- I’m not going to let you waltz into my home and hurt innocent people.”

"Then we're not going to let you live. Even if we have to kill our own family, our own children, our grandchildren! We'll wipe your disgusting kind off the face of the earth and all strains of your filthy presence!"

Horror made her mouth drop open. “There is something wrong with you people. Killing your own children? Just what are you hoping to accomplish with mass genocide of a species that hasn’t done any-”

“Aunt Toki! What’s taking so long? Don’t tell me you fell asleep by the mailbox- If you start doing what dad does, I’m gonna have to disown you.”

Panic flooded Toki as Dom barreled around the corner. He shoved into her, making her jerk towards the man with the gun. This maniac was going to kill her family- his own fucking family too. Her arms came down and spread out, hoping to use her loose sweater to block him from view. “Dom, run!”

"Auntie, wha-?"

And with the lurching movement, the trigger of the shotgun was reflexively pulled, the muzzle of the gun flashing bright in the dark.

The whole town grew quiet as a single gunshot rang out. Tenebris and Caeruleus turned towards the gate, while Quinn immediately moved into action, ushering the king towards to somewhere safe.

Sarah went along with Asgore, as Luna was still resolutely clinging to the King’s beard.

Han’s violin hit the ground as he turned to the direction of the noise. With all of the trees in the area, it wasn’t hard to pinpoint it. Ryushi likewise followed his gaze, and horror stretched his face. “DOM!”

Ryushi raced for the gate about the time that Dom toppled backwards into view.

Toki soon followed, shirt blown wide open as she rotated instinctively, trying to cover her nephew with flesh she didn’t have. Red blossomed on the young boy’s chest and abdomen, and his mouth was open and gasping. Toki was stiller than stone as she draped across him.
Men stepped into view, lining up and blocking the entrance. They stood only a few feet from the fallen skeleton, but their sudden aggressive advance halted Ryushi in his tracks.

“Tonight, Humans Against Monsters makes the second strike. Tonight,” one of their members spoke, “The ground will be covered in dust and blood alike. Tonight you all die- so say goodbye to this world you filthy beasts.”

"..." Tenebris and Cae both stared at the fallen in horror...

For the longest time, there was only silence, the monsters in shock, before a single, horrified screech cut the air.

"TOKI!" Cae shortcut forward without thinking, aiming to land at Toki’s side.

"Caeruleus no!" Tenebris gasped.

The first row of humans converged as Sans appeared next to the fallen skeleton. They trampled over her and the boy, hardly taking note that her arms were positioned to keep her weight from crushing the child below her as they stomped down on her back and vaulted over her. They swarmed in, striking out with the blunt ends of their guns to force the monster back.

“Kill the humans! Dust the monsters! No one survives tonight! Fucking find the King! He can’t evade us forever.”

The first shot rang out, blowing through one of the guards as he scrambled for cover. It blew through his chest, the bullet imbedding in the wood of the wagon. His dust scattered over the cart before he could even yelp.

Ryushi and Han were hardly idle. The eldest of the two met one of the gun-wielding humans, and began the struggle of trying to wrest his weapon from him. Han on the other hand ducked behind one of the wagons, hand fishing in the back of his pants for the gun holster that he habitually had on him.

Sans blocked with his arms and snarled lowly, backing away with the human's advance. His sockets were dark, his grin fallen into a frown. "It's a beautiful night... But on nights like this... Humans like you... Shouldn't be admiring the stars...! Humans like you!" His left eye lit up brightly as Gaster Blasters appeared, a snarl pulling at his lips. "Should be BURNING IN HELL!" His screech was droned out by the roar of the blasters going off, cutting through the air in arcs of hellish blue.

As the humans pushed his son, Tenebris felt something inside him snap. His eyes narrowed and his pupils turned to slits, before a low snarl came from him. His jaw then unhinged and he let out the most bestial roar one could hear, a true battle cry that hadn’t been heard since before the barrier was erected.

It was an order for all brave and strong enough to fight to protect their loved ones.

The monsters heard the cry, and those who knew how to fight swarmed from their houses. The humans scattered as the blasters went off, several of them not getting out of the way in time. They screamed, terrible horrible noises as the blasters seared flesh and stole away the life force in their souls. Many of them dropped where they stood, souls giving out against the trauma that was inflicted. Half of them parted to rush for the civilians that rushed from their homes. The other remaining half surged over the fallen skeleton, scrambling up and away from the massive blasters.

Shots rang out, and the humans ducked to take cover as Han leaned out, aiming to disable them. Leg shots, arm shots, non-fatal wounds.
The space over Toki and Dom cleared out rapidly, humans scattering and bull rushing the monsters. The civilians created a hefty wall across the roads. Those who were proficient at shields took the forefront, setting up barriers that deflected the bullets as they were fired. Long range attacks soared over, narrowly dodging the other guards as some of them rushed out from behind cover to fly with tooth and fang into the fray.

A few turned their guns onto Tenebris, shooting at him to keep him at bay.

Others turned their guns onto Cae, running and dodging as they made attempts to hit him without getting hit by the blasters.

Tenebris led those to protect the innocent, but upon being fired upon, his tail swung around, the bullets being reflected by the blade adorning the end of the monster's tail. Provoked, he screeched ferociously and charged. The humans scattered briefly, reforming into a loose bunch as he turned to charge again. Before he could get too close, he skidded to a stop and pulled fast into a twist. His tail swinging swiftly, there was a sickening gurgle as the bladed end sliced a path through several fleshy middles. It was as easy as a hot knife going through butter.

They fell where they stood, organs spilling out into the grass.

They attempted to hit Cae- they tried hard with their foolish weapons.

But he wasn't the master of the Judgement hall for nothing.

He was the King's judge.

The People's Jury.

The Kingdom's Executioner.

His eye glowed with unreleased energy as he sent blaster attack and bone attack alike out to kill the humans. His steps long and unfaltering as his sole goal was to get to Toki and Dom. His shield was a ring of magic he was able to summon around him, slowing the bullets that traveled through it until they fell to the ground by his feet.

He was pulling no strings, he'd get to Tokiko, and he'd protect her. They didn't deserve her dust on their shoes.

Humans fell dead as blasters and bones alike struck out, driving them back and away from Toki and Dom. The space opened up as the humans were forced back, trampled grass and shards of bone littering the ground among the fallen bullets. Dom was gasping, fingers grasping at his Aunt's forearms. Red mingled with an odd green fluid, staining her shirt and bones a garish color. The tattered scraps of her shirt hid most of the damage for the boy below her- but there was a lot of blood.

Three humans dropped as their legs were shot, and guards were quick to disarm them and restrain them. Ryushi managed to get his opponent disarmed and set in a chokehold. He kept his back to the wall, his eyes on his son, and the terrifying display of magic that was working to protect and repel the members of HAM.

Cae finally managed to get to them and with a surge of magic, cast away his attack to boost his defense as he reached and took one of Dom's hands. "Hey... Hey... It's okay, kid..."

He couldn't see worth a damn with her draped over the boy. Gently, Sans grasped Toki's shoulders, slowly attempting to roll her over as to access the damage. "Oh my god... Oh my god..." he hissed weakly upon seeing her damage.
The front of her shirt fell open, folding down and catching on cracked remnants of her lower ribs. Her sternum was entirely gone, parts of it blown back and lodged in the rest of her bones. Pieces were shoved through the back part of her rib cage, bone lodging up in her shoulder blades as well, littering her shirt with shards of bone. From her second rib and down was entirely gone in the front, and the shattered bits of her ribcage were oozing magic.

Her sockets were dark and empty, body limp and unresponsive.

Dom was a bloody mess below her. The bullet had obviously pretty much exploded against her bones, shoving pieces through other parts of her much more fragile bone structure. Shards of bone were what did the most damage. Long splinters and thick, twisted shards speared into his middle, lodging in between his ribs and up in his shoulder. Blood welled in thick pools from the punctures. He gasped and coughed, hands grasping bleakly for anything to make it stop hurting.

There was a click, and a bullet attempted to shoot at Cae from behind. It slipped under his defensive barrier, tore through his jacket, and struck the ground uselessly as he lacked the flesh for that sort of attack to damage him.

He was going to check her HP when he felt the bullet tear through his jacket... he reached up to where he felt it completely miss his bones, then he turned his head, eye glowing, "... You made a bad choice, Pal." his eye then blinked, and the HAM Agent's soul was turned blue.

The agent's soul was blue, but it didn't stop him from aiming for Sans' skull this time. What did stop him, however, was the force of the massive beast that was Tenebris bowling him over.

The gun now out of reach, Tenebris roared in the man's face. This wasn't the gentleman that many knew and loved. This was an animal, a relentless beast that fought with a purpose.

And by hearing the roar, Asgore knew his state of mind was compromised... He got up and pushed past Aliquam, running back outside. "TENEBRIS!" he shouted, running for them. "STOP!" The king was in his full armor now, and devoid of Luna to slow him down.

The appearance of the King drew the humans’ attention- and those remaining from the fight against the civilians turned to charge him instead. Their guns were useless, peppering against his armor harmlessly. They couldn’t get a clear shot for his head- one aimed and missed, putting a hole through the King’s ear as it flapped behind him.

The one under Tenebris grit his teeth and roared back, rage burying the fear that made his bladder lose control. “We’ll never stop! We are only small part of this, there are many, many more of us. You cant hope to fight us all- You kill me, beast. Do it. DO IT. PROVE TO THE WORLD WHAT YOU ARE.”

Though the pain of the bullet going through his ear blurred his vision with shock, Asgore kept running to Tenebris. He had to stop him!

The Phantom leaned his head back and his jaw unhinged with a loud pop, but before he could sink his teeth into human flesh, large armored arms grabbed him and put him in a lock as Asgore pulled him off of the human.

"Tenebris! That's enough, old friend!" the king snarled over the beast's enraged roars.

Quinn had quickly run out after the King. Seeing the guns fixed on his King, his right eye lit up and he summoned forth bones that shot from the ground, spearing through the guns to render them useless.
"Fuck- RETREAT!" With weapons rendered useless, the humans had no way to fight back. They turned, leaving their wounded where they lay, and bolted.

Flashing lights and sirens appeared outside of the walls, and Han figured that Sarah had called the cops and an ambulance. The enraged beast in Asgore’s arms would not help the situation. His gun running out of ammo, and no more guns in action, had him stepping from behind the wagon.

"Asgore! Get him out of sight! If the cops see him, they’ll shoot- Get him behind the shed!" The shed was the closest thing that was out of sight and still within distance to move him.

There was a flurry of noise from the cops as they lunged out of their cars, giving chase as the humans on foot kept running. The ambulance wasn’t far behind, and paramedics were scrambling out the back of the van at about the same time that Ryushi dropped his unconscious foe.

The father bolted to his son, mournful eyes glancing at his sister as his hands fluttered helplessly over his son’s arms. Cae had Toki well enough- there wasn’t anything he could do for his sister.

“Daddy…” Dom choked. “Daddy it hurts…”

“I know Dom, I know… Oh god, Dom…”

The paramedic’s descended- one hung back for half a second, and cast Cae a helpless look. “We don’t know how to treat monsters… I’m so sorry…”

Advice well noted. Tenebris kicked at first as an attempt to reclaim balance, but the King quickly dragged him away from the action. He needed to calm him down, and he was going to do just that.

Aliquam wasn’t about to let the humans get away. He teleported to the gate, using the trick he very rarely bothered using, and his eye glowed brightly as he summoned bones around those who attempted to run. Trapping them and leaving them at the mercy of the police was the easier option.

Caeruleus was trembling as he sat with Toki, the shield falling to let the paramedics collect Dom, but he slowly pulled Toki close, holding her in a protective hold. "..."

Sarah rushed out as the sounds of guns faded- and she managed to bolt to the paramedics as they took Dom. Luna was sobbing in her arms, and she kept her daughter’s line of sight off of her brother.

Both parents left swiftly in the ambulance that ferried them for the nearest hospital in the city.

Han didn’t linger with the downed men, who couldn’t run for the wounds in their legs. He jogged out, passing Papyrus and heading to the police to handle the fallout that was no doubt coming.

And like that, it was over. The guns were stopped, the fighting done- and the dust of that single guard drifting slightly in the wind.

Shards of Toki’s ribs fell out as she was lifted, dropping to the ground with steady plinks. Toki was limp, rag dolling like a fresh corpse in his arms with her sockets dark and broken ribs still oozing magic.

He held her closer and tucked his against hers. "T-Toki, hang on... please" he whispered, before turning, "P-PAPYRUS!" he cried out.

The younger brother was there quickly, long legs carrying him over. He covered his mouth as he caught sight of the damage. "O-Oh my god..." he whispered roughly. Papyrus dropped to his knees and offered his healing magic to stop his bleeding, passing his fingers over the oozing ends of the shattered and cracked bone. "Miss Toki..." he whispered, tears welling in his eye sockets, as an edge
of her rib broke off when he brushed it. "How the hell... How is she not dust...?" he asked hesitantly. It had only taken one shot to create the pile of dust he had seen- how was she hanging on?

This is when Cae summoned her soul, going to check her HP with the hopes that it was still there. She wouldn’t dust- she hadn’t before, but it wasn’t like he could tell his brother that.

Toki’s soul floated out, still the same warm green color, still alive and still blessedly there. It was dimmer. The large red cracks were more pronounced against the darker green. Her HP read out at 750/1000. Her attack rested below that stat, very faintly outlined if one was looking for it, at a solid 3, while her defense skyrocketed up to 200 next to it. Despite the healing, the number of her HP barely ticked upwards.

The bleeding was stopped easily enough, the rough edges of her ribs glimmering with blood and magic stains. As the healing settled into her bones, sealing up the leaking cracks and fissures, the light returned to Toki’s eyes.

She’d shot herself in the foot once before- but that was nothing compared to the agony of having her ribs completely shattered like that. Dazed and in pain, she made the mistake of inhaling. Her magic filled her chest cavity, expanding on the ribs that were no longer there. Agony stole her breath away, and the air rushed out in a strangled moan.

Papyrus tensed at the damage to her soul. "Oh my god...!" he gasped in shock. Those… Those cracks…

Having Already seen it, Cae bit back an upset sound regardless. He looked to Toki's face as she stirred. "Hey... hey... Toki, it's okay. We're going to get you somewhere..." he told her softly, looking around for the larger monsters that were the King and his father. Tenebris was coming from where he was dragged, with Asgore behind him, cradling his wounded ear. The King veered off, heading over to his people to begin addressing what wounds he could.

The skeleton finished his sentence quietly. "Safe..."

Tenebris looked like he was going to be sick, but his strides carried him quickly over to Toki. He crouched next to his sons, eyes flicking over the damage to her body with a grimace. "Your magic will not heal this damage" He said to Quinn.

"B-But father...!"

"Trust me... She needs more than that." he murmured. He reached out and set his hand under her head and neck, tilting it up slightly so he could peer into the dimly lit sockets. "Toki, can you hear me?" he spoke gently.

Her gaze was vacant for a short time, lost to the agony in her ribs. The murmured voices drew her around, and she managed to focus on the tense faces around her. She sucked in another breath, thirty-two years of human instinct driving her to form her words with air that she didn’t even need. Even as it made her sockets snap tightly closed in pain, she grit her teeth, sparks leaping as her teeth ground together like harsh flint. Her fingers clenched tightly onto whatever was closest. She didn’t look to see what she grasped. “Y-yes…”

Panic budded in her mind- She remembered the gun, she remembered searing pain and twisting to cover Dom- and there had been so much blood. She forced her sockets open, eyes tinting a panicked lime. “D-Dom?”

"Focus on me." He ordered sharply, cupping her cheeks. "Look at me." he ordered again. "Dom has
been taken by the human paramedics.” he assured her. "He's safe, he's going to be okay..."

She really didn’t have much to argue- children had the habit of being surprisingly resilient, but humans were so fragile compared to monster kids. Toki trembled, the lime color dimming from her eyes as pain won out over panic. She managed to give him a nod. Nodding didn’t hurt, and she was hurting so much… Every breath hurt, and each time it hurt she just kept inhaling more… Green tears beaded in her eye sockets. She wasn’t a warrior- she didn’t deal with broken bones, flesh wounds, or any of this sort of stuff regularly. “Hurts…”

"I know... I know." He slowly came closer and lifted her from Cae’s arms into his lap, holding her close. "Your ribcage was damaged... You have exposed bone marrow..." he murmured, "But it'll be okay... The pain will stop..."

The motion of being moved made the agony spike, and green magic briefly scorched over her bones in an instinctive defensive measure as her eyes went dark, mind falling blank against the pain. She cried out, fingers curling into her palms as her spine stiffened. The green briefly singed at her bones, darkening the tips as her defense turned to offense.

The scorching heat of her magic faded off within seconds as it only made the pain worse, and her pinpricks appeared again. She rasped, mouth falling open as she trembled faintly. “Whennnnnn…?” When would the pain stop?

His hand glowed black as he lowered it, holding it over her spine and inner-ribcage. He could see the shards of bone... He shook his head slowly, and smiled to her gently. "Seconds." He then focused with his magic, and from the hole in his palm black tendrils reached out, finding the shards and pulling them straight out.

Her HP ticked downwards as the shards tore out, the same green ooze bubbling forth from the fissures in her bones. Her eyes went dark, and a strangled noise left her. She writhed momentarily, the pain spiking sharply, before it began to ebb off. It didn’t fade completely- every motion of her torso, every breath, brought about pain.

But it was less.

And that’s all that mattered.

"Papyrus."

With the speaking of his name, he moved forward and began to use his healing magic again to stop the bleeding.

"What do we do, Pops...?" Cae asked quietly, uncertainty flitting across his gaze.

"Calm down, Sans. We just need to keep her spine straight and get her inside... we need a stretcher."

Toki fell silent, sockets closing as she tried to hold still.

“The ambulance already left.” One of the police officers approached hesitantly. He had his jacket off- and a few others were shrugging off their own and preparing to bring them over. He glanced hesitantly to the largest of the skeletons, and swallowed nervously. “Uh- big guy? Papyrus or whatever the other one said- you made the bone things, right? If you can, uh, make two really long ones, we can make a stretcher for your friend. That’s- holy shit, that’s Tokiko Nara isn’t it?”

“Fuck, this is going to be a mess…” One of the other’s murmured. He brought over an armload of jackets, and laid them carefully on the ground. Arranging them so they were connected, the
policeman stretched the arms of the coats out. The arms would be used to tie to the bones. “If you can't make bones, maybe just find some long sticks. A spear, or whatever the heck you monsters can make- we can tie the jackets to it.”

Papyrus nodded once, then he smiled, but it was more forced and hollow than genuine. "Two bones... coming right up." he then got up and called upon his magic, summoning two bones into his hands. He stepped away from the three other monsters and let the bones stretch until they were long enough to create the stretcher. "Here we are." he said, putting them down.

The cops watched in amazement, but ultimately the first one that spoke got to work. The second one headed off, going to help wrangle up the survivors- and trying to ignore the sickening sight of many disemboweled humans.

The jacket arms were knotted tightly around the bones, and bunched up to create a solid surface to lay her on. He grimaced, tightening the straps, and then stood with a groan. He was too old for this shit. “There. It should hold long enough to get her some place to rest. I, uh… I’m sorry I can’t do more. None of us are trained to help with Monster medical problems.”

"You've done more than enough to help us." Tenebris said with a tight smile. "You have my gratitude." he then moved to carefully prepare to move Toki, while Cae moved to get the stretcher over to them.

The officer nodded and grimaced. “I’m glad you monsters stopped these guys. Its terrorists like these that make our country not safe- My little girl… They’d have her killed for what she is. We’ll give you some time- and her- to rest and heal, but we’re going to need all information you guys can give. Take some time to heal- We’ll talk with her brother and get things sorted out here.”

Toki moaned quietly. “Thank y-you…”

"If you think your daughter isn't safe... Bring her here." Tenebris offered the small bit of advice.

“I… I might do that. Thank you.”

The shifting of her body onto the stretcher is painful, and the cop leaves before the pained noises grow too loud. Once she’s settled on the stretcher, her fingers curl over the edges and she uses the bones to hold herself still.

Tenebris and Papyrus hefted the ends of the stretcher and began to bring her carefully back to their home. Cae did not follow. The crowd parted to let them through- monsters and police officers alike letting the boss monsters ferry the wounded woman away.

They would see her later- right now they had ashes to gather and dead humans to collect.

With what would have been a white-knuckled grip, the human turned monster managed to keep her body still under the slight swaying of the stretcher. By the end of it, her arms trembled and her finger bones felt cramped and locked in place. “C-couch?” That was where she had been staying, and the blankets were still there and messy from her waking up that morning.

They took her there, putting the stretcher down right on it, before they covered her up to her waist. "I need to work on your rib-cage.” Tenebris told her.

As the bones holding the coats together were dissolved, Toki found her fingers curling instead into the heavy material of the Police coats. Her finger bones creaked ominously. She gave a terse nod to Gaster. “P-please do.” Though what could he do? Her ribs were shattered- shards of her bones were caught in the tattered remnants of her shirt, and resting down in her pelvic girdle. Other shards were
embedded in the ground outside- and… and in Dom.
Strider's Notes: Tooth extraction went well, as I'm posting the chapter after it. Heh. If all goes well, we'll continue with regularly released updates on TOTU. :) If we're slow to release them, I'm sure you guys understand why.

Don't forget to check us out at our blog! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing notes: Well! That was some perfect aftercare after the nightmare that was Chapter 13.
Now it's time to get to the fun part, over the next couple of chapters you'll see more of one of our darling baby bones spending time together with Toki.

Her ribs were a patchwork of cracks and empty spaces, held in place by the same dark tendrils of magic that had yanked the shards out of where they had imbedded in her other bones. There were shards that they hadn’t been able to find- so Tenebris filled the gaps with his magic as best he could, and kept everything in place.

It would take time for the bone to grow back together, to fill in the gaps where the bone hadn’t been able to be retrieved. The patchwork was fragile, so very fragile- one wrong hit, and it would bend under the pressure in a way that no solid set of ribs ever would.

It had hardened up a little bit come the second day- Toki had ‘slept’ through the entirety of the first- but was still sensitive to the touch. She was sequestered to the couch, where she was supposed to sit still and rest. She didn’t have a problem with it on the day she woke- she handled some things with the Police over the phone, and got a call from her brother and his wife.

Dom was just fine- he was still in the hospital, but he was going to be fine. They’d managed to remove all of the shards of bone and fragments of bullets- and the boy, in typical boy fashion, had demanded to keep the largest chunk of bone as a keepsake. She didn’t have the heart to tell him she needed that chunk back for her sternum- so she would handle regenerating that part of her body.

Dom was a better trooper about it than she was.

Han handled everything that she couldn’t do over the phone. Before he had to leave to go back to work, he got it set up for a police patrol to keep an eye on the compound and the village.

The extra protection helped with their lack of manpower, but did little to quell the sadness that had invaded the community.

Toki also got word that one of the guards had been dusted.

On top of her body hurting, her soul practically wept with sorrow. One of the wolves, Hound, had been the one to get dusted. He hadn’t been able to brace his defense for the bullet- and it had torn through his HP. Word had come from the Castle that his mate, still back in the Capital, had fallen down.

On day three after the HAM attacked, there were two funerals, both of which she missed. The King
had returned back home on the day prior- and had taken the ashes of Hound with him.

By day four, she couldn’t take sitting there anymore. She couldn’t just rest while Han and everyone else handled things for her. It wasn’t in her nature to be stationary, to just lay here and grow round from the amount of magic infused food they kept shoving down her. Her soul ached, her body throbbed- and so she eased herself out of the cocoon of blankets and pillows that the skeletons had padded her in, and tried to make as little noise as possible as she stiffly shambled for the kitchen. She didn’t want to attract their attention- they treated her like cracked glass, as if the lightest of pushes would shatter her- as she went to make herself an early morning cup of tea.

The morning light outside was nice- and she had every intention of enjoying the early morning air before the household roused, and she was bundled back up on the couch again.

She didn’t expect, however, Tenebris to be standing in the kitchen in front of the stove.

Simply put, he was, but upon sensing her, his dilated pupils constricted and he took a deep breath. "Shouldn't you be resting?" he questioned on a quiet voice.

She’d frozen when she spotted him, and his voice made her startle. A soft hiss was pulled from her mouth as her ribs twanged, and she shot him a rueful look. "Same could be said for you. I thought you were asleep." Not one to be dissuaded, she continues on her slow shuffling trek, and makes a beeline for some tea. Most of it is on the top shelf, but she’s just tall enough to edge down her preferred tea with the tips of her claws. The teapot was too loud- so hot water from the tap would work well enough.

"My years in the labs have ruined my sleeping schedule." he murmured. "I have enough water, just wait and I'll share this pot of water with you."

Toki makes a soft ‘mmm’ noise in response. Her time being sick had ruined her sleeping schedule. She used to be a late to bed and early to rise sort of human- now she woke up whenever. She fetches her bags of tea, and sets them on the counter. Stretching her arms up too high hurts, darn it. "Thanks, Gaster. I was just going to use some water from the tap."

She shuffle-steps over to one of the cupboards and fetches her usual mug. "You look pretty tired. Why don’t you try to get some more sleep after you have your tea? I can handle myself for a little bit."

He sighed quietly, and then glanced back at her. "I’m probably just going to have a pipe, and settle down in my recliner..." he decided after a while, before he turned back to the teapot. "How do you feel?"

"You do that. I’ll keep quiet so I don’t disturb you.” She gives him a faint smile, and drops a bag of tea into her mug. It could steep for a while once she added the water. She edged over to join him at the stove, and brushed her fingers over her ribs with a grimace. “I’m alright so long as I am careful about how I move or do things. Your magic is still holding up.”

"I'm glad..." he whispered, yawning tiredly. His eyes were dull as he collected a tea bag from the counter and put it in his own mug. "I cant dare imagine what would happen if we lost you."

"Gaster, I’m not going anywhere." She shifted, and gently bumped her shoulder to his side. She would have used her hip, but that was a motion she couldn’t quite handle painlessly. “Us Nara are
made from tough stuff. If I can survive being burned alive, I can survive being shot for a second time.” At least Cae would take guns seriously now- but she kept that particular thought to herself.

He chuckled at that, reaching and setting his hand on her shoulder, "You know, Toki." he murmured, "We all appreciate you for what you’ve done for us, you don’t deserve everything that’s happened to you..." he murmured, "And if there’s anything I can do..."

Her fingers come up to cover his, and she gives him a tired smile as she rubs the smooth bone of her fingers over his own. “You guys don’t deserve the genocide that those people wish. You monsters are kind- kinder than most of humanity.” She sighs, and leans her forehead against his arm. Gods above, these monsters were kind. Scary yes- she’d seen the mess that they’d made of the HAM agents when they’d carried her back here- but completely undeserving of the hate that mankind could bring. Her bone lids close over her sockets, and she heaves a shuddering sigh. “Unless you can magically suck all of the hate and racism out of the world… there’s nothing that you can do.”

The kettle screams, making her flinch against him at the loud noise, announcing that the water inside was ready to be used for their tea.

There wasn’t really much he could say to that with how groggy he was. Instead, Tenebris turned off the burner and lifted up the kettle. "Watch out, it's hot." he warned.

“Heat doesn’t bother me much anymore.” She muses softly. As he fills their mugs with the hot water, she scoops her mug close and cradles it to her chest. The touch hurts- but the heat of the mug makes her sigh in relief, face relaxing. Heat felt good against the broken bones. “Thank you, Gaster.”

"My pleasure, Miss Toki." he said with a smile, leaving his tea to steep longer. "Mmm." He liked his tea stronger... so good, even untouched with sugar or cream.

“You know, you can just call me Toki, right? No need for the ‘miss’ bit to it.” She offers him another smile, and begins her slow shuffle-walk towards the front door. There was a seat outside that was calling her name.

"I know... I know..." He looked at her, then he sighed and rubbed his eyes, "Mmm, wait for me." he murmured, "I'll sit with you.”

“Gaster,” Exasperation tinged her voice. She didn’t stop- but it’s not like she could move very fast. “I am not going to die if I sit on the stairs without someone watching me. Have a pipe and enjoy your tea and then get some sleep. I promise, I’ll be alright.”

"It's not to watch you." Which normally would be the case. "It's just to talk. Or at least relax and get some air.”

She rolls her pinpricks in her sockets, not fully believing him, but ends up nodding. “I’m not going to begrudge you fresh air, and company would be nice.” She reaches the front door shortly, easing it open carefully, and then steps outside. She leaves it open for the older monster to follow after. There aren’t any chairs- so she eases herself carefully down so she can sit against the railing of the stairs. Her ribs twinge, protesting such movements, and a soft groan leaves her.

He followed her shortly. Sitting on the top step, Tenebris' legs easily extended to stretch his claws in the ground, much like a cat would. Setting his teacup down, he stretched in the now much more open space, his mouth opening wide in a deep yawn. It was rather interesting to see, as he wouldn’t usually do this in front of many people.

That was actually slightly adorable. Toki smiled into her cup, shifting to give him space to stretch.
The steps weren’t very wide, but she wasn’t a very big monster. Sipping the scalding tea, Toki hummed and glanced out. Monsters were still asleep, so the town was empty. Only a few were up and about, but they were groggily shuffling towards the market to open up their stands.

“I love mornings.” She murmurs against her mug. The hot tea was probably too hot for many others to drink, but it didn’t bother her. “They’re quiet and peaceful. Sometimes you can pretend that there’s nothing wrong, and you can just… exist.” The sun was teasing the tops of the surrounding forest, glinting off the roofs of the monster houses.

"Mmm..." He took deep breath and looked at the sky, leaning his arms behind his body now with his palms against the ground. "It's been a while since I've had a proper morning... But... this is still rather early for me since I’ve more or less retired.” he chuckled.

“Before I got sick, I used to get up every morning before dawn and come outside to watch the sun rise over the mountain.” She hums. Shifting positions, Toki extends a leg, stretching it out alongside his own. Her other one tucks up, giving her arms something to lean on. “I haven’t managed to get back into a regular schedule with everything that’s been happening. I probably wont manage that until I’m back in my own house.”

"Everyone is going to make an effort to restore your home, you mean that much to us all." he purred, "Not that we're eager to get you out of our house," he teased.

She elbowed him with a soft laugh, and set her tea down. The morning was cold, and steam curled from the top of the mug. “I’ve got it all set up for the contractors to put up the house. They’ll be putting it up after they finish the next district of homes. It’s gonna be a bit bigger than the old one- so everyone can walk through the doors.” And with it being made out of brick, that was going to be needed. If Papyrus plowed into a brick doorframe like he did her old ones, he would definitely need healing of some kind. “It’s nice staying with you guys- in a house that isn’t empty- but I am ready to sleep in an actual bed.”

He looked at her. "If you wanted a bed to sleep in, you could have just asked," he chuckled in a gentle scold.

“Ha- I’m not taking anyone’s bed.” She’s firm on that. “The couch is good for now. What I meant by sleeping in a bed would be sprawling out. Your couch is pretty big- but if I roll too far, I’ll hit the floor.” She chuckles. Scooping her mug up, she drained the rest of the tea and then settled the mug down again. She’d need to scoop out the tea bag eventually, but for now it could sit. “Though, I can’t really move much with all of the pillows the boys keep packing me in. It’s probably a good thing- hitting the floor with my ribs like this would be a mess.”

"I couldn't imagine it would feel good." he chuckled softly, collecting his cup and drinking down his tea before it could get cold.

Though before they could continue talking, Papyrus appeared in the doorway, looking tired and frazzled. "T-Toki!"

The sudden appearance of the frazzled and tired skeleton startled her, and she groaned as her ribs were bumped roughly into her knee. Gods above, that hurt. Regardless, she turned a slight smile to the tall skeleton. “Good morning, Papyrus. Did you sleep well?”

"W-Well yes, I did. I was worried when I didn't see you on the couch!” he responded.

"It's alright, Aliquam. We just needed some tea and fresh air, I made sure she was okay." Tenebris assured him, watching his shoulders slump in relief.
"I'm glad..."

Toki arched a bone ridge at Gaster. So much for just needing fresh air, huh? She sighs through her nasal cavity, and then lifts a hand to the railing. She tugs, working on easing herself back onto her feet. It's a long process- going down is easier than getting up. "I've been on the couch for a couple days now- if I stayed on there any longer, I might have gone stir-crazy."

"Then perhaps I could bring you with me on my morning patrol, just see how well you're doing?" Aliquam offered hesitantly. "I mean... It has been a few days..."

"I actually would like that. Though… I'd probably slow you down. I can't really go at your usual walking pace." Once she’s upright, Toki nods. Her foot bumps her mug, and she glares down at it. Shit. She forgot to bring that up with her. "Hey, Gaster? Can you hand me my mug?" She needed to go rinse it out and dispose of the tea bag.

He shook his head and scooted the mug closer to himself. "I'll take care of it, you two go on ahead."

Toki gives him a grateful look. "Thanks, Gaster." Easing herself down the stairs, Toki glances up to the larger skeleton in the doorway. "You going on patrol in your pajamas, Ali?" Her brow arches, and she gives him an amused smile.

"No! Of course not!" he insisted, before he turned, running back upstairs.

She hears the door slam as he flies into his bedroom, and laughs softly. She makes her way out to the 'road', brushing her bare feet over the ground. The dirt is cold and dry- and the mornings are getting colder and colder. October was just around the corner. Heh. She’d need to introduce everyone to the joys of Halloween- bobbing for apples, pumpkin carving, trick-or-treating… It would do good to keep the kid’s spirits up.

It's not long before Aliquam joins her in his uniform, smiling gently, "You got a head start, huh? Heh, maybe you're doing better than we feared..."

"I made it literally twenty feet from the house the entire time you were gone, Pap. I'm pretty sure you cleared that in like five seconds." Still, she offers him a cheery grin and a thumbs up. She hasn’t joined him on his rout before, so she doesn’t really know where to start. "Lead the way? I'm not sure which way you usually go. Don’t worry about leaving me behind- I know my way back to the house if I get lost."

"Nyeh heh heh...!" he chuckled with a smile on his face, "I feel like it's less you need to be led, and more just..." he then offered, "Me needing someone to talk to, ya'know?"

She nods. She knows that feeling. If he wasn’t going to race ahead, then she was completely fine just walking and talking with him. He’d been so busy these past couple of days… They all had. Toki offers him her hand, wiggling her long fingers for his mitts. "I don’t mind talking." She makes a surprisingly good listener. "Penny for your thoughts?"

"Sometimes, I wonder if they're better priced at a dollar." He chuckled, taking her hand gently in his dark red glove. "I don’t think monsterkind could have gotten this far without you... You've done so much for us, I can’t even begin to thank you, nonetheless the rest of my kind..."

"Nyeh heh heh...!

"A dollar huh? I think I’d be willing to pay that price. Maybe even two or three." She smiles at him, lacing her fingers with his. His hand dwarfed hers, but it was a strangely comfortable sensation. "I think," she hums, "That without me, monsterkind would be in a different sort of place. Perhaps farther, perhaps not- but there’s no way to know, really. None of you guys need to thank me- I did
what all of humanity should have done. For creatures who have evolved so far, it is ridiculous how primitive some of us still are.” She sighs softly, and flicks her pinpricks to him. Her smile softens. “Gaster told me that the primary color of my soul is green, which stands for kindness. He said it’s pretty rare- and I am in the firm belief that if the world could just show a little more kindness and less hate, it would be a merry place indeed.”

"Monsterkind wouldn't have come this far." he whispered, pulling her into a ghost of a hold, not truly squeezing for sake of her injuries. "Not without the wall of protection, of sanctuary, you've given to us." he murmured, his teeth pressing against her cheekbones.

The affectionate gesture makes her flush a bright green, having not been expecting the skeletal ‘kiss’ to her cheek. She eases her arm around his side, letting go of his hand in favor of simply leaning into him as they walked. He made a better brace than one would think. “I’m sure in time you would have. Maybe not this quickly- but given time, you all would have been at this point.” The mention of sanctuary makes her soul clench, and her eyes flit to the ground. “It’s not much of a sanctuary if I can’t protect you all from HAM. I… apologize for that. We lost two monsters because of them.” One here, and one back at the underground. “I don’t know how to prevent them from hitting again.” She was just one person trying to make a place for many, and being faced with an organization that probably outnumbered all the monsters in the compound.

She sucked in a frustrated breath of air, and grimaced when it forcibly expanded her ribs. Gods above, she was useless at this point. They had more important things to be worrying about than her. Toki was one person- one monster, one human, one whatever she was- out of many.

"Toki..." He nuzzled her again, "The loss of life is very upsetting... but try to think of the positive as well. Because we were able to react so quickly, so many people were protected..."

“I’m sorry.” Her fingers rub his side quietly, as they angle around a corner and down another road. “I’m usually better at being positive- but when my mind is left to wander, it often wanders to dark places. It’s why I keep busy. It’s why I kept busy even before I made the change.” She takes in another deep breath and sighs deeper this time. There was no use dwelling on what she couldn't change. Looking to the past did not always pave the way for the future. “Sorry. I’ll try to do better.” Clearing her nonexistent throat, Toki tilts her head back, taking the moment to enjoy a patch of sunshine. It glimmers over her horns, the darkened ivory lighting up. “The mornings are getting colder. October is just around the corner- I was thinking about doing something for Halloween.”

He nodded once, "I'll need to dig up my turtleneck and sweatpants." he mentioned to himself, before he shook his head, "No, you don't need to try and 'be better' at anything. You're you, Tokiko Nara, and that's what so many people love about you. That's what I love about you."

Her train of thought derailed- and though she knew Papyrus was an affectionate being, she hadn’t quite expected that to come from him. That nearly makes her miss a step, and her hand tightens on his side as she strains to keep her balance. Green heat floods her face. Gods above, Papyrus. “I- I guess. Still- I don’t need to be so negative around you. You’re so positive- you can always find the silver lining on the darkest cloud. Your happiness is infectious- so there’s no real reason to be upset. That’s what I love about you. Heh. I bet you look awesome in a turtleneck.” With how his magic filled out his clothes… Flushing again, she glanced away, bright pinpricks flicking around to distract herself. "I need to get myself another sweater for the season. Coats are too bulky, but a long sweater is just right."

"You know, silver linings can be found on more than just clouds... It could be found on bone laced with green magic" he nuzzled her jawbone and gave a soft 'nyeh heh heh heh~'.

"I can loan you one of mine, my ribcage doesn't jut out so much, so it may just fit you too." he told
her happily.

“A bone laced with green magic?” She wasn’t certain what he meant by that, but she wasn’t going to press further. His nuzzles made her laugh softly- though she had to wonder how comfortable that was for him. She was so much shorter… “You know, I think anything of yours is going to be hilariously large on me. And not just because of the height difference. But that’s really sweet of you.”

"Nyeh~" Papyrus doesn’t answer her question, but he does pull back to his usual height and beam down at her cheekily. "At least you'll look cute in it, yes?"

Gods damn it; she just got that stupid flush to go away. She tucks into his side, attempting to hide it. “I- I think that’s a matter of perspective. You think I’d look cute in it?” Everything with these monsters was large on her.

"Well yes!" he laughed, "As soon as your ribcage has recovered, I can see what might fit you... Most of my height is in my legs after all..." he mentioned, before patting her shoulder, "Well, we'll see!"

Toki laughs softly. “I actually might borrow one before ribs are recovered, if that’s okay with you. My current shirt is nice, but it’s really tight across my bones.” It helped hold them in place, yes, but it was uncomfortable when she was moving around. “I don’t know about the height thing though. You’re a lot of leg, but you’re a lot of torso too.” Considering her skull came to about his arm pit- and her horns near his face- he was hilariously tall. But she liked it- he was large. “Being large isn’t bad though. You… make me feel safe.”

He tugged her gently to a stop in the middle of the empty road. "And if you'll let me... I'll always keep you safe." He knelt this time to hug her, with both arms hugging her by where was once the small of her back. His face nuzzled into her neck, and he smiled against her. "Heh... Brother always told me I had an odd way of showing affection..." he murmured.

“I wouldn’t mind that.” She wouldn’t mind that at all. Her arms shifted and looped around his neck instinctively. Her fingers brushed his vertebrae, claws gently scraping as she leaned into him. His grasp around her was gentle- oh so gentle- no doubt in part because of the fragile mass of patchwork bones pressed to his chest. “I don’t think it’s odd.” She murmurs softly against his shoulder. Her sharp teeth rub against his cheek as her fingers trail down to his armor. “I think it fits you.”

He couldn't reply to that, he could only smile and give a soft laugh, "Toki..." he seemed to want to say something else, before it quieted itself in his non-existent throat. "Mm, let's finish our patrol, then we can go home..."

She didn’t press him for what he was going to say. Instead she simply nodded, gave him one last gentle squeeze, and then let him stand upright again. She offered her arm with a smile. “Alright. You’ve been a good sport about my lack of speed. Thank you for being patient with me, Quinn.”

He nodded with a smile, taking her arm with his. "Nyeh heh heh... of course, Miss Toki!" he said quietly, leading her onwards.

She smiled and let him guide her along. The walk back was pretty long, because she couldn’t go fast. But it was nice- and they managed to get back to the house before the children swarmed out of their homes to head to their morning lessons. The house was a welcome sight for Toki. Perhaps a walk that long had been a bit of a stretch for her first time outside since the shattering, but she enjoyed it, even if her ribs began throbbing tenderly.

She kept it quiet- because they would probably not let her out of the house again if she mentioned
overworking herself a bit- and smiled as Papyrus walked with her to the front door. “Home sweet home.”

He nodded once, and pushed the door open for her. "Ladies first" he said softly, letting her arm go.

“Thanks, Pap.” She flashes him a smile and hobbles inside. “So… any chance I can borrow a larger shirt? I was serious about this one pressing on my ribs.” She had the inking it was because of the magical pudge roll she was developing from sitting on her rear all day, but really wasn’t sure.

"It looks like Father really did go back to sleep, so you can relax in his chair until I get back." he told her as he followed her inside, closing the door behind him. He edged around her before starting for upstairs.

She watched him go with a soft sigh, and padded closer to Tenebris’ chair. It was massive- as it had fit the both him and the King on it. She didn’t sit- first, she really needed to get out of this shirt.

Edging her fingers along the edge, she grimaced as she began easing it up. The fabric snagged slightly on rough cracks, and she bit back a whimper. Ow. Ow. Ow.

A short time he came down, carrying a blanket in one hand, and a sweater in the other. He’d changed out of his uniform, settling into his more casual clothes. "Miss Toki?"

“Ah- can you give me a hand please?” She’s got it bunched up under her arms- but she can’t quite rotate her shoulders enough without pulling on the backs of her ribs. “It- ah, it’s a bit stuck.” Her fingers trembled on the edge of the fabric.

His sockets widened and he tossed the cloth in his arms onto the couch as he came over. "Oh goodness!" He carefully unhooked where it was caught, then helped her get it over her shoulders, then moving and putting his hands to the back of her skull, "Go ahead and pull it off, I’ll make sure it doesn’t hook on your horns..."

It was a relief as he unhooked it from where it had snagged. She exhaled a shaky breath and eased the rest of the way out. Her horns slid out easily enough- it was going into a shirt that they usually caused the most problems. As she slid free of the shirt, she stood topless before him. She glanced at her chest. Ugh. The white bone was interspersed with webs of sticky, black magic- and it looked like a mess. She prodded gently, checking for any loose spots. Finding none worthy mentioning, she crossed her arms and turned to Papyrus. “Thanks, Pap. I was in a bit of a sticky situation there. Is that shirt for me?”

"Yes, but first, let me make sure father's magic is not yet faltering from prolonged maintaining... as well on check on your bones themselves." He said gently, though didn’t reach for her immediately. "If I may, of course!"

“I don’t mind.” She turns fully to face him, dropping her arms. She rested them on her hips, watching his face carefully as she turned the mess towards him. It wasn’t pretty to look at. “Be gentle with me, please. It’s a bit tender from the shirt tugging on it.”

"I'll be so gentle you won’t even tell...” he murmured, examining the healing progress of the ribs, his eyes warm and focused.

“I trust you.”

There wasn’t much progress. Some of the smaller cracks to the insides of the ribs were starting to heal, fresh bone soft and pale as it sealed the cracks together. The part being held together with magic was bound tight; only a few spots of bone loose from where he’d had to ease the shirt up. As
she inhaled and exhaled, those spots wiggled, but remained in place. They would settle again so long as nothing tugged or rubbed on them too hard.

"You can touch- just… don’t press too hard. Most of it still feels solid, so that’s good, right?"

His fingers ghosted over her ribs as he examined them, "Yes. It is" he said softly, "It means Father's magic is doing its job. You are healing well." he concluded with a warm smile.

She shivered slightly at the ghosting touch, but held still as he examined her. “Good. I’d rather heal well than not heal at all.” Gaster had said he thought it would be a couple weeks before her ribs will have healed enough to support themselves without his magic. The chill air in the room wafts up her spine, and she rattles slightly. “Alright- am I good to put a shirt on? Did you need to check inside of the cage first?”

"I'd actually like to see your soul for a moment."

"Ah…” She hesitates. “It’s… not a pretty sight. Are you… Are you sure…?"

"I'm positive, I don’t care what it looks like, Toki... It's you. And you're perfect. No matter what.”

He was so damned earnest about it too, and that was the worst part.

Toki didn’t have it in her to tell him no, not without explicitly voicing the reason behind her refusal. “Alright…” She cups her hands at her chest for a second, and carefully draws it out. The right side up heart squishes out between the dark magic holding her chest together, and settles in her palm. It’s still dim, but is vastly brighter than it had been. The red cracks are not as blatant with the more vibrant green to drown it out slightly, but they do glow faintly against the usual green aura that her soul has. She offers it out for him to cup in his magic and investigate. “It’s hardly perfect- but it’s me.”

"But that's just it. By being you, it's perfect to me." he purred, slowly cupping it in his magic to examine it. He then focused to check her HP, thinking about that for a moment.

Her HP popped up higher than it was. It was resting around 775/1000. She watches him quietly, and just smiles. Affection makes her soul glow brighter. He really was sweet. “My HP is higher than it was. Twenty five points isn’t a lot, but it’s more than it was.”

He smiled at her, and then he held her soul close to his chest, cradling it as his own soul released a gentle energy, an aura to be detected. "Your HP is amazing at such a low LV..."

"Gaster isn’t sure why.” She admits quietly. The pulse of energy is soothing, and her sockets shut. The aura over her soul felt like a heating pad being draped across her entire body- it was wonderful. “It- ah, it served me well enough though. If it was any lower, I probably wouldn’t have survived the fire. If it’s all the same, I think it’s more than high enough.” And she had no intentions of ever raising her LV.

"You're LV 1, silly." he laughed quietly, "That's as low as it can get."

“And that’s how low it should stay.” She smiles up at him quietly. “And I meant my HP, not my LV. According to Gaster, most of the other monsters run a lot lower than what I have.” While he cradles her soul, she moves to collect the shirt. She gathers, and eases herself into it. Thankfully the neck hole is large enough her horns don’t snag- and soon she’s draped in a ridiculously large shirt that hangs down past her rear. “Much more comfortable.”

He chuckled at that, turning the soul quietly. The cracks along the backside of it caught his attention.
He remembered seeing these before. "Hmm... Toki..." he reached up with his thumb. "Do you have any idea of what could have cause thes-" Upon contact, however, his form seized up as his eye flashed bright orange in pain, "G-Gaahhh!" He almost dropped her soul as the burning pain seared over his bones.

Heat and agony had flashed over both of them. The cloying stench of smoke, of burning flesh, the crackle and snap of falling beams, and the burning, agonizing sensation of flesh burning down to bone flooded them. The taste of burning flesh was strong, but it was overridden by the sheer pain that came with feeling the fire burning from behind bone, bursting out through ribs and crawling upwards to do the same to her skull.

He took a half step back, before he collapsed onto his knee, trembling in pain, "Ghhh..."

Toki staggered, nearly hitting the floor as the unexpected sensation hit her like a truck. She managed to brace against the couch, arms curling around her ribs as she let out a grinding whimper. She looked like she would be violently ill if she could have been. "D-don't touch those again..." She whispered roughly.

He didn't need to be told twice as he held her soul out to her, letting his magic cradle it away from his palms. "I-I'm so... s-sorry." he whispered, "D-Do you always feel this?"

She took it back shakily, pressing it back into place. She trembled, leaning against the arm of the couch. She wouldn’t meet his eyes. "I... I didn’t think to warn you. N-no, I don’t. Only if you touch the cracks- I wasn’t aware that you would feel it too. A... Are you okay?" She’d already gone through this sensation before. She’d lived it, literally.

But he had no flesh to burn, no nerves to scald away, no lungs to shrivel and burst. What he felt had to have been horrifying. "It... It hurt..." he whispered, getting back to his feet and slowly moving closer to try and help her up. "But yes... I'll be okay..."

She let him ease her up, and she shook like a quivering leaf. The smell still lingered in her nose, and she found herself pressing closer to him to let the smell of him drive away the fire and flesh. "That’s what it was like..." She whispered softly. "In... In the fire. Are you sure? It’s... not an easy thing to go through."

He slowly picked her up with one arm under her, the other under her rear as he moved over to pick up the blanket, before he slowly sat down in the recliner. He then set her down and tossed the blanket until it was unfolded. After that, he covered them both up and wrapped his arms around her. "I'll be okay... I'm going to worry more about you for now..." he reassured her.

She didn’t even squirm or complain as she was settled against the hardness of his chest. Her fingers curled around its edges, and she latched on as he cradled her and draped them both under the blanket. It was warm and soft, and smelled faintly like he did. “I’ll be okay…” She murmured softly. “The sensations will pass. It just takes time and things to override the bad things.” His armor, the blanket, her clothes, all of the things touching her were grounding her, reminding her that she wasn’t burning, and that she was just fine. “So, ah... next time you handle my soul, maybe don’t touch the cracks...?”

"Of course, Toki... I'm sorry about that." He clacked her cheek with a small nip this time, smiling at her when he pulled back again. "I'll make sure to be as careful as I can be..." he promised.

“I know you will be, Ali. I know.” She turned her head so her cheek pressed to his chest, and peered
up at him quietly through one of her sockets. The other closed as she worked to relax, sprawling across him like a warm, bony blanket. As the sensations faded, exhaustion settled in. Her fingers curl around his ribs, clinging to his shirt, and eventually her sockets slide closed. She was safe. He was safe. The fire wasn’t going to get her again… “M’ really tired from that…”

Shivering, Papyrus smiled at her, and hugged her close, "Then sleep. And I'll still be here when you wake up." he murmured, nuzzling her softly. He adjusted his hold so it'd be more comfortable for the long term, and then nuzzled his face into her neck to settle down himself.

Toki didn’t need to be told twice. She settled, letting him get comfortable, and drifted off without another word.
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Ha~ This was a nice chapter. Very relaxing.

Don't forget to check our tumblr! You can come sass me here, or come be sweet to our Silverwing :) http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Also, i did some art for the end of the chapter. :) http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/post/150483105970/strider-i-actually-had-the-urge-to-art-and-so-i

Silverwing Notes: I think i got diabetes from how sweet this chapter is... But for those who have stuck around, thank you so much, and stay tuned for more TOTU~

“I am disappointed in you, Aliqaum.”

The rumbling voice of someone near her drew her consciousness closer to the surface.

Something rumbled back under her ear, and it tickled over her voice. She was laying on someone…? Someone who was talking. She groaned, fingers tightening over what she had in her grasp.

The one resting below her squeaked, and long fingers were soothing her hands to relax. “Father, please-”

“No, Papyrus. What you did was dangerous.”

She roused further- some of the words faded out into unyielding murmurs as she was drawn deep from her sleep. She tuned back in to who she realized was Tenebris, once more speaking quietly, but firmly to his son. They apparently did not notice the change in her breathing patterns.

"Papyrus, you know how fragile souls can be.” Tenebris was quiet, but his voice was firm. “After everything she's gone through, I would have thought you knew to exercise more caution when examining her soul. You should have left her soul for me to handle."

Her pillow rumbled quietly below her. "Father, I know... I'm sorry, I just... Those marks..."

"I know, son. Caeruleus doesn't like them either, but until I find out how to fix them, we just have to make sure they don't get worse..."

Ugh. They had to do this now?

“M’ not gon’ break from Pap touchin’ m’cracks.” Toki groaned quietly, letting the both of them know that she had been woken up, and burrowed her face against his chest. Her soul ached- it was sore from the reminder of the events from the fire- and she did her best to ignore it. Toki shifted and stretched sleepily, comfortable and temporarily forgetting the problem of her ribs in her gogginess.

“Nng… ow.” She stilled, sucking in a breath and easing out of her stretch. She shifted against Papyrus, rotating as she laid on him so that her chest wasn’t being compressed. She peeks open a
socket, blearily peering up at Tenebris. “He learned his lesson when he touched them- pretty sure he won't ever forget that lesson either.”

Tenebris glanced down at her as she revealed she was awake, and he gave a soft exhaled breath. “Toki... This damage is new to me, and I'm not sure how much your soul can take, every incident may bring it that much closer to retaining permanent damage...”

Toki sits up with a careful grunt, giving Papyrus a fond look as she shifts so he can sit upright. “Thanks for letting me sleep, Ali. I hope you didn't get too uncomfortable with me draped on you.” Her gaze drifted back to Tenebris as she mulled over his words. It was true- it could be getting worse. But besides the ache, she didn't feel any worse. “I think I would feel it if they were getting worse. But we can check.”

Given that both Skeletons in the room knew about it- and apparently Cae too, if Tenebris was being honest about him not liking the cracks- Toki eased her soul back out and into view without being asked. It looked about the same as last night, though brighter. The sadness weighing down her soul was still there, but it was lesser after a long day. She adjusted it and turned it around, yawning grumpily into her fingers. She could use some tea, or coffee or something to wake her up. Food too, now that she thinks on it. “The cracks are the same to my eyes. My soul feels fine. The cracks don’t even hurt when they're not being touched.”

He looked at the both of them, and at her soul, and then he sighed. "I need to figure out just what it takes to heal them..." he murmured. Clearly stressed about it to a degree, Gaster’s words were terse and flat.

Toki rubbed her eyes and pressed her soul back into place. “Don’t stress too bad about it, okay? If the cracks get worse, you’ll be the first to know. If they don’t get worse, and just stay as they are, I’ll learn to live with them.” She really would like them fixed- but if it didn’t end up working… Well, so long as she didn’t die, she could survive. She shifts, and holds a hand up to the larger monster. “Can you help me up please?”

"Of course.” he stepped forward and took her hand, helping to ease her up. “Here you go.”

Once she was on her feet, Toki eased the blanket off of her shoulders, and draped it carefully over Pap’s legs. “Thanks, Gaster. I’m going to get started on dinner while you two finish talking. But first… clothes.” She gives them both a tired smile and makes a quick trip to where she kept her small collection of clothes. She keeps the baggy shirt, but opts to change out pants for a long skirt instead. She heads for the kitchen and changes in there. The light from the windows was gone, and the clock on the wall told her was way past the usual mealtime. Heh. She’d slept the entire day away on Papyrus. That had probably driven the poor skeleton insane, being so still all day. “And, uh… Well, I have a theory on why the cracks are there. I’d rather not explain multiple times though. So when dinner’s done, I’ll tell all three of you.” Provided Cae showed up for dinner tonight.

Toki pads into the kitchen with the intent of starting dinner while the doctor and his son continued their scolding session. If she was well enough to walk around, then she could damn well make dinner. There is the soft clatter of pots and pans as she eases one out of the cupboard. They had teriyaki sauce- and she had a hankering for something tangy and good. So some of Papyrus’ spaghetti noodles are sequestered out to be boiled, and she puts a pot of sauce on to cook. It was pretty simple to make- one just needed water, a dollop of butter, spices, and teriyaki. Straight from the bottle, the sauce was too rich to make a good flavoring. But diluted and boiled, it made a deliciously tangy sauce to go over noodles.

She was alone in the kitchen for a while, surprisingly. She could hear them through the open archway, and let the general sounds of their voices wash over her. They seemed to talk more than the
one-sided scolding from before.

After enough time passed, Papyrus joined her in the kitchen.

She had the noodles boiling, the sauce slowly thickening, and was currently, lazily washing the dishes. The smell of teriyaki bubbled up and filled the kitchen, thick and deliciously pungent.

She was singing softly while elbow deep in dishwater. It was one of the songs from Beauty and the Beast- and one of the few that she could sing in tune to. When her brothers had said she could carry a tune, they hadn’t been wrong- but it had to be specific songs. Her voice didn’t mesh well with everything, sadly. She was at the end of this one. “Tale as old as time, song as old as rhyme… Beauty and the Beast…”

She didn’t notice the large skeleton that had entered.

His interest piqued at hearing her sing. His smile grew and softened as he came closer.

She faded off from words for a short time, and instead hummed along to a non-Disney song as she scrubbed at a stubborn stain- from someone’s morning eggs that had been absolutely slathered in ketchup. Ketchup dried was a thing of horrors, honestly. ‘Take Me To Church’ was easy enough to follow.

When she got the plate clean, she pulled it free and shook her fingers. Fishing for a towel to dry it off with, the woman let the lyrics wash forth again. “Take me to church. I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies, I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife. Offer me that deathless death. Good God, let me give you my life.”

"If I'm a pagan of a good time," He sang softly, his arms wrapping around her waist. They settled carefully on her hips, mindful of her torso. "My lover's is sunlight," he then purred into her ear.

A firm grip kept the clean plate from being dropped, and Toki managed to not miss a beat. As his hands settled on her hips, a smile tugged at her teeth, and her mouth fell open to let her words ring clearer. "To keep the Goddess on my side, she demands a sacrifice.

"Take me to church. I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies, I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife. Offer me that deathless death. Good God, let me give you my life.”

"We're the lord's starving faithful... That looks tasty, that looks plenty, and this is hungry work.”

Cooking sure could be. She smiles, a warm flush coating her cheeks. The darkened window reflects her face back at her, and she watches him through their reflection. “Take me to church. I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies, I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife. Offer me that deathless death. Good God, let me give you my life.”

“He smiled and coaxed her hands from the sink. Pulling her into the open space of the kitchen, he
eased her around so she faced him. "Take me to church. I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies," he sang, pulling her into a position much like one could in a dance.

Her hands, soapy and wet from doing dishes, dried in a puff of magic induced steam before her fingers came to rest on him. One hand curled over his bicep, folding over the magic formed muscle gently, while her other arm craned up to loop over his shoulder. She smiled at him, eyes glowing a bright, happy color. "I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife."

His eyes gleamed with glee as he held her close. "Offer me a deathless death," he murmured to her, and set his head on her.

He tuned in with her as she went to finish the last line for the song. "Good God, let me give you my life~"

She flushed brightly, and giggled softly in his arms. The kitchen timer went off, letting the world know that the noodles were done. "I didn’t know you could sing," she murmured softly. "You’re actually really good."

"I dabbled in music time to time," he murmured gently, "But never did I hear a voice as lovely as yours."

Brighter yet brighter her blush doth grow. "I think you’re telling me a fib right there." She hums softly. "Wait until you catch me singing a song I don’t fit well with. Ah- Pap, the noodles are gonna overcook..." she squirms lightly as the timer goes off a second time. "I knew you played a violin- but playing an instrument and singing are two different things." She could only sing.

He let's her go, and folds his arms in amusement. "The voice is an instrument, you know... I’d say you’re a master at it."

She shuffles to the stove and removes the noodles. Draining them went quick and easy, and then she was buttering the noodles and letting it melt. She flashed him a small smile, face a bright emerald as her soul glowed brightly and happily through her borrowed shirt. "I’d say you were the better singer out of the two of us- but I think we could argue who sang better until the sun comes up. C’mere- can you get me down some clean plates? I might as well wait until after dinner to finish doing dishes..."

And that would let Cae’s ketchup monstrosities soak a bit longer before she attempted to tackle that particular challenge.

"Sure thing." he moved to the cupboard and opened it, reaching up and effortlessly collecting a few plates.

She didn’t bother dirtying a spoon to sample the sauce. She dipped the end of her index phalange into it after she urged her magic to churn in the bones of her fingers. It was thick and hot- and perfect consistency in the pan. Taste though... She was never a good judge if her sauces tasted good. She enjoyed food- rarely did she think it was bad. She hummed, looking at the dark sauce staining her digit- and then offered the sticky digit to Papyrus as he fetched her the plates she needed. "Hey, Ali? Can you tell me if this tastes good or not? I’m not sure if need to add a bit more teriyaki to it, or thin it out more."

"I suppose so." his cheek tinged as he realized she meant licking it off her finger and he leaned in after a moment’s hesitation. "Heh..." he then closed his eyes and his teeth parted to free his bright orange tongue. That tongue then proceeded to run up over her phalange that had the sauce on it.

"Mmh..." he pulled back and somehow made a smacking sound, before he nodded in consideration. "Try a pinch of sugar, and it's ready."
Well, that was not something she had expected. With humans it was hardly so... sensual to feel. Hot damn. She coughed slightly as he cleaned her finger, and tucked her chin to hide her flush. “Sugar, got it.” A sprinkle of it was added, and she swirled the pan to mix it in. Fetching the plates, she dished out the long spaghetti noodles, and drizzled the dark sauce over top of each pile.

He frowned, not really sure. "Maybe... I haven’t seen that lazybones all day!"

“Considering I slept on your chest all day, I didn’t see him either.” She gives him an amused look, and pantomimes holding a phone to her nonexistent ear. “Give him a call on your phone? I’ll bring the plates to the table. Ah- snag your dad too. He needs to eat something before he goes off to do ‘science’ or whatever it is he does most of the night.”

"Of course." he nodded and stepped out to make the call to his family members.

Toki hummed as he left and shifted down the counter to collect the silverware. She carries the plates into the dining area two at a time, because her hands are only so large, and settles them in their usual spots. Drinks of the usual choice are placed out, and Toki chooses a tall glass of milk for herself. She could use the calcium at this point. Sans, as per the norm, had Ketchup set out for him- but she put it in a glass this time so there would be none of his rebellious ‘drink it from the jug’ shenanigans tonight.

Aliquam returned about the same time she was getting seated, smiling gently. "I... brought something I think might help you..." he said softly, holding something cupped in his hands.

She eased into her chair, and blinked up at him curiously. “Something that might help me?” With how he had his hands cupped around it, she couldn’t see it. Her gaze flicked behind him, hearing movement in the other room. It was probably Gaster getting out of his chair, or Cae getting home. “What did you bring?”

He smiled, and opened his hands to her.

It was a small tea candle, with a wick that was pristine and white. It had never been lit before.

It was unlit, sitting there innocently in his palm and his hands dwarfed it, making the small candle seem even tinier. Still, despite the comical size difference, and the lack of glow around the small unassuming object, it made the vertebrae of her neck tense up and a sense of unease bubble in her middle. “O-oh. Ah…” She worries her fingers at the edge of the table, glancing away from the candle. She had promised him- though she had said she’d let him know when she was ready. There was no time like the present, she supposed. “Okay. Yeah. We can, uh, do that tonight. I don’t know where your dad’s matches are to light it though.”

"It's okay, we don’t need them." he assured her, before hearing Caeruleus enter.

"Hey Toki, hey Pap."

"Hello, Brother. I was just talking to Miss Toki about a potential therapy method to help her overcome her fear.”

The smaller skeleton drew her gaze as he slipped into the dining area from behind his brother, and she gave him a nervous smile. "Hi Sans. Ah- dinner's done.” Her pinpricks flicked back over to Papyrus, and she hummed softly. “Don’t need matches?” Hard to light a candle without matches. “Sans- did you see your dad out in the living room? Dinner’s done- he needs to eat something before he runs off for nightly ‘science’ stuff that he does. And ah- yeah…” At least the exposure therapy fell in line with what she wanted to talk to them about.
"Nice." he went to sit down, already knowing where he sat by the cup of ketchup. "Well... No, I think he's out having a pipe."

She sighs through her nasal cavity and nods. “Well, I’m sure he knows dinner is done. He’ll join us when he’s done, I’m sure.” After all, he probably wanted to hear what she had to say concerning the cracks. She shifts and twirls her fork through the teriyaki soaked noodles, but doesn’t take a bite. “Did you have a good day today, Cae?”

"I did." he nodded once, starting to eat as well.

The candle makes a soft ‘tk’ as it is settled gingerly on the table. It’s settled about the center of the table. "Are you ready?" the younger asked.

Her grip on her fork tightens, and she nods. It was just a candle. Just a simple, little, tiny tea light. The flame on it would be no bigger than her distal phalanx on her pinky finger. “As I’ll ever be.”

Papyrus nodded slowly, then picked up the candle. He held up a lighter and flicked it to ignite it. Without hesitating he lit the candle, watching the fire catch the wick and slowly light it up... he slowly set the candle down, then he looked to her.

Toki had flinched as the lighter lit up, pointed fingers digging into the table as she gripped it tight. Her first instinct was to bold away from the flash, but she used the table to keep herself in place. Toki had a white-knuckled grip on her fork as she watched the flame. The candle flame was smaller than that of the lighter, and that was a small relief. Her nonexistent stomach cramped up, appetite gone, and her soul trembled. Fear, she recognized easily enough, made her palms feel as if they were submerged in ice.

She forcibly loosened her grasp on the fork when the metal creaked, and made her gaze turn away from the candle. If a skeleton could have gone pale, she would have. It was just a candle- there was no reason to be afraid of it. It wasn’t even a full candle. It was a tea light- they could hardly even be called a candle. She took a deep breath and resumed fiddling with her noodles.

"You're doing great!" Aliquam praised gently, stroking her shoulder steadily as he took the seat beside her.

She twitched, magic churning uneasily in her bones, as he touched her. The candle didn’t put out enough smoke to override her senses, and it smelled vaguely like fresh linens, but her mouth still tinged with the phantom taste of ash. “I-ah…” Words are attempted and failed, before she forcibly shakes herself. Her fingers curl tighter around her fork, and she forced fork full of noodles into her mouth. The teriyaki slid over her senses, and some of her tension eased. She could do this. It was just a candle. It was just a damn candle. She could handle it.

The more she repeated that line, the firmer her resolve became. Her soul pulsed behind her ribs, brightening with her determination.

Both brothers lit up. "Toki, you're doing it!" Papyrus praised with a laugh.

"Well shit, Toki, way to go!" the elder brother chuckled.

“Eheh.” She loosens her hold on the table, and continues eating. She’d rather keep the attention off of her and the candle- because thinking about it made it harder to focus on keeping still and calm. “So-ah, while we were napping today, w-what did you get up to, Sans?”

"I went and helped out with some construction. Went n' tired myself out." he chuckled.
She smiled slightly. “I honestly can’t see you doing construction work- but I will take your word for it.” She shifts and glances to Papyrus. “We had a lazy day today- though I think his end of it was from me falling asleep on him.”

"The roles have been reversed, ‘ey Pap?” Sans cackled, amusement stretching his grin. He lazily winks at them between bites of his noodles.

"Very funny, Sans." Quinn rolled his eyes and laughed softly. He leaned over to drape an arm over her shoulders as he consumed his meal.

“He can’t take the blame for this one. It was an interesting morning, and it left me tired. Your brother makes an awesome snuggle buddy, for the record.” She waves her fork teasingly at Cae, and her eyes flit over to Gaster’s unoccupied seat. “I sure hope your dad didn’t forget about me wanting to talk to you all.” Or about dinner.

"No, he should be in-" And in the other room, there was the sound of a door closing, "-heh, soon enough.”

“Speak of the devil and he shall appear, huh?” She fiddles with her noodles some more, and then pushes the unfinished plate away. She ate some of it- but her ‘stomach’ is still clenched with nerves. The longer the candle burns, the more smoke-like the smell of it is becoming. Sort of like burning cloth. She coughs, and calls out to the eldest monster in the house. “Dinner’s done, Gaster! We’re in the dining room.”

He rumbled and came into the dining room. "Hello everyone." he greeted warmly, sitting down at the open seat. He took a moment to take notice of the candle and blinked once. "Huh...?"

“It’s... Well, Paps is determined to help me be able to handle fire again. It’s part of my exposure therapy.” She doesn’t glance to what drew his question, because she knows what it is. Her fingers drum lightly on the table, a soft ‘tktktktk’ of bone on wood, and her teeth gnash quietly. “Which brings me around to the cracks. I’m pretty sure I know what caused them- and since you got to feel that as well this morning,” her pinpricks flick to Papyrus, “It should be pretty obvious. I’m thinking maybe... maybe working to get over my issue with flames might help the cracks. I don’t know if they’ll ever go away- or if I’ll ever fully win against them- but I can try.”

"That does sound... logical.” Tenebris nodded once in agreement, before smiling at her. "A very clever idea, my dear Toki.” he praised.

“Heh... yeah. We can continue checking on it, and try other theories too, but it doesn’t hurt to try this one.” Her fingers continue tapping, a slightly nervous staccato, and she leans slightly more into Aliquam. The tightening in her middle increases. Skeletons can’t feel queasy, can they? She hopes not. “So, ah, I know you haven’t had this type of pasta before. It’s an original creation of mine. What do you think?”

"This is very interesting tasting. I like it." Caeruleus nodded once in agreement, before smiling at her. "It's good, Toki." Aliquam praised.

Tenebris took a bite, savoring it quietly. "... This tastes wonderful.”

She smiles and heaves a dramatic sigh. “I’m glad. I wouldn’t be much of a poststatute,” She waggles a brow ridge at Cae, “if I didn’t know how to make strange things taste good.”

Caeruleus gave her a thumbs up for the pun, narrowly avoiding choking on his noodles. Quinn face palmed while Tenebris chuckled in amusement, while she relaxed with a pleased look on her face.
The tea light eventually flickers, and she exhales hard enough to send the wick out. As the fire disappears, she relaxes more, and feels the knot of tension in her middle ease. “Sorry- I think that’s enough for now though. Really don’t like that queasy sensation. I’ll go get started on dishes while you three finish up.”

She eases out from under Papyrus’ arm, and slips from her chair. She collects her plate and meanders back towards the kitchen.

While Caeruleus and Tenebris continued to eat, Papyrus stood up and followed her. "Toki... wait."

She paused, setting her plate down onto the counter. “What’s up?”

He hugged her softly. "Come back and sit with us... We don’t want you to feel alone. Besides, wouldn't you rather watch your loved ones enjoy your great creation?"

Warmth fills her smile. “Oh Pap- I don’t feel alone. I never feel alone with you three. I just needed to work off the energy from my nerves. The smoky smell in there was getting to be a bit... much. I would like to see you all enjoy dinner, but I think it’s better if I give the room some time to air out.”

"Ah... I see..." he nuzzled her softly, and bumped his teeth to her cheek. "For the record, your food is wonderful."

She smiles softly, and reaches up to cup his skull. Her fingers trail gently from the top, down to cradle his jaw. She rubbed her thumb lightly over his fangs- they were vastly different than her own, after all. He had a matched set- she was all fang. “I’m glad you enjoyed it. If you want, you can go get your plate and finish eating in here while I do dishes.”

He closed his eyes and hummed happily at her touch. "Good idea." He murmured. He pulled away and disappeared from her view back into the dining room. His voice echoed back to her from the open doorway- explaining that he would keep her company- before he was coming back with his plate of food. Already a forkful was tucked into his mouth, teeth gripping the metal as he padded into the room.

Toki laughed softly and turned to start on dishes. She gave Aliquam the rest of her noodles- no need for them to go to waste with her lack of appetite- and then set in to cleaning her plate and the rest of the dishes.

As she worked, the last of the tension bled out from her body, and she began to hum a small and happy tune for her and her good company to enjoy. Eventually Papyrus finished, and joined her in doing dishes. He was better at putting them up top in the cupboards.
Days rolled into weeks, and before she knew it, it was the last week of October. They had some plans for some fun on Halloween- all of the adults were collaborating to do some decorations around the town, and the houses were going to do trick-or-treating. It wasn’t just going to be the monsters either- the construction workers were bringing their families, and friends of their families. There was talk of putting their cars in the streets and doing some trunk-or-treating too. Unfortunately her family wasn’t going to be making it out this year- they were all heading to her mother’s house to do their Halloween fun there, where they could all keep Dom under a close eye.

That was fine though. Toki had all of her Halloween things in the shed.

Toki had some plans putting one of the battery operated fog machines to use as well.

Of course, that wasn’t to say that Toki would be alone this Halloween. Aliquam talked about learning the recipe of her honey tarts, to which she would happily oblige him. He could help make them en-masse for the event to come.

Now that she wasn’t restricted to the house, everyone seemed to fall back into his or her semi-usual routines. Aliquam was usually spending time with her when he wasn’t needed for guard-duty. Sans seemed to disappear during the day, yet come home exhausted. Tenebris would find himself where he could be useful and provide where he could, but always disappeared after the final goodnight. Toki spent a lot of time doing what she usually did- though much less of the physical aspect of working.

Dominic was healing well but he was still not moving around quite like she could. He kept straining his wounds with all of the running around he was prone to doing. If he was at Nara Village for Halloween, she was pretty sure he’d spend all of it running with Thumper and Twitch.

Time flew by as she handled some of the fallout from the attack from HAM. Her brother took over the case on the monster’s behalf when some city officials stirred up trouble over the monsters having actually killed people. So far, the case was leaning heavily towards the monster’s favor, much to her
joy. The world had been horrified to learn the details pertaining to the attack, and they had a large amount of supporters.

Which helped a lot - donations came in from all over to help support the monsters. As the second district was finished, and the third started, Toki found that she needed the extra outside help to keep expanding what was becoming a small burg. The country was helping too, but politicians only approved of so much at a time to be sent out. Personal donations were a lot different - and it was becoming a new 'fad' to donate to help build the first 'monster city'. They even had their first 'establishment' being put into place. A bar - one that Sans was apparently familiar with - was being put up. There were plans for a bakery to go up as well, but it hadn’t been finalized yet.

Her house was nearly done too. She was excited to get her own space again. The couch was great, and she was very grateful for them letting her stay with them, but she woke up most mornings with cricks in her spine. Toki wanted her own bed again, damn it, with piles of blankets for her to nestle down in.

The first freeze had just come - super late into the year, surprisingly. But with the first freeze came time to shut down her hives for the year. Not only did it make her bones ache something fierce, but also it made her bees sluggish and unresponsive if they were out in it too long.

She was closing up her hives for the year. She was doing one last deep cleaning of the hives, making sure that there was no debris in any of them that needed to be removed. The honey taps had been cleaned out and closed up, and food was going to be placed inside so that the bees didn’t have to completely rely upon what honey they had stored up.

But right now she was elbow deep in a buzzing mass of bees, scraping out something that looked suspiciously like moss from inside one of the hives. The bees were buzzing, clinging to her bones and tickling up the insides of her shirt. Even without skin, the bees seemed to cling to her effortlessly. They rested against her bones, drawn to the warmth that her magic was producing to combat the chill of the morning.

They wreathed her head, like a fuzzy buzzing crown of insects, and clung to her horns with their soft little legs.

She laughed as one crawled over her cheek. “You poor things,” she murmurs softly, “you’ll have to hibernate the cold months away soon. I’ll miss seeing all of you out and about. But you’ll be back once the ice and snow is gone in spring.”

"I don’t see why we can’t put blankets over the hives." Was a comment from Aliquam as he walked up, before kneeling beside her with a small smile. "Heh... I never got the chance to see them when they were active." he murmured, holding a finger out to a bee that sat on the edge of one of the hives.

She starts, which sends up a small cloud of bees. They rapidly settle again, clinging to her bones and clothes. A few of them swarm warningly over Papyrus, buzzing loudly. The one he offered a finger too clamors up onto him, cleaning it's face with a set of fuzzy legs.

She laughed softly as the bees tickled along her neck. Considering she was hollow now, she didn’t need to worry about keeping them out of her shirt. They could just fly out the bottom. “Between you and your brother, you’re both certainly strving to keep me on my toes.” She sighs.

She adjusts a handful of bees, and locates the queen amidst the mess. The long, fat insect crawls lazily over her fingers. “A blanket would run the risk of overheating them. Bees are pretty good about keeping warm in a confined space. It’s just out in the open air that they struggle. Isn’t that right, little Queen?” The queen is settled up in a more proper spot, and Toki heaves out a mess of
moss. It’s tossed to the ground after she picks the bees from it. “You’ll get to see them more active next year, I’m sure. You might actually be all right to bring out here in the full swing of summer. We’re all bones- no flesh to be stung.”

"Mmmhm…” he smiled gently as he lifted the bee to eye-level, watching it clean itself. He gave a soft ‘nyeh heh heh’. "How cute~" he let the bee wander as it wished, watching her be swarmed. "I'm intrigued by how they don't hesitate to come close to you." he mentioned, "They recognize you, even like this..."

Toki smiles at him, and lifts a brow. One of the bees takes the chance to slip down and brush over her nasal ridge, while Papyrus’ own passenger slowly works up towards his arm. A couple others come down to join the first, relishing the warmth of his body. “A lot of people find them terrifying. But a lot of humans are severely allergic to their stings, so it’s understandable. There are other kinds of bees that are aggressive as well, and don’t do kind things for the general reputation.” She eases a mass of bees out of her shirt, and settles them in the hive. The combs in the hive are gently moved so she can remove moss from under them as well. This hive might have a leak somewhere... it would have to do though.

“Bee’s just sort of know, I think. I knew a set of twins when I was a little kid. They were identical, from their faces to their mannerisms, height, weight, you name it. Yuki and Yomi- really sweet girls. But Yomi was like me- she could walk among the bees and never get stung. But Yuki- Yuki always got stung, without fail. Even when they went out together, it was always Yuki who got stung, while they left Yomi alone. I think maybe they can probably feel souls- or at least the energy of them. Same with other animals- some animals can tell a good person from a bad person.”

There was a saying- if a dog doesn’t like you, then there is probably something to be said about your personality. Perhaps, she muses, it applies to bees as well.

"Then I guess it's clear what that says about you, huh?" He purred gently, leaning up to gently bump her skull with his.

“I’d like to think I’m a good person.” She smiled, gently bumping him in turn. As she finishes with the hive, she shifts and lifts the hem of her shirt. She eases out a handful of bees that had been roosting behind her ribs, and dumps them gently back into the box. “Silly things- I am not your hive. C’mon, back in the box you go. None of you have any sense of personal space.” Not that she really minded. The vibrations felt nice on her bones- very relaxing.

He laughed at that. "Personal space issues indeed...!" he agreed before he carefully coaxed the bees from his own frame. "I’m not a hive either, little bees.”

Disentangling from the bees wasn’t all that hard, and soon she was sealing up the box once more. A dish of food is slid in through a slat in the bottom, and then she’s dusting her hands off on her pants, and reaching up to slide her shirt back down over her ribs.

They were almost fully healed- only a few lingering ‘scars’ of soft bone that had to harden up remained. Tenebris’ magic had done well to hold it still, and then encourage the bone to regenerate. She felt bad though- she was all back together, and her nephew was still having problems lifting his arms certain ways.

She sighs, and pats the top of the box. She turns to Papyrus- and then laughs. “I think you’ve still got a friend, Pap.” On his shoulder rests a fuzzy bee, nestled next to his collar. It flutters its wings, and resumes cleaning its legs.

"Oh, would you look at that..." he reached up and slowly ran a phalange over the body and abdomen
of the bee. "Nyeh heh heh~"

She laughs as it buzzes and takes to the air, disturbed by his touch. It bumbles slightly, and boops his nasal ridge as it buzzes around his skull, before fluttering lazily down for the box. "I think that one likes you. Heh. C’mon. You want to help me take the food bag over to the shed?" That had been the last hive she’d needed to clean. "I need to get the Halloween decorations out anyways."

"Of course! I’d love to learn more about this human holiday 'Halloween'." he rumbled with a smile, stooping to take the food bag into his arms. "Any idea what inspired it?" He inquired. "What do you do on it? Who's this 'Jack' that you make a lantern out of?"

Gods above, he was too precious sometimes. Toki can’t hold back the laugh that bursts forth as she guides him to the shed. “First off, we don’t make anyone into a lantern. Jack-o-lanterns are pumpkins that you carve and put a candle in. You light them in the evening. I don’t actually know why we do that- but they can be pretty spooky depending on what you carve into them. Some people do the traditional pumpkin face- that I’m sure you’ll see a lot of soon when the Pumpkins get here- while others do more detailed versions. Some people carve dragons in them, skeletons, werewolves, ghosts- all sorts of things that humanity might consider spooky."

She opens the shed, and props the door open with the rock that sits outside. “As for Halloween itself, there’s a lot of speculation as to where it originated. A lot of it points back to it being a pagan holiday in origin- I just like to think of it as some good old fashioned spooky and scary fun and call it that.” Speaking of spooky and scary… she needed to find the fog machine.

"Spooky." He repeated with an amused 'nyeh heh heh heh'. "How interesting!" he commented, setting the bag of feed off to the side. "And what do you do?" he asked.

“Well, I usually went out trick-or-treating with my family in my Mom’s neighborhood. But plans change- and I’m going to be here this year. The construction workers and myself have been planning stuff for the thirty first.” She grins at him. Her eyes brighten as she spots one of the boxes she needs. She peeks inside. “Aha! There’s what I need. This year, since I’m technically already a skeleton, I don’t need to dress up. Well… I might put on a witches hat or something. Something simple. But I definitely want to up my spooky factor, so I can spook some trick-or-treaters.” Good-natured spooking’s were always fun.

She glances to him. “Out of curiosity- can you check my ribs real fast? I need to know if they’ll hold up to having something attached to them. I know they’re fully sealed- but will the new bone hold up?"

"Of course I can." he assured her with a smile. "Come on then, I’ll take a look."

She beams up at him and lifts her shirt. Really it did get easier to show her ribs to people. She didn’t have breasts to flash anyone with- and bare bones were just bones. “Thanks, Pap. Heh. If I show you what I plan to do, can you keep it a secret? I want to see how much I can startle your brother.” And maybe Tenebris- but she had an inkling that he wasn’t easy to spook.

"Of course I can keep this secret~" he nodded once, before cackling, "As long as I can get in on the scare.

“If you can help me think of the perfect scare, that’d be good. I’m no good at coming up with scares-I can pull off creepy more than scary.” She sits still while he investigates her ribs. He prods lightly, checking over the solid, healed parts, as well as prodding the lighter ‘scars’ that had yet to become firm. The fresh bone is soft and tender, but holds up well under his fingers. When he’s done, she leaves her shirt up, and goes to snag the fog machine.
Velcro is looped around a couple of her ribs. It’s an uncomfortable sensation- but like looking pretty, being spooky was not always a comfortable sensation. She tinkers with it for a second, and then it clicks on with a soft whirring. At least the batteries still worked. She grinned as white fog began to billow out of it, and then draped her shirt tightly over her pants. The neck of her shirt is unrolled, so it rests below her chin, creating a tunnel for the fog to follow. “And now we wait. It’s got a bit of space to fill up.”

His eyes gleamed with interest. "Oh my...!" he then began to laugh. "Nyeh heh heh heh! So you plan on scaring him with that?" he asked.

“You’ll see.” She grins at him. With how her skull is formed, she’s got ‘cheeks’ of sorts, so most of the fog should gather in the back of her mouth. She can feel it vaguely, ghosting over her ribs in a slightly heavier way that shows it’s not air, and it swirls inside of her with every breath. As it fills her insides, she pads back to the boxes and pulls them out. “These have a lot of my tools in it.” She keeps her mouth shut as she talks, so it doesn’t pool out. “Ah! We can make baked pumpkin seeds too. Heh. We’re going to need a lot of paper too. The dining room is going to be covered in pumpkin guts. It’s going to be so much fun!”

"This is going to be fantastic~" he chuckled. "What else do we have to do to prepare?"

She plops a box into his arms and grins at him from over top of it. She can feel the fog filling her mouth. This time she lets her mouth move with her as she speaks, and is rewarded by a layer of milky fog rolling out from between her fangs. Some of it bubbles up and rolls out of her eye sockets and nasal cavity. Definitely not something one would be expecting to see from a living skeleton. The green lights in her eyes dance merrily. “Not a whole lot, actually. You tall folk should probably be expecting to clean pumpkin guts off the ceiling though. Pumpkins can be hard to carve, and if you carve too hard, it flies everywhere.”

Holy stars that looked almost terrifying. Grinning to himself, Quinn chuckled faintly. "So we get to tear pumpkins apart, and make a mess of the internals?"

“That about sums it up. We can also scare trick-or-treaters, but probably nothing too over the top. I’m not totally okay scaring the pants off of children.” She exhales sharply, and playfully blows a curl of fog into his face. Her shirt is lifted, letting fog spill out like a cloud of dust, and then she’s fishing in her ribs to turn the machine off and remove it from her ribs. “So, think that’ll do to scare your Brother a bit? If I hadn’t have told you prior, think it would have startled you too?”

"I would have worried a bit, yes." he nodded, before he blinked, "Miss Toki... What are ‘trick-or-treaters’?"

She blinks up at him, blowing the fog idly out of her skull as she does so. “Uh… Trick-or-treaters are kids that come to knock on your door. They’ll say trick-or-treat. The theory behind that is if you give them candy, then you’ve chosen to treat them. If you have nothing to give, they can play a trick on you without fear of retribution. We don’t really do much of the trick aspect- you leave a light on outside to show you have candy, and you turn the light off when you don’t have candy. Kids go to the houses with lights on.”

"I see." he took this information to memory and thought about it, "So you've mentioned dressing up..."

“Humans used to dress up as monsters- the types from movies and shows- or super heroes for Halloween. Really though, you can dress up as anything. I used to dress up as a skeleton a lot- I think my costume is still in here somewhere. It was actually really cool- the bones were made out of a glow in the dark material, so in the dark it would just show a walking skeleton. Sort of ironic, isn’t
"it?" She grins up at him cheekily. "No bones about it, I was meant to become a skeleton."

He chuckled at that. "Oh the irony indeed. Now I suppose you won't need that costume, huh?"

"Not at all." She grins at him lopsidedly, and rummages around for her old witches hat. "I think I've still got my witches costume here… Now that I'm a few pounds lighter in the middle, I think I can fit in it again." Her hat is located first, and it's plonked on her skull while she digs. It doesn't quite sit right because of her horns, but she can modify it later.

The dress she procures is long and dark, interspersed with a dark green trim and white lace. "Aww. Nope, my pelvis is still too wide. Oh well- maybe one of the other adults can enjoy it. I'll keep the hat though. Gives me a spooky vibe." She wiggles her fingers playfully at Papyrus. "Better be careful, Pap~ I could cast a spell on you." She teases.

He laughs warmly, mischief lighting up his eyes as he sets down the box he had been holding. "Oh dear," he grins at her, dramatically flailing a hand for a second, "I'm cornered by a terrifying witch! I better unleash my special attack!" his eyes lit up with energy as he darted forwards to snap her, and then he leaned under her chin and began to nip gently along her neck. "Nips and kisses! Nyeh heh heh heh!"

She squeaked and flushed, the hat tumbling from her skull as she was nabbed. The 'nips and kisses' brightened her flush, and she couldn't bite back the soft moan that escaped from behind her teeth. Good Gods, he could go from zero to full throttle quite quick. "N-nyah, nips and kisses huh? Your special attack is s-super effective!" One of her hands curls at his neck, and she strokes her fingers firmly over the vertebrae. It was only fair, when he was being so mischievous with her own.

"NYEH!" her counter-attack surprised him, and he let out a loud laugh. "O-Oh gosh... Nyeh heh heh~! Y-Your Counter attack is just a-as effective!"

She grins, and squirms so she can tuck into his shoulder. Her mouth finds where her fingers had touched, and she parts her teeth to scrape them gently along the vertebrae. Her fangs are hardly built for nibbling- but she makes a gentle attempt. Sockets lighting up with green light, Toki's tongue forms and briefly licks over the bone. Two could play the game of fluster- and it was time she stepped up on her end. "Oh?" She hums. "Good~"

He seemed to jolt at the feeling of her teeth and tongue, and his own efforts faded as a soft sound escaped him, his grip on her faltering.

With her point made, she gives him one more scrape of her teeth and then escapes his grasp. She giggles at him, and winks teasingly at him as she stoops to collect her box and her fallen hat. "I think we'll call that battle a draw~"

Quinn pulled back to reveal his face completely flushed. His gaze was lowered and pupils missing past the magical cloud of orange magic that stained the bones of his face. "N-Nyeh... I-I suppose so..."

She grins up at him, and arches a brow ridge. "Something wrong, Pap?" She too was flushed, but holding up better than he was.

"Ye-No, no, no!" he smiled at her, obviously flustered. "Heh... Just a little bit, well, flushed. Neckbones are sort of... you know" he reached up and rubbed his neck bones gently. "Sensitive... Heh... Mine aren't often touched, really."

She grinned. Sticky green saliva would meet his fingers on his neck. "And you think mine are? I
wasn't aware that neck bones could be so sensitive, but... well, that felt nice. Very nice.” She props the box on one hip and mirrors his motion with her other hand. Her neck tingles slightly. “I was just giving as good as I got. Can’t really nibble though. Fangs are meant for biting, not nibbling.”

"You did well enough.” he huffed softly, though he had not left much, if any saliva on her bones. "Though we are even now, so I’ll leave it at that... heh...” he then smiled at her, "Come on, let's go get ready.”

She just grinned at him. “That’s what you get for being such a flirt, Pap.” She motions for him to take his box at his feet, and then slips around him to step from the shed. “There’s not much to get ready. This is mostly inside decorations.” The construction workers were chipping in to get Halloween supplies for outside. Rather than decorating each house- because decorations were expensive in large quantities- there was a plan to decorate the park into a full-scale Halloween ‘village’ of sorts.

“Hm... You ever had pumpkin pie?” She asks curiously, nudging the shed shut once he leaves.

"I have not. The only kind I have had is Miss Toriel's pie.” He answered, easily keeping pace with her short but quick strides.

“I haven’t gotten to meet her yet. Hm... Going to have to change that though. I’ll make a pumpkin pie for thanksgiving then. It’s not really a Halloween thing, so much as hoards of candy and shenanigans.” She bumps her hip to his, grins at him widely, and tickles his ribs lightly with her elbow. “Lots of shenanigans.”

"Heh heh heh... I certainly hope Father can get into the festivities as well." He chuckled, nudging her with his own hip. "Imagine how terrifying that'll be."

“I dunno, it’s hard to see your dad as scary. He’s too… nice. I mean I heard from Han that he can be really scary when he get angry, but I wasn’t really aware of much of the incident.” Apparently the doctor had run around like a hell beast until the King had to forcibly drag him away to calm him.

"None of us took well to the ambush,” he admits, “but we succeeded in defeating them. Caeruleus almost immediately had moved to protect you and Dom..."

“Han told me you got Asgore out of there almost immediately after I was shot.” She gives him a smile. “You did good. They were after him anyways. Heh. I did what I could to protect Dom.” She shifts the box against her ribs and rattles with a shiver. “I’m glad Cae got to us though. If they had realized I wasn’t dead, they’d have probably turned back to finish it.”

"If he didn't, I know that I would have for sure." he murmured. Balancing the box in one hand, he reached out his other to brush her shoulder. She reached up to pat his hand, shifting the box to her opposite hip as they turned down the street to his house. “You’re sweet, Pap. But you had to protect the King- that’s part of a guard’s duty, isn’t it?” She winks up at him lightly. “You can’t just shirk duty because a civilian is in danger. But really- it doesn’t matter. I made it, Dom made it- we lost two monsters in the long run, but everyone else survived.”

He nodded in agreement, "Of course... I am mourning the two lost, but those around us, those we saved..."

“I mourn them too.” She only ever met Hound- but he had always had such kind things to say about his mate… She sighs, taking a breath through her nose, and then wiggles free of his hand. She
bumps his hip, and then more firmly holds the box. She clamps a hand over the top to keep it closed. “Enough sad stuff- today is a good day, and Halloween is soon! We can’t be sad with shenanigans to be had! That being said… Race you the rest of the way! Winner gets to pick a prize!”

And without warning, off she goes, running as fast as her legs will carry her. Her laugh follows after.

"It's ON!" He laughed, running behind her, then beside her, then in front of her.

Long legs really did help when challenged to race.

When he bypasses her, she laughs, and doesn’t slow. She knew he would win- and he got to choose a prize of his liking. She’s not nearly as fast as him- she doesn’t do a lot of running to warrant it- but she is quick with her smaller size. Still, she ends up at the house several seconds behind him, huffing and puffing with exertion.

She might be a bit out of shape. “You, hah, you win.”

He jogged in place, waiting for her at the door. Once she arrived, he stopped and grinned down at her. "Nyeh heh heh heh~!"

She wheezed slightly. “I might be a bit out of shape.” She admits. Still, she goes to open the door for them both, leaving the taller skeleton to enter and close it behind her. She moves to plop the box of things onto the floor next to the couch. “Well… you won. What do you choose for your prize?”

He entered and closed the door behind her. He stacked his box next to her own, making sure not to jostle it or break anything inside, before he sat down on the couch. His hand came up to cup his chin while he pondered. "Hmm..." Papyrus then smiled at her. "Come closer and I'll tell you."

Toki had an inkling of an idea what he had planned, but went along with it anyways. She stood in front of him and leaned down, placing her hands on his knees to help her balance. Her eyes glimmered warmly, the soft green glow showing her happiness as she smiled kindly at him. “I’m closer. Tell me now?”

He smiled wider, a brow arching teasingly, and reached up to pull her onto his lap. "Cloooosser~"

She flushes and ends up straddling him with how he pulled her down. All right then. She could roll with this. Toki shifts and sits back, resting her palms on his chest as she giggles. “I don’t think I can get much closer than this, Pap.”

He chuckled, and then he leaned up closer to her face. His pupils flashed mischievously. "What I want..." he drawled softly and bumped his teeth to her cheek, "Is a favor in the future." 

“A favor?” She swallowed slightly and nodded. “I can do a favor. What favor?”

"I don’t know yet." he then pulled back and smiled at her.

She laughed, letting her head drop down onto his chest. She relaxed for a moment, and then nodded against him. “Alright. When you can think of a favor that you really want, I’ll try to do it. Sound good?”

"Of course." he ran his hands down her back and over her hips before he nuzzled his face under her chin.

She chuckled at his affections, suppressing a shiver as his hands trailed down her hips, and tickled her fingers up his ribs to keep him getting too impish with her. “C’mon, Pap, you’ve got to let me up.
We can snuggle after we get the decorations up.” And she was in a slightly compromising position—
but she’s not entirely certain he’s noticed just how she’s sitting on him. “Do you mind hiding the fog
machine in your room? Sans is sure to see it if it’s left out here.”

“I won't mind at all, but I say we take the chance to spook them tonight.” he chuckled softly.

“Tonight… I can do tonight.” She grins at him, and, giving a purposeful squirm in his lap, slides
back onto her own feet. Her socks rub on the floor, and she goes to snag the machine. ‘Gimme a
hand. I want to put it on the back of my ribs- it feels heavier near my sternum. By my spine should
work better.”

He nodded, grinning as he helped her set it up. His fingers looped the straps gently around the
insides of her ribs, brushing them as he did so. Her flush was his reward, and he gave a pleased hum.
It was followed by what could only be called a mischievous giggle.

As soon as it’s secure, she shifts and turns it on. It whirs to life, and she closes her shirt, and tucks
the loose end into her pants. Her sleeves are bunched up to create a tighter space and prevent leaking.
This leaves it two places to go- out the neck of her shirt, and out her skull. “This is going to be good.
Heh. Alright- nonchalance is the key.” She offers him a hand up. “C’mon mister tall skeleton. I need
you to tape streamers to the ceiling.”

He’s off to fetch the tape as soon as he’s upright. "Of course! Just tell me where to put them.”

She collects her rolls of black and orange streamers, and guides him into decorating the doorways
with the twisting bands, and for lacing most of the wall trims in orange and black. As they work, she
also tapes plastic spiders to the walls, and drapes fake cobwebs along the windows and counters.

The house slowly comes together with more and more decorations- and she even sets up a few
pumpkin shaped candleholders on the shelves. They remain empty- but she knows they’ll eventually
get put to use. She hangs some of the weather proof decorations outside the house, making the front
porch like area become shrouded in ghostly wisps of cloth and hoards of cobwebs loaded with
plastic spiders.

It doesn’t take long to get all of the items into place- and soon she’s watching him hang the last
streamers across the ceiling. She grins happily. “And now it looks like it should. We actually put
these up super late- but I wasn’t up to putting things up back in the beginning of October. Now we
just need Jack-o-lanterns outside, and everything will be in place.” The sound of the door catches her
attention, and she takes a deep breath to stir up the fog sitting heavily inside of her clothes.

Needless to say, Tenebris and Caeruleus were both uneasy as they entered their home, both looking
around with concern and curiosity.

"Tokiko? Papryus?"

Toki waves at them cheerily from the couch, and turns to face them. The fog had been spilling from
her eye sockets for a while now, and as she exhaled, it trailed from her nasal cavity as well. The
sounds of Papyrus covered the faint mechanical noise from inside of her ribs.

“Welcome home!” She chirps, teeth opening to let the dusty fog roll forth from between white rows
of sharp daggers. “Papyrus and I decorated today!”

"Waaaagh!” Caeruleus eye lights disappeared, and he scrambled backwards, bumping into Tenebris.

Toki gave a disappointed pout, but arched a brow. She exhaled, blowing out a curtain of fog as she got off the couch. “What’s interesting? Something the matter, Cae? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

"How the hell are you doing that?!" Cae demanded, pointing at the smoke.

Tenebris came closer, leaning down and examining the smoke billowing from her mouth with fascination.

She blew it into the elder monster’s face, and laughed deeply, sending more puffs of it falling from her mouth and bursting from her eye sockets. “How am I doing what, Sans?” She inquires petulantly, wiggling her brows at him. “Something’s got your bones all rattled, that’s for sure.”

He chuckled lowly and stood tall again while Caeruleus made various arm flailing gestures to try and talk. "The smoke...!" he eventually got out, sounding frustrated and flustered.

She grinned and eased up off of the couch. She shifts, and tugs her shirt out of her pants. The edge is lifted, and white fog spills out in a dense fog, as if someone had just dumped a bucket of milky ash from inside of her shirt. It spilled across the floor, trailing over her socks and bubbling from the inside of her pelvis.

Inside her ribs, Velcro entwined with the backside of the cage, sits the machine. It whirs, spitting out more fog. “Fog machine.” She grins. “Got you good, didn’t I?”

"..." Caeruleus blinked slowly for a moment, and then he laughed heartily. "Oh...! Damn it, kid! Hahaha!"

Tenebris and Papyrus both laughed with him.

"That’s a very interesting device, Miss Toki. May I see it?” Tenebris inquired lightly.

“Sure!” She shifts and wiggles her fingers back into her ribs. She feels along, tracing bones as she locates the Velcro. It’s easily undone, and she eases from around the bones with a soft thrum. Toki hands it over, and motions to the button. “That’s how you turn it on and off. It takes a while for the fog to build up, but it’s worth the effort after.”

Her fingers return to her ribs, and she rubs the spot where it had rested. “It’s not comfortable to wear, I forewarn you now.”

Tenebris took it in hand and looked it over curiously. As he turned it, his gaze flicked to her. "Fascinating indeed..." he chuckled. "May I borrow it?"

“Ah... sure? I was only going to use it to scare you guys anyways. At least I got a bird in the hand, eh?” She grins over at Cae and waggles her brows teasingly. Fixing her shirt, she makes herself presentable once more.

"Easily worth the two in the bush." Tenebris agreed.

Cae just folded his arms, mouth tipping down in a pout that was rather adorably sulky for a six-foot tall Skeleton.

“Easily.” She grins.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Heh. We get another nice chapter of cute things- with some trauma, because Grillby is just too hot for everyone to handle. Unf.

Don't forget to check us out on tumblr! sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

We also have a fanart page! You should check it, and our character information page out. You can see what Toki’s teeth look like :D http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/tagged/TOTU-Fanart

Silverwing Notes: *innocently singing 'This is Halloween', then grins widely* This is starting to get interesting, and this chapter got extra spoops in it, hehehe! Enjoy the festive events that is chapter 17!

Halloween came with a surprising addition to the town. The bar was finished the day prior- and the new owner had been brought in. Apparently it was it was some monster named Grillby, which Toki found hilarious since he ran a bar and grill. She didn't actually have time to meet him, sadly. She would find time soon though, she knew. She had to properly welcome him to the community, and make sure that he had everything he needed here.

The week approaching Halloween was busy as hell. Along with managing to play with the hems on the witches dress- which is what she was now adorned in, with the hat that had been modified to fit over her horns- all of the adults spent time getting the park up and running- and now it was filled with graveyards, hanging skeletons, and other creepy Halloween themed things. There was a spot for bobbing for apples, a bean-bag toss, a pin-the-nose on the pumpkin, and a large pile of hay bales that had been made into the ‘castle of horror’. The kids were fond of the hay fort. They had a 'pumpkin patch' set up where kids were going to get their pumpkins. It was decided that everyone would get pumpkins on Halloween, carve them before midnight, and set them outside to ward off ‘evil spirits’ of bad luck.

Toki already had her pumpkins selected and waiting at home for them, so they didn’t have to battle the kids for them. Each member of the household had one pumpkin to carve, and everything was all prepared in the kitchen. She had intentions of getting them carved before trick-or-treating really got started, so that the kids would have the chance to enjoy the designs that they would be doing.

Problem was- it was time to carve, and they were one skeleton down. Cae was nowhere to be found but she had an inkling of where he would be. Probably down at the bar- which she knew was handing out small child-sized root-beer floats to the kids all day today.

She tugged on the brim of her witches hat, billowing sleeves rolled up and pinned so the pumpkins wouldn’t make a mess of them, and glanced to Papyrus. “Join me to go get your brother? He needs to get here in time to put on his costume, and we need to start the pumpkins if we’re going to get them out before the kids start knocking.”

"Of course!" He replied happily. "I've got the PERFECT costume planned, nyeh heh heh, I bet Sans will love it! By the way, have you seen Father? He said he’d go and get his costume but I haven’t
seen him...!"

“Not since he disappeared upstairs, I haven’t.” She huffs slightly, and glances to him. She was the only one in costume- but she hadn’t wanted to fiddle with the laces after dealing with pumpkin guts. Toki tips her hat back slightly, bending the rim so it doesn’t block her eyes- and then motions him to follow her. She gathers the hem of the dress into her fingers and heads out the door. “We’ll give him a bit to get dressed while we go fetch your brother. I’m pretty sure he’s at the new bar.”

"I'm sure he'll be there, he and Grillby have quite a history!" He agreed, following her to where the new bar n’ grill was. It wasn’t far of a walk from the house, actually.

From outside, it's gentle lighting shown, offering a warm scene to gaze upon as you drew close.

Toki wasn’t much paying attention as she headed for the bar. “I’d heard about that in passing from a lot of the other monsters.” She hums idly. When they reach the bar, she tugs the door open and steps inside. The warmth that washes over her surprises her- but it was a ruefully cold day, so it felt nice. She catches sight of a blue jacket out of the corner of her eye, and lifts her head to call out to him.

She freezes solid in the doorway, blocking Papyrus from entering behind her, and the lights disappear from her eyes.

Next to Sans- who is passing out small cups of root beer floats to some monster kids- is a literal living flame. His fires crackle and snap against the snazzy collar of his vest, and a glowing smile shows as he passes a fizzy drink to an eager child. He looks happy and kind, if a bit large to be handling such small cups.

But all Toki can see is someone on fire, see herself reflected in that flame, and feel the blaze of agony tearing her away from reality.

"Toki...?" Papyrus looked at her, before looking towards his brother, "Sans?" he then called out, hoping his brother could get Toki to move.

"Heeey Pap! Glad you could-" Sans started to look up with a grin, but immediately it fell on seeing the shut-down skeleton in front of his little brother. For a moment he felt only confusion, then the warmth of his friend who served beside him registered.

Grillby spoke up quietly, having noticed the sudden silence from the Skeleton, and the way his gaze had gone. He lifted a finger and adjusted his glasses. “Is there something wrong over ther-"

"Shit." he hissed, interrupting the fire elemental. He teleported once to get on the other side of the bar, and then lunged for Toki. Cae took her into his arms and teleported away again.

He carried her through his shortcuts until they were by the river, the air significantly cooler than it was inside the grill. The sand on the beach was soft and icy, wet from the river and cold from the October air around them.

"Toki...! Toki, Hey!" he said, patting her cheeks urgently, "Come on, kid. Snap out of it...!"

Toki remained unresponsive in his grasp. His touches did little to rouse her. Her breathing sped up rapidly, before it stopped completely.

Fire. He had been made of fire- she had looked like that until her skin had burnt away, until all of the nerves and tissue had charred to nothing but ash. But the fire had kept burning, licking over her bones like a ravenous beast hell bent on devouring her soul. It had burned her, turning her into a human pyre and stealing her breath away. She had breathed fire, had been fire, consumed in the
endless hunger that had taken away her home and nearly her life.

In her chest, the green of her soul dimmed rapidly, the red cracks pulsing with an angry carmine glow. Her sockets remained empty.

"Toki!" he had to get her attention without catching that of the children's... He turned his head then he sighed, "Fuck..." he then dipped his hand into the river, hissing at the shock of the cold, before he slipped his hand under her ribcage, and let his icy hand grab hold of her soul. He grit his teeth and curled up around her, bracing himself in case his shit luck made it that he now had a palm-full of those cracks.

A palm full of those cracks he would indeed have. He would be thrown headlong into her panic, the burning sensation washing over him. Visions of human hands, the flesh melting away to be replaced with ashen bone, would flash through. Of fire bursting through ribs, scouring eyes from eye sockets, burning flesh into the bone. He would feel his face warping under the fire, horns being warped into being as magic rolled and roiled and drew the fire inwards.

He would see a human stuck in a burning house, desperately trying to save children, and burning alive as magic keeps her from leaving. He would see her vision locking onto Grillby, and the parallels she drew between his form and that which she had in the blaze.

The panic that had her so locked up would be nearly overwhelming. The fire, the burning, the panic, the fear, so gut wrenchingly overwhelming that it wanted to make her violently ill.

Toki remained locked down, her soul not even quivering at the icy hand that washes over it. Steam would roil forth, her magic agitated and lashing out against the perceived danger.

"T-Toki..." he hissed, releasing her soul as the pain overwhelmed him. His hand stung, and his soul throbbed in sympathetic agony. He did a quick check when he felt an ache settle over his bones, his vision wavering.

Down to 5/10 hp remaining.

Fuck. She did so much accidental damage just with a touch to her soul.

He grit his teeth as he looked at his burnt hand, as well as what remained of his glove (The heat had burned right through the fucking thing), before he grabbed Toki. "Sorry about this, Doll." he then urged her backwards into the river, making use of her lack of fight, and pushed her into its icy grasp. He let it submerge her fully, keeping a hold on the tips of her horns so he could bring her back out again.

The water hissed and steamed like a hell beast churned below. She thrashed as it washed over her, the icy depths forcibly pulling her from her panic. Her eyes lit up, dim and shaken, as she flailed, sputtering as the water flooded her mouth. Her dress was soaked, her bones crackling ominously as the heat was suddenly changed with ice. Her limbs tremble, and she peers up at him blankly as he pulled her out of the water.

She was there now, but barely.

He pulled her close as soon as he saw the lights in her eye sockets, hugging her firmly. "Shit... Toki... Are you okay?" he asked gently, trudging out of the water to sit on the grass, her form untouched for the moment it took him to shed his jacket, wrapping it around her to donate his generated heat to her as he hugged her close.

She’s silent and still as he draws her from the water and settles her on the grass. The cold, wet cloth
clinging to her bones is such a sudden change from where she was. She was… “I was burning again…” She whispers softly, voice cracking like the marks upon her soul. “It was so hot…” She doesn’t respond as his coat is settled over her limbs, save to nestle down instinctively in the warm fluff.

"Toki... I'm so sorry... I should have remembered to warn Pap about this..." he hissed softly.

“I didn’t… He was… fire…” Her limbs draw upwards, and she huddles into his coat. The dripping brim of her witches hat shrouds her face as she begins to rattle anxiously. “I didn’t know…” Papyrus. Papyrus was still probably back at the bar. She wanted him here- he was safe. Cae was safe too- but both of them were safer feeling together.

There is a low keening noise, buzzing and harrowing at her ears, and it takes her a minute to realize that it is her making that sound. She can’t stop it even as she tries.

"I'm sorry, Tokiko..." he murmured as he squeezed her gently.

He stiffened, hearing something... the rattling of chains sounded, echoing with the sound of wind. But there was no breeze...?

The sounds did not go unnoticed, and she tensed, nervous and flighty in her borrowed jacket. The last thing she needed was for something to go wrong right now, when she was so perilously close to the precipice of panic.

The world around them seemed to grow darker and Cae instinctively held Toki closer. He saw something in the growing darkness, a cloud-shrouded form that carried a scythe-like blade in his hand.

"Wh-What the fuck..." he hissed, trying to hide the fact he was getting nervous from this. Toki didn’t need him getting upset too.

The shrouded form with it’s scythe in hand was too much too soon. Any other time and she would have been simultaneously terrified and awed. But now… It was the straw to break the camels back- and Toki burst into terrified sobs in Cae’s arms. Her panic was too fresh, her fight or flight response too hair-trigger to let her ponder that this might have been a Halloween jape, and not a legitimate threat.

Almost immediately the form tensed and the blade was dropped, flying behind the cloak before the form came closer. "Toki?!" Pure white hands with familiar holes in the palms appeared from the dark sleeves, gripping the hood and pulling it back to revealed the worried gaze of-

"GODS BE DAMNED, POPS! YOU SCARED THE HELL OUT OF US!"

"Sans, yell at me later. Toki’s soaking wet! What happened?"

Sans winced. "She saw Grillby..."

Sadly, that was all that needed to be said for Tenebris to understand. He sighed, and then came closer, touching her shoulder. "Tokiko, it’s me. It’s Tenebris." he murmured softly. She continued to shake while he rubbed over her shoulder, comforting her with one hand. His other hand was sent reaching into the cloak to turn off the fog machine that hid his feet.

She shook and trembled under his fingers, her hands balling up against her face momentarily. Even the familiar voice did little to quell her cries- and her palms pressed to her eye sockets to try and stem her tears.
"Oh god..." He took her from Sans and cradled her, wet dress and all, hugging her gently to his chest. "It's okay... it's okay... shhh..." As the fog cleared, the black shadow compressed into what was revealed to be his coat. The sound of chains, or so Sans thought he had heard, was really the sound of Tenebris' tail rattling, the loose vertebrae clacking against each other with every move. The blade of his tail gleamed in the ambient light of the evening, it's scythe-like blade being that which was held by the phantom monster seconds before.

She uncoiled enough to latch onto him, arms curling around his neck. She cried for a while, arms tightening around his neck as she shook with nerves.

It took her an embarrassingly long time to calm, and eventually she clung to him, trembling like a leaf in the wind. She felt bad- it had just been Tenebris after all, and that was no good reason to burst into hysterics. She felt even worse, knowing she had panicked again. And over a monster no less.

Toki had never feared monsters- not even when the large skeleton had burst into her back yard claiming that he was going to be the monster’s mascot.

“I’m so sorry…” She rasped into his neck.

Dismissing her apologies as little issue, he nuzzled and hushed her gently as he started towards her home, while Sans went to go fetch Papyrus and inform Grillby of what had happened.

Toki was silent for the duration of the walk. It took her a little bit to realize that she was soaking wet and chilled to the bone- and it felt like her very soul had been encased in ice. There was a burning within it, and she tilted her head enough to peek at it through her soaking dress. The red cracks were enflamed, throbbing like a heartbeat against the dim green of her soul. One of the cracks appeared to be wider, throbbing and agitated like a torn-asunder scar.

Home soothed some of her lingering tension- even if it wasn’t her house, she had spent enough time there to consider it one of her homes. It was safe. Safe was good. “Home…” She whispered quietly.

"That's right." Tenebris murmured, carrying her into the house and up the stairs to the bathroom. A warm shower would help her at this point.

“I don’ need it…” She murmurs softly. Her magic churns violently in her bones upon her gentle prodding, and her dress hisses as the heat of it forces the moisture out. Steam fogs up the bathroom, and soon she’s dry and vaguely overly warm in his arms. Overly warm or not, it doesn’t stop the icy chill that’s rooted deep in her stomach.

She had been frightened of a monster- and she felt terrible about it.

“My… soul…” She murmurs faintly, still staring at the widened crack. “S’ not right… It wasn’t fair to him. I didn’t even get to say hello before…” She hadn’t even gotten to say hello to the elemental- and she had the feeling that going back would simply produce the same response.

She was only just getting to handle multiple candles at a time. He was much larger than any candle she had ever seen. She wouldn’t even be able to apologize. Silent tears bubbled in her sockets, but they were scorched away by the magic heating her bones.

He felt her heat and immediately let her dry herself off as he simply held her to comfort her, "It was beyond your control. You just need to keep recovering. You've made it this far..."

“I’ll keep recovering. I have to. The cracks will get bigger if I let this beat me. But it’s so hard. I feel so… thin. Stretched and worn, like frayed fabric… That might have been the worst panic yet. I was in the doorway and then it felt like I was back in the fire. Like I had never left.” She whispers. Her
fingers curl into his sweater, and she shivers in his arms despite the heat that she’s putting off. “It wasn’t his fault either… Gods I feel like shit- I’ve never been afraid of a monster before. It’s not fair to him.”

He sighs and hugs her tighter. "It's okay, Tokiko... It's okay..."

“It’s not okay.” She murmurs quietly. “It’s not okay. Today was supposed to be a fun day.” And she had effectively ruined it in one fell swoop. She shifts in his arms and rattles quietly. At least her rattling was easing off some. Sitting here and stewing in her own thoughts and misery wasn’t going to help any. Not at all. “…I need to do something. Something to keep me busy. Do you think Cae and Pap will still be up to doing pumpkins…?” She still had her dress on- and now that it was dry and warm, she could still do Halloween things.

Anything to keep her busy at this point.

"Of course, of course..." he assured her. The door banged open and shut.

"TOKI?" Papyrus. Right on time.

Toki squirms slightly in Gaster’s arms, a silent request to bet set down. “Lets go down stairs before he tears up the house to find us.”

He nodded and set her down. Once he was certain she was stable, he eased the door open and motioned her out. "After you."

Toki managed to catch a glimpse of herself in the mirror as she was set down. She looked dreadful. Her bones appeared paler, and there were green smears where her tears had tarnished the bone. Heat still churned on her bones, and she struggled a moment to get it to ease off. Once the shimmering over her bones faded, she felt drained and strangely colder inside.

“Thanks Gaster.” He’s given a strained smile, before she’s easing herself out the door and padding towards the stairs. “I’m here, Pap.” Her voice is tired. She is tired. But she speaks regardless so the big skeleton knows where she is.

Papyrus almost trips, twice, as he runs up the stairs to meet her. His arms snare her swiftly, hugging her tightly. "Toki, Sans told me what happened... I'm so sorry!" he whined as he nuzzled her.

She grimaces, but eases into his grasp quietly. Her fingers are shaky as they come up to cling to him. He is warm and broad, and safe feeling. Some of her tension eases. “It’s okay,” she murmurs. “It wasn’t anyone’s fault. I’ll need to apologize to that monster later, but…it wasn’t anyone’s fault. I didn’t expect…” She hadn’t expected a literal embodiment of fire to come and live here, but that was no excuse. Tears bead at her eyes without her prompting, and she stubbornly scrubs them away. “I- I’m not okay right now, but I will be. I promise.”

He used his thumbs to wipe her tears away and he hushed her tenderly. Nuzzling her as he coaxes Aliquam lets his soul release a soothing aura that he spread through his every inch of being, all that much more for her to take in.

Her soul trembles against the soothing affectionate aura that he surrounds her in, and she quakes in his arms. Her face eventually buries against his chest, and she sighs into his shirt. The aura felt good- it felt soothing, like warmth and light and love, and everything that was Papyrus. Her battered soul reveled in the sensation. It helped soothe the chill permeating her being, but it did not stay the shivers that came after. Shock was a powerful thing. “Thank you, Pap…”

He nodded once and touched his teeth to her skull in a gentle nuzzle. "Anything for you, Toki..."
murmured gently.

“Anything, huh?” She sniffs quietly. “I don’t want…” she wiggles her fingers at herself, “this to ruin our evening. Can we still carve pumpkins? I don’t think I can handle candles, but I still want us to enjoy our evening… We’ve still got candy to hand out too.”

He nodded and smiled. "Of course. Come on."

“That includes costumes. From all of you.” She flicks her gaze up to Gaster as well, and then steps from Papyrus’ arms. She heads down the stairs, going slow as trembles shake her legs. “I think… I think I could use some hot cocoa. I can make some while you all get changed.”

Tenebris smiled at her, already preparing to re-don his costume, while Papyrus giggled. "I'm gonna go change, okay?" He purred. When she gave him a nod, he bolted for his room excitedly.

Toki shivered as she reached the bottom of the stairs. Her sockets dimmed, and she forced herself to focus on the clattering noises of Papyrus rummaging around in his room. Her witches hat is abandoned on the couch, and she shambles softly for the kitchen.

Listlessly, she snags the packets of instant cocoa, and begins to prepare a mug for everyone. Quick and easy she has them done, and is then stepping towards the dining room with four mugs in hand.

Sitting on the table is four tea lights, and she closes her eyes and stills. They were unlit. They were unlit, and harmless, and they weren’t doing anything. She had already bested the tea lights once. She could do it again.

As she exhaled forcibly, Toki wondered sourly if she would ever actually beat this for good, or if it would just rear it’s ugly head someday and shatter her peace of mind.

Tenebris came in behind her, looking at how sharp his blade on his tail was real fast, before he smiled at her. "I’m excited to see how these turn out, Toki.” he purred.

She gives him a shaky smile and passes him a mug of cocoa. The other three are set on the table, and she hesitates, before shakily taking the candles and shoving them out of sight behind a vase. “I’m excited too.” She smiles. She moves to fetch the carving knives from the box, and returns with several of the long, serrated edges, along with the finer tools needed for smaller details and four very long, very hefty ice cream scoops. “This might get messy,” she warns, “Pumpkin goes everywhere. It was always family tradition to do it in costume though.” Pumpkin cleaned off rather well regardless.

She steps around the table and stubs her toe on the edge of a large pumpkin. She grumbles, and rolls it over to him. “I got you one of the big ones. Since, y’know, big hands.”

He took it from the floor, easily balancing the large gourd in his hands, and chuckled. "Thank you" he rumbled happily, looking at the pumpkin. He then took his claw and began to mark the pumpkin's outside for its design.

She openly stared. “I kind of forgot that you had claws. It takes a lot of force to get through a pumpkin’s shell.” Good lord. She probably couldn’t do that- she’d get her fingers stuck in the rind if she tried. She snorts, and sets out the other two pumpkins. Toki takes the smallest for herself, and takes a sip from her cocoa.

It’s rich and thick, and the marshmallows stick to her upper teeth, but the warmth and taste of chocolate soothe some of the shaky feelings in her body and warms her soul. “Ah… Mama always did say that chocolate soothed the soul.” She murmurs to herself.
He chuckled softly and put the pumpkin on its side, bringing up his tail and notching where it would lose its cap. "Indeed, though for me it was a nice hot coffee with cream and sugar" he purred, "either that or a nice hot cup of tea."

"Tea is good too." She nods softly. "But chocolate’s just got this… I dunno. It’s really good for after a day has gone bad. And, heh, today went bad. But we’re going to make sure it ends on a high note." She was determined about that. She sips her cocoa again, not bothering to remove her cocoa-stache, and then sets the mug down. “Maybe chocolate is a human thing.” The wolf monsters wouldn’t touch the stuff.

She takes one of the knives, and traces the tip along the top. She outlined the basis for where the cap would be removed, and then reared her arm back to plunge the knife into the pumpkin.

It slid in with a satisfying thud, and she began the process of sawing at it.

With a clean slice, Tenebris watched the cap of his pumpkin fall away from the rest.

Hers is a rather gruesome mess- orange liquid bubbles out the top, and she’s gotten bits of rind stuck between her finger bones- but soon the cap pops off too. She’s feeling better the more she gets into carving the pumpkins. There was something truly therapeutic about mutilating a squash for the holidays. “Oh! Save the seeds for me please!” She flails the stump of the pumpkin top in his vague direction, and offers him an ice cream scoop for the innards. “Just leave the guts in a pile- I’ll dig out the seeds later. I want to bake them. They’re really good.”

He chuckled lowly and reached into the pumpkin, clawing out the internals effortlessly while Sans walked in, smiling. "Oooh, Pumpkins."

She shifts and eyes Cae. Good. He’s in costume. “Mhm. Pick whatever pumpkin you want to carve- might want to take your gloves off though. Pumpkin guts and gloves don’t usually mix well. Knife?” She offers one to him hilt first as she turns to start tugging orange guts out with her fingers. They’re sticky, slimy, and feel absolutely horrible on her bones, but it’s fun and stress relieving. “Ah- watch your cocoa. I’d feel bad if I flung pumpkin guts into your drink.”

He took it, stowing his gloves in his pockets, before making clean work of the top before he took a scoop and started to clean it out.

"Nyeh heh heh!" However, it's not long before another form entered. Aliquam, dressed up in his-

"Heeeeey, Pap! Is that your old battle body?!

"Yes it is!" he replied with a proud laugh.

She looked up, and squeaked. Her scoop dropped into the pumpkin with a wet squelch, and her hands fly up to cover her sockets. Pumpkin guts slick off her fingers and fly everywhere. “Good gods, Pap, why are you in a speedo?”

"At least I’m wearing the under suit that went with it." he commented shyly, rubbing his arm.

"Papyrus wore this when he was younger, his 'Battle Body'."

She flushed, and peeked between her fingers. His battle body fit him well, she thinks, even if it looks a little ridiculous after seeing him in legit Royal Guard gear. “He, ah, looks very, very good in it. But I was not expecting to see a skeleton in a speedo today, no-sir. You do look very good in your costume though.”
"Nyeh..." he smiled a bit, then came over, "Nyeh heh heh... So, Pumpkins, yeah?"

"Mhm!" She motions to the last pumpkin remaining, dropping her hands with a deep exhale. She could handle him in a speedo. It was just bones. Sans had taken the roundest pumpkin, which left the tallest, most oblong pumpkin for Papyrus. "I can help you cut open the top if you’ll bring it closer. That one’s really heavy. Nearly popped my arms off trying to get it into the house.” She’d ended up rolling the Pumpkin that Tenebris had taken. “Or do you think you can manage to get it?” He did have tremendous physical strength- and it was possible he’d just pull a Tenebris and poke his pointed fingers into it.

"Of course I can," he assured her, coming over and lifting it almost effortlessly to start into it. His claws make quick work of the rind as he copies what his brother and father were doing.

Toki stares at him. “You know… I used to think I was pretty strong for a girl, but now I feel like a ridiculous noodle compared to the lot of you.” She sighs and shakes her head. She turns back to her own pumpkin, and scoops out two handfuls of guts. They slop between her bones, and she rattles with a shiver as she deposits them in the center of the table. She’s already got pumpkin on her face, but it doesn’t cover the rich sweet smell that pervades the room. Pumpkin always smelled so nice.

The monsters all got a laugh out of that, and after several minutes, they all had carved out their pumpkins. Now to start on the actual carving of said pumpkins.

Toki had hollowed her pumpkin out spectacularly, so that it was thin and easy to work with. Hell, she’d even sampled some of the insides- the parts that usually gets pureed and turned into pies- and had gotten the brothers to try it too. With the smallest pumpkin there, she wasn’t really sure what to carve on it. Eventually she settled for taking her carving tools and working on smoothing several bees out on the orange surface.

Papyrus looked set on his task, Sans had a lazy grin as he made his, but Tenebris looked the most focused by far, working delicately on his pumpkin.

Toki was naturally curious about what everyone was making- but kept to her side of the table. She found a spot that needed to be thinned, and got the scoop. It was a little tough- and the scoop ended up jerking and sending peels of pumpkin into her face and onto the ceiling.

She scooped a peel out of her eye socket, and peered up with a frown. “Well shit. That’s going to stain something fierce.”

Caeruleus started laughing while Papyrus got her a paper towel. "Here! Accidents happen.”

She accepts the paper towel with a grin and cleans her face with it. The ceiling is out of her reach though- but the pumpkin was bound to fall down eventually. She shrugs and resumes carving. Upon her lips a silly Halloween song is hummed. Spooky Scary Skeletons seemed fitting, for the lot of them in their costumes making a mess out of themselves.

It doesn’t take her long, before she has a cartoon bee drawn next to a jar of honey. She thins out the walls behind it, and pokes a few holes for the light to shine better through, before she beams. She hadn’t just carved it open- she had done the shaving method, which let different layers of light make up the details of the carving. It was going to look epic. She spins the pumpkin around and beams. “Done!”

"As am I!" Papyrus turns around his pumpkin to reveal a classic Jack O’ Lantern face.

"I'm done too" Caeruleus chuckles, turning around his pumpkin to reveal a symbol.
The symbol for Pi.

"Eh? EH?" Caeruelus’ grin grew as he started to cackle.

She laughs heartily, and flicks a string of guts at the round skeleton. “Really? Pumpkin Pi? That’s probably the worst pun I’ve heard from you yet. Good job.” She chuckles. Her smile warms as she spies Papyrus’ pumpkin. “Good job, Pap! I really like how you did the nose. I could never get the nose perfectly even when I do those pumpkins.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh! Thank you, Toki~" he beamed happily.

She nods at him cheerily, and goes to finish her cocoa. She nearly spits it out. “Cold cocoa is not good cocoa.” She sighs. Her fingers were too gross to stick in the drink to warm it again, and one did NOT microwave hot cocoa. They just did not. Not even instant cocoa. So she sets the cold drink on the table, and glances to Tenebris. “What are you working on, Gaster?”

"Since you've met me, you've designated me by last name. You know you could call me 'Tenebris', or any non-embarrassing abbreviation of such. As for what I’ve been working on-" He then turned his pumpkin around. He then made a final cut and pushed it out, revealing a symbol of his own. A Delta Rune, the Dreemurr family's symbol.

“You’ve never told me to call you anything other than that, to be fair.” She points out with a vague grin. “Tenebris it is. No embarrassing abbreviations huh? Can’t call you Tenny then?” Her tease is warm and kind, though her puzzlement is shown as she sees the pumpkin. “That’s a nice symbol- I think the king wore something like that when I first met him. What’s it mean?”

The younger skeletons started to rumble and chuckle until Tenebris growls at them both. With his sons chastised, he then looked at her. "It is the Delta Rune, the Dreemurr family insignia."

“Oh! That’s actually really cool.” She smiles quietly. “Family insignias are pretty cool. A lot of the clans of yore had one- we still have one, actually. My clan, that is.” She fiddles with her pumpkin, and then sets the cap on it quietly. She beams up at him. “I think it’s cute. You put it on the pumpkin for Asgore, huh?” She wiggles her brow ridges teasingly at him. “That’s kind of adorable.”

And at that moment everyone could feel the room raise a couple of degrees as Tenebris’s soul pulsed stronger, his cheeks tingling black as he grunted. "Very funny..."

“I wasn’t teasing you with mean intent, Tenebris. It’s actually really sweet. I’m not blind. Women are usually more observant then men anyways. You’re both really cute together, even if there’s nothing official.” His flush is adorable, and she beams wider at him. “Anyways,” she claps her hands together, and works on shaking off the pumpkin bits from between her joints, “We should get these outside if we’re all done. The kids are going to want to see them when they come by for the candies.”

She had enough caramel apples in the fridge to feed an army- and an army she would be feeding. An army of ravenous, hyperactive kids who would be knocking on the door nonstop until late.

"Of course." Tenebris started cleaning up while the brothers took their pumpkins in hand, Caeruleus taking Tenebris' as well.

“Remember to save me the seeds!” Toki hefts her pumpkin into her arms and follows. She hesitates, reaching behind the vase to collect the tea lights. They felt almost heavier in her hand than the pumpkin in her arms did, and she hustled after them.

Outside, she eased her pumpkin down onto the sides of the step, and took off the top. She offered the
candles to the boys. “I don’t… think I can stay out here while you light them, but my problems are no reason not to have the full Halloween experience. Think you two can handle lighting them while I go get the candy apples ready?”

They took them and smiled, "You can count on us!" Aliquam assured her with a smile.

She smiled, eyeing a mass of kids that were already heading this way. They were all carrying their chosen pumpkins. She ducked inside of the house as she heard the first flick of the lighter.

The kids voices drowned out any tension she might have had.

“Whoah! Look at those! That one’s got a bee on it- I bet miss Toki did that one!”

“Ah! Ah! AH! I KNOW THAT FACE! Miss Toki showed us how to make that one! It looks so nice!”

“I wonder who did the King’s symbol? It looks really good! I want to make one like the math one though!”

“You’re such a nerd.”

She smiled, content at the excitement of the kids that followed her into the house.

It might have had a rocky start- but it wasn't a bad holiday in the long run. Sure she was flighty and panicky for the rest of the night- but she enjoyed herself too. Caramel apples and fangs do not work, she learns.

And come late that night, she learns that emotionally exhausting days leave one drained. So she passes out across Caeruleus' chest in the middle of The Nightmare Before Christmas.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: Chapter 18 is a doozy. over 9k words. e.e this was a long one. Boy howdy.

Come find us at our blog! :D http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Seventeen Chapters. Seven. Teen. Chapters.
And only now do we get to the icing on the cake! Hahaha!
On that note:
Chapter 18 is 18+ only. We love writing, but please keep us out of prison, and dont continue past the Author Notes if you are an underage reader. If you're already past the age of 18, then please! Enjoy the latest chapter of TOTU!

The first snow set in three days after Halloween, and it buried most of the houses in four feet of snow and then some. Of course the kids had a field day, but the cold and the ice made for hard times in trying to continue construction. They had to clear out several thousand pounds of the white, fluffy flakes first before they could even get the machinery to move.

The monsters from Snowdin seemed more used to it, and they made quick work of it the first time. But the snow fell again, two days after that, and it froze over, creating an unforgiving ice pack. Winter was officially here, and it came in like a lion.

Everyone spent hours outside, freezing in the snow and ice as they cleared the walkways and opened up paths between the houses. The snow was piled in heaps and mounds in the park, and once most of the road ways had been cleared, everyone had proceeded to play in the mountains of ice and frozen flakes.

A full-scale snowball war had occurred- and with some magical help from some of the ice-oriented monsters, they’d formed the massive piles of snow into legitimate forts of ice. It was probably the most fun she’d ever had after shoveling so much snow.

Spending the day with the children playing in the snow made her recall playing with her brothers in a similar such way. She missed having kids in her family around- and she was thirty-two. Her clock was ticking away- but she was no longer human now, was she?

She still wasn’t sure how that all worked- how she would ever have kids like this- but for now she could sate her longing for dealing with kids with handling the other monster kids. She babysat often enough that it was practically like having a hoard of her own kids anyways. So she enjoyed her time out with the kids, swapping teams on the snow war to keep everything even and keep kids from getting too upset about not being on the same team.

The day had ended with everyone needing to thaw- but everyone that much happier.

Toki woke up at an ungodly hour on the morning after their snow-fun. It was a particularly cold morning with even more snow falling. Her first thought was- great, someone’s going to have to shovel more of that shit again. She could see it vaguely through the window, which meant it was
going to be piled high in front of the front door again, damn it. The second thought was… why is everything so hot? She woke up feeling warm- like someone had left her near a heating vent all night long. Her shirt was rumpled, her pants in disarray, and she had flung her blanket off sometime in the middle of the night.

Warmth creaked through her bones, and her body physically ached in a way that she had never experienced. Her legs wobbled, her arms tingled, and any time she brushed her bones, it felt almost painful. She couldn’t go back to sleep, even as she tried several times. She was restless, even if she was tired, and no position was comfortable. Her pelvis ached, her back throbbed, her ribs tingled…

Was she getting sick? Could skeletons even get sick? It was possible, after being out in the cold all day that she could have been coming down with something. Ugh. Even changing species wouldn’t apparently free her from the common cold. But, one thing that always helped was a cold shower to drop the body temperature, and then a warm one to ease the ache.

So she plodded sleepily up into the bathroom, and took her shower. She took two of them, in fact, a cold one to try and cool her bones and then a hot one to try and ease the ache.

And she came out feeling much the same. Trying to wash her bones had been an ordeal, and she’d had to stop multiple times. Good gods, what the hell was wrong with her? Was this some super delayed reaction to making the change over? With her soul throbbing uncertainly in her chest, she donned a clean shirt- the loosest one she had- and a clean pair of her baggiest pants, and then headed downstairs to the kitchen.

She would have breakfast ready for the boys, and tea ready for Tenebris by the time that the sun came up.

Aliquam was the first one awake, coming downstairs as he yawned and rubbed his eye sockets with his palms. "Mmmh, Toki?" he murmured as he noticed her up and about in the kitchen far earlier than she usually was. "What are you doing up so-"

Then that scent hit...

The scent of heat...

It washed over his bones and invaded his essence. He shivered roughly as his soul flared with magic, lighting up his eye before he could stop it. Shit. "Hnhg!"

The sleep-rough voice of Aliquam had caught her attention, and she stepped out of the kitchen to bid him good morning. The bright light of his eye caught her attention, along with his shiver, and worry tugged at her face. "Oh no. Are you okay?" Was he getting sick too? Could sickness be passed between monsters? She needed to stay away from the kids if that was the case. "I woke up not feeling… right, I guess. I couldn’t go back to sleep. So I deep cleaned the kitchen and made breakfast."

"I... I see..." he murmured, clearing his throat roughly. He smiled, though it was shaky and forced. "I'm okay, it's just... Well, how do I explain this to someone who was once a human...?" As far as he had observed, humans never seemed to go into heat. The only thing that the men complained about frequently with their wives was the aggressive tendencies that could come from something called a ‘period’.

"Explain what?" She blinks. "It feels like I’m running a fever, but a cold shower hasn’t cooled me off.” She pads back into the kitchen, motioning for him to follow. She sips at her own mug of tea, and leans back against the counter with a soft moan. Her finger rubs her hip, and she winces. “Gods
above, everything hurts.” It was sort of like a period cramp all over her body, minus the terrible stains. Not like she could tell him that—she hadn’t bled since she’d made the change over.

"Toki." he sighed deeply, orange brushing over his cheeks as he stepped closer and gripped her shoulder. He gave her a serious look. "It’s... It’s called a ‘Heat Cycle’.

She deadpanned. “Heat cycle.” She repeats. “Like… what a dog or a cat gets? But…” That made no sense. They were monsters, not animals. Well some of them were animal based monsters, but they were still monsters. It felt wrong to even make that comparison, but it was the only one she could think of on the fly.

He nodded slowly as he looked down at her. "Monsters get it too... And though it’s not contagious like a human sickness, it can spread to compatible partners...” he explained hesitantly, cheeks flooding with an embarrassed orange.

She shivered as his hand remained on her shoulder. Her bones prickled, and warmed under his palm. She shook her head slightly, eyes brightening shades without her consent. They were probably compatible partners, weren’t they? It made sense, given their shared species. “I... Ah... Well. This is certainly… embarrassing. Is it going to spread to you? How can I make it go away?"

"It... Already has spread..." he murmured softly, "As for losing it... well... Either you hold out, though that is far more painful than... just sating it..." his face was going bright orange rather rapidly. “Or you sate it.”

“That fast?” She looks horrified, but the green of her flush spreads rapidly over her cheeks. Holy shit. Holy shit, she brought him into heat like one dog does to another. Holy shit. Oh gods above, if the ground could swallow her up right now, she wouldn’t complain. She swallows, and sets her mug down as her fingers tremble. Were they going to spread it to the others of the house? The ache in her bones deepens, and she trembles slightly under his palm. Shit.

“Ah… Sating it?” She hadn’t covered this in her lessons with Tenebris yet. Shit. “Waiting it out doesn’t seem… productive…”

"That’s what I’ve come to learn," he said softly, his hand pulling back from her shoulder to clench at his side. "Ah... Sating it... As in... Uhm..." Come on, say it, stupid!

“Sex?” She supplies softly, flush brightening as her pinpricks flared. Magic churned in her bones, eager and receptive to the male that it could sense standing before her. Shit. She’d made the exchange from a monthly subscription to Lucifer’s Waterfall to a randomly activated horn dog. She’s not sure which one she prefers. “I... don’t know how.” She admits softly. “I know how it works for humans, but… Your father and I hadn’t covered this in our lessons... If teaching me along the way doesn’t bother you, then I... wouldn’t mind… with you.”

He slowly let his hand loosen, and he smiled at her, before he offered her a hand. "Heh... I... May not have had a girlfriend before... But I’m willing to... try with you." he purred gently.

Her fingers came up and slipped into his. The warm food was forgotten—she wasn’t hungry anyways— and she smiles up at him compassionately. “If you get to be uncomfortable, just let me know, okay?” Shit, if he hadn’t had a girlfriend before… He was probably a virgin. He didn’t come off to her as being the type for a one-night stand. But maybe he’d done it once or twice. He’d probably been ‘handling’ heats for a while, so it was likely he knew what to do and where to touch to make it go away faster.

She eases closer to him, body language shifting from tense to receptive as she steps into his personal
space. Her other hand comes to rest on his bicep. Her mind felt like there was a haze stuck in it, heavy and thick, though her thoughts remained coherent and her own. Hell. What was that smell- had Papyrus always smelled this... good?

He set his other hand on her hip as he pulled her closer, his touch nervous but amazingly gentle... "Nyeh... Heh heh... Honestly... I don’t think I’d want to... do this... with anyone else first.” he admitted, before he leaned down. His sockets slowly close as he pressed his teeth to hers in a gentle first kiss.

The kiss was a surprise, but a welcome one. She leans up as far as she can so he doesn’t have to crane so much, and kisses him tenderly. Her magic pads her fangs instinctively, making the space above them softer and suppler as she returns his gentle kiss with warm gusto. The gentle touch was needed- her hips were almost painfully sensitive. Her hand shifted, trailing from his bicep down to his ribs. Her fingers were feather light- she was a couple hours into her own, obviously, so she was hyper sore, but that didn’t mean that his own bones wouldn’t be tender even as early in as he was.

She doesn’t have to open her mouth to speak, so the kiss isn’t broken as she leans into him with a soft groan and speaks. “I don’t think I would want anyone else for this either…” She purrs.

He shivered, and broke the kiss to smile at her. "We, nyeh... we best get off our feet, so we don't collapse.” he then turned his head slightly, motioning with his chin towards the living room. "Couch?"

Couch sounded good, but what if Cae or Tenebris walked out? Eh... They would handle it as they came to it. It wasn’t like she had a room to drag him to, and if they were going to have sex, she’d rather it not be next to Tenebris’ room. Toki wasn’t always quiet, and she had an inkling that Papyrus was going to be pretty vocal. At least out here there was some space to muffle the noises. “Couch.” She agrees, finger stroking teasingly over his rib. She’d had her fair share of human lovers before- she knew how to play the seduction game. She wasn’t in flattering clothes, but that doesn’t mean she doesn’t know how to rock it.

She pulls from him, trailing her hand over his chest and up along his chin to urge him to follow. She pads away, towards the couch, with her hips swinging with each step. Hell yes, she hadn’t strutted in a long time- she felt like a giddy kid going to snog for the first time.

His body jolted as he moaned under the touch to his rib, but his form practically melted to her hand. As she guided him with her touch, he found himself following her with eagerness that wasn’t entirely the fault of the heat. He slowly came over, and sat down on the couch, before he leaned back and opened his legs a little. He then smiled at her and patted his lap.

Toki was glad she had worn her baggiest sweat pants, because they would be easy to remove come the time to do so. She shivers at his open offer, and gives him a warm smile. A rumbling rattle of a purr escapes her as she eases down over top of him, straddling his lap once more. “This is familiar,” she coos teasingly, fingers sliding up to stroke over his jaw. She tugs him in for another kiss.

He chuckled. "But this time, there's nothing to make me want to hold back from loving you.” he whispered, kissing her before he opened his mouth and let his tongue slide from behind his teeth, pressing it against her own as he purred loudly, the rattling in his bones adding to the eager noise.

Her mouth slid open when his tongue pressed to her teeth. Her magic shifted to pad those too, as her tongue worked and stroked over his own. His rattling was loud, and hers joined in with his. Her fingers slipped to the hem of his shirt, and she slid her hands up, tracing his bottom ribs gently. “Mmm... nothing to hold me back either. Don’t be afraid to touch me…” She purred. Her other hand cradled his skull, fingers tilting back to hesitantly and gently stroke over the vertebrae of his
neck. She pressed to him, eager and almost hot to the touch.

That invitation was perfect for him. He ran his tongue over the front of her teeth before slipping it by them to entwine it with her own green tongue. He moaned at her touches. One hand went down to stroke over her lower spine and her femur, the other reaching up to rub the vertebrae in her neck before lowering to touch her ribs delicately. "Nnnn~"

Well that was a hot sound, holy shit. Her tongue explored outwards, brushing over his teeth as it tangled with his. He tasted refreshing, like the toothpaste he used to brush with that morning. She traced his fangs from the inside, a heated groan pulling from her. “Nn, gentle please. Spine. Tender.” She tensed as his fingers danced over her spine- it was so sore that she wasn’t sure if it felt good or felt terrible through her shirt- but that eased as his fingers found her ribs and femur. A trail of heat followed his hands, like he’d lit a fire below her clothes that couldn’t be quenched. Toki shifted, fingers stroking more firmly over the vertebrae of his neck. Her claws found the seams in the bones, dipping in and touching it delicately while her other hand curled around his lower rib and gave a soft stroke.

He nodded slowly and gave a deep throaty sound as the touch on her spine loosened enough. Watching her expression, he smiled and slowly rubbed the front of her pelvic bone. "Nyeh~"

Her hips rolled without thinking, pressing her pelvis to his fingers eagerly. Her pants blocked some of the sensation, and they were rapidly becoming a bother. Warmth bubbled under his touch, her magic sparking along her bones. The endless ache began to shift into a different sort of ache- one she hadn’t felt in a long time. It had been many years since her last lover- but one did not forget how things went. Like riding a bike, the knowledge never went away.

Toki broke the kiss, and kissed down to his neck. Her mouth replaced her fingers, sharp teeth nibbling oh so gently over his neck, and that freed up her other hand so it too could snake up the inside of his shirt. His shirt caught on the sleeves of her own, and she rattled slightly in her chest. “Shirt’s ‘n th’ way,” she mumbles, not entirely willing to lean back to have him remove it. Or to request it be removed, actually.

He leaned his head back at her kisses and gave a low sigh as he closed his eyes, before he opened them again and smiled, "As are your pants," he rumbled. "I'll take off mine if you take off yours~"

She leans back and rattles at him. Her voice is husky. “Deal,” she purrs. She leans back and curls her fingers over the edge of her shirt. But she hesitates, and takes a shuddering breath. Toki takes a moment to control her urges, and gives him a warm but serious look. “You mentioned that you haven’t ever had a girlfriend before. Doing something like this for the first time is a big thing for humans… If… you’d rather do this with your girlfriend… I wouldn’t mind being…?” She wouldn’t mind being his.

He looked down at her with slight surprise, but it quickly changed to a look of happiness. "I would love to have you as my girlfriend, Tokiko!" he beamed.

She relaxes some, and releases a hot puff of air. “Then you’ve got me.” She purrs. Her eyes soften affectionately, and she resumes easing her shirt up. It slides easily over her horns, and then she’s topless in his lap. She giggles softly. “We’re going to traumatize your father and brother if they come out here… Oh yeah, pants. Nnnng… That means I have to get up. I’m so comfortable~” She wiggles teasingly against him.

"Mm..." He slid a hand under the band of her pants, easing them down over her pelvic bones. Once they’re down to her thighs, his arm flexes and he lifts her easily while she balances with her hands on his shoulders. In a clean and easy motion, he has her pants pulled down and off of her. “Nyeh!”
She laughs, now completely bare before him. His hand on her coccyx sends pleasant flashes up her spine, and she shivers. “You are the biggest goober- and that was also really, really hot, I want you to know that.” Toki had never been manhandled like that before- she’d been bigger than most of her other lovers. Most human men couldn’t lift a woman with one hand either.

She flushes as he settles her down again, and she leans over to kiss him softly for a moment. “Mmm~” Her bare bones against the cloth of his pants feels strange, and she shifts, rolling her pelvis against his in a teasing manner. It was his first time- like hell she wasn’t going to make it a time to remember. “My turn to help you. Arms up, Aliquam.” She curls her fingers at the edge of his shirt, eyes glowing with an almost liquid emerald light.

He grinned at her, lifting his arms above his head as she requested. At the same time he took a deep breath and his chest swelled in her face.

“Fuck, you have some nice ribs,” She had not meant to say that out loud, not with his shirt up and half off over his skull and arms, but it came out anyways. She leans forward to kiss his sternum, teeth scraping gently over the broad bones, as she leaves him to free his arms and the top of his skull from his shirt. She couldn’t reach anyways, not without standing up on the couch. He was too tall. She hadn’t really seen his ribs in full before- and hot damn, they were broad and thick and Toki decided then and there that they were definitely lickable.

He laughed faintly as he struggled the rest of the way out of his shirt, before a soft, breathy moan escaped him at the attention to his sternum. Though as she moved on to assault his ribs with love he ended up arching as he let out a louder cry. "Aaahh~!"

“Shhh~” She purrs into his chest as he tosses his shirt away. “Don’t want to wake the others.” Her teeth scrape again, and her fingers curl, stroking up the insides of his ribs. Damn he had nice ribs. “Mmm… Still need to remove those pants…” One hand trailed down his ribs, and stroked over the top crests of his pelvis. She glanced down, fiddling moving to fiddle with knot holding his pants up. She caught a faint, green glow from her pelvis, and it drew her gaze with an arched brow. She leaned back, relenting on her assault as she noticed just what her magic had formed. “Huh…” Well that answered how they would be going about doing this.

He looked at her, chest heaving as with steamy breaths. By the stars, she was beautiful, perched on his lap like she was. Her chest expanding with each breath, the faint lines of scars from her bones healing over glimmering in the low light. White lines on white bones did not stand out well, but in the glow of his magic, they blossomed. Pale green tainting her cheeks, with a rich, liquid emerald lighting up her eyes… She really was a sight to behold.

He reached down and untied the string holding his sweatpants up. Aliquam slowly pushed them out of the way, lifting his hips up with her astride him without an issue, so he could slide them down fully. Though as he did, a bright orange glow began to radiate from his pelvis.

The glow took the shape of a long, glowing orange penis, standing almost at full attention as his magic took hold.

The ecto-cock- for that’s probably what it was called- was larger than she expected, and she flushed a bright green. Part of it was nerves- but the bundle of heat pooling in her nonexistent stomach knew that the other part was eagerness. Well then. She wasn’t sure why she was expecting something smaller- but hell. He was impressive. Her fingers come down, gently and shyly circling his member to give him a soft stroke. Her thumb strokes over the top, smearing the glowing orange fluid that was beading up and down the length of his shaft. She uses it to slick up her palm for better motion. The folds of her lower lips rub gently against his femurs as she uses the other hand to slide his pants all the way down. There.
Two naked skeletons sitting on a couch- that sounded like a raunchy punchline of one of Sans’ jokes.

“You’re beautiful,” she tells Papyrus firmly, giving him an affectionate look as she strokes him. And he is. He is a bold orange; slightly see through, but with what appears to be small ridges running down the bottom of his shaft. He was human shaped- but also not quite.

He smiled down at her, sighing deeply as he reached and rubbed her legs, before his hand crept closer to her own genitalia. He held her leg in one hand, hefting it up so he could get at her better, the other then reaching up and rubbing slowly against the green ecto-flesh. She was soft against his fingers, and he traced her lips with his digits. They came away sticky with luminous green fluids, and he slicked his fingers together curiously, before delving in for more.

“Holy shit,” her fingers reflexively tighten- because she hadn’t expected to feel that sensation ever again. A ragged breath steals from her chest, droplets of moisture accumulating on her bones as she exhales roughly. “Mmm… do that again?” It’s a request, even as she cradles his member in her hand. She strokes the length of his shaft, brushing her fingers along the head as she goes. He was large- and she couldn’t curl her fingers over the whole of the length. She shivers, mouth returning to press sizzling kisses against his sternum. Her eye lights find his, and they dim with heat driven lust.

He nodded slowly and rattled eagerly as his hand resumed rubbing along her crotch tenderly. His digits slowly moving to push past the outer lips to massage the inside, dipping the edge of his phalange inwards to brush the small cluster of magic at the very top.

Her legs spread instinctively as his fingers laid into her button, though there was no point. She had no thighs to block the way and restrict access. The heat in her bones raged on as she rocked slightly into his fingers. “You can go deeper,” She says softly. “Explore. It’s your first time- if you prod something wrong, I’ll let you know, I promise.” She worked slowly over his cock, her teeth scraping along his chest as she does. She kissed to the side, and, with some careful work, gently bit down on one of his ribs. Her jaw shivered, trembling over the bone in a mock vibration.

"Ahh... Oh Toki~" he purred, before he took that daring step forward and pushed so he palmed the front of her pelvis, his finger searching until it found what he supposed he was looking for. He presses his teeth to the crown of her skull, cradling his face between the rounded curve of her horns as he pushed his finger into her, going in to the knuckle, "Mmh~"

“Ahnnn…” She her hips rolled into his palm, teeth reflexively biting down on his rib as he sent lightning racing up her spine. She soothed her tongue over it apologetically as she trembled, fingers flexing around his member. “Gods above Aliquam, are you sure you haven’t done this before?”

His eye flashed as he whined out loudly at the bite, though he then smiled down at her. "Nyeh... I... Uh-huh, h-haven't..."

She releases him from the bite, and leans up to yank him down into a kiss. “I was teasing,” She coos softly. Toki rolls her hips down onto his finger, and rubs her pelvis into his palm. She was warm and slick- and part of that was because of the nature of her created organ. Heat knotted in her middle- his fingers felt amazing, but it wasn’t what she was craving.

Her walls were soft and made of magic- it was little thought that the slick surface could easily stretch to accommodate his size. “You ready for more…?”

His fingers flexed once, and then slowly pulled out as he gripped her hips. "Y-yes." he purred softly. Cowboy style it was. She shifted, leaning up on her knees so she could scoot closer. She tugs slightly
on his hips so he slides into a slouch, and closer to her own height so she can steal a searing kiss. Flashes of light fly away from where her teeth meet his as the friction from her kiss causes literal sparks to fly. Toki eases up, fingers holding him and guiding him straight. She winks at him, and licks her fangs with her tongue as she lines up.

Her mouth falls to clavicle, kissing and nibbling over it as she eases herself down onto his length. Gripping her hips, Aliquam moaned as he helped her ease down onto his cock. Making sure not to go too fast despite the eagerness they both showed signs of having, his hands gripped her hips firmly as he guided her down.

"Oh... oh my... ah... Toki..."

Going slowly makes her whine slightly- he felt good, hot and thick and where he slid in, the ache in her bones physically eased- but she doesn’t fight the control of his hands. She rolls her hips slightly, walls fluttering around him in responses that came from having experience as being a human. She trembles, easing down slowly, so painfully slow, until her pelvis meets his.

He is large- larger than she had estimated. If she had been human, been confined to the same limits as mortal flesh, there would have been no way to get him seated in her. He was too large all around, both in length and in girth. But this- this was bliss. A throaty moan pulls from her, and she tucks her face into his chest. Her fingers curl around his ribs, taking hold as she shakes like a leaf in the wind. “Oh gods,” she groans. “Mmm…” he presses against every spot she’s ever had. He was going to drive her insane.

He was too large in the torso area to properly bend him body at this current angle, but he was happy with kissing her head as he continued to move her. "Aah... it... it feels so good, Toki," he purred into the side of her skull.

She shifted, legs tensing, and then lifted off. She set into a slow ride, her hips rolling against him as her fingers set to work stroking his ribs. The size of his upper body made this a little hard, but unless he flipped them over so he took top, she’d have to do the hard work this time. She panted, eyes glowing bright as she trembled against him. She had the urge to bite down, but Toki resisted. She never used to be a biter- and she wasn’t about to break off her teeth gnawing on his bones.

No- she focused instead on kissing every inch she could reach, panting into his ribs as she bobs up and down on his member. “If you,” she pants, “want to take control, just follow your instincts. If not… Mmm, I’m good here~”

His arms wrapped around her as he helped her bounce, but after a few delicious bounces, he nuzzled her, "C-Can I move you?" he asked softly.

“Feel f-free,” she purrs. She shifts, pausing in her bouncing to give him the chance to do what he felt was right.

He slowly lifted her off, whining in tandem with her as he did, because he too was loathe to leave the warm, wet heat that had him harder than the bones he could summon. He shifted them both off of the couch, before turning and setting her stomach-down on the couch, her hips hanging off of it.

He moved to his knees behind her, and felt it now much easier to press back against her body. "Mmmh~ This works... sooo much better." he cooed, before he gripped his cock, aligning it to the silky glow of her passage once he was comfortable again. "Ready?" he whispered.

She hadn’t imagined being pinned like so, with her front pressed to the seat of the couch. But it felt
good, and she stretched on her toes, angling to present herself better. Her lower back arched, and she shot him a sultry glance over her shoulder. Her soul thrummed rapidly in her chest. “More than ready~” She groans. She missed him inside of her already. He was heat and light and warmth and she needed more of him now.

His eye glowed eagerly as he leaned down, pressing his torso over the small of her back, it allowed him to lean in and kiss over her neck and head before he gave a gentle bite to her shoulder as he pressed his hips to hers. His cock slowly pushing back inside with a wet, satisfying sound, and the Skeleton gave a tremulous moan. "Nnnhh~"

Her mouth opened with a heated pant, eyes glimmering brightly with her magic. She was effectively pinned; hands splayed across the couch to keep herself steady as he slowly sank into her folds, his rib cage keeping her back settled in one spot. He was just as hot, just as thick, but this angle… Oh this angle, it made the small ridges of his cock slide and drag against so many nerves she thought she didn’t have anymore. One of her hands comes to her mouth, and she bites down on it just as he had to her scapula. Her teeth gnash, sending sparks over her bones as her moan floats up from inside of her ribs. “Nnn, fuck, Pap.”

He nuzzled her gently, bite loosening to place a few chaste kisses up and down her spine. Aliquam chuckled at her reflexive moan as he began to move his hips. He found the position afforded him an ease of motion that he was missing before. His pace began to pick up, pelvis clacking loudly as each thrust brought their bones together.

He slid in and out of her smoothly, her body stretching around him. Toki’s walls quivered, clinging to him and trying to hold him firm. Each clack of his bones against her own was a spike of agonizing need that got sent straight up her spine. Pinned as she was, she was stuck panting under the heat of his body. Her free hand sought his own, and she twined her fingers with his to keep her anchored while her teeth bit down harder into her arm.

He wrapped his hand around hers tightly, lacing their fingers as he drove her into the cushions. Aliquam moaned in her ear, his thrusts speeding up as his edge came closer. "Tokiko~"

“Papyrus,” his name was echoed from her throat, her mouth falling open into a shaky pant. She trembled, her magic building in her middle like a rising tidal wave. It was tightly coiled, like a snake ready to strike, and the coil just kept getting tighter and tighter in her middle. Her free hand scrabbled at the couch, seeking that final edge to send her over. He kept pounding her sensitive spots over and over, her walls clenching at him, milking his magic for what it would give, and yet it wasn’t enough, it wasn’t enough to sate the burning warmth that seared her soul from the inside. “Nnnhnn.”

His other arm looped under her torso to grip at her shoulder, holding her tighter as he seemed to give in, "Hhhaahhh... T-Toki!" he cried out, "I... Something’s... A-A feeling’s... growing... I-inside me...!"

“S-saaa release.” She hisses, her teeth sparking again. Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck aghnnn- her edge wouldn’t come fast enough. Her clawspoke holes in the couch and she growls, the back of her ribs vibrating up against his chest. “Fuuuuuck…”

"T-Toki...Toki...!" he whined loudly before he pressed his face into her back and cried out loudly as a few harder thrusts ended in a release for him, he howled out in bliss as his hold on her hand tightened, and he came off the high slowly, trembling as he slumped over her, "... hhhnnn..."

Papyrus couldn't be reached, please leave a message.

She felt him flood her with his release, his last few frantic thrusts not enough to toss her over. Fuck. She groaned as he tightened around her, deafening her with his howl of bliss, and slumped tiredly
into the couch. The burning ache of her bones persisted, with him still buried deep inside of her- but fuck all, she hadn’t come either.

She took a deep, slightly frustrated breath, and exhaled into the cushion. It was his first time. It couldn’t be blamed on him for that.

Papyrus wouldn’t admit it but he was definitely drooling as he laid over her, letting out soft ‘nyeh’s between every few pants.

Toki shivers because she can feel that drool pooling on her shoulder blades, as it is colder than the rest of her bones. Her fingers loosen, letting his larger hand dwarf her own as she forces her body to relax. He is still warm, pressed flush to her, and her soul’s aura thrums loudly with bone-weary need for more. His seed is warm in her belly, but it does little to soothe that need.

"Nyeh..." he kissed her bones softly after recovering long enough and he smiled down at her, "W-Wowie..."

She peered up at him through one fevered socket, her bones trembling under the waves of heat. Gods above- this was so not fair. She didn’t want to discourage him, no matter how badly she ached. For his first try, he had done remarkably well. Just… not long enough. “Haah… You… You did good,” she pants, turning her palm to cradle his hand in her own again. Fuck. Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck.

"Nyeh... I... heh... Wowie...." he purred as he squeezed her hand.

His purr resonated against her spine, and she keened heatedly, fingers curling tightly against his own. Her hips rocked slowly back into his instinctively. “You, ah, good for another round…?” Please say yes… please to the stars above…

"G-Give me a moment... and I’ll be okay." he purred gently.

A moment. A moment. She… She could wait a moment, right? Fuck. She lets off a soft groan and hides her face in the seat. She doesn’t say a word.

He leaned back and sighed tiredly, before he slowly lifted himself up... After a moment, he smiled down at her and pushed his hips, grinding against her internals as their hips rubbed.

A moan is torn from her, muffled by the couch. As he lifts himself up, she finds herself able to lean shakily onto her elbows… Up until he grinds against her, and sends her into shaky gasps. Gods above she needed it so bad that it almost hurt. “Nnnnn.” She rocks back against him with a needy noise.

He kissed her head gently then he began to rock his hips gradually. His kisses trailed into soft nips, and laps with his tongue as he cleaned up the backs of her shoulders. Slowly he was speeding up, until he was thrusting into her again at the same pace as before. His sighs rang in her ears.

Her sounds echoed back to him, pleased sighs growing louder and louder as her edge was brought back. That coil tightened more and more in her middle, winding tighter and tighter until she felt like she might snap in two. “P-Papyrus!” His name fell from her mouth, her pants nearly producing steam as her claws wore away at the plush surface.

"Oh come on, I like that couch." Papyrus jumped hard and looked up to find Cae grinning as he leaned against the banister of the staircase.

"B-BROTHER?!”
As Papyrus stopped again—because of Cae—Toki found herself snarling loudly into the couch. GOD DAMMIT. AGAIN. “I’ll buy you a new one,” she growls, bright green eyes flicking up to the elder brother against the banister.

"Well shit, Toki, I’ll admit that looks really fuckin’ hot... Introducing my brother to sex, huh? Frankly, I don’t think there's a better candidate for his V-card than you."

Her fingers curl into the couch, and there is a ripping sound as her claws pop right through it. She’d fucking fix it later. Her mouth opens, and it is not a pretty sight as smoke curls out from between her teeth with her growl. She’s beginning to think that bleeding out quarts of blood for a week is more merciful than this. “Normally I’d say I’m honored,” she huffs, bones rattling with that god-awful coil of need strangling her soul, “but this heat thing is bullshit and I am growing more and more frustrated.” And silently she wishes Cae catches it, so his smug ass has to handle the aches and pains too.

He chuckled and shook his head. "Right... well I’m going back to bed, you two enjoy yourself, just don’t wake dad. Or else you're both gonna pay for it."

At this point anything would make it better. Tenebris didn't scare her. He’d probably be mortified if he woke up and saw this. “I will see you later,” she hisses in turn. Her eyes flash as she glances back at Papyrus, and then she’s rumbling at him softly. Not quite the same rumbling threat she’d issued to Cae—no, this was a ‘if you stop now, we are going to have problems’ sort of rumble.

He looked at her, then he smiled, and he pulled back, his cock falling out of her, only long enough for him to roll her over though, "Nyeh heh heh~"

The new position pleased her, and her mouth descended upon his neck with ravenous intent. Her fangs nipped and nibbled, her tongue flicking over any scratches she might cause. Her fingers curl around his ribs and stroke them boldly, urging him to do the same as she hooks her legs over his hips firmly. No escape now.

He groaned and growled softly as he quickly moved back into position, pushing in with little hesitation, "Nyeh~" he hissed softly and pulled her close, before he reached up and grabbed her shoulders, pushing her back onto the couch as he started moving again, his right eye socket was bright orange, the left completely empty.

That was hot, and she wasn’t even surprised that she needed that right now. As he pushed her back into the couch, she kept herself in place with her hands and her own grip on him, mouth working at his neck. She found a spot against one of his vertebrae, planted her mouth, and sucked as her walls clamped around his cock. She rocked and rolled her hips, rolling her bones against his own for the pure friction fire that burned over her afterwards.

The coil burned brighter and brighter, until she thought it might consume her.

He tensed up and growled again as he shuttered roughly, "Oh S-Stars..." he moaned loudly, his hips picking up pace after only a short time, "Toki~" he mewled.

His sounds, his motions, it only spurred her on. When she thought the coil could get no tighter— it finally snapped. Her magic washed over her and flooded the room, and her teeth clamped down on his neck with a vice grip while her claws grasped his ribs like they were a lifeline. The sharp fangs dug in, and his name burst from behind them in a high cry as she clamped around his member in pulsating waves. “PAPYRUS!”
He yelled out in pain but the thrill of the pain sent a zap up Aliquam's spine. His eye socket flashed brightly as he slammed deep and bit hard onto her shoulder as he filled her with yet another round of orange cum, filling her channel until it was gushing out of her. He couldn't find his words, couldn't scream her name... he could only scream in mind-blowing bliss as he rode this harder climax out.

His teeth dented her bones, but fuck if that wasn’t hot and didn’t make that overwhelming sensation linger.

Like all good highs though, it ebbed off, taking some of the frantic frenzied haze that had stolen her mind. She panted against him, trembling and feeling like a battered leaf in the wind. She could taste bone in her mouth, she noted almost lazily, and a rumbling purr pulled from her as she clung to him. Her tongue lathed over his neck as her teeth released, showing faint holes in the bone where she had literally bitten him. At the center of the bite mark was a dark bruise.

She simply purred, pleased on some instinctual level with this.

He panted softly and he nuzzled her. "Nyeh... nyeh~"

“Heh,” she nuzzles him in turn, mouth closing now that she had layered his bite in her saliva. “Mmn... That was... Wowie.”

He blinked once, then giggled quietly as he leaned back to kiss the crown of her head.

“Mm... M’tired... Th’ burns still there though... When’s th’ heat go ‘way?” She’s not whining-instead, the husky quality of her voice lends her the appearance of being well shagged. She might have only gone once- but it had been a doozy.

"A few days... Maybe?” he whined softly, "I hope I h-helped..."

Days? Shit... She didn’t think she could go through that many more times. That was more intense than what most humans went through. She nuzzles up under his chin, chest rattling with a pleased and temporarily sated purr. “You did,” she murmers, clearing her voice so she can talk smoother. “You really did... I’m sorry I bit you so hard. I... was a bit of a savage, wasn’t I?”

"Likewise with you! Your shoulder!"

“IT hurts a little bit, but it feels good too.” She admits quietly. Her fingers loosen from him and come up to brush the bite. It stings- but it doesn’t feel nearly half as bad as her own looked on him. He had blunt teeth and two fangs- she had a mouth full of the latter.

Her fingers trembled with an embarrassing quaver, and she shivered against him. “Mmmn... If this is going to keep happening,” she rasps, “we’re going to need to eat something to keep up our energy. Or at least I am. I don’t know about you.” Her magic had saturated the room- and she felt slightly depleted.

He nodded slightly and hugged her gently as he slowly moved his hips back, "A-ah...”

As he eased out of her, she winced slightly. Gods above, she felt like she’d been rode hard and put away wet. And, looking down at the mess of her thighs and the still-there green glow of her nether bits, she probably had. “Mmn... I don’t know about you, but I feel super sore... but in a good way.” She wondered if her legs would even work.

He giggled quietly and carefully lifted her up onto the couch, before he sat beside her head, his magic fading away and letting him calm down.
Hers didn’t really fade so much as the tenderness eased. She was stained some strange colors between the green and orange fluid from the both of them- and there was no way she was going to put on clothes if this was going to happen again. She shifted on the couch, and eased her way into a sitting position, and then working to stand. “Hell, I need coffee after this… You want some?” Even tea would work.

"Mmmm... Got any juice?" he asked quietly.

She wobbled to her feet, her legs quaking like a newborn fawns. She shivers, magic tingling over her bones as she wobbles. “I think so. Will apple juice work?” She braces on his shoulder for a moment, and then goes to ease herself around the couch. Fuck it all, Cae had already seen her spread wide with his brother spearing her. At this point, she could walk to the kitchen in the nude all she wanted.

He nodded slowly, smiling after her.

She wobbles into the kitchen, eyes zeroed in on the fridge. Juice for Pap. Coffee for herself- or maybe just some of the tea from before. She could just reheat it with magic. Yessss. Less effort spent for the same pleasant effect.

As she collected her drinks, there were soft footsteps coming from upstairs, trudging down the staircase with the occasional soft thud.

The footsteps didn’t even register. She was busy pouring a glass of juice and trying to not drop the bottle with her trembles.

After draping a cover over Quinn, the form walked over to the kitchen, eyes half-lidded as he grumbled softly.

There would be a naked Toki putting the apple juice in the fridge, and then padding back to lazily attempt to warm up her tea. Attempting being the key. Her magic isn’t wanting to respond right away.

"... Ten seconds in the microwave... put it in a mug first."

She startles, and glances back to see... fuck, it’s Gaster. “Uh… Thanks…” She mumbles. She does as told, and wobbles to the microwave. It’s tucked in, and she grumbles about her magic being so easy to stir up earlier as she turns the microwave on. “Mnnng. I had breakfast for everyone earlier, but it’s gone cold now.”

"It's almost 5am..."

“Well that explains why no one was up and it was dark outside.” She rubs her arm, shivering. The timer beeps, and she collects her tea. The mug is hot, and it makes her bones ache with relief. “Heh. Well, I feel slightly silly. I guess I can just remake breakfast if you’re, ah, hungry…” She certainly wasn’t desperate enough to eat cold eggs. Or reheated eggs for that matter.

"Mnn.. No need." he rumbled softly, "Just came to see why my son was screaming... Glad to see you two are getting along at this point..."

She flinched, but didn’t back down from his grumpy rumble. “Sorry about the noise. Not gonna lie though.” She holds her fingers out and pinches them together. “I’m a smidge irritated at you. You don’t think learning about heats was a wee bit more important than learning about what to do if you can’t find a limb that’s popped off?”

"I didn't expect it to come to you this early. At least we know the expected start date of your heating
“Dude. Just… Dude. I traded a monthly subscription to Lucifer’s waterfall to become a horny harpy for a couple days. Definitely something I’d consider important- wait, cycle? They fall on specific dates?” Shit.

"Indeed. They vary greatly between each species of monsters."

She stares at him and sighs through her fangs. “This would have been helpful to know. I literally thought I caught a cold from yesterday. Papyrus had to explain it to me.” Which was awkward in itself- speaking of Papyrus, she had juice to bring to him. Juice, and a once more growing burning sensation deep in her bones. “Is there any way to stop these? These are ridiculous. I snarled at Cae like some sex crazed fiend, Tenebris. I don’t snarl at good people like that. That’s just not normal.”

"Yours will be especially rough to deal with, the boys have had theirs before, but this is your first, and you're well into adulthood. As you must have already seen, the best way to relieve the heat is sexual activity."

She stares at him more. “That sounds completely unpleasant. So I’m going to want to jump someone’s bones every time? Great… Like I said, any way to stop it? Everyone gets it, so there has to be some way to make it skip a cycle or seven, right…?” Everyone had to, she figured. She paused, and squinted at him. “I brought Papyrus into his. Please tell me I’m not going to do that to you. That would be really, really awkward.”

"… You would not stand a chance against me when I am in heat, Miss Tokiko." he doesn't answer her question, his tail swaying behind him.

The vertebrae on the back of her neck rattled slightly and she clutched her mug of tea tighter. “You did not answer my question, his tail swaying behind him.

The vertebrae on the back of her neck rattled slightly and she clutched her mug of tea tighter. “You did not answer my question.”

He retained silence this time, but there was a faint sound.

Rattling.

His tail swayed back and forth, the vertebrae rattling on it.

Her mother always did say she had balls of steel. Toki swallows, but casually sips her tea. The rattling makes her own bones answer, and she rumbles in irritation at the noises she makes. She fixes him with a flat stare, looking deliberately unimpressed.

He seemed to stay engaged in the stare-down with her for a while, but after long enough the silence lowered over his tail once more as it rested its blade against the ground. "It is not your concern." he then stepped forward and picked up the glass of juice. "Aliquam is passed out on the couch, he won't mind if I take this."

She is proud to say that she did not back down against the stare and the rattling of the much larger monster. But… Shit. Aliquam was asleep? Ugh. Shower time it was then. She dips her chin to him, and finishes her tea in one quick gulp. He could be slightly scary, she admits to herself. But the chances of her admitting it to anyone else were slim. “Not my concern my ass…” She mutters to herself. Like hell she wants to trigger others- hell, she’d go spend days in the shed if it meant not bringing everyone into this blasted heat. “Go for it. I’ll get him another one when he wakes up. Lucky pluck.” He was asleep. Not freaking fair.

He snorted softly in amusement and drank the juice before setting the cup by the sink. He yawned. "I'm going back to bed. See about getting some more sleep as well, Tokiko, you've a long day ahead.
of you."

She grits her teeth hard enough for sparks to fly. "If this infernal burning in my bones wasn’t
creeping back, I would probably fall asleep right here on this floor. As it is, I’m going to go take the
worlds coldest shower. Enjoy your sleep, Tenebris. You might not get much of it." She was loud.

"Mmm... you enjoy that" he chuckled quietly, "I’ll see you later then." he then glanced back at her as
his purple eyes began to glow, "I certainly hope you will control yourself enough, I do not like being
disturbed when I rest."

“And I’m not fond of being kept unaware of major things like this. I guess everyone gets
disappointed by life sometimes, Tenny.” She sniffs and turns her back on him to rinse out her mug.

His eyes glowed brighter, a dark promise in the dark purple haze, and his tail lashed out, the blade of
his tail tipping her chin up, to face him. "Watch yourself, Nara." he growled lowly, before he slipped
the blade away from her chin as he walked out.

She will never admit that he was probably scarier than she previously thought, and that such a blatant
threat had sent her magic churning heatedly through her bones in a way that was decidedly not fear.
Nope. This was not okay. Not okay at all. Still, she steels her nerve and manages to watch him leave
the room without showing her nerves. When he’s gone, she deflates, trembling faintly in place. Holy
fuck. Where was her brain to mouth filter at? Holy shit she had been rude, she’d need to apologize
when she wasn’t in a complete shitstorm of a mood.

She stumbles to the fridge, fetches more juice, and takes it out in the living room. It’s left on the side
table for Papyrus, before she wobbles for the bathroom. She needs a shower. A long one fucking
one.

The cold doesn’t help one bit, but it does keep the heat from overwhelming her again. She fills the
rather large tub full of the coldest water she can get, and submerges as much as she can. It’s fucking
cold- but it works well enough to keep her calm and in her right mind.

And she ends up passing out in the ice bath, curled up and dreaming of lewd things.
Holy shit. What had happened? All Quinn could remember was the feeling of heat, and a mindless need before- stars above, why the hell does his neck hurt so badly?

Not yet sitting up, Aliquam reached up and set a hand on his neck over where he discovered there to be a bite. The holes were large, spaced apart evenly. The holes on the top were positioned with the holes in the bottom directly filling the gaps. But where did it come from...

It came back to him as he sat up, hitting him like a freight train. He and Toki...

Toki...!

He slowly got up from the couch, shivering at the chill of the air, before he looked down to realize he was undressed and had marks of last night's fun scarring his body as well as staining it. He grimaced at the tie-dye mishmash of colors that covered his pelvis and parts of his thighs. Green and orange were most prevalent, but the stains also mixed into strange color.

Papyrus stretched, noting that his bones ached. He needed a shower to remove the stains- but first. That glass of juice on the table looked heavenly. He took it and downed it, relishing the room-temperature liquid that quenched his mouth.

The empty glass is set back onto the side table.

He heads upstairs to the bathroom and eases the door open. A wall of steam scours over him, and he takes a step back to fan it out of his face.

"T-Tokiko? Are you in there?" he entered once the steam had cleared and he walked to the bathtub, pulling back the curtain.

She would be limp in the tub, the water boiling around her like a kettle someone had left on the stove for too long. Her sockets would be closed, arms crossed over her chest, and her legs akimbo in what little remained of the water. Where she had been up to her chin before, the water barely covered her pelvis.
Her soft snores filled the air above the sound of boiling water.

Were he not aware of her element, he would have panicked.

That didn't stop him from doing it anyways. "TOKI!" he immediately turned on the cold water to counteract the boiling and whined worriedly as he used the extendable showerhead to run the cold water over her bones.

She jerked awake with a crack of bone on porcelain, her elbow slamming into the heated ceramic as cold as balls fucking water jerked her into awareness. Green floods her sockets as they jerk open, and she thrashes blearily in the hot water. The new water was cold and it hissed as it struck her heated bones. Her arms flailed defensively as she curled into herself. “Ack- Pap? Pap- Pap no, why, that's cold oh my god!”

"You've been boiling in the tub for hours!" he whined loudly, "Are you okay?!"

She sputters and flails again, this time opting to fling herself out of the tub. She drips on the floor as she stumbles to her feet, and flicks her gaze down to the tub. Oh. Oh wow, it really was boiling. Her teeth clack together, too wet to produce sparks, and she sighs. “I’m alright, Pap. I forgot- my magic heats water when I sit in it. It’s… a little out of control right now, to be honest.”

He turned the water flow back to the faucet as to allow it to fill the tub with cold water to null out the boiling water, and then he sighed. "Well… it's a good thing Father got something... well... heat proof..." he murmured, before looking at her, his own pain was now overlooked in his worry for her. "I can tell..." he sighed, "We both have that problem..."

She shivers as the hot water is rapidly diluted with cold. Her bones rattle- and now that she’s awake and aware, that gnawing feeling inside of her bones begins to grow. Mentioning Gaster makes her flush, and she glances away awkwardly. "We, ah, woke your dad with our activities. It was probably the most awkward moment ever in the kitchen.” Still she grimaces slightly, and motions for him to step in. “The cold water wont help with the heat, I’ve found. But it will help keep it from getting worse. Ah… ‘s not good for scrubbing though.” She motions to his pelvis with a flush. At least all of her stains had boiled away with the steam that rolled off of her bones. “I could help you clean off though, if you’d like…” Heating a washcloth with her hands would be easy enough.

Though his blush had faded with the sudden jolt of worry, Aliquam felt the heat returning to his cheeks at her offer. "I... ah... heh... I wouldn’t... Mind it~" he admitted, "I mean... ah..." he turned away, covering his mouth with his hand as he averted his gaze.

“I wouldn’t mind helping.” While her mind was still clear, she owed him for the… rather rough use she put him to for his first time. She fetched a washcloth from under the sink, and approached the tub. “Go ahead and get comfortable. Ah… don’t be embarrassed of anything that happens either, Pap. I’ll try to be gentle, but… well, y’know.” Cloth on bone was either pleasurable or painful at this point- there was no in-between. She kneels next to the tub, a flush blooming across her cheeks as she dips the cloth into the colder water. Her pinpricks flick up to his neck, and her smile sinks. “I really did bite you hard. I’m so sorry- that has to hurt really bad.”

He looked at her and he reached up to touch his neck. "Ah, so that’s why that stings... hahaha, no problem, my dear!” he then climbed into the bathtub, sighing at the comfortable temperature of the water once he turned the faucet off.

The tub was still large for even him, and she leaned against the edge with a smile. “That would be why it stings. It’s, ah, bruised too. I didn’t know bone could bruise.” Her fingers brush her own bite, and she grins. “To be fair, you gave as good as you got. You’re just lacking distinctly in the fang
area— so you didn’t leave as many holes.”

She dips the cloth into the water again, her hand pulsing with magic to warm it up, and then reaches out to begin cleaning his pelvis and femurs gently. Her flush grows, because she knows exactly where she’s scrubbing, and the chill of the room has nothing on the heat that bubbles in her marrow.

"Mmmh..." he listened to her the best he could before his eyes closed and he leaned his head back, moaning breathily at the touches to his sensitive bones.

Well that was doing things to her libido. She continues cleaning him with one hand, while the other eases his arm up and out of the water. She stretches his hand out, and peppers soft kisses up the back of his radius. “Feel good?”

He moaned again, his other hand gripping his knee. "Ah... yes, it does. Don’t stop now, please.”

“Of course.” Her mouth peppered soft kisses up and down his arm, and she forced the haze to stay out of her mind. Her teeth parted, and she nibbled gingerly up his arm, soothing it away with a slow lick of her tongue.

His pelvis was returning to its original color, so there was that. She worked over his bones carefully, keeping the water near his hips warm so the stains came off faster. Soon he was spotless, femurs and all. All evidence of their fun was washed away into the water.

He was shivering by the end of it, long legs trembling in the bath. "Hah... nyeh... Heh..." he smiled up at her, "Th-Thank you.”

She smiled back at him warmly, and kissed right up his arm again. She nibbled over his humerus, trailing kisses up to his shoulder as she leaned on the tub. “I’m glad I could help.” Her fingers still stroked over his pelvis, abandoning the washcloth to let it float in the water. The water around her hand was heating up, but her magic wouldn’t draw inwards to make it stop.

“Ah... Shit. I’m sorry.” She leans back and takes a deep breath to steady herself, removing her hands and leaving him be. He was new to this- he was new to sex and to sexual acts, and she needed to take it easy with him. It was spur of the moment becoming his girlfriend, and she needed to make sure to remember to treat him better. Being overbearing, heat or not, was not acceptable; not when Papyrus seemed the type to date for a while before getting to what they essentially leapt headlong into. “Sorry. You’re probably tired and sore from before. I’ll let you soak- I tend to heat up the water anyways.”

"Nyeh... could... you stay?” he asked quietly, his hand snagging her own before she can pull fully away. "We can refill the tub where it's needed, but... I'd really like to keep you.”

“Keep me, huh?” She relents, and leans quietly against the tub. Her fingers rub soothing circles into his, and she sighs softly. “I’ll stay. For as long as I can, anyways. This heat is… It's hard to fight it.” She still reclines against the outside of the tub, and props her cheek on her palm. Her elbow rests on the rim, supporting her head. “Did you sleep well? Your dad told me you were asleep on the couch when he came down stairs.”

He nodded slowly, smiling gently as he stroked her head with his other hand. "I did, I hope you did too..."

She smiles softly and nuzzles into his palm. “I was sleeping well enough- as good as one can in a bathtub. I was really cold when I went to sleep… But I guess I boiled the water away.”

"Mmm-hmm.” he watched her, and then he sighed and smiled. "You're so warm~"
“I’m always warm.” Her eyes glow brightly at him, and she presses a soft kiss to his palm. She nuzzled her skull closer and sighed. “The heat makes it worse though. I am too warm. It burns, and not in a good way. Isn’t it like that for you?”

"The heat makes it hard, but being you’re a skeleton with fire magic, that may be further reason as to your high temperature," he explained softly.

She groans quietly and rests her skull on the warm porcelain. “Higher temperature and apparently aggression.” The last part is muttered more to herself than to him.

"What was that?" he inquired.

“Ah… shit…” She frees her hand from his to scrub her face with a sigh. “It, ah… makes me a bit of an asshole? I was really… sassy with your dad, and I am never usually sassy. I think I really irritated him.” To be fair, she had been, and still was, vastly irritated with Tenebris over that whole thing.

"Oh...." he then smiled, "Don’t worry, Toki, he won’t stay mad at you, especially if this was when he was tired."

She gives Pap a faint smile, but it’s slightly forced. “I dunno, Pap. I ah… well, he put that nifty looking tail scythe to my chin and told me to watch myself. I think he was sufficiently pissed off when his little intimidation attempt with his tail rattling didn’t work.”

"Intimidation?" he blinked, "Heh... That’s only one reason his tail rattles, so you may be mistaking it for another reason for it to!"

“I am not well versed in your father’s body language.” She points out. “He’s usually much more put together- even with his morning grumpies. And, ah… Well to be fair, I’m usually not so much of a bitch either.” She shakes her head.

The burning heat in her middle scorches through her in a reminder, and she drops an arm to curl it around her ribs. “Ugh… Think if I went and laid in the snow, it would make the heat stop?”

"Not sure... But let me know if it works." he whined quietly.

The green glow is edging back into view between her legs, and she presses her legs tightly together. "Somehow I think it wont. If… If you want me to relieve some of your…" She wiggles her fingers at him. “I wouldn’t mind. I know a bit about sex… You might have some fun with it.”

He blinked, then he shivered and he looked away. "A-Are you sure....?"

“If you’re not comfortable with it, we don’t have to. I… was rougher with you for your first time than I should have been. Normally I’m not rough at all with anyone…” She grimaces slightly. “But I am sure. If you’d like… I wouldn’t mind.” She might have to get creative- because her teeth would cause problems. But an open mouth and her tongue should do.

"Nyeh~" he smiled, "I... Would appreciate it.”

She smiles warmly and nods. The easiest method for this would be achieved by clamoring into the bath with him at this point… Settling between his legs would be easy enough, and she didn’t actually need air.

She shifts and stands, stepping one foot into the tub. Toki leans down to ease his legs apart so she can settle on her knees before him. The water is cold compared to the warmth of her bones, but it feels strangely nice. Her fingers trail up his femurs, stroking with silent appreciation for the sturdy
bones. She eases up to his pelvis, and rubs her finger tips over where his member would appear once sufficiently aroused.

He shivered and rested his head on his arms. "Aahhh... Hnn~" he then rocked his hips gently into her touch, "Nnh~ ah"

She smiled at him slightly, eyes glowing warmly. Her teeth part, and she leans forwards to brush them in kisses up his femurs. She goes slowly, until they finally brush against his pelvis. The water feels strange on her face, but it doesn’t bother her as she scrapes her teeth gently where her fingers had been. She forces her magic around her teeth, creating a soft barrier between the sharp edges and whatever she touches. Her tongue forms, and her mouth parts so she can drag it over his bones.

Compared to the water, her tongue would feel like liquid fire, burning in the most pleasant of ways. "O-Oh Stars...!" he whined quietly, seeming to enjoy the sensation enough, as magic pooled in his socket. And his crotch.

"Nyeh~" he looked down at her as the cock came into existence, twitching lightly as it hardened.

It very nearly appeared in her mouth, which could have been bad. She eyes him lightly, taking a moment to appreciate him. He was just as large and long as she remembered, and she rattled a purr before leaning down. She wasn’t sure how much of him she could take- so she’d save that for last.

Her mouth opens wider, and her tongue licks upwards from the base. Fingers clutching his hips to keep him close, Toki lets her sockets close as she savors him. He doesn’t really taste like much- but she can mostly taste the hot water. Kisses are peppered up the shaft, and she hums under the surface of the water, slowly swirling her tongue around the head. She went slow- because she didn’t want him to panic over her teeth.

"O-Ohhh..." he didn't seem to care enough about her teeth, she was being careful and knew well enough what she was doing, so he was more than content to simply enjoy.

Enjoy he would. She opened her mouth wider, eyes lighting up a bright green as she forcibly focuses her magic. Her teeth are dulled drastically, so that the edges don’t even bother him as she eases her mouth down around his member. Her tongue swirls, and she sucks teasingly on the end of him for a moment. Rather than work him deeper, she pops free, and works herself back down his shaft yet again. "You like?" her voice is garbled slightly under the water, but it rumbles up her bones and into his cock. Thank the stars for not needing air- she would be suffocating by now if she did.

"Yes... Yes... oh god yes~" he moaned gently, reaching to set a hand on her head.

She purred against him, and nudged his fingers with her horns. They were there for a reason- he was welcome to hold onto them if he liked. Her mouth bobbed down again, and she teased a molten kiss up the length of his shaft. Her tongue swirled around him again, and then she abandoned his shaft to teasingly kiss at his femurs. Toki worked her tongue against the joint of his hip, the green of her eyes round and mischievous in her sockets.

"T-Toki~" indeed he ended up gripping a horn as he rocked his hips, "Nyeh...; aahh."

Her mouth nips gently along his leg, sucking faintly on the bone. She didn’t want to bruise- not this time, not with the one so prominent in the bite ring on his neck- but she wanted to drive him a little bit crazy. His noises were going straight to her pelvis, and the water around her was heating up. Her head leans into his hand, and she daringly returns to his cock. Her mouth takes his head in once more, and she slowly slides him further. Her jaw can’t open nearly as wide as she would like- but
she would go as far as possible, wrapping her tongue around him as she goes. The ecto-organ pulses around him, creating a false ‘throat’ with which to massage and stroke him with.

He jolted hard and his mouth fell open. Papyrus gasped loudly. "Aaaahhh~ T-Toki! Nyeh... ahh, it feels so... nnnh~"

“I know,” She purrs. It was nice, she muses, not having to use her mouth to speak. It was full anyways. She couldn’t take all of him in- her skull wasn’t nearly large enough to house him. She stopped about midway down the shaft, gave a pout, and then set a swiftly bobbing pace. Occasionally she would let her blunted teeth scrape up along his shaft as she listened to his moans and gasps.

"Aaahhh~!” he yelped and whines out blissfully as he looked down at her, "Ooooh G-Goodness! You're... ahh... It... it feels good~!” he whined.

She winks up at him. This she had a lot of practice with. Her last attempt at a relationship had her learning more than she wanted to about blowing someone. His favorite thing had been similar to this. At least the information was going to good use. “As it should.” She rumbles softly. Her tongue squeezes around him faintly, constricting in a mockery of a swallow. Her fingers start to play with the back of his pelvis, trailing up and down the curves of his iliac crests. She brushes over his tailbone too, exploring as he enjoyed himself.

Aliquam mewled as his tailbone was touched. His hips jerked slightly in her hold, and his fingers stroked up the length of her horn. “Nng…”

Her horns weren’t quite as sensitive as the rest of her, but it still felt nice with his bones sliding over one of them. His eagerness was adorable, and she kept up her touches as her head bobbed more. His arousal was tingling over her senses, making the pulsing heat between her legs that much worse. But she could wait- this, this was worth waiting for. Making him feel good made her feel good. “You’re doing so good,” she praises warmly. One of her hands abandons his hips to circle around as much of the base of his cock as she can. She works it in time with her bobbing, wanting to cover as much area as possible with her lack of ability to devour all of him.

"Hn... haah... oooh.... ngh~" he moaned as he rocked himself slightly, before he tensed up and whimpered, one hand flying up to press to his teeth as he groaned. "T-Toki! Wait!"

She eased off as he spoke, letting her head lift up and off of his cock. She passes her tongue over her teeth and frees her skull from the water, green pinpricks flicking to peer up at him from her eye sockets. “What’s wrong?”

"I... ah... I don't wanna... uhm... reach it... without y-you.” He stammered quietly into the back of his hand, his gaze locking onto what was suddenly a very interesting shape in the ceramic of the tub.

Oh… Oh gods he was so sweet. She smiles, and a soft laugh bubbles out of her mouth. She rubs her fingers fondly over his femurs, urging him to look at her rather than at the tub. “Papy, it’s okay to just accept pleasure. You don’t always have to give back. But if that’s what you want… Well, I think the tub is big enough for some fun, don’t you? You don't ever have to be embarrassed about wanting something with me. I promise you that.”

He shivered roughly and looked at her, biting onto a knuckle for a moment before he gave a feverish nod, "You... You feel so wonderful," he admitted softly, "I want you to feel pleasure too, you deserve it!"

Shit. This sweet skeleton was her sweet skeleton now, wasn’t he? She smiles at him, sockets half-
closing as she rattles a purr at him. “I’m not going to deny either of us, Pap. Now… The question I have for you is…” she leans up, scooting closer so she can nudge his knuckle out of his mouth and replace it with a warm kiss. “How do you want me?”

He blinked, then he leaned and kissed her happily, "Mmm~ I want you as much as possible. It feels wonderful... Feels wonderful with you~"

She giggles into the kiss- because that is not what she meant, but he is cute nonetheless. “That’s not what I meant, you silly thing.” Her fingers slip down to tease his member, and she presses another kiss to his teeth. “What I meant,” she purred, “Is how would you like this to go? I could ride again- or you can bend me over the tub.” Or something like that. “Whatever you want, or think will work.”

"I... I want to watch your face."

“Riding it is then.” She smiles at him lightly. “I’d say we could do the traditional pose, but the bath tub is not suited for that. That’s more for beds and extremely flat surfaces.” Still, she kisses him again, and uses that distraction to shift into his lap. She is warm and more than ready to take him. Magic was convenient. Lube was no longer something she needed to buy in bulk.

Toki eases into his lap, straddling him in the wide and deep tub. Her hands come to brace on the side of the tub so she doesn’t slip, and she lifts herself up. “Line up, cowboy~”

Aliquam gently pressed a kiss to the crown of her skull and moved her hips into place. He rolled his hips so his cock lined up with the smooth green glow of her passage. Shyly, he purred up to her. "Nyeh~ I love you."

Papyrus had never been shy about his affections- nor about letting those know they were loved. Thankfully, neither had Toki. She smiled down at him, the glow in her eyes softening with affection. “And I love you too.” She shifted and eased down, letting his hands guide her in the speed of her descent. She leaned forwards to rest her chest against his, pressing a soft kiss on the other side of his neck.

He kissed the crown of her head again, teeth brushing gently over the crack that splits her skull. A happy moan escapes her. "Ah... Toki~" he mewed softly.

“Don’t be afraid to touch,” she murmurs the gentle reminder. Her hands keep her steady as she eases down his length, hilting him within her slowly. A groan escapes her, and she pulls her mouth away against the reflexive instinct to nip. She shudders around him, walls pulsing and trembling with the throbbing of her soul. Her mouth comes to kiss his sternum as she lets him get adjusted- and then she sets a torturously slow pace astride his lap.

"Ahhh... hhahh! Tokiko," he grunted loudly, rocking his hips slowly as he looked down at her, "That... it's... too slow." he whined, "Faster...!"

“Faster huh? I think I can do that.” She giggles softly at his frustrated sound, and eases herself into a faster motion. Her hips roll against his own as she comes down to envelop him, her walls clutching him tightly as her bones roll and grind gently against his own. She leans back from him, mouth falling open as she pants. Droplets of condensation gather at her temples and roll down her bones, dripping onto her ribs and then into the heated bath water. Pleasure zips up and down her spine- but it’s not the same frantic feeling as before. It tingles and pools, traveling in waves up and down her spine.

“Ah- yes, mm…” She risks slipping as she lets go of the side of the tub with one hand. The one she freed comes down and slips under his ribs, stroking up the insides of his cage and teasing up to the
backside of his sternum.

"Aahhh... Toki~" he held her hips and began to move his own, causing a small wave of water to slosh.

Between the both of them, the full tub was making a mess of the floor. She really didn’t care all that much. “Mmm, Pap~” His name rolled off of her tongue with a purr, and she stroked the inside of his sternum. Her magic washed over the both of them, mingling with his as she trembled and shuttered. The heat in her belly was great- but that frantic frenzied need was not as bad. Her control remained full, even as the coil of need rolled tighter in her belly. Perhaps the first attempt had been the worst- and she was hoping to all the stars above that this one would be easier, and that she could find her release when Papyrus did.

"Oh god... It's... it's so hot~!" he mewled happily, mouth falling open to join her in panting. His hips picked up the pace, lurching upwards into her roughly.

Water sloshed out onto the tile as his rough thrust drew a pleased cry from her mouth. It felt good, the bone crashing together as they met mid motion. Steam rose from the bones above the water, filling the room with a thin mist as she panted. Her claws clenched in the ceramic, and she rattled urgently above him. “Stars above, I love you,” she purred, eyes glancing down to lock with his own. The green was blazing bright, matching the strong glow of orange from behind her sternum, and it bathed the room in a forest colored rainbow.

"Nyeh! Nyeh! Aahh! I love you too!" he mewled.

She shuddered. His noises were getting to her- his eager sounds, his moans, his cries, it all spoke to something deep in her being that audibly rumbled with a pleased noise. Her fingers curled around one of his lower ribs, stroking it base to front in the same motions that coincided with her bounces. She couldn’t- she was close, so close, she just needed… “I’m clo-”

Magic washed over her bones, thick and potent, as her mouth fell open in a cry of his name as her warning was drowned out. Her bones rattled, walls clamping around his cock and milking it for all that it might give as released claimed her and stilled her in his lap.

As she clenched, he cried out and pulled her hips to his as he curled inwards, clutching her close to him. His energy surged hard over them both, mingling and mixing with her own as his cock. He came after a few short thrusts, flooding her with his magic as his cry echoed out of the bathroom. "N-NYEEEEHHH!"

She shuddered at the warmth that proceeded to flood her insides, slumping into his hold as his cry all but deafened her. A niggling part of her worried that they probably just woke Tenebris again- but the part of her that was basking in his aura like a cat with catnip said fuck all about waking the older monster.

She shivered, arms coming to cling to him as her magic slowly pooled back inside of herself. She basked in the sensations though, panting against his sternum.

He leaned back and his head fell to one side, his eyes closed as he panted. "Ah... Hah... Nyeh..."

The heat still burned- but it was lesser. Sated still, from the first, rough round, and this second, gentler one. It might take time, but… Maybe they could figure out the easiest way to ride through the heat.

Maybe. She’d… She’d need to figure it out as time goes on. She shivers against him, forcibly
cooling her bones so she doesn’t burn him as she relaxes. “You,” she pants softly, “were so… hot, god damn. Mmn…”

"Nyah, you’re wonderful. I love you so much.” he mewled, only having half the mind power in his current state.

“Mmm, love you too.” She nuzzles him softly. She was functioning at a higher mind set than he currently was, so it was up to her to get them moving. She was loathe to move, but she did it anyways. She eased herself off of him, feeling raw and sensitive as he popped free. She was a dripping mess, but thankfully the water kept the stains off. The water though was a mess. She smiled faintly, leaning back to pull the plug. The hot water was rapidly drained, and then she began to refill it with cold water. “You relax and cool off,” she presses a kiss to his sternum. Her magic wavers in her chest, and she feels inexplicably weak. She’d only had tea today- and had just blown through another portion of her magic unintentionally. “I need to eat something.”

"Mmh..." he looked up at her, then he closed his eyes and leaned his head to the side, "Nyah... Alright..." he murmured before he slumped under the water, "brblblbl...."

His tired burbling was adorable. She still eased herself out of the tub and hid a grimace. She was sore- riding at the pace he’d urged her to left her pelvis feeling painfully sensitive. Still, she did her best to mop the floor, dried herself off with a trickle of magic, and then headed downstairs. She needed clothes- at least something loose and easy to remove.

She ends up stealing one of Papyrus’ long shirts, as it sits down the middle of her femurs. She’s pretty sure he won’t mind- and now she’s not going to be flashing her glowing bits to Cae or Tenebris if they come down again. She grimaces and heads into the kitchen- good gods, she needs food. She feels… empty. Drained. But with the amount of magic she’d been letting loose in the house, it was little wonder why. She hardly wants to stand and cook- but she needs to eat something.
Five days. It took five long days for her heat to pass. By the end of those five days, one of the cushions for the couch had been practically gutted, they had ruined a carpet, and the paint on the walls of the hallway needed to be touched up from bones and claws unmercifully ruining it.

Day five had her waking up face down in a pile of couch stuffing, with several bites adorning her shoulders and collarbone, and scratches over her bones. Pap wasn’t much better than she was- but she’d managed not to bite him as hard as the one on his neck. She was sore- oh hell she was past sore at this point. She felt like someone had shoved a jackhammer in her pelvis and left it on high. Nothing was broken- but everything was tender and everything hurt.

But the warmth was entirely gone- and her magic was nearly depleted as well. She felt wobbly as she struggled off the couch, slightly light headed and empty, leaving Papyrus to continue snoozing where they had fallen after the night prior. She tugged the blanket up to cover him, delighting in the fact that she couldn’t feel the pulse of heat from his bones either. She was pretty certain she’d kept him in heat for the duration of her own- and god she felt horrible about that.

Toki felt guilty in general about it. She hadn’t been… pleasant with Cae or Tenebris, during what little she remembered seeing of them between being asleep, or lost in the throws of pleasure with Aliquam. She had apologies to make- probably to all three of them, now that she thinks on it.

Toki tugged on a loose-necked long shirt, and hobbled for the kitchen. She hadn’t cooked a full meal since the heat began- and she needed something substantial. But without the heat driving her, nullifying her aches and pains with that of the heat itself, her legs hardly felt like they could support her.

She staggered, dark circles under her sockets, and caught herself on the door frame to the kitchen. She needed sleep too. Actual food and sleep- not just passing out after sating that burn- but fuck, she
had to fix the couch first. The cushion had all but exploded. She couldn’t sleep on that- or the mess that stained the other cushions.

Caeruleus was standing in the kitchen at this time, humming a tune to himself as he rummaged around in the fridge. The sound of her bones brushing the door frame caught his attention, so he looked at her with the intent of giving some remark about the destroyed remnants of the couch, only to grow worried. "Holy shit, Toki, are you okay?" he asked.

She remains leaning on the door frame, grimacing to herself. Well. This wasn’t what she was expecting- but then and again, it wasn’t early in the morning, and Cae did need to eat too. “I could be better.” She admits. “Ah… I’m a bit burnt out, in the magical sense of things. Sore too. But not in heat anymore, so there’s that?” She shifts, and hobbles for the cabinets. The neck of the long shirt drapes down, and she shifts it up so the bites across her shoulders aren’t on display.

"Heh... There is that." he murmured. The fridge is shut, it's contents abandoned temporarily as he turns to go to her. "Come on, lets getcha on a seat." he told her gently.

“No, no, Sans I’m fine, I promise. I need something to eat- I’m running off of tea and snacks and that does not make for good magical fuel.” Sitting does not sound particularly pleasant for pelvis. “Don’t let me interrupt what you’re up to. I just need food."

"I was making food." he huffed. "I'll make something for both of us to eat."

She puffs her cheeks and sighs at him. “Cae, I’ve been enough of a bother for the past few days- I don’t mind cooking. Besides- can you even make anything other than hot dogs?” Her voice takes on a teasing lit as she rifles through the lower cupboards.

"..." He straightened further, before he came over and flicked her on the head, "I can too cook," he grumbled, "And seriously, you haven't been a bother for us, Doll." he then leaned in and clacked her on the head with the top of his, "Doofus. Don't talk so lowly of yourself."

The flick makes her grumble, and she rubs the spot that he flicked with her fingers. “I wasn’t talking lowly of myself,” She grumbles, “But it was inconvenient, the whole heat thing.” She bumps her hip to his in retribution, and puts a knee up onto the counter so she can look in the upper cupboards. “For the first time in my life, I can say that I need a step ladder. Also apologies for not believing you- I don’t think I’ve ever seen you make anything, besides hot drinks and hotdogs."

"It's normal for a monster to go into heat, you know." He scolded, "You don’t inconvenience us, if anything it's good to know you had it, because you're having something that's normal to monsterkind. Further assuring us of your good health." He almost sounded like his father speaking like that.

He gets a packet of instant gravy to his face for his mimicking of his father’s usual speech patterns. “Dude- for five days I was an aggressive sex fiend- and I also ruined the couch, and Pap and I need to repaint the hallway wall. If that’s not an inconvenience, then I don’t know what is. Ugh. At least Pap wasn’t put into asshole mode. Dunno if you heard about it from Tenebris, but your dad and I sort of squared off in here after you warned us against being too loud.”

She contemplates doing pasta, but decides against it. She wobbles slightly on the counter, and ends up shutting the cupboard and just easing down to sit. She winces. The counter is unforgiving to her sore backside. “I don’t even know what I want to eat. Ideas?"

"Actually, if you want me to be honestly, I knew that happened already. I could feel the tension through the floorboards. Pops has a really powerful aura. Though, uh..." he then smirked, "ah, never
mind." The female before him had stood up to his father's Aura- and that in itself was impressive.

"Would you like one of these 'frozen pizzas'?” he asked, moving back to the fridge. He peered in the top half of the freezer, and motioned to the frozen boxes inside.

“… You and Tenebris have an irritating knack for cutting off half of your sentences. Ah…” His aura- she recalled it, and faked a yawn to hide the color that flitted over her skull. “It wasn’t actually that bad. I was more worried about his tail- it’s really sharp when it’s up in your face.” She arches a brow at him and sighs. “Sure. Pizza sounds good enough. Might as well cook up two. I am ravenous right now.” She would literally eat anything right now.

"What can I say? It’s a family thing. And yeah, that too. He hasn't let that thing dull in years." he chuckled. "Though the pizzas, are they both for you or one for me too?” he joked.

She would have flung her slipper at him if she had it with her. “I was actually going to share mine with Pap when he woke up, but I mean, if you want to eat a whole pizza to yourself…” She trails off with a sarcastic laugh, and hops from the counter.

Her legs slip out from under her, bare bones slick on the tile, and she lands on her ass with a loud curse. “FUCK.” Ow, god, that hurt so bad. “My ass…”

"Oh shit, are you okay?” he asked, turning to her in concern.

“Focus on the pizza, Sans. I’m fine- my legs are noodles, and the tile is slick.” She doesn’t bother getting up, sitting on the cold tile while she reclines into the counter. Ugh. “Ugh. Anyways, two pizzas. If we have to make a third, we can. Anyways, sorry for snarling at you that one time. Ah...” She hesitated to tell him that he interrupted- but she's pretty sure he understands.

He shook his head and abandoned the fridge momentarily to go and lift her up, "Nuh-uh, I’m not leaving you on the floor.” he huffed, before he nuzzled her. "Hey, don't worry about that, okay? You know I don’t get too irked about that kinda shit."

She doesn’t bother fighting it, but she grumbles as he lifts her. She has no pants- and his hand is perilously close to her sore pelvis. “I know it doesn’t bother you, but it bothers me. I am not an aggressive person by nature- or an asshole by nature. It just… ugh. I need to bother your dad about details concerning heats, if these are going to be a regular thing. Can you just- OW. Cae. Gentle please.”

He tensed slightly and was a bit more careful as he moved her to sit in a better position on a chair. "Shit... Sorry, doll" he sighed softly, stroking her cheek gently.

"Unfortunately-" he started, pulling away, "-You wont be able to talk to him for a few days.”

“I wont?” She blinks at him, shifting herself in her seat. “And it’s alright, Cae. I’m just a bit… sore, to be honest. Feels like someone stuck a jackhammer in my pelvis and left it on high.” Or an uncomfortably large vibrator. Either way- she was sore and sitting hurt. Touching anything hurt. “Hence why I’m not wearing any pants.”

Now sore, he could understand, the lack of pants, even more so. But when she offered that metaphor as to how she was feeling. Well fuck.

"That’s... uh... Fuck. One way to put it...” he chuckled awkwardly.

She grins at him, all sharp teeth and equally sharp humor. “That’s payback for your comment about liking the couch. You could have walked back to your room instead.” She gives him an amused look
and reclines back in the seat. “So,” she drawls, “You were going to make pizza and impress me with your culinary expertise, no?”

"Excuse me." he huffed. "Yeah, yeah, lets let the oven heat up first, fucks up the pizza if you put it in too soon."

She gives a mocking bow in her seat. “Of course, head chef. You obviously know best about correct pizza cooking.”

Rolling his eyes, he Frisbee’d the pizza box towards her head once he had pulled its contents from it. "Think fast."

Awake she might be, but she hardly has the dexterity to dodge the box. It smacks her in the face with a satisfying slap of cardboard on bone, and then plops into her lap. She rubs the bridge of her nose and shoots him a dirty look. “Think fast my bony white ass. You’re like ten feet away- I’m not a ninja, you know.”

"Ten feet away gave you at least three seconds to react." he countered quickly (oops is his nerd side showing? Yes it is), before he got a baking tray and set the pizzas on them.

“How about you factor in the fact that it takes more energy to get a stationary object in motion- and I am a little low on energy.” Fuck she hadn’t been in science class in a decade or more- she was rusty at this science crap. The pizza box is wound up, and flung right back at him.

She misses.

"... Touché." He grinned at her, and then he started to get some water going, "What do you feel like drinking right now?"

“Anything hot, thick, and creamy.” She sighs. She could go for a hot chocolate- with a double pouch of chocolate for that extra savory sensation. Gods above, that sounded really good. “Or anything at all. I really don’t care. At this point, I would probably drink lukewarm coffee and call it good.”

Hot, Thick, and Creamy. Only two things came to mind for that...

Buuuuut now wasn't the time, and for once, Cae let a dirty joke get by him as he nodded. "Hot Cocoa it is. Marshmallows?"

“Extra marshmallows, please.” She crosses her legs, and sighs softly. “Maybe add a bit of vanilla creamer to it? It makes it a bit richer.” And she could use the metaphorical calories at this point.

"You got it."

Five minutes later, he puts down a mug of steaming hot chocolate in front of her with a small stirring spoon still spinning lightly from when he mixed in the creamer and extra chocolate. Caeruleus pulled open the bag of marshmallows and put a handful on top, and slid it closer with a grin. "Here you go, Toki. Enjoy."

Her fingers curl around the mug, and she shoots him a thankful smile. “Thanks, Cae.” The still steaming mug is brought to her mouth, and she stills the spoon with a finger, before taking a mouthful of the burning liquid. “Mmm…” She can’t stop the soft moan that spills out- gods above, hot chocolate was a gift from the heavens.

Reaching, he gave her a soft pat on the shoulder as he offered her a grin, "It's nothin' really. What the hell am I supposed to do, be a dick and deny a doll like you her cocoa?"
His pat on her shoulder had her arm flinching out from under his grasp- he patted right over top of the first bite from Aliquam. It had bruised brilliantly. Still, she offers him a cheeky smile. “I suppose you could have, but then you’d have a sad doll sitting in your kitchen. Can’t have that, now can we?”

"Not at all, Toki," he agreed, before he eyed the bites peeking through the neck of her shirt. "Holy fuck, hahaha... You and Pap really didn't let up, didja?" he teased gently. It was a little awkward, talking about this with the woman who technically popped his brother’s metaphorical cherry- but he’d meant what he said. She was a good person- before and after the change. She never did seem to change.

One hand comes to clasp over the bites, and she grimaces. “Not really, no. Ah… You should see the one I left on his neck on the first day.” Her teeth open, and she pantomimes gnashing them. “These teeth are meant for biting, not nibbling. He, ah… Well, it’s not a nice mark. I was more careful after. He didn’t have to be as careful. Mostly flat teeth, you know.” Only the two fangs to make punctures in the bone meant that she got away with the easier of the markings. She awkwardly sips her cocoa, and adjusts herself in her seat. The rich chocolate is making her feel better as her magic begins to restore.

"Heh. Yeah, sure." he chuckled gently, "I'll have to make sure that Pap doesn't keep anything too permanent." He laughed again, quietly. "But hey, you're both happy aren’t you?"

“You may want to.” She smiles faintly. “We are, actually. I… ah, well, I actually asked him out. He said yes. Anyways, I was also unaware that bone could bruise. Hickies are a thing, even for skeletons, then.” She sips her cocoa, tilting the mug slightly and getting a layer of melted mallow over the top of her upper teeth. “Heh. Either way, I’m glad it’s over. It won’t happen again next month, will it? Because I can handle this every few months- but I might go crazy if it’s every month. I’d take human reproductive cycles over that.”

"If you're lucky. Mine happens on it's own once every couple months so you may be lucky and have the same. I'm not sure what Pap's does, you'll have to ask him.” he explained, before he tucked his hands away in his pockets as he smiled down at her, "Shit, that's cute."

She tilts her head at him in confusion, eye lights glimmering lightly. “What’s cute? And I guess so… heh. Even every couple of months would be okay. Still would be better than how human females work.”

"You are. And I have no idea what humans do, so I’m gonna go ahead and just smile and nod."

“You’re always smiling.” She points out. She steals another sip of cocoa, and then nearly snorts it as she laughs. “Be glad that you don’t, Cae. It’s gross.”

"Taking your word for it. Say no more.”

And her grin suddenly grew, eyes sharpening. “Now I sort of want to tell you. I should probably ruin your innocence.”

"Hoe don't do it."

Dear gods, who introduced him to memes? Toki’s grin just widened around the rim of her cup, looking slightly sinister despite her mallow-stache. “Well,” she begins, “A human female has a uterus. The uterus is where a little human is made and expelled- and starting from around the age of fourteen, until about fifty, the uterus is ready to hold a baby. But, when no baby is conceived, the uterus sheds it’s lining to prepare a new one. The shedding of his lining is called menstruation. They
essentially bleed out of their nether bits once every month for seven days.”

Her eye sockets darken and she laughs. “It amounts to the woman bleeding for about seven years of her life.”

"Oh my GOD."

Her laughter is loud as it rings out, and she chokes on her cocoa. How a skeleton can choke, she has no idea, but she’s hacking and wheezing as cocoa goes places it shouldn’t go. The mug is set on the table, and she clutches her knees. Tears of mirth bead in her eyes, and gods above, his face was the perfect mix of horror and fascination she had ever seen.

He turns and bangs his head lightly on the fridge a few times.

"Can't. Un-see that." he groaned. He picked up on soft footsteps, making him turn to see Aliquam entering the kitchen.

Rubbing his eye tiredly as he dragged his blanket behind him, clad in nothing but his bones and a pair of boxers. Boxers with spaghetti pictures on them. "Nyeh... What's going on?" he asked, before he yawned widely, literally releasing a long 'nyeeeeeeehhhhh' in the yawn.

She’s not sure what has her laughing harder- Cae’s response, or Pap’s boxers, but she are bent over, and has a horrible gurgling noise tainting her laughter. It sounds similar to something backfiring, and she just can’t stop laughing in order to make it go away. “I- Cae- talk- HA- women-” is all that’s decipherable from her laughter.

"Oh my... What did I come back to?"

"You. Do not want to know, Pap."

Aliquam blinked once, then he rubbed his head and walked over to Toki. "Slow down Toki, catch your breath. Then you can tell me why my brother is freaking out."

It takes her a minute to catch her breath, and she ends up removing her mustache as she passes her sleeve over her teeth. She giggles slightly, eye lights bright as she straightens. They dim though, seeing the many bite marks that decorate his bones. None are as bad as the one on his neck. Still, seeing them is sobering, and guilt bubbles in her middle. Some girlfriend she was. “Ah,” she coughs slightly, “I was explaining to your brother the worse parts of the human female reproductive system.”

He smiled gently and shaking his head, "Nyeh heh heh. You're awful, Toki" he huffed, before clacking a soft kiss to the top of her head. "Nyeh~"

She shifts, and tilts up to meet his kiss with her mouth instead. She kisses him softly for a moment, simply enjoying the motion as she does so. “I am awful, aren’t I?” One finger comes up to brush over his neck, and she sighs. Double meanings lingered behind her words.

"You torture my dear brother," he scolded once the kiss parted, before he reached and ran his fingers over her marks on his bones. They didn’t really hurt that bad- they had already started healing on their own. He paused, glanced down at her, and made a show of licking over his teeth. "Mmm... You taste like cocoa."

Cae rolled his eyes and chuckled, going to check the pizzas, "Lovebirds."

Toki simply smiled up at him. She rubbed her fingers gently over the worst mark, and sighed again. “I torture him because he tortures me. It’s a mutual relationship, I assure you. And of course I taste
like cocoa- I still have some to finish.” Her mug is taken again as she withdraws her hand, and she sips from it. Her mallow-stache returns with a vengeance.

To Cae, she rolls her pinpricks. “Tweet. Tweet.” There might have been sarcasm in her words, but it was affectionate sarcasm.

He giggled and sat down in a seat next to her. He stretched, "Have you seen Father?"

"No, he took his coat and said he had some business to take care of, that was this morning." Cae replied, "His face was black."

"Oh."

She pauses, and recalls that Tenebris face tended to be black when he was flushed about something. She blinks, slowly at first, before it dawned on her. Her palm met her face in a satisfying slap, and she slumped into her chair with a curse. Her pelvis ached, and she flinched slightly because the chairs were not comfortable to her poor un-padded backside, but remained in her position. “Fuck… of course.” It took little thought as to why the elder monster was missing, and why his face was dark—particularly after she’d basically basted the house in her magic.

After a moment, there was a snicker from one of the brothers, before they both burst out laughing.

Her face burned in mortification, and she slouched further down. Her cocoa was finished rapidly, before she hid in her palms with a groan. “Fuuuuck.”

She’d brought Tenebris into heat.

Fuck.

There was soon a loud FLUMP as Caeruleus fell over, banging his fist on the ground as his mouth fell open, teeth parting with the magnitude of his laughter, "OH MY GOD! He's old as shit and you put him in fucking heat! HA!"

Her bones practically buzzed with mortification.

If there was any tension between the three of them that morning, that single realization brought it all crashing down.
Three days later, and the snow had risen again. By now the monsters didn’t bother clearing the roads- only clearing their front doors, and the roofs of their homes. The ice and chill was rough- but it would eventually ease off. It usually did, anyways.

Three days stuck in the house was a boring prospect though- but she filled the time by spending her hours with the brothers. They managed to get the couch fixed- though it was a rather messy stitching, all of the stuffing was once more back inside, and they flipped the cushions to hide the stains and the ‘scars’ marring the usual sides to them. It worked- and they would eventually see if Tenebris would notice. The house was cold- the heater was struggling to keep anything larger than the bedrooms warm, so the living room, where she stayed, was pretty much an ice cube all the time.

She dealt with it by bundling up- something the brothers didn’t need to do because as Cae put it- the chill went right through them.

By the morning of the third day, the power kicked off for the town, and everyone was cast into darkness. The snow had taken out one of the power lines, and the electrical company would be out by morning to fix it. For most of the monsters, that wasn’t an issue. They bundled up over top of their furs, turned on their fireplaces, and huddled in the main rooms to keep warm.

It wasn’t quite so for Toki- There was only so many candles that could be lit, and she was a nervous and jittery mess with as many of them that they had out. The house was lit though, if a smelling a bit noxious from the many scents, and she used her magic to try and keep the room a stable temperature. It drained her- and ultimately she had to give it up before long.

She bundled up on the couch as the day turned to a frozen and blustery night, a pot of tea balanced on her lap. She was focusing her magic- which hadn’t fully recovered from three days of depleting it- and pouring the warmth into the pot. At her side was a worn copy of a book- one that one of the workers brought her some time ago.

Slowly, the pot of tea was beginning to heat, and she was pleased. Something warm to drink would help warm her inside, even if it sucked away parts of her magic.
"Toki, we don’t want you to get cold…” Aliquam said softly.

"And believe it or not, but extreme weather can actually do some damage to us.” Caeruleus mentioned, his hood pulled over his head. The soft fur was warmed by his magic, but even then it did little to help.

"We need to light the fireplace."

"But we can't unless we know you're going to be okay."

Well she wasn’t going to be okay. But they were right- they did need to light the fireplace, or else things might start freezing over inside of the house. She swallows, cradling the warming pot of tea that she struggles to bring to a boil. “Ah… Yeah. I’ll… I’ll manage.” If all else failed, she would have them turn the couch around, so she didn’t have to face the fire. She shivered though, bones rattling and teeth clacking with the force of it. Her magic struggled against the cold- it sapped her strength, and made her hope that the fire monster, Grillby, was doing all right against the chill. “Go ahead and light it- you both need it.”

Aliquam hugged her firmly with one arm while pressing a few reassuring kisses to her head. He tensed, hearing something, a banging, or at least a rattling on the front door. The sound was frantic, muffled cursing rising over the howling sounds of the wind outside.

Toki was off the couch in but a moment, passing the lukewarm pot of tea to Aliquam. She headed for the door, gathering her magic at her fingertips, and went to heat it. She’d had to do this before already, when the door had frozen shut and Wolfen had come a knocking to see if they were all right. She pressed her magic against the wood grain, and shivered as it sucks the heat out of her palms. Her bones ache against the cold, but slowly the door heats.

Icy water pools from the edges as she pushes more magic into it. Once it’s thawed, she reaches up to tug it open for whoever was so frantic behind it.

As soon as the door handle is turned, the large form stumbled through the doorway with a gasp and fell hard onto the ground.

"F-Fucking hell..."

"Holy shit, Pops!” both brothers go to his side, pulling him in further and letting Toki close the door as the flurry of snow outside rushed inwards.

"Oh man... Looks like you're not gonna suffer alone, Toki." Cae attempted a vague joke, while Aliquam ran to get some blankets.

Tenebris was well soaked with the snow, his teeth chattering as he tried to get feeling in his hands. His legs? Forget about it.

Toki shivered as the snow brushed over her, and she reached down to Tenebris. She’d gotten better about doing this- it was just like warming the pot of tea. He was just a lot larger than any pot of tea she had ever tried to heat- the bathtub not withstanding. She pressed one of her hands into the broad span of his back, the other slipping under the rim of his coat and turtleneck so she could funnel magic into him directly, and surged her magic into him. It worked slowly, trickling like a rapidly draining pool of liquid warmth, but began to steam his clothes dry and warm his skin.

She trembled as she worked, warmth leeching from her bones into him. “T-t-that’s fine,” she stutters, jaw flexing in a shiver. “Let me thaw him, and you can get the fire g-going.”
He shuddered as his form slowly dried and his skin went from a no-blood pale to its usual odd shade. As his clothes dried and warmed, his body heated up and he slowly managed to sit up. "Hah...Thank you, Toki." he sighed softly, smiling at her gently, "I'm proud of you." he praised smoothly once his teeth stopped chattering.

As his teeth stopped chattering, hers resumed with a vengeance. Though she didn’t need her mouth to speak, the chatter bled over into her voice regardless. She wobbled in place, and then motioned for him to stand. “I’ve been practicing since the power went out. Come- I’ll finish heating the tea. You could use it.” She offers him a hand, and braces to ease the massive monster up. She’d gotten most of his body warm- but his feet and hands were very cold. She needed to sit and focus on that alone- but she needed him away from the chill of the door.

It was already freezing shut again.

He got to his feet well enough but after a few steps, decided it’d be better to walk on all fours for this. "We're both in need of the heat... Are you ready to go by the fireplace to heat up?” he asked.

At this time, Caeruleus had gone and started up the fire, Aliquam going to get some more blankets.

Seeing him transition from bipedal to quadruped was always a strange thing to see, but Toki ambled along with him regardless.

“No.” She answered honestly. “I’m not. But I need to- and I know this.” She keeps her eyes away from the fireplace, and from the crackling of wood being devoured. It makes the back of her neck crawl, and her shivers descend into faint rattling sounds. She approaches the couch, drawing her blanket around her and then motioning for the larger monster to sit. “Up you go- I need to warm your hands and feet, or you’ll lose your toes.”

"Same to you, my dear. You're affected by the cold, and I can't allow that to go on much longer..." he told her. Once on the couch, he sat back and opened his coat, "Come on, you warmed me up pretty well, I'd say it's time to return the favor.”

“Feet and hands are important.” She huffs. She doesn’t immediately step in to his grasp- no, she collects the teapot again, and forces her magic into it. It’s not a steady boil- but it finally begins to steam. So she pours some into the large mug, and presses it into one of Tenebris hands, before she clamors into his lap.

She’s shivering largely by then, delicate bones rattling and feeling drained. Still, she plates her hands on his thighs, and begins to pulse warmth down his legs. The tea mug could handle his hands.

His hands immediately felt better upon taking the mug, and his toes began to twitch and flex upon feeling the nerves coming back to life. It hurt, but it was not the worst agony he had ever felt. Her magic was warm and soft- not unlike being next to a candle. "You really are a nursemaid, dear Toki." he chuckled quietly.

“I’m a living hot water bottle.” She grouses good-naturedly. "Sorry about the tea. Wasn’t expecting you home- it’s going to be sweet.” But it would be good for his metabolism anyways. She continues working the magic down his legs, warming up frozen nerves and tendons. “I guess fire magic is good for something.”

Her sockets are closed- and she’s pointedly not looking at the fire that’s slowly warming up part of the room. “Cae, Ali, get yourself some tea too. Cold might not bother you as much, but it’ll still warm your bones.”
"We're gonna worry about you two first."

"I'll go grab Father's slippers from upstairs."

That made Tenebris groan, sound rumbling through his chest. "Aliquam you make it sound like I'm an old man."

"Weeeeellll…"

"Shut up, Caeruleus."

Toki snickers faintly, her magic sputtering against her fingers. “From what Cae hinted at, you are pretty old. No offense meant, though. But, uh, I wouldn’t turn down the slippers. My magic’s not fully back. I’m running on fumes.” But fumes would have to do- and she continued warming his legs until slippers could be fetched. Her own were on her feet- and she had several layers of clothes on as well.

"Chronological age has no place given what I’ve gone through... I'm physically still young enough to be at most three hundred and fifty years old..." he huffed softly, before he smiled and effortlessly lifted her up, his tail holding the mug of tea now "That's enough, you're going to pass out at this rate." he insisted, tucking her into his coat and closing it around her form.

“I’m not going to pass out.” If she was going to do that, she’d have done it when she had been almost empty three days prior. She rattled against him, squirming faintly. There was little she could do though- and thus she was enveloped in his coat, like one might do to a particularly pesky pet. She sighed, her legs sticking out from under the edges of his jacket, and simply leans back into him. Even drained as she is, her bones radiate warmth back into his chest. “Dude, three hundred and fifty years old is practically ancient. Humans rarely live to be a hundred, let alone getting near that number.”

She shivers again, and wiggles her slipper covered feet as she frees her blanket from around her shoulders. It’s wiggled out the bottom of her coat and spread over their legs as best she can. It’s not enough- not nearly enough- to change the chill setting into her bones but it helps some.

"I'm not human, am I my dear?” he huffed, "Now hush, and just enjoy the mutual warmth." he murmured, obviously too busy being a stubborn father to care about himself.

Aliquam came back and smiled gently as he offered his father a blanket. It was taken and the blanket was draped over his lap, legs, and midsection, blanketing Toki save for her head.

She had essentially been cocooned against the large monster. Which probably served its purpose. The chill in her bones couldn’t be helped- her marrow felt like it was made of ice- but her magic kept the topical part of her bones warmed. It filled her clothes with a sputtering heat, and oozed out into the cocoon.

“No,” she muses softly, nestling her head in against the fabric of the blanket. She leans back, careful of her horns, and rests her head against his chest. “No, I suppose you’re not. I was though- it’s a daunting thought to live that long. Humans are meant to live fleeting lives. Heh.” She wiggles her fingers and tucks them into her stomach. “By mutual warmth, did you mean ’enjoy being my living heater’?”

"You made my clothes as warm as if they were fresh from the dryer, so the least I could do is return the favor." he rumbled softly, tucking her in further as if to prove a point.

She grunts as she’s sucked in further, and eventually opens her sockets. Dim eye lights peer up at him as best she can, trying to ease the initial flight of panic she feels upon seeing the light of the
flames flickering on the ceiling. “I got very good at drying clothes after shoveling snow for several hours. Good to know I put my practice to good use. So… Mind sharing that t-tea? I’d enjoy a sip. I like sweet things.” She has no available hands- but she would make due.

He smiled down at her, and held the cup of tea to her. "Here."

She leans up to take a sip, and savors the bittersweet taste of over-brewed tea. Oops. “I still need to work on my tea making skills with magic though.” She’d heated it too fast in her frantic need to make the water boil. “Mm… warm…”

He smiled at her. "When everything is back up and running, I’ll make you some of my favorite tea."

“Orange b-blossom is good tea.” She agrees. She nudges the rim of the cup, and looks up at him. Her teeth chatter again as she shivers, and sparks zing out over the blanket. “Drink, Tenebris. I didn’t speed-heat that to just drink it myself. You were half frozen out there- you need the warmth right now.”

He shakes his head, and leaves the cup balanced near her. "By heating yourself, you're heating us both, trust me." he purred softly.

“Trust me when I say it now- the tea is not going to be enough to keep my magic going.” She hums softly. Her sockets drift closer to being shut, and she sighs faintly. “Besides- you don’t have to fib to me. I know you just don’t want to drink the gross tea.” Toki teases faintly.

"Well at least I considered telling you gently." he teased back, before he pushed his feet into his slippers, purring loudly as he flexed his toes in them, "Mmmm, in just a few minutes I find myself warm enough to doze off,ahaha..."

“Lucky you.” She trembles against him still, bones quivering. Her magic stutters in her bones, and she leans out to sip more of the tea. Screw it- if he was going to leech from her warmth, then she needed all the fuel she could get. He was a big body to heat. The tea is gross, and it makes her stomach ache, but it floods her with the energy she needs to keep the faint flow of her magic going.

When she’s drained the cup, she leans back into him with a sigh. Quietly she nestles down, eying the boys. They’re stoking the fire- which has her quickly flicking her gaze to the ceiling again. The crackling of the flames devouring the wood has sweat beading at her temples. “So, ah… I’m sorry. About before. I wasn’t nice- and even if I was upset with you, it wasn’t right of me to be rude like that.”

"Mmmh... Do you mean the other night in the kitchen?” he asked gently, before he chuckled and shook his head, “No, it's quite alright. I was admittedly more cranky that morning... something previous had me irked, but I’ve long since forgiven and forgotten.” he assured her gently.

She sighed softly and nodded. “I figured you’d say that. Still. For not having one, I sure acted like a bit of a dick. Heh. And, ah… sorry for triggering your…’ Well, his heat was left unsaid. Twists faintly, tiring of looking at the ceiling, and manages to shift onto her side. Laying on her front would be more comfortable- but he’s not in a position for her to do that.

"Hm? Oh... Don't worry about that, again, I’ve since gotten better," he assured her.

“D-doesn’t matter.” She mumbles. “Cae said you didn’t... do that regularly.” Something to do with his age- Cae had been very vague on the details on it, and she hadn’t pressed. “And you said ‘s bound to happen again. So it’s going to happen t’ you again too if you’re around. So… sorry?”

"Hahaha, it's quite alright.” he assured her, "I'm simply going to get used to it like I did all my other
struggles."

She snorts slightly, and closes her eyes. "Mhm. You say that now." She sighs gently again, and curls up faintly. The chill in her bones sucks- but it's not so bad. She can ignore it well enough. "Either way, you won't have to be too bothered with it for long. Once the snow is gone, they'll be working to finish m' house. I'll be out of your metaphorical hair." Probably before Christmas.

"Why do you act like we're eager to get rid of you, Tokiko?" he asked with a scolding tone, his hold on her tightening slightly.

Her bones creaked faintly as his grip on her tightened, and she gave a tiny groan in response. "So I don't trigger a mass heat again? Or do we don't trigger each other?" She mumbles vaguely. One hand wiggles free of its confines to come up and rub blearily at her sockets. She's tired. "I dunno, Tenny. I know you're not eager- but I bet you all miss having the couch and living room to yourselves. Ah- fuck, sorry. I know you prefer Tenebris."

"It is quite alright, Toki. You don't give us any burdens, you know." he sighed. "The heat is a new thing, we can learn to cope with it."

"You sound like you'd prefer I keep stayin' on th' couch." She blinks up at him sleepily, and nestles her head on his chest. Now that he's warming up, he's starting to radiate warmth back to her. It's not much help- but it feels nice. "Tha's right. It's still new. Mmn… Gonna have to figure out how it works…"

"If you ask the boys, they'd surely not mind sharing their beds." He chuckled softly. "Though, if your house did successfully allow us to visit, and you may just luckily share your bed, as long as it's the right size. We'll figure it out together. I admittedly do not have much information on the heat cycles of female skeletons. I never found myself invested with one to bother looking into it."

"Tha's fine. We'll figure 't out as we go. S'not a big deal… Anyways, I want m' own bed. Nice 'n big, where I can hog all th' blankets…" A vaguely amused purr bubbles out from her chest. "Pap's a blanket hog." And Cae snored louder than any snore she'd ever heard. "It's gon' be. Yeah. Havin' it made bigger, house 'n th' beds too. 'Cause you're all giants, and I'm tiny now apparently."

"Yes. You are." he chuckled, nuzzling her, "Compared to us who have been monsters since birth, you are very small for an adult. You are more teen sized, believe it or not."

"Hmph." The grumpy noise that escapes her is equal parts small and adorable. "It's not my fault y'll 'r giants." She yawns. "Giant 'n warm… mmm…" The fire roaring near the brothers was easing the chill in the room, and it was enough to make her strive to ignore the cold in her marrow.

He stroked her head gently and leaned back as he took a deep breath. "Rest, I'll keep you warm now~" he purred.

"Mkay…" She really didn’t need to be told twice. With her sockets closed, magic drained low, and body chilled, she was ready to settle in for something warm to soothe her. The body heat she’d managed to restore to him was doing good to bolster her own, and her magic was leeching faintly off of it.

There was a sleepy grumble, wherein she was trying to get comfortable in her many layers, before she was dropping off to sleep in his arms, shivering all the while.

Content with her settling down now, he leaned his head back against the couch, and slowly closed his eyes to surrender to slumber himself, "Mmm..."
After a short time, both were in a warmth-enveloped slumber.

Their slumber eventually came to an end with more rapid fire pounding on the door. It was black outside- the battery-operated clock informed all around them that it was nearly four AM- and the wind nearly drowned out the sound of knocking.

The voice outside was loud though- it was Wolfen, and he sounded tired and panicked. “Miss Toki! Miss Toki, please, we need your help.”

The noise alone had woken her- but she knew that voice, and Wolfen was not one to beg. The tired skeleton squirmed in her cocoon, trying to free her limbs and body from the sleeping monster that had her caged. She felt better after her sleep- not fully recovered, not even close, but her magic was no longer on empty. The chill in her bones was still present- but it was less.

“Tenebris,” she hisses sleepily, tensing as her eyes flick over the dying embers of the fire. She hyper focuses, and forces her gaze away. It hadn’t hurt her- she was better than her fear. She was better than it, damn it. The fire had kept them warm- it had been a good fire. Yes. A good fire. Her breath whooshed out of her in one tight exhale, and she renewed her squirms. “Let me up, Wolfen’s at the door. I’ve got to go thaw it.”

Tenebris’ eyes opened slowly and he blinked once before he took a deep breath, and let her go. He let her clamor out of the blankets, before discarding them off of his frame. He was warm now, down to the center of his being. Fire magic was handy indeed. He stretched, his limbs creaking faintly. "Allow me." he rumbled.

He walked over to the door and turned the knob experimentally. He heard a soft cracking that was the ice in the mechanism being disturbed, and with one strong pull, had the door open, the ice holding it closed flying everywhere as he looked out at the wolf-guard. "What's going on, Wolfen?" he questioned blearily.

Toki was right there next to him as Wolfen appeared. The large, furry wolf-monster was faring better in the ice than most- but even he was bundled up. The darkness whipped and whirled outside, tossing walls of white this way and that. His back blocked it from being blown in, but the cold still seeped around the large monster.

He cast her a frantic look, eyes wide and muzzle puckered in distress. “We need your help. Thumper. He panicked when a branch hit the house and bolted. We cant find him- we’ve got everyone out looking that we can, but there’s a lot of adults who can’t handle the snow. You’re a skeleton- the cold-”

“Wouldn’t bother me.” Is all she says- she doesn’t bother to correct him about it, because skeletons weren’t usually bothered by cold. Her magic made her different though. There was a lost child out in a snow storm- there was no time to dally. She shifts and snags a second coat from one of the hanging racks. It’s tucked around her arms, and she bundles tighter against the cold spilling in through the front door, and turns to face the door.

She edges up to the side. “I need a boost. I should be able to walk on the snow. Tenebris- Get the boys. We need everyone looking for Thumper.”
For all the fur that the boy had, he was still a child. Rabbit monsters did not grow in a thick winter coat either, and Thumper was not a plush-coated child. They had little time to find him at this early in the morning.

Tenebris did not need much urging from her to get him moving. He was swift as he went to fetch the boys.

Toki was gone before they got back downstairs. Her magic bubbled over her bones, keeping her base layer of clothes warm as she trudged through the snow. For the most part, she was on top of it. It came up to her shins, before the layers of ice were thick enough to support her body weight.

Wolfen had left her on her own once she was atop the snow layers- and he had bustled back into the main parts of town. There were maybe fifty or so monsters equipped to handle the snow- and many of them were trudging waist deep through the thick flurries.

Shouts of Thumper’s name were lost on the wind, while Toki took an unconventional path. It wasn’t the first time he had ever gotten spooked- Rabbits were flighty by nature, and Thumpers excessive energy often made him even more so. Loud noises were usually what triggered his flight response- and with the wind howling like a beast, the loud thump of a branch against a house no doubt would have had him bolting.

Those kinds of noises even scared her from time to time.

But there was one of two places he ran- either out to her hives, or out to the big trees that surrounded the back part of her ancestral home. She had a hunch- she wasn’t sure if he actually made it this far, but with everyone looking around town, it never hurt. If he wasn’t here, then there was nothing lost. But if he was, then everything was gained.

It took time to trudge through the snow though. The wind nearly blew her off of her feet several times, and she’d had to brace herself for the gusts that came and went. She eventually gave up keeping herself warm with her magic- each gust stole her heat away. She would save her magic for warming up everyone later- they would need it after being out in the storm.

Eventually, through the whiteout, she located the towering shape of the dormant tree. Her feet carried her numbly towards the base of it, and she began to search the roots.

Faint gasping reached her ears, and Toki moved for it. She found Thumper curled up under a root, fur frosted over with ice. The tips of his ears were blue, even through his fur, and his little legs twitched with faint spasms. Frost had gathered over his body as he shivered.

He was unmercifully conscious.

“Oh Thumper…” She murmured softly. Her finger stole from her pockets so she could lift him- and it was like lifting a block of fuzzy ice. He was cold- he was so, so cold, and not dressed warmly enough to even consider going outside.

“S-s-s-cold.” His teeth chattered faintly. His eyes cracked open faintly, recognition flashing in the dimmed amethyst pools.

“It’s okay, baby. Shh… You’re okay now…” One of the branches creaked above, and he whimpered. Toki couldn’t warm him up outside of her shirt- but she wasn’t sure he’d make the walk back. But… She could warm him up another way.

His eyes closed, a sighing breath leaving him as he fades out of awareness, and panic makes her decision for her.
Toki yanks her layers of shirts and coats up, and guides the curled and half-frozen child into her middle. She settles his body in her pelvis, and leaves his upper torso to rest against her ribs. He is bigger now than he was before- and he does not fit half as easily as when he curled up after the fire.

Her clothes are dropped around him, making an odd shaped bulge in her middle, before she fires up her magic. She permeates it around her middle, heating the bones and the air inside of her so she can begin to thaw out the frozen rabbit in her middle. She shivers- because he is a block of ice in side of her, and that makes the cold in her marrow even deeper- but begins the slow walk back to the houses. She keeps her hands in the front pockets of her coat, cradling and keeping the bulge of the rabbit inside of her middle still so that he doesn’t fall out.

Aliquam was by far traveling the best out of the three of the Gaster family, able to lift his legs high enough to travel through the snow, so it was hardly any surprise when it was he who stumbled upon her. "THUMPER!" He called, spotting Toki as she turned the corner back into the village proper. He was quickly moving fort her, his legs kicking up plumes of snow as he plowed through it. He was heavier than her- but not by much, so he too was atop one of the many layers of ice and snow. "Toki, Any luck?" he asked, practically shouting over the wind.

Papyrus appearing was a bit of a shock- it had been endless white and wind, and then there was the massive skeleton, bedecked in his bright red scarf and winter clothes. Toki glanced up at him silently, and silently adjusted her arms. The lump in her middle shifted and a passing twitch of a rabbits foot had her grunting. Her mouth went to open, but found snow flaking her teeth and crusting them shut. She was numb, all but to the magic warming her belly and creating a hotspot in her abdomen. What magic she had continued to pool there. Thumper needed to be thawed- but he needed healing too. His ears were so cold... “I found him!” She shouts over the wind, forcing her voice to be louder so as to be heard as she shivers in the snow. “Need to get inside!”

He nodded slightly, and he turned, getting an idea, his eyes glowed and with a flare of energy, he unleashed a powerful wave of magic that flew from his form and coiled into itself, before forming a pair of large cat-like skulls. Their eyes lit up and one's mouth opened widely as it let out a roar, before Aliquam somehow had whistled for their attention. The creatures turned and looked at the duo with bright orange eyes, awaiting orders.

"Bastet! Go and find Father! Let them know we found Thumper!" He ordered one, watching it turn fast and take off into the storm, the other being coaxed closer, "Neko. I want you to stay with us, clear us a path to the others." he ordered.

The giant being let out a loud sound not unlike a monster-esque 'mrroowwwr' and turned, lowering into the snow before starting ahead, nosing and clearing a path. Aliquam then offered Toki a hand. "Come on."

Really, it shouldn’t have surprised her. She vaguely recalled seeing flashes of the huge skulls Caeruleus had summoned- but still, her eyes widened and she watched the huge skulls warily. They were big- and apparently sentient, as Aliquam set them to their tasks.

The one shoveling the way did make a great, path clearer though. The hand that is offered to her is taken, icy fingers curling into his palm. She hadn’t thought to grab gloves- she never wore them- and it showed. The other hand remains cradling her middle as Thumper rouses slightly, shifting with pained sounds from her middle. Thawing limbs are painful, but it is a good thing. If he can groan and feel the pain, then he wasn’t dying under her shirt.

Her magic stutters against a particularly cold blast of air, and she leans into Papyrus to keep her balance. The snow and ice doesn’t hold up against the massive cat-skull thing, and Toki is relieved as her frozen slippers can walk smoothly and swiftly over what remains on the ground.
He held her close as he walked with her on the path made by the blaster creature until they made it to where Tenebris and Caeruleus were waiting, "Aliquam! Toki! You found him?" Cae asked.

Toki doesn’t trust her voice as her shivering sets in again. She nods, eye lights dimming, and shifts her hand out of her pocket. She taps her shirt, where the odd bulge in her clothes is moving. Once the shivering abates for a moment, she speaks. “I’ve got him. I’m trying to warm him- but we need to get inside. He needs healing- he’s covered in frostbite. Lets go to his house- someone needs to tell everyone he’s been found.”

And she wasn’t sure the big blaster monster was a good way to do that. She shifts none the less, and wavers in the wind.

"Lets get him to our home first, it's closer!" Tenebris insisted, "We'll warm him enough to allow me to perform medical treatment.”

Toki visibly is staggered by the wind, fighting to keep the heat in the middle going as the cold sucks at it, and her eye lights flick tensely to Tenebris. Her face is cold, and ice is gathering along her exposed bones. Her teeth glisten with it, and her jaw works to try and thaw it out. “Any house will do at this point. Point me in a direction- I can’t focus very well.”

He sighed then stepped forward and scooped her up, tucking her into his coat. "Caeruleus, Aliquam, have the hunt called off, tell Thumper's mother he's with me. Go!"

The two nodded and turned to go find them, while Tenebris quickly began for their home.

Tenebris wouldn’t find warmth from the skeleton in his coat now. The only warm spot would be the heat she has gathered in her belly. Her arms are stiff as she tucks them close, angling herself so Thumper isn’t crushed between them. She is aware as they return though, and she eyes the once-more frozen door of the house. She extends a hand, shunting off some of her magic without asking so she can rapidly thaw the frozen nob, and turn it open for them.

Tenebris had his hands full with her, after all.

The door opens, and the warmth of the house spills over her. It’s not too much warmer than outside- but compared to the ice on her bones, it’s practically a sauna. The fire is still going, but dimly. No one had stocked it before they had rushed out the front door to join the search.

He pushes his form inside and closes the door fast behind him, before he knelt down in front of the fireplace, using one hand to cover Toki’s eyes as he did so, and opened his coat to drown both forms in this new heat.

Her many layers were frosted over, and she didn’t have the magic to dry them. With his claws covering her eyes, Toki eases her outer coat off, and lets it drop. Without the thick coat on, it’s easier to see where she has Thumper bundled.

She eases the front part of her shirt up blindly, settling it about the curve of her ribs, so that Thumper can feel the more natural heat coming from the fire. She's too cold, too numb, too empty to be upset by being so close to it. He needs it more- but not seeing it is certainly helping her to keep her calm.

“M-m-Miss T-Toki,” he chatters faintly- good, he’s awake. “M-mister T-Ten-Tenebris. It h-hurtssss.”

“Shh…” She soothes softly. One of her cold hands finds one of his paws, and she strokes his fingers soothingly. They’re looped around her ribs, clinging to her much like the time before. “It’s going to hurt. You were very cold, Thumper. Warming up is going to hurt- but you’re okay now. Nothing
scary is going to get you with us here.”

He sniffs faintly, and clutches her fingers in his thawing paw. “I w-w-want my m-mom…”

She rumbles a soft sound through her chest, a vaguely soothing song being hummed to keep him as calm as she can.

Tenebris took off his coat, the clothing still quite heated on the inside, and he draped it over the two, "You'll see her soon, I just need to make sure you're going to recover perfectly."

She reclined as she was seated on the floor, and braced one arm behind her back to keep her slightly upright. This angle would let Tenebris work on the rabbit without disturbing him. She kept funneling her magic into her bones, keeping up the warm bubble that cradled the rabbit. The thawing ice ran slightly over her bones, and she suppressed a shudder.

“O-oh.” Thumper didn’t attempt to free himself from the tangle- he simply clutched onto her tighter, and blinked slowly up at the bigger monster. “Okay…” He hurt- his thin fur had done little to save him from the ice- and he had nothing but his own flighty tendencies to blame for nearly getting himself dusted. Tears beaded in his eyes, and he nuzzled his face into the large hand that he cradled close. It was cold- and so unlike how Miss Toki’s bones usually were- but it still smelled like her, and that was enough. He wasn’t dust- they found him, and he was going to get better. “I… I’m sorry…”

“You got scared,” She soothed softly. “It happens, Thumper. Loud noises can be scary- and this is the first real blizzard I bet you’ve ever seen. They’re kind of scary, I know. No one’s angry with you, Thumper. It’s okay.”

He reached and slowly ran his fingers over the young bunny's fur, watching his face for every twitch and reaction. "You're a brave bunny, Thumper, when the primary foolishness is overlooked." he commented quietly.

Most of the rabbits fur was tender and wet, but beginning to warm. His skin under it was chapped and looked burnt- his ears being the worst parts. The tips of them were black and blue, where the cold had practically frozen them solid. He cried out as those were touched, Tenebris words falling on empty ears.

Toki’s humming remained steady, and she rubbed his cheeks with her finger tips to distract him. “Go ahead and heal him- once he’s healed, all we need to do is let him warm up. And I think I’ve got that covered, between me and the fireplace.” She was running low- but it took marginally less magic to heat something that could fit inside of her abdominal cavity than it did to heat something that was a good deal larger than her.

He nodded once and after a moment began to release his magic to heal the child, if not at least numb him from the pain. “This is not good," he murmured to Toki, "the poor child..."

“This is what the weather up here is like,” She murmurs faintly. Her teeth are starting to melt, and her jaw slacks open limply as it thaws. Toki exhales slowly, tiredly. “Winter is hard here- which is why I had the houses built to withstand it.” She lets her head loll downwards, mildly frozen bones in her neck cracking and popping as she stretches them. “Children- they need to be bundled up and watched. Fur or no fur- this is not weather for anyone to be out in.”

Thumper’s fussing eases as the pain is numbed, and he falls quiet, listening to the sounds of the fire, and the pulse of magic over his flesh. Frostbite is easy enough to heal on the monster child- magic makes it many times easier.
"You're very lucky this was only stage one frostbite, no permanent damage." he told him sternly, a warning rumbling through his chest as he worked. The flesh mended, healing slowly, but surely, as he worked over the frozen parts. "You must not underestimate this world, it is less tame than that which we lived in before."

The rabbit resumes crying in earnest. He hadn't meant to run off- but the noise and the wind, it had scared him. They didn't have such things back in Snowdin. They had whiteouts, sure, but not like this.

Toki creaks open her eyes and rumbles a faint warning up at Tenebris, eye lights glimmering a weak, protective green. Tenebris did not have the best timing for scolding someone- not when the rabbit in her ribcage was already petrified of what happened. It didn't please her. "He understands, Tenebris. Thumper usually only makes a mistake once."

He looked at her, gauging the glow in her eyes, and then sighed and reached out to gently rub the child's ear where it had not sustained damage. "I'm glad he's a bright child, then..." he sighed, "He's foolish, but I'm glad he's a child that learns well from his mistakes."

"Rabbits are flighty. The adults are better at it- but I've babysat these guys enough to know. He gets spooked with wind and loud bangs. You know as well as I do that sometimes panic doesn't give you a choice in the matter, no matter how foolish." Her sockets close again once she's certain her point has been gotten, and then she shudders faintly. The cold in her bones aches. "Hah... 's really cold."

She murmurs more to herself than to him. "Might need to put another log on the fire. Others are going to need it when they get here." She wouldn't have the energy to warm them.

Her magic sputtered and died off, and Thumper whimpered faintly against her. She crooned and soothed him- the inside of her ribs were warm, so it would do for now. His tears ebbed off- and he dropped to sleep. Being cold was tired business- and now that he was safe and warming up, he was no doubt exhausted.

After putting another log on the fire, Tenebris gently pried Thumper from the inner parts of her ribcage. Thumper was content enough to let him put him against his warm and soft turtleneck to rest while he reached down and cupped Toki's cheek. "Are you alright?" he asked.

"Cold." She murmurs. Her arm eases down, and she lets herself lay flat. She idly lets her shirt back down, and just... lays there. The fire is warm, but she is cold. Very cold- and part of that was over use of her magic. "Might be over doing it with my magical heating trick." She admits.

"Take a rest, you're over exerting yourself."

"I am literally laying on the floor, too cold to panic over the fire that is maybe five feet from me. I am literally doing nothing." Not anymore, anyways. Her arms spread out, and she sighs. Her clothes are wet- but her magic wont gather to dry it- and her slippers are soggy. Ugh. "Keep warming Thumper," she hums. "Skin to skin is going to be best at this point." Now that she wasn't heating him with magic. "Rub his arms and legs to stimulate his muscles."

"Not my point." he huffed, though he then settled down and began to do what he was told. The young rabbit monster wasn't much help, but with him asleep it was easier to rub his limbs. The longer he rubbed, the warmer they began to feel. "Of course."

She peeks open an eye to watch him, and then slowly sits up again. She digs her fingers into her layers, and peels off all but the bottom layer of her clothes. Her wet slippers are tossed closer to the fire- and she is glad she didn't blindly throw them in the fire. Now clad in one of her thinner shirts and her thinner sweats, Toki uses her foot to nudge the wet clothing over to where her slippers are.
Her bottom layer is mostly dry- but it’s good enough. “How are you doing?” She inquires. “You don’t handle cold well.”

"I’m well enough... I wore boots this time."

“So you did.” She tilts her head at him, and gets to her feet as the door rattles again. “That’s probably his mother and the boys.”

She pads to it, and finds the handle still not quite frozen enough that she’s unable to pull it open. She opens it, and Thumper’s mother tackles her around her neck, babbling many thanks.

She pats her back softly, and steps back for the brothers to come in. “C’mon, before you let the chill in. Thumper’s asleep- but he’s starting to warm up better now.”

Tenebris is smiling gently as he holds Thumper close, rubbing over his limbs to warm him up. He glances at the door, and gives the boy’s mother a warm look.

Toki ushers the skeletons in, and manages to disentangle herself from his mother’s grasp. She wobbles as the rabbit abandons her, and shuts the door while the cream-colored hare bounces over to the largest monster. She shoots the boys a tired look, and steps forward to help them out of their wet jackets and outer clothes. “C’mon. Out of those- you need to dry off a bit before you mold or something.”

“Thank you.” Penelope gives him a wide, teary-eyed smile. She has the same eyes that Thumper does- and they swim like liquid amethyst with her tears. “Thank you, all of you, for finding my don. Is… Is he going to be okay?”

"Yes. He will be fine. He’s a strong young man." Tenebris assured her with a gentle smile.

“That he is.” She sniffs softly. Her fingers reach up to brush his cheek, and Thumper groans quietly.

“Mommy…?”

“I’m here, baby.” Her fingers stroke softly over his fur, and she dabbles at her damp eyes. “This is twice now you’ve scared me like this.”

“I’m sorry…” he whispered softly.

Toki smiled tiredly, and left the boys to their undressing. She wobbled closer, and brushed the rabbit’s shoulder. “You have a fire going at your house, right, Penelope?”

“We do, yes. A fire, and many candles.”

“Good. You can take him home now, if Tenebris has him fully healed,” her gaze flicks to him slightly. “But you need to bundle him up and keep him close. Body heat will keep his internal temperature up.”

"He is well enough to go home."

"I'll take them home." Cae volunteered.

“Thank you.” She gives the skeleton a thankful smile and gathers her son from Tenebris arms. The little gray bunny clings to her, and she holds him tightly. “Please- I want to take him home. Thank you both.” She steps closer to Caeruleus, and smiles up at him.

He grinned at her and offered his hand to her. "Here."
Toki gives her a cheery smile as the bunnies and the skeleton disappear. The tension bleeds from her bones, and she wobbles over to Tenebris. She drops into his lap like a very cold rock, and curls up with a shiver.

He wrapped his arms around her, and his tail pulled his coat over her. "You poor dear." he murmured. "Don't worry. I'm here to keep you warm." he purred.

“Good luck with that…” She mutters tiredly. She drapes across him, leeching what warmth she can, and settles in to rest without another word. Thank god for being a Nara- dropping off to sleep was practically second nature.

He chuckled, pressing a soft kiss to the top of her head, ready to let her rest. However, one last thing came to him and he purred gently, "Hey, Toki, do you know where you are right now?"

“Nnn? In your lap…?” Was that a trick question?

"You're in front of a lit fireplace. With a very much alive fire."

She tenses faintly, and her claws curl into his shirt. “Please don’t mention it. I’ve been very good and haven’t been looking at it. Or listening to it. I’m too cold to panic right now.” Her magic wasn’t even prickling. Exhaustion had her dragging down.

"Do you not realize? You're recovering very quickly." He praised.

“Situations happen.” She doesn’t have it in her to argue with him. She instead turns and curls her face into his chest, sprawling over him like a particularly chilly cat.

He chuckled and leaned back with a sigh, "Good Night, Toki."

“More like good morning…” Still, she dropped off to sleep, more than content where she lay.
Chapter 22

Strider Notes: Bit of a shorter chapter that comes after the last one, but it’s a good one none the less! Heh. Get some hints of Sansby too.

Come and visit us at our blog! :D Where you can witness shitposting, sass, and relevant things galore! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Well, Poor dear Toki went and got herself DRAINED. How will we be helping our hero? This is how! By taking her to Sans’ boyfriend.

The snowstorm passed later that day. By noon, it was gone, and sunshine glimmered over top the freshly fallen flakes. The power wasn’t back on- but there wasn’t much to be done about it. They had to get the plows out for the road, and there was no telling when they’d make it all the way out to the village.

Most of the monsters got out, and began to uncover walkways, and open up the streets again. Blankets were traded, and Grillby’s was very busy, as monsters came in for warm food and drinks courtesy of the only fire based monster that could decently cook. Patrons came and went, stocking up on magically prepared foods to warm them up as they worked.

Toki didn’t wake up as shovels sounded loudly outside the house, even with the sunlight glimmering in threads through the window. She’d eventually moved onto the couch again, so Tenebris could bundle up in his chair and move closer to the fire. She was bundled up in blankets to actually sleep. She slept with her back to the fire, her shivers worse, and her bones ice cold to the touch. There was a faint tinge of magic on her cheeks, a spot tainted green that was a few scant degrees warmer than the rest of her bones. It lit up the small space between the couch and her face.

Her shivers were steady and growing ever stronger. No one bothered to knock and wake up the household- they had done a lot for Thumper the night prior, and none of the monsters outside were eager to wake the monsters within. Or at least, intentionally wake them. The sounds of shovels tossing snow were loud and grating- and sunlight was rapidly growing in the window as one of the monsters cleared the snowdrift that was piled against it.

Light bathed the room, warm and blissful- but did nothing to soothe the chill of her bones, or the shallow, fitful breaths that expanded her ribs.

Tenebris was snoring by the time the sun was high, his recliner leaned back as he was most comfortable that way. Both brothers were careful and quiet as they prepared for their day.

The light eventually reaches her, and a tiny groan leaves her. Her fingers grasp the blanket and tug it over her more as she shivers unconsciously. She trembles faintly, bones rattling loudly under her blanket cocoon.

The sound is loud in the quiet peace from inside the room. It’s louder than the fire in the fireplace, rattling drowning out the subtle crackling.
The noise drew attention. "Toki? Y'okay, Doll?" Caeruleus had heard the noise and came to check on her.

The rattling doesn’t stop, and she doesn’t answer. The part of the blankets facing out from the couch is warmed by the fire- but the side that isn’t is very cold. Her sockets remain closed, her face still tucked to the back of the couch.

"Toki?" He lifted the blanket to touch her bones directly, "Doll?"

His bones are warm compared to hers- and that was odd. Toki usually ran warm, like a rock left in the sun for several hours. This time it was like ice against his fingers, her skull still and breaths erratic as she flinches away from his fingers. “Nng…”

"Toki... Are you sick?" He asked gently as he moved his hand to her covered shoulder. Her bones are cold, and even her shirt is icy to the touch. She was usually very warm.

She shivers under his touch, groaning as his fingers prod her shoulder. Slowly, she opens one of her sockets, eye lights dim, and tilts to peer up at him blearily. “Mnn…?”

Her magic was hard to sense- and it occurred to him that she might have gotten too cold and too drained for her to regenerate it. He frowned. He didn’t know how to help someone with fire-based magic- but there was someone who did know. "Toki... I think you're sick..."

“Noooo…” She groans softly. Her socket closes again and she tucks the blanket around her. “Mm not siiiiiiiiick.” Skeletons couldn’t get sick, right? Well… they weren’t supposed to go into heat either- monsters were different.

"Yes you are. You used too much magic, didn't you?"


"You have the blanket." he sighed, though he let the corner of it drop back down around her shoulder. He shifted and picked her up, grunting faintly as he did so. "Come on, you."

Her socket’s popped open as she squeaked and flailed faintly, kicking her legs as the blanket abandoned them. Her pants were nice, but did little to block the air that drifted up the legs. “Cae, noooooo.” She whines. The sudden change in position makes her skull throb, and she clenches her sockets shut again. Ugh. Headache. “Put me downwwwwwn, you ass. I’m fine.”

"No, you're gonna suck it up and come with me," he huffed, getting his slippers on.

She rolls in his arms, trying to free her hands so she can crawl over his shoulder. Freeing both of her arms is a chore, so she attempts to climb to freedom with the one she manages to wiggle free from her blankets. If the shorter skeleton was not going to listen to her- she'd instead call to the only other being she knew was in the room. “Tenebris! Help!”

Tenebris' eyes opened in bleary alarm and he sat up, gaze flicking in the direction of Toki’s voice. He yawned. "Sans...?"

"She's sick, Pops... I’m taking her to Grillby."

“I’m not sick,” she groans. She flails her hand over Caeruleus shoulder in a plea for help. “Make him put me down, it’s cold in here and cold out there.”

"You used too much magic last night, Toki.” Tenebris rumbled groggily. “You are experiencing
Magi-Drain. An 'illness' that comes with using too much magic."

“Then let me sleep.” She huffs tiredly. She squirms in his arms again, and tries to flick the blanket back over her bare feet. “It’ll come back on it’s own right?”

"It wont recharge fast enough. Not without a proper jumpstart."

“Speed isn’t everything… What does Grillby have anything to do with a jumpstart?” Unless panic was their motive for getting her magic going again, she seriously didn’t see how they were going to cure her of whatever the hell Magi-Drain was.

"You both have fire-based magic, by sharing his magic with you, it will aid yours in getting back up and running." Tenebris explained with a sigh.

“Oh…” She sighs and slumps. She doesn’t have the energy to fight the grasp on her right now. She peeks her eyes open and glares up at him. “I… you’re probably gonna need to keep my sockets closed, or we’ll have a Halloween repeat.”

"Duly noted.” Cae sighed, before he took a shortcut with her in his arms. "Just keep your face in your blanket."

The shortcut was not pleasant with her eyes open, and her nonexistent innards lurch at the disorienting sensation that washes over her. Maybe it’s because she doesn’t have magic to brace herself, but it did not feel right. She groans and presses her face into the blanket. “Skeletons can feel nauseated. Who knew?” She groused.

The inside of the bar is warm, and there is a lull of monsters as the lunch rush passes. It’s empty, and dimly lit from the light through the front windows, and the light from the bartender behind his bar.

Grillby blinks as Caeruleus appears, holding what looks to be a lump of blankets with feet and horns. Setting down his glass, he adjusts his tie and leans against the counter. Silently, he arches a questioning brow. He figured he’d be seeing Sans again soon, but hardly the same day as the blizzard.

"Hey Grillbz. I need your help with something. Toki here has flame-magic but she went and drained herself last night tryin' to find Thumper. Think you can jumpstart her?"

“You’d have done the same, Cae. Don’t even try to deny it.”

Toki- as in Tokiko Nara? He recalled her quite well- she had panicked at seeing him, for reasons that he very well understood. As he understood it, she had burned alive, and had come out of it no longer being human. The rabbit boy, Thumper, he too couldn’t handle being around Grillby. Some of the adults had informed the fire monster that it wasn’t his fault- that it had to do with what the fire had done and what the rabbit had seen.

He fully understood of course- the child would work through his problems in time. Children were more resilient- but the Nara woman, she was an adult. From what he understood of human aging from before the war, she had been half way through her life cycle. Those sorts of damages were not easily healed.

His brow furrows, and the faint lines that mark his mouth tilt downwards. He tilts his head, and mumbles faintly. “I do not wish to scare her again.” He says softly, knowing his voice likely wouldn’t carry though the thick blanket that kept the skeletal woman from his vision. “But I will help if she allows it.” Magic donation had to be done willingly- or there was a risk of dousing one’s flames. She needed a spark to get her burning again- in a metaphorical sense, not a literal sense.
"Keep her eyes covered, that's all it'll take. You know how to have your fire run cool don’t you?"
Cae inquired. He’d have to make her a blindfold for when she wanted to come talk to Grillby. His
place as a figurative and literal beacon in the monster population made him someone that would be
useful in the daily running of this new town.

The fires of his head crackled faintly, and he shot Cae a bemused look. He was older than he looked-
a lot older. “Of course I know.” It was Fuku who was still learning- hence why she was still
underground, managing the bar below. Once she could manage to handle the rain in waterfall, she
would come topside with him. He sighs and steps around the end of the bar. He motions for him to
put the skeleton on one of the tables. He would need to draw out her soul for this- fire based magic
was tricky business to relight.

Toki grumbles faintly, but claps her hands over her sockets to make sure she keeps them closed. The
 crackling of fire is a bit disconcerting- but if she pretends that it’s just the sound of the fireplace, it’s
not so bad.

He nodded and laid her down, using the blanket to cover her eye sockets for her. “Allow me, I’ve
gotten used to the whole pulling-it-out method.”

There was a vague mumble from below the blankets as Toki snickers faintly. Pulling it out method,

And indeed, he effortlessly was able to summon her soul, lifting it from her chest. "Though, uh, do
be careful, those cracks on it are pretty nasty if you touch them."

Grillby hesitated as the soul was drawn out, the craggy line of his mouth dropping down into a
frown. “So many cracks for one so young….” He murmurs faintly. His hands come to cup her soul,
and his magic supports her now. He is careful as he checks her over- and very nearly drops her soul
as the fires on his head dim.

Oh. Oh stars.

He… Hadn’t expected to see one of these ever again. He hadn’t… Shit, he had hoped to never see a
soul like this again. Nerves make his fires crackle faintly, before he settles them with a forceful
exhale. Despite what she was, she was good. She was kind- the shade of her soul was not like the
one he had met long before. No- she was a good one. And if the others did not know what she was-
well, he wasn’t going to kick the proverbial hornets nest.

Toki groans faintly as his magic eases into her soul, and she shivers violently as the fire monster
croons at her. It is not entirely pleasant- she is so, so cold, and he is so very warm as his hands cradle
the very core of her being.

Caeruleus took a moment to hug her tightly. "You're doing great." He murmured softly, sockets
watching the flame elemental before him. "I'll be over soon, doll.” The unease in the fire elemental
was there and gone rather quickly, but Cae was good at seeing things. Seeing the discomfort in his
form was odd indeed, and he'd have to ask him about that later.

Grillby keeps his silence as he works on warming the soul in his hands. As he trickles his magic in, it
begins to warm and pulse brighter. Fire magic was a rare thing now, so rare indeed, but it had many
uses besides the obvious. As her spark relit, he could feel her magic churning back to life, devouring
his magic like a wildfire. He almost winced as her magic flared faintly against his hands. The heat of
her magic was immense, rivaling his own, but it was uncontrolled and wild. Human souls were so
powerful compared to a monster soul that it was almost mind-boggling.
“She needs training.” He murmurs. One hand still feeds her soul from the deep well of his magic, while the other reaches out to hover over her legs. She is so small compared to them- he could hold both of her ankles in one hand. Her frailty was so… strange for a skeleton monster. “Her magic is wild and buzzing with activity. She will be formidable with proper instruction.”

He frowns still. “Her size is worrisome. From what I remember of skeleton females, they were quite large and fierce.” They had been a declining race back even before the war- and he’d had a few of them under him in his garrison. He knew most of his fighter’s well and the skeletons had been formidable, even as they crumbled to dust against the human mage’s attacks. “But she was human… There is no growth that will likely happen then.”

“Thats what I’m thinkin’… yeah… I mean, I wouldn’t know…” Caeruleus wasn’t even a full-blooded skeleton himself, so how could he… he shook off those thoughts, and then looked at Grillby. "I’m thinking Dad has it in his agenda when she’s recovered enough. No use in training her fire if she’s gonna get triggered by it.”

Grillby tilts his head thoughtfully and hums a soft, raspy noise. “Fire is unpredictable.” He says softly. Her magic was strong- and he had seen Cae’s hand when he had returned. She had burnt half of his hp away just by the touch of her soul alone. Fire could be many things- and as uncontrollable as hers felt, it was little wonder that there hadn’t been more burns for everyone. She had control, yes, but for how long? Her inherent kindness was likely keeping a lid on things- but eventually fire always escapes the grasp of those new to its uses. “Your brother mentioned to me that she has improved up to candles. In time, she will recover. Her soul is already healing. Look.” His hand tilts her soul, and though he doesn’t touch the cracks, he motions to the very bottoms of them. Some of the smaller splinters were no longer the bright, flame colored red that the rest were. They were a soft green- not the same green as the rest of her soul, but newly healed. Fresh. Fragile.

He smiled slightly upon seeing the healing cracks, eyes brightening. "Holy shit, Toki... Way to go, doll..." he chuckled.

“I… I managed to handle the fireplace last night. But I was too cold, and I didn’t look at it. It’s, ah, how I’m handling you right now, no offense. You sort of sound like a campfire. Anyways… Maybe my theory on fixing my cracks was right? Maybe… The better I am around fire, the more the cracks will close up?”

He rumbles a soft, amused laugh, and gently pats her knee as he funnels more magic in. Her soul was looking better and better- and it was not like he did not have a large wellspring to draw from. There were no fire-boss monsters left, after all. He and Fuku were the last of the fire elementals, and he hadn’t put his magic to large use in many a year. “No offense taken, little spark. Progress is progress- you are doing well. It is an interesting theory- but likely the case.” After all, belief in something working was a powerful cure sometimes.

“This is our first actual time talking, isn’t it? I didn’t make a good first impression- I’m sorry.” Her voice is muffled by the blanket, and by Cae’s hand, but this close, it’s not hard to hear her. “Little belated, but welcome to Nara Village?”

“It is good to be here.” He murmurs warmly. He turns her soul again, idly checking her stats. Her attack was… pitifully low. But that helped ease some of his tension. Her defense had his brows lifting, dislodging his glasses. Stars above- that was a high stat. It explained her resilience. Though… His frown appeared, and his gaze flicked over to Cae. “You may want to have your brother heal her when you return. Her HP is not full.” It was reading out at a thousand even, but there was space to be filled in on the bar. Not much- but probably from her running around in the cold the night prior.

"Grillby was the brightest face to look forward to when you reached Snowdin, Literally and
figuratively.” Cae joked, gaze flicking from Grillby’s frame down to the soul that looked so very small in the large monster’s hand. “Heh, sure thing Grillbz. Afterwards you think I could come back for the usual?” However after a moment he looked to her soul and realized why her numbers were skewed. “T-Toki! Oh my god!” he laughed.

“What? What am I missing out on?”

“I’m… not sure why he is laughing.” The fire elemental stared at the cackling skeleton, and then peered at the soul. Both hands came to cup it, and he peered at the numbers. “A thousand out of a thousand and ten. It’s not that big of a loss- surely you lost it while out looking for the lost child.”

She pauses, and then chuckles faintly. “Holy shit. Grillby, no, my HP max was a thousand flat. It went up.”

“Oh. Well, yes. Soul damage to this extent can greatly drop your max total HP. Surely you did not expect her HP to stay this low once she had recovered?” Truly, with what she was, he was surprised to see the numbers as low as they were. The ones he had faced… They never managed to whittle them down to take them out.

"Holy shit, Toki! This is great!” he all but beamed.

“Oh. Well, yes. Soul damage to this extent can greatly drop your max total HP. Surely you did not expect her HP to stay this low once she had recovered?” Truly, with what she was, he was surprised to see the numbers as low as they were. The ones he had faced… They never managed to whittle them down to take them out.

"Holy shit, Toki! This is great!” he all but beamed.

“Uhuh.” She squirms faintly, and flexes her fingers. She still felt tired- like he was filling a bucket with a teaspoon- but she wasn’t as cold. Her marrow felt warmer inside of her bones, and it was a much more pleasant sensation than she remembered. “I’m starting to feel better. Not as cold.”

“Your fire had been dampened.” The fire monster muttered. “You have fire based magic. You must take care to not let yourself get so low on magic. You have a lot of magic at your disposal. I’m not sure how you ran so low…”

“A… Heat, actually. Like you said, I don’t have the best control, so I sorta… basted the house with it? Anyways, I was doing okay until I had to thaw Tenebris and Thumper.”

A bemused grin tugged at Grillby’s face, and a blue hue overtook his face. That explained the sudden appearance of the older brother at his bar for their… Well. “Ah… So you’re the one who caused all the trouble.”

“Trouble?”

“Mhm. Several monsters around your block went into heat.”

Mortification flooded her, and if she hadn’t already had her face covered, she’d have been hiding it again. “Oh my gods, please tell me you’re lying to me.”

“I’m not, actually. It’s a perfectly natural thing.” Grillby chuckled. “Until you get control of your magic, you’ll bring a lot of monsters into heat. Skeletons are one of the few universally compatible monsters for breeding- it’s actually something that developed as they began to die out.” He’d had a handful with the females he’d had in his garrison. Once one went into heat, they all went into heat. Not necessarily bad, because they turned aggressive on the humans, but it did cause a lot of discourse between the soldiers. “A defense mechanism, I think.”

Caeruleus snickered at that, "Grillby here seemed well enough despite the sudden flare of... Well... Activity." the smug bastard then proceeded to wink at the elemental.

The flush on his face grew, and Grillby eased her soul back into her chest. He covered his mouth and faked a cough, smoothing his hands down the front of his vest. “I am very old. It takes a lot to bring
a fire based monster of my age into heat- and my bar is far enough from your home that I was safe.” Safe from her at least, but not from Sans. “Regardless- I do believe you have recovered enough. You need rest, and proper monster food to bolster your magic. If Caeruleus will not fix it for you, then perhaps Papyrus might be convinced. He is proficient at cooking, if I recall.”

Toki just grinned under her blankets, a faint giggle escaping her as she subtly nudged the skeleton that was blinding her. She heard the tone in Cae’s voice- and the strange tone to the fire monster’s smoky voice, and knew exactly where the skeleton had spent his heat. That might explain why Sans was allowed to have such a high tab at the bar- after all, one did not woo the one that was desired by making them pay for their drinks and food. “I’ll talk to Pap. If he’s not too tired from restoring my HP, I’ll see if he can whip up some magical spaghetti or something once the power comes back on. Or hot cocoa. Cocoa sounds amazing right now.”

"I'm the cocoa master here." Caeruleus huffed proudly as he scooped her up, "Heheheh."

There was a click of machinery and electronics, before the lights of the bar flickered to life.

“Power’s back on. Thank the gods, now we can actually go heat up the whole of the house.” Toki shifted in his arms, and wiggled her feet. “Cocoa master indeed. And now we can actually cook… Though you’re welcome to come back here for some time with Grillby. Wobbly or not, I can make cocoa on my own.”

Grillby simply smiles a small, indulgent smile. “Rest well, Miss Toki. It has been a pleasure to meet you. Maybe soon, we can talk without the need for a blindfold.”

“That’s what I’m hoping.”

The barkeeper flicks his gaze to Caeruleus, and parts his mouth faintly. A glowing tongue scores over jagged teeth made of flame, before he seals it again, a teasing reminder of what the flame elemental had to offer. Flustering him brought about it’s own consequences- and he was sure that the skeleton egged him on just for them. “You’re welcome back whenever you have the free time, Sans.”

"I know I’m still gonna be a repeat customer, Grillbz. See you next time!” he winked at him as he then turned to take his leave, chuckling as he walked out into the snow. "See? Isn't he great company?" Cae spoke to Toki after a while.

“He is,” she agreed. She struggled and freed her face once the cold swooped over her. She burrowed as best she could into the blanket and shivered. Apparently Sans was feeling too lazy to put his shortcuts to use again. Not that it mattered- it was cold out, but she didn’t have that marrow-deep chill settled into her bones anymore. Not like before, at least. “And I did okay. I think part of my calm was… Whatever the heck your dad called it. Magi-drain? That thing. He’s really nice though, and I think he really likes you. Very soft spoken though.”

"He's a quiet kinda guy, I guess that's why everyone likes him. He listens.”

She reaches up with a wide grin and pinches the flexible bone next to his ever-present grin. “Is that why youuuu like him?”

"Eyooo!” he growled out, "Easy on the cheekbones, doll or I’ll drop you!"

“You wouldn’t dare drop me in the snow.” she grins. She gentles her pinch though, remembering her claws, but tugs lightly to jostle him with an amused petulance. Tired and recovering from a sickness or not, Toki was a big sister, and she was going to tease him about it. “You didn’t answer meeeeee.
Someone’s got a cruuuuuush on the hot bartender, doesn’t he?"

"No." he growled, "Now shut up about it or I will drop you."

She released his face only to laugh good-naturedly up at him. Oh he so did. That was adorable. “Oh no, you’re adorable when you’re flustered.”

She might be thirty-two years old, but one was only too old to be childish if they felt like it. Lowly, she began to chant. “Cae and Grillby sitting in a tree,” the tone of her voice told all- she knew she was going to get dropped on her ass. She just hoped he teleported home first. “K-I-S-S-I-N-G-”

Dropped indeed, with no teleport to boot.

“THAT’S COLD!”
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: Heh. We get to see a little bit of the big-sister side of Toki here. The fact that she helped raised eight boys sort of comes into play here. She also once again imparts with us the fact that she has balls of steel.

Also come check out our blog! :D lots of shenanigans go down here. Y'all are missing out hard core. http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing notes: We'll see the more unseen sides of the Gaster family in this Chapter.
Sans being a little shit
Papy being a Puzzle Nerd
and Gaster being a salty old man.

She was beginning to think this had been a huge mistake. Huge. The biggest. Why? She had taken Caeruleus to Ikea.

The days had rolled on, the snow melting off as the weather gave in to a slightly warmer front. Now everything was ankle deep mud and slightly flooded rivers- but it was better than the endless blankets of snow and ice.

It was about a week before Thanksgiving that her house got finished. It ended up being bigger than she expected. It towered three stories high, with ceilings tall enough for even Asgore to stand straight. The first floor held the living room, an extended kitchen and dining room, a large walk in storeroom for her honey, and the bottom floor bathroom. Everything had been made with all of the larger monsters in mind- because she wanted to be able to invite everyone into her home.

The second floor held her bedroom, a private bathroom off of her bedroom, a regular bathroom off at the end of the hall, and four guest rooms with room for multiple beds in them. The third floor was, once more, an attic. She didn’t have anything to put up there yet, but she may end up turning it into a private lounge. It had a large window at one end, so it overlooked her hives, and the tops of the trees surrounding the compound and surrounding village.

The house was big, made of brick and treated wood. It had running water, full electricity- the only thing it was missing was someone living inside of it. Thankfully, as the month rolled on, her insurance finally got around to getting her the reimbursement for what she had lost. So she had a large sum of money burning a nice big hole in her bank account.

That’s what lead her to bringing the boys to town. She had hijacked Aliquam and Caeruleus, leaving Tenebris at home to wait for their return. As it was, her truck could seat four normally- but the brothers took up the majority of the space. Trying to fit Tenebris in as well would make for either an uncomfortable ride, or someone getting shoved into the back of it.

Or in the pull-along trailer she had hooked up. Either way, he hadn’t been too bothered by her request to stay home. They simply did not make large trucks to be that sort of monster friendly.

The space would be needed- she had a home to furnish, and food to be gotten. Furniture first though-
food could come after, when they didn’t have to worry about having a fridge to put it in. She needed a fridge and a freezer first- because she was hosting Thanksgiving for her family. She had to get at least a turkey and a ham, if not two of each- and had to have space for everything to be stored.

So after a long drive to town, she had gotten them parked in the parking lot, and linked arms with Papyrus to guide them inside. They got stares as they entered- because three skeletons walking into an Ikea sounded like the start of a terrible joke- but the stares were not what had her regretting everything.

“Cae- Cae, no, oh my god.”

"Hey Toki," Cae grinned as he held up a chair. "I’ve got you on my 'Reidar'."

She groaned and turned her head away. “I need a couple chairs anyways,” she groused. She assists Papyrus into loading several of them up into the cart, and continues onwards. “Pap? How on earth are you two related? Your brother is ridiculous.”

He doesn’t answer. He just stares ahead with an embarrassed look while Caeruleus meandered over to a hanging plant, "Hey Toki, do you think this plant is a 'Riskorn' not?"

“Your puns are definitely going to put you at risk,” she huffs. She doesn’t bother with fake plants- no, she’s off to grab end tables and anything else that she can find. Papyrus becomes the one to push the shopping cart as the tall skeleton tries very hard to pretend that his brother does not exist.

Toki tries to pretend he doesn’t too. Dear gods, she tries.

She fails.

"Hey Toki, you mentioned we had some rodent issues," Cae said as he walked up once more, "So I caught you a-” he then held up another, smaller chair "Kritter~"

“Oh my god, Cae stop.” She presses a hand to her face, stifling a laugh. Nearby, one of the men in the store covers a laugh with a coughing fit, and her face burns brighter. She heads for the bedding section, intent on getting a bed frame and a decent bed that would fit her and… Well, Aliquam too.

"Hmm... You know, Al..." he said, padding up to an 'Adum's rug. He held it up, and pointed to the sign."

"I think they named this one after you, bro.”

"Oh my god, Sans!"

“I never should have brought you here. I should have shoved Tenebris in the truck and left you home. Oh my god.” Toki’s skull clacks against Aliquam’s arm, and she groans. She does snag three of the rugs though, and tosses them on the cart. The floor of her house was done in tile- so everything was going to be bloody cold in the mornings. “Gods sake, Cae.”

"Hey pap, I got a question about you and your girlfriend.” Cae moved closer to his brother as they passed some shelves. "Do Utrusta?"

"Sans." Aliquam groans.

“Sans no.”

“Sans yes.”
Toki groaned. She needed bookshelves- and bypassing them as they head for the beds, she snags a few that could be stacked together. They were heavy, and went into the cart easily enough. “Cae if you don’t stop, this ‘Bladis’ going to find itself lodged in between your ribs.” She hefts whatever the thing is and flings it in the direction of the elder brother. It’s small and covered in plastic- and more than likely to bounce off his coat than anything else.

It takes her a moment, before she groans. “Oh no. The puns are infectious.”

"I guess that means you", he reached and pointed to some sheets, "'Kannetecken’ anymore.” he chuckled lowly.

“Disowned. I am disowning you, Sans.” She huffs.

It was going to be a long, long day.

"Oh Toki, you just cant stand that I'm-" he held up some more sheets, "-Sarskild.”

“Think they take super late Halloween returns here?” She turns a deadpan gaze to Papyrus. “I’m sure they can fit one more skeleton in their closet.”

"I'm starting to think about forging a receipt."

"I think you guys are really 'Envis' about my skills as a pun master.” Caeruleus cackled loudly.

“We probably should.” She grumbles. The beds come into view, and she searches for the largest one she can find. California king- that seemed decent. It offered lots of space to sprawl, or to spread paperwork on when she didn’t want to work at a table like a civilized person usually did.

She frowns. “This isn’t going to fit in the truck. Think we can fit a mattress this size and a bed frame in the trailer?"

"Probably. If you can a ford it, it looks like we'll dodge a bullet on this one."

“Caeruleus. I will hide all of the ketchup bottles in the house and you wont find them. I swear to all the gods. All of them.” She groans. “This is revenge for teasing you about him, isn’t it?”

“Probably.” Aliquam hums, eying it and largely trying to ignore his brother’s pestering of his girlfriend. It was a very, very large mattress. “It can’t possibly be that hard to maneuver it in there.”

“I’m sure we can manage.”

Caeruleus appears to shove a frying pan in her hands, and his grin widened. “I dunno Toki, you don’ got the ‘Tolerance’ for my puns- how you think you’re going to have the patience to fit that in the trailer?”

“Same way I’m going to stuff you in a body bag.”

It took three trips to get everything they needed, and to get it home. Toki ended up stopping for food supplies during the third run, simply because she wasn’t going to be up for a fourth run to town just for food after they got the house together.

Outside of her house was relatively empty, because everything had been stacked inside. Some things were being shipped to her house at a later date- because try as she might, she could not get a
monster-friendly couch in this country, so that had to be purchased online and shipped from overseas.

She also ordered paint- because the bland color of the red bricks was not really something she liked. She was going to paint it something bright and colorful, just for the hell of it.

She tasked Caeruleus and Tenebris with putting together her shelves and coffee table, while she and Papyrus were trying to get her freezer plugged in. The plug in cord was short- so they’d had to switch it spots with the fridge. She was flopped across the counter, with Aliquam holding the freezer at an angle so she could get it plugged in.

They were listening to the melodious music of Tenebris and Sans attempting to put things together- and amusing.

Sans sounds positively befuddled. "I thought this goes with those pegs."

Gaster was growing rapidly more irritated with his eldest son. "No, no, no, no, THAT goes with these pegs."

"Shouldn't they have like, coded these?"

The father was growing exasperated too. Very exasperated. "They did!"

"Well they shoulda’ done color codes instead or something."

"Sans Caeruleus Gaster, are you a bloody child!?"

Toki laughs as she manages to get it plugged in. She shimmies out, her shirt riding up and exposing her ribs. “Ha- Your brother and father sure are enjoying the best part about Ikea, aren’t they?” It was probably mean of her to stick Tenebris with putting together the furniture with Sans- but Sans had earned it for being a pain in the tail bone for the duration of their outing.

Cheekily, she cups her palm around her mouth to amplify her voice as she fixes her shirt. “Have you tried turning it the other way around?” She calls to the duo in what would become her living room.

Completely unhelpful advice was going to be her forte for the evening.

Aliquam chuckled at her shout, before hearing an "oh!" from one of them.

"They sound like they're doing puzzles" Aliquam said, before he let out a small sigh.

“Technically it is puzzles.” She grins up at him. “Not very fun ones, though. Nothing goes where it’s supposed to go, and everything is backwards. But Ikea is known for being cheap- and the insurance didn’t reimburse enough to get everything in the old-style of stuff I had prior.” Her solid oak wardrobe was gone- and she wasn’t shelling out another several thousand dollars for one. Nah- she’d settle for a cheap dresser that didn’t weigh four hundred pounds. “If you’d rather go help them, you can, Pap. C’mere for a second first though.” She wiggles her fingers at him from her seat on the counter. She was almost level with him like this.

"Nyeh?” he smiled as he finished sliding the freezer into place. He padded closer, leaning down just faintly. "What is it?"

“This.” Toki grins. She shifts and pulls him closer, parting her legs so she can loop her arms around his neck. She’s tall enough to do this here without him having to crane down too far, and as an added
bonus, he was within kissing range. She bumped her teeth to his gently, and rubbed her fingers gently along his shoulders. “Mmm. I love you, Ali. I’m glad you came shopping with me today.”

He let out a soft purr once she parted the kiss, and he nodded once as he looped his arms around her. "My pleasure~" he purred gently, "I’m so glad I could come as well. It was fun!"

“Not bad for a trip into town, eh? Sorry about shoving you in the back cab of the truck.” It was the only place that had room for the leggy skeleton to fold his limbs. She smiled up at him, eye lights dancing warmly as she looped her knees over his hips, tickling the backs of his legs with her dangling toes. Having no ligaments meant more flexible joints. “Heh… As nice as it is to have a space to call my own again, I’m going to miss living with you guys.”

"Hey, it's fine." he chuckled, "And at least you'll have your own bed, yeah?"

“My own bed indeed.” She grins up at him and winks, a flush flicking over her cheeks. “Want to help me… break it in~?”

"Mmm, as long as you don’t mind staining it green~" he purred, pulling her hips to his as he smirked down at her.

“Good thing I got green sheets, yeah?” She grins up at him. Her hand wanders down, trailing over his rib and down to tease at his iliac crests. “We’ll have the whole house to ourselves- which means we don’t have to be quiet.”

He was going to reply to that until there was a clatter and the loud sound of Sans shouting. "SON OF A-

"SANS!"

"... I better go." he pulled away fast and ran to the front room.

Toki was a bit disappointed, but concern over rode that feeling quickly. She hopped from the counter, shorter legs carrying her a little slower towards the front room than Pap had done. Shit- did Sans hurt himself with something? “What happened?”

"Played balancing act." Tenebris growled, tapping Cae in the head with the side of a fist. "You idiot"

"Ow, damnit!" He growled, "Look, her petty revenge was poorly thought out! Pap was always better than puzzles than I am." he grumbled

"You had your skills with puzzles, Sans." Aliquam pat his brother's shoulder with a smile then he turned. "Though... Let's leave the expensive furniture to me."

Toki stared at the pile of something that was supposed to be a shelf, and felt her bones buzz noisily with something between irritation and amusement. “Gods above, Sans. Just… I thought you hurt yourself. Shit. Alright. Fine- *punishment* is over then. You want to help me move the rest of the stuff in the house while your brother takes over building?”

"YES."

She snorts a laugh, and motions for him to follow her. “Alright, alright. C’mon. We’ve got to get the dining table in the house. It’s gonna take some work- the doors aren’t wide enough for it.” They’d need to turn it on its side.

It was also a more expensive item she’d splurged for- because it needed to hold up the rigors that
came from family holidays. “Ali? You okay to help your dad?”

"Of course Toki," he gave her a thumbs up. "Go ahead and go do whatever you’ve got to do. Father and I will be here."

“Alright.” She gives him a cheery salute, and leaves Sans to follow behind her. The table was still outside, a heavy cherry-wood thing that was designed more for banquets than for normal every-day eating. She stares at it, and sighs in resignation. “This is going to suck.”

"Mmm... Maybe not". He cupped his chin, "Let's leave that for Pops to carry in."

“What, you chicken?” she grins at him. “You don’t think we can get it? Fine. Help me get my bed frame inside then? That’s something we can put together. It’s literally four pieces of wood. How hard can it be?”

"That, I can do. Just remember to duck." he chuckled, going to get started on those.

She watched as he began to float the long boards up the stairs and into the house. “You do realize that this would be a thousand times easier if you just did that all the time, and not at randomly selective moments, right? We could get the table inside! Think of the possibilities!” He could have had the freezer plugged in without having to contort and do it by hand- Hell, he could have had the whole house set up in moments.

"Who do you think I am? My Dad?” he cackled, "I'll do what I can, but I'm still me, and that isn't gonna change anytime soon.” Somehow, without lips, he whistled as he started carrying everything upstairs.

Toki sighed. Of course he wasn’t- and Sans was a habitual lazybones. She grumbles quietly, and fetches the mattress. For as big as it is, it’s also very heavy- but she manages to get it to the stairs, and up the front steps. She followed along behind him, dragging it up the old fashioned way instead of embracing the laziness of the Nara.

Sitting down in front of where the bed was gonna be set up, he danced the wood planks around and grabbed the screws, putting them in until they were set. It took only a few short moments, and then the bed frame was in place and resting in the middle of the room. "Here we go."

She managed to get the mattress up the second flight of stairs about the time that Sans got the bed set up. She stared at him, straining to push the heavy mattress through the door. “You and your magical hacks, man. Just... Not fair. Not fair at all.” She grumbles.

He grinned and bided his time. As she put all her strength into pushing the mattress further into the room, he proceeded to simply lift it up with his magic and scoot it forwards out of her reach. Revenge was sweet. "Heheh."

And right onto her face she would go, a loud clatter of bones on tile as she slips without the mattress to brace against. “You can be such a little shit!” She hisses from the floor. That was something like what her brothers would do! Gods above, what a dick move.

The thud was loud, and it drew the attention of the tall skeleton below. Aliquam called up from the ground floor with great concern. "Tokiko! Are you okay?"

She sat up, and patted her mouth. She paused and wiggled a tooth. Oh. Oh gods he did not. She turned to him with a sharp glare. He made one of her fangs loose. It. Was. ON. “I AM IN THE MIDDLE OF MURDERING YOUR BROTHER.”
She scrabbles up, knocking over the mattress with an even louder THUMP, and the chase is on.

"HAHAHA- OH SHIT!" Caeruleus laughed as he turned and bolted to the bathroom, locking the door behind him.

She hit the door and rattled the knob. “Sans Caeruleus Gaster, you open this damn door right now and take your thumps like a man!”

"Sowwy! No one with dat name, on the pooopaaaaahh, come back later!" Was sung in a higher voice, mocking and full of dry sarcasm all at once.

“SANS.” She rattles it harder. She has a key- yes, she does. She begins searching her pockets. “Key, key, key, where’s the damn key…”

"Ooooooooh imma little teapot short and stout!" By some miracle, he makes a perfect prrrt sound effect. His laughter echoes in the room.

She knew he was just messing with her- and part of that is what egged her onwards. She was a big sister- and she too could be egged into action when sufficiently motivated. Knocking loose a tooth was sufficient revenge. So as he mocked her with the teapot, she felt her own kettle steaming faintly.

“You’re going to be short and stout when I’m done with you.” She threatens. Her keys are located, and she jambs it into the lock as she runs her tongue over her loose tooth. What if it fell out? Could skeletons even naturally grow back teeth? She would look weird with a gap in her fangs.

The door unlocks, and she shoves it open.

And he’s gone.

Aliquam turns to look out the window and sees his older brother hauling ass towards the main town, and no doubt Grillby’s, letting out a loud laugh as he raced through the muck outside. He turned a corner and was gone from sight.

Toki comes thundering down the stairs moments later, cupping her mouth in one hand, and looking around for the elder brother as she scrabbled to keep her balance. “Where is he? He’s going to get the noogie of his fucking LIFE.”

The father and brother exchanged quick looks, before both immediately shrugged their shoulders.

She flicks her gaze to them and her eyes sharpen. “He knocked my damn tooth loose. He’s just… UGH. I’m going to burn all of his ketchup. All of it.”

"Tokiii, nooo, c'mere." Aliquam reached for her with a smile, "C'mere."

She scowls, but approaches him regardless. Her bones buzz irritably, and her mouth smartens. She cradles her jaw in her hand and eases down onto the floor next to him. “Cae can be such a dick.” She huffs. Technically she had deserved it.

He cupped her cheeks and cooed soothingly as he presses soft kisses to her face a few times. He set her tooth in one quick motion and used a burst of healing magic to secure it once more. "There, all better. Now, what did you say my brother did?" he asked softly.
The setting of her tooth was not entirely pleasant, but the healing magic soothed that. Her bones still buzzed with irritation, vibrating faintly under her clothes. “I was pushing the mattress up the stairs—the big California king sized one for my bed—and I managed to get it to my room and in the door. He… Well, he did his magical mojo and yanked it out from under me. I might have landed on my face. On the tile. He, ah, proceeded to mock me from the bathroom. So all of his ketchup must be burned. Retribution and all of that.”

If Caeruleus wanted to start a war of shenanigans, and then by all rights, she would end it. A lady always ended fights, after all.

"No, Toki. Noooo." he cooed, pecking her face with kisses a few more times, "Noooooo." She flailed her arms, trying her best to remain irritated as she pushed weakly at his chest. His kisses made her stifle a giggle, each one seeming to sap away more and more of her frustration with the older brother. “No, Pap, stop it, I have to remain irritated with him—stop with your anger nullifying kisses!”

"Muah, muah, muah, muah!” he cooed as he kissed her.

“Ack- Pap!” She couldn’t help the laughter that bubbled forth. His theatrical noises had her busting into laughter—she was never one for lingering with irritation anyways. It never settled well in her bones. “Pap, nooooo!”

"Muah, muah, muah, muah, muah~ All the kisses for Tokiko!"

Toki slumps into him with a sigh and soft giggles. Her eyes glint for a second, before she leans up and presses into his last kiss, deepening it with a soft purr. Payback for sucking her dry of her irritation would be getting one hell of a kiss, and nothing more.

Heh—maybe Tenebris could take lessons for when he’s all flustered about kisses with the king?

He let out a pleased coo and held the kiss for a little while, before he pulled back and let out a pleased ‘Nyeh heh heh~’. She sighed up at him, and squinted her sockets. “Teasing me into not being upset with your brother is cheating, Pap. That’s hardcore cheating, isn’t it, Tenebris?”

"Heh, a chip off the old block.” the older monster smirked to himself.

She shifted with a sigh and rolled, casually pushing herself into the larger skeleton’s lap so she could look out over the mess of Ikea parts. “I dunno about that— you seem to get super flustered whenever someone mentions you kissing on Asgore. Huh… You guys actually got pretty far in putting together the shelves.”

He blinked then he grabbed her skull and leaned down, "Watch yourself, Nara." he warned with a rumble before he let her go. "Yes I’d say so, Papyrus was born for this nonsense apparently."

"Nonsense?! That's nonsense! It's so simple! All you’ve got to do is-" As he rambled on, he started assembling another item without looking at the directions.

Once again Tenebris leaned down, "This is when I just smile and nod." he whispered.

She ended up leaning away from him slightly, magic churning faintly in her bones in response to his warning, and reached out to instead pinch Tenebris’ cheek and give it a playful shake. She was pretty much moved out of Aliquam’s lap. She did not fit with Ikea parts, after all. “Watch your own
self, Gaster,” She mimics a rumble back at him. Like hell she’s going to let him intimidate her. “But you’re right- smile and nod is going to be the best thing at this point. So smile and nod- ‘cause if Pap’s absurd love for puzzles and knack for them doesn’t intimidate me, you sure aren’t gonna.”

She tugs his cheek up and down in a mock nod at her and grins up at him with a playfully arched brow bone.

He shot her a deadpan look, then quickly turns his head and brings his teeth down on her hand, severing it at the wrist. He leans back, and she sees him swallow.

And suddenly she has no hand. She gapes at him for a moment, mouth popping open. “Spit that out!” She squeaks, other hand coming up to tug on his chin. He just ate her fucking hand. What the fuck? “You have no idea what I’ve been doing with that hand!”

"Nearly throttling one of my sons." he replied sarcastically, rolling his eyes.

“Tenebris Gaster, you give my hand back this instant.” She sits up on her knees and plants her hands- er, hand- on her hip. Her brow furrows and she grinds her teeth at him. “I wasn’t going to throttle him. Well… A little bit of throttling might have occurred.”

He deadpans her all too easily. "Tokiko Nara, I have gone against the mother of all mothers, Toriel Vinicius Dreemurr herself. Your motherly effects will do little." he snorts in amusement.

She purses her lips at him shrewdly. “I think I have a bottle of ipecac in the shed. I wonder if it works on monsters.”

"You're not going to get anything in me." he rolled his eyes and moved to get up.

She squawked, and proceeded to curl around his leg so he didn’t escape. Her missing hand was starting to tingle unpleasantly. She might not get it in him now, but… She knew how he liked his tea. “Aliquam!” She yelps, “Make your dad spit my hand out!”

"Nyeh?" he looked over at her, "Make my father... What?"

"He ate my hand and won't give it back!"

"..." He looked at his father, who was rubbing his cheek. He then walked over to his father and held out his hand, "Father, please. You promised."

Deadpanning his son, they seemed to have a glaring match until Tenebris rolled his eyes, and shook his shoulders before there was a loud rattling noise from his stomach. He lifted his shirt and Aliquam reached into his abdominal cavity, feeling around until he pulled his hand out With Tokiko's hand gently enveloped in it.

“What… What the fuck…” She looks particularly disturbed and vaguely disgusted as she clings to the large monsters leg like a particularly bony pest- because holy shit, she had been in there once. What. Just… What.

"What? I told you. No internal organs. That includes a stomach." Tenebris shrugged his shoulders. "No stomach, no intestines, no liver, kidneys. Why do you think you were able to fit in my torso? There's nothing in there but the neutral element of the environment.”

Toki releases his leg and gets to her feet. She stares at him, and it is a definitely flummoxed look. “What… how do you… How do you even drink tea then?” Wouldn’t it just run out of the hole? She
peers at him for another moment, forcibly shakes her head and then takes her hand from Papyrus. She makes to wipe the thick black spittle onto Tenebris shirt. “You know what- magic. Magic is the answer to everything.”

He grabs her before she could and gives her a handkerchief to wipe it off on instead. He was going to take more than her hand if she soiled his turtleneck.

She leers at him faintly, but does wipe the hand off on the handkerchief easily enough. Once it’s relocated, she peers at the black slobber coating the kerchief… and then in a moment of brilliant Nara mischief, casually presses it into his chest to give it back. Casually with the goop side down.

She grins up at him, all sharp teeth and amusement. “My mother has a rule- If you’re bitten, you have to bite back twice as hard. Take my hand again, and I’ll implement Momma’s rule. Here’s your kerchief! Thanks for letting me borrow it, Tenebris.” She politely steps back out of his range, and sidles behind Papyrus with a grin.

She might have just poked a bear too big for her to play with- but it was not often she got to see the big monster loosen up for shenanigans. He usually looked on with fond indifference. And Toki was many things- and good at goading was one of them.

He grabs the kerchief and pulls it from his turtleneck, giving a loud whine that completely cut his aggression. Leaving the rag on Toki's head, slobber-side down, he immediately goes to cold-wash his turtleneck, whining about hoping to get the saliva out before it leaves any stains.

Toki giggles into Papyrus back, part of her giddy with relief at his lack of irritated response. The other part of her knows this stuff is going to be a mess to get off her bones. She takes it off, cleans what she can, and then leaves the rest to be scrubbed later. “Do you think he knows that I know how to get pretty much anything out of white clothing? I was a human for thirty two years- if I can get blood out of clothes, I can get monster spit out of clothes.”

"Toki..." Papyrus said quietly, reluctant amusement glimmering on his face. "That's his favorite turtleneck. If you can really get it out, you better hurry and go tell him.”

“I'll make sure it’s extra white.” She says with a veiled laugh. She pats his shoulder, and gives him a grin. “I’ll go handle it- you finish the furniture. And, ah, if you don’t hear from me in a couple hours, assume he’s probably locked me someplace and eaten the key.”

She pads after the big monster, laughing in a non-veiled way. “Gaster, stop. Just take off the turtleneck- I can get it clean for you.”

He's glaring at her loathingly from where he's standing in front of a mirror in the bottom floor bathroom. "You can do many a things to me in revenge, Tokiko Nara. But for the love of science. You do not hurt a man's turtleneck." he growled sourly, though he does remove his turtleneck, revealing a black tank top he wears underneath it, one that hugged his muscles and shield generously. However, as the outer clothing is removed, a large wave of heat comes off of him, one he immediately seems to miss as he hugs himself, rubbing his arms. "Brrr.... how long will this take?"

“For the love of common manners, you do not bite a girl’s hand off.” She quips right back at him, rolling her eye lights in her sockets. As he strips, the heat rolls over her, and she chuffs. Her house is cold- no heat running yet since they had been in and out of the door so much- so of course he’s going to exude warmth. “Probably an hour? Maybe two, if it’s a stubborn stain. The washing machine is hooked up and everything, but it takes about an hour to do a usual run through.” She collects the turtleneck from him, and pads out of the bathroom. Down the hall is the laundry room,
and she fetches some of the supplies she had gotten while in town.

A good heaping of detergent and some various home remedies later, she’s bundling the massive shirt into the machine that seems entirely too small for it. She shuts the lid, and starts the hot water with a sigh.

"You pinched my cheek like I was a child!" He countered sourly, before going upstairs to get something to wrap around himself until he got his favorite heat source back.

"You growled in my face for innocently teasing you,” She shoots back just as sourly when he returns, wrapped in a quilt she had purchased. It was, hilariously enough, the one she had intended to use for her bed. “That’s bad manners, Tenebris. I was raised with a bunch of boys, but even I know it’s bad manners to tell someone to ‘watch themselves’ unless you mean to go through with it.”

"I'm a man of my pride, I don't take well to being treated like a common youngling!" he snarled sharply. "You should be thankful I only bit off your hand! I knew it would be painless!"

"Pride is no excuse for being rude, Tenebris. You’re old enough to know that.” She squares her shoulders and the look she gives him is decidedly stubborn. “Good natured ribbing is something done between friends, Tenebris.” She wondered what he meant by ‘only’ and pondered if he would ever actually hurt her. Toki really didn’t think he would. “Are we not at least friends by now?”

"I'll answer this better after some tea. I'm not good at holding my heat as well as you can." he grumbled quietly, "I need to warm up..."

She crosses her arms and arches a brow. “I haven’t got any tea yet. It wasn’t on my necessities. If you want, I can help warm you. It is my fault you’re sans a shirt now.” And she would own up to that, even if he was being a bit of an ass.

"I'll take you up on that. But first. Tea."

“That’s a long walk through the cold back to your house for tea.” She arches a brow at him and steps closer. Her fingers curl over the edge of her quilt, and she guides her magic into it. She had gotten quite good at this. It wasn’t going to be as good as directly into his body, but it would make the quilt warm.

... He let out a shrill whine at the mention of no tea, but as the newfound heat came to seep into his torso, he let out a soft trill, yes, a trill and he purrs as he lowers to sit down to snuggles into the heat.

She watches him sit down in the middle of the floor, and sighs to herself. She keeps a hand on the blanket, peering back into the main room where Aliquam was still working through her furniture. Most of it was already done- damn, he worked fast. “Better now?” She questioned the grouchy older monster with a soft sigh.

"Mmh...." he nodded slowly, then he nuzzled into the blanket, "You can go ahead." he murmured, "You only just got your magic back..."

“If I let go, this blanket is going to cool off.” She arches her brow. “And I’m back in full stores, thank you very much. I was only low last time because of the heat. It’s been what- almost two weeks? I’m good now. So. I know it’s not tea- but are you going to answer me now?”

"..." He opened his eyes, then looked up at her with a faint smile. "After everything you've done, we are at least friends, yes."

“Good. I consider you to be quite the good friend myself.” She looks relieved. “As your friend,
lemme tell you this. You can be one of the most bipolar bastards ever- I like you anyways despite this- but if some of my teasing bothers you, tell me up front. Don’t growl at me when you do- be clear and concise and I will respect it. It’ll avoid situations like this, where you bite my hand off, and I ruin your turtleneck.”

"I'm an old man, it's my job to growl at people." he huffed, "But you've given me a warm quilt so I don’t suffer while you clean my sweater, so... I'll make an exception for you..."

“And it’s my job to get my stuffy friends to loosen up.” She gives him a toothy grin. “I’ll do you one thing more. Since I don’t own a clothes-dryer, I’ll even dry and warm your sweater before you put it on once it’s clean. And thank you for making an exception for me. You might end up making a lot of them- I am a bit headstrong sometimes.” She had always been a willful child- kind, but willfully stubborn.

She shifts, and wiggles right into his lap with a huff. There, she closes the quilt tighter, and spreads her magic thinly over him as well. The floor below was cold, after all. Tile was not good for conducting heat.

"You and me both, Tokiko Nara." he puffed softly, before he sighed. He looped his arms vaguely around her- she was always warm, and it was nice when your body did not retain or make it’s own heat very well. "I need a pipe..." he murmured, before he pulled the blanket over his head. "Mnh..."

“No smoking in my house.” She chirps cheerily up at him, content to sit and act as his heater. “Lets make a deal. Shit's bound to happen- you’re stubborn, I’m stubborn, and we’re bound to clash against each other at some point. Whatever we argue about, it’s probably not going to be important. So- we stay friends, even if we’re angry. Friends forgive over time. Sound all right? ‘Cause I’m already working towards forgiving you for eating my hand.”

"... Sounds fair." he murmured, looking down at her with a ghost of a smile. Residual heat was nice, but this constant pace of new heat had him as mellow as a snake under a heating lamp. His eyes half-lidded and a tired smile on his face as he spoke, even his voice softening to a gentle rumble with the warmth she generated.

She nodded up at him, and glanced out of the blankets to speak to Aliquam. “Are you alright putting the rest of the furniture together? I’ve got to keep your dad warm until his sweater is done.”

"Nyeh? You speak as if it is a challenge for The Great Papyrus!” the young man announced boldly, before resuming his work while humming a tune.

Toki just laughs softly. She sighs, reclining back into the large monster clinging to her for warmth, and lets her sockets close. She rubs the ridge of her nasal cavity with a sigh. Today had been fun- but she could feel a headache building in the base of her skull. Dealing with knocking a tooth loose, and then having to handle Tenebris left her tired. She shifts, nestling down a bit more, and is content to wait until the washer screams at her that it is done.

By the time that the washer’s buzzer goes off, Aliquam has managed to get everything put together that needs to be together- and most everything from out in the truck and trailer is now inside of the house. The dining table was a two-person job- and she was occupied elsewhere- so it was sitting outside on the front deck area, out of the weather until they could get to it.

He was currently buzzing around and organizing her house- he recalled how everything had been arranged far better than she did. It also gave him something to run off the excess energy with. So he stacked shelves, put dishes in their rightful place, and got things into order.
Toki manages to wiggle free of the dozing monster draped against her, and goes to fetch his turtleneck. Like she suspected- it is stain free, and probably whiter than it has been in an age. Mama Nara’s stain removal secrets strike again. She pads back to the living room after ringing it out, and pulses her magic into the heavy cloth.

She drops it onto Tenebris with a smile, the fabric hot and dry, and completely free of his drool stains. “Family secrets are handy, aren’t they?”

He doesn’t reply, instead just immediately climbs back into it and hugs himself, hiding his face in the warm neck before he started purring loudly, his breaths short and swift as he took in the new, clean scent as well.

Tenebris was quite the pleased monster now.

She still has his drool stain on her skull, and subsequently smells like his stink- but his happy sounds are worth it. “I’ll give you a moment alone with it, goodness me. Get a room you two.” She teases lightly, and pads for the kitchen to get a start on scrubbing her skull.

"... Thank you, Toki,"

“You’re welcome, Tenebris.”
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: Kon also earns his humps. -Wagglebrows- Also another nice and fluffy chapter for you all. I hope you like the other half of her brothers- because fuck all, i hated writing this chapter, and I don't ever want to have all eight of her siblings in one chapter at a time. I write them all. e.e
Also come check out our blog! :D lots of shenanigans go down here. Ya'll are missing out hard core. http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing: Kon is a 110% concetrate Little Shit. And Tenebris only instigates his ass XD GDI

Unfortunately plans for thanksgiving weren’t folding out like she had hoped. Her parents were unable to get a flight out- and her two youngest brothers were with them. Ryushi had promised that he would take the kids to his in-laws house this year- and he was taking Han with them since he was living with them- so he was out. That left Utaka, Kon, Kohaku, and Roshi. Utaka’s wife wasn’t coming- she was off on holiday business for the company she worked for.

With Kohaku would come Mirou, but that was still only five of her family instead of the usual mass. Even the family she had from her dad’s side couldn’t make it- but that wasn’t that hard to guess. Her American grandparents were a lot older than her mom and dad, and had trouble getting around.

It was a little disheartening- she had hoped they could spend the holiday together. Papyrus was a bummed that part of her family would not make it, but did not let it bring him down fully as he heard he would still meet a good part of it. Toki steeled herself- she would have more than just her brothers there with her after all. She had invited the Gaster family and their dates of choice if they so wished. Papyrus was already her date for dinner- but she had no idea who Gaster would bring, or if he even would.

She had a strong inkling about who Cae’s choice in partner this evening was going to be- and had steeled her for several days to prepare for it. She had made herself watch the fireplace until it no longer made her feel flighty- which was a feat in and of itself.

She had also spent most of the day cooking. Caeruleus was there to help her prepare for one of her guests arrivals, further sealing her thoughts as to who he would bring, as well as some of the cooking. He wasn’t actually that bad of a cook- and did very well making the crust for pies.

Tenebris helped a bit too- but he spent the majority of his day helping the rest of the village prepare for their own festivities. Turkey’s to cook, pies to make- all of the like. He would be back around the house later though, which gave her ample room to get things done without everyone hovering excitedly.

Her house was permeated by the smells of many different types of food. Turkey, ham, pumpkin pie, apple pies- she made almost and every traditional food known to the holiday. She had even gotten her hands on pickled beets- which she was most definitely looking forwards to. They tasted so weird,
but hell, they were a good kind of weird.

There was going to be enough food for everyone to take leftovers home. Which was good- she slaved hours over it, working from early in the morning until nearly four in the afternoon. If they didn’t take leftovers, she would be eating turkey for a week. She still might end up eating turkey for a week. The two turkeys were quite large. At last though- At last she was done. The last rolls were out of the oven, and on the table.

The long table in her dining hall was doing well to keep the food in due order- and her magic was keeping it warm. Fire magic was rapidly growing to be something that she was using often, hilariously enough. She never would have thought that it could be useful for things besides burning.

Everyone would be arriving soon- and she was nervous about how her brothers and other nephew would react to her and her guests of choice.

Aliquam was smiling at his girlfriend as they waited. "Are you excited?"

“I’m equal parts excited and nervous.” She admits to him, carefully reaching up to untie her apron. It was covered in flour and dough- and needed a thorough washing before it could be used again. “I’m sure my brothers will love you- I just wish you could have seen all of us together. Well… Maybe not. We get a little chaotic when the nine of us are together. Are you excited to meet them?"

"O-Of course!" he nodded quickly, "Yes I don’t think I’ve ever been so..." he then whined and hugged her. "I'm nervous, Tokiko..." he sighed.

She managed to set the apron on one of the counters so she could hug him back. “Oh Pap,” she sighed softly, “You don’t have to be nervous. Or very nervous, anyways. I’ll make sure to keep them in line.” She wasn’t too worried- most of her brother’s had good heads on their shoulders. The only one she needed to watch would be Kon. “Or as in line as can be- you know how brothers are.” Toki tilts his chin down to her and gives him a soft smooch.

He nuzzled her and kissed her with a smile. "Nyeh~ I trust you on that...

She smiles up at him warmly, and nuzzles him gently in return.

There is the sound of knuckles on an oaken door, and Toki perks. Her eyes brighten eagerly. “That’s probably them now. I warned the guards my family would be coming.” She wiggles out of his arms, giving him a happy smile, and pads for the door. Her feet are in her usual slippers- and she’s in slacks for once, instead of sweat pants. She kept her usual turtleneck though, opting for an orange one that very closely matched the shade of Aliquam’s magic.

She opened the door, and was promptly tackled by Roshi. All of her brothers looked alike- but each had a slightly different shape to their jaw, or cut to their hair- and the rowdy mow-hawk that Roshi kept his hair in tickled at her nose as the burly personal trainer squeezed his arms around her like a noose. He rocked back and lifted her clean off her feet, swinging her in a circle as she laughed. “Big sis! It’s been far too long- I’d say you should eat more, because you’re skin and bones, but that’s insensitive.”

“It’s ineffective if you just say it anyways.” Utaka stared at her neutrally, and dipped his chin faintly in a fond gesture. He steps in, opening his arms once Roshi lets her go. “You’ve been in to trouble since we’ve last gotten to sit down face to face, sister.”

“Sorry, bro.” She smiles at him regardless and leans in to hug him. Utaka was in a suit- he was always in a suit- with his hair cut short and his glasses perched upon the bridge of his nose. He was
the only one out of her siblings who needed to have glasses- but Toki liked to think it added to his intimidation factor. He was a very, very good lawyer. “Thank you for handling my case though.”

“What else are brother’s for?” There is a fond tilt to his lips as he reaches up to pat her cheek. His gaze flicks past her though, dark eyes scrutinizing Papyrus with a sharp intensity.

“Getting their sisters into trouble, for starters.” Kon brushes past both of the elder boys, and clamps his arms around her hips. He tickles her ribs coyly, and grins up at her. Kon was the third youngest- and by far one of her more risqué brothers. He ran with whatever fad tickled his fancy- which today, was the tightest pair of pants she had ever seen on anyone, and some hipster shirt with a catchy saying. His hair was, as per the usual, one of the many colors of the rainbow. He’d gone for a bright purple this time. “Look at you! You look wonderful- though your teeth are a little bit intimidating, Sis.”

She playfully gnashes them at him. “All the better to keep you in line with, Kon. You’d better be on your best behavior tonight, little bro.”

He grins up at her. “Kinky. I didn’t know you were into biting too, Sis.”

She swats him, and shoos him away with a laugh. “Oh my god, Kon, seriously. Behave, or no pie for you.”

Kohaku was the last to step through. He was shorter than the other three of her brothers, but he was also brawnier. Given his job in construction, it was little wonder why. He offered her a quiet smile, and adjusted his grip on his son’s hand. “Hey Sis.” He waves quietly. He was the more soft spoken of the four brothers presently here- and it was a trait that he had passed down to his son.

Mirou proceeded to hide his face in his father’s pant leg and peek out at Toki.

“Hi, Kohaku.” She smiles warmly, and then crouches down. “Mirou,” she coos softly, “Do you remember me? I’m your Aunt Toki. I know I look a lot different now.”

Mirou flutters his lashes at her, baby blues peering out at her from under the thick lashes. Mirou looked remarkably like his father, all save in the eyes. He had his mother’s eyes. He lifts a hand and taps it to his lips, before pointing at her face. “Teeth. Wont bite?”

“Oh sweetheart, no.” She shook her head, and offered out her hand for him to take. “I only told your Uncle Kon I’d bite him because he wont listen otherwise. I wont hurt you. I’ll make you a pinky promise on that.”

Pinky promises still meant the world to most of her family- and the little boy was soon in her arms and snuggled to her chin.

She hefts him up- he had his dads build, and was very large for a six year old- and then turns to Papyrus with a sheepish grin. “Papyrus- these are my brothers. Roshi, Utaka, Kohaku, and Kon. This is my nephew, Mirou. He’s really shy. Bros- this is Papyrus, my boyfriend. He and his family will be joining us for dinner tonight.”

Utaka did not looked perturbed by the massive skeleton- he simply raised a dark brow, strode forwards, and offered an unflinching hand to the massive monster.

Papyrus watched with a smile as her brothers greeted the sister, and when he was offered the hand to shake, he smiled warmly and reached out to take the offered hand. He gives it a firm shake. ”It's nice to meet you all. You can call me Aliquam, or Quinn for short if the first is too hard to pronounce.” he chuckled.
“Aliquam.” Utaka muses, releasing his hand after a firm shake. He straightens, peering up at the massive skeleton quietly. “Toki has mentioned you the last few times we had managed to talk. I am the one responsible for handling the case against the HAM agents. You may call me Utaka.”

“I didn’t know our big Sis was finally dating someone!” Kon grinned. He bumped his hip to hers, careful of Mirou, and beamed up at his much taller sister. Kon was six inches shorter than her- so looking up wasn’t much that was new. “Ah- you took my advice. He has a nice ass, Sis. I approve.”

“Kon!” She scolds, cupping a hand over Mirou’s ear. Not that it did much- the sound slipped right through her bones. “Language.”

“He, ah, hears worse regularly, sister.” Kohaku scuffles the boot of his shoe against her tile for a moment. “He comes to work with me sometimes. Construction workers say worse things.”

“I suppose… So long as you don’t repeat them, then it’s all right. You have to be in high school before you can say them.”

“I know, Auntie.” He loops an arm around her neck and sighs. Mirou glances around over her shoulder, before he squirms. “Can I look around…?”

“Oh course, sweetie.” She sets him on his feet, ruffles his hair, and then sends him off. He wanders for her living room, and she lets him. There’s nothing she has to hide. Kohaku quietly excuses himself to follow his son- which was fine enough. Kohaku was pretty quiet, and she’d rather her introverted brother not get too worn out too soon. “Will you be staying the night tonight?”

“Nah- we carpooled.” Roshi grinned. “Besides- Utaka has to be in bright and early tomorrow.”

"You were the one to aid us? You have my gratitude!” He said with a smile to Utaka, before he looked over at Kon. "You're quite the bold one." he chuckled.

“I was.” He was still handling all of the fallout- but most of the men and women from the attack were sure to not be allowed out of prison. Domestic terrorism was a serious crime. Utaka dipped his head quietly, and gave his sister a faint nod when the large skeleton’s gaze moved elsewhere. He approved so far of her choice in… men? Monsters, or whatever the term could be politely called. He shared a look with Roshi though, and found the elder of the two still uncertain about his choice.

Kon however grinned widely. He leaned forwards, planting a hand on his hip, and blew a kiss to the tall skeleton. “If you weren’t with my sister, I’d say I could be whatever you want me to be, baby. But she’s got prior claim on that sweet ass.”

He yelps as Toki pinches him, and shoots him a vaguely amused look as she steps forwards to bump her arm fondly against Aliquam’s. “You’re damn right I do. Speaking of saying things- please try to keep yourself under control when Pap’s family gets here.”

She was slightly horrified of what might happen to Kon if he gets too out of hand with Tenebris or Caeruleus.

“No promises.”

He lifted a brow, but his words were interrupted as the door opened.

"We're back, Toki!" Cae announced, with Tenebris trailing in behind him.

Grillby wasn’t far behind them either, and the flame elemental edged in behind the both of them and carefully shut the door.
Toki swallowed, but kept her eyes fixated on the floor. “Welcome back,” she smiles, and offers them a wave. “Everyone’s here then- we can start eating if you like. Sans, Tenebris, Grillby- these are my brothers. Roshi, Utaka, Kon, and my other brother, Kohaku, and his son Mirou are in the living room. Bros- That’s pap’s brother, father, and Sans’ guest for the evening, Grillby.”

“I… Ah, I brought cider…” Grillby had a jug of it cradled in one hand. “I’ll go put it on the table.”

“Thank you, Grillby.” She flicks her eyes to him, ignoring the flutter of panic in her chest. She gives him a genuine smile despite it, her fingers curling tightly into her palms. The sharp prickle of her claws is enough for her to focus. She is not her fear- her fear does not have to dominate her life. This was a monster- not a reflection. This was a good monster. This was a good fire. “The table’s in the other room- why don’t you go find a spot to put it?”

“I’ll help!” Roshi is hot on his heels, mouth working quickly to babble at the quiet monster. “Dude! You are literally fire! How cool is that? How do you not burn your clothes? Are they fire-retardant clothes? Magical clothes?”

“Roshi’s harmless, and it’s nice to meet all of you, certainly.” Kon grins. His eyes are on the skeleton and the largest monster he’s seen yet. “Toki, why didn’t you tell me you were surrounded by such hot company? Oooh, tall, dark and handsome is such a dilf. Did it hurt when you fell from heaven, handsome?”

Going to make sure that Grillby wasn't too overwhelmed, Caeruleus was quick to follow the both of them into the other room.

Grinning, Tenebris leaned down to be more level with Kon, his tail coming around to tilt his chin up. “Gutsy, Are we? Well i have a question for you” he chuckled.

“Did you scrape your knees when you crawled out of hell?” he countered skillfully.

Such a comeback made Cae snort while Aliquam covered his face with his hand.

This close, Kon could see Tenebris teeth quite clearly and the muscles of his shoulders tightened with something that was decidedly not fear. Oh no- quite the opposite. “Oh fuck- I kind of of want those to bite me.” He grins at him, and leans cheekily into the tip of his tail. It prickles at his skin- but fuck, that was hot. “If I did,” Kon grins, "Would you like me to fall to my knees and beg forgiveness~?" Because Damn, that was one sexy DILF he'd like to-

“Kon.”

“Get to know a whoooolle lot more.” The purple haired brother grinned cheekily. Apparently he'd said that last bit out loud. He regretted none of it.

“Tenebris, if you ignore him he usually goes away, I promise.” Toki covers her face with her palms and sighs into them. Dear gods- she had forgotten that Kon had no filter.

Utaka shoots his younger brother a look and crosses his arms over his chest. He sighs through his nose and rubs his eyes. “Tenebris, yes? Please- I apologize on behalf of my brother. He is… obnoxious.”

"He's cocky. That will get him in trouble in due time." he chuckled lowly.

“And if I like trouble?” He flutters his lashes at the bigger monster and steeple his chin onto his
hands. “What if I really like trouble?”

“Then you can do the dishes when you get in trouble.” Toki quips. She tugs him away by his ear and motions for him to go into the kitchen. “Go wash up- food first, then you can get in more trouble.” Her eyes do flick to Tenebris, and she arches a brow. “That counts for everyone else too- Wash up time! Grillby gets an exemption from it.”

There is a muffled thanks from the dining room, and she doesn’t have to guess to know that it was Grillby.

“No one likes doing thanksgiving dishes.” He blows a raspberry at her, and pads into the kitchen to do as told. All of her brothers migrate in after him.

Tenebris chuckles as he walked to the sink to wash his hands, taking care of the holes in them especially.

Mirou comes to a stop behind Toki, having intended to take her hand and drag her in to get washed up too. He stares with wide eyes up at Tenebris. He looks very much like a fawn caught in the headlights, his hand clinging to her pocket as he stares up at the monster who is nearly three times his height. He was rather short for a six year old.

“Mirou,” Toki gently ruffles his hair, having caught on to his nerves. “This is Doctor Gaster. He’s really nice. Tenebris- this is my nephew, Mirou. He’s a little timid.”

"Pleased to meet you, Mirou." he rumbled gently, smiling down at the child.

The whites of his eyes grew larger, and he ducked behind Toki’s pant leg. “H-hi.”

She rolls her sockets and scoops him into her arms, swinging him up so he couldn’t hide from Tenebris. He would need help reaching the sink anyways. “C’mon, Mirou. Tenebris is really cool. He’s a bit big, but he’s a really big softy.” She leans in to whisper to the child, winking up at the big monster as she does so. “He purrs like a big cat when he’s happy- someone who does that cant be too scary, can they?”

“I guess…”

Toki simply smiles up at Tenebris and wiggles into the fray to get her hands and her nephew’s all washed up for dinner.

“He seems pretty nice to me~” Kon grins. He brushes past the big monster- and his fingers might brush against his backside as he ‘wiggles’ free from between him and the crowd of his brothers and other monsters. So smooth with how he does it, his siblings don’t even notice. "Very nice."

He blinked slowly, not entirely sure he felt what he thought he felt, and he gave Kon a look. "How often does this one get himself in trouble?" he asks Toki.

“Often enough that I had to bail him out of a lot of it when we were younger. I got a lot of black eyes for his ass when he bit off more than he could chew.” She rinses her fingers, and gets a towel to dry them off with. Mirou is settled onto the floor, and handed his own towel for drying

“IT’s not my fault that they couldn’t handle my flirting."

“You were eight- what the hell were you doing flirting with boys who were my age?”

“Excuse you. I happen to like older men. It’s not just a taste that develops over time, you know. It
also helped that I had an older sister who was taller than all of the boys her age.”

“Just because they had to jump to punch my face did not make it hurt any less, Kon.”

"Hm..." He rolls his eyes and his tail shoos Kon away as he dries his hands.

Kon laughs gleefully and heads for the dining room. He snags his usual seat near the middle, and grins as his brother’s pile in around him. He gets one on each side—no doubt to keep him under control.

Toki watches him go with a faint sigh, smiling as Mirou manages to give Tenebris a tiny smile. The boy bustles after Kohaku, and Toki trails behind slowly after she collects plates. “Feel free to sit wherever you want,” She addresses the monsters, “There’s no particular seating arrangement when it’s just my brothers and myself.” Her mother and father usually had her sit at the head of the table while they took the seats on her left—old clan tradition bullshit and the like, since she had technically taken over the clan compound— but they weren’t here to enforce the usual rules. Plates are handed out, and she manages not to flinch when her fingers brush Grillby’s. Grillby had managed to get everyone glasses of cider— and it looked delicious.

He smiles at her faintly, sitting down near one of the sliced legs of ham. What a peculiar food…

Caeruleus sits down by Grillby, grinning up at him, Aliquam sits down as well near Toki’s seat, smiling to her. Finally, Tenebris takes the largest of the seats, no doubt the one made for him at the end of the table.

"This looks wonderful, Toki, well done." he praised.

Toki settles between Aliquam and Tenebris. She had indeed left the largest chair for the largest monster—she’d gotten special ordered with Asgore in mind, but it suited Tenebris well enough too. “Don’t just praise me, you dork. You helped too— you did really well with the pie crusts.” She chuckled.

“It looks really good.” Kohaku murmurs faintly. He’s across from Grillby, and offers the quiet monster a smile that is returned in kind. His son is next to him, and he can see him staring in nervous curiosity at the fire monster across the table. “Uh… Did you want to start us off with saying thanks, Sis?”

“Thanks?” Grillby murmurs quietly. There had been so many things to memorize about the holiday that he wasn’t sure which one that was. “That is the tradition where one says something that they are deeply thankful that happened to them… right?”

“Correct.” Toki smiles warmly. “I was actually thinking of letting you all start.” She motions a hand to the monsters at her table, and laces her fingers gently through Papyrus’ own. “Want to start us off, Tenebris?”

“Heh... I suppose I could give it a try.” he nodded once, before he began to purr faintly. "I'm thankful for the humans bearing kind hearts towards our kind. To Frisk for freeing us, instead of taking his majesty's soul and leaving us in the underground without our king.” He tilts his head and shoots her a loose grin. “And to Tokiko for giving us homes that let us poke our heads out the windows and take in pure mountain range air."

“Well spoken.” Kohaku hums.

Toki grins bashfully, and then motions to the skeleton brothers and Grillby.
Grillby clears his throat first. “I am thankful for the chance to be up on the surface once more. I am thankful for my friends, and family, even if they are not here with us now. I am thankful for many things.”

“Also well spoken, hot stuff.” Kon beams.

"I'm thankful for Toki, and for everything that has worked out so far up here in the new town." Aliquam said with a happy 'Nyeh heh heh!'.

Toki smiles wider and rubs her fingers over his knuckles with a fond sound.

“Daww,” Roshi grins. “Toki you got a sweet one.”

“Damn straight I did.”

Finally it ended up Caeruleus' turn... he took a breath, and then he smiled, "I'm thankful... that everything went right for once... And that the kid promised... No more resets..." he then leaned against Grillby with a smile. "Everyone finally got their happy ending."

Grillby flushes a bright color, and makes a pleased crackling noise.

Confusion bubbles up inside of Toki, but she smiles nonetheless. “That’s a good thing to be thankful for…” her tone conveys her confusion, but she doesn’t ask. Maybe a reset is a monster thing? That was something for a later discussion. “Happy endings are always good.”

Her brothers too took note of it, but kept quiet. Well, mostly. Kon pouted slightly. “Aww, so the skeleton can flirt with the hot bartender but I can’t flirt with the dilf?”

“He is more subtle with his flirtations, Kon.” Utaka clears his throat, relaxing in his seat. “My turn. I am thankful for all that has happened this year- and that we are all still here to be able to have this conversation.” His gaze flicks to Toki, and he dips his chin faintly with an arched brow. Two near-death experiences on her part had to be more than enough.

“I’m thankful that I managed to pick up more business- and that I’m here with all of you.” Kohaku echoes quietly.

Mirou piped up after his dad, fiddling with his napkin as he watched the table. “I’m thankful that Auntie Toki’s okay, and that daddy finally changed my bed time. I have a friend like aunt Toki who is super nice- I’m thankful for him too.”

“I’m thankful she’s okay too, kiddo. Hm… I’m also thankful that business has been booming! Lots of people are wanting to be fit this year, and it’s just great!” Roshi laughs.

Kon sighs and leans back in his chair. “Despite all of the sass I keep getting from you tonight, I am definitely thankful that I managed to come to dinner. I wouldn’t miss it for the world.” He leans forwards again, and grins at Tenebris. “I’m also super thankful I got to meet you today, big daddy.”

"Stick your hand in the snake's den and you're going to be bitten.” he warned him simply.

Kon grinned unrepentantly. “And I already told you- I wouldn’t mind being bitten. Those teeth. Hnnnn-”

“KON!” Toki scolds. “There is a child at this table!”

“Sorry but not sorry?”
He rolls his eyes, then he sighs, "Oy..." he then looked at Toki, smiling gently. "What about you, Toki?"

Toki smiles at Tenebris in return, before letting her eyes wander over everyone. She ponders a moment, considering what she wants to say. What did she want to say? There wasn’t really one specific thing that she was thankful for- or even a small list. Hell, her list would take hours. But… she could probably sum it up in one go. “I don’t really have a specific thing, I think… Well, maybe. I’m thankful that the barrier broke. That all of you got out. Despite some of the side effects that came with the Emergence, I wouldn’t change it for the world. I am thankful that I got to meet all of you- that I’ve gotten to know all of you, to care for all of you, and to share our world with you. I am simply thankful for all of you- every last one of you. I’m thankful that I am here to share dinner with you, to share laughs, to share this holiday with my family and loved ones- human and monster alike.”

“Without the barrier breaking,” She continues, “I would never have met any of you. So I am thankful to the kid who helped break it- because without them, you would not be here with us today. I wouldn’t have gotten to love all of you- and I certainly wouldn’t have the best bone-friend in the world.” She shoots Pap a wink, squeezing his hand gently. “So… yeah. Heh. That’s the gist of what I’m thankful for.” It wasn’t very concise and linear- but she felt it got the point across.

“That was… Well spoken, Toki.” Utaka blinks. “I think I speak for all of our brothers- including ones who aren’t here tonight- when I tell you good job.”

"Here-here!" Papyrus said with a laugh.

Caerlueus laughed and lifted his glass in a mock toast. "To the barrier’s destruction!" he announced, "And our new life on the surface!"

“Here-Here!” was echoed. Glasses didn’t clink- mainly because the table was too wide and too full of food for proper toasting- but everyone took a sip all the same.

It befuddled Toki how Grillby could drink- but she did not comment on it. Magic was a strange thing.

“And now we can dig in.” She grins. “I hope everyone eats a lot- because I feel like I probably made too much food. There’s going to be leftovers for everyone.”

“That’s not a bad thing though,” Kohaku smiles. He stands so he can reach out and begin filling Mirou’s plate for him. “Beets?”

“Blech!” His nose crinkles. “No beets, daddy.”

“I’ll take some of those!”

Tenebris seemed to favor the turkey, the taste and textured of the cooked meat appealing to his inner predator. Aliquam liked the potatoes and gravy, the spices that had been added creating a cacophony of taste on his ecto-tongue. Her brothers favored the ham, enjoying the brown-sugar glaze that it had been baked in, though they stopped eating every once in a while when a glowing tongue would come into view.

She and Grillby and Caeruleus ended up taking bits of everything- though Toki veered away from the potatoes. They did weird things with her teeth, and she gave up eating them when it got too messy.

The food was good, and Toki ended up eating way more than she probably should have. She felt stuffed, her magic sluggish as she relaxed back into her seat. They had ended the dinner with pie-
and she just barely managed to fit in a slice of pumpkin pie.

Grillby had two slices of apple pie- and might have found a new favorite sweet. “I really need to get this recipe from you, Miss Toki.”

Tenebris enjoyed the apple pie as well, purring happily as he ate it. Aliquam tried the pumpkin and came to enjoy it, while Caeruleus seemed in agreement of enjoying the apple.

Utaka politely wiped his mouth with a napkin and took a sip of his cider to clear his mouth out. “Toki doesn’t follow a recipe.” He chuckles softly. “Never has. When she bakes from scratch, everything is measured as she goes.”

“Nothing ever turns out exactly the same every time, so it’s no guarantee you’ll taste the same thing twice. It’s a knack I got from my grandmother.” She grins lazily. “But I’ll get a basic recipe written down for you, if you’d like.”

“I would, thank you.”

Toki laughs slightly, and covers a yawn. “Agh. I don’t even have flesh anymore, but still, thanksgiving dinner is going to apparently make me sleepy.”

“You can’t escape the sleepy effects of the turkey,” Roshi grinned to her. “Or, apparently,” his grin widened, and he motioned a fork for her middle, “Getting a holiday food baby either.”

She glanced down- and indeed, her magic had padded her middle faintly to give her that ‘stuffed for the holidays’ look. Toki had never been stick thin- but she hadn’t been hefty either. With her build, as a human, she had ended up with what her siblings had affectionately called a ‘food baby’ whenever she stuffed herself at the holidays. The food baby term was coined for the similar look it got to a small ‘baby bump’ as the term went. She laughed, and crossed her arms over her middle. “Apparently so. I still don’t understand how it works- but magic does strange things.”

Aliquam giggled and hugged her gently, "Nyeh~ we're both pregnant then, I guess." he laughed jokingly, gesturing to his own food-bump.

“I guess so~” She leans up to kiss him gently, and giggles, running her fingers over his middle teasingly.

“How scandalous,” Kon grinned. “Going to make us uncles before you’re even married- what would dad say?”

Toki rolls her eyes and leans into Aliquam with a soft laugh, blushing faintly. “He’d probably be as offended as he was when you showed up to our family reunion in a skirt with your hair the color of the rainbow.”

Kon tossed his head and laughed. “I thought I was going to get disowned- but his face. Oh his face was worth it.”

Utaka chuckles softly. “You and father have been disagreeing about your life choices since the first time you told him you wanted your own style of clothing.”

“What can I say? I’m a rebel.” He made a kissy face at Tenebris and winked. “Besides- we’ve all had our spats with dad. He’s far too traditional for his own good. Change is good for him. Speaking of… Imagine what he’d say if I came to Christmas with this angel on my arm?”

“Father doesn’t have an issue with monsters, you know that.” Kohaku sighs.
“No,” Kon agrees, “he doesn’t. But it would be because I would have brought him. You know how he is.”

“You usually antagonize him though, to be fair.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" Papyrus giggled at that.

Tenebris rolled his eyes, leaning back and pulling out his pipe, before patting around for his lighter or matches.

“Tenebris, smoking is done outside.” Toki gives the big monster an amused grin. She wiggles free from Aliquam, and gets up to collect dishes. “I’m going to get these into the sink to soak before the brown-sugar starts to stick.”

“And before you fall asleep and forget them, huh?” Roshi grinned, handing over his plate willingly.

Miou hops up too once Kohaku prods him lightly, and begins collecting dishes on his side of the table. “I wanna help with dishes, Aunt Toki.”

“That’s fine, sweetie.”

The duo move into the kitchen, and Toki starts to stack the dishes in the sink. The hot water is turned on, and she collects Miou’s dishes from him as well. Once the sink is plugged up, she sets it to filling.

“Aunt Toki!” Miou takes on a scolding tone as he spots her apron. He bounces to grasp at her apron, and then looks at it unhappily. “That’s unsanitary! Grandma says you don’t keep used aprons on the counters.”

“Well, what grandma doesn’t know doesn’t hurt her, does it?” She grins at him in amusement and dries her fingers. “Toss it here, little man. I’ll go put it in the hamper to wash later. Sound good?”

He does as asked, and a cloud of flour puffs up into her face as she catches it.

It tickles at her nasal cavity. She coughs, flapping her hands to get the flour out of her face- but it doesn’t stop the sneeze that comes. Her mouth falls open and clicks shut, sparks flying as her skull rattles with her sneeze.

There is a puff of light, not unlike a candle and a bottle of hair spray, before Miou is shrieking. “AUNT TOKI SNEEZES FIRE!”

Aliquam had followed to help a few minutes later, only to "NYEH!” in surprise as she sneezed the cloud of fire. "GREAT GOOGLY MOOGLY!” he exclaimed.

“My nose!” She clasps her fingers over the bone, sockets watering. That hadn’t hurt per-say, but it had felt like the time she had snorted chili powder on accident. It was an unpleasant burning sensation.

Miou began to laugh- and her brothers, who had poked their heads in at the shout, began to roar right alongside him. Utaka was the quietest, covering his mouth as he snickered.

Grillby had remained in his seat- and was quietly chortling. “Fire natured beings usually sneeze fire.” He murmurs in amusement.

Caeruleus was laughing beside Grillby, while Tenebris shook his head and chuckled quietly.
“Wow Toki. I didn’t think you could become a flamethrower without a little help from the fireman’s wick, if you get my meaning.” Kon- it was always Kon- nearly choked on his cider as he finished it.

Grillby did choke on his cider, and sputtered into his napkin as his face burned blue.

There was a few seconds of silence where everyone was processing just what Kon had piped off with before there were blue and orange glowing bones surrounding him. This was a perfect example of the phrase ‘talk shit, get fucking dunked on.’

“B-boys! No fighting in the house!”

Kon? Kon had earned his thumps.
Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: I don't know what everyone was so freaked out about on tumblr, honestly. -Shrugs- Anyways, here's some cute fun in the snow. :) It's really adorable- and the image of Tenebris on ice will be forever ingrained into my mind. :D I hope you all like it.

As usual, you're missing out if you don't come visit our blog. Come find us at http://sinosoftheunderground.tumblr.com/ where you can talk to us and experience the greatness that is my salty ass shenanigans. :D

Silverwing Notes: 's no day like a Snow Day... It's a good thing we as a daring duo were able to make it that much better~ Enjoy 25 ye who remain loyal to read our crazy story!

The holiday ended well, with a massive game of poker with the monsters. Tenebris and Kon disappeared during the game for more than an hour, and her brother returning with a strange hitch in his gait and an extremely pleased look upon his face. Tenebris returned in a scarf- and refused to take it off for the rest of the evening.

She knew exactly what had happened- and Toki was not entirely sure what to think of it. She wasn’t sure if he had charmed him into bed- or if Tenebris had simply had enough of his flirtations. Either way, she had to change the sheets in one of the guest rooms, and black stains did not like to come out of baby blue sheets. They were promptly thrown out of the house, and she replaced them with a set of spare ones she had.

The second snowstorm blew in during the beginning of the first week of December. When the first few inches of snow began to fall, there was a mad scramble for another order of blankets from Muffet.

The spider woman had been weaving heat-enchanted blankets for those on the surface- and she had a large order ready. But with the snowstorm incoming, there was a high risk of being trapped out in the ice with the wagon. The only ones who could safely go were the skeletons.

Papyrus and Sans had gotten geared up to go, ignoring Toki’s offer to drive them there. The chances of the truck getting stuck in the snow was too great- and after Toki had gotten sick last time, they were even more adamant that she stay back at her home where it was safe and where she couldn’t freeze.

They set off the same morning, with only a few inches of snow on the ground, but more growing every minute. Having sent the boys off with something he wanted to have given to the king, Tenebris was content as he watched them depart.

It was for naught though- the snow fell for most of the day, but eased off during the night. Rain took over during the early, and watered down the snow. The cold remained- and by noon the next day the rain and the snow had froze over into thick sheets of ice that coated everything in a treacherously
slick surface. Toki had a delivery coming- but the driver had assured her that his chains wouldn’t have a problem with the ice, so that was one blessing.

Of course, the ice wasn’t without its merits. Toki had several of the kids out on the road- the only place that the adults hadn’t gotten to trampling on and scraping into a pile of gross slush- and was in the midst of teaching them how to do a poor mockery of ice-skating. It made for a good way to entertain them- even if hitting her backside on the ice hurt.

She laughed where she sat, sprawled with her tailbone smarting in the middle of the road. Other than watching out for the delivery truck to turn the corner, the road was never busy. It was safer than trying to teach them how to skate on the frozen parts of the river. “Keep going Thumper!”

“I’m gonna get you!” The rabbit had proven to be exceptionally bad at ice-skating, and was slipping all over the place as he chased down his fellow children. Somehow the lessons had dissolved into a hilarious game of ice-tag.

Twitch, counter to her rabbit partner, was practically a natural. The light pink bunny drifted backwards, the thick ice supporting her slight weight easily enough. “Mlehhhhh.” She blew a raspberry at the gray bunny, “You’ll never catch me like that.”

Tenebris was rumbling and humming quietly as he strode over the ice, his tail swaying behind him as to keep his balance effortlessly as his feet rhythmically slid on the ice. His gaze was on the mountain, not really paying much attention to his surroundings.

The big monster was pretty graceful, she knew. But the children were not quite as graceful. Toki had managed to get to her hands and knees before one of Wolfen’s kids plowed into her front and sent her sliding over the ice rapidly. The gloves over her hands didn’t let her claws catch, so she had no way to slow herself down as she slid straight for the monster’s legs.

“Tenebris, watch out!”

"What?" He turned and tensed. "AH!"

She slams into his legs, and his large form topples over her own. She shrieks, expecting to get crushed- only for her horns to catch on his shirt, and for her body to get crushed up into the slit in his abdomen. Her arms and legs are stuck out, horn still tangled in his turtleneck, and she’s flailing faintly, muffled by the dark flesh pressing around her.

“Mister Gaster, are you okay?” Howl- the one who had ran into Toki- skittered over to the fallen monster. He was fluffy and white, with a mane of curly fur around his neck. He looked primarily like his father- except for the two curly sheep horns coming from between his ears, and the fluffy short tail that he had inherited from Bo.

A couple of the guards near the entrance began laughing- they had witnessed the pileup happening from the entryway, and that was a sight that they wouldn’t soon forget.

He groaned and turned his head to look up at Howl. "Yes child, I’m fine" he assured him, smiling gently. "Ah... Ngh. Toki, are you okay?" he asked.

Her arms flailed below him, and she kicked faintly. There is a muffled noise from inside of his chest. “Let me out!”

“I think she’s stuck, Mister Tenebris.” Howl offers the big monster a hand- he’s tiny, but stout, and he can balance well enough for the larger monster to get to his feet.
He laughed and took his help to at least get to his knees, before he reached inwards and began to untangle Toki from his clothing.

“Ack- Tenebris, that’s my horn! It doesn’t bend that way!” One of her horns had speared right through his shirt- which meant that good heavens, if it had been flesh, he would have been hurting. It takes a moment, but soon her horn is untangled, and her limbs are still flailing faintly. At least she’s upright now.

Howl hesitates once Tenebris is up, and then reaches out to tug lightly on Toki’s legs. “You’re really stuck, Miss Toki.”

He groaned at the hole in his turtleneck, but let it hook on his shield as he moved to at least get her in a position where she could move. "Oh dear..." he sighed.

It took a bit of finagling, but eventually she got both of her arms hooked where she needed them to, and pulled herself free. Thankfully, unless something went through his mouth first, it didn’t get slathered in his black slobber. So she came out onto the ice again, dry and with her clothing askew. She takes a moment to get her balance, and then glances up at Tenebris with worry. “I didn’t hit you with my horn, did I?”

“I don’t see any blood, Miss Toki.” Howl gives her a smile, and then grunts as Thumper slides into his back. He slides slightly into Tenebris- but the large monster is stable enough on his knees not to be shoved. “Ack!”

“You’re it!” Thumper crows. He scrabbles off on all fours, finding better traction using his front paws as well as his back, and escapes before the wolf child can tag him back.

“Awww,” Howl whines. “That’s not fair! I was helping Miss Toki and Mister Tenebris!”

“All’s fair in love and war!” The gray rabbit crows back.

"Where in the world did he learn that line? What books have you been giving them, Toki?" Tenebris laughed softly as he carefully got up again.

“I might have said it once or twice when we were playing tag last month. I didn’t think he heard me though. I doubt he even knows what it means.” She grins.

The little wolf monster curls his muzzle with a sigh, and then glances to Toki. He grins, and reaches out to gently tap his paw against her knee before he bolts off as fast as he can over the ice. “You’re it Miss Toki! And no tag-backs! You play dirty.”

Toki laughs and grins. “You’re learning to play by the dirty rules then. Good job Howl. Better run fast though- I’ll get Twitch to get you otherwise.” But... She grins, and her sockets glimmered up at Tenebris. She reaches out and pats his leg. “Aaaand now Tenny’s it! Run Howl, run!”

She takes off after the little wolf, grinning back over her shoulder at Tenebris.

"Well then..." He blinked once, and then he rolled his eyes a large grin growing on his face. "ALL’S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR!” he bellowed, before he lowered to all fours and took off in a fast run, laughing as he went after the children.

The children’s shrieks lit up the air, and laughter was had as they played tag. Toki had to tap out after nearly an hour, having bruised her tailbone with as many times as she’d fallen on it.

She was joined on the sidelines by a winded Thumper, settling against the wall of the compound and
well out of the way of slippery ground, and gradually many other children as well as they too tired out from struggling to stay upright on the icy road. Twitch was still going- the little bunny had proven too fast for Tenebris to catch, and was flaunting that as most children are wont to do.

She was the only one he hadn’t tagged- and the only one who still had the energy to go. The little pink bunny was far too happy to run circles around the large monster, proving that when she grew older, she’d be quite the speed demon.

“You’re too slow, Mister Tenebris!” She laughed. “You can’t catch me! You better give up before you get too tired.”

“We’ll see about that, little Twitch! I might be more aged than you are but I am still going and I don’t intend to stop anytime soon!” he laughed.

Toki simply grinned. It wasn’t often that he cut loose and just romped with anyone. Heavens knows she prodded him often enough- rarely did she get such a response. Kids had magic of their own though.

Twitch laughed heartily, slipping faintly on the ice as she cackled. “Just don’t hurt your back, Mister Tenebris. Older monsters should be careful of their health you know!” She taunts playfully. She skids behind him and ducks between his legs, sliding on her paws to reverse her direction once she’s clear of his frame.

He reared backwards and his tail dropped fast, hooking on her abdomen before pushing her back between his legs. He then snatched her up, tossed her in the air, and caught her with a laugh. "I've got you!"

Twitch shrieked with laughter as she was snagged and tossed, her ears flapping in the wind. Her eyes lit up with joy, and she laughed harder as she landed in his arms. She looped her little fingers into his sweater and beamed up at Tenebris brightly. "You win!"

There is the sound of chains over ice, and then a horn is blaring in frantic spurts. A truck turns a corner around the road, with its chains clacking uselessly over the ice. It’s moving fast- the truck that was apparently able to handle the ice and snow- and heading right for Tenebris and Twitch in the middle of the road.

He lowered the child with a smile, but turned and gasped sharply as he saw the truck. Without thinking, he turned and flung Twitch into a snow bank by the others, he then moved to run, but he was too late.

He had only made it to his lowered form before the truck struck him. There was enough energy stopped by his weight to stop the truck, but there was enough counter energy to send him into the nearest snow bank. "I-I tried to stop! The ice!" the driver stammered as he got out of the truck, coming to see the front of the truck was practically destroyed...

And covered in black blood.

Twitch had been caught by Howl- and then the children were being bustled into the compound by the guards near the gate. Two of them rushed out to the truck, two of them taking the children in- and then two more following Toki towards Tenebris. Her magic lashed outwards in a panic, and the ice around her feet melted away in a burst of steam.

The guards followed behind her. Fuck the truck, Toki thought, fuck the truck, it could be fixed. They didn’t have any healers here to fix Tenebris!
“Tenebris!” She shouted, reaching the snow bank where he had slid. Blood flecked the ice leading to it. “Oh gods…”

The guards immediately moved to dig the snow out from on top of the old monster, only stopping when moving anymore would put pressure on his form.

His wounds were considerable, and many of them bleeding. His right side had taken the most damage, his arm was mangled, and parts of the bone showing where enough pressure had blown in the flesh. His shoulder and hip looked shattered and were he not a monster, they could have been considered unfixable.

His clothes were destroyed, the warm brown-colored turtleneck now missing a large portion of its fabric and revealing that his side had been cut into as well.

His head was also bleeding, a long path of black going down his face from a gash.

This was far worse than the injuries sustained in the burning of Tokiko’s previous home.

And it worsened further when he let out a deep, weak moan, his eyes barely open, and greatly unfocused as his hands twitched, seeking something, anything...

Tenebris was still awake.

Toki’s hand came to her mouth, and a distressed sound left her. “Oh gods…” She couldn’t panic right now- the urgency of the situation wouldn’t allow for it. He needed tending. He needed healing- Fuck, they needed Aliquam. But neither brother was here. The other guards could handle the human behind the wheel. “Can you carry him?” She had no gravitational magic to put to use now- nor the strength in her body to carry him. “He needs to get inside now- the cold is going to hurt him worse with his body all torn up like this.” He needed to be warm first- with how his turtleneck and pants looked shredded from the ice. If he got too cold while he was bleeding out… He needed to stay conscious. “My house is closest. We need to be gentle- but we don’t have a stretcher. One of you- ease under his shoulders. The other- take his hips. Tenebris? Tenebris, this is going to hurt. We need to get you inside- we need you not to fight us on this, okay?”

She stooped down to take his least wounded hand in her own to give him something to cling to.

His hand tightened only a little in hers as he seemed to twitch. When the monsters started to move him however his full form tensed and he roared out in pain.

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, FUCK. Toki’s soul cried out in agony in time with his verbal roar- because holy shit, this was hurting him so bad and there was nothing she could do to ease his pain. He didn’t have anything to brace against- and squeezing her hand wasn’t working- so she did the only thing she could think of.

She shoved magic into her left forearm to reinforce her bones, and shoved it between his teeth for him to bite down on. “Shhh, Tenebris, shhh… it’ll be okay. It’s going to be okay. Bite down- focus on your jaws, don’t focus on the pain.”

The guards hustled as fast as they could while going carefully. Her house wasn’t far- it was literally just inside the compound- but they had to not jostle him. They didn’t have to worry about the ice. It melted around them under the force of Toki’s magic.

He looked up at her but ended up biting hard in pain as the guards resumed moving him. His tail dragged limp behind them, the blade plowing the ice as he was moved.
Toki would have hell to explain when the brothers got back home

Her magic strained against his jaws- they clenched with more force than she had expected, and she felt something in her arm crack ominously as her form forced more magic to brace back against his bite. This hadn’t been the smartest idea- but she hadn’t been thinking. There hadn’t been any stick near close enough to what they needed- and she couldn’t exactly go pry off the bumper of the truck that hit him to do the job either. The magic making her bones buzz numbed whatever had gave- and she urged the guards on as she rubbed soothing circles with her other hand.

It was a long, long walk for them, as they got him up the stairs and into the house. Her room was their destination- and she helped them ease him down onto the bed. She hadn’t remade it yet- all of her quilts were in the living room- so the bare sheets took the brunt of his blood as it rolled down his limbs.

She cradled his head as it was settled, having freed her hand as soon as he was set down. She rubbed her fingers soothingly over his jaw, crooning warmly in an attempt to get him to ease it open on her arm. “Get me Bo,” she turns her eyes to the guards. “Please. She can help me.”

One of the guards nodded and hurried outside as he went to get Bo. Tenebris was trembling in pain as he held onto her, refusing to release her arm.

Well, her arm wasn’t going to be let go anytime soon, was it? She tugged faintly, groaning as his grip tightened. She massaged his jaw faintly. “Can you help me with his clothes? I need to see the damage to his legs- there’s scissors in the drawer of my beside table. He’s not letting go- but he needs those cut off so we can see the extent of his damage.”

The remaining guard nodded and hurried to get the scissors, bringing them over.

As he set to removing Tenebris’ ruined clothes, Toki eased down onto the bed next to his uninjured shoulder. “Tenebris,” she cooed softly, fingers still rubbing over the taut bone of his face. He had a grip on her arm probably akin to that of a bulldog, and she wasn’t getting her bones free without his help unless she either began removing his teeth or breaking his jaw. She didn’t want to do either of those things. “I need you to let go of my arm so I can look at your wounds. Can you do that for me?”

He let out a throaty whimper as he looked up at her, before he closed his eyes and slowly opened his jaws. They stayed open as he let out pain filled pants. “Hah... haahhh…”

Her arm eased out of his mouth, and something along her radius throbbed with pain inside of her sweater sleeve. Her magic eased out of her arm, and she eased his mouth back together. “Shhh,” she soothed, “You’re alright. You’re going to be okay.”

She eased off of the bed and turned to the guard. Tenebris was mostly unclothod now, and she did her best to keep her eyes on his non-private areas. Not that there was much to see at this point anyways. Blood was everywhere...

He was actually less skeletal than she thought. He had a broad skeletal shield over his chest, but it ended about the middle of his ribs. Instead he seemed almost like he was made from living bone- or some sort of bleached white flesh. It was strange- but that was what he was made from. She’d almost say he was like a lich- but she wouldn’t want to offend him.

“Okay… okay, I can handle those wounds. I need my sewing kit…” She was bustling back to her bedside table and pulling forth her emergency sewing kit. Her medical pack from the bathroom came next- though she wasn’t sure what she’d do with it. “Fuck, there’s so much blood…” it was black, just like the saliva that stained her jacket. She had no idea what she was doing- but fuck, she had to
do something. Getting his flesh to be back in one straight piece seemed to be the best method available. No one else could heal.

The doctor is the one that got hit, after all. So she set in on the spots where the road and ice had torn him asunder, washing gravel and ice from his wounds with water fetched from the bathroom before beginning to stitch.

It wouldn’t be pretty- after all, the couch had looked like Frankenstein’s monster.

He whimpered quietly and would jerk and twitch in pain, his tail convulsing and flying in rings behind him, as if a mouse performing a post-mortem helicopter-tail, the blade was heavy enough to keep it grounded but it would get pulled with the especially hard pull of his tail's thrashing.

Toki was about half way done with his arm- the Guard having put a light amount of pressure on Tenebris’ leg with a towel to keep it bleeding- when she heard the front door bang open.

“Up here!” She calls, hearing Bo’s voice ring out. His arm was looking more together- her stitching was thick and ropy, but it was holding, and that’s what counted.

Hoofs clomp rapidly up the stairs, and the harried sheep bursts into her room. She’s got a basket on her arm, laden with salves, and she bustles for the wounded beast. She shoos the guard down to hold his tail. “I came as quickly as I could. How is he?”

“He got hit by the delivery truck outside.” So much for his fucking chains working. “I don’t know for sure- but I think his pelvis and his femur are broken. His shoulder and humerus are pretty well shattered- and he’s got a concussion. I’m trying to stitch up his wounds- but I don’t know how to set his bones.”

“We need Aliquam.” She says softly. “I don’t think Tenebris can focus enough to heal himself. He should be back in a couple of days. We can keep him stable until then.” There was no way she was risking a car trip to take him up the mountain- Shit, if she went off the road, they would be stuck. She couldn’t carry him home- and her magic would run out if the night got colder.

"Oh poor darling..." she said softly, going up to set one cool hoof on his cheek, using the other to tilt up one of his eyelids. His pupils were extremely dilated, he had little to no focus and was no doubt blinded by how much light his pupils would let in like this. "He's definitely out of it, oh poor darling..." she sighed, before letting his eyelid down again slowly. She moved away and turned to go to the bathroom. "I'll go get something to help clean up the blood."

“Towels are under the bathroom sink.” She calls. “At this point we need to stitch him up- and then wrap his wounds as best we can. I’ve got a lot of bandage wrap in my first aid box.” It was all they could do at this point. Her fingers work quickly, sewing his shoulder and arm back together. The bones are still broken- and where they peek out of the skin, she eases them back under gently.

Once his arm is back together and the stitches are keeping him from bleeding out, she starts in on his leg. There’s only a few big cuts- and those are rapidly sewn shut as well. Speedy and not the neatest- but they hold. He wouldn’t be popping a stitch like this. By the time that his leg has been cleaned out and stitched together, she’s covered in his blood. The black sludge is dark against the pale color of his legs, and she shivers. “I think I’ve got everything stitched…”

Bo had come with warm water to clean Tenebris off. Moving with a gentleness that could be considered as soft as her wool, she carefully cleaned the clotting blood, though she hesitated when she saw the reflection of the clot in the light... there was threads of bright red within the black... How... odd...
Toki didn’t notice the red- she was more focused on the black that was everywhere. Once he had been cleaned and dried, Toki began bandaging his arms. She did them tight- to keep his bones where they were as best that she could- and tried not to listen to his pained sounds when she had to pull the bandages tight. Tears beaded in her sockets- he was hurting so bad, and she couldn’t do more than this.

Once his arms and legs were bandaged, she left the scrapes on the rest of him to Bo. They just needed salve. She turned and went to his skull, gently cleansing it and beginning the wrapping process there. The spot where the blood was the thickest sported a small crack- and she bound it tightly before it could bleed more. “I am so sorry we can’t do more, Tenebris…” She murmurs, gently petting his cheek.

The male’s form was still tense, but the merciful numbing given to him by Bo's salves enabled him to tolerate the agonizing pain that burned both sides of his form. Feeling her hand on his cheek, Tenebris managed a slightly deeper breath, before he slowly let him exhale a soft, rattling noise.

“Tenebris- I’m going to check your HP, okay?” If it was high enough up, he should be able to sleep without the risk of him going into a coma. Or whatever it was that monsters did. She shifts to his chest and reaches with her magic to coax his soul out. She keeps it between her body and Bo’s, the damaged lavender shape glowing faintly in her hold. She peers at him- he had around half of his hp left out of three thousand and five hundred. His attack rested at ninety, defense a fair bit lower at seventy. She wasn’t sure what normal boss monster stats looked like- for all the times that they had seen her own, she’d never seen Caeruleus soul, or Aliquam’s.

“I think he’ll be able to sleep…” She murmurs softly. She pulses magic gently against it, bathing it in soothing warmth to try and help him relax, sort of like what Grillby had done for her. Minus the giving of magic- she was mimicking the soothing warmth that had flooded her body.

Bo nodded once as she watched him, before hearing Tenebris sigh. To him the pulse of magic made it feel like he had just sat down in a hot bathtub of water. It gave him reason to relax. After a moment, he settled down, and his tail twitched, a natural wanting to curl around his form.

“You can let his tail go now,” Toki murmurs to the guard. The guard does as asked, and eases his tail up onto the bed with him. “I think he’ll be okay to rest… Thank you for coming, Bo. Can you go see if the driver is okay? We’ll need to call a tow truck for his rig…” And she needed her supplies from the truck- but no doubt they had been unloaded already. She’d ordered some food in bulk- and a couch. A second couch, technically- to replace the one that Papyrus and her had ruined at their house. It was supposed to be a surprise, but…

“I’ll stay with him.” She says softly. “He’s going to need his rest- and I can keep an eye on him well enough.”

"Of course, dear. If you need anything, just give me a call." she nodded once to Toki, giving a soft smile before she took her leave.

Toki could do that. She gave a nod to the other guard as well. “Thank you for your help. Please- go get cleaned up and let everyone know what happened.” She keeps up the magic pulses to his soul, and swallows quietly. Her room was warm- her magic was releasing heat into the air- and it no doubt felt good over his body as well as what her magic was doing for him.

Once the guard left, she eased closer again, and sat on the edge of the bed. Her bed was massive- so there was plenty of space for her to stay close as she cradles his soul to her chest. She doesn’t touch- she doesn’t have the right to that- but she keeps the warmth going over his soul with her magic.
“Tenebris? How are you feeling? Is this helping?”

Tenebris couldn't bring forth his voice to reply, but he smiled at her, his gaze sharpening for a few seconds before losing focus again, his eyes closing.

With his concussion as it was, that would have to be answer enough. That was good enough for her. She kept his soul cradled to her chest with one hand, sitting at his least damaged side while her other hand strokes gently over his skull, mindful of his bandages as she tries to ease him into rest. Her sockets close as she sighs. She’s covered in blood- but so is her bed. There’s no point in changing if she’s just going to get dirty again.

It was going to be a long day.

Bo was kind, and brought them both some dinner once darkness fell. She managed to get him to eat a little bit of the heavily magic infused food- but he was too out of it to consume much. She sat up with him, alternating between reading silently and reading to him to help keep him relaxed while she kept him warm and repeatedly warming his soul. She didn’t want a blanket to obscure anything she might miss- like the horrible black marks blooming over his bones.

The bruises were horrifying- and she had never thought any living being could turn those sorts of colors. It was nauseating, watching them blossom over his pale frame.

It was late at night, more into the next morning, when she couldn’t take it anymore. She was tired from the activities of the day and the stress that had come afterwards. Try as she might, she couldn’t fight the pull of sleep forever. She fell asleep after tucking his soul back into his chest, with his good arm draped over her legs and a book open in her lap. The contact would help keep him warm- after all, she tended to heat things in her sleep.

Unfortunately for her, she missed the relaxing of his body. It wasn’t the sort of relaxing that came with sleep- no, this was the sort of boneless relaxation that felt more akin to liquefaction than it did relaxing.

She slept on, blissfully unaware.
Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Heheheheheh. On another note- we finally figure out that ‘illness’ that Tenebris mentioned way back in chapter four. Also Wingdings do not translate well over skype- or into AO3 for that record. So here is some garbled gibberish- enjoy.

On another note, don't forget to come visit us on our tumblr! We'd love to hear how you're freaking out over all of this. :) http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/ is where you'll find us, darlings.

Silverwing Notes: Of all the characters we have to work with, Strider and i almost Unanimously agree that Tenebris is our favorite of them to fuck up, with Toki at a close second...

Why do you people like us so much we're fucking monsters. And monster fuckers but that's a whole different topic bro.

Toki woke early the next morning to an odd sensation over her legs. It was almost wet- not quite. Warm and sticky- sort of like someone had taken a bucket of goop and poured it on her. She stretched faintly, rubbing her sockets blurrrily. It was entirely possible that it was just the blood sticking to her. It had soaked into her clothes- and she hadn’t left his side long enough to bother changing. She’d stayed on the bed- and it was no use ruining another set of clothes if he started to bleed again.

The first thought, upon opening her sockets, was that Gaster was worse off than she had thought. The black had grown, oozing over her sheets like syrup in a cold room. The problem was- it wasn’t blood.

No- it was his body.

He had sagged, his full form losing a good portion of its shape in the night. His bandages were still in place- but that was one of the only things that were solid about him other than his hands and his skull. His other arm had darkened, and had oozed partially around her leg. It encased it, but it wasn’t hard to pull away.

Her startled shriek couldn’t be stopped as she jerked away from the ooze, pulling her legs free of what had once been his body. Her hands come up to pat his face in a panic, trying to rouse him. Her magic roiled in her bones, unsure what to do and how to fix him. He wasn’t dust- so he wasn’t dead, but this… She didn’t know what this was.

“Oh gods…” His face had done the opposite of his body. Where his body was sagging, slowly turning into a dark, formless blob, his face had pulled tight. One of his sockets drooped, but his mouth pulled up into a terrifying grin. “Gaster! Tenebris! What’s happening to you? How do I fix it?”

The noise made him shift and after a moment, pupils appeared in his eyes, white dots that came to glow gently... he looked around, then began to speak, "T-*O��I?" he blinked slowly, then the
pupils turned to pin pricks and he let out a horrifying sound much akin to a scream. He knew what this was, and it was clear that he didn't like it.

The sound that came from him was inhuman, and panic made her eyes glow a bright lime. Oh gods- this wasn’t normal was it? Was this part of his condition? Oh fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck. Her hands cupped his face, and she forced him to look at her. “Oh gods, Gaster, I can’t understand you. Shhh, shhh, just- just tell me how to fix this! Speak slow, I’ll try to understand.”

His gaze darted back and forth before moving up to her. "DET ☇ ☼ MN ☁ ☀ ☠ ☇ TER ☇ INAT ON!" He spoke in a panicked voice. "TAB ☇ ☀ TS!" his gaze then resumed looking around. He had no idea where he was. Yesterday was a painful blur for him, and he had no idea that he was resting on her bed.

Deter- Deter something. Whatever it was- she needed it. She got the gist of the last word. He needed something- probably a medication. She could get it- she just needed to know where before he turned into a liquid and got absorbed into the fucking mattress. “Tablets! You need tablets! Where? At your house, I know, but where? Your room? Shit- I’m going to need to run to your house- fuck, what if you dissolve before I can get back, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck-”

He looked at her, then he looked away, his form wheezing deeper and deeper as he tried to calm himself enough to speak coherently, "... Ro ☇ ☇... Ri ☇ ☇... Top." he managed to get out. "Fro ☇ ☇... Re ☇ ☇"

“Room… Bed…” The other word was a mystery, but she got the gist. It was something in his bedroom, and it was either on top of something or in the top of something. If it were clearly labeled, she would find it. If it wasn’t… Well, she’d just grab everything she could find. And it was red, Red, she could do. “Got it. You stay here- don’t try to move and try to not melt anymore. I’ll be back.”

She bolts for the door, slamming it open, and is then rushing down her stairs. She foregoes shoes- because fuck it, she didn’t have time to find where her slippers had gotten tossed- and just books it out of the house.

It’s a little after dawn, she realizes- and no one is on the streets yet. Which is for the best- She looks like she’s been dipped in tar, and running with the panicked look on her face would probably bring a mob of monsters to her defense.

She makes it to his house in record time and tears up the stairs. His room is violated- and this is the first time she’s actually been in it. It’s militaristically simplistic- but it just fits Gaster. His bed is massive- nearly the same size as her own- with a bedside table on either side. He’s got one window, and a few shelves and book cases. She beelines it for the bed- he’d mentioned the bed. She checks the dresser on the left first- and finds nothing red or pill shaped inside.

The one on the right is ripped open as well- and there, blessedly on the top, is the bottle she needs. It’s full of red tablets, large and chalky looking. It’s the only bottle in there- the only thing with pills anywhere near the bed. This has to be it.

She takes it firmly in hand and turns, bolting out of his room again. She’s tracked mud up and down their stairs- and into his room- but she’d clean it later. She’s flying back out the front door, barely managing to shut it behind her as she takes off down the street.

It was probably the fastest Toki had moved in years- and it showed when she got home. She managed to use her magic to dry the muck at her feet, but she’s panting as she makes it up to the room.
She throws open her door and rattles the bottle, hot breaths leaving her as she flashes him the red pills. Thankfully he doesn’t look too much more gooey than when she had left. “These are the only thing I could find,” she gasps.

He looked at her, and his eyes lit up. Those were the ones he needed! "✿✿" he praised.

She didn’t understand his word- but his eyes told enough. She bustled to the bedside, twisting the cap off expertly. She eases his hand up so she can see it better, and glances to him. “Twitch your fingers if you can please. How many pills?” Shit- could he even drink water to take them like this? He would have to dry swallow.

He looked at her, and then he looked at her hand.

Twitch.

...

Twitch.

“Two?”

"Y_aligned:"

“Got it.” Two pills are taken out, the cap twisted back into place. She shifts and holds them to his mouth. “Open please- or not. You don’t have teeth. Uh… All right. I’m just going to… put these in then. Please don’t choke- I don’t know how to give a blob of goop the Heimlich.”

With that, she drops them into the fixed and parted grin on his face.

He rolled his eyes and closed them as the tablets were taken into his form, absorbing them rapidly. After a while, he takes a deep wheeze, and relaxes. The flowing and oozing motion of his form melting comes to an abrupt halt as the determination floods his body.

As his melting stops, Toki relaxes. “Shit… Shit… Okay… Fuck…” The pills are set onto her bedside table- because shit, he needs these things or he’s going to turn more and more into a pile of goop. “Shit… Okay. I’m just… Gonna sit here a second. I think you scared ten years off of my life span, Gaster. Gods above.” She eases onto the bed, trying not to sit on any of his goop, and cradles her skull in her hands.

Holy shit.

That was… That was a nightmare worthy experience.

The melting stopped, Tenebris is able to find himself able to relax in this time of pure numbness, though, after a while, he took a deep wheeze, and then exhaled a soft chuckle.

She paused. Was… Was he laughing? She turned to face him.

The bastard was chuckling.

“You… You right bastard,” she hissed. “This is not funny! I wake up to you literally melting into my fucking bones, and then you freaked out when I woke you up! Fucking hell, Gaster, it’s not funny!”

He looked at her, then he did it again, but this time it was accompanied by harder jerks in his chest, fluid pooling at his eyes.
Was he laughing? Was he crying? Both.

Fuck.

“Fuck, fuck, sorry, god, shit…” She scoots up the bed some, and hesitantly eases her arms around where his neck would be. She doesn’t touch the blob that was his shoulder- was still his shoulder, with the amount of bandages holding it in place- and instead dabs at his inky black tears with her hand. “Shit. Sorry. I forgot it was probably scary for you too. It’s going to be okay, Gaster. Shhh…” She pulses her magic gently over his face in an attempt to soothe him. No way was she pulling his soul right now. “But seriously- you asshole. If you hadn’t been so secretive and maybe warned me that you took daily meds, I could have known to have gotten them sooner or something.”

He looked up at her then he chuckled again and his pupils dimmed as he turned his head to rest it on her arm, "I’m so sorry me friend."

She paused, trying to decipher his words. “I didn’t catch most of that,” she says softly, “But I think I get the gist. It’s… okay I guess. I know now- but it would have been useful to know before, you know?” her fingers stroke soothing circles over his skull, and she cradles him as best she can. “Will you reform like you were before…?”

"Ye, of course" he purred quietly, his eyes closing.

She strokes his skull- his calm is good, even if she doesn’t fully understand him. She sighs softly, and leans down to press a soft kiss to the crown of his skull. “Going to tell you now- if you ever scare me like that again, I will do unspeakable things in revenge. I promise you now.”

He just let another chuckle pass, looking up with her as his pupils started to darken, a ring of deep purple forming around them, already signs of his recovery.

The color returning was good. She sighed, and patted his cheek. “I’m serious.” She gives him her most serious face. “Very serious. Anyways, I’m going to go get my quilt from downstairs. Now that you’re conscious, you’re going to need to keep warm. I’ll be right back.”

She pulls from him again, watching as the goop of his body starts to shift further into him. Good. Good.

She has to take a moment outside of the door to calm the rapid thumping of her soul- panic was never a good emotion to feel. A quick trip down the stairs has her with a quilt in hand, and then she’s returning to her room. She’s a bloody mess- literally and figuratively- and is beginning to ponder just saying to hell with it and changing anyways.

Toki drapes the quilt over him carefully, and then pads to her dresser. “I need to clean up. I didn’t take the time to yesterday- and your blood is starting to itch on my bones. If you need at me, just holler.” The computer generated sounds that whatever that language made was startling enough to draw her attention from anywhere, she is very sure.

Fair enough. He relaxed and closed his eyes, going to wait this out until he was intact once more.

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Toki had just gotten clean- discovering a small and mildly painful fracture on her radius from where he’d bitten her while she was at it- and into a change of new clothes when she heard the door below being knocked on. Frantic knocking, in fact.

She groans faintly and steps out of the bathroom, rolling the sleeves of her shirt down to her wrists. Her sweater was warm, and it covered the aching crack in her radius. At least she looks less like she’s been doing vulgar things to a squid. “You’re looking better all ready.” She informs the big not-
quite-solid yet monster taking over her bed. “Someone’s downstairs- so I’ll be back shortly, alright? You rest up. Call me if you need me.”

Once he gives her the okay, she heads down stairs, tiredly plodding for her door.

“Hello?”

"A-Are you Tokiko Nara?” A humanoid Fox monster was standing on the other side of the door, holding two scared looking human children close to his form. The fox monster, a male by his voice, was the average size of an adult human man. "Y-You have to help me... please..."

He was just a hair shorter than her, she noticed. She eyed the children, and the battered looking appearance of the man before her, and stepped aside. “You can call me Toki.” She smiles. “Come in, please. You’re safe here,” she soothes softly. She doesn’t reach for him- the swelling in his eye and the ragged appearance of his fur keeps her from doing so- but she offers him a genuinely kind smile. “Do you need a place to stay, Mister…?”

"M-My name is Todd, Todd Hanes... Th-thank you so much...” he coaxed the children inside and took them to the couch, sitting them down before he looked them over. He comforted the younger of the two, a girl who was crying into her fists. The other brother sporting a small cut on his head, with a stubborn refuse-to-cry look on his face, refused to be held close. He glared up at her warily.

“My home will always be a safe place for people like us, and the families of us people.” She smiles warmly. She shuts the door firmly behind them and follows, adjusting her sleeves slightly as she pauses by the entry to the living room. “Todd? Can I ask what happened to cause you to come here? You’re the first that we’ve had come to us.”

"... I... I finished my change early this morning... My wife... she freaked out... said that it was going to happen to our children too, that we were... filthy. That we were... tainted.” he whispered softly, "She... She hit me first, and then she grabbed a knife..." he looked shaken, sounded even more so, "I had to grab the kids... and run for it."

She glanced at the children- they didn’t look sick, or to even be remotely showing the signs. Her eye lights flicked back to him though, and she nodded softly. “You are safe here, Todd. I wont let her hurt you. What is her name?” She could tell the guards to be on the lookout for her. “Do you think she would follow you here?” Most humans weren’t brave enough to enter the compound if they had anti-monster mentality. HAM was an unfortunate exception to this usual rule.

"V-Vikki. Her name's Vikki. She... She might? I don’t know- We have two cars, and I took the faster of the two, but... I don’t know. She was... She was..."

“Vikki then. Easy, Todd. Breathe deep for me, okay? Keep calm.” She nods. She coaxes him through a few calming breaths, and then continues once the fox is out of danger of hyperventilating. “Vikki wont hurt you or your children while you are under my roof. C’mon. Lets go get your wounds bandaged- if that’s okay. You all look like you could use some food and rest.”

"That'd be wonderful... Thank you so much, I hope this isn't anything too out of the way for you..."

“Oh goodness no, it’s no problem at all.” She gives him a bright smile. “I do have a guest right now though- he’s really badly hurt, and can be a bit grumpy. He wont hurt you- but I just want to warn you that he’s probably not going to be a pretty sight if you see him. He’s in my room right now- Follow me. I’ll show you to the guest room and get my first aid kit. Once we get you all patched up, I can make you some breakfast while you get settled in. Does that sound all right to you three? Ah... What are your little one’s names?”
"This is Felix," he gestured to his son, who looked up at her quietly, "and Rosie." he hugged the girl gently to hush her, letting her hide her face in his shoulder.

"Felix and Rosie. It’s nice to meet you both." They get soft smiles, before she’s motioning for them to follow her. “C’mon. Lets get you a room- are you okay sharing one?” She wasn’t sure if he’d want his kids close- they were still young enough to share a bed for a couple of nights until their father’s nerves wore off.

"Yes, that won’t be any trouble at all." Todd said with a smile, while Felix reached up and took his sister's hand.

Both children were quiet- but after witnessing their mother apparently trying to murder them… She could understand their silence. They might loosen up once they’d had some time to settle in. She smiles at them kindly still, and leads the way up the stairs. “Here- this one is across from my room, in case you need me. I’ll give you a moment to get settled in while I go get my medical kit. I’ll be right back, I promise.” A soothing smile is shot to Todd as she opens the door to the extra room, and then steps back to let them in.

She turns to go into her room, gaze flicking over to Tenebris as she does so. “We have guests- they’re going to be here for a little while, I think.”

"Mmm..." Tenebris' face had been released from its set position, his mouth closed in a neutral frown while his eyes were closed. He seemed set on resting for now.

“You keep resting.” She smiles tiredly. She collects her first aid kit, adjusting the blanket to better cover him and keep him warm, and then ducks back out of the room. She heads across the hall and into the open door of the room. “Alright- do you need my help to patch you all up?” She wasn’t sure what Todd did for a living- but obviously a nurse wouldn’t need a lot of help form her if he was one. She probably wouldn’t do half as good of a job as a nurse would.

"A-Actually, no! I'm all right to treat these with what you have there." he said with a hesitant smile. "I... was actually a medical assistant, at the Ebott City Hospital."

Relief floods her. “Goodness, you are a godsend. I’m not good at medical things.” Tenebris’ stitches were terrible things to see. “Alright… Alright. I’ll let you take care of your kids- and I’ll go do something productive.” He probably needed a moment to just calm down and realize he was safe. The poor fox was absolutely haggard looking- it was a several hour drive out to here, and it was still early. Who knew what time it was that he made the change? “How do pancakes and eggs sound?” She’d make it with magic in it- something she was getting good at- to encourage those bruises and cuts to heal. The father could probably use it too- Monster food was good for one’s HP, and there was no telling what sort of stats he had. She couldn’t see souls while they were still inside.

Rosie sniffled faintly, clinging tightly to her brother’s hand. “Sounds okay…” She whispered.

“Then that’s what I’ll do. You three take some time to yourselves, okay? Relax and rest. You’re safe here.”

"I would have thought monsterkind has doctors." he said quietly, before he sighed and gave her a happy smile. His tail behind him, though ruffled up, starting to wag slowly in the impromptu hole he’d had to tear in his pants. "Thank you so much, Miss Nara." he murmured softly, "You really are a miracle to monsterkind." This new monster would bring his experience of the human world with him, the good, and the bad. But the way he smiled at her with so much happiness, it was clear that he would follow the tales of the good if it meant a new, happy life the way he was now. "O-Oh, before I forget, where's this home's restroom? In case one of them needs to go." he asked,
gesturing to the children who were seeming to settle down well enough on the large bed.

“Trust me, Todd, you wouldn’t be the first one to tell me I’m a miracle.” Toki chuckles faintly, though it fades off after a few scant seconds. “Our doctor is currently in my room.” She sighs.

“There was an incident yesterday with the ice outside and a delivery truck. Tenebris got hurt- and his son, who also knows how to heal, is currently on his way back from the castle. With luck he will be here tonight- but it’s possible he wont be here until as late as early tomorrow morning. Otherwise I’m very sure he’d be out here healing your wounds and checking on your HP.” She steps out the door and points down the hall. “The door at the very end of the hall is the bathroom- and you’re all welcome to it. You look like you could use a hot shower. I’ll have an icepack ready for you when breakfast is ready- there are some spare clothes in the dresser. They’re my size- but you’re close to my size too, I think. I buy larger than I need anyways. Get changed and get settled in.”

"I hope he's alright," he said softly, before he smiled and stood, "You two stay here, I'll be right back." he murmured softly to his children, before he went to go take that shower.

Toki watched him go, and then closed the bedroom door after waving to the kids. Tenebris would be fine for now- when he was feeling up to it, and was fully reformed into his prior shape, she’d ask Todd to maybe take a look at him. He might know how to properly bind and set the bones, at least until Aliquam came back.

She padded down the stairs, scrubbing a hand over her face with a sigh. This was unexpected- but she wouldn’t turn him away. It made her sad- just how many men and women alike were subjected to spousal abuse because of the change? She was surprised that it wasn’t the other way around- but, she mused, it wasn’t just women that could be abused either. His wife had tried to remove the problem with him and his children- and she was eerily reminded of the HAM agents. They had intended to kill anyone with ties to monster blood.

Genocide was a serious threat. No one really knew how big HAM stretched- or how many members there were. There were a few attacks on the news- where humans who had either changed or hadn’t yet made it were attacked- but nothing had been fatal yet. The only fatal attack from HAM that she had seen had been the loss of Hound. But there had been more sent to hospitals or monster healers than anything else.

She tugged at her sweater, bones rattling with a nervous energy, and plodded into the kitchen to put her apron on. Food first- she could set to warning the guards about Vikki once everything was properly working in the village. It was early still- she’d catch them best by the lunch rotation.

“Pancakes and eggs,” she hums softly, a light tune of song being rumbled from her chest, “do the soul good. Mmm. I wonder if I have any syrup…” She knew she had some honey- not homegrown, but it was still good honey. She could mix it into the batter- it added sweetness to the pancakes that just made them divine.

It was about a half hour until they came back down. This had been enough time for all three to get bathed and cleaned up, with a bandage on Felix’s cut. Todd still had a towel around his neck, using the towel to rub the fur around his head and shoulders. He was going to have to get used to that.

“Over here!” Toki calls from the kitchen. She was just finishing up the last of the food- which was heavy with infused magic. It wasn’t particularly healing magic- but at this point, the magic itself would help bolster the healing process.

She has four plates set on the counter, and a fifth off to the side and covered in foil. The fifth is set for Tenebris to eat when he was feeling up to it.
The last of the pancakes are shunted off onto a serving platter, and smiles as she turns off the griddle. Her hands are dusted off on her apron, and then she’s working to untie it.

"I do apologize if I trail water around, my... fur is still quite wet..." He admitted as he walked into the kitchen with his children following behind him.

She turns to face him and can’t help the giggle that escapes. He looked like a fox that took a dip in the river. “Oh my. So it is. If you’d like, I can help you dry it while the kids grab their food. Dining room is that way, little ones- salt, pepper, syrup, and all of the breakfast additives are already on the table. Feel free to take as much pancakes and eggs as you want- I made a lot of extra.” She’d even gotten the silverware out and set to rights.

"I suppose some help would be nice." he laughed quietly.

Both children edged around them both. Felix gave her a slightly less grumpy look, but it was his sister that gave her a hesitant but warm ‘thank you’ as they went to get their food. Felix didn’t look as grumpy as prior- but there was a definitive edge to his faint smile that Toki identified as the ‘hungry boy’ look.

Having helped raise her brothers had its perks.

She watched them go with a smile, and then freed herself from her apron. It’s tossed on an unoccupied counter, before she offers him her hands. The bones were clean, thankfully. Making pancakes did not always end up messy- and she didn’t have to scrub batter from between her bones. “Alright. May I have your hands?”

He reached hesitantly and took her hands. His hands were smooth and damp, covered in fur despite their relatively human shape. "Alright..."

The kids slipped past them into the dining room with plates loaded with food. They gave them a curious look, but didn’t linger.

Toki tightened her fingers on his and gave him a soothing smile. Belatedly, she realizes that a soothing smile from her might be like getting a grin from a crocodile. Oh well. She can’t do anything about her teeth. Eye lights dancing warmly, she shifts her grip and hums softly. “Don’t panic- I’m going to use my magic to dry you. It might feel a little warm, but I won’t burn you. I promise.”

With that said, she opens up the well of her magic, and lets it flow over her bones. They buzz faintly against his fingers, before steam rises from his fur in a thick cloud, billowing up to the ceiling before disappearing.

The steam is not the only thing that rises up.

He shivers at first, smiling at how nice the heat felt, but suddenly he realized exactly what causes the sudden silence in the kitchen. He opened his eyes, looking at his body.

"Oh. My god." Without hesitation he let go of Toki and bolted past her, going into the dining room and opening his arms. "Rosie! Look at Papa!" he laughed, revealing to his daughter that he was now less a fox and more a walking FLUFFBALL.

“You’re so fluffy!” Bright green eyes twinkled at him as the little girl began to laugh. It was shaky at first, but continually staring at the fluffy mass of monster in front of her began to ease the nerves in her chest. Daddy was still daddy, even if mommy wasn’t nice anymore.

Felix nearly chokes on eggs as he covers a laugh at his dad’s expense.
Toki began to laugh, covering her mouth as a gleeful amusement filled her. She hadn’t expected him to fluff out like that. “Alright, Mister Fluffykins, don’t forget to get a plate of your own. I didn’t expect you to fluff like that- but then and again, I don’t work with fur on a usual basis.”

"Of course, of course, but Rosie always had a passion for fluffy things, so I’m going to let her have her fun first," he chuckled, going to sit down by his daughter.

Rosie was all too happy to oblige in her passion- and her fingers thread through the fur of his arm with happy curiosity. She beams, rubbing over the soft fur. “It’s so soft!” She smiles. “I wish I had fur like this.”

Toki just smiled. She’d make him a plate. Parents could often forget to feed themselves in their desires to insure their children’s well being. He seemed like a very good dad- and his children obviously loved him.

A quick trip to the kitchen and back, and she returns with two plates. One is set in front of Todd, and the other is settled in front of her as she takes a seat across from the family. Where Felix appears to have drowned everything in ketchup, Toki does the equivalent with honey instead.

Felix stares in mild and unhidden disgust as he watches her take a bite of the sticky concoction on her plate. “Honey on eggs?”

“Honey goes good on everything.” Toki winks. "I think you'd like one of my friends, Felix. He likes ketchup too." Ketchup on eggs was pretty good- but on pancakes?

Todd chuckled, eating idly with one hand while his daughter commandeered the other one. "I never figured out where he got that habit. As long as he washes his plate after he's done, I’m happy." he commented.

“You lucky dog- Sans always avoids doing dishes whenever he’s over. Ketchup is nearly impossible to get off once it dries.” She chuckles. Her pancakes were amazing- and a pleased rattle escapes her ribs. “How do you guys like the pancakes?”

“They’re really good, Miss Nara.” Rosie smiles at her slightly, and nibbles at part of an egg. “They make my mouth tingly though.”

“That’s the magic.” She nods with a smile. “I’m no doctor, but I’ve worked alongside the monsters long enough to know some tricks. Magic infused food is good for healing and restoring any lost HP.”

"You also seem to have this way of making it feel like you just draped yourself in a blanket that's fresh from the dryer." Todd laughed softly.

“That’s how my magic works. I’ve got fire-based magic- so my magic feels warm. It’s really handy when I have to warm things up.” The honey makes the egg stick to her teeth, but she enjoys it regardless.

“You’ve mentioned that twice now. HP, that is.” Felix fiddles with his pancakes, taking a bite that is heaping with far too much ketchup to be healthy. At least he doesn’t seem upset about eating magic pancakes. “What is HP?”

“It’s tied to your soul, actually.” Toki smiles. “I’m still learning about how to be a monster myself- but I know that HP and souls are actually relevant to both humans and monsters. It’s actually really cool.”
"That's really interesting." Todd commented quietly, "I do believe I have much to learn about this new life I'll be living, huh? All of this about Souls... it sounds amazing."

“I’ve been around monsters since the Emergence- but I’m always learning something new every day.” Toki gives him a small grin. “Sometimes it seems pretty far out there- but it’s all real. Souls are actually really cool- you can pull them out and see them. It’s the culmination of your entire being- and you can hold it in your hand. It’s kind of scary- but really nifty.”

“Really?” Rosie blinked. “You can just... pull your soul out? Doesn’t it hurt?”

“Not if you’re gentle.” Toki chirps softly.

"That's amazing. How is that done?" he inquired.

“You can use magic to draw it out. Ah... Would you like to see how?” Tenebris had shown her his soul once upon a time- back when she was still human. She leans back in her seat and brushes her fingers against her sternum. It wasn’t really that invasive for her to show him- he needed to know what it was like, so he wouldn’t freak out if someone ever pulled his. The children too- the monster kids were always comparing souls and ‘stats’ as it were. Twitch was the proud owner of the highest speed stat, and liked to boast about it. “I can show you mine if you promise not to touch.”

"Sure... What do you two say?" Todd looked at his children, propping his chin in his palm.

“Sure! I wanna see what a soul looks like.” Rosie grins. “I’ll keep my hands to myself, I promise.”

Felix shrugged. “I guess.”

Toki nods. “Alright then. Watch closely.” They wouldn’t be able to see the magic that she wove- not even she could do that- but they would see the strong green glow that began to bubble behind her red sweater. Her soul squishes out of her chest, and hovers in her hand. She makes note that the cracks in it have healed further, since she last checked. The ones that remain are glowing as bright a red as they usually do. “This is my soul. I have a human soul- as far as we know; most HTM’s have human souls. I haven’t actually got to meet another HTM yet to confirm this, but... yeah.”

Rosie’s eyes lit up. “Wow! It’s really pretty. It matches your eyes when they do the glowing thing! Why’s it green? Couldn’t it be pink? What’s with the red lines?”

Toki chuckles. “The color actually depends upon your strongest trait. Mine is kindness, so my soul is green. I know a monster with a lavender soul- but I don’t know of anyone who has a pink soul. You see how mine is a right side up heart? Monster souls are upside down. It’s really cool. The red lines are actually some damage on my soul. It’s healing though, so I’m getting better. It’s why I didn’t want you to touch it- the red marks tend to shock whoever touches them.”

Her gaze flicks to Todd, curious about his reaction to seeing her soul.

His ears were standing straight up as he looked at her soul. The colors were magnificent, if he had to say so himself. The cracks were odd and concerning- because something to crack a soul had to have been a terrible incident- but he supposed if they were healing then that was good as well. "Oh, wow...” he murmured gently.

“Mhm.” Toki let them look for a moment more before she tucked her soul back into her chest. She shivered, and finished off her pancakes. “That’s what a soul generally looks like though. It’s pretty cool. It shows your stats as well- but those are confusing and I don’t entirely understand them all that well yet.” She wasn’t sure why she had a defense of two hundred- which was astoundingly high, considering how well her bones broke against physical attacks. Her radius was still sore from
Tenebris- but that was her own foolish fault there. “If you’d like, you can eventually learn how to do it too.”

“That’s really cool!” Rosie finished gobbling up her breakfast, and then turned her wide eyes to Toki. “Can I see my soul? Will you show me? Pretty please? I bet it’s pink! Or purple! Ooo, I hope it’s pretty.”

“Uh… That’d be up to your dad, kiddo. Souls are a pretty personal business. It can leave you feeling pretty weird afterwards- and you’ve all had a long day.”

"It's absolutely painless right?" Todd asked, just to be sure.

Toki nods. “I had my soul removed once when I was human- I felt a little bit cold, but I think that was tied into the nature of my magic. It didn’t hurt at all, I promise.”

"Alright, just for a moment, okay Rosie?"

“Okay, Daddy!” She beams at him. She hops out of her seat when Toki beckons her closer, and takes the seat next to the skeleton. “Okay, so what do I do?”

“Just sit still, and be calm.” She smiles at her. She reaches in with her magic. Finding Rosie’s soul is easy- and it slips from the little girl’s body without much issue. It really was a novelty to her- but she was sure it was part of her human nature. Seeing souls was always amazing.

She holds the little soul up, and grins. It’s not even half the size of her soul- which is strange, but given her age, she can understand it. It was a pale pink color.

“I don’t know what pink means- but I can ask Tenebris when he’s feeling better.”

Rosie positively glows. “It’s so pretty! Daddy look! It’s pink!”

"Oh would you look at that." he laughed, "I'm glad, Rosie, it's a perfect color for you."

Toki laughs, and eases it back into the girl’s chest. “Mhm. It is a very fitting color.”

Rosie bounces back to her side of the table and nudges her brother. “Felix! Felix, you should have her check your soul too! I bet yours is all dark and stuff ‘cause you’re such a grumpy butt.”

He stuck his tongue out at her and shook his head. “Nuh. I’m good. Souls and stuff- seems pretty heavy.”

"I suppose I’d like to see mine too, if you can help me summon it." Todd rumbled faintly.

Toki nodded and waved him to her side of the table. Once he joined her, she held out her hands and smiled. “Focus on the feeling of it being drawn out. It’s the feeling you’ll need to use when you want to draw it out yourself.” Her magic slid into his chest, and she eased his soul out into the grasp of her magic.

Hovering in her palm was a small green soul. It was a bit bigger than Rosie’s, but vastly smaller than her own. It was a lighter color of green, more the color of a sun-lit canopy than the brilliant emerald of her own.

“Green.” She whispered softly, eye-lights wide. “You’re green.”

She couldn’t help but to peer at his soul- at his stats as well. His health was hilariously low compared to hers. His HP rested at about two hundred and fifty when full, with his attack at a two and defense
at a three. Her health and defense stat outclassed his by far.

He took a soft breath as he watched her, then he looked at her, "Green... is it a bad thing?" he asked.

"Mine is green too, if you recall." She smiles despite her words, and holds his soul out for him to inspect. He, like his daughter, doesn’t have any flaws on his soul. "Green stands for kindness- and I have been informed that it is a rare color of soul to have. Its... it’s nice to see that there are other kind people out in the world."

"O-Oh... heh..." he rubbed his head, looking at his soul, "Kindness." he repeated, before he laughed quietly, "I'm glad..."

“It’s a good color.” She assures him. She eases it back into his chest, and then grins at him.
“Definitely going to talk to Tenebris about all of this. It’s really cool- I didn’t know souls could be different sizes.”

Toki chuckles faintly, and then stands to take her plate. She reaches across for Rosie’s empty plate- and is summarily slid Felix’s not entirely empty plate as well. “Why don’t you finish eating, Todd. I’ll go get these soaking, and then you three can relax in the living room. I have some movies,” She’d finally gotten more copies of the old Disney shows, “That you can put on and relax to. I need to check on Tenebris.”

"Thank you so much, Miss Toki.” He smiled at her slightly, and slid his plate over to resume his meal.

“When you’re done, just set the plate in the sink. I’ll get to it later.” Toki simply smiled, and was quick to put the dishes into a sink full of water. It would keep everything soggy enough to clean it when she got around to doing it. Procrastination at it’s finest, right there.

She balances Tenebris’ food in one hand, and points Rosie at her collection of Disney DVD’s with the other. The girl snags her brother- who puts on one heck of a show of grumping despite how easily he was tugged to the massive couch- and goes to pick out a movie.

“I want to watch Finding Nemo.”

“Rosie, we watch that one often enough at home. Why don’t we watch The Lion King?”

“No way! Nemo is the best.”

“But the lions are fluffier.”

“Hnnng... You drive a hard bargain. You know the hyena’s scare me!”

“How about something fluffy that doesn’t have hyenas?”

“Like what?”

The children’s discussion fades from her ears as she heads up the stairs. She doesn’t bother knocking, instead stepping into her room with a flourish. She has to switch the plate to her other hand as she does so, but it’s no big deal. “Tenebris? I made breakfast.” And with a bit of magical manipulation, it would even be steaming under the foil.

"Mmm... Toki..." he purred quietly from where he lay on the bed, his form almost restored now.

“Hey there,” She grins. She pads closer to the bed, and sits at the edge. “Do you think you’re up for
some food?"

"Not yet, I’m afraid." he sighed.

“That’s okay.” She nods. Toki sets the plate on the side table, leaving the foil to keep in the heat. Running her fingers over his skull, she peers into his sockets with a soft frown. “You’re still pretty concussed,” she sighs. “I don’t know if you were fully coherent earlier. We have guests- and they’re going to be here for a while I think. He’s an HTM like me, and he’s got two sweet little human kids.”

"I'm glad..." he sighed softly, "I... can't wait to meet him.”

“When you’re feeling up to it, I was thinking he could look at your limbs. He worked at a hospital- so he’s going to know more about what he’s doing than I am. He might know how to wrap them better.” She smiles faintly. She brushes over his skull again, and thrums. Magic runs over him, giving him an extra boost of warmth to keep him going. She was going to be back and forth after all- she wouldn’t be here to keep the room hot all day. “His name is Todd- Todd Hanes. His kids are Felix and Rosie. Felix is a bit of a grump- but after the morning they’ve had…”

"Mmm..." he purred deeply, then looked up at her. "Are they okay?"

“Todd’s face is pretty messed up,” she admits. “And I couldn’t see if he had any other wounds. He seemed to be walking okay- so I’m pretty sure it was just his face, and maybe some bruises elsewhere. Felix has a cut on his forehead, but his dad managed to fix it up. Rosie’s just fine. Ah… Todd completed his change this morning. His wife came after him and the kids with a knife because of it.”

He looked at her for a moment, silent, and then he winced as he shifted. He was trying to get up.

She planted a hand in the middle of his chest and glared at him. The sad fact was, it wasn’t hard to keep him gently pressed down. “No.” She says firmly. “If I have to tie you to this bed, I will. No getting up. Monsters don’t have to use the bathroom, so you can’t even make that excuse. You’re stuck here until Aliquam gets back to fix you.”

He let out a soft groan, looking up at her with stubbornly furrowed brows.

“If you stay on this bed until Aliquam comes back, I will lift the no-smoking rule in the house while you’re bedridden.” And that was being generous- while Tenebris’ pipe did not smell very bad, she wasn’t fully comfortable with extra smoke being in her house for understandable reasons. Even if the smoke smelled like spearmint.

"........." That got his attention, and he sighed, "Could I do a smoking-bowl instead? Just smoke the leaves on my bedside?" he requested.

She made a face. That would put more smoke smell into her room. “If you help me scrub the smoke off my ceilings when you’re better, then yes.”

"..." He sighed, and then nodded. "Deal."

“Good.” She took her hand from his chest and gave him a smile. “I’ll go get a bowl for you now. Your tobacco is probably still in your coat.” Which had been flung off to the side of the room when the guard had helped her undress him. “You sit tight and rest.”

"Spearmint." he corrected after her.
“Yeah, yeah, smoke is smoke even if it smells good. And it still stains things.”

She flashes him a smile and heads out the door. She’s plodding down the stairs, hearing the beginnings of 101 Dalmatians starting to play, when she spots Todd herding the children towards the stairs.

Knocking at the front door registers in her ears.

Todd’s bright blue eyes were blown wide with panic, even the one that was bruised and partially swollen. “Vikki’s outside!” He hisses. “She’s at the door!”

The day could not get any worse, could it?
When he said he hadn’t known if she was following them or not, he had been right. He hadn’t known. But she was here- and knocking at Toki’s door. Toki couldn’t just ignore her- if she was violent with her husband and children, there’s no knowing what she would do to an unsuspecting guard.

Toki ushered the three of them into the room they had been in before. “Keep the door shut,” She says. “Keep it closed until I come knock. I’ll let you know when she’s gone away.”

Todd hugged his children tightly as he nodded to her. Pushing the door closed behind him, he moved his children to the bed and held them tightly.

Once the door was firmly shut, Toki headed back down the stairs. It didn’t take her long to get to the door, and she listened to the impatient tapping of shoes against her front porch. She couldn’t tell what type of shoes- but the tapping was more and more impatient the longer that she waited. Finally she leaned up, peeking through the peephole in the center of the door.

The woman on the other side was short, broad in the shoulders. She had curly brown hair, and was glaring up at the door with the same green eyes that Rosie had. She was worrying her lip- but Toki couldn’t see past the woman’s chest to see what she kept glancing down at.

Toki steeled herself and grimaced. Vikki wasn’t exactly what she had imagined when she thought of spousal abuser. Vikki looked like an overly fit soccer mom- like she should be out on the field encouraging kids to run faster. Well- one could never tell a person by their cover, could they? It explained why the guards hadn’t stopped her- Vikki looked harmless, and as good as the guards could be, sometimes an unassuming aura could get past them.

She wondered what sort of story that the human had spun to them.

She put a fixed grin on her face, making her teeth look a bit sharper than she usually tried, and opened the door. Behind her, she can hear the start of the ‘Cruella de Vil’ song being sung.
“Cruella De Vil, Cruella De Vil. If she doesn’t scare you, no evil thing will…”

“Vikki, I assume.” Toki’s voice oozed a calm politeness that was most certainly fake, but did its job well enough. “I’m going to have to ask you to leave my property immediately.”

To her credit, Vikki only looked mildly startled to be face to face with a much taller fang-toothed skeleton monster. She recovered swiftly though, and her lips curled up into a disgusted look as she recognized the face she was staring at. After all- if you didn’t know the face of the woman who hosted the largest settlement of monsters in the country, then you lived under a rock. "If you know my name then that stupid fucking fox is here. Tell him to get his fucking ass out here now."

“That _man_,” she stresses the word, “Came to me after you went after him and your children with a knife. Todd came to me with signs of spousal abuse- with a story of attempted murder. No, Vikki. I’m going to have to ask you to leave again.” She keeps eye contact with her, letting her shoulders square out as she leans down so she is pretty much face to face. Her teeth grit and she lets them grind faintly to spout off sparks. Her arms come to block the doorway so that she can’t slip past her into the house. “He is a guest seeking sanctuary under my roof- and it’s something that we offered to all families with family members who made the change. So please. Turn around and leave and don’t come back.”

"No. I'm not going to leave, until that stupid fox is dead!" Her eyes glinted- not with fury, not with rage, but a bone chilling calm. She knew very well what she was doing. Vikki swung her arm up, and then down.

The crowbar that Toki hadn’t seen cracked down on the top of her skull. She hadn’t had time to pull back- no, she had been lost in the look in Vikki’s eyes. She honestly believed that she was right to murder her husband and her children, and that she was justified in doing so- and that had frozen her solid.

Pain split her skull open as the crowbar glanced off her horns in a shower of sparks, and she stumbled back as the bar slid down and struck over the large crack in her skull. The sound of bone cracking was loud, and one of her eyes went blind as she reflexively shut it. Stars danced in her skull as she staggered back into the main room with a pained shout, one hand coming up to clutch over her socket. Shit- the human had cracked from the scar on her skull down to the top of her eye socket. Droplets of green magic beaded at the edges of the hairline crack and rolled down her face.

Unafraid, she storms forward into the house, hefting her weapon upwards. The woman is loud as she shouts angrily. "WHERE ARE YOU, YOU DISGUSTING BEAST?"

There was a startled noise from upstairs- one that Toki’s ringing skull distinctively picked out as a startled noise from the children- that drew Vikki’s gaze.

She was not going to hurt those children. It had been many years since Toki had last had an actual fight- and she was far too much out of shape for it- but like hell was she going to stand by. Toki was going to have to knuckle-up and do something about it.

She lunged for the back of Vikki’s skull as the woman turned to go towards the stairs. Her claws hooked into her hair, and she flung the woman away. She ended up shoving towards her kitchen- but that would work just fine. “I warned you to leave.” She hisses, planting herself in the way of Vikki and the stairs. She drops her hand from her socket, and her eye light turns on. Seeing hurts- but not even as close to her chest had hurt from the shattering. “I asked you nicely to vacate the premises of my property. And now you’re threatening my guests. You’re not going to touch anyone. Last chance. Pick the shattered pieces of your pride up and walk out the front door now.”
She snarled as her hair was grabbed and she hit the ground, "Ghn..." she reached and rubbed her head, then stood up with the crowbar in hand. "I'm not leaving, that stupid fox needs to pay for what he's done!"

“And what has he done?” She snarled. Her mouth slid open to enunciate her words, and she let the sparks flicker from her teeth while the magic in her body began buzzing in her bones. “He has done nothing that he could control! No one chooses to become an HTM, Vikki. You are his wife! You should have loved and supported him- to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, if I recall my brother’s wedding vows right. Just because he’s covered in fur doesn’t mean he’s a different person!”

Toki doesn’t have anything in hand to defend against that crowbar- so her best bet is to rush her. She hasn’t ever brawled in an unfair fight. Back when she used to get into spats with people picking on her brothers, it had been fistfights. Always fistfights. The crowbar had her wary- so she stood her ground for the time being.

"What am I going to do if I’m married to a damn fox!? I don't want people getting ideas about me suddenly having interest in fucking a fox! And my children! They're better off dying as humans than growing up and turning into THAT!" She shakes her head and sneers. “You monsters are a blight upon this world. It’s wrong- it’s hubris, monsters having children with humans. But here they are- proof that our ancestors didn’t have an ounce of shame for fornicating with beasts. And we-we are going to cleanse this planet of the plague that has washed over us. This place- this plague vector- will be wiped clean."

“They’re not going to turn into what he is! If they were, they would have by now! You obviously lack the genetic code that causes the mutation, or they would be monsters.” Toki bristles, and her bones buzz louder. “Fuck what other people think! If you had truly loved him, then it wouldn’t matter what other people think! You were married to him for how long? Probably for longer than your children have been alive! If you can just shake off time spent like that because of what HAM has obviously been spewing to you, then you’re not worthy of being a wife, and not half as smart as you look. If you can just kill your kids because their father carries the genetic markers for becoming a monster, then you are not worthy of being a mother. Get out of my house and off of my property now before I throw you off.”

"I've already said. I'm. Not. LEAVING!” Her voice trailed off into a shriek, and she lunged at her, swinging the crowbar again.

Toki didn’t have a choice but to meet her lunge. She ducked down under the wide swing of the crowbar, keeping her horns angled away so she didn’t impale and kill the woman, and drove her shoulder into the stout woman’s chest. Toki had height on the woman, and magic reinforcing her steps- but Vikki was broader across the shoulders than Toki could ever hope to be.

Toki had to put more umph behind her hit as she shoved the woman back, magic switching intent from offensive to defensive in an instant. She wasn’t at an angle to shove her out the door of the house- so into the kitchen they stepped, her bare bones slipping perilously on the tile.

They thrashed her kitchen, shoving each other into cabinets, the counters, Toki trying to stay close enough so that Vikki couldn’t get a good strike in with the bar.

The motions blurred together, and she got her skull rattled more than once when the woman attempted to shove her and her claws away.

Vikki’s clothes were in tatters, and that made it easy to scratch at the flesh below. She bore shallow claw marks- and the blood made Toki hesitate her next strike. Instead of aiming to claw her, her fist...
balled up and she drove it into Vikki's middle.

Choking out in pain, Vikki wrapped an arm around her gut as she swung the crowbar in retaliation at the shoulder that she could see. Toki jerked back and moved her arm to block it so she didn’t crack it down on her shoulder. But she made a mistake.

She used the arm that Tenebris had bit down on the night prior, and her magic was no longer on the defensive.

There's the loud cracking of bone and she screamed a shrill note as her radius, which had been cracked under the powerful bite from Tenebris' jaws, was then shattered under the strike of the crowbar. She was forced to retreat as she clenched her arm, fingers curling around the jagged break that parted the bone in half as severed shards dropped onto the ground.

"See why you shouldn't get in my fucking way?" Vikki sneered.

Toki didn't reply. Her mind was in a haze, as she clutched at her arm. Her sockets were briefly dark, but it did not last long. Her magic surged in her bones, bright and green and burning with anger as instincts she had never used filled her bones. Her sockets ignited as instincts drove it forwards, curls of magic scorching upwards from her sockets as she glared at her.

The energy filling her body buzzed and her bones began to hum with an audible tenor of warning. They began heating up as magic came to fill every ounce of her essence, ghosting over the wounds that now marked her head and her arm. Green ooze bubbled out between the claws holding tight to her arm, dribbling down onto the tile below her.

This woman. This woman dared to enter her home with the intent to kill. To not only kill her husband, but also two innocent children who had done absolutely nothing wrong but be born to someone with the HTM gene. This woman was no better than the genocidal terrorists of HAM- and it wouldn’t have surprised Toki one bit if this woman was affiliated with them. She wouldn’t stop with her family though. No, a woman like this would surely kill Tenebris while he was unable to defend himself. Then she would likely return to finish Toki.

Toki had to protect them. There was no one she would risk- not after losing one of the guards to the humans last time. No- they were hers to protect. The guards, the villagers, the children, everyone under her roof and under her care.

She had to protect them.

"I swear, if you dare think for a second," She hissed, “that I will let you harm any of them... I will make you quickly regret considering such a foolish notion." Toki warned her over the sound of her practically buzzing bones. Her words dripping with venom as the energy of her magic began to come off her form in waves. Her soul pulsed brighter and brighter, throwing her defense straight out the window and right into her offense.

Not fazed by the threat, Vikki began for the stairs. She stopped short as glow of green magic blocked her from the first step. It rapidly began to fill the room around them, clinging to the walls and the ceilings, blocking off doorways and windows. "What the fuck?"

Vikki used the crowbar she had in hand and swung it into the cloud, only to hit something that felt solid... something that then began to buzz violently. The magic collected into orbs, then compressed.

They formed bright green bees that hummed loudly with violent intent.

Vikki reeled backwards a step, shoulders hunching together as she stared in undisguised unease at
the sight before her. "B-Bees?!"

Toki was surprised. Of all the creatures her magic took form of; it was ironic that it was bees. Bees always held her passion, and the humming of the insects that were vibrating over her walls resonated with the feelings inside of her soul. She had always cherished bees- maybe it wasn’t so ironic that this was what her magic formed to defend her.

Though their forms were masked green with magic, there were features she recognized from her own bees. Even one with a perfect stripe down it's back- One she hadn’t seen in years. Stripe, she recalled, had been the first queen that she had ever had. They were larger than normal bees, but varied in sizes- some were about the length of two knuckles instead of the length of her distal phalanx, while others were as large as a guinea pig.

They were her bees, her finest treasure.

And her magic had formed them to defend the hive.

Having a swarm of eight-inch bees staring you down would unnerve even the most hardened of people.

Her eyes gleamed brighter, a harsh glow as her magic irradiated the house. A snarl tugged at her teeth, and she straightened on her feet. "I really don't want to hurt another human being, but I think by having these show up, my decision has been made for me. This is your last warning, Vikki. Leave my house, and never come back."

She could feel the bees through her magic- they were not fully sentient, no, but dependant upon her. They buzzed in the back of her mind, awaiting her command, and urging her into motion with what little instinctive sentience they had.

Vikki hesitated, but with the hatred growing greater in her eyes, she did not back down. She growled. "NO!" She swung at the bees again, striking them with the crowbar.

As the bees actually faltered in their steady buzzing, a distinct throb of pain struck hard in the back of her mind. A few of the larger ones dropped to the ground, bodies bent awkwardly and dripping green, and fizzled from existence. Toki’s mind went blank, and her gaze went red.

She dropped her arm and lunged. She grabbed Vikki by the wrist, her heated bones scorching the human's skin until she screamed and dropped the crowbar. Toki held on for a moment longer, driven by the ingrained instinct to bring her point across. She let go when the flesh below her bones began to bubble and blister, the smell of burning meat wafting up and clinging to the air in a cloying stench. The burn that bubbled up was red and black- and followed the shape of the bones of her hand.

She hauled her arm back and flung Vikki towards the dining room. Toki stepped onto the crowbar, and the metal scorched her tiles as it was warped and bent under the heat of her bones. It glowed a ripe cherry red color- faintly burning the bottoms of her feet- and only when no human hand could hold it did she withdraw her touch from it.

The crowbar now rendered useless, Toki turned to face Vikki.

Vikki’s face had stretched in horror, several of the bees having come to land on her. Welts were bubbling on her face as the balls off fire scorched over any exposed skin, burning holes in her clothes and scorching her hair.

Toki advanced.
Vikki, in a moment of panic, grasped the nearest chair closest to her and flung it at Toki. The bees swooped in to block it from hitting her. They swarmed over the chair, creating a buzzing, writhing barrier as they blocked Toki from the strike. The chair dropped to the ground, charred and burnt, but still whole.

Toki stepped through the swarm, which clung to her bones and wreathed her in flame.

"S-STAY AWAY FROM ME!" Vikki threw another chair but missed as Toki lunged. Toki lunged, her undamaged hand coming around Vikki’s neck. The skin heated, burning hot- and the scream of terror was like a shot of ice through Toki’s mind. The burning flesh invaded her nose again, clinging to her palm and ingraining in the creases of her bones as she realized just what she was doing.

Vikki sobbed, her hands clinging to the wrist that was burning her. The heat began to ebb as Toki worked to rein in her magic. When she was under control again- with the buzzing rage set on the back burner- Toki leaned down and opened her mouth to snarl in her face.

"Get out of my house." Toki ordered sharply, before dropping Vikki onto her rear. “If you dare come back here again, or think about hurting anyone of mine…”

Hers. Yes. Everyone here was hers- her friends, her family, they were all apart of what her magic insisted was her hive. They were hers to protect.

At her urging, the bees all gathered behind her, their unison buzzing making a roar that vibrated over the walls once more. Fire billowed out from between her teeth, and she shrieked a noise from the center of her being that was hardly a human sounding noise at all. The threat was obvious.

It was all Vikki needed to know. She picked herself up, and ran for her life. She burst from the house with Toki following at her heels. Toki watched as the woman fled, bursting past confused wolf guards who lingered at the gates. She watched as Vikki got into a car and sped off, leaving a burnout on the road as she fled back towards the city. The guards took one look at Toki, and began to run a perimeter check.

That was for the best. Getting close to her right now was like sticking your arm in a fire.

Once alone, Toki turned and leaned against the doorframe. She clutched the shattered part of her radius and trembled in place, her arm throbbing and pulsing in time with her skull. The horrible roar of noise from her bees was ebbing off as they calmed and settled on her walls. They didn’t scorch the wallpaper covering the brick- they didn’t damage anything in her house at all. The only burn marks she would find were from her hands touching things, or her feet stepping across tile.

There was a brush against her cheek- and she recognized the bee with the single stripe down the center of it’s back. It came down to rest on her shoulder and she got a closer look at it. It was one of the larger ones, about as long as a small guinea pig. Where there was the soft fluffy cotton like fur on a normal bee, there was a wreath of flames in it’s place.

It buzzed and brushed its feelers over her cheek, trailing warmth over bones that felt clammy.

She let go of her arm and shifted up to cover it with her hand. Stripe, she recalled. This was Stripe. Or her magic had manifested itself in the form of Stripe. The bee buzzed gently, happily. She wasn’t sure if it was actually sentient- but she could feel it buzzing in the back of her skull. It felt… content. Pleased at what had happened. She also wasn’t sure if Stripe was female, or if it even had a gender since it was a being from her magic.
The bee did nothing to inform her of the answer.

She fell back on old impulses, as she looked it over. "Did she hurt you, my babies?" she whispered faintly. There was a slightly higher buzzing from Stripe, before Toki watched as the bees started to disappear one by one as her magic calmed down.

They continued to disappear until finally it was just stripe and her. She ran her finger over the magic bee, taking note that the green flames that had replaced the fuzz was warm. It didn’t burn, or put off that oppressive heat that she had felt from the swarm. No, holding the eight-inch bee was like holding a bottle of warm water.

Stripe buzzed faintly, tickling warm legs over her cheeks again before it too disappeared. Her magic sucked back inside of her, leaving the house empty, silent, and colder than it had been before.

"...." She took a breath, and then wobbled back into her house. Her legs shook, and her body trembled- but she had things to do, even if she felt light headed and woozy. She first located the shards of her arm, and stuffed them in her pockets. Aliquam could fix the pieces that had splintered off when he returned.

Her dining room was pretty trashed, and she would need new chairs… But…

She needed to let them know that Vikki was gone. Toki staggered up the stairs, holding her sleeve tightly to the broken bones in an effort to stem the bleeding of the green magic.

She knocked on his door, voice raspy as she spoke. “Vikki’s gone, Todd. If she’s smart, she wont be coming back.” She needed to tell Tenebris too… She had basically flooded the house with her magic- she would be surprised if Tenebris hadn’t tried to get up.

"Toki." Todd's voice came from the door. "Are you okay?" he asked, moving the chair out of the way of the door to pull it open. His breathing was slightly labored, and he was panting with his mouth wide open. Sweat had dampened his fur. "I heard a lot of that… Wh- Oh my god! Your face! What happened to your face?"

Toki wobbled where she stood, her cracked socket closing as green ooze trailed down her cheek. Concern spiked through her at the sight of his bedraggled state, and she kept her bleeding arm pressed to her chest as he reached out his hands to cup her skull gently. “She came with the intent to… Well, she came with a crowbar. I didn’t see it until she hit me with it. Ah… Are you okay? You look really… warm."

"The house... it got so hot... We had to open the window..." he managed past his panting, "There was enough room for the children to stick their heads out, so they were able to keep cool enough." he murmured, before he reached out and gently gripped her wrist. He could see green staining her shirt- and as he pulled her other hand away from what was obviously a wound, his eyes grew round in his sockets. "She came with the intent to… Well, she came with a crowbar. I didn’t see it until she hit me with it. Ah… Are you okay? You look really… warm."

Guilt filled her- shit she had over heated the house accidentally. “I’m sorry- my magic is fire, and I probably heated the house up.” She paused when he grasped her extended wrist. Confusion tugged at her mouth, and she followed his gaze.

Her palm and fingers were black. Not the charred by fire black- but had layers of flesh and meat that was definitely not hers. It was cooked to her bones, stuck between the spaces in the bones. The stench hit her again, wafting up to her. Meaty and thick, so thick she could taste it in her mouth. It was one she was intimately familiar with. Burnt human flesh was not a smell that one could ever
She had done this. She had done this to another human being- even if that human being was trash. No one deserved to deal with burns like that- she had… She had charred her skin away.

Toki blanched, and a sickened feeling churned in her stomach. The smell pervaded her nasal cavity- and human meat burning smells vastly different from animal meat- and she found something bubbling upwards from inside of her chest. A sour taste built in her throat, and it was one she was certain she’d never feel again.

Skeletons couldn’t vomit; skeletons couldn’t vomit- oh the hell that they couldn’t. She turned on her heel, one hand coming to clamp over her mouth- the closest bathroom was in her room, and that’s the one she fled to.

Todd was left standing there, gaping in the doorway. He’d seen the horror that crossed her face- but she hadn’t said that Vikki was dead. The burnt flesh clinging to her bones though, made him wonder if Vikki was wishing she might have been.

Toki burst through the door to her room, and made a beeline for her bathroom- just barely making it to the toilet in time as she dropped to her knees and retched noisily. The magic that her food had been converted to came up in a thick, dark green sludge as it stained the toilet bowl.

She couldn’t get that smell out of her nasal passage, and not even the dark and bitter taste of regurgitated magic could cover the taste of it in her mouth.

"T-Toki?" Tenebris was able to lift his head to look towards the bathroom. "Hey! What the hell happened?!

Toki couldn’t answer- her arms clattered against the bowl as she shuddered and retched again. It was in her nose- it was in her mouth, it was on her hand. She could feel it flaking off of her bones, like thick wafers as it drifted down to the floor. The magic that coated the bowl burned as it came up, spurting past her teeth like green magma.

She trembled, rattling like a wind-chime in a storm. “I… I burned her, I burned her and it’s on my hand, I can smell it, I can feel it,” she stammered.

"Toki!" he tried to sit up only to immediately regret it as he went down again, his head throbbing in sheer pain, "Toki..."

Her magic panicked as she struggled to gain control of her body. She flung an arm out in his direction, choking his name as she heaved again. He had promised not to get up- she couldn’t take care of him while she was trying to quell her nausea.

There was a pop as her newfound magic reacted- and then a fluffy green bee the size of a kitten settled on his chest and buzzed at him in a scolding tone. The lone bright stripe down it’s back stood out against the green fires of its body. It didn’t burn him or his blankets at all- it simply stared at him through little glowing green eyes and waved its feelers at him. But Stripe’s warning was very clear despite the lack of large body language or verbal cues. Tenebris was to stay still.

He tensed up as he looked at the bee in surprise, but he smiled lightly and slowly relaxed his body again. It was warm on his chest, and not as heavy as one might have thought. "Your magic is powerful enough to summon an incarnate." he purred, reaching up with his unwounded hand to try and pet the bee. “That is quite the surprise indeed.”

Stripe buzzed slightly as it- she?- was petted. Fuzzy legs carried its round body forwards so she
could get nearer to his face. It patted his face again, leaving little imprints of warmth where it stepped. The flames that billowed out in place of soft furs were no warmer than Toki’s bones usually felt, and did no harm to his fingers as they stroked through the long and crackling fluff.

It took Toki a minute to calm down. Her magic began to ease off about the same time that her heaving did. She flushed the toilet and staggered to her feet. She didn’t answer Tenebris at first. Toki shoved her hands under the sink and began to scrub frantically at her hands, ignoring the agony that shot up her arm.

Thankfully the charred flesh came off easy- and soon she was spotless once more. Only then did her terror ease- and Stripe gave one last warm buzz before disappearing now that Tenebris did not need to be distracted.

She staggered back out to her bedroom, wiping her teeth on the sleeve of her sweater. She had flecks of char on there too, but she didn’t have the mobility in her arm to change shirts. “I… V… Vikki showed up. I had… I had to handle it. She came with a crowbar.” She turned to face him, displaying the weeping crack that split her left eye socket all the way up to her scar. “She… She was… She was going to do bad things.” She clutched her wounded left arm again and stared at the floor.

Her fingers were dripping the green ooze that acted as her blood, and it was dribbling down into a small puddle on the floor. It had already stained her sleeve- and the red turtleneck was a damp brown color where her magic had oozed into the fabric. She… She needed to do something about that. Bind the bones or something. “I… I need my first aid kit…” She whispers softly. Todd still had it, she thought.

"Toki… stars above…” He whispered as he looked at her, frowning worriedly.

There was a knock on the doorframe that drew his gaze. Todd stood in the open door, an uncertain look on his face. "Here.” he said softly, holding the first aid kit in his hands, "I... I can help you if you'd like... I mean..."

“Please.” She nods slowly to the red fox. “I need help with my arm at least. It really is starting to hurt pretty bad now that I’m not using it. Ah… Tenebris, this is Todd Hanes. Todd, this is Doctor Tenebris Gaster. You’re welcome to come in, Todd.”

Tenebris looked at the Fox and the fox looked back for a time, though the latter looked a little intimidated. Not all of the intimidation left when Tenebris shot him a smile, but it was a good start. "It's nice to meet you, Mister Hanes."

"Ah. The feeling is mutual, Doctor.” Todd smiled a little. He hesitated, tail swishing behind him, and then plodded into the room to go to Toki’s side.

Toki approaches the side of her bed, and sits on the edge for lack of better place to actually do this. She really needs to get a table and chairs in here at some point- but for now this would have to do. She gnashes her teeth, the damp surfaces not giving off sparks for once, and begins to roll up her sleeve. Her arm looks fine from below, though her radius is angled further out than it should be. Once her sleeve reaches midway up her left arm, her radius drops off into a jagged, weeping edge. It is empty for several inches, before the bone resumes further up. “I don’t know what you can do- but maybe just covering the ends of the bone with bandage so it stops oozing?”

"I'm afraid that's the most of what I can do... I didn't work with bones as much.” he sighed. He was going to do what he could, regardless of his lack of knowledge in bones. "I... I must thank you again... I couldn't dare imagine what would have happened if I didn't come to you.”
“Given how quickly she arrived after you did, I’m not sure you’d have been safe elsewhere.” She murmured. She’d need to call and report this to the police… At least the crowbar down below would still have Vikki’s fingerprints on it, and probably spots of Toki’s magic ooze on it. It would hopefully be enough to sway them to her side, even after what she did in defending her home. “Nara village is open to those seeking refuge- I am glad you came here for protection.” She smiles faintly as she watches him bandage up her bones. It hurt- but her ribs had hurt worse. “You don’t have to know how to work with bones to help. I just need it to hold for now. When Papyrus gets back, I can have him rework the shards back onto my arm. I found them all this time- so no re-growing required, right Tenebris?”

"That's correct, Toki," he replied quietly. "I only hope I can say the same for my own."

"Toki told me there was an accident with a delivery truck. I'm glad to see that the impact didn't kill you."

“He’s tougher than he looks.” Toki gives the older monster a bemused fond look, wincing as Todd tightened the bandages on her arm. “All of your bones were located, Tenebris. Ah… The ones that were sticking out were pushed back in your skin stuff when I stitched you up. Pap’s gonna have to set them though.”

Her fingers flexed faintly, and she was glad she could still move them, even if her ulna was the only thing keeping her arm together at this point. Toki’s right hand comes up to prod gently over her eye socket. The oozing hadn’t slowed down, and the crack was still sore. Her socket and the surrounding bones felt sticky from her magic.

“… Oh boy. I’m going to have to explain this mess to Sans and Papyrus when they get back.” She sighs. She was already dreading it.
Toki ended up with a bandage wrapped around her skull, covering the damaged socket and reducing her vision down to just one eye. It was a little overkill— but cracked skulls were worrisome. At least she didn’t have anything besides a killer migraine from it— she had no brain to rattle, so no concussion could be given. She did have a wicked bruise that was blooming though— in the same green shade as her magic.

With Todd’s help, she piled the burnt chairs outside, used enough air freshener in her house to cause a serious problem around an open flame, and managed to get the call out to the Police. An officer had shown up, taken her statement, recorded her wounds, and then took the crowbar with him for evidence. They put a notice out for her arrest, and Toki let them know that they should check the hospitals since Vikki had gotten burned.

It had been over swiftly— and she’d gotten a pleased look from the officer after informing him as to why Vikki had come with violent intentions. Her brother would be getting another call, no doubt— but it wasn’t anything that Utaka couldn’t handle.

It was suggested and agreed upon between the Officer and herself that maybe her house was not the safest place for Todd and the kids. She got it arranged so they would be staying with Wolfen and Bo for a few days; per-chance that Vikki came back or sent someone to finish her business. It suited Todd well enough— his kids could play with their kids, and Wolfen could teach Todd about being a male monster. Particularly one closely related to the canine family— there were many things that the skeletons couldn’t handle teaching him at this point.

As night fell, Toki’s arm grew more and more sore. She ended up with it propped to her chest in a sling made of towels so she would stop using it, and with another pot-full of magic heavy food from Bo. The sheep woman hadn’t wanted her cooking, not with a broken arm. That suited her just fine— the pot of stew was delicious, and she had even heckled Tenebris into eating a few bowls to keep his body going and urge his magic to heal his concussion.

After the long day, she was tired— but she needed to wait for Aliquam and Caeruleus to get back. With Tenebris up in her room, probably fast asleep with his spearmint burning in a bowl on the bedside table, Toki found herself sitting on the first step up towards the second floor. She wasn’t ready to go upstairs— but had no desire to eat in the dining room.

She had a thin blanket draped over her shoulders, and a bowl of hot soup balanced on her knees. Her sweat pants had been changed out earlier, as had her turtleneck, and she was stuck in a t-shirt until
they could get her arm fixed. She shivered, and spooned bite of hot soup into her mouth, tilting her skull so she could better see what she was doing out of her open eye socket. The last thing she needed to do was spill soup all down the front of her shirt when it was just her and Tenebris in the house. She’d be stuck in a stained shirt until she could get some help changing.

“At least it wasn’t my right hand,” she mutters faintly to herself. It was cold outside- it had started to snow again, and she could faintly see it through the window. “I probably could have put this in a mug and saved myself some trouble though.” She stares at her soup with a soft sigh, and eats another spoonful. Balancing the bowl on her knees and eating at the same time was not easy when she couldn’t brace the bowl with her other hand.

There were noises at the front door, of shoes shaking mud and ice off, before it opened to reveal Caeruleus and Aliquam. Both of them were caked in snowflakes and ice. "Fффффиньин freezing out there," the older snarled, shaking himself off. They had bundles in their arms- bundles that looked like blankets. "Tokes!" He called, “We're back!"

Vaguely through the door, she could see thick-furred guards unloading the blankets from Muffet. Those would do well for the villagers who didn’t have the fur or magic to keep them warm, she mused. A tired sound leaves her, and she angles her skull to peer up at the guys through her open socket. The bandages on the other one itched faintly and felt cold. It had oozed through the bandages and stained the outside layer a faint green.

“Welcome back,” she murmurs softly. If they hadn’t come bursting in here in a panic, it was unlikely that the guards had the chance to mention what happened to Tenebris. Toki gets to her feet and sets the bowl of half-eaten soup on a side table. “Please tell me you’re both okay.” She adjusts the blanket around her shoulders and peers at them hopefully. “You both look like you could use some hot soup. Bo made some- there’s a lot left.”

"We're fine, but what the hell happened here?" Caeruleus asked urgently, glancing around. Some of the furniture had been disturbed- and there were feet shaped burn marks on the floor.

"It smells terrible in here..." Aliquam said quietly. His gaze flicked around the room, categorizing the damages quietly, until his eye lights landed on Tokiko. A worried frown tugged his teeth downwards. "And what happened to you? You look.... Terrible."

“Lovely thing to say to your girlfriend, Pap.” She would wink at him, but it comes off as a tired blink instead. She touches her bandaged socket, grimaces, and motioned for them to follow her. She took the bowl of soup and plodded for the kitchen. “Some things happened. You can look at my wounds later. Follow me- I’ll recap once I put this in the kitchen. The, ah…” She swallows thickly. She had tried to cover the smell with air freshener- but now it just smelled like berries and burnt meat. “The smell is in the explanation. You might as well take a seat in the dining room. I’ll explain, and then we can go upstairs.” It would be easier to have everything laid out before they went to wake Tenebris for healing him.

They looked at her, and then followed quietly.

Once the dish had been put in the kitchen, and everyone shuffled into the dining room, Toki slumped into her usual seat and adjusted the blanket again. “Okay, bear with me. It’s been a hell of a couple of days. Prepare yourself for a little bit of a word vomit.” She scrubbed her right cheek with her palm and buzzed faintly. “Remember how I said that my home would be open to any humans turned monsters if they needed refuge? I had my first refugee today. A fox monster named Todd Hanes came to me for help- apparently he had made the change this morning, and his wife had promptly tried to murder him and his two kids with a knife. So we got him and his kids in- they’re not here right now, but that’ll come in later- and I got the gist of the story from him. His wife, Vikki, is
apparently anti-monster. Heh.”

Both brothers were frowning, sharing glances. "That's awful... He's okay now, right?" Aliquam asked, "And the kids?"

“His face is pretty messed up.” She admits. “Eye all swollen shut and bruised.” Sort of like the nasty green color that had bloomed around the crack in her skull. Bones, she had learned with Papyrus, could indeed bruise. “He and I are both one eye down- but he’s all right. Felix has a cut on his forehead, but Todd managed to get him bandaged up just fine. Felix is his son, for the record. They’re staying with Wolfen’s family right now, because my house is too easily accessed by Vikki. She already found him once today.”

"Where the hell was Pops when all this happened?” Caeruleus inquired, leaning his elbows on the table quietly. "Please tell me he gave her a good thrashing.”

“Ah... No. He got hit by a truck yesterday- he’s pretty busted up. I, ah, had to handle Vikki myself when she showed up with a crowbar and bad intentions.” She trembles faintly, bones rattling loudly and gestures to a few burn marks that mar the walls where Toki had pinned the human. “Ah... Tenebris really needs some healing- but I wanted to get this out of the way before you go tend to him. Also- apparently if your dad misses his medications he turns into a goop monster. That was one hell of a way to wake up this morning, and I am far more out of shape than I thought. I don’t run that fast regularly anymore.”

They were silent for a moment, before Caeruleus hissed sharply. “He got hit by a truck?”

“Yeah. So the night after you guys left, it rained. It was still cold, so the rain and the snow turned into some pretty thick sheets of ice. I don’t know if you had trouble with it on the road or not- but we did here. The kids and I were playing out on the road while the adults cleared the walkways in the compound. We got your dad playing ice tag- he’s actually really good at playing with the kids, y’know? Anyways, I had a delivery truck that was supposed to bring some stuff... Apparently his chains didn’t work, and he slid around the corner in the road. Tenebris took the brunt of the hit instead of Twitch. He was asleep when I last looked in- there were things I wanted to tell you before I showed you so you didn’t disturb him with a thousand questions about if he was okay and about what happened.”

"So... He's okay now, right?” Cae inquired.

“He’s in my room, unable to move.” Toki grimaces. “Pretty much shattered his hip and pelvis, and his right arm and shoulder. Concussion too. He’s stable and not going anywhere, though. His HP has been steady, and slowly ticking upwards with the amount of magical food he’s been eating.”

Aliquam tensed and stood from the table. He headed for the stairs without another word.

Toki watched him go with a soft sigh. Tenebris hadn’t been going anywhere- but Aliquam was a worrying sort. She understood it just fine. She had hoped to get everything laid out first- but she had an inkling that she was just too mentally drained to be thinking correctly. It occurred to her that she should have sent them straight up the stairs to heal Tenebris right from the start.

Fuck- where was her mind? Obviously not present. “I trust Papyrus to be able to handle your Dad well enough. You may want to go help him though, Sans. I’m not going to be of any use holding him down- and snapping bones into place isn’t going to be easy.”

She too stands from her chair. She discards her blanket, baring the sling that Todd had made her wear, and instead turns to head into the kitchen. “I’ll finish explaining when you both are done.”
The dining room smelled a lot like burning meat- and she was intent on getting the air freshener again before it made her stomach expunge the little bit of food she’d put into it. Well, into her magic, anyways.

"Toki, as soon as Pap comes back down those stairs he's gonna heal you too, you know..." he assured her, before going to join his brother upstairs.

She pauses, and just... she snorts. “That’s not even remotely a worry I had,” she mutters faintly to no one. The thought of Papyrus ignoring anyone’s wounds was preposterous.

The air freshener is sprayed, but it doesn’t help in the least. And as sounds of pain come from upstairs- the roars and groans of a wounded beast getting his bones relocated into place- Toki had to step outside. She settled on her back deck, and planted her back against the wall as she took a seat. The snow falling and pattering lightly against the house helped drown out the sounds- sounds she had heard the night prior, and sounds that she had hoped to never hear again. Between the sounds and the smells, she felt more fragile than she had a right to being.

She had defended her home- she had defended someone who came to her for protection. But she felt terrible- and everything was starting to snowball, and she didn’t have her bees or her hives to distract her from everything now.

“Fucking hell,” she whispers. It was too much. She ducked her head into her knees and let the snow continue fall around her as her magic buzzed in her bones and dribbled from her eye socket onto her pants. Her soul wept with every pained noise that Tenebris made.

For all the pain that he was enduring now, Tenebris knew it was worth it.

His form tensed up and he bared his fangs as his bones pushed through healing nerve and muscle to reconnect like a puzzle in his hip and shoulder.

"We're almost done, Pops." Caeruleus assured him.

When the searing agony finally stopped, Tenebris was panting weakly as he lay on the bed, his head to the side... Aliquam came and knelt by his head. Cool bone touched hot cheeks, and the son leaned in to rest his head against his Father's, healing what damage was done by the concussion. When that ended, Tenebris was finally silent, his body going to heal the rest of the way on it’s own without any problems now. The bruising would take weeks to fade, most likely. Bruises were not Aliquam’s forte.

They covered him up once more with her quilt and let him rest in her room. It would be a while before he would stir.

The brother’s then headed downstairs.

Toki wasn’t where they had last seen her- but it wasn’t hard to find her. She had left the back door open a crack, and the cold air outside rushed inwards. The air was cold- but it was blessedly fresh compared to the stink that permeated the rest of downstairs.

Stepping outside, Aliquam spotted her easily enough. She was right next to the door. He stepped closer and reached down to touch Toki’s shoulder. She didn’t respond to his touch, or him stepping outside. Worry tingled through his soul. “Toki...” he murmured softly, "How do you feel?" he asked gently.
“Not very well, to be honest.” She doesn’t look up at him from where she’s sitting, and her voice is thicker than it usually is. Her bones are warm- obvious that her magic wasn’t depleted, despite her show of force earlier today. She scrubs her visible socket on her knee, drying at the tears that were glowing down her cheeks. They were traitorously bright streaks in the darkness outside. “Papyrus… Fuck. I’m a bit of a mess right now, to be honest.”

He stroked her shoulder gently, and then reached up and used his thumb to wipe her tears. He didn’t see them often- and they made his soul ache when he did see them. She was usually very strong- but the events of the day and day prior had shaken her. Sometimes, for all of her strengths, it was easy to forget that Toki was just a beekeeper and a civilian. She did a lot for them, and handled things that she really shouldn’t have had to do. "Let's go inside, okay? Brother will make you some cocoa while I fix you up." he said gently, pressing a gentle kiss to the top of her skull.

“Okay…” Toki nodded quietly. She eased herself up, using the brick wall to support her back as she shoved to her feet. To her credit, she didn’t wobble in the snow. She shot him a wobbly not-quite-earnest smile, and eased around him to enter the house again. She sniffles quietly, and goes to fetch the bag of bones from the counter. She hands them to the tallest brother, and then begins to un-do the sling forcing her arm still. “You’ll need these.” She murmurs to Aliquam, and to Caeruleus too since he is there in the kitchen. He was puttering around in her cupboards, probably working on making something. “I managed to find all of the shards.”

Without the towels to hide it, her bandaged bones come into view. The gap is long, and the ends of the bones are jagged. Bandages had been secured over the ends- but they had oozed through and stained the tips of her radius a radiant green color. Bone ooze did not apparently possess a clotting agent the same way blood did- and a few drops dripped free from their bindings and splashed onto the floor. There are nine pieces in total in the bag she had handed him- only one of them very large. The large piece has the spot where the first fracture had been- and it’s vaguely indented in the shape of one of Tenebris’ teeth.

Both hands free, she pads back for the dining room. He could spread the bones out on the table and do what he needed to do with them.

He looked at her wounds like a worried lover would and was quick to start his work. He started by putting the damaged fragments of bone together as a puzzle-master would, nearly effortless as he worked… once done he slowly used his magic and let the fragments seal together. There had been a fracture that hadn’t matched up with the damage from the crowbar- it was on the entirely opposite side of her radius. But he healed that too. Once healed, he took the severed part of her radius and brought it over to her. “What caused the crack on the other side? It doesn’t match up with the strike mark from the crowbar.”

“I let Tenebris bite down on my arm while we were moving him into the house. It was a rough trip- and I couldn’t just sit by and let him bear it on his own. Biting down gave him something to focus on.”

Aliquam paused and stared at her for a moment. “You… You do understand that Father could have utterly rendered your arm into splinters, correct? While I thank you for helping him in his time of need, it was incredibly foolish of you to do.”

“I got the gist of that when I had to flood magic in my arm. It did well to reinforce the bones, but he still managed to crack my radius anyways.” She shrugs quietly. “I’d do it again, if I had to.”

“I know you would.” He sighed. He pressed a soft kiss to the crown of her skull, avoiding her bandages as best he could, and then settled into the chair next to her. “Arm please.”
Toki stretched out her arm as asked, resting it flat on the table so he could line up the jagged ends easier. Her fingers tugged the bandages off the ends first- and left the bare marrow out to the air. She winced slightly. It wasn’t a sensation she had ever hoped to have to deal with again- but at least this time they found all of the pieces. It wouldn’t have to re-grow completely.

He angled the radius bone to where it connected and slowly moved it into place. A pulse of magic later and it began to seal together once more. "Mmmh..." He let out a soft sound as he focused.

Toki held her arm still for him to mend. It wasn’t an entirely pleasant sensation, making her magic buzz in her bones in an agitated way, but she gritted her teeth and held out through it. Idly, her right hand came up to tug at the bandages on her skull. They loosened as she tried to work her claws through the knot at the back.

Eventually they fell away, revealing her closed socket, and the crack that ran up through it all the way to her scar. Her bones weren’t the same pale color as before- a blotchy green bruise spread out from the impact site in the vague shape of a crowbar’s back end.

Once sure her arm would heal the remainders of the cracks on it’s own well enough, Aliquam moved to her head and let out a soft sad sound. "Oh Toki..."

She blinked up at him slowly, and opened her damaged socket. Moving it brought another bead of green ooze trailing down- and she closed it again instead and nestled her jaw into his palm.

He stroked her cheeks with his thumbs, cradling her skull in his hands. If not for the length of her horns, his gloved hands would have outsized her skull. He peered sadly at the crack, and gently prodded it. It seemed stable and easy enough to heal- and there didn’t look to be any pieces missing. The green magic that beaded from the crack was gently wiped away.

"She caught me off guard.” She murmurs softly without his prompting. “I didn’t think to check her hands- and she clocked me a good one that had me reeling. It’s how she got in the house. It honestly doesn’t hurt as bad anymore. My arm hurt worse.” At least none of her skull had chipped off. It was a surprisingly sturdy surface- and the crack was long, but thin and fairly straight forwards. The bruise looked worse than the crack, honestly. “T-To be honest... I... I hurt her worse…” Toki’s voice wavers hesitantly.

"Toki,” he sighed softly, leaning up and softly kissing the cracks gently. He releases magic as he does so to heal the crack, and watches with a critical eye as the bone shimmers and begins to weave back together. "You did what you had to, didn't you?" he inquired.

"I did.” She murmured softly. The crack healed up easily, leaving a faint line of off colored bone that would eventually return to its original colors once it settled. She opened her socket when it was healed, and peered up at him through dim eye lights. Tears gather in the corners of her sockets again. “Papyrus... I burned her. I was burning her alive with my magic and the bees- I... her... Her skin, it... It was burned into my hand. That’s what smells so bad in the house, and the air fresheners aren’t helping down here. I... did that to another living being, Pap. I know what it feels like- and being burned alive is not a pain I would wish upon anyone.” She felt her magic churning in her middle again, nauseated and agitated all at once. Her hand comes up to curl over her teeth and she squeezes her sockets shut with a sharp shake of her head. She didn’t want to get sick again.

"Hang on, hang on...” He interrupted her, "First... Take a second... just collect yourself before you continue...” He guides her through a few slow breaths to get her started. He knew what the burning felt like- he had felt it in her soul. Toki was horribly kind by nature- and he knew that inflicting that sort of pain on someone else was not something she ever wanted to do. “Second of all... Bees? What bees?” As far as he knew, bees did not come out in the winter- and the snow and ice outside would
have chased any living insect back to their hive.

She did as told. It didn’t help much, but she’s not sure anything will at this point. It lets her get her composure though, and her composure is what she needs. Toki swallows and lowers her hands into her lap. She cups them together, and quietly glances down to them. Wordlessly, she pulls on her magic, on the buzzing in the back of her mind. It’s surprisingly easy to do- as if the magic bubbling in the back of her soul is eager to come out and see the world.

Stripe appears in her palm as her magic draws the bee forth, just as large and as warm as she remembered. Stripe buzzes in her hands for a second, before lifting into the air to settle on her shoulder. Glowing green eyes watch Papyrus with a calm intensity.

“These bees. Well… There are more of them. This is Stripe. When Vikki broke my arm, I got angry, and my magic just… sort of summoned them to block her path when she tried to go up the stairs. We ended up overheating the house.” They’d nearly cooked poor Todd and his kids in the room.

"...! Oh wow." he said softly, reaching up a finger to touch the fire bee. "A queen bee familiar... That's amazing!" he said with a smile.

Stripe buzzes faintly, but clamors onto his finger. She works her way up his glove, the fires of her fluff warm but not burning him as she walks.

“Yeah- she comes with a large hoard of other ones. It’s… actually really weird. She’s got the exact same markings as the first queen bee I ever had in my hives.” Toki smiles quietly, but it’s more half-hearted than it is a real smile. Toki’s magic wavers, and the bee buzzes at her slightly. “I can feel them- all of them, in the back of my mind. They’re there, waiting. It’s this… faint tickling feeling.”

"Wow." he whispered, smiling happily as he watched the bee. As it clamored up his arm, he reached out with gentle fingers to stroke from the fiery mane around its wing joints down along the glowing stripe down the abdomen. It vaguely reminded him of petting the bees from Toki’s hive- except that these were many times larger, and less likely to be accidentally crushed under his touch. "How cute! A perfect fit for you... oh wow I wonder now what your blasters themselves are like...!" he pondered with a 'Nyeh heh heh!'.

Toki blinks faintly and shakes her head. She shivers, and her magic withdraws. Stripe disappears with a parting buzz, and then Toki rubs her fingers over her upper arms. Turning her head away, she quietly looks at the floor. “Blasters? Aren’t those boss weapons...? I’m not a boss monster, Papyrus. I’ve still got a human soul.”

".... Oh yeah... Well... you know... there's a chance. Father always thought they were genetic-exclusive to his bloodline, but given you've summoned a familiar like we can..."

“Familiars might be a skeleton thing...?” She shrugs slightly. “We can ask Grillby. He seemed to know a fair bit about, uh, skeletons. From before the war, and stuff. Your dad saw my family tree- and he didn’t say anything about the Vaega bloodline being able to summon anything even remotely like your blasters.”

Toki shifts in her seat, and then quietly stands so she can loop her arms around his neck. She doesn’t say why at first- but she simply hugs him tight and hides her face in his shirt. He’s still chilled from being outside- but her magic makes quick work of that. His scent blocks out the smell from the room itself. “Sorry… I just… I needed a hug. It’s been a long couple of days, and I’m glad you’re both back.”

He takes a deep breath and hugged her gently back in return. "You're my girlfriend, Toki. Don’t
think it's a chore for me to love you, okay?” he murmured, pressing a few gentle kisses to the top of her head. “Besides- when am I going to turn down a hug from you?”

“Hopefully never.” She sighs softly. “Will you stay tonight?” Toki pulls back enough to look at him. “Tenebris has my room- but the couch can fit us both I think.” Heavens knew, the beds in the guest rooms were not wide enough for two skeletons. Caeruleus would fit though, if he didn’t want to settle on the couch with them.

Papyrus nuzzled gently against the top of her head and gave a ponderous sound. “Well, I think we can make it fit. You and I fit together quite well, so it stands to reason that we can make the couch work.” They did fit together, like two finely crafted puzzle pieces.

His hand slid down to the small of her back, and he tilted her back so he could give her a full kiss. “I’ll stay tonight, and any night after that you need me.” His murmur was earnest.

She smiled up at him, eyes glimmering faintly after the kiss. “We’ll make it fit… Caeruleus?”

“Yeah, Doll?”

“You’re welcome to any of the guest rooms, unless you want to stay on the couch with Pap and me.”

“I think I’ll take one of the rooms, Doll.” He comes lumbering from the kitchen, and hands her a small mug of cocoa. “Drink this first, though. Cocoa heals the soul, right? You did good keeping my old man together- but you’re no surgeon.” It was so easy to forget that Toki was human- and this sort of chaos was not something that she was accustomed to, no matter how well she handled it. He’d seen the stitches- and it had been made with an unsteady hand. Bo’s salve had been present too- but the sheep monster had no way to hold a needle. The only one who knew how to do stitches was the skeleton that owned the house. “You drink this and let the chocolate soothe you. Double packs o’ chocolate, and a shot a’ creamer. You deserve it.”

Toki smiles and takes the mug. She sips it- and the rich chocolate soothes her faintly. It was thick and creamy- and heavy with the unique magic that Caeruleus had. It left it with a sort of peppermint aftertaste. “Thanks, Cae… Go get some rest, okay? You guys made it back here, and then had to work once you got here.”

He gives her a cheery salute, and shares a quick look with his brother. They nod to each other, and then Sans snags one of the magic-weaved blankets from the table and proceeds to take one of his shortcuts up the stairs to one of the rooms.

“Come,” Papyrus eases her towards the living room, snagging one of the blankets as well.

The living room is dark, and quiet as they settle on the couch. Toki nestles into his side, and holds her cocoa close as she takes her peace with him. He spreads the blanket over them, and basks in the warmth that comes. Having a girlfriend who naturally exuded warmth alongside a blanket that was created with the sole purpose to provide heat was a uniquely satisfying experience.

He took note of some burns along the bottoms of her feet as she tucked them up onto the couch, and leaned down to quickly heal them. He wasn’t sure where they were from at this point- but it was possible when she had used her magic it had heated the floor below her and singed the bones. It didn’t make sense though- because she could handle the hot pots in the kitchen, or pulling thing straight from the oven with very little issue.

They hadn’t been painful- she hadn’t been walking funny and she hadn’t said that her feet needed healing- so he wasn’t really going to complain about where she had gotten them or how. All the
same, he healed them up and settled her flush into his side.

“I’m sorry you had to come home to drama.” She murmurs softly to him as she got settled.

“Shh…” he strokes the top of her skull gently, and steals a sip of her cocoa to make her laugh. “It’s not something you could control, Toki. It’s really not- so you don’t need to apologize. You did the right thing today- I am proud of you.”

He succeeds both in stealing a drink of her cocoa and in getting her to laugh, if only faintly. Toki leans up to kiss his mallow-stache away, and smiles slightly at the orange flush that tint his cheekbones. “I know… I just worry.” She clutches her cocoa close to her and sips it quietly. She works through nearly half of it, before the silence gets to her. “Hey… Pap?”

“Nyeh?”

“I never did get around to asking Caeruleus about this, but… Back at Thanksgiving- when he mentioned being thankful for no more resets… What are resets?”

“It’s a bit of a heavy topic…” He hedges, not entirely certain she was up to that sort of revelation today. Stars above knew that he hadn’t been ready when Caeruleus had approached him- and all of their friends from the Underground- and explained everything as best as he could without completely traumatizing everyone.

“It’s a bit of a heavy day.” Toki responds softly. “I can handle it, whatever it is.”

Papyrus frowns faintly and nestles her more firmly into his side. He heaves a deep sigh, letting it rumble through the broad expanse of his chest. He really wasn’t sure that she was- but he wasn’t going to deny her the answers that she sought. Aliquam would just need to be there for her if it scared her, as any good boyfriend should. “I don’t really understand all of it,” he admits quietly. “But I know the gist of it. Magic in the underground was a strange thing. It… Well, lets just say that the most determined soul could control the flow of time- and if things went bad, they could reset to the time before the bad happened and go from there.”

And so he explained, to the best of his ability, how Frisk’s powers worked, and how only a scant few could remember clearly through the resets. Aliquam did his best to explain that the resets were triggered if Frisk died- or if Frisk felt the need to reset. There had apparently been some times where someone close to them or one of their friends that had died or been killed, and they had been prompted to reset. He adds that he thought there might have been some darker aspects to it- simply because of some of the nightmares he had seen from his brother, and the general lack of trust that Sans had concerning the human child- but acknowledges that he had no real proof of it, and no grounds to demand a solid answer from his older brother.

Toki sat quietly through it, processing it as she drank down her cocoa. It was finished long before he was done talking, and she left her empty mug on the coffee table. The more he talked, the more she could understand some of Caeruleus quirks. He had been friendlier with her than he had been with several of the other humans she’d been around- and she had indeed heard some of his nightmares. Caeruleus was mostly quiet when he had them- but some nights he would wake, come down stairs, and binge on ketchup.

She had used to join him when she lived with them- she would have cocoa, coax him back to bed, and then crash back on the couch.

She had a brother who had nightmares too- and Han had stayed with her for a while until the isolation of the countryside got to be too much for the city-bound teacher.
Frankly the whole explanation and story about resets was a little hard to believe, but she found herself inclined to believe them. Aliquam had never lied to her after all. He had been honest with her from the start- at least as far as she knew about. She didn’t think he’d have any reason to lie to her now.

“So… That’s why your brother was nicer to me then he was a lot of the other humans who started working here.” Toki murmured quietly. “It was a little… weird. He always seemed to be one step ahead of me- and seemed even friendly with me where he wasn’t with others. It explains a lot.”

“Yes.” Aliquam rubbed her shoulders gently, and hummed slightly. “He hasn’t told me a lot about the other times that Frisk had to reset- but he remembers a lot of them. It’s why he has bad dreams sometimes.”

“I understand that…” She shifts and peers up at him. “So… what about me in the other resets?”

Aliquam’s face pinches, and he looks away. “Well… This is the longest one so far. The others… he would not tell me exactly what happened… You remember the attack from HAM? Where your ribs got shattered? We didn’t know that was going to happen, if you can understand what I mean by that.”

She was smart enough to read between the lines. Her sockets close, and she nods. “Say no more. I understand.” She really didn’t want to hear about how she had died- because she had several inklings as to how. The fire- the sickness- there were any innumerable reasons as to how it could have happened. It was entirely possible she probably hadn’t ever woken up from the bed in the castle. She really didn’t need to think on it though- She was here now, and now is what mattered. “This is a lot to wrap my head around.”

“It was for most of us too.” He nuzzles her skull gently, and kisses along one of her horns.

Toki swallows, and buries her face against his side. “Now that I know, I can say I’m thankful there hasn’t been any more resets either.”

“As am I.” His fingers massage over her shoulders, and he thrums a soft tune for her. “Are you okay with it?”

“I’m about as okay with it as I can be, Ali. It’s in the past- now is now, and I am alive, and so is everyone else.”

“It is a good way to think.”

She’s quiet for a short time, until she finally yawns. “Can we lay down?”

“Of course.”

It’s not hard for him to lift her again- and she’s draped across his chest much like the time when her ribs had been broken. She feels more solid against him this time, and he takes some comfort in her better health this time around. Toki was mostly healed, but her bones would need time to settle so they would not re-break. So he would keep an eye on her to make sure she kept her rigorous activity to a minimum until he was certain that the new-bone would hold.

“Thanks, Ali…” She murmurs softly. She snuggles into his chest, sockets closing, and simply basks.

They were back- they were safe for now. And even if the lingering smell of burnt flesh ruined the air for her, Papyrus smelled like fallen snow, spaghetti, and musk. It was enough to combat it the smell- and she found herself falling asleep against his chest without another word.
Papyrus was content enough with that. One of his sockets lit up, and he glanced over the back of the couch towards the front door. He flicked his fingers- and the locks in the house engaged with a quiet click.

Now no one could just open the door and walk in while they rested.

Pleased with himself, he rumbled and looped his arms around her. Her recently damaged one was cradled in his hand, and he rubbed his fingers soothingly along the break. The glow in his sockets remained as he settled in- but this time it was a comforting glow that would help keep her soothed and relaxed in her slumber.

Toki was not meant for fighting- for as rough and tumble as her brothers were, and for the times she had to defend them in her youth, she was sorely out of practice. This scared him- it scared him a lot. As much as he wanted to say he could protect her all the time, he knew that it wasn’t true. The bruise lingering on her skull was proof enough of that.

But… While he could not teach her to fight as a human could, he knew someone who could help teach her how to fight as a Monster could. It might not be enough- but if she could keep someone from getting close to her, she would be okay.

He knew just the woman up for the job.
A week passed in what felt like the blink of an eye. Tenebris ended up going home two days after the boys returned, with Caeruleus joining him. Aliquam remained, spending most of his days shoveling snow from the small blizzard that blew in, and spending most of his nights curled around Toki. The ice and snow thankfully only lingered for a few more days, before it began to melt off. It was still woefully cold- but it was a dry cold, verses the wet and freezing cold that came with snow.

For the first few nights, Toki had nightmares. Burning Vikki left it’s mark on her mind- and she woke up several nights to her bones nearly singing the sheets with Papyrus frantically shaking her awake. Her dreams were unpleasant- but they dealt with them. It took her a while to accept the fact that what she had done to the human had been necessary. If Toki hadn’t done what she did, then Vikki would have likely succeeded, and there would have been several dead bodies and likely dust, if Vikki went after Tenebris.

In an effort to keep everyone’s mind off of the events that came to pass- from the new ropy scars that littered Tenebris’ arms and legs, to the bruise that was rapidly fading from her face- Toki and Aliquam decorated the house with her Christmas decorations. Plastic mistletoe hung from several doorways, and there garland along every edge of the room. She’d even put up a tree. Not a real one- No, Douglas fir did not grow native around here, and she was not paying several hundred dollars for an imported one. But she had an eight-foot tall fake tree, and she and her boyfriend decorated it liberally. It might have been two weeks until Christmas, but it looked quite like someone had vomited Christmas spirit into her house. They’d even hung up cheap car fresheners to give the house the smell of pine trees.

She even had outdoor lights on her front porch.

It did it’s job- and the house felt lighter with everything in it. Toki and Aliquam romped that night- the first night that he was sure she was healed enough for any such ventures- and found bliss come morning. The Christmas spirit in the house helped with her nightmares- and she found her nights no longer plagued with the violent terrors.

She would be doing a family gathering for Christmas- with any luck, anyways. She knew for sure her parents were coming- but all of her brothers were up in the air about it. With everything that had happened, Utaka was horribly busy- and her siblings were dealing with some issues of their own.

It was fine- the last half of the year had been pretty hectic since the monsters Emerged.
everything calmed down- and the issue with HAM was resolved- Toki figured things would go back to normal. Or better than normal, she would muse, because the monsters would be there to share it with her. By then, maybe she’d have control of her magic.

With the newfound gift of her familiars, Toki had realized she was developing some interesting… habits from them. They might not have been completely sentient, but they did have thoughts of their own. Not quite human thoughts- or monster thoughts either. They were fairly possessive, she was learning. Alongside the new instinctual urges they kept pushing at her, Toki found that her bones buzzed more often than they rattled- and the bees were at her beck and call.

They buzzed in the back of her skull, a constant company against the quietest moments in the house. She was growing used to the busy din of their noises in the background. They were always there- but sometimes the buzzing was louder than usual.

Today was one such morning. Toki stirred slightly where she lay, peering up at the glimmers of sunshine trickling through her window. There was warmth at her back, and a surprisingly heated bony arm looped around her middle. Papyrus had taken a liking to her bed- it had space for both of them, where his bed at his house did not. She’d gotten it with that thought in mind. As such- she discovered that Papyrus was an amazing big spoon. He made an adorable little spoon too- but he liked to envelop and hold her close more often than not.

This one such morning was no different than the last- save for the fact that he was warmer than he usually was. Perhaps he had caught a cold while he was out and about in the snow? Or whatever that Magic-drain thing had been. Toki was sleepy- but curious as she shifted faintly.

She stilled, however, when his scent hit her. It rolled over her like a musky spice, flooding her nasal cavity and making her bones buzz heatedly. The magic in her body was warming and reacting accordingly.

Was that…?

Heat?

The short answer- or not so short, in actuality- was given to her when something that was definitely not his leg pressed to her backside and rocked into her. The bare bones of his chest pressed against the nightgown covering her spine, and she shivered slightly at his rumble.

He was in heat- and not even awake yet. There was no telling when it had hit- but from the heat in his bones, Toki would bet it had hit sometime early in the morning. She was surprised that he was sleeping as deeply as he was- though with all of the work that he tended to do during the day as of recently, he had been sleeping deeper than usual.

Well… She wasn’t about to let him suffer through his heat alone. Not when he had helped her through her first one- it might not be his first rodeo, but that’s what girlfriends were for. Toki shifted, and gently rubbed her backside against the beast restrained by his boxers. Her fingers found the bones of his arm, and slowly slid between them. Toki rolled the tips of her distal phalanx over the inside of his radius.

Now it was time to wait and see when he would rouse.

He shivered and let out a quiet ‘Nyeh’ as he ground and dry-humped against her. But when she poked her bones through his arm, his magic jolted and his eye sockets lit up, the right one a bright orange. His arms tightened around her. "N-Nyeh...? T-Toki?"
“I’m sorry, Pap. Did I wake you? I was just making myself comfortable for the long haul.” She wiggles her hips back into him softly, and tilts her head back to peek at him. She grins toothily. His magic felt good against her bones- and his scent was musky and delicious. She runs her fingers along the inside of his arm again.

"C-Comfy?” he squeaked, before he whined and nuzzled against her back. "Nyeh..." he didn't fucking care. He just... felt NEED... "Toki..." he rolled over and pushed his way between her legs, nuzzling into her neck before starting to nip and bite along her bones. "Nnnh... You’re s-such a t-tease," he hissed quietly.

“I’m pretty sure someone woke up in a heat~ or at very least, quite the randy mood, no?” She grins back at him. The nips and bites stirred her magic, and she found herself making a high-pitched humming sound at him. She vaguely recognized it from her many years working around bees and their queens. It was a high-pitched buzzing sound, a queen’s song to lure in her suitors, and it was called piping. It vibrated over her bones and into the air.

She rolled willingly when he did, settling on her back as he eased above her, his heat encouraging her own to go along with him. Her eyes brightened, and she all but buzzed under his touch. Her gown had inched upwards, showing off the undergarments that she still bothered to wear even though she had nothing to hide. Toki stroked her fingers up his back and teased them over the back of his jaws. “I only tease for you,” she purrs.

The piping noise only made him excited as he ground against her. "Oooooh my stars, Toki." he groaned, "That sounded so... Alluring." he hissed. He reached up and gripped her underwear, wanting to admire them later on, but not now. Right now, they were in the way. He began to ease them downwards off of her pelvis.

Toki lifted her hips willingly, and wiggled them to get her undergarments to slide down. His eagerness pleased the buzzing feeling in the back of her mind, and that luring piping noise continued in soft, sweet intervals. She shifted and tugged at his boxers. “Mmm, I’ll lure you right into my trap if you’re not careful.” He looked far too restrained in his boxers- and the orange glow was showing through the thin material.

His bulge ground against her bare bones now, his face pressed under her chin as he moaned and whined. "N-Nyeeeeehhh.... Trap…?"

“An innuendo,” she purrs. She kisses along the top of his skull, pressing vibrating fingers into his vertebrae as she rolls against him. Shit- he was hard as hell, and rubbing right along her bones. “Nnnn… Now who’s being the tease? Why don’t you unleash that beast and let me tend to it~?”

With a sharp sound, he bit her clavicle and reached down, pushing his boxers down to free his cock, which looked a bit more swollen than usual.

"S-Summon... N-Now..." he growled, before whining faintly into the bone he had gripped tightly in his teeth. "Please~?"

He was always so polite- even when he was demanding from her. Toki parted her legs, and her magic didn’t even need much prodding. Her lips formed down below, magic slicking up her walls in preparation for what was to come. His bite stung over her collarbone- but it felt good in a way that his bites always seemed to. Her claws roved over his scapulas, and she piped again at him, insistent and taunting all at once.

He hissed in excitement and with a sharp thrust of his hips, his cock was pushed inside of her, almost halfway. "N-NYEH!" he barked out, gripping her arms tightly.
She squeaked as he shoved inside- faster and rougher than he ever usually was. Perhaps it wasn’t best to poke the sleeping bear when the bear already had a stick pointed at you in the first place. Toki’s legs come up, hooking over his hips as she lets out a pleased yelp. Her chest arches up into his face- and she makes note that his bite might have ripped her nightgown. To hell with it- she had other gowns. She finishes ripping it the rest of the way, and her bones practically vibrate against him as she’s freed. Clothes were overrated anyways. He was hot- thicker than normal, and she was fairly certain that there was no way he was going to get all of him inside of her. Toki was going to enjoy him trying though. “Ah-”

The vibrations set him off and he lets out a loud sound as he immediately starts a powerful pace into her. "N-NYEH! Aaahhhh... F-Fuck...!" he snarled.

She yelped, one hand coming to hold him while the other extended above her to hold her headboard. He drove her into the mattress, and her arm was the only thing keeping her horns from being driven into the cherry wood behind her. “F-fuck, holy shit.” She gasped against him. Each thrust drove him deeper into her core, and heat flooded her bones. Toki rolled her hips against him as best she could, her mouth falling open with heated pants as her soul raced behind her sternum. He was doing his hardest to fit- and her magic was working with him to make it happen.

"Nngh... nnhhh... Toki." he snarled. He glanced down, caught sight of the thundering soul in her chest, and used his magic to pull on it. "T-Toki... there's something I... want to try..."

Her soul didn’t even fight being pulled. It slipped from behind her sternum easily, urged on by her magic, and floated up to him. Her HP was full- resting now at a thousand and fifty now- and the green glow was overpowering the red. “W-with my soul?” She pants slightly under him, eyes glowing up at him warmly. “I trust you.”

He looked at her with a smile, before he pulled her soul close. His teeth pressed against the smooth side of it, and his magic caressed it. He gently kissed it, leveling one arm flat on the bed to keep his body weight supported. "I love you so much," he whispered into her core.

The touch was not something that was new- but the intent with which he touched it… She trembled, and her eye lights brightened like flames. Her claws tore into the headboard- and a moan ripped from her throat as he continued to thrust at a slower, gentler pace. It felt like he had just kissed her everywhere at once- and the throbbing of her magic increased. Her soul fluttered in his grasp, tendrils of magic curling along the surfaces like lures. “A-a-ah f-fuck, P-pap, wow. D-do that a-again? Please…”

Very, very faintly, her soul piped to him in his hand.

He moaned softly, and made sure to avoid her scars as he kissed her soul again. And again. And again. "Oh Toki…” He crooned softly against her, punctuating each kiss with a slow thrust of his hips. “You’re beautiful.” He watched her through half-lidded sockets, enjoying the sight of her writhing below him. He murmured sweet nothings to her, punctuating each one with a smooth thrust.

With the green glow that was overwhelming the red, it was likely that touching her scars wouldn’t have even produced the usual shock. Her soul pulsed faster and faster- each kiss and touch was equal to a thousand fold that against her bones as the surface of it slicked up with sweet tasting magic. She trembled, mouth open, eyes ablaze- and amidst his words, she was lost.

She came hard, clenching around him like a vice as the high-pitched buzzing raised an octave. It stuttered off shortly, but she was still left gasping, magic roused and inflamed as her soul practically oozed it’s own release in his hand.
That was something she had never felt before- and holy fuck was that ever the overwhelming experience. She wanted more.

He hadn’t ever done this before- and was surprised as her soul oozed against his mouth. The taste on his tongue... Honey? Aliquam let out a low humming moan as he shifted gears and gently began to suck on her soul, his hips rolling more gently against her own. His cock twitched and throbbed, tightly moving within the shuddering confines of her walls. "Mmmh~"

“Sh-shit,” Toki writhed faintly under him, her soul sending waves of sensation over her. She hadn’t even fully ebbed off her first one, and he was jolting her forwards towards yet another. Her soul fluttered against his tongue, oozing more magic as he stimulated it. It was slick and sticky- and textured exactly like honey was. Her magic bubbled up in her chest- it felt good, it felt amazing, but he wasn’t exactly getting anything huge in return from it either.

Her fingers twitch, and she sends her magic to gently tug on his soul. Not a demand- not a forceful pull- but a simple inquiry. “C-can I?” She hadn’t seen his soul before- but hell, if this is what he could do to her… she wanted to see how positively mad she could drive him.

"Yes, Toki." he whispered. He kept her soul lightly balanced in his mouth, and propped himself up better on his one free arm so his chest could be parted from her own. He remained seated deep within her, hips still twitching now and again, and summoned his own soul. It was healthy, a beautiful, vibrant bright orange monster soul. "Ha... What do you think?"

Her fingers come up to gently take his soul from his hands. Toki shudders softly, but is extremely gentle as she takes him. Her walls spasm around his cock- but she keeps her composure as she handles him. The last thing she wants to do is accidentally hurt him.

He was beautiful- Orange just like his magic, but so much deeper. Vibrant hues danced along its surface, with darker shades of orange swirling within. The upside down heart was warm, throbbing in her fingers with every pulse of his magic. It was the culmination of his being- and it fit him perfectly. She strokes along the edge of it with her thumb, and trembles faintly. It was the same size as her soul was. “You… You’re perfect.” she murmurs softly. Toki edges him up to her mouth, and very gently presses him to her teeth in a soft kiss. Magic dulls the edges of her fangs, and she nuzzles into him affectionately. “W-What does orange mean?”

He shivered and moaned breathily at the touches to his soul. He eased her soul back into his hand before he smiled at her. His sockets were still alight with magic, and the heat roiled between them. He’d need to make a call later when the heat temporarily abated for a time- he was supposed to be doing guard duty today. Heats changed plans, however, so it wasn’t like anyone was going to complain. "N-Nyeh... It's... Bravery." he answered softly, "A-At least... for humans it is.”

“Bravery? I think it fits you.” She mirrors him, parting her teeth faintly so she can lick over the length of his soul. It tingled against her tongue, with a strange taste that she couldn’t quite place. “You are my brave heart,” she purrs. Her soul buzzes against his fingers, and she pipes at him instinctively. A word built up in the back of her skull, forced there by the buzzing of her swarm in the back of her mind, and she kissed his soul again as her magic wrapped around him. The word rumbled out of her chest with a liquid promise, possessive and loving all at once. “Mine~”

"Nnnh...! Y-Yours~ Fuck... and you're mine!" he snarled in pleasure, brushing his teeth lightly on her soul as he ground against her happily. His thrusts were resuming in earnest, and each soft nibble to her soul was punctuated with an almost bruising slap of his pelvis against her own.

Toki parted her mouth and took his soul inside. The sharp edges of her teeth were dulled faintly as she scraped it. Her hand cradled him as her other claws dug into the headboard. She rocked against
him with a soft cry. Her words floated from behind her busy mouth as she makes a valid attempt not to bite down too hard. While his light chewing felt good- just slightly painful enough to make her soul vibrate against his teeth- hers would be entirely painful. “Ahh- Yours! Yours! I’m yours!”

Ffffuck yes- His fingers clawed at the sheets below them, and he groaned faintly before his mouth fell open and her soul was free to fall into his hand. "Hahh.... hhah..." he panted quietly, "Ah... T-Toikiko.” He whined faintly.

Toki trembled as her soul fell free from his mouth. He needed to come to his edge- she was nearing the edge for her second one. Slowly, slid his soul from her mouth, a curious idea blooming in her skull. She pressed a solid kiss to it- and then stretched her fingers out to brush the edge of his soul gently against the un-cracked side of her own.

Her soul sparked with a bright green light that sent jitters flailing through her bones, and stars flashing in her skull. “W-Wowie,” she very nearly drops his soul as she brushes them together again.

His eyes suddenly lit up brightly and he let out a shrill shriek as he immediately collapsed, hugging her tightly, unintentionally pressing their souls together as he did so, "Fffffuuuck!" he cried out.

She squeaked as he collapsed on her. He was heavy for a skeleton, and she groaned as her soul was pressed to his. She vibrated under him, a lewd sound leaving her- because holy shit, the stars just kept dancing. She clasped her hand with his, keeping their souls together- that was better than any touch he could do with his hands. “P-Papyrus, f-fuck- move!” She wiggled her hips under him in a clear demand- this was too good a moment to pass up.

This sort of pleasure didn’t come often- why squander it?

His thrusts are almost savage as he resumes, and his mouth clamps tightly over her neck as he reflexively bites down. His teeth hold tight, and he groans, hips clattering against her own noisily. The clatter nearly drowns out the slick sounds of his cock dragging within her. Aliquam can feel himself thickening, and he yelps needily. "T-TOKI! AAH!"

The bite on her neck stung- but it felt amazing too. Her hips rocked up into his, and she abandoned her hold on the headrest to drop her hand and stroke his ribs firmly. “P-Pap!” She could feel her edge coming closer- her magic sparked at him, at his soul, and she cried out in desire. “S’ close!”

Papyrus’ magic sparked, between his ribs and her fingers, and it caused him to cry out in pleasure as he moved. His mind and magic were both lost to instinct as he continued to thrust until his vision went white, and he ended up screaming her name out as he reached release. His cock swelled within her, and surged with magic as he emptied into her being, his soul basting her own with magic as it seeped into her own.

His release triggered her own, and Toki’s soul surged with magic as she took his waves of magic into her being. She exuded heat, an overwhelming buzzing noise taking over the room as her magic blended with his and basted the house. She cried his name, mouth falling open with a shriek of passion, and eyes whiting out against the pleasure that overtook her. Toki clenched around him as he flooded her insides, her legs holding him firmly in her depths.

Toki slumped under him, overwhelmed by sensations, trembling like a leaf under his weight.

He was currently in the same rough state, trembling and panting weakly as he held onto her. "Hah... hahhh... Ooooohhhh stars~"

“Stars,” she whispers raggedly. Toki gulped in air, her soul and body buzzing with the magic she’d
been washed with. Her soul shuddered against his, and her fingers twitch slightly. They’d made a mess of their hands- but she found the sticky goop in their palms to be satisfying. “W-why haven’t we done t-this before?” she rasped questioningly. “Th-That was… wow.” She felt thoroughly well ridden- and full. Her hips twitched against his, and she groaned faintly. Hell- he was thick, and she was slightly sore, but in a good way.

"Nnn... Nyeh~ We... We'll have to do that again soon..." he giggled quietly, his soul slowly slipping free of them to tuck away in his chest, "Hahh~"

“Oh yes~” she purrs. Her claws unhook from the bed frame, and she loops her arm around his neck. Toki drags him up for a smooth kiss, and nuzzles her face to his. The burning in her body was ebbing slightly- a nice reprieve for the storm yet to come. “Mmm… did that help a little bit?” Her collarbone was sensitive from his bite- but it felt good. She wiggles her fingers and takes her own soul back to her chest. A soft giggle leaves her. “We made a bit of a mess…” Their hands were very sticky.

"This mess is almost as bad as when Sans refused to clean up his messes." he huffed. “But yes, I feel a bit better.”

Toki chuckles slightly and cleans her fingers on the sheets. They could simply be washed anyways. She shifts, settling under him, completely content not to move. And since she didn’t want to move… Maybe some snuggles and talking it was. “What was it like, underground?” She inquired softly. “Also- I have been dying to ask since I met you- but how did you decide on The Great Papyrus?”

"Nyeh heh heh... Well, before the barrier was destroyed, it was quiet.” he hummed quietly, before he laughed, "The Great Papyrus, or so I called myself when I was younger, was that determined young skeleton who’s heart was set on joining the Royal Guard... That old armor I was wearing on Halloween was my 'Battle Body', or a costume Sans had made me for a party." he explained.

She giggles softly. “That armor was a little silly- but very dashing on you, if I must say. I was quite fond of your speedo. So… what had you so set on joining the royal guard? It seems like a noble thing to do.”

"The Royal guard was marveled by the entire underground! And... Admittedly, I hadn't too many friends back then.”

“Really?” Her fingers come up to stroke his jaw slightly, rubbing her thumbs along his temple as she does so. “They sound really cool... But I can’t believe you didn’t have many friends. Who wouldn’t want to be friends with you? I have the most awesome boyfriend ever.” Anyone who hadn’t wanted to be friends had sorely missed out, in her opinion.

"I know, I know." he chuckled, "I was rather immature." he sighed quietly.

“Everyone has to grow up over time.” She smiles softly to him and gives him a gentle smooch. “Do you know how old you could be compared to in human years?” She asks curiously. “Your dad mentioned that Skeletons aged differently- that monsters in general did.”

He leaned into her kiss with a soft purr of consideration. "Mmmm I'm not sure... perhaps around... twenty three?"

She hesitated, and then her hands came up to cover her face. She began to laugh, ribs bouncing up slightly against his. “Oh my god. Oh my god, I’m a cougar. Kon’s never going to let me live that down, oh my god.”
"How are you a mountain lion?" he asked, staring at her in befuddlement.

She laughed even harder. “No, no, you don’t- Oh my god. Okay… Okay, so a cougar is a term for an older woman who dates younger men. I don't know the actual age requirement to be a cougar, but it doesn't really matter. I’ll be thirty-three this coming January. The twentieth of January- Pap, if you think you’re the equivalent of twenty three- you’d be ten years younger than me. That puts me well into cougar range, as far as my brothers would be concerned.”

"...! O-Oh...!" his cheeks darkened slightly as he looked at her, and cleared his throat. "Ah..."

She giggles softly at his blush, and twitches her hips faintly against his own. “I don’t mind being with a younger man- or skeleton, technically. Does it bother you that, physically by human standards, I’m older than you?”

He shivered as she twitched her hips, then he smiled down at her. His teeth gently pressed a kiss to her chest, and she nibbled him gently. "No. Not necessarily." he purred.

“Not necessarily, hm? Afraid I cant keep up with a young sprout like you~?” She gives him a teasing grin, nerves bubbling slightly in her belly. She didn’t think it would- but sometimes one could never tell. “I think I can prove that I can keep up with you.” She purred.

"You already have~" he purred, before giving a light grind of his hips, "Well enough~"

She grinned up at him, soul soothed slightly. Her mouth comes up to meet his in a smooth kiss, and she strokes her fingers gently along his bones. “Good~ Now, speaking of keeping up…” She rocks her hips gently into his, a tremble of arousal sliding up her spine. He hadn’t pulled free from her- and it ached in a wholesome good sort of way. “Food before the heat resumes, or another round~?”

"Mmmm~" he then smirked at her, "The only thing I’m hungry for..." he drawled teasingly as he lifted himself up slightly and pressed their hips more firmly together as he leaned down over her, "Is you~"

Toki flushed a bright red, and giggled softly. “I think that’s a craving I can help you sate,” she purrs, winking up at him.

"Nyeh heh heh~" he grabbed her by the arms and pulled her with him as he sat back, Toki now seated in his lap, "Hope you wouldn't mind being the one to move this time around~"

"You kidding me? I never mind.” She wiggled slightly as he rolled them so she was seated astride his lap. She rolls her hips slowly against him, and takes the chance to fully shrug off the tattered remains of her nightgown. She adjusts herself on his lap, steadying her legs, and then kisses at his collarbone. It was his turn to get nibbled at- and she had every intention of leaving him with a hicky.

"Mmmh~" he leaned his head back, smiling at her as he did, "Ah... My lovely Toki~" he purred, "wanting to leave your mark?" he rumbled.

“You left one on me,” she grins. His teeth had left a lovely mark on her collar bone, and she had full intentions of giving him one. “I thought it might be fair for us to be matching, right handsome?” she leaves a small bruise on his bone- and then kisses her way up to his neck. Slowly she lifted her hips, drawing her up along his shaft. She shivered and set a slow but steady pace, lightning zinging up her spine.

One hand came down and began to stroke over his spine.
"Nnnh~ oh yes," he chuckled softly, "Hah~" at the touches to his spine he arched and moaned louder, his hips twitching and squirming under hers, "Ooh~!"

She kissed and nibbled along his bones, rolling her hips into his every time that she hilted him inside of her. He could just sit back and enjoy as she bounced over top of him, her fingers stroking up and down along his spine as she quickened her pace. Her mouth nipped and nibbled over his bones, teeth scraping slightly over his neck. She touched over where she had bitten before, tongue lapping at the bones.

"Ahhh..." he wasn't afraid to be vocal for her, it felt really good and he wasn't going to hide that fact.

His noises pleased her, and she found her bones vibrating against him in a soft, luring buzz. She pipped for him as he moaned for her- and she rocked and bounced at varying speeds, building surely towards their end. "Mmm~"

"Nnnh.. aahh... Nyeh~" he moaned as she rode him, until soon he grew close and he grabbed her hips, moving her faster. "Nyeh! Aaahh!"

She let him take control as she felt him pulse inside of her, magic thick and heated as she takes him deep. She can feel her edge coming, and pulls him down into a heated kiss. Her tongue steals out- and she laps at his teeth teasingly, her hips grinding down against his.

"Ahhh... Nnnh! Toki~" he mewled, hugging her tightly as he shivered and reached a rough climax. His hips twitched into her own, and he rumbled at her pleasantly. "Nnnnggh!"

Toki shudders and slumps into him with a quiet purr. Her bones buzz pleasantly, and she drapes across him like a limp blanket. “Mmmm, Pap~” She was pleased- very pleased- and slightly tired. Two orgasms in a short amount of time made her sleepy- despite the warmth and the heat bubbling lowly in her bones. “Mmmm.”

"I love you" he sighed softly.

She nestled close, her sockets drifting to half-mast as she relaxed. “Mmmnnn, I love you too.” She purrs contently.

Yes- yes she did love him. And it was a love that was growing each day she spent with him, and with each new thing she got to learn about him. She draped herself across him with a content sigh, enjoying the tingle of her magic over his bones and the warmth in the room. They needed this.
Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So it is a thing. HEH. HEHEHEHEHEHEHEH. Enjoy, folks-

Also, don't forget to come visit us at our blog! You can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: You thought things couldn’t get any more crazy, right?

It was a nice, short heat. Two days were spent in lavished fun, romping across every surface and cleaning up after as they went. Toki was in need of a replacement pillow for her couch- she might have bitten it during their dinner time romp- but the majority of her house got away unscathed, which was surprising given the intensity of his heat. He was no where near as aggressive as she had been- but she found that by making that high pitched buzzing at him, she could egg him onwards into greater action.

So naturally, she had to tease him frantic multiple times- and enjoy the lust that took them for a joyride because of it.

Her headboard had the claw marks too- but they didn’t bother her really. They made great handholds for when Aliquam had gotten exuberant with his thrusting. After two days of not-quite-tender lovemaking, much really didn’t bother her. They had both needed it- sure they had sex prior, but there was just something uniquely soothing and settling about being entangled with another for many hours- without a care in the world. Well, a care besides sex, snuggles, and food. They had been entirely focused on each other- and it had been a wonderful thing.

They’d even played with some of the Christmas stuff- not that she would ever tell anyone what exactly. But there were a few strands of garland that were no longer sacred- and garland on bone was vastly less itchy than it was on actual skin.

The heat ended late the second night- and they slept like peaceful logs all tangled up in her sheets.

She woke quietly come late morning, her limbs still tangled with her boyfriends, to a faint glow that tickled at her closed sockets from under the blanket she’d been burrowed in. She shifted closer, nestling to his chest, and groaned quietly. She was sore- well used, more like- and her soul ached. They had spent several more times touching their souls together over the few days of his heat- and it left her feeling drained and yet full. It was an oddly pleasing sensation- but they had probably overdone it. Over stimulating themselves seemed to be a running factor of heats- which made her glad that they did not come once a month. It hadn’t been all that long since her heat- but at least his was vastly shorter than her own, and vastly less violent.

Like it had been mentioned, her magic seemed to make the heat more intent. His magic didn’t burn with the intensity hers did- so it made his heat less… intense? Yes. Intense. It had been good though- and that was the sort of heat that she could get behind having regularly.

A happy moan escapes her throat, and she nestles her fingers around him. She threads her fingers into the backs of his ribs and eases her chest to his. Her ribs brush against his- but it is a strangely
muted way. She shivers, and nestles closer to him with a sleepy sigh. They were both sorely in need of a shower- they smelled strongly of musk. Toki didn’t mind it- he smelled amazing as per usual- but to other monster noses, they probably would be offensive.

Speaking of offensive. She tugged the blanket closer to her face, slightly stealing it from her boyfriend as she cocooned herself tighter against him, and groaned again. “Nnn… Tu’n ‘f th’ ligh’.” She grumbles quietly. She had left the curtains closed- so where was the light coming from…? It wasn’t bright- but to sleepy sockets, anything could look like the sun if one wasn’t aware enough to properly process it.

Aliquam had sat up when she started to complain, sockets opening sleepily to look towards the lamp. It was off- as were all lights but the night light in the bathroom- so what was… He shifted slightly, and glanced down to where the faint glow was originating from the darkened room. It was coming from under the covers.

Wait… Was that…

"T-Tokiko… it's... it's not the lights..." Shock coated the sleepy tone of his voice, and he found his tiredness fading rapidly as he stared at the faint green glow from where his girlfriend was nestled in the blankets. "It's you! You're glowing!"

“Wha-?” She was glowing? She took a moment to rub her sockets, and then disentangled her arms from his body. She peeled back the blanket- and there, under it, was the source of the green glow. It was her torso- or at least most of her abdominal cavity. The space usually filled out in her clothes had begun glowing faintly, a dark green color that was just opaque enough for her to faintly see the outline of the bones hidden within the glow. She could follow the rolling lines of skin she didn’t have, rolling up from her pelvic bones all the way up the first two of her ribs. It wasn’t smooth and thin like she used to be- no it matched how her clothes filled out, with a small amount of pudge that she had gained over the holidays. She even had a divot that marked her belly button. The false body was darker near her hips, and lightened slightly as it rolled upwards towards her ribs.

Toki blinked slowly, processing this new sight, and reached out a finger to touch her abdomen curiously. It was warm- and very solid under her fingers, like someone had taken play-dough and mixed it with Jell-O. “Uh… Holy shit, I am glowing. What the hell?” Confusion and slight unease flooded her. “This didn’t happen last time.” She hadn’t ever ended up with a body like this. Yeah, when she was in heat, she summoned up the lady parts that were usually not within sight. It didn’t hurt- but she wasn’t certain what exactly it was supposed to mean. “Uh… Do… you know what this is?”

"... I have a guess... but... Perhaps I should go get Father." he hedged quietly, eye lights locked on the glow of her middle. "This isn't... something I know enough about..."

“If it has something to do with the heat, your Dad isn’t going to know either. He doesn’t know a whole lot about female skeletons- I’ve been one huge learning experience for him a lot of the time.” Her breath hitches slightly, and she watches her middle move with it. Holy shit. Holy shit, this was weird and not okay, and it wasn’t something she wanted to deal with so soon after the incident with Vikki.

“I don’t know who to ask about it thou- Grillby. Grillby dropped a lot of hints about knowing about skeletons when Caeruleus took me to him the time that I got that Magi-drain thing.” The fire monster had mentioned that it was normal for female skeletons to cycle through their heat like she had- and to affect so many. Which meant there was the high chance that the fire monster would know about it.

Toki squirms, and works to disentangle herself from her blankets. Clothes- she needed clothes. She
wasn’t sure what sort of shirt she’d need- but as she watched, the glow on her middle eased slightly in response to her rousing. A turtleneck would do- a long one, so it wouldn’t ride up.

"You've gotten used to his fire by now, right?" Toki didn’t do too badly with Grillby when she wasn’t stressed- but he wasn’t entirely certain how this particular meeting would go. This wasn’t the best way to wake up in the morning. “It won't hurt to go and talk to him?"

“I’ll be okay with you there.” She did better when she had someone else with her. Grillby was nice-and the more she got to know him, the less he seemed to trigger her panic. Toki managed to flail out of bed, and went to get her clothes. “Yeah- C’mon, up. Clothes, and then we’ll go talk with Grillby.”

She leaves him to get out of bed on his own, and flies into her own clothes. Her middle had her disturbed- skeletons could form body parts, she knew, because they could form tongues. But this wouldn’t go away when she willed it- and other than her lady parts, she had never had something form without her willing it into being. Even when she had accidentally used her tongue for the first time, she had been actively trying to lick her teeth clean. There was no reason for this glowing abdomen business. But sweatpants and a dark green turtleneck covered the small amount of glow well enough, and she flicked her sockets over to see how Papyrus was faring.

Papyrus had been quick to get out of the bed and into his usual clothing. He wrapped his scarf around his neck, and then smiled as he looked at Toki. "Nyeh, let's not waste any time, then!"

Toki gave him a nod in turn, and got her slippers on. After snagging his hand, she headed out of the room and down the stairs with him. She idly kept tugging at her turtleneck, making sure it covered her as best as possible. With this… skin of sorts, she had no desire to show off anything under her shirt. It was… weird.

It also made for a frighteningly swift walk towards Grillby’s- her legs carried her quicker than usual, and her fingers kept a tight hold on Aliquam’s. She was nervous- what if touching souls had been bad? They’d never done that before- what if it set off something weird in her body? Maybe human souls weren’t meant to be touched like that?

All sorts of questions lingered in her skull, and it kept her quiet for most of the walk. She managed smiles and greetings for those who offered them- but there were few monsters out and about at this time. Many were tutoring the children during their late-morning classes.

Thankfully that meant that Grillby’s was empty when they arrived- though the ‘out to lunch’ sign on the front was as good of a way to tell it would be. The door wasn’t locked- but it was only locked when the bar itself was actually closed.

Grillby himself was behind the bar as usual. He had a burger on a plate in front of him, with a basket of fries that he was quietly chewing away at. In his other hand, he held his phone. It was more or less the size of a tablet- given just how large his hands actually were- but it served as a good screen. He was browsing this ‘you tube’ thing that the humans had. They had wonderful videos on how to create such strange concoctions of alcoholic drinks- and a channel that created misleading videos. One did not stuff a turkey in such a violent way- he had seen the proper way to do so, thankfully.

He glanced up when the bell tolled, one fry braced between burning fangs. Upon seeing Tokiko and Papyrus, he tilted his head quietly, and motioned them closer. “… Can I help you?"

"Grillby, I’m glad you're available." The taller skeleton took the lead and brought his girlfriend with him up to the bar. "There's something... strange going on with Toki..." he started, hesitantly glancing at her.
Toki glanced away slightly and cleared her non-existent throat. “Yeah. I kinda… figured you might know more about it than Tenebris would- you seemed pretty knowledgeable about, uh, female skeletons when you helped me feel better.”

Grillby glanced between the both of them and finished his fry quietly. He dusted off his fingers on his pants, and quietly paused the video on his phone. “I can assume,” he started slowly, “That your thoughts on my knowledge are because this is something to do with…?”

“Well, it happened after Pap’s heat… And uh, I woke up with it this morning, and Tenebris doesn’t really know so much about female skeletons as he does male skeletons and… it’s open out here, or I’d just show you, but…”

He cut her off with a wave of his hand. “Come.” He had no idea what the both of them had gotten up to during heat- but that would explain why Caeruleus had come grumbling about having to pick up Papyrus’ morning shift for him. The large bartender stood, leaving his unfinished food and phone on the bar top as he padded out from behind it. “I cannot help what I cannot see. The back room will do.”

Toki clutched to Aliquam’s hand, and tugged him with her as she headed for the back room. The back room, as it turned out, was one of the alcohol storage rooms. It was wall to wall with crates of various alcohol and confections. Once they were in the wide room, and her boyfriend had shut the door, Toki tugged up the edge of her turtleneck up.

Her belly glowed faintly as she exposed it. “This is our problem. It showed up this morning- and we have no idea what it is.”

The old bartender’s flames let out a surprised crackle of heat, and he stared down at the tiny skeleton in front of him. His gaze flicked over to Aliquam, and a flaming brow arched high with a dry sizzle. “Well… First off, congratulations. I was unaware you both were intending to have children at this time. Or that you were formally mated, for that matter. Really, Aliquam- shame on you. You did not even tell your brother. Second- what did you think would happen when you shared souls with the intent to create children?”

The brother tensed up, sockets blossoming wide. "Ah! Children!? I... I hadn't meant to... I mean.... Intent?!" Poor Papy was a stammering mess, orange rising to his cheekbones as the flabbergasted skeleton failed to put together a legible sentence.

Toki was marginally better than her boyfriend, but only just. Her shirt remained clutched in her fingers, and she stared at him out of black sockets. She was… he… She was pregnant? What? But… “But… We... We never... Children never even crossed into my mind. I mean I want them, don’t get me wrong, but… It didn’t… We were just messing around, nothing of that sort intended. We’re not... mated either. Dating yes, but…”

Grillby blinks slowly, observing the both of them. “… But it is not possible for monsters to conceive without the desire for children on both parties. Both souls have to touch with the intent to spawn- and the new-formed soul can gestate within either parent. It is how monsters can never be forced into having children. Your pregnancy is the only reason your body would form and not be able to be returned to its usual state.”

Toki’s fingers dropped her shirt, and one hand came down to rest on her lower abdomen. The other came up to cradle her temple. “I… I don’t have a monster soul though... Humans… Humans don’t…I have a human
soul. Maybe…” Shit- it was too soon, it was too much- and shit, she was light headed.

Papyrus stammered a little bit more, before he let out a weak ‘nyeeeh’ and went down.

Grillby’s flames flashed bright as he stepped forwards to catch the toppling skeleton. Despite Papyrus being nearly as tall as him, the skeleton weighed hardly anything. The bartender’s flames crackled faintly, and he hefted the fainted skeleton over his shoulder. His eyes glanced to Toki. “We can talk about it upstairs. Are you going to faint too?”

“I’ll be okay…” Concern filtered in through her internal panic, but her eye lights were still missing as the massive flame monster carried her boyfriend- and the father of her apparent child- out of the back room and over to another door. The door had lead to a set of stairs, and she followed him up those too.

Grillby guided her into his home above the bar with a gentle hand, and then to his living room. Aliquam was gently dumped onto the couch, and he patted the Skeleton’s cheek to get him to start rousing as the fire monster took a seat on the floor. He had two seats- the couch and the chair in front of it. He hadn’t quite expected the big skeleton to drop so suddenly- No; the human turned monster had looked more apt to be the one to faint. “Have a seat, Miss Toki. Please- continue. We can figure this out together. I know how monster conception works. Do humans not use their souls?” He had never taken the time to study humans and how they reproduced when they had been at war- he had been more concerned about killing them, not on how they were to be made.

He watched her intently. The small skeleton still looked likely to faint- and the emptiness of her sockets was disturbing. That was one small fact that he would never get used to regarding skeletons- how empty and utterly dark their sockets could get when they were angry or distressed.

Toki took a seat on the chair across from the couch, and curled her arms around her middle. Amidst the panic, there was a sort of numb sensation. Shock, most likely. That… had not been the answer that she had been expecting. She had a tiny being growing inside of her- she had been expecting some sort of soul complication, like she’d eventually be covered in all green glowy bits or something. “Most humans don’t even believe souls exist,” she mutters softly. “Humans… You’re aware of sex, yeah? Well, humans are entirely biological. A male puts his bits into a female, and he ejaculates- and the sperm meets with the egg in a female and forms an embryo. Humans have accidental babies all the time- be they forced, or accidental in a relationship or one nightstand. It’s why we have population problems.”

His brow furrowed. “Then how does the soul of this embryo come into being? I know human souls are strong, but to create another soul from just one is not possible without severe damage to the soul.”

Toki’s mind flashed to Tenebris’ soul- to the holes that marked it and showed the damage he’d gotten from creating not one, but two souls from his own. “I don’t… I don’t know. Women are usually tired through pregnancy- when my sister in law had Dom, she couldn’t seem to get enough sleep. My mom had my eight brothers and myself though, and she’s still as cantankerous as ever. Maybe… maybe it’s a human thing? Because I have a human soul, we didn’t… need the intent t-t-to make a new soul?”

“It might be possible, Miss Toki.” The fire elemental frowned deeper. That did make sense- and account for the population boom in humans, and how they hadn’t died out when they barely lived for half of a century. That was concerning though. “I sometimes forget you have a human soul- which is silly with as powerful as yours is. My apologies for my assumptions earlier- I will need to apologize to your intended as well when he wakes.”

“Its okay…” The horned skeleton curls in on herself, her knees coming up to shield her middle. She
liked kids- hell she wanted several of them herself. But… She wasn’t ready for kids. With the threat of HAM, and with everything going on, she hadn’t wanted- “I… Can you please not say anything?”

“Pardon?”

“Can you keep this a secret for now? Papyrus and I are going to need to talk about this- and I don’t think I can do that if everyone knows. Wait. Everyone can’t tell, can they?”

Grillby nodded quietly, and ran his fingers over the bridge between his eyes. This was a mess- and he pitied the poor young ones. They hadn’t even known… “I will keep it quiet, Miss Toki. I understand- you and Papyrus will need to discuss your plans. As for telling- no. Skeletons are rare creatures- and you are not even a day into gestation yet. So long as you keep your shirt down, you should be okay to keep it quiet.” He rumbled softly, and glanced back at her quietly. She looked stressed- and he leaned back to knock his knuckles gently on Aliquam’s cheek again to attempt and rouse him once more. He needed to wake up and tend to his female. “Keep in mind, though- we will need to tell Tenebris something. If this is something that is possible for all Human Turned Monsters, then word needs to be spread about it or there will be cases of this that arise all over the place. Perhaps I can come up with a cover story for us in time, though.”

Toki shook her head and wiped at her eyes- shit, she was tearing up. It was starting to sink in- she was pregnant. Shit. Shit, shit, double shit, triple shit. “N-no. We’ll tell Tenebris soon, I promise. Just… I’ll handle it. But… But not yet. I… I need time.” She needed time to calm down, time to talk to Papyrus, time to just… She needed time.

“I understand, Miss Toki.” He gave her a soothing smile. “Slow your breathing, Miss Toki. Panicking in your condition is not good.” When she failed to slow her breathing- in fact, him pointing out her hyperventilating seemed to make her do it faster- Grillby scooted along the floor and made her uncurl. He took her hands- so small and fragile compared to the monster that had sired her child- into his own, and let his chest expand. “With me, okay? Take a breath in- one, two, three… And out. Take a breath in- one, two, three… and out.”

Toki’s fingers curled into his, and she shakily matched his breathing. She hadn’t even been aware that she’d been hyperventilating- but she’d panicked more when she realized it. She didn’t want to hurt the baby- or whatever the little soul was called. But his technique worked- and she began to calm slightly.

During the breathing process, Papyrus had begun to stir. As Toki calmed, he slowly sat up, rubbing his head with his palm. ”Nyeh…?”

Toki was doing marginally better- but she kept silent, working through calming breathing. The longer she did it, the more the coil of panic began to ease off. His hands were warm and large- and created great focus points for her bones to cling to. This was the first time she’d touched him, now that she thought on it- fire was a strange medium to hold and to have touch you. It did feel good with his thumbs rubbing over the backs of her palms though.

Grillby eased her through a few more breaths, making sure she kept the slow and even pace with him, and then turned to look at Papyrus over his shoulder. Amusement flickered through his flames. “You with us now, Papyrus?”

"Nnn… Uh-huh…" he took a breath, steadying himself as he scrubbed his hand down his face. He then looked at Toki, ”A- Are you okay?”

“Are you okay?” She counters quietly, continuing her calming motions. She wasn’t okay right now- she was still flighty, still panicky- and growing ever more worried because she and Aliquam were
still to new into their relationship for this to be happening. They hadn’t even talked about kids yet. Shit- he was so young to be a dad- she was old enough to be a mom, but…

She shook her skull forcibly and tried to clear her mind. If she continued to think about it, she wouldn’t make it stop. A deep breath in- one, two three…

“She will be. She worked herself into a bit of a panic- and it is not good for the soulling for her to be in such a state.” Grillby tilted his head quietly and kept an eye on the skeleton. If he careened off the couch, he’d crack his skull against the coffee table- and then they’d have to tell Tenebris why his son’s skull was flayed open after he fainted for the second time that day.

"I... I can't blame her... she... Oh Stars." he ran his hands over his face. "This is my fault..."

“Technically, it is no one’s fault.” Grillby shifted- making sure that Toki would be alright on her own first- and then scooted back across the floor to the younger man. Stars above, he was too old for this. He rested warm hands onto Papyrus’ knees, and gave him a comforting look. He was a dad above all else- and these two were very obviously lost and in need of guidance at this point. “Toki and I talked while you were recovering. Humans work differently than monsters- we think it is the differences in your souls that caused this. Humans don’t require souls to create new life- and we think that might have translated over to her life as a monster now. Her soul is still human.”

Toki shifted, scrubbing her eye sockets slightly to remove any traces of tears that might have gathered and lingered. When she blinks them open, her eye lights come on, and she peers over at Aliquam tiredly. “I don’t blame you, Ali. This… This sort of stuff happens to humans. He told me that monsters don’t have… accidents… like this. So… I’m… I’m sorry…”

"...!" Papyrus swallowed thickly, and offered Grillby a thankful smile at the offered comfort. He eased off of the couch, and stepped over to the chair. Leaning down, he looped his arms around her and hugged her tightly. "D-Don't be... We'll get through this, okay?" he murmured, "Somehow... we'll make this work..." He wouldn’t abandon her because of an accident- they would just have to handle the consequences of their actions like most people had to.

Toki managed not to hiccup into more tears or hyperventilation, and instead looped her arms around him in a tight hug. She dragged him down so he ended up kneeling in front of her, and proceeded to wrap around him like a leech. Burying her face into his chest, her bones rattled in a faint tremble. “Y-yeah. We… We need to sit down and discuss everything. We need to figure out what we’re going to do…”

Grillby smiled faintly, and propped his chin onto his palm. “You both are willing to work on it,” he murmured softly, “which is a good sign. I think you’ll both be okay. I will keep your secret though, Miss Toki. But you may want to tell Tenebris soon- neither of you will be able to hide it for long.”

Not if Caeruleus got wind of it- the elder brother had a particular knack for soul searching.

Quinn hugged her in a vice's grip, his face nuzzled into her shoulder as he took a deep breath to steady himself. "Toki, I love you... I would... never abandon you. Either of you." he murmured softly.

Toki nuzzled into his shoulder quietly and shivered. “I love you too…” She can’t deny the possibilities of him leaving her hadn’t crossed her mind- but she had to recall that monsters had a different code of honor than humans did. Not all humans would stay with a woman after this- and many would insist upon having the problem taken care of. There were few who would honor it- but not as many as there should be.
Grillby shifted, and hauled himself to his feet. His fires crackled faintly and he stretched his back-yes, he was surely too old to be scooting around on the floor. “It has been an exciting morning for you both,” The old fire elemental murmured gently. “Why don’t I get you both a burger and a fry so you can get home and get cleaned up?”

“Cleaned up…?”

Grillby chuckled. “You both smell of heat. I am fairly certain that you did not take the time to rinse off before you came here, correct?”

Embarrassment tinged Toki’s cheeks a bright green, and her grasp on Aliquam tightened.

Aliquam pulled back and hid his face in his hands, "I am so sorry." he murmured to Grillby.

Grillby chuckled and patted the skeleton’s shoulder. “It is not the first time I’ve had to do this for someone- and it surely will not be the last.” Amusement tinged his voice. “My sense of smell is not the best- but the wolf monsters will surely know what you have been up to.”

“I think I’ll forego the burger, Grillby. Thank you, though. I think I just want to get home and get washed… maybe make pancakes or something.” Something light and not-greasy. She groans quietly. “Right about now I wish I had Sans’ knack for shortcuts.”

"We’ll come back later for that breakfast, if that’s okay with you." he murmured as he looked up at the elemental.

Grillby nodded. “It will be lunch by then- but of course. Stop by whenever you like, and I will prepare you a meal.”

“Thank you, Grillby.” Toki leaned back slightly and scrubbed her hand over her face. There was a lot they needed to talk about in private. She shifts and goes to stand. It would be another quick walk back, she hoped.

Papyrus stood as well, and then hugged Toki close to him before he teleported them both back home.

Toki squeaked- sudden teleportation was always disorienting- and clung to him when they arrived back. “I… did not know you could take shortcuts too. Warn me next time please? It's pretty disorienting if you can’t brace for it.” Was teleporting even good for a new soul? Well… Her middle was still there, so it couldn’t have been too harmful for it. “So… ah… are you okay? I know this is a lot to take in… We haven’t even seriously talked about having kids before…”

"Nyeh, ah… I’m sorry…” he giggled quietly, before nuzzling her. "I'm fine, yes... just... just shocked."

“I’d say you were shocked. You fainted.” She nuzzles into him quietly, and then peers around. It would appear that he had dropped them in the living room- nearly on top of the coffee table. “But… are you really okay? Like… This is big news. I understand if you’re not totally okay with it. Our relationship is pretty new. Most humans wait years before they even consider having kids with each other.” They’d only been together since November- it had been just a little bit over a month, she thought.

"Of course!" he answered, nuzzling her, "I don’t think I could be happier right now, I mean... I wanted children someday, I didn't think it would be so soon, but I don’t care!"

Toki laughs quietly, and finds moisture beading at the corners of her sockets. “Holy shit, Ali. Just… holy shit. You monsters are something else entirely- most humans wouldn’t have hesitated to pack
their bags and leave as fast as possible. Or insist on other… methods.” She swipes at it, and smiles up at him warmly. “You really are amazing, you know that?” She was undoubtedly the luckiest woman alive. Toki pulls back, and edges her shirt up faintly. Peering down at her middle, she flicks her eye lights up to his face and grins a lopsided-grin. “So, ah… surprise I guess? You’re going to be a dad?”

He smiled and knelt down. Hands coming to rest on her hips, Papyrus leaned forwards to press his teeth gently against the glow of her lower belly. He kissed it softly, thumbs rubbing soothing circles over her hips. "So I am. I'm still happy and don't care~” he purred. “Hello there, little one. You can’t hear me yet- but I’m your father! And I love you very, very much.”

One of Toki’s hands came down to rest on his skull, and she rubbed soft circles over the crown of his head. She listened to him talk to it- talk to something that had only just come into being- and felt her soul warm at the sight. “I’m glad you’re happy.” She smiles softly. It was a huge weight off of her soul- this wasn’t going to cause a rift. Exhaling a shaky sigh, the skeleton tilts her head back and closes her eyes. “I am too. Now that the panic is over, I’m actually really thrilled to be a mom. A little… unsure about the timing, but it can't be helped.” She needed some time to just let this settle in first before she began to tell anyone- but she was both eager and dreading telling everyone. Dreading mostly because if HAM found out…

Her smile faded slightly. “Hey, Pap…? What… What are we going to do? HAM is still a problem… If they find out about the baby…”

Even he began to frown. He leaned back and peered up at her. "They won't find out..." he murmured firmly. "We will keep this as tight-knit as possible.”

Toki swallowed faintly and nodded. “I don’t know how we’re going to manage that. This is going to be a mess- I’d be the first HTM to be having a child with a monster. It’s… common knowledge that we’re together. I don’t know how skeleton pregnancy’s work- or even what this one is going to be like, since my soul is human- but human pregnancies are nearly impossible to hide once you get further along. People are going to suspect things…” Pregnancy weight was different than just getting heavy. “At least with Undyne coming, I’ll be able to defend both of us better if I need to.”

Toki was already a target for HAM because of what she was, and for everything that she had done to help get and keep the monsters on the surface world. Nerves coiled in her middle, and her bones buzzed faintly. It wasn't just her that could be hurt anymore. They would target the child- and Papyrus for siring it.

"We'll find a way to make things work." he promised softly, pressing a few more kisses to the soft green ecto-flesh of her belly. "I promise, I wont let anything happen to you.”

“It’s not just about me, Pap. They'll come after you too. Because we’re together- because the child is ours- you'll be a target too if HAM finds out.” Her fingers smooth over his skull again, and she takes a few slow breaths. “We can tell the villagers.” She murmurs. “They'll need to know- and the guards. We can... hell, I don’t know. Maybe we can consult Undyne about it too. She's going to help me learn how to defend myself- and then I can protect you too... And... Shit, we need to tell your brother and your dad.” This would be Tenebris’ first grandchild. Her parents and brothers would be excited- but it was the first grandchild that was always special. It was mainly why she’d ended up inheriting her grandparent’s place, despite the fact she was only half Japanese. Dominic was her parent’s first grandson- and he held a special place in their hearts.

But this would be Tenebris’ first.

"I can protect myself.” He huffed stubbornly into her abdomen. "I don’t care about what happens to me, as long as it doesn't happen to you, I’m content as is.”
She flicks his skull with the tip of a claw and huffs at him. “Being in a relationship means we protect each other, you numbskull. By protecting each other, we can better protect our child. We’ll also have friends and family to help protect us too. Think Caeruleus will be excited about being an uncle?”

Aliquam rumbles faintly in response and nods. He could accept that. "Of course he will. He's already taken the role of 'Dunkle' for his majesty's child."

“Dunkle, huh?” Toki chuckled faintly and nudged him softly. She motioned to the couch- if he wanted to snuggle her middle, then they could do it from the couch. It was bound to be more comfortable than him pressing his kneecaps into the hard tile under them. “I’m thinking we tell everyone on Christmas. Think your dad will be excited…?”

"Indeed. I remember when he told us about when we were growing. His joy wasn’t hard to see or hear.”

He didn’t seem to notice her nudge- which was fine, because it occurred to her that they sorely needed a shower instead of stinking up the couch. Toki pets his skull again, and then wiggles in his grasp. “We’ll tell everyone on Christmas then. Though… Undyne probably needs to know, since she’s going to be teaching me to fight.” And the fish monster had seemed to be a very… passionate person. Toki’d rather she be aware of her passenger before training started.

He nodded once, then he sighed and slowly stood up, hugging her close to his chest once he was on his feet. "Come on... we.... ah... should probably go wash up and get ready for the day.”

“We probably should,” She agreed. Her fingers drifted down and she fixed her shirt. Once he let her go, she padded ahead of him and flicked her eyes back to him as she headed up the stairs. “C’mon you. We could both use a shower- and then some food too.”

He nodded in agreement then began upstairs, snagging her fingers with his as they go. They would be okay.
Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Undyne is hilarious- also fish plus fire does not mix well. Hehehehehe.

Don't forget to visit our tumblr! I just recently did some pictures of Toki, so you can go see her cute little face. You can find us here at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: I can smell the shit, and it hasn’t even hit the fan yet. Enjoy chapter 31!

Three days proved to be some of the most surreal days she’d had in a long while. Finding out she was pregnant had been a shock- and she’d spent the first day slightly out of it as she puttered around the house. Day two and three were easier- but she still wasn’t sure she believed it. She didn’t feel pregnant. The only thing that kept reminding her that she was pregnant was the green glow that escaped whenever she lifted her shirt.

She was only a few days along, though. It made sense that she wouldn’t feel anything yet. It was probably not even visible to anyone who could see souls yet.

Toki found herself looking forwards to Christmas- when they could tell everyone the big news. With how Aliquam strutted about happily, she was sure that everyone suspected that something was up. No one had asked though- which was good. She didn’t have an explanation for them- and she didn’t want to lie and say that they were engaged or something, and certainly a good lay was not enough of a reason to strut like that.

Before Christmas could come though, she had to handle the first time training with Undyne. The fish woman due to arrive any minute- having apparently decided that she needed to run from the mountain instead of taking a cart like a normal living being.

Toki was in her usual turtleneck- but opted this time to wear jeans instead of sweat pants. She even crammed her feet into her old tennis shoes- and ended up stabbing the pointed parts of her toe bones through the end of them. Oh well- it worked. She wanted traction if she was going to be active that day.

Toki lingered in the house, all-alone at the moment. Papyrus had stolen some of the guards away to do some training with them- he’d taken it to heart that everything would be more secure in the compound. Which served her well enough- she didn’t need anyone seeing her getting her ass handed to her by a giant fish woman.

It wasn’t late into the day when a noise from her front door had Toki certain that her door was going to be rattled off its hinges. She padded for it, and tossed it open so that it wouldn’t take any more abuse. Predictably, it was the large fish monster on the other side of the door. Toki greeted her with a hesitant grin. “Hi!”

The woman on the other side was grinning widely, baring hellishly sharp teeth and looking barely winded despite her travel-roughened appearance. "Hey there, Miss Nara!" she cackled, "It's been a while!"
"Undyne," Toki smiled up at her, "It has been a while. At least this meeting is under better circumstances, am I right? Please, come in!" She steps back from the door and motions for the burly monster to come inside. "We need to talk before we get started."

"Sure thing!" she said with a grin, padding into the house after her.

Toki worried at the edge of her turtleneck as she shut the door behind her. She motioned for the fish to follow her into the kitchen, and then made a beeline for it. She shivered slightly, and rolled her shoulders thoughtfully. Once safely inside, she leaned against the counter and turned to face Undyne. "So… We’re going to have to be careful in training and take things kind of easy."

Undyne arched her brow, and curled her lip curiously. "Yeah? How come?"

"If I tell you, you have to keep it secret." Toki curls her arms over her chest and arches a brow at her slightly. "It is utmost important that you keep it secret. Can you do that?"

"...! Well, yeah! Of course!"

Toki heaved a sigh and nodded. She hiked up the edge of her shirt- and showed her middle. The glow was less bright than before- and not as noticeable- but the green sheen of ecto-flesh was undeniably there. "So… Turns out that HTM’s need to be careful with soul play."

Undyne's eye widened as the ecto-stomach was exposed and she stared for a little bit. Her fins twitched, flaring slightly, and her eye shifted back up to give her an incredulous look. "It's Papyrus', huh?"

"Yeah. Once he got over his initial shock, he was pretty excited to be a dad." She rubs a finger along the surface quietly, watching the flesh flex under the tip of her finger, and gives her a faint smile. "It came as quite a shock to both of us. Turns out that HTM souls follow human conduct. Anyways, we’re keeping it quiet. Outside of us two, only Grillby and you know. So… Keep it quiet, please? We wanted to surprise everyone at Christmas. There's also the problems with HAM- I'm a target for them, and all three of us would be a larger one if they found out. Pap's out working with the guards- I think he's training them up better because of all of this."

"... Ah... yeah!" she gave her a grin. "Heh! If anyone can whip those punks into shape, it'd be Papyrus. Especially since he's got something extra to protect now."

Toki sighed and set her turtleneck back into place. She smoothed the dark fabric down, and then glanced back up to Undyne’s face. "So you think we can still train well enough? I really do need to be able to defend myself. I got my ass handed to me by a human. Though… I’m not sure how we’d work on my magic. I don’t want to hurt you."

"Fufufufufufufu!" Undyne’s head fins flared widely, and her head rocked back as she cackled at Toki. "You? Hurt me? Hahaha! Don't worry about me, punk! I'm not the captain of the guard for nothing!"

Toki tilted her head and stared at her disbelievingly. "I am not sure if you are very self-sure, or mildly insane. But… all right. I think you’ll be okay to hit my anywhere except my middle- that’s about how it works with humans, I think. I don’t know about monsters though." She shrugged, and hummed. "Do you need to rest for a bit before we train? I heard you… ran here?"

The royal guard laughed and shook her head. She might have been mildly sweaty, but she’d done longer laps back and forth between the districts under the mountain. "No way! I feel good!"

Yep. Toki was leaning towards the monster being mildly insane. She shrugged and rubbed the back
of her neck quietly. A sigh pulls from her nasal cavity, and she twitched her head towards her back door. “All right- we can practice out in the back part of the compound.” Her beehives weren’t there- and the only thing they could damage would be the shed and the big clan tree. Toki snags a couple bottles of water- mostly for the fish woman following her- and heads out back. "You have any idea what you want me to do...?"

The fish woman isn’t far behind her. She surveys the area with a quick glance, and then focuses on the skeleton in front of her. "Just fight!"

“Just fight?” Why did Toki have a sudden feeling that this was going to be a huge mess?

"Yeah!" There was a gleam of her eye, and suddenly Undyne had summoned a pair of matching spears into her hands. “Ready to get some, punk?”

Spears, of course. The fish monster summoned spears- harpoons would have been far too cliché. Toki stared at her for a moment, speechless, before flailing her hands frantically at the spear-clad woman. “Wait-wait-wait, I have no idea how to do anything like that.” Her bees would get speared through, holy shit. At least her bones were less of a target. This woman was going to steam roll her.

Toki wasn’t going to deny that she might have her priorities backwards. She could stare down an intimidating Tenebris with little issue- but the raw passion in Undyne had her vastly more intimidated. This was a violent monster- one who fought often and for fun- that was bearing down on her with a grin that made a great white shark look like a Pomeranian.

“Well, no time like the present to learn! And don’t give me that shit- Papyrus said you summoned some sort of bug thing- let ‘m out! I’ll fight ‘m all!” The fish gave her a cheerful grin, but did end up tossing one of her spears over to Toki. “I’ve never fought a human turned monster before. I’ve fought Frisk, but all they did was deflect and run away.”

Toki fumbled with it- and then was on the run as the fish woman charged her with a wild whoop. Toki squeaked, her voice rising in a startled shout back towards the wall of muscle pursuing her. “Fuck FUCK FUCK FUCK I WASN’T READY!”

“NGGYAHHHH! STOP RUNNING AND HIT ME BACK, PUNK!”

It was past noon when the swarm appeared. Bright green and glowing, a swarm of flaming bees appeared over the compound where Toki’s house was located. The buzzing cacophony of noise that arose was nothing short of deafening- but none of the monsters would get close enough to the wall of flaming insects to get in. The heat at the edge of the wall was too much- far too much for those with fur or easily burnt skin to get close to.

The cloud hung heavily over the air, undulating with noises of what was apparently a fight happening inside. With no way for anyone to get in, one of the guards hoofed it for the only one who could handle the heat- the fire elemental at the bar. Papyrus wasn’t here- he was out with some wolves running in the forest- and they weren’t sure the skeletons could take the heat anyways.

The guard burst in, a panting hard. “Grillby!” She spotted the fire elemental along with the older skeleton brother seated at the bar. “Grillby! Come quick- there’s something going on in Miss Toki’s compound- there’s a wall of flaming bee things! We can’t get in, but we can hear fighting.”

Grillby perked on the stool he was seated on, his attention taken from Caeruleus’ joke as his head
whipped to the door. A fight? With Toki? That- she wasn’t supposed to be fighting! The fires of his skull whipped and whirled, and he stood from the bar. His long fingers rolled his sleeves up, bearing scarred and muscled forearms, and he took long strides for the front door.

Caeruleus had gotten up as well, as he was worried about her. "Allow me to take us on a shortcut, Grillbz." he said, reaching up and grabbing the elementals wrist before teleporting the duo to the compound.

Grillby’s flames flickered faintly- teleporting was not something that he did often and it was slightly disorienting when he did so- but remained steady when they landed. Sans had dropped them right outside of wall of what appeared to be large, flaming bees of some kind. The largest were still small to him, but the smallest were like gnats. The problem was- there were thousands of them all buzzing and exuding heat. The air felt like summer time, which was a relief from the cold of winter. “Thank you, Caeruleus.” He murmured faintly. The elemental glanced down at the skeleton, and tilted his head. “Let me see how thick they are in there before you enter.” With his HP, Sans couldn’t risk getting burnt by these bees. Grillby however, they simply fed to the heat of his flames. It was nice- even if the noises of fighting from inside were disconcerting.

The fire elemental finished his sleeves, and then made for the wall. He pushed through the bees with little issue- and they parted around him like water over a rock. He did not hurt them- and they did not hurt him, though they did singe his shirt in places. For the most part, it appeared that they had made a flaming barrier of sorts, patchy in some spots and thick in others. The inside was mostly hollow- though there were a few here and there that were aggressively buzzing in the general direction of the fighting. The fire elemental turned and raised his voice enough for the skeleton to hear over the buzzing din of the swarm. “Cae! You can come in- just don’t touch the bees.”

"In that case I’m staying out here, there's too many bees to actually avoid them!" Caeruleus insisted, backing away quickly when a few bees strayed out of the pack.

They wandered over vaguely to investigate him, putting on an impressive defensive display as they did so.

Grillby sighed through his teeth. “I’ll handle it then!” The big monster rolled his shoulders with a faint crackle of fire, and then was jogging lightly around the back of the house. At the epicenter of fire and bees was not the one whom he was expecting.

Inside the compound, Undyne was stunned at the magnificent sight that was Toki's attack. The swarm of green bees, their wings screaming and causing the ground under her feet to shutter and vibrate up into her calves... it was... amazing... but also really intimidating with the vast size of the swarm.

Toki had a hand on her forearm and was attempting to unpin herself from the tree she’d gotten stuck to. Undyne had chased her for the better part of an hour- maybe an hour and a half- and the skeleton’s ribcage was heaving for breath. She’d lost her spear maybe half way through, and had been stuck keeping on her toes, avoiding swipes that would have knocked her across the yard. And they had, on more than one occasion- and she’d felt the sting of the magic weapon tingle over her bones. It stung- but probably not as much as it should have.

But Toki had stumbled once the fish woman had moved to projectiles. Toki took a thick spear that lodged itself right between her radius and ulna- and when she’d glanced back, Undyne had been stalking towards her.
To simply put it, Undyne intimidated the hell out of her simply by the passion with which she put into fighting. And that intimidation had kicked in flight or fight to defend her and her baby- and she hadn’t been able to flee. So her bones had buzzed and burned, and the spear in her arm suddenly began to throb painfully against her bones, and her bees had come.

Droves of them flooded from her magic, buzzing and spiraling into the sky like a burning pyre. They had fanned out, blanketing over the compound like a defensive wall, with Stripe coming to rest on Toki’s pinned arm. The swarm vibrated, a sullen warning for the fish to cease her assault- and a few of them darted in with stingers aimed.

“Don’t let them touch you!” Toki yelped. “They’ll burn you!”

Undyne was backing away from the bees, her magic dispelling almost immediately as she turned tail and danced out of the way. "Yeeaaahhh, FUCK THIS."

Toki rubbed her arm as Undyne’s magic let her free. Her soul raced in her chest, and she curled her arm protectively around her middle. The bees buzzed louder, and Toki took a frantic moment to reach out with her thoughts. Her swarm buzzed loudly in the back of her skull, and they were dead set on removing the threat. The apparent threat was Undyne- who had to stay on her toes as the swarm began to converge.

She focused her magic, and gave a tug backwards on them as Grillby rounded the corner. Toki’s skull throbbed, and she clutched at it as the buzzing in her head grew in intensity, like something much larger was about to make it’s way into the world. No, no, there was no need for this. It was play fighting- this was not an actual fight, this was Undyne going overboard, and her bees had no need to react this way. Yes- she had been afraid. But Undyne wouldn’t have hurt her and her child.

She pressed this need to them- and the oppressive buzzing in the back of her skull began to fade. The bees stilled in their swarming, and let up on their movements against the fish monster. Forcing herself to calm was helping to calm the bees- and she shot a look to Grillby as he headed for them. He had several of them clinging to his shirt, but they did him no harm, and he did no harm to them.

Toki pulsed her magic again and began to draw it in. Most of the swarm began to dissipate, and as her magic shifted back into it’s defensive position, she found the ache in her bones easing.

“Shit- Undyne? Are you okay? Grillby? What are you doing here?”

The old general crossed his arms across his chest and fixed her with a decidedly unhappy look- though it shifted and he pinned the fish monster under his ire filled gaze. “And what exactly was happening here? I was called out because the guards could not get to you- and we heard fighting. Captain Undyne. Explain yourself. Now.”

"Woah, woah hey! Don’t pin this on me! She wanted me to come and help her train, so I thought I would!” she defended herself quickly.

Toki shifted off against the bark and set herself between the large flame elemental and the fish woman. “She didn’t do anything wrong- besides scare the bejeesus out of me.” She rolled her shoulders faintly and peered at the hole in her shirt. “And pin me to the tree. Pap and I asked her to help me learn to defend myself. She, ah, knows about the thing too.”

Grillby pinned a glowing gaze on the skeleton, and tilted his head down. “She should not have been so rough with you if she knows.” His gaze flicks back to the fish, and he frowns at her. “She is a civilian. Last time I was in the army, we did not throw civilians directly into live-combat situations, Captain. Humans don’t inherently know how to fight like we do.”
“She’s not human anymore though, Grillby. I had to push her to get her to fight back- hell, I even threatened things I wouldn’t ever do, and she still ran, even when I hit her hard. She’s got the instincts for fighting-”

Grillby snorted smoke. “Miss Nara is inherently kind, Undyne. It is not in her nature to fight- and the fact that I came around to her pinned in a tree? You took it too far, Undyne. That response? That response was her magic set to defend her and her-”

“Grillby- good gods, Grillby, it’s okay. She didn’t hurt me- she was really careful where she hit me. You can even check my HP- it didn’t go down all that much until I went to attack her. Yeah, she scared me a lot, but I needed it. She’s right- I can fight, but getting me to fight is harder.”

Grillby paused and peered at her. As the rest of the bees dispersed, he leaned in and coaxed her soul from her chest without asking.

He got to witness her defensive stat- which was startlingly resting at a negative three- begin to rise back up to it’s usual position at two hundred. The problem was- it was sucking it from an attack stat that was suddenly much, much higher than it should have been. She was only down a hundred and fifty HP. “This… is befuddling.” He mutters. “Really befuddling. I knew boss hearts were strange sorts of souls, but this is… alarming…”

Even with the facts defending her, Undyne looked guilty enough with a small frown, before she blinked once at his words. Boss heart…?

Caeruleus had gotten Papyrus and both brothers were now running up, a hoard of guards fanning out around the compound to secure it.

"Toki!" Aliquam shouted worriedly, coming to her side before looking at her soul. "...!"

“Boss heart?” Toki repeated. She watched the flames on Grillby’s head rapidly change colors. “I’m a boss heart? What is that? I’m okay, Ali. I just got spooked and my bees came to my defense.”

The fire elemental ground his teeth faintly, and passed her soul over to Aliquam so that the father of her child could restore her HP. Her stats were still off- but rapidly dropping to their normal positions. And he was very certain that both brothers could see it. “A boss heart is the human equivalent of a boss monster.” He mutters slightly.

Papyrus took her soul and cradled it gently as he began to heal it. His eyes focused on Grillby, as did most everyone else’s.

Grilby’s flames crackled faintly, and he watched and waited until the guards that were circling began to return to their usual duties now that training was ‘over’ for the time being. He heaved a great sigh, and began to fix his sleeves. He brushed off any burnt ashes from his shirt- his vest now had an open hole that showed off one of his pectorals, so that would need to be replaced- and then began to speak.

“Boss hearts,” he murmured, “are terrifyingly powerful- but they are also… I think the term is called a ‘glass cannon’? When they are alone, they are a force to recon with, but each one has a specific weakness. All together, they are virtually unstoppable, until they run themselves dry.” He crosses his arms and sighs, tilting his head back to watch the sky. He had missed the sky, being sealed underground. “Unlike with monsters, there are only ever fourteen boss hearts in existence at one point. Two for each of the primary soul colors- One representing the good side, and the other representing the bad side of the souls. Determination, patience, bravery, integrity, perseverance, kindness, and justice all have their antonyms. Negligence, intolerance, cowardice, deceitfulness,
indecisiveness, cruelty, and corruption, respectively match up with the seven main colors. I had the pleasure of facing many boss heart mages on the battlefield- and I squared off with Cruelty many times. It is how I know what they are. Toki is the boss heart for kindness. It was the seven anti-hearts that created the barrier once they had gained enough LOVE to boost their power.”

Toki stared at him blankly for a moment, and then lifted a hand to her mouth as it dropped open. “Holy shit…” That… That was a lot to take in. She wobbled in place and simply stared. “Why… didn’t you say anything?”

“Because- there was no point in causing problems when you were not Cruelty reborn. You are Kindness. But it is because you are kindness that is a problem. I met kindness only once- before Cruelty killed him. Kindness was killed almost instantly when he went on the offensive to defend my group. I am realizing why he was so easily killed now that I have seen your soul. On the norm, your magic is primarily defensive to magical attacks, and your defense to physical attacks is better than most. Hence why you were not dusted when you were shot by the HAM agent. But when you go on the offensive- your stats flip, and your defense goes into the negative. I do not know why. But it is something that can prove to be a huge problem for you. If you have to fight- you must not allow yourself to take any damage. Your HP should be higher- Several hundred points higher- but the damage to it… You are more fragile than you would think, Miss Toki.”

"So what you're saying is..." Sans started, trailing off as his younger brother moved.

Papyrus wrapped his arms around Toki, nuzzling her gently as he pressed her soul carefully back into her chest. His arms came to settle around her middle, cupping it protectively. "She's better a shield than she is a sword?" the younger brother finished.

"So even if I did hit her and did do actual damage... it wouldn't have been something overly bad?" Undyne then asked.

The look Grillby shot her was one that could be vastly frightening. His teeth parted, and he rumbled at the fish monster. “Better a shield indeed. Her bees did a good job of keeping things out- but she would be defenseless if something got inside. As for you-” he pointed a finger at her, “if you had hit her full on in the stomach, not even her defense stat would have saved the soulling. Carrying monsters are fragile- the further along they get, the less magic they have to work with, and what magic they do have is usually slightly unstable. In the case of this one, we don’t know just how fragile she and the soulling might be. Humans miscarry very easily. She has a human soul. So I do commend you for making sure your hits only struck her arms- it would have been a sad day to lose a soul not even a week old yet.”

"H-Heh..." she smiled a little at that, before she rubbed her head, ducking her gaze away from the old general. It had been a long time since Undyne had trained anyone- Papyrus had actually been the last. He had come to her with prior knowledge of how to fight- as most monsters did. She could swallow her pride and admit she’d approached it wrong. "Ah jeez... You're right, I guess. I got excited about fighting with an HTM, and I didn't stop to consider how humans work verses us."

"Soulling?" Caeruleus questioned.

“Dammit Grillby.” Toki sighed. She peered at Caeruleus, and wiggled a bit away from Aliquam. She peeked the edge of her shirt up, showing the slight green glow of her belly. “No going back now. Congrats- you're going to be an uncle.”

Grillby sighed out a plume of smoke, and scrubbed his palm over his head to cool his ire. He was not fond of people risking innocent souls- and he had his reasons for it. “My apologies, Miss Toki. I was… on a roll, so to speak.”
"Holy shit." Was all Caeruleus could let out, before he stood up straight, grinning widely. The lights in his eyes got larger, until they began to practically gleam. His fingers fist ed in his hoodie, and he bounced lightly on his heels "Heh... Holy shit... I'm gonna be an uncle...!"

Toki reached out and clamped a slightly overly warm hand over his mouth to keep him from getting too loud. Not that it mattered- he spoke much like she did, without needing to open his mouth. “SHHH. Keep it quiet. We were going to surprise you for Christmas- but we still plan to surprise Tenebris. So. Shush.”

"Right..." he chuckled weakly, rubbing his head once she let him go. Before she could pull out of reach, he snagged her arm and tugged her into a tight hug. “Heh... heh heh heh..."

Toki sighed and hugged him back. She patted his shoulders gently, hoping silently that this wouldn’t become a ‘touch the belly’ session that so many pregnant women complained about. She didn’t even have one to touch yet, and it would be ridiculous to do so now. “Now you know why Pap’s been strutting around like a peacock, yeah? Anyways… Undyne? I think I’m done training for today, if it’s all the same to you. My bees would like to turn you into grilled fish.”

Cae seemed content to simply hug her close and eye the hole in her shirtsleeve. It changed the whole perspective of the fight getting out of hand now that he knew that he was going to be an uncle. “It does explain his extra cheer that he’s had and hasn’t bothered to explain.”

Grillby crossed his arms. “I think I can take over training you. Fire is my element- and your bees cannot harm me. We will stick to turning the offensive capabilities of your insects into primarily defensive measures.” Plus he had more experience actually training skeletons. He peered at Undyne intently. “You will join us. You could improve in your techniques with starting civilians.”

"... Sure thing, Sir..." Undyne said quietly. That was the only time you would see her in such a passive state, "And, ah, don’t sweat it, Toki! I still think you did one hell of a job fighting today!" She then grinned again, giving Toki a thumbs up.

Toki chuckled quietly and squirmed. “I did more running than I did fighting- and let me tell you, that’s more running I’ve done today than I have done in years. I am vastly out of shape.” She raps her knuckles gently on Cae’s shoulder, and tilts her head. “Hm…” She really needed to make sure that her bees knew Undyne not to be a threat- in case something ever came up again. She turned, squirming in his hold, and got a hand free. She summoned Stripe, and managed to free herself from Cae’s grasp. “Stripe is the queen of my hive. I think, anyways. She’s got the most different shape body out of all of my bees.” That she had seen, anyways. “Anyways, I want the bees to know you’re not a threat. She’s familiar with Pap already- and she’s calmer now that I’m calm- so you can touch her if you like. I can focus them better when it’s just one. She won’t hurt you.”

Grillby watched the bee appear in Toki’s palm, and tilted his head curiously. “Undyne, it has been centuries since anyone has called me Sir. Just call me Grillby. It is easier for everyone.” Centuries yes, but one did not forget how to do their job. “I wonder what plane your summons come from. There are not many fire-natured summons- and I have never heard of fire bees.”

Undyne hesitated for a moment and she came closer, nodding to Grillby before she slowly reached out to the bee. Now, she wasn’t scared of a single bug on it’s own, but she sure as hell didn’t like the feeling of getting her hand burnt. Or any part of her getting burnt, for that matter.

Toki eased her hand out, and offered Stripe over. The bee buzzed faintly, recognizing the fish woman- but at some careful nudges through her magic, the bee steps out and extends a leg to gently boop one of Undyne’s webbed fingers. The bee was warm- about like warm water from a sink- but did not burn when it touched her. Stripe began pulling herself forwards, aiming to get into Undyne’s
palm without having to fly.

“I’m not sure where they come from,” Toki mutters, keeping a close eye on Stripe. Her stinger was hidden- but she still didn’t want to risk it. “I know I think there’s more where they came from. The swarm was really loud in my skull- like more of them wanted to come out and fight. Gave me a bit of a fright- I really didn’t want them to hurt Undyne.”

“Captain Undyne is, if I remember, quite susceptible to the heat. It is for the best that you reined them in.” The old general mutters. He sighs, and drapes an arm around Sans shoulder. “It is possible that there are more of them. Depending on the plane they come from, you could very well be their first host. Or at least the first in recorded history.”

Toki made a curious noise, but left it at that. They would find out in time, she supposed.

Leaning against Grillby, Cae smiled at him and leaned his head against him, taking a deep breath and seeming able to breathe better in the aromatic heat resonating from his elemental boyfriend.

Aliquam was watching Stripe as Undyne carefully handled her, though after a while the captain gave a grin, "Heh, holy shit... This is actually pretty cool...!"

“Bees are very neat.” Toki agreed. She stepped back over to Aliquam, and leaned back against him quietly. She peered up at him, and offered up the arm with the hole in the sleeve. “Think you can help me fix this? Or is it beyond repair?” She really liked this turtleneck. It was warm, and covered the glow of her middle fabulously.

The queen bee buzzes faintly, and crawls slowly up Undyne’s arms. There, she wiggles her feet at her and gives her a scolding buzz for scaring Toki. Stripe’s fluffy mane whips and whirls slightly, as she turns glowing eyes to Cae. She wiggles her feet at him next.

Grillby watches intently, keeping his arm loose around Caeruleus. The bee didn’t seem aggressive- but Cae did not have the HP to risk perchance the queen bee decided that it didn’t like him.

"Of course I can fix it, Toki." Aliquam promised easily, eying the hole slightly. His fingers brushed it- and he eyed the width. “It can be patched- but it might not look the same. I think I have thread that can match the color. It is a clean tear, after all.”

“Good.” Toki chuckled softly. “You saw Tenebris’ stitches. That’s about the extent of my sewing skills. It doesn’t have to be perfect- it’ll still be better than what I can do.” Embroidery and sewing was not a skill she possessed. She did writing and bees- that was her forte.

Undyne watched the bee with the same intensity, but seemed calm enough with it's presence.

Caeruleus just laughed quietly and gave her a soft wave, "Hey there, pretty Queenie." he purred.

Having been spoken too, Stripe’s wings began to rapidly flap. It warmed her up faintly, but she was off of Undyne’s arm before she could bother her too much. Like a fat, bumbling sausage of the sky, the queen bobbed over towards Cae, aiming to land on his arm.

Grillby offered his hand for a landing pad- and was surprisingly ignored in favor of Cae. “I think she likes you calling her that.” He murmured quietly.

He let out a soft laugh as the queen landed on his jacket. "Well she's really pretty, isn't she? For a bee, y’know." he laughed softly, reaching a finger out to pet the bee.

Stripe’s fluff was warm under his fingers, and she gave a faint humming buzz against his touch. She
ventured down his arm- and then began to try and crawl up his sleeve curiously.

“That she is.” Grillby watched both the queen bee and Toki- and the shortest skeleton didn’t seem wary, so the queen must have been entirely passive. The insect seemed calmer now that the threat was over, and part of him wondered just how tightly bound the master and her summons actually were. This is something he would need to figure out- and given his immunity to the heat of her flames, he would have ample time to do so. He hadn’t trained in years- but this was necessary. She had decent control over them now- but he wasn’t sure she always would, as the insects seemed sentient. Still- he was a little unsure as she began to work up the arm of Cae’s jacket.

“You can grab her- just be gentle and you wont hurt her.” Bees were fragile- but her magic ones seemed pretty sturdy. From when Toki had touched them, their exoskeletons had been hard and strong compared to the easily crushed bodies of actual bees. “She’s curious about the inside of your jacket.” It was the only pair of sleeves with the space for Stripe to investigate, after all.

He laughed softly and reached to gently cup around her, before lifting his sleeve up to allow her in. "My pretty Queen," he cooed gently, "Pretty, pretty, queen."

Toki grins faintly. “Apparently I’m not the only one who talks to bees.”

The queen buzzes faintly, and clamors up his sleeve as he lifts it better. Her little legs cling to the bones of his arm, and she settles in, vibrating lightly against him. He shuddered, and wiggled his fingers faintly.

Toki’s magic wavers slightly, and leans back against Papyrus. “So, I don’t know about you, Undyne, but I think I need something to eat. That many bees sort of sucked up a lot of my magic. I’m not quite used to summoning that many yet.”

“That is something you are going to have to watch, Miss Toki. You’ll exhaust yourself easier with your condition.” The fire elemental dips his head, and flicks his gaze pointedly to Papyrus. “You will also require magic donations from another source from time to time as well. As you are a boss heart, your stores will be higher- but there is no telling how this could go. Your soul is human- this will be a learning experience for us all.”

“Nyeh?” Papyrus looked mildly confused, and he rubbed a palm against his skull. “Donations?”

“It helps strengthen the soulling and lessen the strain on the carrier’s soul. Your magic will be better for this process, since you are directly related to it. Family, or like-natured magic would come second best, but it is doable. Technically anyone can donate- but some magic is better for it over others.” Grillby sighed faintly. It was slightly sad how little that they knew- but Tenebris tended to hoard some of his knowledge like a dragon upon it’s gold. “It’s fairly easy- pretty much just like giving a magic donation for someone suffering from Magi-drain. You needn’t put it directly into the soul, however. A hand on her middle would work just fine. Miss Nara’s magic is not going to restore as easily as normal- so she will need to eat more to compensate for the loss of magic if she uses large quantities.” The fire elemental murmured. “Toki will know when she needs a donation- and so will you, I suspect. If she begins to act differently, she might require a donation.”

“On that note- come on, Toki. I’ll take you inside for some cocoa. Summoning that many bees probably took a lot out of you, and you’ve got more than just you to think about now.”

Toki snorted softly. “Cae, I hardly need to be babied.”

“Oh, so you’re turning down my cocoa, doll?” The broad skeleton chortled faintly.
“The day I turn down your cocoa is the day I need to go to the mental ward.” Toki responded teasingly.

“Anywhos, Pap’s needs to show Undyne around th’ town anyways, so that leaves me to make sure you get the food you need. Extra heavy on th’ magic f’r sure.” Caeruleus offered her a wide grin, and stepped away from Grillby. He jerked a thumb towards her home, and tilted his head in the direction of the back door. “C’mon, doll. I’m not takin’ no for an answer.” He needed to talk to her anyways. “Unless you’re ready to be shipped t’ th’ loony bin?”

“And I need to get back to my bar.” He hadn’t put up the ‘out to lunch’ sign. Grillby tilted his head, and bade them farewell. He was the first to leave, turning around and eying the burns on his shirt. He needed to change too- this was highly unprofessional of him to look like this. His steps were quiet, strides long, and he was soon heading back around the corner of the house and back towards his bar.

She could do without a trip to the loony bin. Toki relinquished her hold on her magic, and Stripe disappeared from Sans’ sleeve as she turned to smooch Pap’s cheek faintly. “Alright, Cae.” She chuckles faintly, and turns to plod for the house. She rubs her arms, and then sighs. “I need to get another shirt anyways. C’mon, Cae. The promised cocoa awaits!”

He laughed and nodded, following her towards the house while Aliquam and Undyne followed after Grillby. "Let's go get that cocoa."

Toki flashes him a grin, and pushes into the kitchen once she reaches the back door. She leaves it open for him to follow after her, and then makes for the cabinets. Toki hums lightly and climbs up the countertop to fetch a mug for her cocoa from one of the upper cabinets. “You going to pilfer my ketchup again, or are you going to have some cocoa today?”

"I actually don’t have enough of an appetite." he replied, starting up the cocoa.

“Really?” She blinked over at him. Her brow furrowed as she eased off of the countertop. She approaches him and presents the mug, peering up at his face with a concerned frown. “You never turn down ketchup. Are you okay?”

"Honestly? No,” he sighed. Ah shit. She had a faint inkling as to why. Her teeth ground faintly, showering sparks over her counter, and her eye lights flicked over his face for a second. Shit indeed. Toki plunged her hands into the pockets of her jeans, and gave him some space to work. “Is it because of…?" Her chin jerked at her middle, and she scuffled the tip of her tennis shoe against the tile under her feet.

"Yeah... I mean... You've only been dating my brother for a month.” He sighed. His fingers tapped idly on the counter as he waited for the water to boil. She could have heated it with magic, sure- but it would be counterproductive to have her infusing the drink with magic. “Are you two sure you wanna move so fast?” he inquired quietly. “Having a kid is… huge stuff.”

“Truth be told, this wasn’t intentional. It’s… it’s even a little fast for me too. Humans wait years before having kids with someone...” She admits quietly. “We... well shit, you’ve already seen us rutting on the couch. This can’t be any more embarrassing than going to Grillby about this.” She takes a moment and frees her hands so she can scrub her face. It was different talking about this with Grillby- he was nice and all, but he wasn’t related to either of them, or connected in any official way. This was the uncle of her child- and she really didn’t desire to give him the sordid details of its conception, even if he’d already seen Papyrus metaphorically balls deep inside of her. “He wanted to try something, and I trusted him to know what he was doing- and we dabbled a bit into soul play during his heat.” That was about as bad as she thought it would be. “It, ah... turns out that HTM’s
need to be careful doing anything with souls. Human souls don’t ever touch when humans procreate- and it turns out we don’t need intent to spark off a little soul. So… yeah. We don’t really have any other options except—" Except for abortion. And she really didn’t want to do that.

The massive abortion debate was a huge, huge mess about when it was ethical to do it, when it wasn’t, when the fetus was actually considered alive, if pro-life or pro-choice were the better options-it was basically a huge shit storm that Toki really didn’t want to get into. Actually knowing that there was a living soul in her made her highly desire to keep it alive- and the thought of intentionally destroying a soul that she was creating… it made her nonexistent skin crawl, because she knew it was alive, even if it wasn’t aware or large yet.

It was an accident? But… such a thing... It would be impossible.... But again... She was once a human... "Oh..." he then ran a hand over his face, sighing through his teeth. "An accident..." he then looked at her, and let his smile settle into a gentle one. "I gotcha... Well... you know what?"

She was slightly wary, but didn’t think she had reason to be. Her fingers settled down to tap on her middle, drumming over the warm shirt covered magic quietly, and she peeked at him out of the corner of her sockets. “What?”

"Even if you didn't mean to have 'em." He then grinned and gave her a thumbs up. "I'll still their punkle Caeruleus."

Toki laughed softly and grinned at him slightly. Relief tittered through her soul, and she rubbed her middle quietly. “So you will be, so you will be. We’ll have dadiquam, punkle Cae, grandpa Tenny, and momster Toki. Heh. It’s actually a relief that we got you in on it. Now I don’t have to worry about how to surprise you at Christmas. Though, ah… As I said, it was going to be a surprise- but we’re also trying to keep it quiet in the compound itself. Pap’s been running drills with the guards for a reason.” One she knew Cae could catch on for himself. “Anyways… I sort of wish I could see souls. I’d love to see what it looks like- if the little soul’s going to be having a human or monster shaped soul, y’know?"

"Fantastic, we just need the baby and we've got the whole set.” he joked, before he gave a semi-serious nod. "Yeah, Pap’s ‘s pulling all the strings to ensure your protection."

Toki nods slightly. The pot on the stove begins to bubble, and she goes to the fridge to fetch the creamer for him. “Heh. Little babybones.” At least she assumed it would be. No one would really know until it was born. “I know he is.” She sighs quietly. The creamer is plonked on the counter near him, and Toki fiddles with her sleeve. “We need to protect him too though, Cae. HAM… they’ll go after him too for being with me. For being it’s father.” Her fingers tap gently on her middle again, and she shakes her head sharply. “Ugh. HAM is a huge problem I wish we didn’t have to deal with… Anyways, off of that topic… So you want to know what happened when Pap learned he was going to be a dad?”

"Tell me and you'll get an extra handful of marshmallows."

“Well how can I refuse that?” Toki grinned, and leaned back against the counter while he worked on the cocoa. “So… we went to Grillby because we were concerned about the glow- and Grillby sprung it on us that well… y’know. Paps… He fainted. Dropped right where he stood, like a sack of clanky-bricks.”

He paused, and then chuckled softly. "... Make that two handfuls."
Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Fuck this chapter- too many people. UGH. It’s a little lacking- because Strider made the big fuck up of giving Toki so many siblings. The chapter is probably the hardest one for me to date- and it very nearly did not happen because it frustrated me this much. Ugh. As much as I would love to have all of her siblings be active things in this story- for my sanity, I am pretty sure I’m just going to stick to my favorites. –groans-

Don’t forget to come visit our tumblr! I actually got around to doing some face references for Toki- and also a human toki, which looks like utter crap, but... yeah!
Come visit us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: So sweet I think I got diabetes from this chapter.

Christmas came faster than she could have possibly thought. Toki managed to get all of the presents she needed- including a special one for Tenebris and one for Cae- and got them wrapped the morning before Christmas. The tree was heavily loaded with presents, and it wasn’t even all of them. Grillby had brought over his to put under the tree, Utaka and Kohaku had sent along their gifts because they weren’t going to be able to make it. Keri- Utaka’s wife- had promised Christmas to her family, and thus they were stuck going over to her parents place. Kohaku had work- and as a single dad, he couldn’t exactly turn down a job for a holiday.

That was fine- Toki’s house was hilariously full as it was, and the Gaster family, plus Grillby, hadn’t even arrived yet. She’d miss having her brothers and nephew there- but she’d make sure to call them and tell them the news later.

Her family was ridiculously busy- and had arrived late in the afternoon on Christmas Eve. Her mother had bustled in, arms laden with presents that went to making the mountain under the tree even bigger, and had proceeded to boot Toki out of the kitchen so that she and Sarah could take over cooking the rest of dinner. Her dad had shuffled off to the living room with her niece and nephew- and they had started to marathon Christmas movies all evening.

Her brothers, on the other hand, turned the fresh snow out in the back yard into a battlefield. They’d entertained themselves as they usually did, and had built snow forts to battle each other with. Shiro, Souta, and Kon were on a team against Roshi, Ryushi, and Han. Han’s team was dominating- and from her position up stairs, Toki could hear Souta’s frustrated swearing.

Shiro and Souta were her youngest brothers under Kon- and they were the hardest to motivate. Hence why they were still undecided in their college majors. But, like all good siblings, her brothers knew how to motivate each other. One thing someone should fear is a motivated Nara- and there was plenty of motivation making the brothers compete against each other outside.

While her family invaded her home- making it their home in the meantime just as they always did when they were all there together- Toki had retreated upstairs to get the guest rooms ready. Four rooms meant that everyone would be sharing at some point- and she had some futons for those who wouldn’t be getting a bed. Toki’s room would be housing the Gaster Family and Grillby for the night, since it was the largest room with the most floor space for absurdly tall monsters to be
sleeping, and she could fit everyone comfortably within it.

She wasn’t sure how her family was going to bunk up- but that was something that they’d have to handle on their own.

Her stomach was tight with nerves about the evening- because she was going to be informing everyone of her condition once everyone gathered in the living room for nightly shenanigans. She hadn’t eaten all day- that probably didn’t help- but her anxiousness about her family’s reaction wasn’t unwarranted. Her dad was… traditional at best. She had no idea how he would react to her being pregnant and unwed- or even pregnant with a Monster’s child. Her mother was vastly less traditional than her dad was.

Hence the not eating- because she felt like her stomach was going to crawl out of her throat, and it had nothing to do with the baby in her middle.

Toki shook out the larger futons, and carefully spread them on her floor. She was leaving the bed to Tenebris for the night- because he was older, and she didn’t want him to wake up with a crick in his neck or in his back from the hard tile under the mats- so she had two sets of futons on either side of her bed. One set was for her and Aliquam- the other set was for Caeruleus and Grillby.

She smoothed out the futons and got them put together, her soul thundering quietly in her chest. Toki had no real reason to be so anxious about this everyone meeting, but hell, she couldn’t help it. She just… She wanted this to be a good holiday, and there were so many things that could royally ruin it. Her dad being an asshole was one of them. Or Kon and her dad getting into an argument. Kon and her dad were always ones to argue.

Toki collected some of the old sheets she’d taken from the guest rooms, and headed down stairs once her room was prepared. After dumping the old stuff into the wash, Toki headed back out for the main room. A knock at the door drew her attention and she went to answer it- and she silently hoped it was Aliquam, because she was sorely in need of a hug.

It wasn't her boyfriend, rather her honorary brother. "Hey there, Doll." Caeruleus said gently, looking down at her. He read something in her eyes apparently and reached out, pulling her into a gentle hug. "You doing alright?" he asked.

A hug was a hug, even if it wasn’t her boyfriend. Her honorary brother was just as good for hugs. She leaned into his hug and sighed softly. “Tired and nervous. About, y’know.” She didn’t motion or say what- her dad had keen ears, even over top of the cheesy Christmas songs coming from the movie- but it was obvious. “I’ve gotten the bedrooms ready for tonight though. ‘s good to see you, Cae. C’mon in! Your bro and Tenebris still trying to get the last of their presents wrapped?"

Claws and wrapping paper would make for a hilariously difficult time trying to do things, she figured.

"Thanks, don’t mind if I do, ’s fuckin’ cold out." he huffed, stepping inside and shivering to warm himself up before he spoke again. "Heh... Pops is having the most trouble. He, with all his dexterity with surgical procedures and dangerous chemical work, can hardly handle some flimsy paper and tape without tearing it pretty badly." he laughed.

Toki chuckled. “I had some trouble wrapping gifts too. There’s extra tape on some of them to fix the holes I made.” She reaches out and brushes her magic over his coat, warming it for him without him asking as she shuts the door behind him. “Yeah- it’s cold as heck outside, and my brothers are still out there in the middle of their snow war. Kon’s team is getting their asses handed to them.”
“Tokiko- watch your language.” Her dad calls from the main room. “Who’s that with you?”

“I’m an adult, dad,” She calls back automatically, “I’m well past the age where I have to donate to the swear jar. Also this is Caeruleus- his family is joining us for Christmas this year.”

"Nice To meet you, Mister Nara.” he called to the other room.

“You can call me Jiro, Caeruleus.” The older Japanese man peeked over the back of her couch. He looked a lot like his sons, though his hair was graying and thinning out along the top. Dark eyes glittered at them thoughtfully, and he didn’t seem too upset to see the skeleton at the door. “You’re the brother to Papyrus, correct?”

His grin was casual and relaxed as he offered the older man a wave. He then gave a nod. "That's me. He's my little bro."

Shrewd eyes watched him for a moment, before he made a soft ‘hmmm’ noise. “I see.” Jiro tilted his head quietly, and nodded slowly. “You and yours have treated my daughter well-”

“Grandpa, shh!” Dominic’s voice came from next to Jiro. “You’ll wake up Luna.”

“Sorry, Dom.” A faint chuckle softened his face.

“They’re the best, Dad.” Toki grins. She loops her arm through Cae’s, and tugs on it lightly. “I’m gonna go introduce him to Mom. You keep being the babysitter for the evening.”

“Babysitting is my thing.” He drones dryly.

“You’re the best.”

"Heh heh heh." Caeruleus laughed quietly into a fist, before he followed Toki, "Lead the way.”

Toki grinned and tugged him to the kitchen. Sarah was elbow deep in a Christmas turkey, pulling out all the little bones from inside now that it had cooled, with ear buds in her ears and the faint sound of music trickling from them. She offered them a faint wave, and resumed what she was doing. Bones were dropped onto a plate- and then she began actually carving into the meat so it could be served up.

Next to her, on a small step stool, was a tiny wisp of a woman with her gray hair tucked into a tight bun. The apron she had on was a little long, but served its purpose. She couldn’t have been any taller than five foot, if that. She was slight, with the same skin tone that Toki had when she was human, but there were some things that looked similar. The shape to her jaw, the curve of hips, how she held herself- it was all reminiscent of Toki.

“Mom,” Toki grinned, “This is Sans Caeruleus Gaster. This is Pap’s brother- Pap and their dad will be along later.” Grillby would probably be by once the bar closed up- or he finished helping Gaster. One of two options- it depended how frustrated the older monster got, and if he would actually seek help. “Cae- this is my mom. Her name is Yumei.”

Yumei dusted off her hands, and adjusted the thick glasses on her face. She turned, and squinted up at Cae quietly, before motioning for him to come closer and lean down.

Caeruleus smiled lightly as he looked at the woman, before he came closer, "Nice to meet you, Yumei." he rumbled.

Once he was closer, she reached up and clasped his skull in her small hands. She yanks him down
closer, and peers up into his sockets intently. She is silent for a time, assessing him thoughtfully. She’d heard a lot about him from her daughter- a lot about everyone who was coming over, in fact. But he didn’t know that. And unlike Toki- Yumei amused herself by strange means sometimes. “You have a good soul.” She decides, smushing where his cheeks would be if he had flesh. “Loyal soul. You love your brother and your father- and someone else, I think. Yes, you are a good skeleton. Even if you have a strange taste in drinks. It is good to meet you finally, Sans. I look forwards to meeting your brother and father as well.”

Toki covers her mouth and giggles quietly. Her mom was great.

He tensed up at the gripping of his skull, then he chuckled as he smiled down at her with his usual fixed grin. She was odd- and he had no idea how she knew what she knew- but Toki’s giggle gave him a hint. "Well you're not bad at all either, ya'know."

“I would like to think so.” She pats his cheeks playfully, and then turns back to her cooking. “He is good. If his brother is like him, I approve.”

“Pap is amazing, Ma.” She grins. “I think you’ll love him. I know I do. Tenebris is pretty cool too.”

“Ah yes, Tenebris. Kon insists that he is quite the…” She seems reluctant to say it, so she simply trails off.

“Kon flirts with anything that looks delicious.” Toki chuckles. “Apparently Tenebris fell into his tastes. Bro’s weird like that. But we love him anyways, no?”

“That we do.” Yumei flashed them both a grin. “Now shoo- out of the kitchen until food is done. Why don’t you make sure that Caeruleus is up to date on his Christmas movi- HAN.” She taps a spoon on the window, and pushes it open slightly. “You put your brother down right now!”

“But Kon started it!” Han had Kon tossed over his shoulder, and was steadily going to dump him face first into a snow bank.

“I don’t care if he started it- I am finishing it, end of discussion!”

Toki giggled. “Kon always deserves it though.” She points out, grinning up at Cae with a wink. “Doesn’t he, Cae?”

"He had what he got coming to him. He's good, but I know my Dad was a heart-lyncher in his golden years." he snorted quietly

“He’s apparently still a heart-lyncher.” She chuckled slightly. Toki laughed and tugged on Cae as her mother waved her spoon at them next. “C’mom, lets scoot before she starts to fling things. She doesn’t like to cook with everyone underfoot. Or on top of her feet, given her size.”

“Tokiko Nara, if you crack one more short joke about me, I will bend you over my knee and paddle your backside, bones or no bones.”

“Yes Ma!” She laughed again, and tugged him from the kitchen. “All right. What would you like to do until everyone gets here?”

"I had a feeling you couldn't be the butt of the short joke forever.” Cae cackled.

The front door opened up, and Aliquam called out to them. “We’re here!”

“Welcome back!” Toki calls back, lightly smacking Cae’s arm as she wiggles past him to go to the
Grillby slides in behind Tenebris, shutting the door firmly behind him. He has a stack of gifts in one hand, and he shuffles them from hand to hand as he shakes himself out of his jacket. “It is good to be back, Miss Toki.” He murmurs softly. “It is quite cold outside- what on earth are your brothers doing out in the chill?”

“My brothers are probably insane, and it’s best to just assume that’s the reason and leave it at that. It’s good to have you over again though, Grillby. Please, go ahead and find a place for the presents by the tree. I can take your jackets up stairs if you’d like- I need to grab the stockings anyways.” They’d need to find places for all of the Christmas stockings- and she had a feeling they would all be placed high on her wall, if not on the fireplace. Toki grins up at Tenebris as she takes Grillby’s jacket for him, and holds out her hand to take his as well. “So, I heard you’ve found that wrapping paper is pretty flimsy, huh?”

"Very funny." Tenebris chuffed, shedding his coat and dropping it on her with a teasing smirk. "You sure you can carry that, Toki?" he teased. "It's been getting colder, so my coats are heavier now."

She wiggles it off of her face and laughs up at him. His coat was heavy- ridiculously heavy, with the amount of material that made up the long surface- but she managed to keep her hold on it. “I think I can manage, Tenebris. Though,” she grins up at him teasingly, “If not, I’m sure the floors will get a proper sweeping if it has to drag the ground.”

“Unca Quinn!” There is a tiny squeak, and a white head of hair pokes up over the back of the couch. There is a grumble- Luna had obviously woken up and is obviously using her brother’s face for a step stool- but she beams at them with a tiny-toothed smile that was as white as her skin. Her ruby eyes got wide though, seeing Tenebris and the large fire monster. “Oooo.”

"Excuse you!" he chuckled, purple eyes watching her bemusedly as she headed up the stairs.

Papyrus lit up with a wide grin. "Little Luna!" he said happily, going over to deposit his armful of gifts by the tree before scooping her up. "Nyeh heh heh heh!"

Luna beamed happily as she was lifted, watching her aunt take the coats up stairs as she nestled into his arms. “Uhn!” She leaned up, eager to do the customary nose rub with the nose-less skeleton. Her glee was palpable when he leaned down and mashed the bridge of his nose to hers, and she happily giggled as she clung to his face.

“And you must be Papyrus.” Jiro waved slightly at the massive skeleton that filched his granddaughter from the couch. His gaze slipped to the large fire monster, his eyes glimmering warily as he subconsciously waited for something to catch fire. “I’m Jiro, Toki’s father. Who are you?”

“IT is a pleasure to meet you,” Grillby murmurs faintly as he slips around to place his gifts around the tree as well. It was hilariously full- and he wondered just how much paper would cover the floors come the morning after. “I am Grillby- I run the bar here in town. Your daughter graciously is having me for the holiday since I could not have my daughter here to spend it with me.” Neither of them would do well traveling in the cold- Grillby was more resilient than Fuku, but he didn’t want to risk being snuffed at any rate.

“A pleasure.” The elder man nodded, shifting as his grandson lounged across his lap.

"My name is Tenebris Gaster, I'm the Father of Sans and Papyrus." Tenebris introduced himself with a rumble.
Jiro freed himself from his grandson’s grasp so he could get up. His back popped faintly, and he hid a wince- his back wasn’t as great as it used to be any more. He padded around the couch, looking up, up, up to the face of the big monster. Jiro was approximately five foot five- and looked like a much older clone of most of his sons. He offered the big monster a hand. “Jiro Nara. You’re welcome to simply call me Jiro, though. So… our kids are dating, it appears.”

He reached out and gently took the offered hand as he looked down him. He took care not to break the human’s hand as he gave it a firm shake. “Indeed they are.” he replied, "However, I cannot help but think of the good fortune of their match. Toki is kind, and my boy is full of potential as a lover. She's in good hands."

“Personally, I try not to think of Toki’s love life.” Jiro admits, returning the firm shakes politely before releasing his hand. “I don’t know your son yet- but my daughter is an excellent judge of character. She would not be with him if she did not trust him- and I think it is for me to trust in her judgment as well. Their match is a good one, I feel.” They also fit together quite well, his skeleton daughter and her skeleton boyfriend.

“Glad you approve, Dad.” Toki rejoins them downstairs, her arms laden with several large stockings and a box of tacks. Each has a name embroidered on it- all of them having been made with everyone in mind. “So, who wants to help me get these up? For once I’m not the tallest in the house- so I get to pawn the tall people jobs off onto everyone else.”

Tenebris laughed slightly at that, and moved to take them from her. "I'll take care of those."

“Thanks, Tenebris. They go around the fire place, by the way.” The pile of cloth looks a lot smaller in his arms than it does in hers- and she grins when he sets off to do those. Toki takes a moment to bump her hip to Cae’s, pointing cheekily over to Grillby, Luna, and Papyrus.

Luna tugged slightly on Aliquam’s jaw, and pointed shyly over his shoulder towards the bigger fire monster. “Is glowy… Can touch?”

Grillby shifted where he stood, eyes flicking to the tiny albino child in Papyrus’ arms. “I suppose you can…” Grillby murmured quietly. It wasn’t like he was going to burn her- but not many asked to touch a fire elemental on the first meeting. Water elementals certainly- fire was usually viewed a bit differently.

Papyrus smiled and came over to Grillby. "Luna, this is Grillby." he rumbled gently. Luna looked at him with widening eyes, her mouth popping open. Grillby hesitated, and then offered the tiny child his massive hand. She took it, leaning back slightly in Aliquam’s arms, and ran her fingers over his palm curiously. He was warm, like holding a bottle of warm water. “Pretty~” she coos softly. “Funcle Grilly ‘s pretty!”

Grillby flushed, and rubbed his other hand over the back of his head. Funcle sounded like something Cae would come up with. "God damn that's cute." Caeruleus whispered.

“I know, right?” Toki grinned. She bumped him again playfully and leaned in to whisper to him. “He looks pretty cute with kids, don’t you think?”

"Grillby's a natural father, he raised his daughter after all." he chuckled softly in reply.

"Isn't he nice and warm, Luna?” Pap cooed.
“Uhuh!” Luna pressed her face into his palm and giggled. He was very warm- and she liked it.

Grillby smiled slightly and chuckled. “I am very warm.” He murmurs softly to her. “Do you like it?”

“Yuh!”

Toki grinned up at him cheekily. “Think he’d want more?” She asks casually.

"I don’t know...” Cae shrugged, "I mean... kids... he needs something to keep him on his feet but I think the bar does that well enough..." he chuckled faintly.

“Grillby seems the type to enjoy being kept even more on his toes.” She grins at him cheekily and wiggles her brows teasingly at him.

She startles when the back door opens, and a stampede of boots comes trampling in. Her brothers jostle out of the kitchen, tossing their things sloppily into a corner, before swooping into the kitchen. Moments later, they swarm out again, arms laden with everything to set the dining table with silverware and food.

Yumei comes out of the kitchen, drying her hands with a towel. She spots the cluster of monsters in the living room, and gives a slight whistle to gather their attention. “I see everyone’s here- come, food is ready. We can make introductions inside.”

“I already know Tenebris inside and out,” Kon wolf whistles from the dining room, but it cuts off as the sound of flesh smacking flesh rings out. “Ow!”

“Behave, Kon.”

“But-“

“Behave.”

Rolling his eyes, Tenebris felt that this was going to be another interesting evening.

Dinner was a messy and chaotic affair that lasted nearly two hours long, just from all of the talking that occurred. Potatoes had been nearly flung several times, and messes had to be scooped off the floor when slick bowls were nearly dropped. Despite the chaos, it was an amazing dinner- and went better than Toki had expected.

Kon even behaved for once- of course, with Yumei sitting next to him, any time he’d gone to say something dirty, he had gotten pinched. He’d spent the time making sad puppy eyes at Tenebris- and being mostly ignored for his efforts.

By the time that all of the food had been mostly devoured, Toki was beyond ready to sleep. Luna had already beat her to it- the little girl was sprawled out on Grillby’s shoulder, cradled against him with one hand as she drooled faintly onto his shirt. The fire elemental looked odd with the little albino sprawled against him- the glow from his body made her look even paler, but she snuggled into his warmth like a tiny leech.

Toki had things to do first before she could officially announce that it was time to go to bed- lest Santa not come. “Hey mom? Do you mind if I steal Tenebris, Pap, and Cae really quick? I need to talk to them about something.”
Yumei nodded from her seat. “That’s fine, Toki. You take all the time you need. Your father and I can handle your brothers.”

“Handle us?”

“Yes. Dishes for all of you- you spent your hours goofing off out in the ice and chill while us women spent our hours making this house livable for everyone. It is your turn.” The small Asian planted her hands on her hips and tilted them faintly.

Tenebris would recognize this as the same pose Toki had given him when he’d bitten off her hand.

The boys groaned, but began to move. A great mess of noise and stomping feet occurred as everyone gathered everything from the table, and plowed into her kitchen. Dom snagged Grillby’s hand, tugging the fire elemental away before he could be recruited into dish drying duty- and tugged him back into the living room.

Toki chuckled, watching the mayhem for a moment, before glancing down to the Gaster family. “You three don’t mind if I borrow you, right?” Only one of them didn’t know the reason. And he would find out, once she took him to her room and fetched the gift that had been left in there.

"Not at all." Pap rumbled

"If it gets me out of cleaning duty." Cae cackled before getting a smack to the back of the head from Tenebris, "Ow."

Toki rolled her eyes in her sockets, and motioned for them to follow. “Don’t worry, Cae. You get cleaning duty for breakfast tomorrow. Breakfast will be up to the boys to cook. Knowing them, they’re going to make the greasiest bacon known to mankind.” She exits the dining room, feeling sluggish and bloated from all of the food. Potatoes converted into a lot of magic surprisingly- and it made her tired and sleepy. She yawns faintly, and heads up the stairs for her room.

"Heh..." Cae chuckled quietly.

"So what is this about, Toki?" Tenebris asked, having not been leaked the news in any form.

“I actually have a gift for you, Tenebris. I wanted to give it to you here though- it's a special gift.” She had gotten Cae a t-shirt with ‘greatest pun-cle’ written on it- but that was something he didn’t know about either. He’d get that tomorrow though. He was just here because he already knew. Toki pushes into her room, stepping around one of the futons, and pads for the dresser. She snags the present off of it, and motions for Tenebris to take a seat on the bed. She wasn’t sure how it would go- but if he fainted like Aliquam had, she didn’t want him to flatten the futons. Once he’s seated, she passes him a box,

“Go ahead and open it, Tenebris. It’s an early Christmas presents.” She grins, and fiddles with the edges of her sleeves as she shares an excited look with Aliquam.

Tenebris sat on the bed and watched her quietly, raising a brow. He then took the present when it was offered and he looked at it; before he used his claw to cut it open cleanly. He then looked in to see the contents.

Inside the box would be a large black beanie. Embroidered on it in purple- the same lavender color as his soul- would be the words ‘World’s Foxiest Grandpa’. It would be made of some soft and warm material.

He felt the fabric between his digits and he smiled lightly, but was confused upon reading the words.
“World’s Foxiest... Grandpa...?” he then looked up at the brothers, whom were both snickering loudly.

Toki beams at him once he’s had proper time to digest what he’s seeing, and lifts the hem of her shirt up. The green of her belly is bright against the dark red of her sweater, and her eye sockets light up happily at him. “Surprise! You’re going to be a grandpa!”

He looked at her stomach and his eyes widened in surprise. He set the beanie down on the bed, and slid off to kneel on the ground in front of her. Tenebris glanced upwards first, silently asking permission. When she nodded slightly, his eyes brightened he brushed his fingers against her stomach. It was firm, warm, and solid, and he could vaguely feel the mass of magic that was forming her womb in her lower belly. His eyes twinkled merrily for a moment. He couldn’t quite see it from this angle, but he could sense it if he focused. It was very small, very new- but undeniably there.

"This is..." his expression then settled into a calm look, and he flicked his eyes up to them slightly. "You and Papyrus are sure about this?" he asked gently, peering into her middle intently to examine the soul. He couldn’t see much- or even a speck. It was likely too new yet to get any details on it. How fascinating.

She’s not sure what he was trying to see- the soul wasn’t even two weeks old at this point, and she certainly can’t see anything inside of her middle. She’s glad he’s excited though, even if he hides it pretty well. Toki rolls her shirt up to her ribs to let him have better access, and smiles down at him crookedly. "It was actually an accident. Apparently HTM’s don’t need intent during soul play to spark off a little soul. Pap isn’t going to leave me on my own for this- though our relationship is pretty new." Toki shoots Aliquam a tender smile.

"This is... illogical and... Impossible... But..." he then smiled, "I suppose I can be considered what one could call... Pro-choice? I would love a grandchild, but if you two think you're not ready... I'll support you on either path."

Toki shook her head quietly. “I’m pro-choice too, but we didn’t really discuss getting rid of it... I mean, with humans, it’s a huge debate about when it becomes murder and stuff- but with the soul already there and visibly in existence...” Her fingers curl over her middle faintly, and she glances again to Papyrus. “I mean... if he’s not ready, I can handle being a single mother. A lot of women end up doing it, believe it or not.”

"No," Aliquam hugged her firmly from behind, leaning down and pressing his face into the back of her skull with a purr. "I'd never do such a thing as leave you to do it alone. It's mine too- and as weird as it is, I don't mind being a dad."

Toki smiled happily down at Tenebris, and curled her fingers over Pap’s as they braced on her upper abdomen. “Well, there’s your answer. So yeah- you’re going to be a grandpa, Tenebris. Ready to learn with me how an HTM pregnancy works?"

"For once, I will not be the mentor in the lesson of life." he chuckled quietly.

“Nope.” She chuckles softly. Toki taps her middle and sighs softly. “I can’t wait until we can actually see the soul. Heh. We’re flying blind here- I think the only one who knows much about it is Grillby- but he knows legitimate skeletons, not ones with human souls.”

"Mmm..." he smiled and got back to his feet, and then he looked down at her. "I have something for you..." he said gently, picking up the beanie and putting it on. "Comfy~"

“We’re glad you like it.” Toki grinned up at him. She shoos Pap’s fingers from her middle and sets
her shirt in place. “Have something for me? But shouldn’t it wait until tomorrow- Pap, lemme
gooooo. You can hold me later tonight. Baby and I aren’t going anywhere.”

"NYEH! I sha’nt!" He then scooped her up bridal style. "Nyeh heh heh heh~"

Toki squeaked and curled her arms around his neck. She laughed, her legs dangling over the edges
of his arms. “Oh my god Pap,” she laughed, “It’s been a while since you’ve done this. Well- if
you’re not going to let me down, will you follow your dad?”

When he brought them downstairs, Toki laughing all the way, she was faced with the sight of her
curious brothers staring at the both of them. She waved at them with a grin, and pointed Pap towards
the empty side of the couch. “Tally-ho my handsome steed!”

He laughed and trotted over to the couch, dropping her off while Tenebris came over with a box.

Toki settled on the couch eagerly, peering up at him with curiosity. “So, what’s in the box?”

"Your present." He answered, holding it to her.

Her brothers loitered curiously around the room, while Grillby scooted out to give them space. Toki
took the box, settling it in her lap. It was heavy, and she took care to unwrap it so she didn’t damage
anything inside. Inside the box was… “A book?” She blinked. She pulled it gingerly from the box,
before flipping it open.

Her jaw fell open, and tears beaded at her eyes.

These… Were the pictures that she had lost in the fire. Not all of them- but… But there were a lot of
them. “Oh my gods…” She whispered.

“Holy crap- didn’t you say those went up in the fire?” Han blinked, leaning over the back of the
couch. “I remember that one! It was your first time meeting a cow- and the first time you got licked
by one. I remember how tall your hair stood after it licked you.”

“Cow spit makes great hair gel,” Roshi grinned.

"I salvaged as many as I could before they cleared the rubble" Tenebris murmured gently as she
looked through the photo album.

Toki’s sockets watered more, and she gently slid the book off of her lap. She took a step back onto
the couch, and then used the added height to throw her arms around Tenebris’ shoulders with a loud
sniffle. “Thank you. Thank you so much…” She managed, before dissolving into happy tears.

Yumei smiled quietly. “These pictures mean a lot to all of us… Thank you, Tenebris.”

Catching Toki, Tenebris didn't reply, just pressed his face into her shoulder and started to purr
loudly.

Grillby smiled quietly, and nudged Caeruleus, slowly pushing the shorter skeleton towards the corner
of the doorway. “So, did you know about this?”

"The photo album? No. But this explains his disappearance on those nights a while back.” Caeruleus
replied quietly.

“Hmm. I see…” Grillby eyed the ceiling lightly, and once he was in position, he grinned. Slowly, he
turned Cae so he faced him, and then motioned with a brow towards the ceiling.
And the mistletoe that dangled slightly above them. “So… I have a question for you, Caeruleus.”

He tilted his head back and blinked as he saw the mistletoe, before he looked at the Elemental.

Grillby gave him a roguish grin, and crouched down slightly. His mouth closed gently over Cae’s for a short, sweet kiss as was tradition. “Will you,” he murmured softly against the skeleton’s teeth, “allow me to court you properly?”

"... Court me... Grillbz holy shit...” he murmured, his cheeks flushing.

“Is that a yes~?” The fire monster murmured warmly, eyes searching the other’s sockets. It wouldn’t be much different than what he had been doing already- but it would be putting a title to Grillby’s actions.

After moment, he let out a soft ‘heh’, before he began to laugh, and he hugged Grillby tightly, "F-Fuck yeah!"

“Language!” Jiro barked from somewhere in the hoard of his sons.

Grillby laughed and swung the skeleton up into his arms for a deeper kiss.

Kon wolf whistled, and grinned. “Oooo hell yes, kiss him deeper! Use some fire tongue! Turn that skull into a jack-o-lantern, hot stuff!”

He kissed him for a while, then his eye lit up and he immediately sent bones flying at Kon.

Kon shrieked and dodged, flailing backwards over one end of the couch.

Grillby laughed softly, and leaned in to whisper to Caeruleus. “Later,” he rumbled softly, words thick with promise.

“No magic in such crowded areas, Caeruleus.” Yumei scolded softly. “Kon got what he deserved. Hmph… Hmmm…?” Her eyes locked onto Tenebris’ beanie, and she tilted her head. Adjusting her glasses, she squinted and read it. “World’s Foxiest Grandpa...?”

Toki sniffled slightly and pulled back from Tenebris. Oh yeah. His beanie. Shit. Well, there went the surprise. Rubbing her sockets, Toki giggled quietly and turned to her family. “Yeah. It’s his first grandbaby- and your fourth one. So, ah… Surprise? I’m pregnant?”

“We’re going to be Uncles! Again! FUCKING FINALLY!” Han whooped.

Her dad sputtered, nearly choking on his drink. “But you’re not even married yet!” he sounded positively scandalized.

“I’m going to be a grandma again!” Yumei’s face stretched into a brilliant grin, her eyes twinkling merrily.

Caeruleus’ cheekbones went dark, and he hid his face in his now-certified boyfriend’s chest as the various sounds of celebration and shock began rupturing from the occupants of the living room.

"YOU’RE NOT EVEN MARRIED YET!” Echoed again, louder this time.
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This may prove to be the second hardest chapter. Agh. –groans- I officially hate doing holiday chapters. On another note, this one focuses a lot on Han, actually. It was fun exploring a little bit of his character. Also- yes, i mentioned on my blog that i am not particularly religious- and neither is Toki. Hence why she says 'gods' a lot of the time, instead of any variant. Anywho- she sings one of my fav Christmas songs simply because i enjoy it. :) And it was either this one, or a bastardized version of Jingle Bells.

Don't forget to come visit us at our blog! You can come visit us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Christmas morning had been chaotic from start to finish. Not in the bad sense- but in the busy sense. Toki had woken up early to the sounds of her brothers making a mess of her kitchen, and breakfast itself had been one huge mess. At least it had been tasty- her brothers were decent cooks when it came to breakfast.

Opening presents had been a feat unto itself. No one had imagined the amount of paper that could come off of so many boxes- they’d actually had Grillby burn the pile in the fire place half way through opening gifts. Admittedly, some of the paper was from Cae’s shirt. She’d wrapped the box about eleven times, mostly just to frustrate him with how many layers he’d had to dig through.

Everyone got a lot of things. Most of the gifts were admittedly for the kids, but everyone got a little bit of some things. The gifts for Utaka, Kohaku, and Mirou were set to the side to be taken to them once everyone left the compound. Toki had gotten a couple medical textbooks for Tenebris, on top of a dark custom-sized fedora. She’d gotten Grillby an apron with ‘So hot, too hot’ written on it. Cae had gotten the shirt, and a book on puns. For Papyrus, Toki had a harder time choosing, but she ended up getting him a book on Italian cuisine, a new scarf, and a couple books with the hardest puzzles she could find.

Her youngest brothers, still in college, got several textbooks that they would need for the next semester, and a couple pre-loaded gift-cards for one of the local coffee shops around their campus. Kon got a new tablet for his computer, and she got Roshi a set of leg-weights. Toki had shelled out for Han too- she’d shelled out to get him a new violin and carrying case for it. Ryushi and Sarah had gotten a joint gift from her in the form of new knives for both their restaurant and their home kitchen.

Her mom and dad got a couple magic-enchanted blankets for their home life.

Toki on the other hand ended up with hoards of quilts and hilarious little bee-related things. Outside of Tenebris’ gift, Grillby’s was the most touching. He’d presented it as a gift to both her and Papyrus. The fire elemental had apparently contacted Muffet- and had her rush order a pair of little onesies. They came decorated like bees, with little stripes and fabric stingers and wings, and were matching in all except color. One matched the color of her magic- the other matched the color of Aliquam’s magic.

It had moved her damn near to tears.
The vast part of the day was spent handling her family treating her like she was glass- apparently being able to physically see her pregnancy had them on edge, just because it wasn’t coated in protective muscles and fat layers. It was very sweet- but very tiresome too.

She’d made her phone calls later in the day- and had been rewarded with excited whoops from both of her quieter brothers. Mirou was excited too- but he was vastly quieter about it than his father had been.

The day went had gone well, as did the next. The next was the last day before everyone would leave- and so it found most everyone outside and romping through the freshly fallen snow.

Everyone was spread out, mostly doing their own thing in the center park in the village. Toki had bundled up and was nestled against the base of one of the trees with Tenebris, quietly keeping an eye on everything as her brother’s romped and caused general mayhem with each other while she kept the big monster from getting too cold. Her brothers were currently deep into a playful brawl, and were trying to coax Aliquam into it with them.

Aliquam was less into the idea, moreso in his new puzzle book. Already he was a few pages into it. Though there was a glint in his eyes as he seemed to continue to lure the attention of the boys back to him, keeping them from asking Caeruleus to join them.

Speaking of, where was he anyhow?

He was in the shadows, stirring trouble that would spell a messy end for their lovely guests' snow-fight.

Tenebris had happily worn his new fedora with his coat outside, mentioning how it 'reminded him of the 40's' with it's relation to the long coat, before he took to reading into the medical textbooks, curious about human health. As he read, his pipe bounced in his teeth with idle movement of his jaw

Han stayed out of most of the rough housing, and chose to instead take up post near the play set. He was fiddling with his violin, toying with the strings and the sound settings while he watched Dom play with his little sister on the swings. Several other monster kids were with them- they were highly curious about Luna and her odd coloration.

The little girl had been liberally smeared in sun block, because it wasn’t an overcast day. It made her white skin even paler- but it was worth it to keep her from getting a burn from the sun reflecting on the snow.

Han laughed quietly, and set the fiddle to his shoulder. He decided to pick up the tune from one of Charlie Daniel’s songs, and began to mutter the lyrics to it quietly as he got the strings adjusted accordingly for it. Just because he couldn’t sing worth a damn didn’t mean that he didn’t enjoy attempting anyways. “The devil went down to Georgia. He was lookin' for a soul to steal. He was in a bind 'cause he was way behind, and he was willin' to make a deal. When he came across this young man sawin' on a fiddle and playin' it hot, the devil jumped up on a hickory stump and said, 'Boy, let me tell you what. I guess you didn't know it but I'm a fiddle player, too. And if you'd care to take a dare, I'll make a bet with you. Now, you play pretty good fiddle, boy, but give the devil his due. I'll bet a fiddle of gold against your soul, 'cause I think I'm better than you.'”

He tweaked the tune again, and found the perfect spot. His pace picked up, and he set the violin into the first real song it had probably ever played. When his sister gifted him instruments, she usually went all out- and he was not disappointed. “The boy said, ‘My name's Johnny, and it might be a sin. But I'll take your bet, you're gonna regret, 'cause I'm the best that's ever been.’. Johnny, rosin up your bow and play your fiddle hard, 'cause hell's broke loose in Georgia and the devil deals the cards.
And if you win you get this shiny fiddle made of gold. But if you lose, the devil gets your soul.”

“That’s a bad word, mister.”

Han startled, his bow making a shrill sound, and turned to see a little girl peering at him curiously. Bright green eyes twinkled at him— but the most startling fact was that this girl was human. He was used to the monster kids— he hadn’t been expecting a human child to be here for the holidays. Though, it occurred to him that it really shouldn’t be that odd. Toki had told him about the HTM and the human woman that had come calling with bad intentions. Han had every intention of getting Toki some sort of weapon. “Ah… Hell isn’t a bad word. It’s a place.”

"Sis." A human boy joined the girl near Han and took her hand, before looking up at Han with a warily curious look. At least until there was the calling of the children’s names.

"Rosie, Felix!" It was Todd, his bright red fur was combed back and had been trimmed so it was a little easier to care for, but his tail stayed bushy as ever. He came over and smiled at his children, gaze pulling to Han once he discerned that his kids were okay. "So you're the source of the mean string pulling. Your skill is remarkable!" he praised.

Han flushed and scrubbed a hand over the back of his neck. “Ah… Thanks, I guess… I’m nowhere near as good as Charlie Daniels. These your kids?” He offered a shy smile up to the fox man. He thought the HTM was a fox, but… “I-if not, sorry for assuming. My sister told me about another HTM here, but… I don’t really recall what sort of monster she said they were. Ah- I’m Han, by the way. Han Nara.”

"Todd Hanes, and you're right, I’m that HTM. These two are mine." he smiled back, hugging his children when they came to him. "It's nice to meet you, Han. You're related to Toki? I'm glad there's more than one Nara in the world. One just wouldn't be enough to make up.”

Han stands, gathering his instrument in one hand and offering a broad hand to the taller fox. He smiled up at him quietly. “They’re cute kids. Heh. Makes me miss my students. Everyone’s off for the holidays back in the city. Ah… Well, there’s actually eight of us boys, and then Toki, so there’s nine of us total. It’s nice to meet you, Todd. And you too, Rosie, Felix.”

“It’s nice to meet you too, Mister Nara!” Rosie beamed up at him brightly, snuggling into her dad’s side. She fists her little fingers in his coat, and giggles slightly. “I like your songs. Except the naughty words. They’re bad.”

"The word he said isn't as bad as you think, Rosie." Felix insisted, before looking up at Han, "Nice to meet you too." 

Han offered the boy a hand too, and grinned at him slightly. “It’s still not a word that you kids should be saying. It might be a place- but it’s still also not quite something little ones should be saying. So, did you all have a good Christmas?”

"I think this is the best Christmas we've had in a long time." Todd answered with a smile, "This perfect snowfall, it's like magic.”

“Well, given that actual magic exists, it’s little surprise that the snow is so perfect.” He grins quietly. “Usually we’re four feet deep into a snow storm at this time. I’m glad you had a good Christmas though, despite what all happened to you. So, uh… if you kids want to go play, you can. I promise my brothers don’t bite.”

Well, Kon might, once Kon caught sight of Todd. But Han’s younger brother was a bit of a freak-
and everyone knew it. “So, Toki told me you worked in the medical field?”

The kids were let loose to go play while Todd talked to Han. "That's right, I worked at the hospital in the city before I changed."

Han motioned for the fox to join him on the play equipment, and then took his seat once more. “Ebott City, right? Heh. Small world. That’s where I got my teaching degree at.”

Todd smiled at him and settled next to him. His tail swished slightly as he got comfortable on the cold surface of the play set. "Yeah... What college did you go to?"

“Ebott City University. I got my tuition paid by the military. Heh.” He wiggles his violin. “I’m a music teacher. I actually teach here on the weekends- but I haven’t been able to make it here on account of the weather as of late. What about you?” He idly hefts his violin, and begins to play a soft tune. It was an original one, befitting the calm peace the snow had brought.

Though it wasn’t so much peace- Kon was shrieking, dancing around and trying to shake snow out of his too tight jeans. That’s what he got for wearing skinny jeans to a snow brawl.

Unfortunately, his skinny jean struggle was about to become worse. As Caeruleus soon appeared, grinning wider than usual with mischievous intent.

"Same! I got a scholarship." he replied with a smile. Todd leaned back and relaxed, smiling as he listened to the gentle music, "Mmm, I'm thinking this is far better than the city..." he sighed, "It's much nicer, living out here."

“That’s good!” Han chuckled softly. He rolled his eyes, watching the mayhem unfold. “I couldn’t get one- and I refused to let mom and dad pay for it. Military offered full payment for one degree- and I took it.” Some days he wondered if it was worth it, really. “Yeah… it’s peaceful here. The city hasn’t been very good to me as of late.” He muses quietly. “Part of me wonders if Toki has room here for me again…” It wasn’t fair to his sister though, for him to come and go and come back again. Not while she was dealing with so much- and being pregnant? Hell, he was one more stress she absolutely did not need.

“C-Caeruleus! Don’t you dare!” Kon, with one arm shoved down the back of his pants, kicked snow at the larger skeleton. “Sans!”

He cackled lowly and used his magic, suddenly two large Gaster blasters made of snow lifted from the ground and both opened their mouths widely.

Kon about shat his pants. He yelped, watching the snow forms for half a second, before he took off across the snow. He ran funny, ice still packed in the back of his pants, but he booked it, a shriek escaping him as he made a beeline for one of the other trees. “You asshole! Don’t you dare!”

Todd took some time to respond, but he eventually laughed softly. He too was watching the mayhem happening. "I'm sure there's enough room, Han. I'm sure you'd fit right in."

“It’s not so much about fitting in.” Han smiles wryly. “It’s about it staying that way. I was out here a couple times before- but it got too quiet for me with just Toki out here. The city has a bit too many people- too many people who like firecrackers.”

"FIRE IN THE HOLE!" he yelled, before the blasters unleashed their fury, literally, in a cannon blast of snow that flew at Kon.

"Well regardless, I’m sure if you tried, then you'd be able to fi-" he was cut off as he heard the
maniacal cackle of Caeruleus accompanying Kon’s yells as the skeleton chased after him.

Kon’s shrieks grew as the ice knocked him right off of his feet. He landed face first in the snow, and scrambled back to his feet to try and escape.

Roshi laughed heartily and gave chase, playfully chucking a snowball at Caeruleus’ back. “Hey! Only we get to pick on our little brother!”

“A little late to my defense, don’t you think?” The younger snarled, shaking himself off behind the tree.

Han laughed heartily, his music trailing off as he set his instrument next to him. “Heh. Kon probably earned that. Heheheh. I know Toki’d find a place for me in a heartbeat, but I don’t know what I could give back to her. She’s got a lot on her plate- and she gives too much of herself to others sometimes.”

"As soon as my brother marries your sister, he'll be my brother too!" he laughed.

"Do what you can for the other monsters here." he answered, "You would make a great music teacher."

“We’ll all be your brothers then! Which means…” Ryushi gave Roshi a boost, and sent the personal trainer crashing onto Cae’s shoulders.

Roshi caught him in a gentle headlock, and rubbed his knuckles lightly against the top of his skull. “Brothers get NOOGIES!”

“And ice down their pants!” Kon darted back for them, now that Cae was covered by his two brothers. Ice and sleet is shoved liberally towards the skeleton’s pants.

Han snorted faintly, watching them ‘take vengeance’ on the skeleton. “I would be… heh. Maybe. I’ll think on it… So what about you? Are you going to resume your practice here? They don’t seem to have any actual doctors besides Tenebris and Toki’s boyfriend. Speaking of… any chance you know prenatal things?” Tenebris might end up picking the fox’s brain if he did.

"OH GA-COME ON!" he yelled out, shaking his head and trying to get free from them, "GUYS!"

"Well of course!” he replied with a smile, "Prenatal huh? Explain"

“Brotherly love!” Roshi’s knuckles scrubbed at his skull again, and, like his sister, he showed a remarkable skill for hanging on when attempting to be shaken off. “Shhhh, just take it. Just take it aaaaaalll in.”

“Allll of it,” Ryushi grinned. The eldest brother shifted, and aimed to take out the skeleton’s legs. Yeah, it would drop the big monster on him- but it would ‘take him down’ a notch.

“Well… I’m not supposed to tell anyone though… But I guess if you’re going to be staying, you’ll know soon enough.” He leaned closer and whispered quietly. “Toki’s pregnant.”

"You guys SU-aaahh!” he yelped out as he fell.

"Really?” he inquired, gaze flicking over to the human next to him.

Han nodded to the taller fox monster and smiled faintly. “Yeah. I’m gonna be an uncle again. We have to keep it quiet though- there are humans out there who wouldn’t be happy about the baby.
Anyways- you’re an HTM, so you’re going to want to talk to Tenebris about the soul stuff. I didn’t understand most of it- but I guess it ties in to how Toki ended up pregnant.”

The skeleton was suddenly piled upon by a good chunk of the Nara brothers- and those who didn’t pile on began the effort to pack the pudgy skeleton in the snow while the rest kept him still, regardless of Ryushi being trapped under him or not. Sacrifices must be made, after all. The brother below the skeleton wiggled and prodded him teasingly, his muffled laugh trailing upwards.

“Ah, ah, ah, is that any way to speak to your future brothers? Whenever the two love birds pop the question, you’ll never be able to be rid of us.” Roshi grinned.

"I gotcha." Todd nodded in understanding, smiling gently. "I am rather intrigued with how this goes.”

“Yeah. You’ll have to talk to Tenebris some. Toki got him some medical books, but they’re flying blind as far as I know.” He shrugs faintly, and props his chin on his palm. “So you never did answer- do you know prenatal things? Toki didn’t really know much about what you did at the hospital. Were you a nurse?”

"I was, yes, so I do know things of the sort." he replied, smiling gently.

"YOU GUYS SUCK!" Caeruleus yelled again, "Let go of me! I look like a fucking... UGH!"

“Nice tits Cae! You a double ‘d’ snowball, or…?” Kon leaned down to press two mounds of snow to his chest, grinning at him cheekily. “I must say, you make a mighty fine snow-maid~”

Han snickered, and grinned slightly to Todd. “That’s pretty cool. People who can heal are amazing. I have immense respect for folks who can help the wounded. Though I will admit- army medics can put the fear of the gods into a man sometimes.”

"Grrrr..." he glared up at them all, then he turned his attention to Kon, "I'm going to shove so much snow in your pants," he hissed, "It'll run out of space and go up your ASS!"

"Army medics." he chuckled at that, "It's the 'Nurses' that everyone likes."

“Oooo, ice play,” Kon leaned down and gave Cae a flirty grin. “I’d like that~ Is that just empty words, or is that a promise, big guy?”

“Ew bro, that’s gross!”

“It’s only gross to those who haven’t tried it yet!”

Han choked slightly on his saliva and worked to clear his airways as he nodded to Todd. “Eheh, yeah, uh, Army nurses take no shit either. Heh. But you stay on their good side, and they’re quite pleasant. Heh. So... Where are you staying? I didn’t see you at Toki’s place for Christmas. Do you have a house of your own?"

"I'm staying with some monsters, they took me in while we find a more permanent residence.”

He nods quietly. “That makes sense. They’re constantly building new houses- I’m certain you’ll have a place of your own soon. This place is getting huge... it seems so much more vast than the compound I grew up in. All eighty something of us used to live in the compound buildings until my grandparents passed.”

"That sounds like it was wonderful.” He makes a soft pleased sound. “This land is so... lush. It’s
“This isn’t even all of it.” He chuckles quietly. “Toki has hundreds of miles of land. We used to take family camping trips when we were younger, and it would take us days to work through everything. Heh. We haven’t done that in years- frankly, mom and dad are too old to be crawling up the back mountains like they used to.” And getting lost in the woods didn’t interest him anymore. Knowing Toki, in a couple years this whole place would become a city for the monsters.

He shook his head wryly, and watched his siblings finish encasing Cae in snow. They yanked Ryushi out from under him by his ankles, and then proceeded to run the hell away before the skeleton could get himself free from the snow. “Heh. Maybe I’ll ask Toki to section me off a small plot. Maybe settle down- start a gardening business or something. Something peaceful, alongside teaching of course. Music isn’t something taught often anymore, sadly. But maybe I’d have better luck with work with the monster schools?”

Toki had mentioned them finally putting in an official building here soon. Maybe he could get on working there or something… it would technically be falling under a government funded job, ironically enough, given the still in-progress negotiations that were happening. He heard news of the monsters possibly getting rights to own land, and to finally get vehicles and licenses of their own.

HAM would have a field day with that. He wondered if the phone calls he kept getting would get worse.

Todd laughed quietly, rubbing his head with his palms before resting them in his lap once more. His tail swayed behind him as he looked away for a moment, before looking back at Han. "You’d make a great music teacher. Unless they happen to own instruments that we don’t have up here.” he snorted.

Han offered him a wry grin. “I own all of the instruments that I bring here. I let my students use them- so it’s likely that I wouldn’t have much of an issue with instruments and the like. Heh. I’ll talk to Toki about it. It’ll probably be a while before they get the school up though. So… is there anything you’d like me to play for you in the mean time?”

"Well there's an idea." he chuckled, before he looked at him thoughtfully. "Well... if you're offering..." Todd propped his chin in his palm, watching him through blue eyes. He seemed to contemplate what song he wanted to hear.

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“I could resume the one I was playing before... Oh! What about Silent Night? It's a bit... late, I guess, but we might be able to heckle Toki into singing the lyrics for us. She does the softer songs better.”

He blinked, and then he laughed. "Well, tis' the season isn't it?"

“I guess so, yeah.” Han grinned at him cheekily, and stood up. Gathering his instrument closer, he cupped a hand to his mouth and shouted across the park for his sister. “Hey! Toki! Get your ass over here!”

“What for?” She calls back.

“I’m gonna play a Christmas song! Silent Night!”

“And you want me to sing it?”

“Well yeah!”
The eldest sibling groans and gets to her feet. She offers Tenebris a grin, and pads for the play set. She’s closely followed- her younger brothers leave Caeruleus to his fate under the lightly packed snow, and flood towards the play set. Her niece and nephew are tossed onto their shoulders- and Rosie and Felix find themselves astride her brother’s shoulders as well.

“Fuck yeah! I love when Toki sings Christmas songs!”

Toki laughs slightly, and turns when she reaches her brother. Her hands are stuffed into her pockets, and she grins across the gaggle of her family and friends. A couple of monster kids wander over too.

“Hey Pap! You said you played the violin too. Think you’ve heard Silent Night enough over my phone to play with my bro?”

Aliquam grinned at her and closed his book. It’s tucked under his arm as he gives her a wave and a nod. "Worth a try!" he said happily, going inside to get his violin.

Thankfully his house was pretty much right in front of the park- so he didn’t have to go far to get his instrument.

Toki grinned cheerily, and peered at Han and Todd while they waited for Papyrus to fetch his instrument. “So, are you serenading Todd, Han?”

Han flushed but grinned and lightly socked her in the shoulder in revenge. “Hardly- you’re going to be serenading us all. You know I play better than I sing.”

“Far too true.”

"Good thing she's already taken by Pap, huh Toki?” Cae joked from where was trying to get his body out of from under the snow packed around him.

“Damn straight!” She grins back. Toki watches him struggle in silent amusement. If he had been legitimately stuck, she’d have sent her bees to melt the snow- but given how it was flaking off around him, she didn’t think he needed it.

Han snorted a laugh, and carefully checked the tuning on his instrument. It was good enough for Silent Night, he thought. “So, you good to sing it? Don’t need a drink of water?”

“I don’t have a throat to lubricate, Han. Or vocal chords for that matter. Magic is pretty awesome like that.” She perks, spotting Aliquam coming back out. “Did you find your violin, Pap?”

"Yes I did!" he laughed happily, approaching with long strides. "It's still tuned right too!"

“Good!” She grins back to him. Toki steps further down, making room for Aliquam to join her brother in standing atop the stairs to the play set.

“Go ahead and warm up, Papyrus.” Han gives him a cheery salute with his bow. “You know the gist of the song, right?”

"I do indeed." he replied, giving a few plays of the notes on the strings. He’d listened to her Christmas play list on her new phone far, far too many times. Once he was sure he was good to go, Aliquam nodded eagerly to Han. "Ready!"

“Alright!” Han readied his violin, and began the opening chorus. The sounds that floated from his violin were sweet and gentle, and he cycled through the opening chorus once, before bringing it back around to cue Toki.
Taking position near Han, Aliquam finished rosinning his bow, and tightened it in time to take over playing in rhythm with him.

When her cue came, Toki was ready. She laced her hands against her front and leaned her shoulder into the railing. Her mouth opened slightly to give a clearer sound, and she began to sing. “Silent night!” Her voice drawled slowly to the tune of the violins. “Holy night! All is calm all is bright. Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace! Sleep in heavenly peace!” Her words trailed off as she waited for the music to trail to the next point where she needed to begin. In the meantime, she took a moment to observe the crowd.

Her brothers were silent, watching her with open glee. She wasn’t the best singer- but she’d used to sing all of them to sleep on nights where they had nightmares. It brought good memories to all of them. Even Tenebris and Caeruleus were watching- and she gave them a cheery wave.

When the musical cue came up once more, Toki shifted positions slightly and began to sing the next part. “Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah, Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!” She might not have strictly believed in one god- or any particular religion in general- but she did vastly enjoy this song.

Toki took a moment to draw in a breath, giving the guys time for them to roll through the instrumental parts. Waiting to sing was always the hardest part- she didn’t want to miss her signal, or she’d die of embarrassment. When it came time for her to sing again, she found herself quietly swaying with the tunes of the violins. Her sockets closed, and she simply rolled with the music, voice reflecting the soft duet of the violins behind her. “Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light. Radiance beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus, Lord at thy birth. Jesus, Lord at thy birth.”

The longer instrumental part would come next, she knew. The song itself was fairly short- but the slow tone of the lyrics made it seem longer than it was.

As it rolled around for her to sing again, Toki’s voice deepened, taking on a softer, quieter sound that wafted over the snow. “Silent night~ Holy night. Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah, Christ the Savior is born~ Christ the Savior is born…”

As the final notes passed, Aliquam lowered his violin to hear the crowd that had gathered cheer for them.

Han dropped his as well and laughed gleefully. He hadn’t been paying much mind- but several monsters had wandered over to the gaggle of Naras and had listened in apparently. His gaze dropped though, looking to see how Todd enjoyed the show.

Toki flushed brightly, and slipped upwards to bump back against Aliquam. “Glad you all enjoyed it,” she chuckles softly. She tilts her head up and winks at him. “Did you have fun? You play really good.”

Todd was smiling brightly, having been entranced in awe while he listened to the performance.

Aliquam wrapped his arms around her and pressed his teeth into the back of her skull with a gentle kiss. "I had fun, oh yes~" he laughed softly.

Toki grinned up at him widely and nuzzled leaned into his embrace contently.

Han just grinned, and laughed happily.
Sometimes a little bit of music in the snow was just the way the day needed to go.

“What wants another song?”

Almost immediately the crowd cheered, eager for another performance.
Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This one is one I really a lot~ hehe, it’s cute and relaxing and very sweet. Also Silverwing needs to go to the shame corner for MAKING PUNs IN THE AUTHORS NOTES.

Don't forget to join us on our blog! I’ll be uploading an art pic pertaining to this chapter here soon :) You can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: This chapter has a pleasant surprise to it, Sweet as cake, fluffy as the icing on top, ahhh it has me in tiers~

Enjoy the chapter folks, happy reading!

New years came and passed, with fireworks being had and a festival being thrown. Half the village ended up drunk off their asses- but it was a good show, and a wonderful start to the New Year.

Everyone watched the fireworks from either in the middle of the park, or on top of the roofs of their homes. It was a beautiful display- and well worth the money that was shelled out for it. It wasn’t nearly as good as the display from the City- but they had no way to move seven hundred monsters that far to see them. So… her display worked for now.

The days rolled by as January came into full swing, and Toki found herself busier than ever. Asgore was making progress with the governments of the world, finally. There was talk of monsters finally getting human rights- and no longer being considered her ‘wards’ as it were. There was solid talk of monsters being able to purchase the houses that they lived in now, and of monsters being able to finally get driving licenses. Car company’s were also eager to get in on the latter- they wanted the chance to make specialty cars that catered specifically to monster clients. Currency was also being transferred over- and it turned out that the monster’s currency traded up very, very nicely into human money.

Toki would have to teach the monsters how to drive- given that she was the only one on the property who could legally hold a license and legally drive. It wasn’t going to be fun- but it would be nice to be able to see some of them driving if Asgore could get the law passed to secure their rights.

As houses went up and more monsters moved in, she had to handle the possibilities of human settlements coming in. A company called Tall-mart wanted to put up a store near the village- and there was talk of a police department and fire department. All of them would be manned by human and monster staff- in the first true start of integrating the two societies together.

It was busy and a lot of stress on her- and it wasn’t hard to realize why she completely forgot about her birthday. She spent most of the morning of the twentieth bent over her dining room table punching numbers into her calculator and figuring out the best possible places to fit the new ‘jobs’ of sort that would be opening up soon.

Toki gnawed on her pen, not even paying attention to the time as she stared down at the forms. The words were blurring together slightly, but she forced herself through it to continue looking them
over. She wasn’t even entirely sure what this form was about anymore- but it was important, and she had to sign it, so she’d rather not sign her soul away if she didn’t have to.

“Ugh…” She groans quietly, scrubbing her palm over her face as she toys with the cap of her pen. It wasn’t long until a gentle pair of arms wrapped around Tokiko, pulling her away from the table and into a warm embrace. "Toki." It was Aliquam gently purring in her ear, his hold on her securing her against him. "You’re working too hard." he sighed quietly, "Do you remember what day it is?" he asked softly.

She startled, not having expected to be hugged- but relaxed when familiar bony arms settled around her. She leaned back slightly, and angled her skull so she could peer up at him blankly for a moment, thoroughly gnawed upon pen still clutched between her fangs. “It’s work that has to be done though, Pap. It’s important for all of you.” Her brows furrowed slightly. “What day…? No? I know it’s the twentieth and these papers have to be mailed out tomorrow if I agree to the terms…” She was completely drawing a blank as she settled contently in his grasp. “What was important about the twentieth?”

"Toki, you mean you forgot the meeting conference at Grillby’s tonight?!" he insisted, before he nuzzled and began to nip at her neck teasingly. "Tsk tsk tsk!"

Horror stretched her sockets. She didn’t… remember a conference meeting at Grillby’s. “Shit!” She squirmed in his grasp, managing a slight giggle from his nips, and leaned forwards to gather her papers into a jumbled pile to be handled later. “Oh my god, I didn’t even remember there was one today! How late am I? Oh gods, shit, I hope they’re not too upset…”

"You're actually like... only a minute or two! Come on! I'll meet you there!"

“That’s fine, that’s fine! I need to find my shoes- please let them know how sorry I am about that.” She wiggles out of her chair, and bustles to go find her coat and shoes.

"Of course!" He made sure she didn't see his grin as he ran out of the house.

Toki wasn’t out of the house that much later than he was- perhaps a minute or three- but he was already long gone out of sight by the time she took off after him. She’d taken a moment to change into a nice orange turtleneck- it didn’t match well with the blue of her sweat pants, but eh, she didn’t really care about matching colors.

They all blurred together as she set out at a fast jog for Grillby’s anyways. She was already late- no need to break her neck on any slick spots in a mad dash for the bar.

It wouldn’t take her long to get there anyways. The blinds were down, which was typical for meetings that were supposed to be private. Guilt gnawed at her- Grillby lost business when the bar was closed for long meetings, and she had no idea if this conference was going to be a long one. Either way, she sighed, shaking muck off of her slippers as she eased the door open and squeezed inside of the warm building.

"SURPRISE!" Was countless yells from the monsters waiting inside, standing behind the Gaster family and a large cake.

"Happy birthday, Tokiko!" Aliquam laughed happily.

Toki froze at first, like a deer in the headlights. Slowly a grin stretched her face, and she laughed as she shrugged out of her coat. “Oh my gosh, I completely forgot today was my birthday. Thank you, all of you- you didn’t have to do this for me.” So much for having missed an important conference-
but this was a welcome surprise instead.

Aliquam came over and pulled her into another embrace, kissing her happily.

"We wanted to, doll." Caeruelus laughed.

Toki laughed again, leaning into Aliquam’s grasp contently. She smiled up at him warmly, eye lights twinkling brightly. “So much for missing a conference, huh?” She winked at him. Toki shifted, linking arms with the taller skeleton, and then guided them closer to everyone else. “Thank you, all of you. This is... really nice, actually.” The Nara hadn’t realized how tightly wound up she was with all of the work she’d been doing- but the surprise party was easing some of it. “So, who baked the cake?”

Caeruleus lifted a hand, and then glanced towards Grillby, who then elbowed Tenebris in the arm, making his clear his throat. “I... helped them a little bit” the older admitted under his breath.

Toki beamed at them warmly. “I’m sure between the three of you that it is a wonderful cake. Grillby wouldn’t let Cae make a ketchup cake- so it’s definitely got to be edible.” She winks at the older brother, and then steps around Aliquam to give everyone a hug for a thanks.

Grillby takes his easily, patting her back gently. “You work too hard, Miss Toki.” He admonishes quietly. “Today is the day celebrating your birth- you should be relaxing and enjoying it.” Not spending it bent over a table doing paperwork.

“It’ll be more relaxing with all of you,” She grins warmly.

He pats her skull fondly and nods as she goes to hug Tenebris. “It is nice to see you again. We have seen little of you with how busy you’ve been with the humans and their papers.”

“I’ve missed seeing all of you too- but it is important paperwork. There’s talk of all of you getting full citizenship and human rights. That’s worth a back cramp any day.”

Tenebris rumbled as he hugged Toki and he gave her a gentle peck on the top of her skull. "Do not hurt yourself with your efforts, Tokiko dear."

“I wont, Tenebris.” She squeezes him gently, and smiles faintly. “I’m sorry I haven’t been able to do a lot of checkups with you lately- papers and all of that. For what it’s worth- I feel fine? Pretty tired, but with all that’s going on… It’s super exciting.”

And it was- she was up late most nights handling phone calls, emergency faxes- it was a busy time of the year. She felt sorry for Pap too- he’d ended up falling asleep without her several times because she was simply up late doing things.

"I will want to look tonight, if that is alright." he murmured, before he chuckled and turned, looking at the townspeople who attended the party. The bunny children and their mother, Todd and his children, his sons, Grillby, and himself were all there. It was a small party, but more than enough to show how much Toki is loved.

It was definitely enough to let her know she was loved. Everyone being there warmed her soul, and Toki found utter joy in them taking time out of their day to do this for her. She hadn’t even remembered her own birthday- and probably wouldn’t have until someone sent her a text message about it. “Of course!” She smiles. “That’s fine by me. Lets get through the party first, before we do that.”

Grillby was close enough to hear, but the crackle of his flames kept the others from overhearing.
“You are welcome to the back room if you need it,” he murmurs softly to her.

“We’ll see.” She grins up at him, and takes a moment to hug Cae as well. She spots a bit of something on his sweater, and grins as she swipes what appears to be frosting off of it. “Someone is messy, aren’t they?” It’s booped onto his teeth, and then she swipes her fingers off the rest of the way onto her fingers. “So, which first, everyone? Cake or presents? The cake looks amazing, by the way. The decorations are really cool!”

"If you don’t distribute the cake, I think Caeruleus will eat it all.” Aliquam joked with a laugh, getting a sharply indignant "OI!” from his brother.

“I think you’re right,” She grinned to her boyfriend. Toki bounced slightly, and moved towards the cake. “You’re not all going to do the singing, are you…?” The singing always flustered her- she’d rather just get the cake cut up and served and enjoy the sugary confection without all the noise.

"Why wouldn't we?"

"It's a special event, you dork.” Cae cackled.

“Because it’s…” She flails her fingers and hides her face. Gods above- the oddest things could fluster her sometimes, and singing happy birthday was one of them.

Grillby grins lightly and gently bumps his shoulder to Cae’s. He waggles a brow lightly, and begins to chant softly. “Happy birthday to you,” He crooned softly, starting off the song before Toki could fuss.

"Happy birthday to you,"

"You look like a monkey!"

"SANS!"

Grillby scolding pinched the ridge of Cae’s iliac crest, though he chuckled quietly.

Toki laughed into her hands and endured the rest of the song. When it ended, she dealt with her flush and managed a smile for everyone else. The candles were blown out, and she grinned. “So- who’s got the knives for serving up the cake?”

Grillby held up a knife, and offered it to her handle first.

Toki took the knife with a faint smile, and turned it towards the cake. She collected plates, and began to cut and put slices on it. “Alright- Remember to pull out the candles in your slices, but now it’s cake time!”

She settles slices onto the plates, and slides them down along the table for everyone to collect.

“Cake!” Thumper was practically bouncing at her feet. “Cake, cake, cake, cake!”

“You hardly need the sugar,” Penelope gave Toki a smile, and gently nudged her out of the way. She pushed a place of cake into the skeleton’s hands. “Birthday girl gets the first slice, silly. Let me handle this- Thumper, you keep your fingers out of the icing.”

“But Mom!”

“Patience is a virtue, dear.”
"It'll taste better on the cake itself, trust me kid." Caeruleus mentioned as he got into what was starting to be a line, while Tenebris helped with a second knife that was almost humorously small in his hands.

Toki giggled and got out of the way of the small line. She shot Grillby a grin and took a seat on top of one of the empty tables- to which he frowned and wiggled his fingers at her scoldingly.

“Tables are for glasses,” he admonishes once he gets his slice of cake, also slipping out of the way for everyone to slide through, “not asses.” There would be plenty of cake left over for everyone, even once all of the slices had been handed out to people. They had made the cake with larger monsters in mind- so the slices were catered more to the size of himself and Tenebris. Toki’s looked hilarious in front of her- but it was even more so for a monster like Thumper.

The boy’s eyes practically glowed at the slice of cake on his plate though, and he carefully brought it over to the tables sized for smaller monsters. It was currently the ‘kiddy’ table of sorts- but it looked smaller compared to the cake. The slice was the size of his head. Truly, he would be in taking a lot of sugar, and Penelope was going to have her hands full.

“But tables are more fun to sit on.” She teases back, content to wait as everyone filed through the small line. It was an interesting sight- the knife was more suited to the small rabbit monster. Compared to Penelope, Tenebris looked like a large child playing with doll toys. “Besides, I don’t have one of those. I have a pelvis and whatever the little bones that make up the backside of it are.”

"Your Sacrum, Coccyx, Illiums, Pubus." Cae piped up from nearby.

“Yes, those.” She waves her fork at him slightly, and slides willingly into the seat, instead of sullying the top of the table.

Grillby’s stern looks ease off, and he chooses to take a seat near Caeruleus. He casually props a leg into his boyfriend’s lap, and nibbles his cake quietly. The moist confection sizzles slightly in the heat of his mouth, but it tastes good all the same.

Toki patiently waits until everyone has their cake and is seated, before she starts in on hers. It’s probably more cake than she can actually eat- but it looks amazing, and she’s going to eat as much of it as she can. Her fork dips in, and she samples it happily. The frosting is delicious and sweet- borderline too sweet for her tastes, but utterly delicious.

Given the number of monsters that it would be feeding, there wasn’t any magic baked into it. The last thing anyone needed was monster kids with more energy from extra magic alongside the sugar rush that was sure to come. Either way- the magic would have changed the base flavor of the cake. The cake is vanilla- which is a good safe flavor to choose when feeding so many. “It’s amazing,” she thrums contently, leaning back in her seat as she enjoys her treat.

"Excuse you." Cae cackled quietly, patting his boyfriend’s leg with one hand as he nibbles at the cake with the other.

Tenebris and Aliquam had taken up their seats near Toki, enjoying their cakes as they relaxed at the table.

"I'm glad you like it, Toki." Aliquam chirped happily.

The female skeleton gives him a wink, and nibbles another bite. It really is very sweet- and she finds herself finishing a little more than half of it before she sets it down with a content sigh. She knows her limits- the rabbit children do not. Thumper was nearly finished with his cake. “It was a very good
cake,” She chuckles slightly, dropping her fingers to pat her middle. She folds her hands over her belly, turtleneck bunching slightly over the curve of the ecto-flesh hidden under it. “But I think that’s about as much as I can eat.” It was most of what she had eaten that day- and too much sweets on an empty ‘stomach’ was just asking for something bad to happen. “Do either of you want the rest of mine? They’re really big slices- though they do fit better to someone your size, Tenebris.”

“We can save it for later in case you get a craving for sweets.” Aliquam suggested warmly.

Toki chuckles, and quietly licks her fork clean. She wasn’t even far enough along to begin craving anything. But still, she nods and lets her fork clatter against the plate. “I think we’re going to end up with more cake than we can eat, to be honest.” She laughs.

There is a split second where she has a second to brace herself, before a fuzzy child sized bullet slams into her middle and wraps around her like a furry leech. “Presents now?” Thumper is glowing as he beams up at her. “You have to open mine first! You gotta, you gotta!”

She was slightly winded, but he didn’t appear to have hurt her. She loops her arms around him and gently bumps the ridge of her nasal cavity to the soft pink of his nose. “How about we wait until everyone else has finished their cake first? After all, Cae can probably eat two or three pieces, you know?” The last part is whispered playfully, and she shoots the older brother a cheeky grin.

At this time Caeruleus was indeed munching on the beginning of a second slice, chewing as he looked over, "What?"

Toki just laughs, releasing Thumper as the rabbit groans impatiently into her chest and squirms to be let down. Despite having just eaten an entire slice of something the size of his head, he was still up and moving- and apparently darting from table to table with childish impatience. “Oh nothing, Cae. So, is that the second slice or the third?” She teases.

Grillby just hides a grin, and chuckles just slightly. He finishes most of his slice- but diligently dumps the last small bit onto the chubby skeleton’s plate. It was much more fun to watch him eat it- and enjoy the extra energy the skeleton would have when the sugar was processed directly into his magic. Grillby would help him wear off that energy later though.

“Buzz off.” he grumbled, though he ate the last piece of cake on his plate from Grillby.

Toki paused. She actually paused, before squinting at him. “Was that an intentional pun, or unintentional?”

His grin widened as he leered over at her, "Buzz buzz."

Toki grinned back at him, slightly more sharp-toothed than he was- and proceeded to buzz her bones and magic at him tauntingly. “At least you’re being accurate.” She snickers.

He choked at that slightly, and then he looked at her as he coughed. "Well heck, that's awesome."

Toki grins at him. “I had forgotten that you haven’t gotten to hear that yet. Pap listens to it often enough- it’s something from my bees.”

“It was really cool!” Thumper is back at her table again, and is bouncing slightly as he peers over the edge. He doesn’t vault into her lap again- no, he’s doing table checks.

“Someone is letting their eagerness show,” Toki ruffles his ears, and laughs softly. “Okay. Tell you what- how about you go collect empty plates, and set them all on a table for me, and then I’ll start on presents. Sound like a deal, Thumper?”
“Yes!” The rabbit was off and running, boundless energy carrying him back and forth as he hauled plates like a pro.

Toki grinned wider. “Hey, Grillby? When he’s old enough to work here, he’d be an awesome waiter. Not many kids have a talent for balancing plates like that.”

“Perhaps.” The fire elemental murmurs quietly as his plate is gathered. He shifts and stands, freeing his intended as he rights himself. He rumbles thoughtfully, and goes to fetch the gifts for her to begin opening.

Cae finished his cake and left it to get snatched up as he joined Grillby, humming quietly while his tongue happily wandered about his mouth in savoring the sweet aftertaste of the cake.

The fire monster loaded the gifts gently onto the table- he knew his was fairly durable, but the others were a bit of a mystery to him.

Toki stared at the small collection of gifts and wondered how she was going to carry them all home. Her rib cage couldn’t be used anymore, after all. “So, which first?”

“My!” Thumper grinned. He finished setting the plates aside and bounced back as the other monsters gathered around. They left plenty of space, but still lingered to watch the unwrapping around them. Thumper fished his gift out, and plopped the small box into her lap. “Mom and I made it for you!”

“Awww, really? That’s super sweet of both of you!” They both got a warm smile, and then Toki gently opened the wrapping. It was decently wrapped- but opened easily under her claws. A small box came into view, and she opened the end of it curiously. Out plopped a bracelet decorated with green and black stripes, and tiny bee charms. Toki beamed, and slipped it onto her wrist. “Awww, thank you! It’s so cute! Look, Ali! It’s got a bee on it!”

The surprise party ended well- with a couple new turtlenecks from Grillby, a box of tea samples from Tenebris, a new single-person quilt and a handful of hand-knitted gloves came from Todd and his kids, a tiny leash and collar from Cae which had been listed as ‘for the pretty bee’, and a scarf that matched Papyrus’ own red one.

The gifts had thrilled her- and even better, they all fit into one box for her to carry home.

After the party wrapped up, Toki had stuck around at the bar to help Grillby clean up. Naturally, she’d managed to wrangle the Gaster family into helping her and the flaming barman. They’d stuck Cae on dish duty, while Grillby packed cake into containers for them to take home. Aliquam was breaking down boxes, while Toki swept up the floor.

Thumper had taken a tumble into the table when the sugar had kicked in- and paper and package stuffing had pretty much exploded across the floor.

She tiredly hummed as she swept, gathering things into a pile to be disposed of.

Tenebris had taken this chance to step outside, puffing from his pipe quietly as he relaxed, taking deep breaths of the smoke and exhaling long plumes of it into the air.

Toki was done cleaning the mess on the floor before he got back in. Once it was swept up and put into the trash, she turned to the other monsters and searched for her next task.
Grillby grumbled a soft sound, and set the to-go boxes of cake on top of the box of gifts. “You can go ahead and get home, Miss Toki. I’m glad we managed to steal you away for a while- I know you have been busy.”

“I have been,” She admits quietly. She approaches, and quietly peers at the other skeletons. Cae was still busy with dishes- Aliquam was finishing up stuffing the cardboard into a recycling bin that looked fit to burst. “I might actually clean up the mess of papers at home and go to bed early. Now that the sugar is starting to wear off, I’m getting pretty tired.” It was dark out- nearing nine at night- so it wasn’t like it was too early to sleep. “Hey, Ali? You spending the night at my place, or you going to crash at your house?” He spent a lot of his nights with her- but there were some nights where he returned to his place. He hadn’t moved in with her, after all.

"Are you crazy? I'm staying with you tonight, nyeh heh heh~" The look in his eye sockets was mischievous. It was obviously promising something.

She grinned at him teasingly, and hefted the heavy box into her arms. “Good! I’d enjoy having you here with me tonight.” Though she wasn’t sure she had the energy to get up to the sort of things that his eyes were promising- she would certainly try though. “Are you sure you and Cae can handle this, Grillby?”

“Go enjoy your night,” he rumbled softly. “And don’t forget to have Tenebris check on you. It has been a long time since you have had the time to get an appointment. I will enjoy my time here with Caeruleus, once he is done using that deathtrap of a sink.”

Toki smiled and nodded. “Mkay. You enjoy your time with your boyfriend. C’mon, Ali. Lets go snag your dad and head to my place. I’d love to try some of the tea he got me.”

"Alright, last I checked, he was outside." Aliquam replied, leading her to the door with a smile.

Indeed he was outside. Toki’s arms were full of the heavy box, so she couldn’t wave to get his attention, but her mouth worked just fine. “We’re heading back to my place, Tenebris. You wanted to tag along, right? To talk about some stuff?”

"Mmhm.” he nodded once, "Let's go, then, I suppose," he replied as he walked with her and Papyrus back to her home sweet home. "How are you feeling now, by the way?” he inquired.

The walk home wouldn’t be long, though it would be awkward as she shifts the box from one hip to the other. Cardboard was hard to hold with the slick bone of her fingers. Her slippers are a little bit soggy- but that was fine. “I feel pretty tired, to be honest. Even with the sugar rush from the cake- which was really good, by the way- I feel pretty exhausted. It’s been a busy start to the New Year, and the month isn’t even over yet.” She chuckles.

“I know Ali’s probably been telling of my horrible sleeping habits as of late.” Up until midnight or later, and then up super early- she was probably running herself ragged. “Once I’ve got this last batch of papers done, it’ll be a week or so until the next ones come. I’m looking forwards to some time to crash and just sleep if I can. Maybe for more than four to six hours a night, eh Pap?”

"I'll start pinning you down if you don’t take this task upon yourself.” he said with a laugh, making Tenebris chuckle behind them.

Toki flashed him a slight grin. “Well, I wouldn’t mind being pinned down,” she wiggles her brows at him with a wink. “But I think I can manage some sleep without extreme measures.” As they reach the house, Toki leans back slightly and adjusts her grasp on the box so she can tote it up the front stairs. She stifles a yawn, and waits for one of the guys to open the door.
Aliquam pushed the door open and followed her once she stepped inside, with Tenebris in tow as he put out his pipe.

Toki headed for one of the side tables in the main room, and carefully plonked the box down. Idly, she rubbed her knuckles into her lower back and stretched, letting the vertebrae pop and stretch out once more. Her back was slightly tight from all of the writing and poring over papers she’d been doing. It felt great to stretch- though she belatedly remembered that popping bones was not something skeletons did. At least, not what the other skeletons did. “Ah, home sweet home.” She hummed, straightening out her turtleneck. “Okay, so where are you going to be able to see easier, Tenebris?”

He was rather tall, and she was much smaller than he was. Crouching was not going to be an easy angle for a decent checkup.

“Well, somewhere you can sit where you end up a little higher is easier for me.” he replied, “No where uncomfortable for you though. Even the counter would work.”

“I can do the counter.” She had wide counters. “Kitchen’s got the best lighting anyways.” She leaves the box of gifts in place, though takes the to-go boxes of cake, and saunters for the kitchen. The most open spot is near the sink, and she leans over to turn on the kitchen lights first before stuffing the cake into the fridge where it could stay good out of the relative warmth of her house. Getting up onto the counter is a bit harder- she’d had them made more in mind for tall guests, so the counter actually stops about at the bottom of her ribs.

She turns, plants her hands, and bounces slightly so she can hop back up onto the counter. She shimmies back, and sits with her back straight. “This work?” She grins. “If all else fails, I can lay on the dining room table. Though I don’t know how well laying flat would work for seeing inside of me.”

Both of them followed her into the kitchen. Tenebris nodded and let her get comfortable before he came over, smiling gently. “This will work.” He collected a chair with his tail, and took a seat in front of her. He tugged his gloves off gingerly. “Alright then, if you’d kindly.” he purred, gesturing to her shirt with his bared fingers.

Toki nodded with a smile, and rolled her turtleneck up to just past the bottom of her ribs. The thick material was stubborn, so she left a hand on it to keep it upright. Her abdomen was the same color it had been prior, though there was a small, almost unperceivable slope to the bottom of her belly. Toki couldn’t really see without craning awkwardly, so she relaxed, easing down the bottom of her waistline so it edged under her iliac crests. “Can you see alright like this?”

“Perfect.” He ran one hand over her side in a comforting manner then looked into her midsection. Nestled in her pelvic girdle, a darker green shape was slightly bean shaped and was now visible. It shifted lightly as she breathed, and inside something was visible. It was a little gray heart- which rotated and parted, and showed that it was not one, but two tiny, gray little upside down hearts nestled inside of the summoned organ. They floated slightly, but seemed to be tethered closely to the walls of the pseudo womb.

Toki shifted, watching him curiously. “So, can you see anything yet?”

He watched it for a short while, mystified as he watched the tiny gray souls. It was obviously two, and not just a reflection against the glow of the organ in her belly. Tenebris smiled warmly and ran his knuckles slowly over her midsection. The flesh was slightly firmer, a different sort of feel to it than it had before. "Yes..."
“Really?” Her face brightened eagerly, shifting slightly as his knuckle passes gently over her belly. The look in his eyes is soft, and there is an almost mystified look on his face. This was the first time he was getting to see his grandchild- and being a monster has to have it’s perks. Humans didn’t get to see much this early. “I was wondering if it was a monster soul or a human soul. Can you tell what it is yet?”

He did not reply vocally at first, but his smile was growing with every passing second. ”They're Monster. Genetics would be consistent. One part human to three parts monster.”

“Monster!” She grinned. “That’s good! That’s actually really cool! Hey Ali, it’s going to be a little monster soul!” She peeked as best she could, but couldn’t see anything beyond a dark blob from her current angle. “Is that weird dark bean shaped thing where the baby’s soul is?”

Aliquam was smiling, but something had Tenebris entranced, and that drew his attention. He stepped closer, and tilted his skull inquisitively. "Father...?"

"I can't believe this... it's such good fortune." he purred happily.

“That it’s a little monster soul…?” She was confused- she couldn’t quite see what he was seeing.

"No... It's two."

Toki paused, her breath hitching faintly, before she tucked her chin quietly into her chest. One of her fingers came to brush over the side of her belly, the pointed claw tracing lightly over the flesh and sending phantom goose bumps over her glowing parts. “Pardon me? You said… Two? As in… Twins?”

"Twins!" Tenebris laughed, confirming her question quietly.

"T-twins...?"

And there was a crash that made Tenebris turn in his seat. Yep. Aliquam fainted again.

Toki squeaked- the shock of twins was rapidly replaced by the fact that there was now a pile of sprawled skeleton that had probably just concussed himself on the tile of her kitchen floor. “Gods above, Papyrus!” She wiggled off of the counter, escaping Tenebris, and she bolted to the fallen skeleton. “Not again,” she sighed, the sound amused and frustrated as she crouched down by his shoulders.

She hooked her fingers under them and grunted, heaving his heavy upper half up into a sitting position so she could lean him against her. “Dammit- you need a helmet, I swear to all the stars in the sky. C’mon- wake up, Pap.” She patted his cheekbones gently. His skull didn’t look like he’d cracked it- but that didn’t mean he wouldn’t wake up with one hell of a headache.

"Nyyyyehhhhh...." Aliquam groaned and slowly leaned his head back, "T-Twins..." he rasped out slowly.

Toki heaves a sigh. The noise he makes is not quite aware, and his sockets are hardly fully lit. “Yeah, twins, Pap.” She presses a soft kiss to his temple and then groans quietly. “He’s pretty out of it. At least he’s still marginally conscious of it this time. Will you help me get him to the couch, Tenebris? He's really heavy.” He might have been all bones and no meat, but he was made of a much more dense bone than a human skeleton was.

The elder monster sighed softly through his teeth and eased out of his seat to go take his son from her.
"Twins." Al grumbled as Tenebris hefted him up.

"Up we go, Papyrus." he purred.

Toki watched him heft the skeleton up, and bustled to the couch to get it in place. She righted her turtleneck, and settled a pillow for Aliquam’s skull to be settled on.

Once they got him settled on the couch, Toki rubbed over his skull slightly and draped a blanket over him with a soft sigh. She scrubbed her face tiredly, and leaned against the arm of the couch.

“Twins. Gods above.” She curls an arm over her middle, and cradles her face in her hand for a time. Twins. Not just one- there was two. Two little souls in her middle- they were going to have two. Holy shit. She knew they could handle one- but twins was going to be harder. A lot harder.

"I’m so proud of you, Toki" Tenebris praised her happily.

“Proud of me?” She inquired incredulously, dropping her hand from her face to fold it over her middle. “Why on earth?” She was… actually sort of nervous. Twins was so much more… Just… more. Anxiousness was building- and there was no logical reason for her to be so nervous about twins. “T-Twins is… Twins is… a lot… It’s…” It was kind of scary to some extent. Twins meant there was much more that could go wrong, much more that would be happening. It was a lot to find out on her thirty third birthday. “It’s not a bad thing, but… It’s… kind of scary…” She murmured tiredly.

"It is a lot to bear, I understand my dear." he said gently as he touched her shoulder, “It is scary, but I’m going to be here for you.” he purred softly.

Toki sighed faintly. “I know you will be. I just… I worry.” The initial pregnancy had been a shocking, but… Twins was… “Twins come with their own complications for humans. I don’t know about monsters.” Her hand slides up, and she settles her palm over top of his fingers with a quiet sigh. “I just… worry. Ali’s young- twins is a lot to be saddled with. It’s a lot harder pregnancy. Are you… sure it’s twins? Not just a reflection in the glow or something?”

"I saw two individual souls, Toki." he said softly, "But please, I am a father of two myself, I can help you where I can." he assured her. “I will do my research as best I can. I have been around other pregnant monsters- though not skeletons, I admit.”

“At least there’s an age gap between the boys, though.” She points out. Toki wasn’t sure how old Caeruleus was, but she knew he was older than Papyrus. “Two… Oh boy.” She lifts her shirt quietly, and peers down into her middle. Distal phalanx’ running across the tiny curve of her abdomen, Toki makes note that she can’t see the souls no matter how hard she squints, but she can see the dark green housing that’s holding them. “Your help will be appreciated. So. Heh. Twins. Looks like I’m going to have to invest in two cribs.” And despite her not wanting to think about it, doubts trickled into her mind. Twins on the first shot- in a relationship that was a couple months old. She would not blame Aliquam in the slightest if he was unhappy with this situation, or if he wanted out at any time. She was already committed- but she wasn’t going to force him to do anything.

But that was a conversation for after Tenebris went home. And after Aliquam woke up.

“… I’m not going to be able to hide it for long.” She mutters suddenly. “They’re already getting big… We’re going to have to tell the rest of the village.”

He smiled gently and patted her shoulder. He offered her a comforting rumble. "You can deliver the news when you're ready."
“I’m never going to be ready,” she sighs. “And these two will be too big to hide before I am. Thumper’s sure to notice here soon with how often he barrels into me. I almost want you to tell everyone- you’ve got more sway, and can probably better explain the risks and why we have to keep this quiet for as long as possible.”

Idly, she drops a hand and taps a claw gently between Aliquam’s eye sockets, hoping to fully rouse him.

“I can do that, if you wish. Give it some time and think it over. You are tired, Toki.”

Aliquam groaned slightly and his sockets relit slowly, "Nyeh..."

“Hey there,” Toki murmured softly to him. Her palm cupped his skull, and she rubbed at it soothingly. “You feeling better now?”

"Twins..." he giggled quietly, "I... ah... Twins!" he started to giggle louder.

Toki hesitantly withdrew her hand, and cast him a bemused wary look. “Uh…” Her eye lights flick up to Gaster, and she tilts her chin towards his son with a befuddled look. “Yeah Pap. Twins. Is that okay?”

"Yes!" he looked up at her, eye lights twinkling merrily. "Twins...! Oh my god this is.... Terrifying. But I’m... Oh my god, I’m so excited...”

A relieved laugh leaves her, and she stoops down to press a kiss to his brow. “I’m glad. I’m somewhere between terrified, exhausted, and excited, to be honest with you.” She smiles faintly. “You’ve got to stop this fainting business, though. I’m not nearly strong enough to move you when you clock out on the tile. So ah… heh. Twins. Good thing Grillby gave us two onesies for Christmas, yeah? We’re going to need two of everything... Might explain why I’ve been so tired though- makin’ two little ones is harder than making one.”

He giggled quietly up at her, still clearly lost in the news of being a dad to not one, but two little ones. "Well then I think I should help you with that, yes?"

Toki shifts and stands from the arm of the chair. She plants her hands on her hips and gives Aliquam a tired smile. “Soon,” she nods, knowing what he was meaning. Her gaze flits to Gaster. “Is there anything else you wanted to check first before we do that? Or that you need to check, I guess. You did mention being around monster pregnancies before, even if it wasn’t skeleton pregnancies.”

"No, you should be alright for the pre-exchange. Just go ahead and get comfy." Tenebris assured her as he watched Aliquam slowly sit up with a quiet grunt of effort.

"I know enough, at least a little bit! Enough to, ah, do this" Aliquam insisted, before he smiled at her and patted his lap, "Come on!"

Toki rolled her eyes with quiet amusement. “Been talking with your dad about what he knows, haven’t you?” She inquires with wry amusement. Still, she shifts and eases down into his lap. Not like she’s going to complain. Toki shifts, and leans her torso back against the arm of the couch, letting her legs stretch out over the other side of his. “This work for whatever you’re going to do?”

"I talked to Grillby too." He replied with a small smile, wrapping his arms around her and giving a small squeeze. "Nyeh~"

Toki chuckled softly as he looped his arms around her. “Sounds like that’s good enough, if you’re not kicking up a fuss. So... Shirt up, I’m going to assume?” Her fingers wriggle to the edges of her
turtleneck, and she rolls the orange fabric up to her ribs as she nestles close to his chest. “At least if you faint from seeing them, you’re already on the couch, no?”

"Hahaha." he laughed quietly, tugging his gloves off before reaching out to rest his fingers across her middle. Rubbing her stomach gently as he looked down at the beauty of his future, his pupils practically glimmer with glee. "Oh my goodness, it's... hahaha..."

“It’s what?” She blinks up at him curiously. Toki does relax slightly as the bare bones of his hands rub over her middle. It feels nice, in an odd sort of way, and she slumps slowly into the couch. One of her arms comes up to support her neck, and she watches him out of contently half-lidded sockets. “That feels really nice,” she admits softly. “It’s really soothing. Pretty sure they’re fond of it too.”

"It's wonderful." he said with a smile, fingers roving gingerly over the flesh. "Absolutely beautiful."

Toki chuckles softly. “I’m glad you think so. I was… kinda worried that two might seem like too much for you.” She admits quietly. The little green blob in her middle shifts as she adjusts her hips, and Toki smiles wider as she watches him explore her middle gently. “I get the feeling this is going to become a regular thing, isn’t it? Not that I’m complaining. It’s really relaxing.” The green flesh felt tight at times- but that was probably the growing and shifting that her magic was having to do to accommodate not one, but two souls growing inside of her.

"Nonsense. Two just means that there is more to love.” He hums softly. “I wouldn’t mind doing this more. Only if you like it, though.” he purred gently, before he rested his head against her own. He closed his sockets as he let his magic flow down his core and into his hands, slowly streaming it into her own through the barrier that makes up her middle.

“I would not mind more. It feels good- the flesh has felt tighter recently.” she hums softly in turn. She nuzzles her face to his, sockets closing with a blessed sound as he eases magic into her middle. It takes a short bit, but the tiredness in her soul begins to fade, and the bright glow that her belly initially had returns with force. It had been dimmer- which she had been glad for, because it let her hide easier. She’d have to wear a jacket overtop of her turtleneck now, or double up on the shirts, but it wouldn’t be too bad. “Mmm… your magic always feels nice,” she murmurs. “Like being out in the sun. Warm. Light. Joy. It is very much you.”

"And yours is a feeling of a blanket that is draped over your shoulder when your day couldn't get any worse, it reminds you just how there is something to look forward to after even the hardest of days." he purred.

Her hand trails up and she cradles his jaw with a soft sound, caressing his skull with gentle fingers. Slowly, a soft buzzing noise escapes her bones. It isn’t the same mocking noise that she made at Caenor the piping she made when he had been in heat. This is a content sound, a soft buzzing of harmony and inner peace, of health and happiness. “We make a good match, I think.” She murmurs softly to him.

The glow of her abdomen brightens more, and then levels out, growing no brighter or dimmer. The tiredness in her eases further- but she is still sleepy from working long hours. It is less so- but still present.

"Like a bee and honey.” he joked quietly, purring quietly until he stopped feeding magic to his young. "Mmm~ Feel better?” he asked gently.

Toki nodded against him, slowly opening her sockets again. Like a bee and honey indeed. She kissed him gently, and then released her light grip on his skull so she could lean back. She glanced down, and laughed softly. “I feel a lot better. But it looks like I’ve been eating glow-sticks. I might
need to borrow one of your turtlenecks to wear over mine. None of mine are thick enough to cover this sort of glow… Huh. It wasn’t this bright before you donated magic. Looks like that’s something to note.” Her hand trailed down, and she laced her fingers with his so they both cradled her middle. She was warm, her belly warmer, and that soft buzzing noise from her bones was persisting.

"Nyeh heh heh heh... Of course, my love." he purred gently, kissing her softly.

She kissed him back gently, leaning into him with a pleased sound. “What about you?” she murmurs against his kiss, “Are you feeling tired? That felt like a lot of magic.”

"Honestly I am a tad tired but you know, I already passed out once so..."

“We’ll avoid doing it again.” She smiles softly and kisses him again, before nestling against him. “Want to just sleep tonight?” He had intended mischief, she knew, but she didn’t want them to run out of energy in the midst of it either.

"Yes, we’ll look into eating later. For now. Sleep." he purred, hugging her before pulling her onto his chest as he laid back.

Toki managed to fix her turtleneck before he rotated her, but found herself sprawled out across his chest in what was obviously becoming their couch snuggling position. She giggled softly and stretched out. A slow glance to the side let her realize that they still had a guest. Her face bloomed in a blush. “Uh… Sorry about forgetting you were there, Tenebris. You were pretty quiet…”

"I’m glad you two have a hand on how to nurture the children while you carry them, Toki." Tenebris rumbled gently, amusement dancing in his eyes. "Instinct does it job well."

“That it does,” she admits. “Though we’d be pretty lost without you and Grillby. He knows a lot about caring for a pregnant mate.” Which made sense- he did have a daughter that he mentioned from time to time. Toki nestles down better into Aliquam’s grasp, and peers up at the largest monster. “Did you want to check the souls again now that they’ve been given magic? Being see-through is pretty handy for checking without moving.”

"I suppose.” he chuckled slightly. Kneeling down beside the cuddling duo, Tenebris took a peek at the small souls again, lifting the back of her shirt up towards her ribs. He had to shift his angle slightly to see past her spine, but it was doable.

The souls appeared much the same, if a bit brighter than before, and harder to see for the brightness that glowed from her middle.

Toki exhaled slightly, a shiver racing up her spine as a cool draft of air raced up her exposed back. “They look okay?”

"They actually look healthier now." He murmured in response.

Toki frowned slightly. “I didn’t know that they needed energy that badly,” she mutters. “I guess we’ll just need to keep an eye on the glow. The brighter it is, the better they’re doing, is what I’m gathering.” It gave a whole new meaning to the phrase ‘pregnancy glow’. That particular thought made her giggle, and she nuzzled her face into Aliquam’s pectoral. She was glad that with the way her magic filled out clothes, it hadn’t given her breasts. Lying on someone’s chest with breasts was simultaneously impossible and uncomfortable, and she rather liked being sprawled out on his.

“Thanks, Tenebris. For checking and letting us know. Though, I imagine we would have learned eventually. Knowing earlier means we can prepare better for them though.”

Too bad they didn’t know the genders- they’d just go with a neutral color of some kind. Maybe
green, or orange for the nursery- Toki and Pap would have to talk it over when the time came to actually get a nursery up and running.

"Of course, Toki. I will get a blanket so you two can rest." he rumbled, leaving them be as he got up to fetch a blanket.

Aliquam wrapped his arms around her more firmly and smiled gently, before he sighed. "Mmm~ I love you.”

Toki adjusted her shirt, pulling it back down over her back, and shifted to she could kiss the bottom of Aliquam’s chin while they waited for Tenebris to drape a blanket over them. “I love you too,” She murmurs warmly. “I love you more each passing day, you know that?”

"More and more." he agreed happily.

Toki smiled and draped her arms around his chest. The pleased buzzing starts up again, lower and more relaxed than before. They could do this together- Twins was a challenge, but it was one that they were up to handling.
Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Nyehheheh. So we’re actually going to do a lot of the pregnancy stuff in this fic- including some of the grosser things, because pregnancy is fascinatingly disgusting at times. Though of course, it’s not all going to be as bad because skeletons- but y’know. We roll with the skelepreg ideas as they happen. HEH.

We also learn a little bit about what Toki actually IS to the monsters somewhere in the eleven thousand words that makes up this beast of a chapter.

Don't forget to check out our blog! I finally caved and joined in on the bittybones craze, so you can totes check out the doll i made of Sassafras. Eheh. You can find us here at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Well, no smut in this one, instead, Tokiko learns of the greatness that is known as the 'Change of Taste' that usually accompanies pregnancy. HEHEHEHEHEH! Enjoy the chapter!

Unfortunately for Toki, her paperwork troubles didn’t end with that last stack. She got it shipped out once she finished it, and the day after that, she got even more. Progress was happening though- legitimate progress towards monsters being considered full-fledged citizens and people in their own right. For that reason alone, Toki wasn’t bothered by her lack of breaks. No- this was important. This was hellishly important- so if there were any papers she needed to get done, she wasn’t going to procrastinate any of them. The sooner she got them done, the sooner talks could continue. Besides- she wasn’t the only one. The other ‘foster’ homes of sorts in other countries were participating as well, considering the monsters under their care were technically their wards. Though most certainly not in as large of scale as she did.

Current legal matters technically considered all of the monsters in Nara Village to be wardens of the Nara clan. Considering she’d taken over as clan head by all legal means, that meant that she was essentially the head of a clan of several hundred monsters now. That included paperwork for every monster- from the oldest, to the youngest. It was a lot of papers- but she settled into a groove and began to crank them out as they came in. It wasn’t like she had anything else to do during the day while Papyrus was out running drills with the guards. Her hives wouldn’t be opened up for several months yet.

All the effort into the papers was worth it as far as she was concerned. Soon, they would be their own people. Soon, with any luck, they could be considered their own families- and be fully free to make their own choices, legal or otherwise. Soon she’d be needing to teach several hundred monsters about taxes, how to do them, about how to drive, and how the world of humans worked for them when they had to handle stuff on their own. She might end up recruiting her brothers into helping her give driving lessons. Her family was pretty vast- and all of them, except for Shiro and her niece and nephews, could drive exceptionally well. Between her family, extended and otherwise, they’d manage to get everyone taught.

Not that the monsters would let her overwork herself, though. Heavens no- she’d already been banned from a lot of the weight intensive work of the village. Tenebris had a conversation with the
people of the village, explaining her current situation and why they would need to keep it quiet for as long as possible. Everyone remembered HAM- and remembered what HAM had done, the lives that HAM had taken, and the life that they had nearly taken. Though Toki wasn’t privy to what all he told them, she was pretty sure he told them a lot of things that they probably didn’t need to know.

It changed a lot of the dynamics in the village. She had a sneaky suspicion he’d told them that her pregnancy was something they were still learning about, and that it was best if they made sure she didn’t strain herself.

Much like the time that Toki had been sick with MRS, the villagers had banded together to support her. The guards were working double time now that they knew why Aliquam was pushing them to better their skills, and the monsters proved ubiquitous whenever something needed done. Ice needed removed on the stairs? It was scraped off before she could melt it away. Someone graffiti’s the walls? The graffiti was gone by mid morning.

She didn’t mind the help- though it did make her feel a little bit useless, like a glass doll someone sets on a high shelf to keep it from getting shattered. It did give her time to do paperwork though, so it wasn’t like she really had the time to be doing physical activities outside. She spent hours bent over the dining table, her back stiff and coiled tighter than a slinky with phantom knots while doing papers- Toki literally did not have the time to be out shoveling ice, or scrubbing the walls, not when she was busy signing seven hundred plus papers on a regular basis.

This was probably why she was the ‘matron’ of the biggest monster home currently out there.

The beginning of February put a kink into her work groove though. She woke up on the third with something feeling off. She wasn’t quite sure what it was- everything felt strange sometimes- but it threw off her groove. She’d woken up earlier than Papyrus for once- as of late, he was usually awake far earlier than she was due to his early morning training routines with the guards- and had decided to let him get some sleep rather than wake him for company.

He was tired too, though he seemed to have boundless energy once he actually got up and going. She wasn’t going to begrudge him more sleep. She’d wake him at eight- that was an extra hour for him to sleep. He was usually up between six and seven- being one hour late wouldn’t be that much of an issue. The guards knew their usual drill- they could run the basics without the skeleton there to push them to their limits and beyond.

Padding down the stairs after getting ready for her day had proven only to make that feeling worse. She was groggy- she wanted some tea to help wake her up and get her ready for her day.

The kitchen smelled weird. Very weird. Toki’s mouth curled into a frown, and she splashed some water into her face from the sink to wake her. Once she’d dried her bones, she began to search for whatever made the smell.

It didn’t smell like it had gone bad- but whatever it was, it was turning that odd sensation into a queasy pulse in her middle. It wasn’t in the cupboards, or in the sink either, or even under it. She eventually tracked it down to the fridge.

Inside the fridge weren’t a whole lot of things that could spoil. Some soda, some iced tea, some ketchup bottles, a couple things of freshly sliced lunchmeats for sandwiches, milk that was still two weeks out from expiring, and a carton of eggs. And leftovers from last night’s dinner- but none of it hit her off directly as what could cause such a smell.

She checked the iced tea first. Iced tea tended to ferment and then mold- but it still smelled fresh and delicious. It needed to be used up soon before it started to go bad, but it was hardly close enough to
needing to be dumped down the sink. The milk was next- because you never really knew unless you
smelled it- and it too proved to be in good condition.

Toki scoured the fridge and found nothing. She heaved a sigh and grimaced, before snagging the
leftovers. She really didn’t want to cook, not with the weird smell making her nauseated- and
besides; Aliquam could eat spaghetti for weeks and never tire of it. He certainly wouldn’t complain
about having it for breakfast.

She collected the tin of leftovers, and closed the fridge. Plonking the Tupperware onto the counter,
she fetched two bowls. She needed to eat regardless of how she felt. A bowl of spaghetti would give
her the energy she needed to crank through the last of this stack of paper.

Toki pried open the lid of the spaghetti, and leaned over to enjoy the smell of the garlic and tomato
sauce. That was one thing she liked about being a skeleton- her body no longer had problems eating
tomato based products. Which meant that she could enjoy his spaghetti without any consequences.
Hell, she’d dug in with gusto the night prior- it had been a while since they’d made spaghetti, and
she had enjoyed every bite of it, and probably ate more than she should have. But it had been good,
like always. It wouldn’t actually surprise her if Aliquam ever wanted to start an Italian restaurant,
onece monsters could officially own their own property outside of the village.

As the spaghetti smell wafted up into her nasal cavity, Toki realized her mistake. The odd smell that
she had been dealing with all morning had been the spaghetti smell lingering in the house from
dinner last night- though there was nothing wrong with it at all.

Something lurched in her midsection, and Toki had a few seconds to realize exactly what was
happening before she had to turn and bolt for the downstairs bathroom. She wasn’t going to go
outside and retch in the frost covered grass- that was asking for the guards to hear her and come
running. The upstairs bathroom was out of the question- she would hardly make it there, and even if
her room’s bathroom was closer, she wasn’t going to wake Papyrus. Her bare feet clattered noisily
against the tile as she booked it, abandoning the spaghetti on the counter as she ran.

She made it in time, throwing the door open with a bang against the wall as she hit her knees to the
ground. Toki retched noisily, hands clinging shakily to the side of the toilet bowl as her insides
revolted, and felt last night’s feast make a comeback in the form of vile smelling waves of green
magic. She heaved, and thus began the cycle.

Morning sickness was going to be a thing for the HTM, it would seem. They hadn’t known if she
would end up with it- though since she could regurgitate, it made sense. The twins were not
apparently fond of their father’s spaghetti either, and what they weren’t fond of, she wasn’t going to
be fond of. She’d seen enough of her mother’s pregnancies with her brothers to know exactly what
this was going to be like.

The only saving grace she had was that it wasn’t chunks of noodles she was spewing- but noodle-
flavored magic wasn’t much better. It didn’t help in the slightest- and it sloshed into the bowl as she
made a wretched groan. Throwing up was terrible- and it wasn’t stopping with the initial heave. No-
she was certain the noises she was making were floating up to Aliquam. He was a floor above her,
and not far from the bottom floor bathroom either.

As she hurled into the bowl, she hoped he was a heavier sleeper today than he usually tended to be.

Unfortunately, simply put, today was a day where he was not a heavy sleeper.

There was a crack of displaced air behind her as he made use of his rarely used teleportation, and
then he was behind her and rubbing her back with a broad palm. His other palm scrubbed his
sockets, and he covered a tired yawn as he crouched behind her. "Toki, are you okay?" His voice was sleepy, but aware and very concerned.

Toki choked, coughing between heaves. His hand on her back was soothing, but did little to stop the rebelling of her magic. She cradled her skull in her hands, elbows resting on the toilet seat, and took shaky breaths through her mouth. Thankfully, because no one ever needed to use the toilet, everything simply smelled like bathroom cleaner and the contents of her stomach.

“N-hrk- not yet,” she rasped. “Nnggh…” He smelled vaguely like the spaghetti from last night, and she gurgled a wave of sludge again to the porcelain god.

"Toki," he whined quietly, rubbing her back carefully. "What's the matter, Toki? You never got sick like this before."

Toki chokes, and coughs to clear her mouth. It ebbs for a moment, letting her catch her breath. She rattles faintly against his touch, nausea twisting in her middle. “It’s called morning sickness,” she rasps, taking shallow breaths and spitting to clear her mouth. “It’s a human thing… ’s got triggers, sight, smell, taste. Buncha sciency stuff behind it- short story made shorter, babybones doesn’t like dinner from last night."

"Was it bad sauce?" he asked quietly, "I'm sorry."

“Noooo,” she groans quietly. “Not bad sauce, not your fault. Dinner was delicious last night. It’s the smell. I can smell it in the air and on you and it’s making me nauseated.” She inhaled slightly, and leaned her head over to spit again. Ugh. Her middle still churned and bubbled, but it at least was settled enough that she wasn’t spitting up more blobs of green. Still, she wasn’t going to risk moving yet.

He let out a quiet sound and moved away from her. "I... ah... I'm sorry."

“Pap,” she sighs softly, “it’s okay. We didn’t know if it was going to be something I’d be dealing with. Not your fault. Tenebris knows more about how it works- he’s got the books; you can ask him when he visits today. Just... Can you... Can you get the spaghetti out of the house please? And open the windows?"

"... I... yes of course, hang on." He got up fast and quickly went and collected the leftovers, packing them in air-tight containers before turning on a fan and opening the windows. He made sure that the dishes he used last night were free of any pasta and sauces as the house aired out.

Toki exhaled softly when he left, and staggered slowly to her feet as she flushed the mess in the toilet away. She made it to the sink, and fished out a washcloth to clean her face, rinsing out her mouth with some careful maneuvering so she could fit her skull and her horns in enough to rinse.

Once her mouth was fresh again, Toki took a moment to clean between each of her fangs, and then stared at herself in the mirror. Despite not having skin, or gills, she looked vastly greener about the gills than she did the day prior. Her skull seemed paler, her eye lights dim, with an odd green tinge about her cheeks from the magic buzzing in her body. Morning sickness came in like a lion, and out like a lamb, she knew. Ugh. She wandered out of the bathroom when she was certain she wouldn’t be immediately sick, and made a face at the nauseated bubbling her abdomen kept doing.

The house was starting to smell better. A relieved sigh escapes her. “Thanks, Pap.” She calls, not daring to go near enough to the kitchen to find him. She stays near the front room. “The house is starting to smell better.”
"I’ll... uh... Go and shower too..." he said softly, edging out of the kitchen. "I wore these clothes to bed... I probably still... ah... smell the part."

Toki gave him a queasy smile and nodded. “You do, love. I’m sorry about this- all of this. I can go put your clothes in the wash if you want.” She didn’t need to breathe, per say, so she could just hold her breath while she handled them. She felt bad about him having to handle this with her. Vomiting was disgusting- but at least skeletons only heaved magic, not chunks.

"Nyeh...." he sighed softly, before going upstairs. There was then a knock on the door.

“Just leave your stuff outside the door, Pap. I’ll get it, okay?” His glum look had her soul pulsing sadly, and she ducked her skull quietly. The knocking caught her attention, and she groaned faintly. Tenebris was supposed to visit, but there was the chance it was always someone else. Either way, she headed for the door and opened it, hoping that whoever was on the other side didn’t mind that she looked like garbage.

Tenebris was standing there, puffing from his pipe, "Ah, good morning, Toki. You're up early.”

She really wasn’t sure if smoke would be another trigger or not, so she not so discretely covered her nasal passage and gave him a mildly miserable look. She could smell the spearmint vaguely through her sleeve, and her stomach was still deciding if it was going to like or hate the smell. “Yeah, it’s earlier than I’d like to be up, to be frank. Come on in- though leave the door open. The front room needs to air out. Pap’s in the shower.”

"Did something spill?" he asked, "Is Papyrus alright?"

“He might be mildly traumatized, but no, he's physically fine.” She steps back to let him in, and takes a hesitantly deeper breath. The smoke from his pipe is cloying, but it smells soothing. She idly drops her hands to cradle her belly. “Spill? Only my insides spilled. The, ah, spaghetti from last night didn’t agree with the twins. He thinks it’s his fault, I think.”

"Oh that's not good." He said softly, "Sensitivity to certain food, it seems consistent with a few human symptoms with pregnancy... We weren’t certain you would be affected- but it seems that you are. I am sorry, my dear. It does not seem… pleasant.”

“Yeah…” The nausea began to abate, and she furrowed her brows slightly in relief, and rubbed her fingers over her belly. The motion was soothing as well, so she kept it up. “Thank god, it’s starting to abate. The mint is helping I think- so for once, you’re welcome to smoke in the house. Anyways, I woke him with getting sick. Think you can explain it better than I can? I didn’t explain it very well.” It was hard to explain between heaves and gags.

He puffed his pipe a few times, and then he nodded, carefully exhaling the smoke into the air near her so she’d get more of the scent as he cleaned his feet before he entered.

Toki made a face at the smoke, but enjoyed the nausea abating feeling that the mint brought. “Thanks, Tenebris. Looks like I might need to invest in some sort of mint scented things.”

She sighs, and crosses her arms quietly. She tilts her skull, listening to the sounds of the shower from the top floor, and then closes the door behind the bigger monster. She didn’t want to let the mint smell escape, after all. Scrubbing a hand down her face, Toki proceeds to go take a seat on the arm of the couch. The living room didn’t smell too horribly- mostly like the fireplace and like paper and ink. “Why do I feel slightly guilty over spooking Paps? I couldn’t really control it…”

"Spearmint is known to be therapeutic," he rumbled quietly, watching her intently. “And I do not
know, Toki. Perhaps because it is his first time seeing you so sick?” They had managed to not let
him see her purge blood from her body- and he had not been home to witness when she had gotten
sick after burning that vile woman.

She heaved a deep sigh, and nodded quietly instead of responding to the last bit of his words. “Well,
it seems to be helping with my nausea.” She mutters quietly. The vast removal of what she’d eaten
the night prior had left her feeling empty- not quite hungry, but not quite full enough- with some of
her magic depleted. Resting her chin in her palm, Toki fell silent, simply sighing and waiting for Pap
to finish. She’d get his clothes when he was done- or when Tenebris left. Either or.

"Hm... In that case…” he took a deeper intake as he took a small clay bowl off one of the nearby
shelves. He held it on his fingers as he then took his pipe and turned it over, tapping it into the bowl.
The smoldering debris landed with a soft plop, dimming faintly before he blew into it. The embers
spread and released more of the smoke. "There we go," he purred gently, setting it down back where
he’d found it and letting the smoke rise and fill the air with the smell of mint. "A natural incense
bowl."

Toki quirked a gentle smile at him, managing to not look entirely miserable from her seat on the arm.
“You didn’t have to do that,” she murmurs softly. “I’d have gotten hold of some mint somehow. But
thank you, Tenebris. That’ll help clear the air some at least. With the fan and the windows open, I’m
sure the house will be clear soon.”

He nodded gently, smiling at her, "My pleasure, miss Toki" he rumbled, "I do hope you feel better
soon enough."

“My nausea is already ebbing off. Or is at least not as bad as it was a little bit ago. If I’m going to
apparently have food triggers, it’s possible that it could last well into twelve weeks or longer.” Her
bones buzz faintly, and she heaves a larger sigh and gets off of the couch. She stretches her arms,
and tucks her fingers into her pockets. “Would you like some tea while we wait for Aliquam,
Tenebris? I think I could use some hot cocoa- and he’s going to need something for breakfast before
he goes running off to train the guards.” She had full intentions of bringing the smoking incense
bowl with her into the kitchen, however.

"Sure. Until I get the mint I need to refill my pipe," he rumbled, "That will do quite nicely.” He
scooped the bowl of incense into his hand, and motioned for her to lead the way. He smiled at her as
she led him to the kitchen. “Thank you, Toki."

“It’s not a big problem,” She chuckles faintly. When the incense bowl is settled on the counter, Toki
gathers a kettle full of water, and sets it to heat on the stove while she prepares his preferred tea into
his usual mug. She collects another mug, and then goes to fetch the packets of instant cocoa. “So,
what brings you by the house so early?” She inquires. “I didn’t figure I’d see you until well past ten
or eleven.” It wasn’t even eight yet.

"I suppose I was being a concerned father again, I was coming to check on the two of you.” he
admitted, "That, and Aliquam woke with a start, I felt that trace element of a flare of magic when he
seemed to wake.”

“Ah. My apologies for making him alarm you. I didn’t know you could feel when his magic flared-
that’s actually fairly neat.” Her shoulder hunched faintly, and she hid a soft sigh. She tugged open
both cocoa packets, and proceeded to dump them into the mug. The powder puffed up, and she
fanned it with her hand. She couldn’t actually smell it over the thick scent of mint that was gradually
clogging up her kitchen, but she’d take mint over nausea any day. Idly, she stirs in some creamer and
makes the base liquid, contently waiting for the water to boil. “Is that something all parents can feel
with their kids?”
"Sharing a soul will do that." he murmured, rubbing his chest. "Not sure if it's exclusive or if I'm one of many with this capability."

Understanding dawns in her sockets, and Toki nods quietly. "Given the method of their creation, it might be unique. I don’t feel anything from the tiny souls yet." And her soul had literally sparked off the souls technically on it’s own, though obviously borrowing Aliquam’s ‘genetics’ of sorts. She wanders to the teakettle, and rests her hand on the edge of it. Toki is admittedly a little bit impatient- but she threads some fire magic across the surface of the pot, and heats it rapidly. Within a few seconds, it is screaming at her, and she proceeds to pour the hot liquid into his mug with his tea bags. She pours him his tea, and slides his mug towards him along the counter.

Her cocoa is next, and she pours in the hot liquid, stirring it with a chopstick she kept aside strictly for stirring. Chopsticks were fun- but forks required much less effort to eat. Chopsticks made great stirring sticks though.

Toki hums faintly, staring at the dark liquid swirling. "I’ll make breakfast when Pap gets downstairs." She’d rather make something he wanted rather than something he didn’t- he did get a shitty start to his day.

"Sounds good, no rush at all." he chuckled, "We have a whole morning ahead of us to eat."

"We do," she nods, "But Ali was scheduled for more training with the guards in a couple hours." Still, she collects her mug of cocoa and snags a seat in one of the chairs that was always being moved to and from the kitchen. She nudges the other out for the elder monster to take a seat in, and crosses her legs as she sips her cocoa. It is thick and rich like usual, and she enjoys it with a soft groan of appreciation. "I’ll ask him what he wants when he gets out of the shower. He was trying to scrub the smell of last night’s dinner off of his bones-, which is really, really sweet of him. Heh. When he’s craving spaghetti, he’s going to have to do spaghetti night at your place, I think. At least until the little ones decide that spaghetti is an acceptable meal."

"I'm wondering if it would prove more beneficial if we convince him to cook other dishes. Spaghetti is a good starter, but it seems less than what he's truly capable of."

"I've been working with him on it. He’s learned a lot of the stuff I know how to cook- and we’re working on perfecting a lot of stuff from one of the cookbooks mom sent me for my birthday." She hums slightly into her cocoa, and chuckles softly. "Still, he might end up doing dinner for you guys some nights. I can’t imagine him doing a couple months with no spaghetti. That’s like me going months without cocoa, or you without your tea or pipe."

"It's... actually not that dampening on his psychological status, he likes cooking it since it was the first dish he ever perfected." he explained. "He wont perish because he hasn't gotten to cook it."

"Is that so?" She blinks over at him. "That’s not what I meant though, Tenebris. None of us would technically die if we didn’t get to enjoy our favorite things. You could live without your tea and pipe- I could technically live without my cocoa too. But life would be a miserable and slightly sad thing without our favorite things in life.” Cocking a brow at him, Toki chuckled faintly to herself. “I’m not going to deny him his spaghetti- though I will try to distract him from missing it as best I can with the cookbook."

"Do whatever, he's quite adaptive, I’m sure it'll work out." Tenebris chuckled, before he took a deep breath, enjoying the diluted smell of the mint. "Mmm... The scent of spearmint already diluted by the oxygen. I think I may do smoke-bowls more often."

Toki chuckled softly. “Just don’t do them near any smoke detectors, or you’ll set them off.” Hers
were still slightly ruined from when she’d scorched Vikki- she hadn’t gotten around to replacing them yet. Toki shifts in her seat as she takes another swallow of cocoa. Her middle bubbled faintly, and she took a deep breath of the smoke to try and soothe it. “He and I will talk about it.” She nods, bones blanching as she glares faintly at her cocoa. No- this was not happening. No. She refused to accept it.

He chuckled softly, though it faded off as he noticed her expression. His brow furrowed, and he paused mid sip of his tea. "Toki?"

“Nngg… Nope.”

Toki couldn’t refuse it for long. It bubbled up the back of her throat, sour like before, and she abruptly stands as condensation beads at her skull. Her mug is discarded, very nearly spilling it in her haste to set the half finished cocoa in her seat. She doesn’t have the time to make another mad dash for the bathroom- so the empty side of the sink would have to do.

Her bones rattle as she loudly retched. It was the second heave that had the cocoa flavored magic back flowing out of her body and into the sink. Her fingers take a death grip on the metal edging, and she braces herself for round two.

He was at her side in seconds, one large hand coming to pat gently along her back. "That's... very unfortunate," he said quietly, before hearing footsteps on the stairs, "Ah... here comes my son."

Toki grimaced. Her dry heaving covered the sounds of Aliquam’s approach. She trusted Tenebris’ ears though, and focused on letting her body do what it needed. Most of the cocoa had been expelled with the first couple of heaves, so now it was just the twins letting her know they did not appreciate her attempting to drink so soon. Idly, she shakily turned the sink on to wash down the green goop that had been splattered on the sink.

She really didn’t want him to walk in on her sick again- but every noise that escaped her was unpleasant and betrayed her. “Ughhh…"

"Toki..." Aliquam walked over with a frown, approaching closer once Tenebris stepped out of the way.

She groaned again quietly, and tipped her skull to rinse out her mouth with the tap water once her dry retching eased off. “Sorry you came out to that, Ali,” she mutters quietly, rinsing her teeth and flushing her mouth clean. Once water had replaced the sour taste in her mouth, she righted herself and guided the water to rinse the sink clean.

Toki was still nauseated and her bones looked paler than normal, but the mint was beginning to help again now that the little souls in her belly had finished their tantrum. “I’m okay, I promise.”

Aliquam looped his arms around her gently, settling his palms over the soft plane of her middle. His fingers gently rubbed soothing circles over her lower belly, and he nuzzled her shoulder gently. He hummed softly to soothe her and the little souls below his fingers. "Goodness," he murmured, "My poor Toki..."

Toki finished the sink, and then leaned back into his chest. Her fingers came down to slide along his own, cupping his hands as they cupped her and their little ones. Rolling her skull back to rest safely against his chest, she let her sockets close and a soft sigh escaped her. “That feels good… It’s helping too. Thank you, Pap.” She murmurs faintly. “I’ll be okay, Ali. Just… no cocoa for me. I guess it’s a fair exchange though.” Given that the spaghetti smell made her horribly ill, it was fair that she didn’t get to drink her favorite drink. “Are you okay? You seemed pretty disturbed when you went to
"shower…"

He whined quietly, "Not your cocoa...." he then sighed and shook his head, "No, I'm alright. Please don't worry about me."

"My cocoa for your spaghetti- it's a fair trade, Pap." She nestled into him quietly, peeking her sockets open to peer up at him. “Papyrus, a relationship is a two way street. I’m at least familiar with what’s happening- I doubt you’ve ever regurgitated magic before. I’m going to worry- just as you worry for the three of us.” Her thumb massaged the back of his palm, and she melted further into him with a sigh. “I need to make you breakfast,” she mutters, eyes closing again. “You need to eat before you go out to train.” He was already late, unless he’d taken time to make a call from upstairs to let them know why.

"I have plenty other dishes to make you know." he murmured, before he nuzzled his cheek to hers. He rumbles softly, a soothing sound for her benefit. "No, you don’t need to cook anything for me. I appreciate your effort though, Tokiko.” he purred.

Toki quirked a faint smile, and hummed softly. “We have many dishes we can make,” she murmurs. They had an entire cookbook of dishes to make and perfect. “Are you sure? I could make you some pancakes or something.” Something simple and easy wouldn’t be too hard to do. She could go flop on the couch afterwards. Being sick was tiring- and she wanted to catch a nap before she had to go hunch over her paperwork again. “You need time to get into your training gear, don’t you?” Unless he canceled it for the day.

"I... ah..." he laughed quietly, "I told them I’d be a little late... they understood, being that you're my mate." he murmured, pressing a soft kiss to her skull. "I plan on making sure that Father is ready to take care of you while I’m gone."

She wasn’t sure if they were officially mates- given that they weren’t married or bound or whatever the monster equivalent was, and did technically live in separate houses, even if he stayed at her home most nights. A soft buzz of agreement escapes her, and she leans into his soft kiss. “And you’re a very good mate,” she murmurs slightly, testing the word out on her metaphorical tongue. It was a good word. “I don’t need someone to watch me though, Pap. All I need is some saltine crackers and a nap before I get to work.”

"Father knows how much I worry about you, you know." he huffed quietly, gently nudging her skull with his chin. "Even if I don’t stay, he'll make sure you do not over-exert yourself."

Toki continued rubbing his hands lightly, and sighed in affectionate exasperation. With the twins made known, Aliquam could be such a worrier. “I’m not going to overexert myself doing papers, Pap. I spend hours hunched over the table- the only thing at risk is probably my posture.” And her tailbone- sitting for so long drove her crazy, but the paperwork was important.

He nuzzled her softly and pressed a few clanking kisses to her head. "I love you so much.”

Toki laughed softly, and lifted a hand to cradle his jaw. She shifted, rotating so she could face him, his hands sliding to her lower back instead of her belly, and leaned up to kiss him gently in return. “I love you too,” she murmurs, “but my statement stands no matter how you butter me up. I’m not made of glass, love. The little souls and myself will be okay to do paperwork without their grandpa practicing his babysitting skills early.”

"Nyeeehhh." he whined slightly at her. "Toki... I'll stop by later, okay?"

"I would hope so.” she smiles up at him soothingly, gives him one more kiss, and then eases out of
his hold. If he continued to hold her, she wouldn’t want him to leave, and he did have prior arrangements. Toki stretches her shoulders, and goes to put the half empty mug of cocoa into the sink. The smell doesn’t bother her, nor does the sight, so it must have been something in the taste. Either way, she looked forlornly to the drink as she dumped it down the drain. “I always miss you when you’re missing all day. Maybe stop in when the guards break for lunch?”

"Of course, and I’ll join you for dinner. Maybe some pasta with a vinaigrette or a spiced oil dressing?" he purred, watching her.

She shot him a smile, and leaned up to kiss his cheek. “That sounds lovely, dear. Heh… hey Pap? Probably odd timing, but… you spend a lot of time here, even if you do spend a fair bit of it at your house too. Do you ever think about maybe… I dunno, moving in with me officially?"

"I could, yes," he said softly, "Of course. Father and Caeruleus can keep my room intact but I could grab what I need and come stay with you." he purred lightly.

She smiled up at him quietly and laughed softly. “As cool as your bed is, I don’t think we need two in my room. Well, our room, if you officially move in. Do you want to though? I know you’ve lived with your dad and your brother for all of your life.” Yeah, they’d still be relatively close, but it was still scary moving for the first time and technically leaving your family.

"I’ve never tried anything like that, honestly, so… I at least want to try it. If it works out.”

“If it works out, then you’ll be here. If not- then it’s not like it’s far to move you back, yeah? We can continue what we’re doing now if all else fails.” Toki wasn’t an extremely hard person to live with, really. He was practically doing it now- except he’d come here for bed every night, instead of returning to his family’s place.

Toki gives him a wider smile, and gently bumps her hip to his. “How about we talk more about it over dinner tonight, yeah? We don’t want to keep the guards waiting for too much longer.”

"Sure..." he purred, before he realized exactly how late it was getting to be in the morning. "Oh crap!" He then kissed her one last time, grabbed his armor from one of the closets in the main room, and began dressing as he ran out the open door.

"That... was amusing." Tenebris snorted.

Toki watched Aliquam go with a soft bemused sigh, and then flicked her eye lights to Tenebris. “That’s Ali for you,” she says fondly. “At least he doesn’t have to watch the doorways anymore when he’s rushing around. Heh… So, about what he said... are you really going to keep an eye on me all day? It’s hardly going to be entertaining watching me work on papers for hours on end.”

"I may just do just that, but not for the reason you think.”

She crosses her arms across her chest and arches a brow up at him. Her sockets half lid, and she gives him a look that says entirely how much she doubts his words. “And what reason would that be?"

"I’d... Actually like to help you," he replied, bemused at her look. "Paperwork was everything back in the labs, so. I might just be a valuable asset to this new enemy." he chuckled, joking with that statement.

Toki watched him for a moment, still incredulous. “… You’re actually volunteering to help with paperwork?” Her tone was even more skeptical than her look portrayed. “I mean, I’m not going to complain- it’s a lot of reading, though. I’ve got about three hundred more sets of paperwork to go
over today- help would be appreciated. Though… unless you can forge my signature, I’m still going to have to sign all of them.”

“Fair enough.” he rumbled gently, moving out of the kitchen and into the dining room. "I'll do what I can." He pulled up a chair and sat down, starting on a file nearest him.

It would, ironically, be his file that he grabbed. Toki takes a seat next to him after following him into the dining room, and offers him one of her larger pens to write with. It’s technically a gag pen she had gotten in her Christmas stocking- and as such, it’s bright pink and covered with bee stickers. His behemoth hands would crush her nicer pens if he put too much pressure behind his strokes. “If I give you a sample of my signature, you can practice it a bit. This is technically illegal- but I really could use the help. I wont tell if you wont tell.” A sticky note is then defiled with her signature, and passed over for him to practice with.

He chuckled, eying her signature for a moment. "Even Scientists are known to bend a few rules, my dear Tokiko." However, he put the pen down, and looked into his file, wondering just what was in it.

His file had a lot of known information on him- stuff that wasn’t too private. Stuff that wasn’t to be shared without his permission had been redacted on Asgore’s orders. For the most part it listed his occupation, all of his legal numbers and information that would officially become his once everything was done, and it also listed him as having an official guardian, and being considered part of the Nara clan by proxy. His name was actually listed as Tenebris Gaster of the Nara Clan. There were spots for Toki’s signatures where she was agreeing that this information looked correct, a spot for her to sign for him to get his rights- the file was approximately forty pages thick, with signatures needed every other page.

“True that- but if it was found that these were being forged, it could set everything back by months of progress. If you don’t think you can forge it, just let me know, and I’ll handle the signing.” Toki was already setting in to her file. This file was on Grillby and his business in the village, and was a slight bit more complex, as he was the only monster who had an entire building dedicated to his business. The market district was full of stands and collapsible tables, so that was an entirely different sort of paperwork that she had to do. “An accidental fire threat?” She mutters to herself, brows furrowing as she checkmarks the ‘not a threat’ box. If Grillby started a fire, heavens knew it would not be an accident. She was more likely to start an accidental fire than he was.

Upon seeing this information and knowing it’s importance, he pulled up a side sheet of paper and began to write down these numbers. However, he soon noticed how name was put, and his eyes narrowed slightly as he stared at it. "Toki. A question."

She didn’t glance up, busy reading the fine print at the bottom of one of Grillby’s pages. “I might have an answer.”

"Why is my name written like this? And... An official guardian?" he questioned, "I've been on this planet for what is almost a thousand years now. Why do I require a guardian?" he asked, sounding slightly offended by the idea.

Toki looked up, tilting her head quietly in consideration. She inhaled, taking a deep breath of the mint-scented air, and leaned her elbows on the table. ‘I’m your guardian.” She tells him honestly. “I’m the guardian for any monster who comes to the Village. I don’t really understand the complexities of it, but… you guys don’t have all the rights that humans do yet. It’s... Frankly stupid, to be honest. These papers are to help get you guys your rights- That’s why I’m working hard to get them done as fast as possible, so Asgore can continue to make progress with the governments of the world. But until you have them, the only way to keep you on the surface was to essentially give you
a guardian. But, because I am also the head of the Nara Clan, it essentially puts you all as my wards, which by proxy means that you are all part of my clan."

"After everything, as well as the addition of my personal heritage I would have thought it would at least allow my sons and myself a place in my own clan..." he grumbled quietly, looking at the next page. He then huffed and closed the folder, leaning back, he looked to pull out his pipe, but upon realizing his spearmint was left at home, what he had now burning slowly in the bowl, he sighed and tucked it away again.

"Why is it that a large portion of human beings assume they're the superior race? If anything, we Monsters were on the earth before them. Is it because of their 'opposable thumbs' against the other animals of the world? We have them too” he sighed, lifting a hand and bending his thumb a few times to make his point.

"I assure you if humans had been the ones to do this, we wouldn't force them all this paperwork just to reclaim the land we once called home." he growled in annoyance.

Toki let him vent, and then leaned back in her seat with a soft sigh. “I don’t know, Tenebris. Humanity is… cruel and corrupt, I think. We like control- we fear that which we don’t understand. We are a race that can hate and murder and enslave our own kind simply based on the different color of our skin.” She exhales quietly, and gives him a soft look. “When you get your rights, you and all of the monsters will be given the choice to remain apart of my clan, or to break free. That is what I want more than anything- for you all to have the choice to do what you want, when you want. I want you to be free to own your own land, to own your own cars, to own businesses or farms, or whatever makes your souls happy. Right now, myself and all of the other guardians of the world are simply… well, gilded cages, as harsh as the term is. We offer protection and home- but you’re not truly free. Not yet.”

And not all of the other guardians were like her. She’d met them a few times- and not all of them offered complete freedom like she did. They made decisions without consulting any of their wards. Toki left the decisions usually to the monsters- they governed themselves in the village. She simply handled the paperwork and kept the stress off of the civilians. Nothing of Nara Village seemed like a cage- even with the tall walls of her compound surrounding her house- and she did everything she possibly could to make sure that it wasn’t. But by legal standards- she was the cage that kept them safe from the harshness of the government, and from true freedom.

“But you all will be soon.” She gives him a determined look.

He was silent for a moment, staring hard at her table for a time. Eventually, he sighed. "Thank you, Toki." he murmured, looking to her, "Your selfless consideration for our kind will reward you in due time." he said with a small smile.

“I don’t do this for the reward, Tenebris.” She shakes her head, and turns her gaze back to her papers. “I do this because freedom is the right of all sentient beings. And as much as I do not like being a cage for you- I’d rather you be in a cage where you can see the sky, than be trapped underground for months- or years, if it drags out this long- before you could enjoy the world up here. I don’t… do a lot of things that other guardians do. Not all of them let their wards make decisions for themselves.”

And other than keeping this information from everyone, Toki was honest with all of the monsters. She asked opinions- she took opinions too- and she let them decide what to do with the town. She provided the means for them to do with it what they wanted- and she made sure that their will was done.
The fact that none of the monsters ever seemed to suspect anything spoke measures of her effort to make sure that they were as free as they could currently be.

"Ignorance is bliss, I suppose." he rumbled quietly, "I'm relieved that they don't immediately realize when there's something wrong, but then again, the ignorance would put them in danger, if the situation was that bad."

"In some places, it is." She grimaces slightly, and continues signing the papers. She plows through Grillby’s paperwork, and then tucks his folder into the ‘finished’ stack. “Which is why we’re working hard to get everyone the right to choose. It’s looking like you’ll all be able to drive before you’re able to own homes though, so that will be interesting. Apparently the motor companies are pushing for it- they want to make specialty cars for monsters with special needs. Like… your legs, technically. You wouldn’t be able to drive my truck with how your legs are structured.”

"I haven't remotely considered driving since I got here, though I suppose if moving large quantities of things, or going long distances, both would more of a convenience by a vehicle," he rumbled, before he laughed, "I was almost too large for the cab, remember? I had to tuck in my legs and lay in the back seat until we returned to the compound."

“I remember that. You fit better in the bed of the truck than you did inside of the cab.” She chuckles softly. “But no, going by car is much faster. I’m about dead center between the mountain and the city. It’s a couple days by wagon to the mountain, but it’s only like… two or three hours by car, I think. It’s been a while since I’ve made the drive. It’s about the same to the city. It’d probably be a lot easier on you for visiting Asgore if you could drive.” Toki grins to herself, and selects the next file. It’s Cae’s folder.

"We'd have to make resources count, you probably don’t have any fuel stations in the immediate vicinity." he chuckled quietly, before he noticed the file, "Ah, if I may have a look at that." he requested.

Toki slid him the file easily, and took his instead so she could go over it and sign where she needed to. “We do actually have a gas station between here and town. Not towards the mountain, but it’s about an hour towards town. It’s near the fire department.”

"Hm... an hour..." he murmured, opening his son's file to look at it now.

Cae’s file was a lot like his. There was a little bit redacted, but not nearly as much. His files were a lot thinner than Tenebris’ own, with his own personalized legal information.

Toki scrolls through Tenebris’ files, and signs what she needs to. There’s a lot to sign, and she pauses as she gets to the last page. “I’m going to put you down for wanting a license regardless, mkay? It’s not a bad thing to have- it means if there’s an emergency, you could drive if someone else was unable to.”

"Sure,” he murmurs distractedly, “that’s fine."

Toki nods, and finishes up his papers. She slide’s Ali’s file over to him too, figuring that he wants to look them over, and then dives headlong into her work. She slightly tunes him out, muttering here and there to herself as she works, settling into her usual groove and completely losing track of time.

Aliquam’s file was thicker than Cae’s, but not nearly as thick as Tenebris’ own had been. Inside were general details, as well as express permissions for him to wield his magic in an offensive measure without repercussion. As a guard, he needed it to keep the property safe. It was slated that he- and a lot of the wolf guards, actually- were there to guard her and her wards, as well as provide
protection for supplies that were brought to and fro. He had a lot more information, loops and hoops to jump through that made his paperwork a bit more tedious to read over than any of the others. He was also marked as one of the few skeleton monsters- Cae’s file had one too. Tenebris’ file did not state what he was.

The government was fully aware of HAM- and the threat that they posed. This was the best option they had, other than putting her with a twenty-four hour protective service. Instead, she had the monsters to guard her twenty four seven instead. Which, technically she was supposed to have- but she didn’t bother informing the other monsters of this. It wasn’t like she left the compound often- and she didn’t need special treatment.

He looks over everything, then sets it to her pile to be signed, before he looked at Aliquam's file, of course he’d have a bit more detail to his, permissions to use his magic. Yes, yes. It's all accounted for.

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Hours pass with her hunched in place, signing file after file after file, making sure that everything was in order as she cranked them out. The mint had burnt out by then, but the house still smelled vaguely like it, and that in itself kept her empty ‘stomach’ calm. Well, that and the fact that she was completely lost in her work, oblivious to her companion and the ache in her back.

After a couple hours, Tenebris had gotten a crick in his back and he sighed, then he stood and popped his back, "Nngh, jeez... I'm getting too old for this shit."

Toki’s posture hadn’t changed, still slouched and stiff and most likely going to make some horrifying noises once she did move. She was still scribbling away with one hand cradling her forehead as her eye lights scan over the papers. She doesn’t even notice him getting up, and her vocal response is more an instinctual agreement than an aware response. “Mhm.”

He rolled his eyes. She was completely lost. He sighed, and stepped behind her. Tenebris then pulled her chair back and away from the table. "Come on. Break time."

She was aware enough to lift her pen before she made an erroneous mark on the papers. Toki blinked, still poised to write, and then glanced back at Tenebris. His words registered, and she quirked the corner of her mouth upwards at him. "I got lost again, didn’t I? Sorry. I sort of zone out. Okay. Break time- I can do that. My back is killing me."

Easing out of her chair proves to be a pain in the ass, and her back makes some distinctly horrifying noises as she forcibly straightens. She kneads her knuckles into the ecto-flesh of her lower back. “Agh. Skeletons should not be able to get back cramps from magic. There is no logic in it. We don’t even have muscle!

"If I may," he stretched out his arms and set one hand on her shoulder, the other coming to rest flat against her back. "I have a remedy for this."

“A remedy?” She tilted her head back to peer at him over her shoulder, but didn’t fight his grasp. No, she leaned slightly into his hands and waited trustingly. “Is it like some sort chiropractic work for skeletons?”

"You could say so." he slowly bent her back as he pushed on her spine, hearing consecutive 'pop, pop, pop, pop's from her back.
Her hands came to brace against the back of her chair, and she groaned faintly. “Holy shit- ah, that hurts… but in a good way? Hurts less after it pops.” Her brows furrow, and she stretches slightly so he can pop further up her back. “Mmmnn… Thank you for this. Need me to pop your back too?” She couldn’t do it like he could, but she did know the human method.

"You're not strong enough to use your hands..." he told her, "But I do think there may be another method to do so. Though, what did you have in mind?"

“I actually think I can. It’s all about positioning.” When he finishes her back, she stretches, rotating her shoulders slightly. “Ah. Much better.” She still ached, and there were cramps in the summoned flesh of her lower back, but it wasn’t something that he could fix immediately. “If you don’t mind laying on the floor, I can give it a shot. You’ve got the added benefit of having flesh- or whatever it is you’re made out of- with bones under it. I know how to work with that.”

"I suppose," he chuckled, before lying down with a sigh.

When he got settled, Toki carefully straddled him. He was a lot larger- but she had long legs, and she could manage it. Standing above him, she grinned down at him and tapped his arms with her fingers. “Lay them flat at your side, please, and relax.” Her digits then trailed to his back, and she edged down. She started at his lower back, and placed her palms on either side of his spine.

As she began to rub, loosening the tight muscles, she quietly threaded her magic into them to promote the muscles to loosen, so she could ease his vertebrae back into place.

He laid his arms flat and took a deep breath, before he sighed out softly. "Ooohhh..."

“Mhm.” She might have been a little bit smug- and probably should have listened to him- but she slowly began to pop his back for him once the muscles in his back loosened enough for his bones to move. She had to put all of her body weight behind her shove, but each vertebrae slid into place and was soothed from aching by a wash of her heated magic. Working her way up his back, Toki managed to get most of his back adjusted, and then carefully shifted so he could get up. Her arms might ache a little bit from the force she’d had to exude, but she was smug as she grinned down to him. “Told you I could do it. Feel better?”

The sound of his back popping made him take deep moaning breaths, his hide shivering slightly under his coat. "Oh gods..." he sighed happily.

Toki laughed at the sounds he made, and carefully eased herself to sit beside him. She leaned forwards, putting her elbows on her knees and her chin in her palms, and watched him relax. The position made her middle shift, pudging outwards just slightly. “Heh- you really do need to relax from time to time, Tenebris. Your back was full of knots. I could feel it in my magic. I know I overwork myself, but at least I don’t have physical muscles anymore that can turn themselves into painful lumps of ow.”

"This... Mmmh~ It feels so much better now..." he sighed, eyes half-lidded as they slowly rolled upward to look at her.

Toki laughed at the sounds he made, and carefully eased herself to sit beside him. She leaned forwards, putting her elbows on her knees and her chin in her palms, and watched him relax. The position made her middle shift, pudging outwards just slightly. “Heh- you really do need to relax from time to time, Tenebris. Your back was full of knots. I could feel it in my magic. I know I overwork myself, but at least I don’t have physical muscles anymore that can turn themselves into painful lumps of ow.”

"This... Mmmh- It feels so much better now..." he sighed, eyes half-lidded as they slowly rolled upward to look at her.

Toki laughed quietly, and reached a toe out to gently poke him in the ribs. “Maybe I need another part time job. How does being a bee keeper, author, and masseuse sound for a resume?” She teased lightly. “Toki’s Magical Massages. Sounds pretty legit.”

He grunted, then shot her a look, "Mmmh. Like you don’t already have a lot on your plate?"

She drops a hand and pats her middle. “And my plate’s about to get even fuller for the next several
years.” Toki laughs slightly, and leans down to teasingly poke his cheek. “I was teasing. But I wouldn’t mind helping you relax your muscles when you need it. Didn’t you say you were getting too old earlier? Or was I hearing things?”

Her eyes are twinkling at him merrily, a playful grin stretching up her face. She was feeling better, her nausea completely gone-and it was showing in her mood.

He moved onto his hands and feet as he arched his back out like a cat, stretching the newly relaxed muscles slightly, before he looked at her. "Hrm. I said nothing of the sort." he huffed softly, but he had a playful smile of his own as he arched a brow at her.

“I dunno,” she grinned, wiggling a brow back at him playfully. He dwarfed her, crouched on all fours as she sat there on her behind. She leaned backwards, bracing her hands on the floor behind her. “I think I distinctly recall you mentioning that you were too old for something. I might have been in my own little world, but I know what I heard. I guess you are getting up there, huh, Grandpa Tenny~?”

"Very funny, Toki,” he huffed, before he reached over and flicked her gently on the forehead. "There's only two people in the world allowed to call me Grandpa.”

“I think I’m a riot, mister ‘World’s Foxiest Grandpa’.” Toki was entirely unrepentant as she rubbed her forehead where he’d flicked it. Amusement glimmered in her eyes. “And who might those two people be~?”

He glared at her, then his gaze softened and he lowered his eye lights downwards, pointing to her stomach. "Them."

“Oh? These two, right here?” Her grin softens, and she edges her shirt upwards, showing off the starting curve of her belly. It’s dimmer than the last time he saw it, but the glow is still strong and still bright. With how she’s sitting, the top of the womb is visible, and a little gray soul is visible. She beams at him, all joy and happiness in her gaze. “I’m sure you’re going to be the best Grandpa. You’re already learning how to settle their tantrums.” The mint had most certainly helped settle her belly.

"Hahahaha!” he laughed at that, and then he sighed and leaned forwards, pressing a soft kiss to the top of her skull. "You'd make a fine daughter-in-law."

She let her shirt drop back down and smiled warmly up at the much larger monster, dropping her hand to let it rub her middle quietly. Not as relaxing as when Aliquam did it, but it was still nice. "You’d make an amazing father-in-law. I wouldn’t mind marrying Aliquam, but I don’t know if we’re ready for that yet.” Though legally, any marriage wouldn’t even be legal yet anyhow, unless they did it through Asgore. And even then, it would only be legal through monster standards. “I know you heard us in the kitchen. We’re going to talk about him moving in tonight, before we even get close to talking about tying the knot yet. What are your thoughts on your youngest moving out?”

"He may be my youngest, but he is an adult. If he thinks he is ready, he is free to go, if it ends up not so, then he is always welcome to return home."

“Good answer.” Toki nods up at him. She shifts, and pushes a hand gently against his face. “Okay, mister Foxy Grandpa, my tailbone hurts sitting like this on the tile. Back up a bit so I can get up.”

"Don’t call me that." he huffed quietly, grunting at the hand to his face. He did begin backing up however, and offered her a hand once he gained his feet under him.
She takes the hand up gracefully, and dusts off her backside once she’s upright. She grins at him unrepentantly. “And what exactly are you going to do to me if I keep calling you that?” She couldn’t help poking lightly at the monster before her—really, she shouldn’t, but she couldn’t help it.

"Simply this." he then reached over and flicked her forehead again.

Toki flailed her hands at his with a laugh, covering the twice-flicked spot with one of her palms. “Really? A forehead flick? That’s not what I was expecting. But I guess that’s not so bad—very easy to block you from doing it again.” He couldn’t flick her forehead if he couldn’t get to it.

He rolled his eyes, then reached up and flicked one of her horn-tips instead, "I am a creative individual, Tokiko Nara... I will find a way to get my revenge."

Flicking her horns is not usually a good thing to do. Sparks fly from the blackened tips, dancing over the arm of his coat and down her skull, and she snickers at him in amusement. “Careful Tenny, or you’ll light your nice jacket on fire.”

... And there was his gaze of reconsideration as his hand retracted back rapidly.

She reached up and patted his sleeve, making sure no parts of his coat smoldered into flames. Toki gave him an apologetic smile. “Sorry, Tenebris. People seem to forget that parts of me act like flint.”

"It's quite alright. I've never seen bones this conductive, honestly. It's fascinating."

Toki rolls her eyes and teasingly snaps her teeth at him. “It’s a pain in the ass—my teeth are worse than my horns. They’re too tightly interlocked to do anything with my mouth open, unless my teeth are wet.” Her teeth weren’t even black like her horns were. “Not all of me actually makes sparks, either. My horns and my teeth do, but the rest of me doesn’t.”

"Interesting..." he rumbled, "Perhaps I could take a sample later on when I have my lab set up."

“A sample of my bones...” She arches a brow at him curiously. “I mean, you could probably take a sample now and check it out the next time you go to the castle.”

"With you being pregnant, I wouldn't want to be gone for a long period of time. You're too precious to us."

“Tenebris, if you’re gone for a week, I hardly think me or the little souls will die. Valentines is coming up— I’m sure you want to spend time with Asgore, right?” She smiles at him warmly, and chuffs softly. “You can kill two birds with one stone while you’re there. The, uh, sample won’t hurt me or them, right? I’ve got the HP to tank any damage that comes from it, but...”

"... It would not hurt them." He sighed and rubbed his head, glancing away from her. "Time with his majesty... would be nice... And I can certainly trust our little family up here..."

“Then spend time with Asgore.” She smiled up at him. “Really- I’m going to be spending some time with Ali, and Grillby told me he’s got plans for Cae. Don’t waste the day away here. Hell, I can even drive you to the castle if you’d rather not take two extra days to make the trek by cart.”

"Heh... As long as it's safe, I’d actually appreciate the run..." he admitted, rubbing his cheek now, though the staining black was shining through the hole in his palm.

Toki grinned up at him. “You’re adorable when you blush, you know that?” Despite totally calling him on it, she nods. “So long as you don’t mind sitting in the back seat again. We can roll down the window and you can stick your feet out if you want.”
"That gives me a hilarious mental image that I probably did not need, Toki. But that certainly sounds reasonable." he agreed warmly, before he huffed, crossing his arms as he peered down at her. "I am not adorable, damn it."

“You are very adorable.” She grins up at him. Petulantly, she reaches up and gently pinches the remnants of his flush. “The evidence is right here, mister blush master. I’m sure Asgore enjoys just how adorably cute you are. After all, you are the world’s foxiest grandpa- so your beanie proudly proclaims.”

Before he can retaliate, she steps out of range and saunters into the kitchen, laughing as she goes. “Want some tea, Tenebris? I actually could use something to drink, at least until Aliquam comes back for lunch.”

"You will regret your actions on this day, Tokiko Nara." he growled as his cheek was pinched. Once his cheek was free again, he rubbed his cheek and stretched his back. "Some tea sounds nice, and hopefully you can stomach it."

“No regrets here,” she chuckles back to him, completely unrepentant. “Though I’m hoping I can stomach tea too. It would be bad karma for teasing you if I cant. Heh. Orange blossom like usual? Mmm, I might have some crackers too… Can you grab me the box from the top shelf? Aliquam sometimes forgets that I’m not quite as tall as all of you.”

"Orange Blossom sounds wonderful, thank you." he replied, following her to the kitchen and reaching into the cabinet upon request. "No problem" he replied, tossing her the box of crackers.

The saltines were caught, and she liberated a package of them so she could start nibbling them while waiting for the kettle to come to a boil.
Chapter 36

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And this would mark the first time they actually do the do on screen outside of a heat. Heh~ Yes, this chapter is 18 plus exclusively- as will the next two chapters. Valentine's, baby~

Don't forget to visit us at our blog! you can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Toki and Aliquam talked over dinner, and decided that yes, he would be moving in. Moving him in didn’t actually take very long. All of his things fit in the back of her truck, and it was just a short jaunt down the street to bring them to her home. They ended up leaving his bed behind. Everything else was loaded up and taken to her home, and now her room was much more fleshed out. As was her house in general- lingering amongst her things, his items had been interspersed.

It wasn’t just her house anymore- it was their house. Not all that much changed in their dynamics- except now he was there with her every night. Not that she minded. Toki enjoyed her time with Papyrus, and getting to spend every night with him was a treat indeed. She liked being able to wake up to his arms around her, or being sprawled across him.

Though she did feel bad for the mornings where he woke up to her making ghastly noises from the bathroom. Those were fairly common, but not as bad as it could be. Saltines and mint seemed to help keep most of her nausea at bay during the mornings. Thankfully for her, it so far was strictly morning sickness- though the ‘morning’ aspect could be as early as three or four in the morning.

At least the house smelled nice, like a York Patty truck had exploded with minty freshness inside of it.

The days bubbled past, and soon Toki found herself taking Tenebris on a truck ride up to the castle. They’d shoved him into the back of the cabin, folding down the front seat so he could rest his chest against it and watch out the front window with her. He couldn’t exactly wear seatbelts, but it wasn’t like he could fit out any of her windows if they wrecked, either.

Toki had taken him up mid morning on Valentines, dropping him off so he could spend a couple of days with the King. She’d then hurried home, possibly breaking the speed limit once or twice, because she had preparations to do for her evening with Aliquam. She already had one part of it prepared- it had been prepared for several days.

She knew Grillby was doing something for Cae, so the elder brother was at low risk of interrupting their fun.

Toki had parked her truck in its usual spot when she’d gotten home around two or three, and had hustled inside. Aliquam was busy most of the day- he’d volunteered, with her reassurance that she really didn’t mind if he was busy all day, to pick up the shifts for the guards who had made plans with their mates for Valentines. But there was no telling when he’d be done with that, and she wanted to have everything ready for sure for when he got inside.
Toki might not have been able to stomach spaghetti, but ravioli seemed to be okay most nights. So she’d done a spinach and mozzarella ravioli, with a side of garlic bread and roasted chicken. Toki had also taken the time to make him homemade chocolate oranges, as giving chocolates was tradition on this such day. One of her recipe books had them in it- and it seemed to be a unique thing to make. They’d actually turned out very good- though they weren’t quite as detailed as the store bought ones might be, she’d actually enjoyed the little nibble that the twins had let her enjoy.

They seemed to like things that tasted like oranges.

The house smelled deliciously like garlic, and was warm. Toki had the ‘to go’ bag for after dinner resting on the counter, with everything that she would need inside of it. She puttered around the kitchen in her apron, humming an idle tune to herself as she fiddled with the wrapping on the box of chocolate oranges.

Now all that was left to do was to wait for her boyfriend to get off from his shift.

The life of a royal guard was always a task. Even if there was no serious action here, they were kept busy where possible. It wasn’t a problem for Papyrus, but he was more than happy to return to his home after a long day of working.

“Toki, I-” he called as he entered, before he blinked and took in the air with a couple sniffs. "Nyeh? What have you been up to while I was gone?” he asked with a soft laugh, closing the door behind him.

“I’m in the kitchen, Pap!” She hurriedly slid the box of chocolates behind her, and pressed her hips casually against the counter so her body hid the gift. “Well, I took your dad up to see Asgore- and that was a pleasant ride, even if he did have to contort like a pretzel. I had the urge to do some cooking when I got home. Did you have a good day at work, dear?”

He chuckled as he slowly removed his outer-most armor, setting it by the stairs before he walked into the kitchen. "Well enough. I’m exhausted.” he sighed, before smiling at her, "What about you? Cooking huh? What do you have to show for your time?” he inquired.

“Tired, huh?” He’d definitely get a kick out of tonight’s activities then. It would help relax him. Toki grinned, and motioned to the spread that was steaming on the counter. “Spinach and mozzarella ravioli, roasted chicken, and garlic bread, with your choice of drinks for tonight.” Toki couldn’t exactly have alcohol, but if Aliquam wanted some, she wasn’t going to deny him it. “And of course,” she purrs, “something specifically for you, but you have to come closer for it-”

"Oh, how sweet of you, Toki!” He smiled, voice warm and happy as he wandered closer to her as requested. "What's that special something, then?” he hummed as his gaze locked on her.

She smiled up at him, and leaned up to kiss him. While he was distracted, she gathered the box into her hand, and pulled it from behind her. It was pressed into his hands as the kiss parted. “I made you a little something. It’s customary on valentines to give a gift, yeah? This is part one. I, ah, hope you like it.” Inside the box would be the chocolate oranges she’d made for him.

"Mmm~” he had enjoyed the kiss, but was pleasantly surprised at the box thrust into his hands. Upon opening it, his eyes gleamed with happiness. "Oooh! This looks wonderful, Toki!”

“You’ll have to let me know if you like them. They’re called chocolate oranges.” She beams up at him, and gently bumps his hip with hers as she starts to put the plates together. She heaps his full-she’d infused magic into it, having figured he was likely to be very tired after pulling double shifts all day. “You go get seated at the table- I’ll get your plate for you. You’ll get your second Valentine’s
"Alright, thank you~" he purred gently, taking the treat to the table to sit down and wait for her.

Toki isn’t long behind him. She comes in sans her apron with two plates balanced on one arm—thanking her several summers of working as a waitress in her youth—and two glasses in her other hand. She settles his plate in front of him, along with a glass of red wine, and then takes her own seat.

Sipping at her glass of milk, the smaller skeleton winks up at the larger one. “Bone-appetite, my love.”

"Red wine, huh? How fancy!" he chuckled, "Thank you." he then took a sniff of the wine, before he took a drink and let out a happy sound, “Mmm.”

Toki giggled softly, and sipped her milk again. “Mhm. Red wine is pretty customary for Valentine’s too- so you’ll have to enjoy your glass for me too.” She had picked a decent brand, she thought, though she was not so much a wine drinker. If she drank, it was usually what her brothers had drank, so vodka, tequila, sake, or whiskey depending on the day.

Toki lets him enjoy his drink and nibbles at her garlic bread. “Mmh. Speaking of wine- Roshi called. He, Han, and Kon want to take you, your brother, and your dad out for drinks. Sort of an official ‘welcome to the family’ thing.”

"Is that so?" he perked up. "I think that would be rather fun, actually!"

She snickers. He’d find out well enough how it would go. “I’ll let him know you’re down for it then. Your dad already agreed. I just need to ask Caeruleus if he wants to tag along. Heh.”

Either way, she digs into her food with gusto. Pregnancy was weird- she was either nauseated and not desiring food at all, or the switch would flip, and she found herself wanting to eat anything that she could. “Mm…” And she definitely liked this- and so did the little baby bones in her belly. “So, did anything interesting happen on your patrols today?”

"We suspect a few of the Squiddus that were native to Waterfall migrated up here and have started to cause mischief." He chuckled, before he began to dig into his meal. "Already they have started their rivalry with the Octonics once again."

“Oh yeah?” She wasn’t entirely sure what those were, but she nodded along slightly anyways. Dabbling her mouth with a napkin, she took a moment to remove a piece of garlic that wedged itself against the curve of one of her fangs. “Think they’ll cause problems in the compound?”

"The worst they could do is steal a small fraction of our fish intake, but they scarcely take more than what's needed."

“I don’t think that’ll be too much of a problem. The river is usually pretty full of fish- they’re certain to have plenty of food either way.” She wasn’t going to begrudge them food, after all. That wasn’t in her nature. Toki finished off her garlic bread, and worked on devouring her ravioli. “Oh! Before I forget- do you remember where I put my shoes? Not my slippers- but the old tennis shoes I used when I trained with Undyne? I can’t seem to find them.” They’d gotten set somewhere when they had moved him in- and she did need to find them.

It would make traversing the forest easier, but not necessary. She had full intents of going barefoot outside- it was cold, but surprisingly dry for February.
"Yeah, you'll find them in the closet by the door." he replied.

"Thanks, Ali." She gives him a warm smile, and falls quiet as she focuses on eating.

She doesn’t end up finishing her plate- she eats until she feels full, and finishes her milk before leaning back in her chair with a content sigh. “Mmm…”

"Full?" he asked with a smile, eye lights twinkling at her warmly.

Toki pats the faint curve of her middle and winks at him. She had a food-baby on top of actual baby bones. She was very, very full. “I am, yeah. What about you? Going to have room to enjoy those chocolates later~?"

"I'll share them with you." He offered with a purr.

"I can nibble a little bit.” She smiles faintly. “But only a little.” Too much chocolate risked making her nauseated again. “Heh, you'll have to bring one of the oranges with us tonight. We can enjoy it together.”

"Of course~" he chuckled. After he finished eating, he took his dishes to the kitchen and came back with a smile, "I have an idea for tonight, if you're in the mood for a little time out of the house.”

“I actually had an idea too,” she giggled. She had stood while he’d taken the dishes and had straightened the chairs. She adjusted her sweats, and made note that they were starting to fit differently on her now. “A plan, actually. But what’s your idea?” If his plan was better than the last part of her surprise, she could just delay the surprise until another time.

"Oh... a little time at the riverside.”

Toki pauses, and laughs heartily. “That’s actually what I was planning. Great minds think alike, don’t they? Well… shall we? I need to grab something from the kitchen… Do you have the energy for a walk though? I know you said you were tired.”

"I'd crawl on my hands and knees at 1 HP if it meant I was at your side.” he announced boldly.

Toki chuckled softly, and linked her arm with his. “Well, let's never let that happen, yeah? You’re mine. You’re not allowed to get that hurt.” Bumping her forehead to his arm affectionately, Toki tugged him into the kitchen and collected the small backpack she had sitting on the counter. Tugging it over her shoulder, she beams up at him brightly and laces their fingers. “I’d much rather have you walking at my side anyways. Ready for our walk?”

"Of course.” He folded his hand with hers and smiled at her, "I’m ready!"

Toki beams at him and guides him out the back door. She has a destination in mind- but finding it in the dark would be harder. Despite having become a monster, her dark vision was still utter crap. She waves a finger, and then there is a glowing bee hovering overhead and acting like a light for them to use. “You know,” she hums conversationally as she guides him out the back, moving around her apiary and into the trees that surround the undeveloped side of her compound, “It would be really cool to be able to see in the dark.”

"It would, yes." he agreed, watching the bee buzzing around with a warm amusement. They were fascinating, her bees, and at the same time they scared him. Knowing that her titanic defense could drop into the negative always sent his soul into nervous flutters. All it could take was a few well placed hits… "I think Father can see in the dark."
“Probably can. I know the rabbit kids can— they were befuddled that I couldn’t see in the dark as a human. I think it still befuddles them that I can’t see in the dark as a human. But, y’know, kids, right?” She gently bumps her hip to his, and smiles up at him. A couple more bees are called, and they spread out, lighting the way.

Stripe appears, in the harness that Sans had given Toki for her birthday, and flops harmlessly across the top of Aliquam’s skull. She buzzed contentedly, like a particularly fat, glowing sausage hat, warm legs holding onto the bone with ease.

"Kids." he laughed in agreement. His eye lights flicked up, going slightly cross-eyed as he attempted to look up at the bee resting on his skull. "Nyeh heh heh! Hello, Stripe!"

The bee gave a buzz, gently patting the top of one of his brows with a flaming fluffy leg, before nestling down contently.

The one who summoned the bee was all too happy to laugh and relay the greeting to him. “Stripe says hello. I think she’s content on your skull… Heh, kids indeed. We’re going to have kids of our own soon.” Sometimes it didn’t feel quite real yet, despite the symptoms she dealt with and the fact that she could look down and quite literally see the little souls in her belly. It was odd. “I wonder what they’re going to be like. Their favorite foods, their favorite activities, which parent they’re going to favor when trying to sweet talk us into something… I’m excited to meet them.”

"I am too. It is also another reminder of what I do, and why I do it.” He squeezed her hand gently.

A tender look bloomed in her sockets, and she rubbed her fingers over the smooth material of his gloves. Sometimes she wondered why he habitually wore them— he had lovely hands. Strong hands, with strong fingers— she loved every part of him, truly. “It is, huh?” A warm look is flashed up to him, and she hefts the pack higher on her shoulder.

"Indeed.” He murmured gently. “You’re the woman I love; and with my young within you… I would fight with my life if it means protecting you. All of you.”

Toki smiled and nestled her head gently against his shoulder. A soft buzzing sound kicks up, and it’s not the bees making the pleased noise this time. “You’re the one I love too, Pap. We’re going to protect each other. All of us. We’re a family— and family protects family.”

He wiggled his fingers free from her own and then looped that arm around her firmly. With gentle eyes, he looked down at her with a smile. "I love you so much, Toki.”

“I love you too.” She leaned into his side, looping her now free hand around his waist. She tucked her fingers under the waistband of his pants, and grinned as the river came into sight. It glimmered lightly under the stars, rushing over rocks and sand. “Alright… There should be some stepping stones around here somewhere…”

A line of flat, slimy rocks would be raised out of the water a little bit to the left of their current position. The line of rocks leads directly over to the other side of the river— and is easily traversed. One of her bees goes to highlight it, and the rest of the small flock buzz over to aid in lighting the way for them to cross.

He noticed and he moved over to them curiously, temporarily pulling away from her. He held examined them for a moment, and then held up his hand and smiled over to Toki. "Shall we?"

Toki grinned and took his hand. “We shall. Here- let me go first. I’ll clear off the slime so your shoes don’t slip.” She eases around him, and uses her feet to wash off the tops of the stone as she goes.
“It’s still going to be slippery though—so be careful, or we’ll both get an impromptu bath.” And the candles in her bag really did not need to be getting wet.

He held to her tight to make sure neither of them fell, but he still moved one slow step at a time as they made their way across as an extra precaution. As his shoes touched the grass, Aliquam grinned broadly. "Well done!"

Toki rinsed her feet off in the shallows, and then stepped onto the grass with him. She grinned at him and nudged his hip with hers. “You’re a natural at stone walking, Pap.” She teases gently. “Now c’mon! There’s a place I want to show you, and it’s just up here!” Toki loops her finger tips with his, excitement bubbling over her bones and lighting up her sockets, and she turns, tugging him down along the river bank and slightly into the trees. The tree tops are thick, giving no light from the moon or stars— but the bees guiding them provide more than enough light to get them through.

"Alright, alright, I’m coming!" he laughed, long legs hardly struggling to keep up with her quick pace.

Toki guided him a little further in, and slowed down as the trees opened up suddenly. In the center of the hollow, which had a perfect view of the stars in the sky, was a deep-set pond, clear and cold from the small stream running into it and probably fifteen feet wide or more. The bottom was set in stone— and it looked like someone had already been here. The grass at the edges had been cut short-- and someone had rolled some logs into it to make impromptu seats and spots to rest in the deep water.

“Here we are;” she beams. “This is where I wanted to take you. You work so hard for everyone— I wanted you to have a night where you can feel special. Though… I didn’t have time to trek out here and get it ready beforehand.”

She lets his hand go, and begins rifling through her bag. Candles are procured— and her bees flutter over to help her in putting them strategically around to give them light.

"Oh wow...!" he said in awe, gaze roving over the stars and everything around them. "This is amazing! How long have you known about this?"

His amazement makes her soul sing, and Toki’s bees pulse bright with magic for half a second— before they’re gone. The glow of the candles takes their place, and it casts a soft, glimmering glow over the dark water. “I’ve known for a while;” she admits, “And it occurred to me a few days ago that I would like to turn it into a little ‘vacation’ spot, if you will.”

Toki makes a small noise at him, and begins to strip, easing her pants down over her hips teasingly, so he can catch what she intends. She chose, today, not to wear undergarments of any kind, but her long turtleneck covers down to her thighs anyways. She shakes them off, and puts one leg into the icy water so she can heat it before he gets in. Teasingly edging her sweater up as the water around her leg begins to steam, Toki winks at him.

He watched her as his cheeks turned bright orange and he tried not to look too excited as he undressed as well. His ghost-muscle disappeared to reveal strong bones, and yet, he looked so bare without clothing to illuminate his physique.

Now only in his boxers, he came to join her by the water, touching her shoulders as he rumbled a deep chuckle. "What are you trying to get at, you little tease~?"

It took but a moment to escape from her turtleneck, and she left her clothes far enough away that they wouldn’t get wet if they happened to splash. Toki stood bare before him, proving that she hadn’t decided to wear her usual underpants. Unlike him, the green glow of her torso did not disappear.
Instead, it shifted with her, rolling like actual human flesh did, though the undeniable shape of her womb was obvious as it swelled up from the cradle of her pelvis. Toki cocked her hip teasingly at him as he touched her scapula, and trailed her fingers down over his ribs and playfully twanging the band of his boxers.

Green dusted her cheeks, and tinted the lights of her eyes, and she winked at him again. “I think you know what I’m getting at~” She purrs. It takes her but a moment, and she’s giggling as she eases down into the pond. It is clear- and soon, as her bones slide deeper into the dark water, the top begins to steam. “You work very hard,” she buzzes softly, “so very, very hard. I thought it might be fair if you got the chance to enjoy a lovely round of skinny dipping with a girlfriend who just happens to be able to make anything into a hot spring.”

He quietly laughed, and then he reached his hands down and slowly freed his boxers from where they hooked on his ileum. Letting them fall, he took a moment to nudge them over near her clothes before he stepped slowly into the spring. Letting out soft ‘hah’s as he adjusted to settle in the heated water, a pleased sound escaped him also. "O-Oh stars~"

Toki watched him settle into the newly made hot spring and grinned. She sank down into the heat of the steaming water. It was deep enough at the deepest point that she had to stand on her tippie toes, lest her chin go under- but he wouldn’t have that same issue. From this vantage, she looked like a particularly smug crocodile as she watched him ease in. She didn’t sink like the she thought she would- but the dense magic keeping her middle stable apparently worked as a makeshift flotation device.

An amused thought made her giggle, bubbles escaping from under her chin. Her eye lights twinkle at him as she swims closer, brushing her fingers up his femurs teasingly. “Hey Pap… what do you call a pregnant woman who’s swimming?”

"I don’t know. What?” He gave her a suspicious look.

Her grin grew, and she flicked warm droplets of water at him with her fingers. “A human submarine.”

He blinked once, and then started to laugh heartily. "Or a skeleton submarine, in your case!"

“That too,” she smirks. Toki shifts, and hauls herself up onto one of the logs she’d sunk. The bark had been lost long ago, but the wood was worn smooth with the weather of the world. She seats herself, upper torso out of the water, and beams at him. “So, hot stuff, how do you like the hot spring? I didn’t make it too warm, did I?” Her body was enjoying it, and the warmth felt great on her lower back.

"No, no! This feels wonderful!” he replied quietly, a happy look on his face as he sunk down into the water. "I never thought I could encounter a hot spring so close to home.”

“Having a girlfriend with fire magic has its perks, doesn’t it?” She smiles to him. “C’mere.” She parts her legs and pats the top of the water, wanting him to come closer. With how the log was propped and floating, Toki could give him a hug without him having to stoop- and she was going to enjoy every moment of it. And, with luck, give him a ‘massage’ of sorts.

He came over and smiled as he nuzzled close to her. "Nyeh~ what do you have in store now?"

As his hands came to settle on the curve of her ecto-flesh hips, Toki looped her arms around his shoulders and pressed her fingertips into his scapulas. Face to face with him, Toki winked and gently pressed a nibbling kiss to his jaw line. “Nothing nefarious, I promise. Just something I want to try…”
He didn’t have muscles, not like humans did. Well, he did, when his magic stretched out to fill out his clothes. But he did not have clothes now— it was just the bare bone.

Her magic pulsed over her fingers and down into his shoulder blades, simulating the same sensation as a legitimate massage. “If all else fails, it means I get to smooch you until my shoulders get too cold up here in the air. Though… I might just do that anyways.”

He watched her expression until the stimulation to his shoulder-blades hit and his eyes widened, before they closed and he leaned his head back, a moan of bliss escaping him. "N-Nyeh~"

“Well, that’s a plus then.” She grins, kisses him softly again, and then has him turn around so his back presses to her front. Toki works along his shoulder blades and down the backs of his ribs, running her magic through her finger tips as she traces and relaxes his body through his magic. “You work really hard, Pap. You work to keep us safe, you work at making sure that I don’t over exert myself— it’s time someone makes sure you’re taken care of, yeah?”

"Hhhnn... U-Uh huh..." he looked back at her with a shaky smile. "Of c-course."

Toki grins, and presses soft kisses over his shoulders as her hands work downward. When she runs out of ribs, she cups his spine in her hands and begins to rub down the vertebrae one by one, straying and lingering over any particularly tightly set bone.

He was starting to tremble at that point, hands coming to brace his weight on the log she was seated on. "N-Nyeh...hahh... haahh... T-Toki~"

Toki grins, and nibbles gently over his shoulder, before her hand slips down and gently fondles his coccyx as her magic peters off. She did need to keep the pond warm- and using all of her magic would not be wise to do. “Mmm, have I succeeded in relaxing you~?” She teases gently.

"Nnnyeeeehhh!” suddenly there's a glow from his soul and his eye...

And one more place awfully close to her hand.

Toki blinks, and giggles softly. She doesn’t hesitate, reaching her hand through the empty space of his abdomen so she can grasp the glowing member lighting up the pool of water. She strokes him gently with her thumb, dragging her teeth gently down to where his ribs meet with the water. “Well, I guess that’s one way to make a guard stand at attention, no?”

He gave another jolt, pelvis jerking slightly in a faint thrust, and his mouth opened with a throaty gasp. "Hhaahhhh... T-Toki..!"

“Yessss Pap? Got to tell me what you want, my love. Telepathy isn’t my gift,” she purrs.

"Hah... hahh... Touch me... please Toki~" he pleaded. "Touch me, and let me touch you."

“You never have to beg to touch me, Pap. I am yours,” she purrs into his shoulder. “I’m going to be the mother to your children- I am very, very, very much yours.” She eases her grip on his member, and has him turn once more so he can face her.

She hooks her knees gently over his hips and peers up at his face with a gentle smile and green tinged cheekbones. Toki’s fingers rove over his ribs, tracing his sternum as she lets the orange glow of his cock light up between them. It reflects off of her middle.

He smiled at her now that he was facing her, his sockets glowing a low orange color. "Hah~" Aliquam reached up and gripped her hipbones with gentle fingers before he leaned in and began to
kiss her. He rubbed what he could of her hips, before they were enveloped in the ecto-flesh that made up her middle. "Toki... I can't believe how lucky I was to find someone like you... I love you" he told her happily, "I love you so much..."

“I love you too. I love you so, so much... it is a love that grows deeper each day I spend with you.” She shifted, a soft shiver escaping her as he kneaded his palms into her hips. Her hips felt tighter and tense, and that felt heavenly. The skeleton leaned into the kiss, hands stroking back up his body. She giggles softly though, and nuzzles her face to his, one hand dropping to stroke over his member again. “You really did find me though, didn’t you? Stumbled right into my back yard, back when I was still human.”

He shivers at her gentle touches, and keeps massaging her hips gently. "Announcing my determination to be friends with a any and all humans," he chuckled, "but... I’ve matured a bit since then, haven’t I?" His giggle weakened as he reached a hand up to rub the base of her spine, as well as trailing a hand down her pelvis.

“I see you mature more and more every day.” She admits softly. “You’ve grown in leaps and bounds- and you make my soul swell with pride all the time.” Her fingers slow their strokes, and she presses close to kiss him again as she melts into him. The hands on her spine make her magic stir, warming within her, and she rocks her hips slightly into his palm. His erection is trapped between them as she cuddles closer, propping her chin gently on his chest. Fingers trailing over his ribs, the skeleton shudders slightly under his fingers. “You are wiser, you are stronger, smarter, more mature… You are you, Pap. I’ve cared about you since I met you. Your determination, your bravery… Truth be told, you probably stole my heart the moment you flounced into my back yard.”

He smiled up at her as she spoke and he let out a soft laugh, before he leaned up to kiss her as he lifted up her hips off of the log. "Mmmh~"

Toki giggled as he eased her off of the log, curling her legs tighter to his. She leans her torso back, and with a soft pull of her magic, she summons her lower parts so his member can nestle up against the velvety magic of her core. “Mm...” She kissed him softly, and nipped gently along his jaw. One hand curled around his spine, the other coming to clutch curl around his shoulders.

The hand around his shoulders played with the base of his skull, teasing her digits over the back of the smooth bone.

"Mmmh, aahh~ Hey... ah... Toki?"

She leaned back slightly and peered up at him with a soft sound. “Hm? Yes, Pap?”

"I remember... when you were human you had these... things on your chest." he reached up, pantomiming cupping something over her chest.

Things on her- Oh. “My breasts?” She reclined back further against the log, and looked down at her chest in consideration. If her magic could make her middle, and make a tongue, or- according to Caeruleus- anything she wanted... She could probably give herself breasts. “Hm...” He wouldn’t have mentioned them if he didn’t want to see them- and that was consideration enough for her to focus.

It helped that she remembered what having breasts was like. The texture, the feel, the softness, the weight of them- she knew her breasts quite well. It took a moment, and then the magic from her middle rolled upwards, coming to cover the entirety of her ribcage. The green glow swelled, and two green breasts appeared.
They were bigger than she remembered them being- but it occurred to her that she was pregnant- of course her magic was going to reflect that. “Huh. Apparently yes, I can make magic boobs. These are what you were thinking of, yeah?”

His eyes lit up as they appeared and he smiled up at her, ”Thank you.” he then leaned in and his tongue slipped from his teeth, lapping over the breast before he purred softly and carefully took a nipple between his teeth.

Toki squeaked slightly as he took the summoned globe into his mouth. His tongue was damp, and between it and his teeth, she found a shiver steeling down her spine. “Oh, stars,” she murmurs softly. Her breasts had never been that sensitive before- but these weren’t breasts. This was another construct of her magic- no doubt the same type of construct that formed her feminine parts. It made sense that it was sensitive. “G gentle please, they’re sensitive.”

"Mmh... Mm-hmm~” he nodded once but continued his gentle treatment. He swirled his tongue around the nub, exploring it gently with his mouth. The flesh tasted similar to what Toki’s magic tasted like- and he enjoyed it greatly.

Toki shifted, shivering quietly. Her head rolled back, and she rolled her hips gently, stroking her nether lips gently over the length of his shaft. Two could tease- and with how her back was craned over the log, she couldn’t exactly line up for him to thrust in. “Nnn…” her mouth parted, long fangs whistling slightly as she exhaled roughly around them.

Her hands did the only thing they could- and that was work over his shoulders, stroking his clavicle and up along his spinal column as he worked over the magic that had formed her breast.

"Nnhh...” he whined quietly as he moved her slightly, hips rocking into her own. "I want to... to make love to you, Toki... Is it safe to...?” His hips twitched, and his eyes flicked down to her middle as his mouth relinquished her breast.

Toki shuddered against the log, adjusting her hips so he could have an easier time about getting in. “You wont hurt them. You wont hurt me either. Make love to me, Pap- it’ll be okay, I promise.” Despite the log digging oddly into her spine, she was comfortable, sprawled out with her chest up for his enjoyment. She rolled her hips, teasing him slightly, and then she piped at him, low and sweet.

He smiled up at her and he kissed her with a gentle passion as he took her hips in hand, moving her with unfathomable gentleness as he moved his cock to line up with her entrance. "Toki, I love you~" he whispered gently, easing his member into her gingerly. "I-I-aahhh... I love you s-so much...!” he groaned.

Toki kissed him back, one arm keeping his skull close as she cradled him. She hissed softly as he eased inside of her, her walls stretching around him like a formfitting glove. “I love you too,” she purrs, “so very, v-very much. Nn… Feels good,” she purred. Her hips twitched in his hands, and she slowly rolled against him, an encouraging motion as he slowly seated himself. His member would stretch deep into her- but wouldn’t bother the pseudo womb in her middle. Her tongue slid out, and she lapped at his teeth, seeking permission to tangle hers with his.

"Aahhh,” his mouth opened once more and his tongue reached out to press against hers in a skillful, loving manner. "Nyeh, hahhh- Oh Toki you feel so good.”

She gyrated against him, her hips slowly rolling against his and sending tingles of pleasure shooting up and down her spine. With her free hand, she guided one of his from her hips and settled it on her untouched breast in a silent plea for more of his touch. Meanwhile, her hand resumed a path of wandering, exploring over his bones and sliding into any crevice she could find. “So big, so thick,
so… you. Mmm, I can’t get enough of you,” she murmurs, a tremble trailing over her bones. She pipes again, an involuntary sound as she invades his mouth with her tongue, tasting him and offering him the same experience with her.

His hand gently squeezed and kneaded her breast in his hand as the other hand held her hip so he could move within her. "Toki… Ooh stars, hahh~!" he moaned breathily "This is... so good! You feel so good."

“This feels amazing,” she purred. There was something different about making love outside of a heat driven lust- something more personal, something more intimate. She might have been being pounded into a log out in the wilderness- but the only thing she could see, feel, taste, and experience was the slow drag of his member against her walls, and the touch of his body against hers.

She arched her back, changing the angle of her hips so that each slow draw of his cock rolled across everything within her. “This is right, us here, together… Mmm, we are perfect,” she purred. Or as close to perfect as could be. She broke the kiss, her mouth coming down to suckle along his neck. She nibbled, exposing her own and giving him something to clamp onto if he so desired as her fingers found his lower spine and began to stroke it softly in time with his thrusts.

"Hahh~ Haaahh!" his mouth was hanging in the pleasure as he moved gently against her. Even he could sense this perfection between them now. There was no heat to mask either of their judgments; their chemistry was in its purest form.

"We're... hahaha... no... You're perfect, I am but the drone that serves her majesty." he whispered, purring at her with a wide smile. "I love you so much…”

Toki moaned softly, a tiny giggle escaping her as her fingers stroked back up his spine. “You are hardly a drone,” she purred, “for if I am a queen, I surely must need a king…” Toki kissed him again, sweet and gentle. She shifted, flexing her core around him. Each stroke sent her soul fluttering in her chest, the ectoplasm that made up her flesh trembling and clamping tight around him. She panted against him, steam coiling up from her bones as her magic coiled tight. “Mmm, Pa-py-russsss…” His name rolls from her mouth in the form of a breathy moan. “I love you,” and she never, ever got tired of saying so.

"O-Oh god, Toki~" he gasped out, hand abandoning the summoned ecto-flesh on her chest to grasp her other hip, his face pressing into the soft flesh summoned onto her chest. "O-Oh stars... Toki~ You're so warm around me." he moaned.

Toki shivered, letting her head roll back as his face buried in the soft flesh summoned onto her chest. Her hands came up to cradle his skull, massaging and stroking as she rocked and rolled under him, striving to bring him to his edge through gentle touches. “You’re so warm in me,” she pants, soft breaths escaping her as warmth rolls off of her bones. “I need you- all of you. Mmmm- ahh~ Stars, Pap…”

His hands moved her slowly until he started to get close, this being shown as he began to urge faster. "Ah, hahh, nnn, nyeeeh~”

The stimulation that came with the change of pace was enough to toss her over. She tightened around him, a wordless cry that sounded vaguely like it might have been his name escaping out of her open mouth. She shudders, tightening around him in more ways than one, and buzzes pleasantly against him as her body milks his for what she can. “Ah~”

He tensed up as her body clenched around him and he let out a few breathy moans before he wrapped one arm around her and held her close, pushing her hips down to pin them to his as his
release washed over him, "Nyeeehhh~! T-Toki~!" he cried out.

Toki didn’t have a problem with him pinning her, and her body drew in the magic that he released to her. The glow of her middle brightened, the magic around the dark green shape tinting a different color as the manifested form of his magic was taken in and absorbed. Toki clung tightly to him, her arms looping to hold herself tightly flush with his body. “Mmmm, Pap,” she purred, pleasantly buzzed with the afterglow of their affections. Her upper torso shivered in the cold night air, but her lower half was pleasantly warm and enjoying being wrapped around him. Toki draped against him, content not to move until he wanted her to. “Mmm… I love you.”

"I love you." he whispered into her torso.

She leaned down to kiss the crown of his skull, and was content hugging him to her body. “I love you more,” she purrs with a soft teasing thrum. “Mm… Can we sit further down on the log? If you want me to keep these out for tonight, we’ll want to keep them warm. Cold boobs are not fun boobs.” And the chill of the air around them was very real.

He giggled and looked up at her, then he moved the both of them off of the log and they sank under the water. It once more solidified the fact that that skeletons didn't necessarily need to breathe.

Toki laughed softly as they sunk under the surface, and leaned in to kiss him softly. She shifted in his lap, leaning back as her abdomen lit up the space between them. The glow caught her gaze, and she blinked down at her middle, before wiggling a brow up at him. The lower part of her belly was an odd mix of orange and green- and it was quite obvious that there were apparently several ways to give a more direct magic donation. And this one apparently made her change colors slightly.

He kissed her then he looked down and smiled as he stroked her stomach, "So beautiful," he whispered, his words unheard under the water. "So perfect.” he then leaned up and kissed her neck softly.

She could hear him saying something- but without lips to read and with how water tended to warp spoken words, she had no way of knowing what he was saying. But the fingers that stroked over her belly made her buzz, and that was a sound that shivered through the water almost clearly. She tilted her neck to the side, a pleased sound escaping her as he kissed over her neck.

He smiled up at her, and nuzzled her neck with an airless sigh.

Toki nestled close, tucking her chest to his and her head to his shoulder. The skeleton drapes herself more firmly against him, and settles down to enjoy her evening with him. They had all night- until the sun began to rise and the world began to rouse.

She was going to make sure it was a night that he’d never forget.
Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This chapter takes place on the same day that the other one does. But this- this is our Sansby chapter. ;) It is also NSFW- so anyone under 18 needs to scoot.

Don't forget! You can find us at our blog! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/ is where it's at, baby. Also, ya'll totally missed it. We got our first hate anon last night- and it wasn't even TOTU related. XD Apparently they thought that I shouldn't be doing art unless i can afford to make art to the quality of their standards. Apparently I make shitty things~

Silverwing Notes: And if you fuckers thought the last chapter was good…

ENJOY THIS SACK OF HOT SHIT.

Unlike Tokiko, Grillby was limited in what he could do. He could not make chocolates traditionally- there were things he could and could not do, and cooling his body enough to handle chocolate was not one of them. Chocolate melted too easily for him to handle- so sadly, Cae was not gifted with chocolates when he came to the bar that evening to help the bartender close down.

What the skeleton was going to be gifted with, however, was a bouquet of roses with the promise that Grillby would love the skeleton until the last rose died. It was an idea he got off of the human internet- and inside of the bouquet, there was a single silk rose hidden among the others for Cae to find later.

The doors to the bar closed early, when the dark came, and Grillby had taken time to wipe down the bar and prepare it for the next day’s work. Cae made good company, even if he did deplete the fire elementals supply of Ketchup rather quickly, though as per the norm, the skeleton was the one to lead the conversations. Though Sans had gotten pulled away midway through the day, to run some various errands for some of the townsfolk who didn’t have anything major planned for the holiday.

Grillby had plans though. Oh yes he had plans- and they involved his skeleton intended, and long, long hours spent up in his haven.

He also wanted to talk to him. With Aliquam settling down with Toki- even if they hadn’t formally mated or wed- Grillby had been getting thoughts of his own. He did not think he would ever marry again- but then and again, he hadn’t thought he would ever love again.

His first mate had been his world- and then given him Fuku. They’d nearly had a second child, before his first mate had gotten killed by one of the fallen humans. His daughter had been nearly grown when they were lost. Grillby had waited until she was old enough not to need their constant attention to tell her about wanting to give her siblings- but even then, it had taken several months to spark the soulling- and they had lost many of them. His mate had never been in the best of health- but his mate had not been a boss monster like Grillby was. She had been so fragile compared to him- and Fuku was the spitting image of her.

When they reached the point where the little emberling wouldn’t extinguish, everyone had been so
overjoyed. Their family had been about to grow- but it hadn’t meant to be.

It had been a young boy, he remembered, who had come in with guns blazing. He had been a little older than frisk, he thought. Perhaps closer to Felix’s age, give or take a year or two. His first mate had lost her life- and the life of their unborn child, and he and Fuku had mourned her loss.

Even his soul still longed for her- but it was not meant to be. Sans had come along and reminded him that it was okay to love again, that love was not something that needed to be feared or something that he wasn’t allowed to have. The skeleton had wormed his way in with his wisecracking jokes, his sass, and the general pestering that he tended to do when trying to get someone to loosen up.

Though Sans would never know, he had saved Grillby in more ways than one. He gave him cause to hope again- cause to love. He saved him from falling- for he had been slowly deteriorating as grief for his lost love consumed his body and soul. Monsters who lost true mates did not usually die- but most wished they would. With only Fuku to fall back on, Grillby had been wasting away, because it was not the duty of the parent to put that sort of emotional weight onto their child. No- he had made sure that she wasn’t fading, that she was growing and happy and as healthy as could be.

It had worn him down.

The wise cracking skeleton had been a ray of light for him- and damn if he hadn’t fallen hard for him because of it. He had fallen hard for the skeleton that had only one HP and enough cracks in his soul that it should have shattered long ago- and that had terrified him.

If he hadn’t been such a coward about it… there was the chance he could have been with him years ago. But Grillby had been afraid of losing him. Of losing another he had come to love. Losing one that you come to love with your entire being was worse than anything the war had ever done to him- and Grillby still had his triggers about that too.

But Sans had hope now- and Grillby had the joy of watching his soul heal, and his HP tick upwards by each precious, sacred point.

Grillby… Grillby was finally in a place where he wanted a family again.

He wanted to roll out of bed in the morning and listen to the pitter-patter of little feet racing for breakfast. He wanted to heft a child onto his hip, to hold them close and watch them grow.

Grillby idly swept, rolling his plans for the evening over in his mind, and crackled a soft tune as his heels bounced lightly over the floor. He was dancing just slightly as he swept, a good mood keeping his flames as high as his spirits.

Having needed some help done around the town had ended up with Cae being late as he arrived at the bar. "Hey Grillbz, sorry I’m late!" he called casually, "I had to help out here and there in the town."

Though he had shown up late, Caeruleus was casually relaxing at the bar, ketchup bottle in hand. He was amused as he watched Grillby do his little dance while he worked. "Looks like you’re ready to lay out a salsa dance, Grillbz." he laughed.

“If you’re going to make a pun about salsa being my perfect dance, I will take back your ketchup rights.” The bartender rumbled in a gentle teasing tone. He knew Cae’s brand of humor- and likening the spicy flavor of salsa to the bartender’s flames was not something that he was above doing. He hummed, and leaned down to scoop up the dustpan. Debris from the day’s work were swept into the pan, and carried to the trashcan near the bar.
He chuckled lowly, knowing that he would get called out for a pun like that, "I have no idea what you're talking about~"

“That's a hunk of slag and you know it.” The bartender gave him a fondly amused look, and resumed cleaning. He paused though, and had to stop for a second and make an attempt to clean the layer of dust off of his glasses. His eyes squinted as he scrubbed the lenses on a soft cloth, rumbling faintly to himself. It would be easier if he could use the cleaning spray that had come with his new glasses- but the spray burned his body something bad when it touched his skin. "I am glad Fuku does not have to deal with these things," he mutters.

"At least it's not a chemical burn. I heard humans can get those and they hurt like hell, but here, let me take care of that." Cae fetched the spray cleaner that the bartender never used, and took the glasses from the larger monster.

Grillby handed over his glasses without complaint, and scrubbed a hand over his face. His eyes squinted, looking at the blurry outline of the skeleton handling the cleaning for him, and shifted to carefully move a few of his tables. “I can handle small amounts of liquids or light rain. Whatever it is in that solution burns something nasty. Hence, why I am glad Fuku did not inherit my vision problem.”

He nodded gently in agreement, cleaning the bartender's glasses before he smiled and handed them back. "Here.”

Grillby took them with a thankful nod, and secured them to his face once more. As his vision cleared, the fire elemental leaned down and pressed a smooth kiss to Caeruleus' skull. “Thank you, Sans.” He murmurs. Straightening, the elemental rolls up the sleeves of his shirt, exposing rippling muscles littered with a few scars here and there, and then heads behind the bar to put the alcohol bottles into their proper places. “Speaking of Fuku- she is doing very well managing the bar below ground.” He mutters softly. “She's heard that we are officially together. She… 'ships' us? I do not know what that is, though 'ships' are something the humans of the Internet frequently seem to freak out over.”

He whistled quietly at the sight of the elementals muscle, then he smiled and followed him to the bar, returning to his seat. "Ship, huh? That's weird... we're inland though..."

“And we are not boats.” The larger monster had plenty of muscle to ogle- and with the blinds drawn on the front of the bar, the skeleton monster had a fair chance of possibly sweet talking him out of his top. “I believe it is a term she has coined from Doctor Alphys during one of their ‘anime’ nights at the bar.”

"... Aaaaaah.... yeah that'd explain it" he chuckled, looking up at him, "Mmm, So, Grillbz..." he started, "I'm wondering if we wanna do anything special for today, I heard it's supposed to be a romantic holiday or somethin'."

Grillby nods, his back to the skeleton. “I had something in mind,” His voice rumbles pleasantly out to Sans. “Something in mind I think you’ll like… But I do need to finish here first.” His voice slips towards being apologetic. “I hope you do not mind being patient for me. I promise, it will be worth it.”

Cae watched him for a moment, and then he smirked and leaned his head on his hand, his elbow on the bar. He then twitched his other hand, using his magic to tease the bartender, rubbing a ghostly touch over his chest before moving to undo his vest

Grillby was unsure for a short time just what the skeleton was playing at- but as soon as the first
buttons on his vest began undoing themselves he began to get the picture. He flicks his gaze over to the smaller monster and rumbles deeply at him, amusement tickling over his voice. “Careful about which monsters you tease, Caeruleus. Some of us do not play fair.”

Still, he shed his vest, leaving the black spider-silk garment on the top of the bar as he turned to put dishes away into the cabinet. It left him in the white button up shirt he wore below his vest. It was tucked into the waistline of his slacks, folds of his shirt highlighting the muscles of his upper back.

"You think I care~?" he purred, his gaze half-lidded with interest as his magic continued to touch and feel.

“I think you will care.” The rumble in his voice wasn’t a threat- no, it was a promise of things to come.

Grillby wasn’t bothered in the slightest as the buttons came undone one at a time. His shirt was pulled free of his pants once all of the buttons were unbuttoned, and he found it sliding down his shoulders. He rolled his eyes with amused exasperation at Sans impatience, and willingly slid his arms out of his shirt.

His back came into view, rippling with muscle and a few thick, roping scars. Smaller scars, obviously burns from water, darkened the bright orange and red that made up most of his blazing skin. Grillby hummed, shifting his stance, and stretched an arm up to place a bottle of liquor on a high shelf.

Two could play at that game- and the muscles rippling under his flaming skin were on display as he made sure to stretch and flex when he could. He was almost giddy- he hadn’t put himself on display like this in a long, long time.

He chuckled lowly and gave a soft whistle, appreciating the view he was getting. "Hot damn, Grillby~" he chuckled. “I’d love to get me a taste of that hot tamale.”

The old general hadn’t lost his warrior’s body, even after all of the centuries that had come to pass. Grillby turned, carefully cleaning some of the glasses, and gave Caeruleus a lopsided grin. To distract the skeleton from going for the button on his slacks, the fire elemental chuckled softly.

“You’ll get a taste of this hot tamale soon enough,” he rumbles, “but do you think you can handle the burn?”

He’s interrupted from his flirting as his senses pick up a flare of magic from near the river. He pauses, tilts his head, and then chuckles softly. It would appear that the Guardian Angel had already started her plans with the father of her child.

"Holy fuck that’s hot." he snorted, though he felt the flare as well. He turned, casting a glance in the general direction of the river, and then he chuckled. "You know, I always wondered why your bar was so close to the river.”

“Maybe I like to live dangerously?” He suggested cheekily. “Mostly, I enjoy the view from the top floor. Water is as lovely as it is deadly, and so long as I do not try to enjoy it up close, I am fine.”

The fire monster focuses his magic, and from around his ankles slides a rope of fire. Prehensile and made entirely from his magic, it begins the process of snaking up the bar stool, aiming to bind the skeleton while he was distracted by the flares of magic from his sibling and Toki.

“You’d think they were trying for a soulling with how often those two enjoy themselves.” The fire monster snorts slightly, and straightens the top of his bar.
"So true. If they didn't already have two, I wouldn't have been able to tell the difference." he laughed.

The bartender laughed too, and his eyes brightened as the rope of fire tightened, binding Cae’s feet together suddenly, before snaking up his legs and up the legs of his shorts. Without hinting at anything going on, Grillby hums slightly. “Indeed… Say, Caeruleus… Despite only formally asking you this last Christmas, I would say we’ve had a steady relationship for a long while. What do you think about maybe… having children of our own?”

Sans let out a startled noise as the rope tightened. He felt the rope now and he looked downward at his legs. Grillby's question went unheard for a moment. "What the hell!?"

“Something the matter, the matter, Caeruleus? You didn’t answer my question.” Grillby leaned closer to him across the bar, flames flickering slightly. It was obvious to see the rope was made out of the same colored flames that made up Grillby’s form. The bartender crossed his arms, making the muscles of his pectorals ripple. “Cat got your tongue?”

Caeruleus looked up at him, blushing a bright blue. "This is your handy work, Grillbz. Kinky." he huffed, before he shivered at the sight and feel of the ropes sliding up and around his pelvis. "Holy shit... Ah... W-What was your question again?"

One did not poke the bear without consequences. Grillby cocked his hip against the bar, and arched a flaming brow at the skeleton. A smirk visibly split his mouth, and sharp looking fangs of flame glimmered at him. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he hums softly. “As for my question, what do you think about having children with me? We’ve essentially been together unofficially for years.” Grillby was too old to wed again- but he was not too old to love or be a father again. Or a… mother, he supposed. He had never carried when he and his first mate had tried. Out of all of the times that they had tried, he had never been the one to take on the emberling.

He was shivering lightly as he looked up at him. But the question makes him stop and think for a moment, fiddling with his ketchup bottle. "K-Kids... With me?" he asked, "I mean... shit... are you serious?"

“Very.” Grillby tilted his head slightly, and paced around the other side of the bar. As the rope slid higher around Cae, it stole his hands away from his ketchup, and bound them lightly behind his back. The bartender hooked his finger in the zipper of the skeleton’s jacket and began to undo it.

After all- all of the ropes were under his clothes. He could freely remove what he wished, when he wished, without having to fiddle with irksome clothing. “I do not say what I do not mean.”

"Hhn!" he gasped sharply and looked up at Grillby, sockets wide and eye lights small. "Wha.. B-But why me, I mean... Do I really look like I could be a mother?"

“You know as well as I that you could end up being the father.” Grillby murmurs softly. “It would likely be better for your HP if you were the father... But yes.” He coyly motions to the pudgy skeleton’s middle, trying to lighten the mood with a light joke about the skeleton’s round middle under his shirt. His jacket is removed, and discarded neatly next to Grillby’s own shed clothes. “I have come to care for you over the years- you have brought me feelings again that I haven’t felt since I lost my first mate. I find myself happier when I am with you- and I would be happy to make a child with you. I miss being a father, to be honest. And there is no other soul I’d rather make a life with.”

He puffed and gave a hesitant laugh, before he smiled up at him. "Shit... I ah... I don’t know what to say, Grillbz..."
“A yes or a no would suffice.” The flame monster arched a brow at him, and looped his fingers through the skeleton’s shirt. Grillby didn’t remove it-no, he used it to haul Caeruleus up, and over his shoulder rather swiftly. Keeping one arm across his legs, the fire monster patted his intended’s backside and headed for the stairs.

He gasped as he was lifted up and he blushed furiously, "G-Grillby... Fuck..." he murmured, before he smiled, "H-Heh... Y-Yes."

The fire monster paused at the stairs, hand on the railing, and shifted the skeleton draped across his bare hide. “… Truly? You say yes?”

"Come on man do you really need me to repeat it? I said yes damn it!” he huffed, squirming. At least he had a good view of the elementals ass from here. "I... Jeez... I can't believe you asked me... I mean... Well shit we've been great friends for a long time now... if not so much more... I just...!" he was a flustered mess.

Grillby laughed heartily, mouth falling open as his voice rumbled up and down the stairwell. “We’ve been more than friends for a long time, Caeruleus. It was my own nerves that kept me from asking you formally a long, long time ago.” He resumes going up the stairs, taking them two at a time as he heads up to his home.

The door is opened, and he makes a beeline for his bedroom. Cae’s flowers were on his bed- and he took a moment to carefully move them to the side table before he dropped the skeleton chest down on the massive plush surface. “Take a deep breath and relax, Caeruleus. Though… Don’t relax too much. You have prodded me a fair bit- I am justified in my actions tonight.”

The elemental leaned closer and pressed his hips against the back of Cae’s shorts. The heat against his pelvis would let the skeleton know just what he had gotten himself into- if the flaming fangs nipping at his spine through his shirt didn’t do it first. “So… Tonight? Or do you need time to… process impending parenthood?”

He shivered as he was laid down, then looked back at Grillby, before he jolted and let out soft moans in reaction to the heat that now spread over his back, "nnh... hah..."

Grillby hooked a finger in one of the ropes that looped around the skeleton’s neck, and tugged it back. It parted, like a leash, and yanked him upwards. “I expect an answer when I ask you something.” The bartender rumbled softly, rolling his hips teasingly through the other’s shorts. “Or are you going to be naughty as well as teasing today?”

He gasped as he was pulled back and he looked at him as best he could. "H-Hah... Grillby... Holy shit..." he moaned quietly. "Nnh... Do you want me to behave? Or are you egging me on to give you shit?" he cackled.

“Mmm... I just want my answers, so I know how this evening will go.” The more magic they exchanged, the easier it would be for a new life to spark. Fire elementals were hard to breed with- but their young were hardy and tough inside of their carrier once the flames of their souls were stable. If they started now, there was the chance that it could spark off in several months time. Grillby gently pinched the skeleton’s coccyx through his shorts, and rumbled softly. “How you act is entirely on you- but then and again, you enjoy it when I get rougher with you, don’t you?”

He jumped sharply, and then he shivered and grinned up at him unrepentantly. "Hehehe~"

“Answer me,” the big monster rumbled his demand sharply. But instead of scolding him-he eased up, keeping him restrained but not touching him, taking reverse measures to get what he desires.
He shivered and groaned loudly as he squirmed lightly, "Nnhhh, I-I'll be good" he whined.

Grillby clucked his tongue lightly against the back of his teeth and adjusted the ropes that bound him. "That is not the answer that I seek," he rumbles. His hand tightens on the leash, and he uses it to lean the skeleton upright once more. "And avoiding it is definitely being naughty... Do you know what happens to skeletons who misbehave?"

"Wh-What happens" he asked hesitantly.

Grillby shifted and removed Cae’s shirt in one swift motion. It might have slightly torn- but he could repair the hem for him in the morning. “Disobedient skeletons have to work for what they want.”

In one swift motion, Grillby has Cae kneeling on the floor- which has a padded rug to cushion the bare knee caps of the topless skeleton- and nestled between the thick thighs of the fire monster. Grillby keeps a hold on the leash, and toys with his zipper pointedly. “But disobedient skeletons get handicaps. Yours? No hands. Not until I say so.”

"Hahh... h-holy shit." he murmured, smiling up at him, "This is hot, Grillby..." he giggled weakly.

The barman tilted his head and gave him a smoldering smirk. “I know. I can smell what I’m doing to you.” His desire was palpable- particularly since Grillby’s sense of smell was tied to his entire body, as his flames consumed air to give him those sensations. He was no dog or wolf monster, but he had a decent enough sense of smell, particularly when it was one he was intimately familiar with.

Slowly, Grillby unbuttoned his slacks. The zipper came next, proving that the barman did not believe in boxers or briefs- mostly because unless it was in use, he did not need them. His cock summoned, glowing red and long, with small curls of flames branching out from the base and leading up towards his belly button.

He arched a brow, and leaned back patiently on his elbows. “You know what to do.” He would have to suck until Grillby either came, or Cae actually answered his question.

Cae was asking himself right now why the hell Grillby was affecting him like this. He couldn't even think of anything good to try and snark back with. "I... ah... I wouldn't mind kids... you know... I mean... tonight seems okay enough.” he murmured into the shaft of Grillby's cock.

Grillby shifted, and loosened the leash a little bit. He parted his thighs a bit more so the broad shoulders of the skeleton could fit more comfortably, and then offered him a flash of a soft grin. “Then that’s how we’ll end out the night,” he purrs gently to him. Though the gentleness fades, covered by the prior mask, and he drags a flaming finger down his cheek as the skeleton’s face nuzzles close to his cock. A lot of this was a mask- a mask that seemed to excite the skeleton under him, so he kept it up. “But for now... your impatience earlier in the bar has reaped this- if you had just been patient, had waited until I was done...” Grillby rumbled at him, mouth opening to flick a flaming tongue out across his lips. “We might be in an entirely different situation.”

"Explain~?” he cooed softly, before he opened his mouth, his sharp teeth gleaming before he closed his mouth around the head of the cock,

The muscles of Grillby’s legs tensed faintly as those sharp teeth closed around him. It both excited and made him wary- he’d been on the accidental end of love bites before, though from different monsters, and getting a bite to that particular spot was not something he wanted to experience. Still, his cock was warm, and Cae’s mouth seemed cool in comparison. It sent ripples of flame up his skin, the equivalent of gooseflesh for a human. “Mmm...” It pleased him, and Grillby glowed brighter. The inside of Cae’s skull lit up, and that made a curl of desire bubble deeper into his belly.
“Well,” The elemental muttered, stroking his fingers over the top of Caeruleus skull, “The way I see it, you would have been sprawled under me as I worshipped every inch of you I could. You could have been face down in the mattress, being pounded until your eyes roll.” Though he’s certain that one is going to happen at least once tonight, “Or even tangled together in the midst of making love. But no- you must earn that tonight.”

*Earn it* he says... His lowered gaze lifts, and gleams as his grin appears around the elementals cock. His eye sockets were glowing with a gentle lighting, before he suddenly leaned forward, taking in almost the entire cock into his mouth, softened by magic and moistened by 'saliva' as he began to suck Grillby off. His eye sockets were now glowing much brighter now.

Grillby had not been expecting the skeleton to take him almost to the hilt. Grillby was a large monster, his cock befitting his size. So the skeleton’s skull lit up like a jack-o-lantern, and Grillby couldn’t hide the groan that pulled from his throat. “Stars,” he hissed softly, palm cupping the skeleton’s skull. “Good,” he praised, pleased.

He chuckled quietly and he pushed himself forward again, taking him to the base, before pulling back again. "Mnhh~", it definitely gave his jaw a bit of a stretch, but he didn't care, watching Grillby's face with a smug look.

Grillby did not do oral often- he was more often the one to toss Cae down and ravish him, rather than have the skeleton attempt to ‘blow his candle’ as it were. It felt good- alien and foreign, and cold in a way that felt splendid. Grillby’s face was slack, eyes bright behind his glasses. He watched Sans, withdrawing his hand from his skull so the skeleton could move as he pleased. Instead it came up, and he bit lightly at his knuckle, trying to keep his breathing steady.

Noting Grillby's reaction, Caeruleus moaned happily and look up at the elemental, grinning through his gaze as he also sought Grillby's approval to the treatment. "Mmmh~"

“Yesss,” he purred. His hips rocked faintly where he sat, rolling them slowly as Caeruleus bobbed on his cock. Grillby groaned, biting further onto his knuckle. “Mmm, good work, Sans. G-good work.” He rumbled pleasantly.

Perfect~ he was going in the right direction. He chuckled and hummed softly as he kept sucking and bobbing his head, mock swallowing around him. "Mmm."

Caeruleus did not have a throat like other monsters might, but that was probably the only reason that he was able to actually hilt the big fire beast. Grillby hissed softly, and the hand in his mouth moved down to clutch Cae’s skull. His hips rocked slightly, thrusting upwards just faintly into his mouth. The fire elementals mouth fell open, flaming tongue lolling gingerly over his teeth as smoke curled faintly out of his mouth with every growing pant.

"Mmmhhh~" he relaxed himself to take the thrusts, his tongue happily rubbing against the cock as it moved against his tongue.

Grillby had better stamina for things outside of oral- and it showed. He shuddered and shook, breathing coming out more and more ragged as Sans bobbed and bounced. Grillby shivered, waves of fire crackling over him in a small flood of elemental gooseflesh. “I am, ah, nnn, c-close,” he manages to warn the small skeleton.

Close... good... he relaxed his magic then leaned forward, completely hilting the cock in his throat. "Mmmmng~"

The humming helped, and the fire of Grillby’s head blazed upwards for a moment as he came.
Grillby grunted deeply, his cock pulsing-and then liquid fire magic rushed out into Caeruleus mouth. It was on the slightly too hot side, like coffee that was just a little too hot to be drinking regularly.

He shuddered, hand stroking the skull that had brought him to his edge. “G-good,” He manages, smoke curling out of his mouth as he panted. “Very good.”

His eyes widened slightly, and then squeezed closed. He groaned as he gulped down the hot load, before he slowly pulled back, his mouth hanging open as he panted. "Hahh... hahh..."

Grillby loosened the ties binding his arms, so Caeruleus could have some bit of freedom. The flaming ropes remained, and began to pulse with his magic, teasing over the bones that they were so tangled with. “I, hah, think you’ve earned a reward,” he purrs softly. Just as soon as he could go again- which would be shortly, for sure- he would be ravishing Sans.

His arms sagged a little, and he moaned as the ropes started to move and tease. "A-aahhh~"

Grillby did not rest long. As he shifted, he used the rope to move the skeleton onto the bed. He shifted, and scooted his pants further down. Sans had swallowed his load- but these were his nice slacks, and he had no intention of staining them blue.

Once his pants were down- nestled somewhere on the floor, leaving him bare, Grillby clamored back up onto the bed with Caeruleus. He brushed his fingers up the skeleton’s legs, and the ropes gathered and he guided them around and up, so his hands were secured above the headboard. “Mmm, your turn now,” he purred. “Though these seem to be in the way- oh? What’s this? Excited, are we?”

Caeruleus took a soft breath as looked up at him, "Ahh... hahh... hehehehe~ Well... shit no hiding it is there?" he asked quietly.

“No hiding indeed,” the fire elemental purred. He cupped him through his shorts, rubbing just slightly to tease him. “Looks like I wasn’t the only one who got something out of that, hm?” He left Cae’s legs free, keeping the ropes bound to his bones to keep him stimulated from all over. Grillby was nothing if efficient- and with the rope weaved between his bones, it was sure to drive Sans bonkers. “So tell me,” he purrs, “would you like me to remove your shorts? To have my wicked way with you, my Caeruleus?”

His tongue was hanging out of his mouth as he arched his back, arms straining at his binds. "Oooh fuck..." he groaned loudly, "P-Please... Y-yes..." his voice came out slightly whining, but he honestly did not care.

Grillby grinned, and leaned down. While he slowly teased his shorts down with his fingers, Grillby ran his mouth up and down the Sans’ spine, kissing and nibbling as he goes. It doesn’t take him very long to ease the skeleton’s shorts down, and he shifts to run the warmth of his tongue over his ribs briefly. He had to tease him a bit more, after all, before he got to the main event. He leaned back, scooting up and easing the skeleton’s legs over his hips, eyes flicking down to see which equipment Cae had summoned for the evening.

"Aahhh, haaaah…” Surprisingly enough, he summoned an ecto-cock, despite how submissive it looked like Grillby had him.

Grillby wasn’t really surprised- Caeruleus was a bit odd in his desires sometimes, so the fire elemental had learned to roll with whatever the skeleton wanted for the night. The big monster hummed, and grasped his cock in his hand. Cae was decently sized, but Grillby had very large hands. He had little trouble slipping his palm around him and giving him a firm stroke upwards. His mouth returned to working over his ribs, silent save for soft rumbles that he filtered into the other’s
"Aahhh!" he leaned his head back, his teeth now closed again, tongue hidden. "F-fuck~ your hand is nice ‘n hooooot!"

Grillby grins, and scrapes his teeth gently over the skeleton’s ribs, before dipping down to do the same to the sensitive side of his spine. He doesn’t respond verbally- instead his tongue comes out, and he lifts the skeleton enough for him to slick his tongue around the girth of his spine.

His hand continues working over the thick blue cock gently, while Grillby’s hips gently rock into the mattress below him.

"Aahhhhh…" his hips rocked into his hand as he looked down at him, eyes glowing brightly. "Ooooh fuck… Grillby~"

“That would be my name, don’t wear it out.” he purred. The elemental kept stroking his cock, rolling his palm around it slowly. Eventually he shifted, and moved so Cae’s legs hooked over his shoulders again. “If I had ears, I’d love to use your femurs as earmuffs. Oh look- I already am.” The big monster grinned. His mouth came down, and he had little problems enveloping his cock in his mouth.

Sans always ran at a far colder temperature than he did, and it stung his mouth slightly. But Grillby persevered, and began to warm him with soft strokes of his tongue, and feather light touches of his lips over his shaft.

"GRILLBY!" His shout was loud as the other's mouth was suddenly around his cock. Unable to hold himself back, he roughly bucked upward.

His buck caught Grillby off guard, and the big monster coughed slightly as he effectively shoved the majority of the front of his pelvis straight into his mouth. If he had a throat like other monsters, it probably would have gagged him. Grillby pulled back, fingering part of his jaw that was probably going to bruise from the sudden bones to the face, and eyed his partner with mild amusement. “Little tightly wound up, aren’t we?”

He wasn’t going to be upset about it- accidents happened. He would just need to keep a firmer grip on the skeleton’s pelvis. He didn’t return immediately to his cock- no, he left it sitting there, covered in his glowing red saliva and straining for attention as he instead kissed and nipped along the femurs on his shoulders.

"Hahh... hah... N Ngh! G-Grillby don’t stop!" he whined, squirming faintly. "Please!"

Grillby simply arched a brow at him and nibbled a little more firmly on his femur. “Begging, are we? Show some patience, Sans. Your impatience got you into this mess in the first place, no?” He shifts and runs his fingers over the space where Sans could summon his other parts. He teases the insides of the bones, deliberately ignoring the cock that was tempting him in front of his face. “Be patient,” he purred. “The best rewards are the ones you wait for.”

He whimpered as he looked down at him, his normally round pupils shaped almost like hearts, "Grillby, I’m sorry, okay?! Just... please... My dick's getting cold...!"

“Oh, is it?” The old general adored when he could drive Caeruleus this far. Teasingly, he exhaled warm air over his dick, and then ran his tongue from the base to the tip. “Well, we can’t be having that now can we?” His digits curled upwards, securing his pelvis in place so they didn’t have another thrusting repeat- and then his mouth slowly closed over his cock, savoring the cold burn that stung...
over his cheeks and tongue as he hilted him again.

Grillby curled his fingers, stroking inside of his pelvis teasingly.

"Oooh fuuuuck," he gasped out, his eyes becoming half-lidded as he leaned his head to one side, "Oh god~"

His magic was coiling around Grillby's hand. If it got out of the way he'd end up summoning his other anatomy as well.

Grillby could feel the magic gathering around his hand, and withdrew his fingers obediently. He mouthed up and down his cock, lips brushing and massaging gently as he gave a soft and firm suck. He couldn’t speak with his mouth full- but he got to enjoy as Cae’s skull lolled to the side. He rumbled softly, letting it vibrate up through the length being worked by his mouth.

"AAahh!" Within seconds of his hand withdrawing, there was a bright glow as he had summoned an ecto-pussy, "Hahh... hahh...."

The ecto pussy made him smile, and he teased two fingers gently along the outer lips. His mouth continued it’s bobbing, keeping him distracted as he began to tease him there too. Two fingers curled, and eased into his depths while his thumb found the nub of ecto-flesh at the top and began to massage that too.

Skeletons were fun- they could make whatever they wanted, when they wanted. He let out a pleased hum, watching the bound upper half of his chosen intended to see how he reacted to the double stimulus.

He jolted and let out a choked sound of pleasure, his fists clenching and relaxing repeatedly as his teeth parted one more to get more air. His face was a feverish blue in hue, and his pupils now well distinguished hearts in his sockets.

Grillby grinned wider. Oh yes- he was enjoying this. But… He knew the one thing that could drive the skeleton over the edge. He shifted, and his mouth left his dick. No doubt this would upset Cae- so he shushed him gently. Fingers still slick from stretching the skeleton’s folds, he slid them around his cock as he moved up. Cae’s legs dropped back down over his hips- and Grillby gave him half a second to realize what this meant before he slid his cock home into the skeleton’s body.

Grillby was a large, large monster in many proportions. Cae’s pelvis fit him like an extremely tight glove as he rocked in place, palming his cock as he loomed over him. His mouth found his chest and he began to kiss and nibble each and every one of his ribs, dick pulsing with the warmth of his flames.

He clearly needed more than that second to recollect himself, but as soon as Grillby was hilted in him, he arched and choked on his own noise. His body rattled loudly with pleasure as he let out a single word, voice verging near a sob.

"C-CLOSE!"

“Good,” Grillby purred. “Be a good skeleton for me,” he murmured against his chest. His hips shifted, rocking and pounding into the skeleton mercilessly. Each hard thrust was timed with a stroke of his hand, and Grillby even found his own end coming close again. It was hot, driving him this crazed for him. “Be a good skeleton,” he repeated, “and scream my name,” he rumbled.

"G-Grillby...!" he gasped his name a few times, before he arched deeply and screamed as he climaxed around him.
Grillby lasted a few more thrusts before the sight of Sans was enough to push him over. As the skeleton’s eye lights rolled practically to the back of their sockets, he hilted himself and growled a pleased noise. His member pulsed, and then hot magic flooded into the skeleton, flooding him full with his second load of the evening.

Grillby didn’t even mind when Cae’s cock spurted blue up his abdomen, painting him just as he filled the skeleton. “Caeruleus,” he rumbled softly, shuddering as he nearly collapsed on him. One arm braced himself, and he panted, basting the bound skeleton with the warmth radiating from him. His mouth slowly closed as his form slumped, boneless under the big monster. "Nnh... H-Hahh..." he whimpered softly, before he looked up at Grillby, "G-Grill...?"

Grillby had enough awareness to let the ropes disappear, and he shuddered slightly over Sans. His hips rocked slowly as his soul raced, taking time to calm after such an exciting moment. “Are you alright?” He was aware the other had fragile HP- and sometimes Grillby could get a little out of hand. He kissed softly over the skeleton’s chest, and peered at him with warm eyes through his glasses. Releasing Sans’ cock, Grillby shifted and flipped them, so the skeleton was sprawled out across his chest.

His form slumped upon being freed from the ropes, and he held tightly to Grillby, panting heavily as he laid his head on the other's chest, "Y-yeah..." he managed out after long enough, "G-Great."

Grillby nodded. He coaxed his own soul out of the side of his chest, showing a brilliant orange soul, interspersed with flecks of red and yellow to make it look almost like living flame. He offered it out to Cae, utmost trust in the tired boss elemental’s face. His soul is worn slightly, a few healed cracks leaving permanent marks where he had nearly given up hope so long ago.

He looked at him, then he smiled weakly and he nodded faintly. "Y-yeah..."

Grillby extended his hand, and let his soul draw closer to Cae’s own. “You are beautiful,” he murmurs, awe easing into his voice. It was such a fragile soul for a boss monster- but hell if that didn’t make him want to protect it from harm. His soul trembles softly in his palm, and he extends it further, letting Cae make the final choice on if they do this or not.

He smiled at him hesitantly. "Yours is more so.” He purred softly, before he slowly pushed his soul closer to Grillby’s, "I want this." he whispered.

“I want this too.” Grillby lets his soul extend as he shifts his other hand to cradle Cae’s skull tenderly. He strokes his cheek as he waits for their souls to brush and mingle together.

He closed his eyes and his soul was held out until it brushed against the bright colored soul of the
"A-Ahh..." he gasped.

Grillby tensed under him, a soft groan leaving him. His soul pulsed warmly against Cae’s, the surface of it being chilled by the cooler temperatures of Sans’. A shiver rolls down his body, and he cradles their souls together, trapping them between his hand and the skeleton’s palm. “Ahgn… Mm…” He could slightly feel Cae, feel his nerves, and did his best to soothe him as he pushed his magic towards the younger skeleton’s core.

The magic was sent with the express intent to create a soul- with all the hope and desire that the fire elemental could muster, along with all of the love for the skeleton that he could physically send over.

"Nnnh..." his grip moved to cling to Grillby's shoulders, his form curling up slightly as the sensation quickly washed over him. "G-Grill... f-fu... hhahh..." his sounds were now more breathy, his head resting on his chest.

Grillby was silent and focused, offering his magic to the skeleton above him. He shivered under him, heat bleeding out into the smaller monster as he hoped with all of his being. “We will have to wait and see,” he admits softly. “It might take a while for it to take…” Tiredness coats his voice- the amount of magic he’d put into Cae was more than he had expunged in a long, long time.

"Th-That's... that's fine..." something was not fine... Sans Caeruleus Gaster, the normally strong-willed and cocky skeleton was trembling as he lay against Grillby, taking a weak breath before his shoulders shivered.

Grillby frowned, and looped a warm arm around the skeleton. He nuzzled the top of his skull, and began soothingly. His soul threaded more love over alongside his magic. “Sans…?” He queried softly. “Are you okay?”

He looked at him as he started to laugh, "Y-Yeah, Grillby... I'm... well shit..." he nuzzled him and hugged him tightly, "I never got this far b'fore." he murmured, "There was always a reset..."

“You said it yourself,” Grillby murmured softly. “This is the last one. This will be the last one- so why not let yourself be happy? Let yourself love, let yourself grow… Live, Sans. Let yourself live for once.”

The skeleton had blundered the facts about the resets to him a long time ago, when he had gotten too drunk. In trying to drown his sorrows, he had accidentally spilled them- and had to go back several days later to clear up many facts that he had muddled.

Grillby had understood then, why Sans had been slightly distant and fearful in getting to attached to their relationship.

He gave another laugh, and he nuzzled him again, "Fuck, Grillbz... Why couldn't it have been like this sooner..." he sighed.

“… That is mostly my fault,” the fire elemental clutched him tighter to him, and nuzzled the top of his skull. “I was afraid…” He admits. “Afraid of loving and losing again. Twice… I would not survive it.”

He looked up at him, then he slowly pulled himself closer to lean up and kiss Grillby.

Grillby kissed him back gently, and let their souls part. His sluggishly slid back into his chest, so he could loop both arms around the skeleton using him for a living heating pad. When they parted,
Grillby closed his eyes and heaved a great sigh. “…Do you remember,” he began, “when we first met? Do you remember what I looked like?” he had been thinner then- his muscle tone had faded along with the brightness of his fires. He had moved like he was so much older than he actually was- and his glow had been dimmer than an echo-flower’s. Grillby had looked decent from afar, but up close he had been run down, looking nothing like he did now.

"Yeah, you were so fucking cute." he chuckled quietly, "Hey, remember how short I was?"

It physically pained him to have to ruin his perception of their first meeting, but it meant that he too had been fooled by his outward appearance. “I remember, yes. You had to get a step stool to get onto one of the taller seats- and then you proceeded to flirt with me. If I recall, you said I ‘lit up your world’. I remember it made me laugh.” Grillby chuckled quietly. His eyes closed though, and it faded off. He was silent, and he glanced away. “Truth be told, I was perhaps days away from falling.” He admitted quietly. “You making me laugh had been the first time in a long time.”

“Well, I’ll admit, there was definitely a spark between us.” he chuckled quietly, before he nuzzled him, "Hey... Grillbz... You know I’ll never let that happen."

“Losing you would tip me back, Sans. You, with your puns and humor, reminded me to live. To hope again. Losing my first mate hit me hard, Cae. It hit very hard.” He smooched the top of his skull quietly and closed his eyes. “The reason it took so long for me to formally ask was because I was afraid. I’m... not afraid anymore. I’m ready to move on- and to live. And that’s what I want you to do too. Don’t fear the resets. Fearing things- it keeps you from truly living.”

He sighed softly. "Yeah... you're right," he murmured, before he held tighter to the elemental below him. "Well you know what? Not an issue anymore." he told him firmly. "Because now you have me. And I have you."

“Exactly.” The large fire elemental nuzzled into him and rumbled contently as he enveloped the smaller skeleton in his warmth. “And together, we will truly live.” He murmured warmly.

Giving a soft laugh, Caeruleus nuzzled him again and took a deep breath, his body aching and demanding he surrender to the warmth. "Promise you won't tell no one about this?" he murmured, his accent coming into the way he talked again.

“I am a man of few words,” The bartender rumbled softly. After all, he’d kept the knowledge of his falling to himself for many years. This would stay between them and only them.

"Damn straight you are." he chuckled, nipping his chest before he sighed and settled, his eye sockets soon going dark.

The elemental settled down as soon as Sans had fallen asleep. His fires dimmed faintly as he settled down, and the elemental succumbed to slumber shortly after. It had been a good Valentines- a very good one.
Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So here’s the third part of the Valentine’s chapters. Here’s what Tenebris has been up to during the events of the past two chapters. –flails hands- here is the kingdings that Silverwing has been frothing relentlessly for. I still don’t ship it or really enjoy it, but eh. The things you do for friends, am I right?

Don't forget to come find us at our blog! you can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: And now, for the cute-ship we've all been waiting for!

Some Kingding Dads fuckin' like the adorable lovers they are!

"Thank you for the ride, Toki."

"No problem, Tenebris! I’ll see you in a little while!"

"Of course."

When introduced to the idea of spending this romantic holiday with Asgore, Tenebris had felt a sense of fluster that made him both excited and almost a little nervous to visit the king. And yet, he accepted her offer for the lift, and thankfully didn’t have to twist himself into a pretzel to fit in her car this time.

At least getting out was easy enough...

Tenebris waved until the truck was out of sight, and he smiled as he turned and began into the mountain. He felt Goosebumps as he walked through the barrier hall, feeling a older sense of dread and loathing for what once occupied this hall. Regardless, he continued walking, out of the great hall, and into the lesser, he could see the light at the other end of the hall, a bright golden color. Growing eager, he quickened his pace until he arrived in the throne room doorway.

As usual, Asgore was in the throne room. This time though, he was settled on his knees, heavy cloak discarded and settled over the arm of the throne as he tended to the garden of golden flowers that bloomed around his seat. The king was metaphorically elbow deep in carefully removing several buttercups from the ground, taking care to keep the roots in tact. It was obvious he’d been doing it for a while- for the garden was larger than it had been before. He was spreading out the flowers, thinning out the patches where they had grown surely too thick, and making the ground cover expand.

It also served the purpose of making sure that the precious plants did not choke themselves out. He only had to do it every few years- but it was enjoyable work nonetheless.

The king sneezed as pollen invaded his nose, and he laughed quietly as a few loose petals fluttered into the air. His ears twitched, and he shook his head, heavy mane bouncing around his horns. “This is what I get for doing this in the middle of blooming season.”
Tenebris put a fist over his mouth to stifle his laugh as he came over. He pulled a handkerchief from his coat and reached out, running a hand over Asgore's shoulder as to not startle him, as he offered it to the king, stepping into view with a gentle smile.

"Gesundheit, your Majesty."

The king did startle, but not completely. He had heard the soft noises of Tenebris’ feet over the tile, but he hadn’t expected him to be so close so soon. So while his mane fluffed slightly, his tail fluttering rapidly as it poked out the back of his trousers, he avoided actually jumping from the contact.

He sniffed quietly, and took the handkerchief with a thankful rumble. “Thank you, old friend.” He took the moment to blow his nose, and gave his head another slight shake. Pollen puffed off of him, and he waved it away with a quiet chuckle, tucking the used kerchief into his pocket so he could either use it again, or clean it later. He turned on his knees, peering up at the tall scientist. “I did not expect you to be here so soon- it has been far too long since I have gotten to see you. How did you get here so quickly?” The caravans took days- and he’d gotten word that Tenebris was going to visit, but hadn’t expected him to be there the same day that he got the call.

Kneeling down to rest on his haunches so as to be more level with Asgore, Tenebris smiled at the other. "I was given a lift by Miss Toki." he explained, "I believe she detected my eagerness to see you again." he admitted with a soft laugh.

Asgore shifted to face him fully and offered him a kind smile. His ears perked, and his eyes twinkled merrily. “That is quite kind of her! She has been doing much for our kind- I am glad she could take the time to bring you here… I would be lying if I said I wasn’t eager to see you too.” The king beamed at him. “Forgive me for being a bit unprepared. When you called this morning, I thought I would be seeing you two days from now. I would have made sure I wasn’t up to my wrists in dirt.”

He laughed softly and shook his head. "Oh don’t worry. I think the earthy smell fits you." he purred, before looking to where he was working. He arched a brow curiously. "Opening up the garden, hm?” he rumbled, "A task well known by an experienced botanist such as yourself.” he then reached out and picked up a few of the flowers, looking at it before he glanced to Asgore with a warm smile.

Asgore chuckled merrily, and scrubbed his hands on a spare cloth, so the fur wasn’t as dirty. “Well, I certainly hope you enjoy how I smell. I certainly enjoy your scent.” He inhaled a heavy whiff, pointedly sniffing teasingly towards the skeleton monster. The king nodded, gathering the few plants he’d uprooted and settling them into a bin with some dirt in it so they wouldn’t dry out. “You know I have to do it once or twice a year, or they choke themselves out. But I think they can wait to be finished until a later time. Would you like some tea, or did you want to stop at your laboratory first, old friend?”

The phantom had mentioned vaguely over the phone that he had some samples he wanted to run some tests on- though he hadn’t said what they were or why he wanted to run them. Asgore did not often press for answers, though.

"I’d rather have a cup of tea with you before I end up losing track of time." he admitted, before he leaned forwards and bumped his skull gently under the king’s chin. "It's been so long since I properly spent time with you." he murmured.

Asgore nuzzled his chin down onto the top of Tenebris’ skull, and proceeded to tug the monster into his arms. He stood up, with Tenebris easily draped in his arms, and pressed a soft kiss to the phantom’s forehead. “It has been far too long, my friend. A cup of tea sounds splendid- I think I still have some of your favorite back at home. Come! Tea awaits!”
Fluffy tail flicking happily, the king turns on his heel and carefully steps through the flowers, making sure not to crush them as he goes.

He purred happily when he felt the other's soft lips on his forehead and he chuckled before following him, "Right behind you, my king."

The king was cheerful as he plodded down the long hall that headed towards his home. It didn’t take long for his legs to bring him there, and he opened the door, ushering the phantom in first. The house was warm - it was always warm, maintained by his magic that had long ago permeated the premises - so Asgore gave Gaster a smile. "Is there anything you would like me to make you along with the tea while you get settled in?"

"Mmm, I don’t have a preference, anything that's convenient will work just fine." he replied, standing by the front door as he reached up, starting to unbutton his coat.

Asgore nodded and left him to get himself settled in. The king stepped into his kitchen, quietly grabbing for some biscuits that would go well with the tea. Some were settled onto a plate, and then Asgore started the tea.

Fire magic had many uses - and he had long ago perfected the art of making the perfect cup of tea with it. He hummed pleasantly, warming the pot of water with one hand and getting the tea ready to steep with the other.

Tenebris soon came to join him in the kitchen. Now barefoot and in his turtleneck, he hugged Asgore from behind and started to purr into his back.

The king had heard him coming, and smiled to himself. The monster purring into his back was warm, and Asgore chuckled gingerly. "Is the house warm enough for you, Old friend? I know you get cold quite easily." Asgore himself was verging on the edge of overly warm - but having thick fur often did that to a monster.

"Yes. But there's nothing I love more than the heat of another... especially if he has the aroma of tea, flowers, and soil to him." he rumbled gently.

Asgore simply smiled. He rumbled gently back, and poured the now-boiling water over the tea leaves to let them steep. The king shifted, carefully scooting the cups back so that they did not get spilled, and then turned around in Gaster’s grasp so he could face him. Large hands settled on the phantom monster’s hips, and he dipped down to rub his nose against the other’s neck. Soft, furry lips pressed ticklish kisses over the turtleneck hiding his skin from view. "Well, I most certainly do not mind sharing my warmth with you, my friend."

He let a soft giggle slip past him and he smiled up at the king. "Good, because I would be set on taking it anyhow." he purred softly, nuzzling the top of the king’s head.

Asgore chuckles, and his ears flick and flop. The spot where he had gotten shot had healed over, and with magic, it looked as if it had never been there in the first place. He tilts his head, exhaling warm air and lipping gently up the side of his neck. "Mmm, one condition. I get to hear more of your laughs- I love hearing your laughter and making you laugh."

He shivered and in response to the other's actions, leaned and softly nipped his ear with a rumbling chuckle.

Asgore laughed softly and hugged the other monster affectionately. He released him then, and slid the tea over to him. "Mm, tea first, my friend. If we wait any longer, it will have steeped for too
long.” And one did not waste tea in the presence of the king.

"I wouldn't mind a stronger tea." he rumbled, but he took his tea without another word, and blew on it gently before he took a sip.

Asgore too blew on his own cup, leaning against his counters as he took a sip. He had an odd quirk of simply eating the tealeaves that remained in his cup- Frisk often teased him that he was more goat than he let on- and he had to take care not to get the soggy leaves caught in his beard. “Strong tea is good- but a perfect cup is neither too strong, nor too weak.”

"Very true." he sighed blissfully. "There's always something about the way you make it, dear friend, that always makes it taste wonderful.”

Asgore chortled softly and wiggled a furry brow at him playfully. “I could take a page from your son’s book and say it’s made with magic.”

"That's awful" he laughed, "It would have been worse if you said 'made with love'." he added.

“Well, it might have been made with the lower case love,” Asgore winks. He sips his tea, the hot drink scalding over his teeth and tongue. There is a content rumble in his chest- and it sounds vaguely sheep like as he enjoys his warm drink.

"Stars..." he moved his teacup to one hand so he could face palm, well aimed so there is a loud SLAP result as his hand met his forehead.

The noise startled him more than the action, and Asgore choked on his tea with a bleating laugh. It sounded like someone had just slapped a china-plate. He sputtered, dabbing his beard with a napkin as tea escaped. “My friend! If you do that, you might damage your face with your claws.”

He looked at him with a smile, already the handprint darkening on his forehead from where he’d smacked himself. "I need not worry about my claws, dear Asgore. Thank you anyways for your worry."

“I am always going to worry.” The king chuffs softly. He finishes his tea, and goes to rinse his cup.

After a moment Tenebris came and rinsed his out as well. "You wish to return to the garden? Or would you like to do something else~?” he purred

Asgore lets Tenebris take over at the sink, and sidles up behind him. His nose burrows into the neck of Tenebris’ turtleneck, and he slowly presses kisses to what skin he can as his hands come to rest on the shorter monster’s hips. “I’m thinking,” he purred, “Something else first.”

He shivers and his tail starts to rattle as he leans his head to one side, letting the king have better access. "Nnn... heh... Great minds think alike.”

The king rumbles softly, large palms exploring over the monster’s hips. One of his fingers comes to tease the base of his tail, and Asgore chuckles gently against Tenebris’ neck. “Great minds indeed… Where would you prefer it this time, Tenebris?” Last time they had accidentally broken one of his cabinets when Tenebris got a little exuberant- but he supposed he wouldn’t mind it here if that is where the doctor wanted it.

He purrs until the other’s digits go to his tail and he stiffed, pupils dilating slightly as he let out a soft rattling moan. He slowly managed to turn around and grin up at Asgore. "Anywhere we haven't tried yet~?” he chuckled quietly.
“Probably the actual bedroom,” The king chuckled. He let the monster turn, and then shifted, pressing him flush to the counter behind him. There was a growing bulge pressed to the front of Tenebris’ pants.

He let out a soft ‘ah’ of surprise, and then he licked his lips. "Ah... You were as eager for this as I was..." he chuckled lowly.

Tenebris leaned against the counter for support, and with a flex of his midsection, Tenebris brings up his legs, haunches resting on the king's hips as his legs locked behind him, his tail coiling around one of Asgore's legs. He grins at him coyly. "Then what are we waiting for, your majesty?"

Asgore chuckles softly as he’s snared. He arches an amused furry brow at the monster in front of him, and idly plucks the hem of his pants. “Well,” he rumbles back, “I think we have a problem. I’d hate to ruin your favorite sweater and your pants…” he could slip his own down from there, but Gaster’s tail would definitely put a small kink in things. But he did have practice, and expertly began to work the other monster’s pants down his hips. “Lift,” he commands gently, so he can slide them out from under the curve of his buttocks.

He chuckled and did as ordered. "Don't forget to unclip the band over my tail." he murmured.

Asgore wouldn’t forget- but the reminder was good. He chuckled softly, doing as instructed, and then began guiding his pants down. He has to unhook Gaster’s legs long enough to fling the pants away, but soon he’s back, pressing the growing bulge in his own pants against the slit that hid all of Gaster’s parts. He kissed him softly, and his hands wandered up the scientists’ turtleneck, stroking over pale skin with the soft pads of his fingers.

He moaned softly into the kiss as his haunches, powerful and pure white, were released from his clothing, "Mrrr~" he let out a purr and his mouth fell open as the king's hands found his shield. Soft pads found powerful bone that protected the smaller's chest, and as wandering fingers slipped between the ribs of the shield, he arched and gave a soft moan, "Ahhh... Asgore~" This felt more like a massage, but he was happily anticipating so much more.

Asgore was content to give much more than that. He shifts, and guides his shirt up. “Arms,” he purrs. While Tenebris has his arms in the air, he's going to kiss and nip along the edges of his shield, and run his blunted teeth along his neck. He rumbles softly, rocking teasingly against Tenebris’ slit.

He chuckled and helped him, first getting his head through the turtleneck before he easily slid out of both it and the black tank top he wore underneath it.

He now laid back on the counter with a sigh, bare for his king to admire. "Mmnn~" he smiled up at him, "It's been too long."

“Far too long,” Asgore all but purred. He leaned back for a moment, eyes roving over the pale body displayed for him. He trailed his hands up and down his sides, stroking over the slit at the center of his body, before wandering up to the shield of reinforced bone that made up Tenebris’ chest. “Mm…” He leaned down, and his mouth began to trail paths over any new scars he might have missed, kissing them and making note of them, and making note that each new scar just made Tenebris that much more lovely.

His torso swelled with air as he leaned his head back, eyes closing as his arms came up to look around Asgore’s neck, stroking through the golden fur. His shield had little damage to it, proof of its capability, but had a few thin marks around the hole that led to his empty torso. Under the king’s girth, however, his slit, held closed by strong muscle that sealed everything behind the flesh, was now softening up in arousal, starting to open to the king's touches, "nnnh~"
Asgore was pleased at his reactions, and continued his gentle ministrations. Kisses here, touches there, licks that trailed teasingly over roping lines of scar and muscle- Asgore practically worshipped the body that he was presented with. Sadly, he had to pause, if only to undo the buttons on his trousers and free himself from his ever tightening confinements.

His sheath popped free, his cock already slipping free. It was long, with slightly backwards facing barbs along the bottom of it that faced towards his testicals. The goat monster let out a rumbling sound, and his fingered slipped to his slit, gently stroking the softening flesh.

Tenebris had lifted his head to see for a moment what Asgore had stopped for, but he wasn't disappointed in what he saw. "O-Oh sweet Stars," he mewled out upon the gentle touches to his slit. He leaned back and turned his head to moan behind a bit lip as a long, black tentacle slipped from his slit to gently entwine with His Majesty's hand, "nnnhh…"

The tentacle wasn't much of a surprise. Tenebris had some… interesting parts, but Asgore enjoyed them nonetheless. As the tentacle looped around his fingers, he gently stroked it. “Well hello there,” he crooned cheekily. “Someone’s excited.” It was sticky and black, and stained the fur of his palm something fierce- but his palm worked over the tentacle anyways, trying to coax out the rest of them.

Tenebris buried his face in his arm, moaning breathlessly as the tentacle continued to react to his king's touch, though soon enough the tentacle was accompanied by a second, followed by a third, and a fourth.

Asgore smiled softly, and took his time stroking each of the tentacles that came out. He let them spread their slime, and chuckled softly as he stroked each one. Tenebris blissful expressions made him happy for what he was doing.

Pried open by the tentacles, the muscles of Tenebris' slit retracted completely and the scientist looked up at his king. "A-Asgore…” he moaned out, rotating his hips before pressing against his hand, the tentacles all happily moving over the king's fur, staining them with their black essence. But now it seemed the smaller of the two monsters wanted something more.

The king knew exactly what the smaller monster wanted, and he shifted to stroke his pinky just below the tentacles. The soft nook was usually hidden by the tentacles, and he made sure to brush his knuckle against the sweet spot. “Tenebris,” The king rumbled softly. His paws gingerly worked over the tentacles while his mouth paid tribute to the pale flesh before him. Asgore’s teeth worked gently along his shoulder, nibbling and nipping the skin with blunted tips as the soft fur of his lips kissed and sucked slightly.

The king knew exactly what he truly wanted- but Asgore wanted Tenebris absolutely prepared before he did anything more. Tenebris was closer to his size- but Asgore’s member was more inherent to that of his lion-based father. If Tenebris was not completely ready, it would not be pleasant, and Asgore did not want any part of this to be unpleasant for him. Perhaps he was too patient of a lover, to attentive, but that is how he was.

Patient and attentive was more than okay for Tenebris, he knew what the king was packing, but he didn't care. He was always so gentle.

The soft sounds that Gaster made were beautiful as he clung to his king, running his fingers through his fur. The touches to his nook had him gasping and moaning softly as he rocked his hips, wanting more of his touch.

Asgore was gentle as he slipped a clawed finger inside. He stuck with his pinky for now, as it was his smallest finger. His claw gently scraped over the inside of his nook, the soft pad of his finger
massaging the inside walls. That left the rest of his fingers free to fondle the tentacles clinging to him.

As the finger moved inside, Tenebris gasped out. His nook had gone untouched for so long… "O-Oooh stars...." he breathed out, "Asgore~"

“Tenebris,” Asgore cooed softly. He slowly rocked his finger in his nook, stroking and curling it slightly as he stimulated him. Slowly, he added a second finger, easing it in and gently stretching him. Thrusting them slowly, Asgore gave a patient rumble, chuckling at the soft noises of pleasure from the smaller monster.

Tenebris curled in and pressed his head to Asgore's neck as his hands hooked around his back, holding to him tightly as his toes curled. "Aaahhhhh..." he mewled out, his hips rocking in reaction to the two fingers in his already-wet nook.

The motion pleased the king, and Asgore curled his free hand around the smaller monster. His claws traced teasing patterns up and down his spine, stroking over the flesh and scars that were there. “Mmm…” His mouth settled over Tenebris neck and shoulder, and he nibbled and sucked where he found.

Asgore rolled his wrist, and squeezed a third finger in. He curled his fingers, rocking his knuckles in deeper into the phantom. A few thrusts, slick black ooze sticking to his fur and slicking it down. “Think you’re ready, my friend?” He teases slightly.

He was breathless at this point, his mouth hanging open and taking a gasp whenever Asgore moved his fingers, "Y-Yes...! YEes...!" was what he managed to get out. His face was a deep black now, and hot with a blush. He knew that only Asgore could get him like this, but fuck he loved it~

Truly, his poor scientist was far too wound up if he was already trembling and twitching around him. Asgore would just have to make sure he spent his time here as relaxed as could be. A pleased noise rumbled from his chest, and he gave his nook one last rolling thrust with his fingers before sliding them out.

The king took a moment to slick his cock up with the sticky black fluids that coated his digits. Once he was sufficiently lubricated, Asgore placed his hand on a pale hip, and began to guide his member into Gaster's nook. He took it slow, gliding smoothly. He was wider than just three fingers- but three fingers was usually enough to prepare Tenebris well enough for the girth that came with taking the goat-king’s cock.

The sounds from the scientist only grew louder as the king pushed in. Tenebris loved the way his king's fingers felt, but after so long without, when it came to finally being able to envelop the king's cock in his needy nook, he stood no chance to remain coherent. Claws pressed into Asgore's shoulders as he moaned louder, "Aaahhh~!"

Asgore’s fur was thick, and his shirt added a layer of defense against the thick claws that dug into his hide. The kind purred, sucking sharply along his neck. He eased himself in until he was hilted, and gave him a little bit of time to adjust. Slowly, he drew out, the barbs dragging backwards against his nook as he pulled backwards.

His hips jerked forwards again, completing the thrust with almost painful slowness.

Moaning into Asgore's chest, Tenebris' legs clenched around his waist and he let out a needy snarl, before he jerked his hips, rocking against him. "Nnnhhh...!"

Asgore gave him a sharper nip, and rumbled to him. “Patience, my friend,” he murmured
affectionately. His hands held firm to the pale hips, keeping him easily still as he set the pace of the thrusts.

"Ah-Asgore... please..." he whined into his neck, his tail coiling tightly around Asgore's leg as his toes continued to curl and uncurl.

Asgore rumbled soothingly, keeping one hand secure on his hip. The other hand came up to cradle his back, dragging gentle claws up and down his spine. His hips rolled, and he began to pick up his pace. Soft grunts escaped through his nose, and he lapped his tongue up the other's neck, rumbling gently.

Tenebris was more than pleased to let out his noises as he was pounded into the countertop by his king and lover, leaning up and lightly nipping his ears and jaw between moans.

Asgore rumbles lightly and shivers at the nipping. He shudders, his cock throbbing as he shifts his angle, driving the thick head of his shaft into the upper parts of his nook. “Mmmm,” The kind purrs, eyes sliding shut. His grunts deepen slightly, and he nips and nibbles Tenebris' shoulders a bit harder. He would end up with several hickies and no doubt some bruising from his teeth- Asgore wouldn’t regret marking his scientist though.

Not that Tenny cared at all~ they were the marks of his king, and Stars help him if he didn't thoroughly enjoy every last one. He let the king bite him as he pleased before he retaliated. He moved to the king's collarbone, nuzzled back his clothing and bit down gently, "Rrrr~"

Asgore’s fur was thick- and they’d probably be picking it out of Tenebris teeth for hours after. Still, the king groans, jerking his hips a little rougher. The spurs on his cock slid roughly over the inner side of Tenebris nook, and Asgore didn’t bother to stop the pleased growl that bubbled up through his chest.

That rougher thrust is exactly what Gaster wanted. He moaned out in pleasure and bit a little harder, his hips wiggling eagerly in Asgore's hands, "Ahh- th-that's it" he hissed.

The king chomped slightly harder onto his skin, lips curling up and tickling the whiskers of his beard over his skin. Asgore’s thrusts roughened further, his breaths coming out in deep, grunting pants. He rolled his hips, giving his cock a little twist as it tugged free and thrust back in.

That freed Asgore of the fangs on his collarbone as Tenebris began to bark out and made loud open-mouthed moans from Asgore's treatment. "Oooh F-Fuck~!") he cried.

Asgore rumbled sharply, jerking his hips heartily. He felt his edge coming, and could feel that Tenebris was close too. The rippling and pulsing of his nook surrounding his cock was almost painfully pleasurable. One hand keeping his hips still, the one that had wandered up to his back moved back down suddenly, grasping back at the tentacles that had been left thrashing between them.

He began to stroke them in earnest, timing it with each sharp thrust as he slammed further and further into his core.

"A-ASGORE!" Tenebris cried out, his grip like a vice on Asgore's clothing as his hips began to jerk into the dual stimulation. The king wasn't wrong in his assumptions, Gaster was close... so close.

“Come for me,” the king rumbles deeply, letting it vibrate up his chest like a bass drum. “Come for me, Tenebris.” His hand rolls, tweaking the tentacles tauntingly, as he rolls his hips in a nearly bruising thrust. “Scream the name of your King,” he purrs.
Tenebris tensed up at the baritone words that trembled through him, and his tail came to unwind from Asgore's leg, instead going between them and hooking onto his shoulder firmly. "A-ASGORE!" the scientist cried out, before his form went rigid and he clenched down on the king's cock as his tentacles all began to release their black fluids.

"ASGORE!" Was the near-scream that then tore itself from Gaster's throat.

Asgore’s shirt was officially ruined, but that was perfectly fine. The king’s face buried in Gaster’s neck, his hand still stroking the weeping tentacles. Asgore gave a beastly grunt, thrust a few more times, and came hard as well, flooding the phantom’s nook with his essence. His cock swelled, locking them loosely together as the king clutched him tight. “Mmmm, Tenebris…”

W-Was he... oh god he was tied. Tenebris let out weak pants and mewls as he settled down in Asgore's arms, panting heavily into his shirt as he slowly managed to lift one hand, petting the king gently.

Asgore’s rumbles faded into a deep, almost sub-sonic bass boom deep in his chest, and he snuggles into Gaster affectionately. His lips press soft fuzzy kisses wherever he can, and he leans into the soft pets with his ears twitching happily. The goat king’s tail flutters happily behind him.

"Hahh... Hnn~" Tenebris caught his breath, then chuckled quietly as he nuzzled the soft chest, "Mmm... Thank you." he purred.

The goat monster purred, mouth pressing more kisses. He lathed his tongue over where he had bitten him, and then leaned back to pepper his skull in kisses too. “No,” he purred, “Thank you. Mm… Sorry I knotted- I didn’t think to pull out. My apologies,” he purred, not at all entirely apologetic. Asgore shifted, and lifted Tenebris up so he could tote him over to the kitchen chairs. He sat, leaving the phantom draped over him, and relaxed to wait out the tie that kept them bound together.

"N-No no... I don't care... Not a bit.” he purred happily, nuzzling into his chest, "I... didn't mean to ruin your shirt." he murmured, slowly getting his tail to unhook on his shoulder.

“A shirt can be replaced,” The king chortled affectionately. “It is no trouble.”

"Mmmh." the reassurance put the old soul at peace and Tenebris closed his eyes, "I missed this.”

“I’ve missed this too. It has been lonely since you moved to the Village,” The kind king admits quietly. He loops his arms tightly around him, and settles down to snuggle in the chair as they wait for the knot to pass. “Without Toriel and Frisk here, the castle feels very empty.” Even if he was busy all hours of the day handling bureaucratic nonsense and working to get the laws into place. “How has life been down in Nara Village? It was coming along wonderfully when I came for New Years. I heard they are getting a school put up?”

"Indeed." he replied, "My Papyrus has found love with Miss Tokiko, and I’m going to be a grandfather soon." he explained to him.

“Oh?” Asgore blinked. “So soon? That is very fast. But I suppose love waits for no one. Congratulations on expecting your first grandchild, Tenebris. I didn’t know there was a wedding.” A furry lip juts out, and he pouts slightly at Tenebris. “I wasn’t invited?”

"Well... a few things... one... It was an unexpected accident that was overlooked due to Toki's human soul... two... there was not a wedding... and three..." he smiled at this, "It's twins, actually...”

“Truly?” Asgore blinked, pout fading to surprise in an instant. “Oh… Oh dear, well then. That is… news we should probably make public, so that all HTM’s out there are aware. Congratulations
doubly though! Twins! What luck! I am sure you all are very excited.” He smiles a tenderly lopsided smile, eyes glimmering faintly. “Fatherhood is such a joy… I am certain Papyrus is excited, no?”

"He was surprised initially, but he's very excited to be a father. I have faith in his skill." he rumbled gently.

Asgore’s hands wandered, idly petting the white form draped across him. “I’m sure you’re excited to be a grandfather, aren’t you?” He thrummed softly.

"Ecstatic." he replied, smiling tiredly.

Asgore chuckled softly. He nuzzled him again, and pressed a soft kiss to his face. “You sound tired, old friend. We won’t be able to part for a while yet- why don’t you get some rest? When you wake, we can have some more tea and some biscuits.”

"Mmmh..." he sighed tiredly. "Gladly, sire..." he murmured, not caring that he was without clothing. He was happy and warm against the fur of his king.

Asgore had plenty of practice keeping the phantom monster warm. He snuggled him closer, fur fluffing out to help disperse his heat to the other, and settled down to wait out his knot.
Chapter 39

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And now we get to see some drunken shenanigans. Woop woop. Also don’t worry- despite you guys not seeing a lot of it immediately, plot is progressing steadily. Hehehe.

Ah! Don't forget to visit us at our blog! You can catch us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: For those who haven't seen Deadpool, or haven’t gone out drinking, yes there is an alcoholic beverage by the name of which Tenebris speaks. I personally think it's fucking hilarious, and ironic that it would happen to qualify to be Tenebris' favorite.

Anywho, enjoy, readers!

Toki went to fetch Tenebris around a week later. She’d left him there for probably longer than he had planned- but she’d been serious when she’d told him that she wasn’t going to die if he was gone for a week. And, as she pulled up outside of the castle in her truck, she had been right.

The week had gone good- she’d gotten it cleared with Cae that yes, he wouldn’t mind going out with her brothers. She’d also made headway into the next set of papers- and things were really beginning to progress as far as she knew. Most of the week had been spent enjoying her time with Aliquam and the relative peace of the village- though they’d made use of the pond she’d made into a hot-spring more than once.

Her mood was high, and she turned the radio down slightly as she rolled down her window, waiting for the big monster to come out to the car. She’d gotten the seats all set for him, so he could sprawl on his chest across the collapsed front seat, and leave his lower half curled up in her back seat. It was on the cooler side today- so she’d taken extra care to make space for his tail, so she could keep the heater on inside of the truck for him.

He did get cold easy, after all.

Idly, Toki sung along with the radio, tapping her knuckles lightly on the steering wheel as her truck idled. Toki sent Tenebris a text, letting him know she was here and waiting for him.

Giving his king one last kiss farewell, Tenebris looked more than content as he walked out of the castle, through the barrier hall, and out to where he could see her. He gave a wave to reveal his presence easier, before starting over to the truck.

Upon arriving to it, he smiled and opened the door. "Hello, Toki~" he greeted, even sounding much better than he had when he was dropped off.

Toki grinned at him cheekily when he opened the back door, having rotated so she could see him clamor in. It was easier for him to fit if it was just the two of them in the car- and he could drape across the seats like a lion over a sun rock. “Sooo,” she purrs, “Did you have a good week of
vacation?” She wiggles her brow ridges at him, turning the radio down so they could talk without having to shout over it. “You certainly seem to be in a better mood.”

Once in the truck, he stretched out and sighed, settling down in the seats before he smiled at her. He pillowed his head on his forearms, using his tail to shut the door behind him. "It was wonderful, yes..." he then blinked, mouth popping open. "Wait... It was a week?!"

“It was a week.” She nodded with amusement, keeping a sage smile on her face. Once the door was shut, she hit the locks so he didn’t accidentally open it while going down the road, and then tossed the truck into reverse. She backed down the rickety road, and got the truck turned around when she could. Putting it back into drive, Toki proceeded down the main road towards home. “Got lost in your lab and in your boyfriend, didn’t you?” He had needed it- the improvement to his mood was visible, and a happy Tenebris was quite the sight to see.

"The latter more than the prior." he admitted with a chuckle, "It was so good to visit him."

“That’s good.” Toki keeps her eyes on the road, but idly taps her knuckles to the tune of the music. “You really did need it- you’re coming back with a much better mood. Maybe I need to drop you off up there more often.” She chuckles.

“Very funny,” he snorted, giving her a faint grin. "Though, admittedly, you may have a point.”

Toki adjusted her seat belt with one hand- it was starting to sit funny across her middle, and she wasn’t entirely certain what to think of that. “I always have a point.” She grins, tapping one of her horns with her finger. “I’m glad you enjoyed yourself. So, besides spending some quality lovey-dovey time with the King, what else did you do?”

"That was awful." He snorted, bemused. "I did that research I said I would do. And I’m surprised at what I found."

“I’ve been hanging around your son too much.” Toki chuckles softly. “Some of Sans’ humor was bound to rub off on me eventually. He’s like a fungus. A strange, ketchup guzzling fungus.” The way she says it is full of nothing more than affection though, as she shifts gears in her truck and turns on her fog lights. The particular stretch of woods was always foggy- and it was honestly creepy. There had used to be people out here- but a lot of them had sold the land and moved away the moment that the monsters became part of the world. Now it was empty houses and the ghosts of what remained of farms or play sets. “Really? What did you find?”

"That was awful." He snorted, bemused. "I did that research I said I would do. And I’m surprised at what I found."

“He really does grow on you.” he snorted, before getting to answer her. "The chemistry of your bones has changed. They're highly conductive, and yet at the same time they're completely fireproof."

“At least the parts that spark. I burnt the bottom of my feet when I had to handle Vikki. Pap’s the one that actually saw it. But I think that was from touching hot stuff while my defense was in the negative. Hm... We could probably test it. I think I have a lighter in my glove box?” The lighter wasn’t a huge deal- she used them to light candles at home. Really, she was doing a large amount better with fire than before. Grillby no longer bothered her, to be honest.

"Not while you're driving." he said sternly.

“Tenebris, I’m literally the only car on this road at almost any given time anymore. This is the best time- you know Paps would pitch a fit over us doing something like this.” Aliquam was a love, truly, but he was also overprotective at times. Her being a glass canon had him worrying- and it seemed he would rather her not use her magic with her defense how it was. “If you’re worried about me
panicking, I can pull over.”

"I wouldn’t mind it," he sighed.

“Ye of such little faith.” But still, Toki is not going to begrudge him his safety measures, since he is the only one who had the possibility of probably ruining his face on the glass. Her seat belts were top of the line- she wouldn’t be going anywhere once they locked. Toki drives until they’re out of the fog, and then pulls off to the shoulder of the road. As she slides it into park, Toki turns slightly in her seat and gives him a wry grin. Experimenting with the lighter wasn’t going to kill her- and a burn on her finger was easily healed. “You’re going to have to dig in the glove box for me- it should be off to the side by the passenger door.”

He shook his head and chuckled, before he rummaged around the glove box. "The sample from your horn might not be the same as your phalanges, so let me know if it hurts at any point."

“The bones of my hands are inherently more sensitive. I don’t feel much in the ends of my horns, to be truthful with you. It’s probably going to suck. I don’t mind though- I’m just as curious as you are. For science, right?” he wouldn’t have a problem finding the lighter- she could see the bright red shell of it just next to her first aid kit. Toki offered out her fingers. “So do you think it works different when the bone is attached to me still? We know the sample of my horn didn’t scorch, but do you think it still won’t if it’s not away from my body?”

"... Yes for science." he said in defeat, "I'm afraid I’m not sure if there is going to be a difference." he mentioned, before he tested the lighter.

Toki nods and wiggles her index finger. She does look away though as he lights it up, and takes a calming breath. It was different knowing she was going to be touching it- but she stayed calm. It was only a little bit on her finger. She had burnt herself worse than that on hot drinks as a human- and it wasn’t like a tiny burn on her finger would hurt the twins in her belly either. “I’m ready. If it hurts, you’ll know.”

He nodded and sparked the lighter, looking at the flame before he held it out for her.

The flame passed under her digit, and she held still. “It’s hot,” She admits, finally glancing over. The bone of her finger was slightly darker, but that was from the smoke of the lighter. “But not too bad. It’s getting a little bit irritating- like being out in the sun for too long, but it doesn’t hurt. I think my defense stat buffers the burn.”

"Most likely." he moved the lighter then gently blew on her finger to cool it.

She laughed at the absurdity of him blowing on her finger, and instead dipped it into the bottle of water she’d brought with her. She found herself taking in a lot more fluids, even if she didn’t technically need them. The water hisses and steams for half a second, before it calms. Her now cool finger is withdrawn, and she turns it over for him to observe and analyze. “‘You know,’” she chuckles, “We’re hilarious. We just pulled over to the side of the road to see if all of me is fireproof or not. Heh. Did you want me to flip my defense so we can see if that affects it?”

"That would involve you needing to resort to violence, and right now I rather like having my jaw located properly. Plus if I show up with a bruise my boys would get worried." Toki guffawed, and proceeded to sip the water she’d cooled her finger in. It tasted slightly like smoke- but was better than nothing. “Oh please. If I actually hit you hard enough to bruise you, I’d probably break my hand before I dislocated your jaw. Either way, you are right and that can probably wait.” She shifts, bringing the car back into gear, and resumes driving. “I might be able to
flip my defense when I summon my bees— but I’d need something to send them after. Like… I
dunno, a tree or a big rock or something. Something I’m not actually going to hurt."

He chuckled softly and set the lighter back into the glove compartment. "Let’s bring this up again
later when we can actually act upon it."

“That sounds good to me.” She chuckles. “Alright. We’ve got a long drive home. Going to get your
nap on, or jam to the tunes with me?”

"I can enjoy it if you play it quietly, but I do think a nap is in order."

Toki grins and wiggles her brows at him suggestively. “Tired yourself out good and hard, huh?”

"Not a word.” He curled his lip at her, baring sharp reprimanding teeth at her. “I can still sense
Papyrus on you.” he growled, his cheeks darkening.

Her brows wiggle harder, and to her credit, she doesn’t even flush at his words and implications. She
knows exactly what he can sense— and the orange-colored tinge to her lower belly was probably the
cause. “That might be true, but it doesn’t fluster me to talk about it. It’s adorable when you get all
flushed.”

He snorts softly and rested his head more firmly on his arms. "I enjoyed the time I had with the king,
that’s all you get to hear."

“For one, I don’t want any sordid details. That’s gross. That’d be like walking in on my mom and
dad having sex. For two, just nope. Do not want.”

Tenebris could be such a cat sometimes— fine one moment, and grumpy and huffy the next. Toki
grinned and turned the radio up just a hair and got comfortable in her seat. One arm guiding the
steering wheel, she idly tapped a tune on her leg while she sang along quietly.

When they got back a couple hours later, Toki pulled the car to a crawl as they approached the
compound. She squinted slightly, peering over at the two cars in her driveway. “That’s Kon and
Roshi’s cars…” She mutters. Kon’s car was undeniably his— he had a large, improper sticker stuck to
the back bumper of it.

Tenebris was snoring quietly where he laid, but feeling the car slow down had his eyes opening
slowly. He lifted his head. "...?"

Toki hummed slightly, and turned on her blinker. She pulled into the compound, bringing her truck
over to the usual spot that she parked it. “Huh… Well, we’re home! I wonder how much damage my
brothers have done to everything while I’ve been gone.”

She also was low-key pitying Papyrus, because the poor skeleton probably had taken it upon himself
to baby-sit her brothers while she wasn’t here to keep them in line.

Oddly enough, things were peaceful as she got out.

Little did she know that Kon would be hogtied and pinned down by Aliquam with a foot on his back
as he spoke calmly to the brothers. Kon couldn't get anything out because he had a sock stuffed in
his mouth. Aliquam, safe to be said, was annoyed with him.
Toki indeed was oblivious as she got out, motioning for Tenebris to follow once he clamored out of the car. Toki made quick time getting to her house, and she opened the front door hesitantly, peeking inside suspiciously.

“I don’t immediately see anything broken…” She mutters, stepping inside and leaving it open for Tenebris to follow. She paused, spotting her brother bound and gagged on her floor and being used as a foot rest for her boyfriend. “Uh… Why is my brother all tied up? I mean, unless you’re giving him as a welcome-home gift to your Dad, I’d understand.”

Kon, on the floor, squirms and gives her puppy dog eyes. His hair-bright red now-is a mess, and he can’t even plead with her to get his freedom.

Toki squints. “… Is that one of Caeruleus’ socks…? That’s… disgusting.”

Tenebris entered the house and looked down at Kon, before he smirked. "Well, this is definitely interesting. Papyrus do you have your phone? I want to get a picture of this."

With a smirk, Aliquam pulled out his phone and tossed it to Tenebris.

He caught it and set up the camera, smirking as he knelt down to get a good angle. "Smile for the Camera, Kon."

Kon shot Tenebris an unrepentant look, and wiggled his brow. It was muffled, but there might have been a vague muttering about being tied up and photographed being considered kinky.

Toki glanced up at Papyrus and tilted her skull, bemused and also slightly alarmed. “What on earth could he have done to get you so irritated?” Papyrus was usually very calm.

Her brothers clamped their mouths shut when she glanced at them, and refused to say a word on it.

Aliquam grunted slightly. "He started going on about very inappropriate topics. Then mentioned a threesome with me and my father... I believe the phrase for this would be 'Talk shit, get hit'?"

“That sounds like Kon.” Toki grimaces. She shifts and tugs him away with a soft huff. “You just need to learn to ignore him, Pap. Physically stopping him works- but he actually enjoys being tied up.”

“That he does.” Han crosses his arms and leans down to tug the gag out of Kon’s mouth once Tenebris is done with his pictures. “You’re a bit of a freak, bro.”

“But at least I own up to it.” Kon grins unrepentantly up at his older brother. “I’m not the one who has the hots for the foxy doctor but lacks the balls to-”

Han gives him a light thump, and flushes with a frown.

"At this rate I feel like you’re going to invite me to do something absolutely filthy with you, Kon." Tenebris sighed. "I need some tea, it's too early for this." he huffed as he walked past them.

“It’s nearly three in the afternoon.” Roshi laughs. “Oh boy. Are we sure we wanna take the old man out drinking? If he’s drinking tea, he’s going to get so shit-faced far too fast.”

Kon squirms, and eventually Roshi leans down to help untie him. He calls after Tenebris though, grinning wide. “I mean, we could have done something filthy. I was already all tied up for you and everything!”
Toki shakes her head. “So you three are here to take them out for drinks now?”

Han nods, brushing away his flush with a few scrubs of his face. “Yeah. I’ll be having a couple- but I’m going to be playing designated babysitter for the evening.”

She nods sagely. “You handle your alcohol very well. At least the bar isn’t far from here. But please-try and keep Aliquam in one piece. I love him dearly- and I will be very upset if he gets lost.” Or if one of her brothers pulls drunken shenanigans.

Like stealing his hand and hiding it.

Aliquam had a smile as he looked to Toki. "Don't worry, Toki, I'll be alright."

Toki rolls her eyes good-naturedly and gives him a bemused look. “You say that now, but if you come home tonight missing an arm or your hand, I am going to laugh really, really hard at you.”

Kon makes a noise from the ground. “That was one time Toki! One time!”

“You stole someone’s prosthetic arm while you were drunk and threw it on a roof, Kon. I had to climb the roof of the bar to go give it back to them.” She plants her hands on her hips and gives him a stern look. “One time is enough for a lifetime.”

Roshi grins and singsongs from down by Kon. “Someone’s practicing her mom look again. But this time it’s actually going to be put to use.”

Papyrus sighed then went to go get Tenebris, bringing him to the front room. "Alright, you three, are you intending to drag us off for drinking?" he chuckled, while Tenebris grumbled softly.

It was apparent that the big monster hadn’t gotten his tea. Toki giggled at him softly.

Roshi helped his brother up, dusting him off, while Han nodded to Papyrus. “We are, yeah. Toki told us that Grillby’s was the best place to go- we were going to take your brother too.”

“Sans is already probably there. He spends a lot of time at Grillbys.” Toki chuckles softly. She leans up and tugs Pap down to give him a kiss on his cheekbone. “You boys go have fun, yeah?”

He leaned down and kissed her gently, "Of course~ we'll see you later.”

“Mhm.” She gives him a fond gently, “We are, yeah. Toki told us that Grillby’s was the best place to go- we were going to take your brother too.”

“Sans is already probably there. He spends a lot of time at Grillbys.” Toki chuckles softly. She leans up and tugs Pap down to give him a kiss on his cheekbone. “You boys go have fun, yeah?”

He leaned down and kissed her gently, "Of course~ we'll see you later.”

“Mhm.” She gives him a fond gently, “We are, yeah. Toki told us that Grillby’s was the best place to go- we were going to take your brother too.”

"Come on." Aliquam smiled at Tenebris.

The older monster sighed in defeat before he chuckled quietly. "Alright, let's go." he agreed

Toki waved them off with a wide grin, and shut the door once everyone had filed out. She shook her head with an amused chuckle, and went to go prepare the living room. Her brothers weren’t going to be in any position to drive home- and they’d need some place to crash. There was no way she and Han were getting two drunken humans and two drunken monsters up to the top floor safely.
No- she had futons to lay out and Tylenol to find for the hangovers the following morning. She wasn’t sure it would work on monsters- but given what Kon’s favorite drink was, the humans would definitely need it.

Kon’s favorite drink was one she actually invented. It tasted like shit- but she called it the death shot. One part whiskey, one part vodka, one part tequila, with a pinch of cinnamon to help it burn- and it was a hell of a way to get drunk very, very fast.

She pitied her monster family- they were in for a hell of an evening.

One would be surprised as to who came walking, or waddling, back to the house.

Aliquam and Tenebris were by far walking the straightest. They were each helping a brother make their way, except for Kon. He was getting dragged behind Tenebris.

It was dark out, somewhere between ten and eleven at night, when the five of them finally headed home. As for why it was only the five of them, well, turns out that Sans could not hold his alcohol. He’d passed out at the bar, and Grillby had taken him upstairs half way through the night.

The night itself had actually ended when Kon had groped the bartender one too many times, and had gotten them summarily booted out for rowdy behavior.

Han was the only brother who hadn’t gotten himself shit-faced. He had a couple drinks, and it showed only for the flush in his cheeks and the slightly more relaxed grin on his face. He was trailing behind the four in front, making sure that no one had gotten lost, or fallen on their face on the stairs.

Though Kon did enough falling anyways. He’d gotten sloshed, and had the coordination of a two year old. Tenebris tail was an amazing obstical- and the older monster had gotten tired of him either running into it or falling over it, and had thus promptly taken a hold of the back of his shirt and proceeded to drag him. Not that Kon had minded- it left him right in range for groping the monsters backside.

Han had both of Kon’s shoes in hand. They’d come off with his heels dragging in the dirt.

Roshi was pretty well latched onto Aliquam, fingers in places they should not be as he giggled and swayed, clinging drunkenly to the skeleton who wasn’t even nearly close to as bad as he was. “Y’knoo,” he slurred as they reached the door, “M’sis ‘s righ’. You’ve got greeaaaaat booooooones,” he cackled. “You know what else has great bones? Thiiiiiiis door. This is my door. I love this door.”

“And I love this ass~” There was a clap, and Kon’s hand clapped against Tenebris’ backside. “And this tail. I wanna lick it.”

“Sure you do, Brother.” Han shot Papyrus an apologetic look, and wouldn’t even meet Tenebris’ gaze. “But Roshi, do doors have bones?”

“… Y’kno, I dunno if doors have booooonones. Les’ ask Toki! Toki knows aaaaall about bones.”

Roshi however, proved to be completely inept at opening the door. “Th’ knob ‘s moving! I think it likes me.”

"Aliquam."

"Yes father?"
"Let me surgically remove his hands."

"No Father."

Aliquam sighed as he helped Roshi, eyeing Kon with a flat, disappointed look.

Han chuckled, and once no one was in danger of toppling back down Toki’s stairs, he squeezed in to the door. It swung open to the smell of peppermint and vanilla, and he wrinkled his nose. Peppermint and vanilla usually smelled really good- but whatever Toki had been baking had practically basted the house in the smell, and it was killing his nose. "Ugh. It smells like the Pillsbury doughboys butt-hole had a Christmas party in here."

The house was dark and quiet, save for the light from the dining room, and one in the living room. There was soft snoring coming from the dining room. Obviously someone had fallen asleep while doing papers again- which would end up murdering her back.

Roshi lurched into the house, knocking the door into the wall as he staggered. He giggled. "Tokiiiiii," he practically shrieks, "Do doors have bones?"

The snoring fades off abruptly, and there’s the sound of her knee jerking into the top of the table. A tiredly muttered, “Owww my knee,” Floats out of the open doorway.

Tenebris took in the air and smiled, before he dropped Kon. “Quit touching my rear already.” he growled sharply before going back out to light his pipe.

Aliquam helped the others to the couch, and smiled gently at them, before looking at the general direction that Toki had made noise from. "Are you okay?"

Han- ever the helpful brother- grasps Kon’s arms and begins to drag him towards the living room. The colorful Asian sulks the whole way, making grabby hands at the big monster as he stays outside.

“Noooo, come baaack.” Kon whined as he slumped on the futon he’d been dropped on. “But it is the best buuuuutttttt. I wanna touch it all night long."

“Good luck with that, whiskey dick.” Toki appeared in the doorway, clothing rumpled. She was kneading a fist into her lower back while the other one rubbed tiredly at her sockets. She shook out her leg with a grumble. “I hit my knee. I’m okay though… Roshi, bro, you are very drunk. No-doors don’t have bones.”

“Awww… Poor door. I bet ’t would have the bestest bones.” Roshi sagged faintly against the couch, where he had been summarily dropped, and giggled loudly. “I swear to drunk I’m not that god.”

“You are very, very drunk.” Toki translates easily. She approaches, doing her best to ignore the gross stench of alcohol on all of them. Offering Pap a faint smile, she tilts her head, keeping one hand on her back. Falling asleep like that left her with the worst knots in her ecto-flesh. “Did you have fun, Pap?”

"I did. It turns out I can hold my alcohol rather well!” he replied with a smile, "It was rather funny when I won."

Toki offered him a faint smile and sighed. Inhaling again was a mistake, and she gave him a nod, hands folding across her belly unconsciously. “Hold it well indeed. I can smell the death shot on all of you from over here- hey… Where’s Cae? Didn’t he go with you guys?"

“Sans, it turns out, is a lightweight. You can drink better than he can. Well, when you can drink.”
Han gave her a dip of his head and kicked off his shoes. He set to the task of trying to wrestle Kon’s shoes from his feet.

“I can usually hold my liquor quite well for someone who doesn’t drink often… Though, just how many drinks did you have?” She squints up at Papyrus. “You guys were gone for a while- death shot really should have knocked you on your tailbone if you had more than four or five.”

"I had four.” he answered with a totally sober smile. "Father did his own thing, indulging in an oddly named drink."

“Oddly named drink?” She parroted. She leans back slightly still, and arches a brow. “Let me tell you now, you might be completely sober, but if you were to go around an open flame, you might very well combust. Death shots have a lot of alcohol in them.”

“Taste like shiiiiiiit.” Kon groans. “I love ‘m.”

“I made them taste like shit so we’d be discouraged to drink so often,” Toki chuffs. She steps back a few paces and calls out to Tenebris. “What sort of drink did you have, Tenebris? Didn’t indulge in any Death shots?”

"Nope." He replied calmly, puffing quietly from his pipe as he glanced back at her, "I avoided those, and rather indulged in my favorite.”

She watched him out puffing on his pipe and arched a brow. “Probably for the best. You don’t come off as the heavy weight drinker. So if you didn’t get coerced into my brother’s liver-killing favorite drinks, what on earth did you get?” he hadn’t come in far enough for her to get a whiff.

Han smelled vaguely of margarita salt alongside whiskey. Roshi and Kon both smelled too strongly of Death shot for her to get anything more. Which was for the best- usually it didn’t bother her, and the red wine Paps had drank on Valentines hadn’t bothered her, but this much was slowly murdering her insides.

After putting out his pipe, he walked back over to join them. He smelled of alcohol, but also had an underlying thick stench of coffee that mixed horribly with his mint in his pipe. "I indulged in a couple of Blowjobs." he chuckled.

“I can give you a couple moreeee!” Kon calls, flailing a bare foot in the air. It’s barely visible over the couch, and Han’s swearing kicks up as Kon manages to clock him with his leg. “I’d drink you all night long~”

Coffee was not a smell that she was apparently okay with either. The mint of his pipe did not mix well with it, and her middle lurched sharply. Her bones blanched slightly, eye lights disappearing. She swallows shakily. “That’s… nice…”

"It's a rather pleasant taste. It's alcoholic coffee and Irish cream, very tasty.” he explained, before giving her space as he went to go drink some water.

That didn’t help at all. Describing the taste and what was in it was not what she needed.

Han stands, dusting himself off lightly. He glances up, and his face twists slightly. “Uh… Toki? You okay over there?”

“Nope… Fuck…” And off down the hall she goes, stomach churning traitorously as she makes a mad dash for the bathroom. Retching echoes out after her as she rushes into the restroom, managing to get to the toilet before a mess is made on the floor.
“Grosssss, someone’s been drinking too much, hehehe,” Roshi giggles from the couch.

“Oh ew, I remember when Mom was sick with Kon. That sounds rough.” Han is a bit more sympathetic than his smashed brother is, but even his face twists at the horrid noises coming from the bathroom. He glances to Aliquam. “Morning sickness is a bitch, isn’t it? You got any sympathy sickness?”

"Oh dear." Tenebris said quietly, having witnessed her bolting. "Tsk..."

"Yes, and I’ve gagged a few times, but otherwise..." Aliquam faded off with a soft sigh and trailed after her. He stopped at the doorway, but didn’t get too much closer. He still remembered the spaghetti incident, and how his smell hadn’t helped her. "Tokiko," he whined softly, "Are you okay?"

Toki had her head clutched in her hands, elbows resting on the seat as she knelt. She gagged, nothing coming up beyond the first heave. “Ugh... I would be better if this morning sickness could just not be a fucking thing.” Even she was getting tired of it. Slightly frustrated tears beaded at the corners of her sockets, but her arms blocked his view. She choked again, retching once more with a miserable sound.

Han watched the skeleton standing in the doorway to the bathroom and sighed softly. Yes, Aliquam was a good man- even if he wasn’t a man, and was technically a monster. Han headed for the kitchen, snagging the bottle of Tylenol off of the coffee table before he went. He slipped past Tenebris, but stopped at the cabinets. “… Mother fucking- I did not notice. These were made taller. Uh... Hey, Tenebris? Can you grab me a glass? This house is not short people friendly."

"Of course." Tenebris answered as he walked over and collecting two glasses, one for himself, holding the other to Han.

Aliquam entered the bathroom with a soft sigh and reached out and touched her back gently. "Oh Toki..."

“M’ sorry,” she choked. It always bothered her when he had to deal with her being sick. Her bones buzzed faintly under his hand, and she shuddered with slight stress. It had been too many scents all miss-mashed together. Papyrus didn’t bother her as badly since it was just his smell in the bathroom with her. A hard retch shakes a faint sob from her. “Fucking- gghghg.”

Han is trying very hard to ignore the horrible, horrible noises his sister is making as he takes the glass. “Thanks, Tenebris. You need some Tylenol too? Or can monsters even take human medicines?” He shakes out what he thinks is two tablets, and tosses them back before filling his glass of water. He chases the oblong tablets with the cool drink.

"I'll be alright with enough water. Thank you." After a moment he turned, and refilled his glass.

"I smell too much like that drink... I'll have to stay at a distance tonight, I hope you don’t mind that, Toki." Quinn whined gently, before turning as Tenebris approached.

The older monster was offering him the glass of water. "Here."

Taking it, Aliquam smiled at his father, then returned to Toki as Tenebris moved away.

For Toki, she had been okay enough with the smell of the Death shot. It was overpowering, but by itself, it wasn’t that bad. Tenebris coming near brought her the smell of coffee mixed with mint- and she heaved up thick green magic, her arms visibly shaking as she leaned against the toilet. Fuck, this night was going sour rather quickly. “Not you,” She manages, gasping amidst her coughing. The
rough heaves were doing nothing to help the cramping in her lower back. “Co-coffee.”

Han had gone back to the living room. Despite the noises from the bathroom, there were two very unconscious drunkards sprawled around his sister’s living room. Han was starting to get that ‘after drinks’ headache- so he settled down too. The two monsters could handle his sister.

"Ah..." he slowly came back closer and held the glass of water out to her. "Here."

Toki gurgled miserably, and spat to clear her mouth. She groped blindly for a moment, and collected a washcloth before she bothered to take the glass of water. It took a moment of wiping her teeth before she would lean away from the toilet. “Thanks,” she rasped softly. Her stomach still roiled, but she used the first few sips to rinse out her mouth. The second sips, she actually swallowed. It was cool and refreshing- and didn’t make her middle immediately want to spit it back out.

Shakily, she flushed the toilet and leaned back, body trembling as she ran a hand under her sockets to remove the glowing traces of her frustration. “God- I’m sorry, Pap. S’posed to be a fun night for you.” Not a night where he had to come back and deal with her.

He smiled and shook his head gently. "Don’t worry about it, Toki."

“Heh. But I do. I hate when you have to deal with the worst of this stuff.” More tears beaded, and she didn’t bother wiping them away. Her stomach roiled, and she took a sip of water and then bowed her head quietly. Toki took a moment to just do nothing, to breathe through the worst of the nausea wave. When it faded, and she no longer felt like she would hurl if she so much as looked at the water, Toki shifted and pushed into Aliquam’s arms. She didn’t say anything, and simply buried her face against his shirt. Yeah, he smelt like the bar, but under it all he still smelled like himself, and Toki just needed to be held.

He smiled and hugged her gently. "I love you."

“I love you too…” She nestled close in his arms, shivering faintly as they sat on the bathroom floor. Her sockets closed tiredly, staining his shirt with luminous tears, and her arms tightened around him quietly. “Morning sickness is utter shit.” She whispers, sniffing quietly into his shirt. And she still had weeks of this stuff left. Ugh.

"I know... I know..." he murmured.

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t be tearing up over this. It’s stupid…” she mutters. The tall skeleton curls up in his lap, effectively filling his lap as she leaves her legs to drape over the side of his femur. “I’m sorry…” Shit, what was wrong with her? Was this a mood swing?

She hadn’t had those yet- and she was not sure what she was expecting.

He smiled and stroked her head gently, humming to her gently. "It's okay..." he whispered, "It's okay."

“But it's not okay!” She exclaims in frustration, his humming and gentle touches soothing. “I don’t… I shouldn’t be crying- its stupid, and you shouldn’t… you shouldn’t…” She sniffs and has to dabble more tears away, staining her sleeve. “It’s just stupid sickness and back cramps and mood swings and… It's just stupid…”

"It's okay." he purred, "You're going to be okay.”

The purring sound being generated from his bones was oddly soothing, and she hiccupped into his shirt for a short while. She was conscious of this being a mood swing- but that didn’t mean that it
was any less powerful, or any less pesky.

Eventually her tears faded off, along with the worst of the nausea, and it left her feeling empty and exhausted. She shifted, arms looping around his neck and leaving her angled a little oddly. Toki tenses, back throbbing, but simply ignores it and instead nuzzles him softly. She leans back, one hand coming to dry her sockets completely, while the other goes to her lower back. “Thank you… Gods, I’m tired now.” She mutters. Crying always exhausted her.

He stroked her head and cooed quietly as he scooped her up. “Let’s go to bed.”

Toki didn’t even cringe when his scooping jostled her middle. She had abandoned the glass of water sometime during her crying fit, so she didn’t have to worry about setting that down. She shivered and nestled her head on his chest. “Mkay… We need to get into our pajamas.” She mutters quietly. Toki eases the door shut behind him and nestles close. She’s a mess of sore and achy. Her back is cramped to high hell, her abdomen feels like it’s been punched with how tender it is. The warmth of his arms holding her feels good though.

"Can you drink more water if I brought it to you?" he asked softly.

Toki nodded passively against his chest. “Yeah…”

"Good… I need to shower so I smell more like home… it'll prevent nausea more than how I am now…” he purred.

“Thank you.” She nuzzles him softly, and tilts her sockets up to watch the stairs. Her brothers are snoring loudly in the living room, and she holds her breath until they get up towards their room. Tenebris hadn’t been in sight- but he might have been in the kitchen, or out smoking. Or had already gone home- there were many options.

Toki once more opens the door for him, so he can step into their room. “You can set me down now,” she says quietly. “If you leave your clothes here, I’ll take care of them for you while you go get clean.” She could take that glass of water after.

"No, no.” he said stubbornly, "Go and get ready for bed. I'll shower and bring you your water.”

She sighed softly through her nasal ridge, and then shot him a tired smile. He was the greatest- truly. “I was just going to put your clothes in the hamper,” she admits softly. She had to do a load of laundry in the morning- so his clothes were going to wait in there. “But okay… I’ll get ready while you go shower, alright?” She just needed to be set down by her stubborn skeleton boyfriend.

He pressed a soft kiss to the top of her skull and laid her down in their bed. Another loving clack of his teeth between her horns, and Aliquam let out a content 'Nyeh' before he went to shower.

Toki laid there for a moment, having watched him go, before she carefully rolled out of bed. He was sweet- but she couldn’t get in her pajamas if she was already getting settled. Toki took a moment to strip, sighing as she rested her clothes on the dresser. She tugs on her lighter sleeping gown. It’s mostly see-through, which turns her into a living nightlight most nights, but she enjoys it. It’s soft and silky against her bones, and is exactly what she needs.

While Pap has the shower going, she sneaks in and trades out his clothes. His used ones are replaced with his usual sleeping boxers and optional pants, as she does what she said she would. His clothes and her clothes are tossed into the hamper outside of the room before Toki actually goes to settle on the bed.

She sits on her side, and leans forwards to stretch her lower back. Her fingers rub circles in the ecto-
flesh of her lower back while she waits patiently for him to get out.

Aliquam was out after around five minutes, a tired, content look on his face. "Nyeh heh heh... Thank you Toki." he purred softly, before he climbed onto the bed, nuzzling her gently.

Toki shifted when he had gotten in to bed, and eased herself down so she could snuggle up next to him. She nuzzled up affectionately under his chin, not even bothered by him forgetting the glass of water. “Told you I could handle it,” her voice is full of warm affection despite her stubborn words. Her thin arms loop around him, and she guides his hand up to her lower back and groans softly. His bones were warm from the shower- and the heat felt amazing on her lower back. “Your hand is warm. It feels good. Mm… you smell good too.”

"I'm glad you think so." he purred, "Oh, before I get comfy, still need that water?" he inquired.

Toki shook her head slightly, and closed her sockets. “No. I just need you.” She murmurs softly.

He smiled and hugged her tightly as he lay back, making sure she was perfectly aligned at his side before he pulled the blanket over them both. Giving her one last kiss, this time letting his teeth tenderly linger against her own as he cradled her to his much larger frame.

"I love you so much, Toki...” He murmured softly to her. “Good night~"

Toki settled to his side comfortably, body flush with his bones. She looped her fingers over his ribs, and nestled in contently. “I love you too,” She whispered softly. “Thank you. For being with me tonight… Good night, Pap. Sleep tight.”

He shivered at the hand on his ribs, but grew comfortable quickly as she relaxed against him. "Mm... You’re welcome~" he purred, holding her until he fell asleep, his arm coming to rest protectively over her stomach in his slumber.

Toki took a little bit longer to fall asleep for all of her tiredness. It was only when the soft snores of Papyrus eased into her ears that she found herself drifting off. With his hands cradling her belly, she let her legs tangle with his. With a soft sigh, Toki nestled down and drifted to sleep. It had been a long day.

But it had ended on a good note. She couldn’t feel safer and more loved anywhere else other than right here in his arms, even with the loud racket of her brother’s open-mouthed snoring coming from downstairs.
Chapter 40

Her morning sickness began to ebb off as March came into the swing of things. There were still some scents and tastes that could send her running- cocoa and the smell of anything coffee related to be frank- but as the days rolled on, her morning worship to the porcelain god happened less and less. On one hand, she was very, very thankful. Being ill was stressful on her, and on poor Aliquam, who did what he could to help her. It was nice to not wake him up super early in the morning with her singing the song of pregnant peoples all across the world.

But on the other hand- something else cropped up. Not just mood swings- though those were few and far between thankfully. No- Toki began to get headaches. They cropped up at all hours of the day, and there was nothing that she knew she could do for them. She’d googled it though- apparently headaches and migraines were sometimes part of pregnancy. Each pregnancy was different. Some women got them, some didn’t, some had terrible ones, some had light ones- it was all very inconsistent and frankly befuddling.

So she didn’t bother the boys with it. Truthfully, they weren’t that bad. She had troubles doing all of her paperwork for as often as she did normally, because her head would just pulse in agony. It just gave Toki the excuse to take more breaks. Lights bothered her sometimes, but she usually kept the house dark when she was home alone, so that was fine too.

She might not have had experience with them a lot before, but what she had read had said that they were fairly normal.

However, migraines aside, that wasn’t the only thing that had popped up. It was a little bit past half way through March- and she had a belly. It was not huge by any means- but she noticed it as her and Papyrus were trying to get ready for their morning.

Her last pair of sweat pants had gotten dirty the day prior, and she really didn’t want to wear them until she got around to doing laundry, so she’d pulled out her slacks. Her slacks had fit a week ago when she’d had to trek up to the castle for a meeting with some of the car companies and the King- but now, as she stood in front of a mirror, straining to get the button to hook, she found that she couldn’t even draw it near.

She had buzzed irritably for a moment, because she had a migraine from hell making the back of her skull tight and her eyes sensitive and did not want to be dealing with pants that had apparently shrunk in the washing machine. She had buzzed loudly too, before she paused, falling silent. She turned sideways, and took a look at herself. Her middle sloped outwards- and she realized that she
was technically at the end of her first trimester.

Her fingers roved slightly over the slope of her middle, sockets widening marginally as she took in the real signs that her belly was actually growing with life. The glow of her middle was duller than usual- she’d need to have Paps do a donation soon, though she wasn’t eager for the brightness to be showing through her clothes again. Her fingers gently cupped her middle- and her hand actually had something to cup for once. She hadn’t noticed this popping up- or at least not this big before. But she hadn’t exactly looked at herself in the mirror from the side in a while, and looking at it from a downward view wasn’t something she always did.

Shit. She was going to need new pants. No wonder her sweat pants were starting to feel tight across the middle.

“… Hey Pap?” She called back softly to gather his attention, making sure to keep her eyes angled away from the sharp glare of the bedroom light. “I think I’m going to need to go shopping for clothes here soon.”

"Does that mean a trip to the city, Toki?" he asked from the other side of the bedroom, where he himself was preparing for the day.

“That it does. But that’s not all I meant. Look.” She remains turned to the side in front of the mirror, and watches him through the reflection.

He looked over, and he smiled gently, eye lights lighting up as he spotted her dilemma. "Oh Toki..." He got up from where he was lacing his boots and headed over. Making sure no light got by him, he sidled up behind her and hugged her from behind, his hands caressing the swell. "My beautiful Toki." he purred.

Toki smiled up at him tenderly, letting his hands replace her own. The smooth bone of his fingers felt nice against her middle, and she chuckled softly as she laced her fingers gently over his. Leaning back against his chest felt nice, even if it made her skull throb with the change in positions. “Look at our little ones. They’re getting bigger.” She tenderly rubs her thumb over his.

In the mirror, she can see her eye lights change, glowing a bright but tender green. Her soul practically pulses with joy. She couldn’t even be too upset by her pants not fitting anymore. There was finally something to cup, to hold. It was different than just seeing the souls, knowing that they were there. She didn’t know why- but it was, and it made her all that much happier. “I might need to borrow a pair of your sweat pants. All of mine are dirty- and if my slacks wont fit, I’ve got no chance in hell of getting my jeans to fit.”

His sockets were glowing with a gentle orange color, mirroring his happiness as he looked at her through the mirror. "That's fine... we could also get you some long skirts." he suggested.

“Long skirts?” she rolls her head back to look at him, and hides a wince. That just made the back of her skull feel tighter. To distract herself, she rubs his fingers slightly, and hummed softly. “Hm… Well, I suppose I can get a couple. You’ll have to help me though- I’m not the best judge of which skirts I look good in.”

He chuckled and hummed into the back of her head, clacking his teeth to the back of it in a soft kiss. "Of course!"

The kiss, for once, actually made her eyes twitch in discomfort. Normally the touch of bone on bone didn’t bother her, but the noise made her ears ring and skull pulse. She sighed softly through her teeth and nodded. “Good. We’re going to need to take the trip to town soon- I’ve got that meeting at
the castle in a couple days.” It was the car company’s again- they wanted measurements on the monsters that were going to be driving once they could get the bill passed. For now though… “You still have the pair of sweats with the long drawstrings?” She’d need to pull them extra tight. She had large hips, yes, but his torso was wider than hers, and she really didn’t want to have to keep hiking them up.

"That I do."

She gives him a soft smile. “Think you can find them? I’ll shimmy out of these, and then we can actually go get some breakfast. I’m thinking pancakes? Maybe waffles?”

"That sounds delicious. Homemade or while we're out?” he inquired.

Toki laughed slightly- he still hadn’t let her go. She squirms, and leans up to press a gentle kiss to his jaw while his fingers continue to cradle her middle. “You’ve got to let me go before we can get any food. Tell you what- lets get me some pants, then we’ll snag a granola bar to tide us over until we get there. We can grab a late brunch when we’re in town. And then, this evening, we’ll flop on the couch and turn on a movie, and you can snuggle my middle to your soul’s content. Sound good?”

"Couldn’t have planned it better myself." he agreed happily, reluctantly letting her go.

Toki smiled back at him and shimmed out of her pants. Her slacks were rolled up and set on her dresser, before she crossed to his side of the room and began her search for his smaller pair of sweats. “Hmm… I might make a swing through the maternity store while we’re there.” She was still small enough to go unnoticed- and could say she was buying things for a friend, since they were supposed to be keeping her pregnancy hidden- but if she got any larger she’d need to stock up on larger sizes of clothing, otherwise people would start to notice.

And given that there was no word of any other skeleton HTM’s with horns, and Toki was well known for Nara Village, there wasn’t really any way to go incognito. “Aha! Success.” His pants are located, and she pulls them out, and slips them on. Her pelvis is once more covered, and she tightens the strings so they don’t fall down. They are still hilariously large on her, and she has to roll up the legs of them.

She ends up giggling nonetheless, ignoring the irritation it causes in her head. His pants, with how they were rolled up, looked like hammer pants on her. He might not get the reference, but she looked a little silly. Toki tucked turtleneck down over her pants, and offered him a grin. “I look cute.” She declares.

He has a hand over his mouth, palm pressed into his teeth with the brightest blush on his face. To him, she wasn't just cute. She was adorable.

Toki tilts her skull, peering at him ponderously. His flush was adorable, and she gave him a wink. The loose clothes on her hid her burgeoning bump very well, though it still showed slightly through her top, and she rocked faintly on her heels, shoving her hands into the deep pockets of the pants. Her slippers were downstairs- and she might actually invest in some different foot ware. Or at least new slippers, since her current ones were getting a bit haggard. “You finish lacing your boots, Pap. I’ll go get my purse. Did you want to stop at the bank while we’re in town?” The bank that she went through did a lot of conversions of Gold into human currency- and the Guards here were still paid by the King in Gold.

He nodded gently. "A trip to the bank sounds good." he rumbled gently in agreement, "God you look so cute." he giggled softly.
Toki giggled softly and smiled at him. “Well, thank you~” She purrs. She gives him a wink over her shoulder, and pads out of the room. She leaves him to get ready, and bounces down the stairs. Migraine or no, seeing her bump had put her in a hell of a good mood. There was a light bounce in her step as she located her purse and tossed it over her shoulder. Her keys are collected too, and then she’s waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs. “Don’t forget your wallet, Pap!” She calls up to him, carefully slipping her feet into her slippers.

"I wont!” he called, grabbing his wallet and putting on his coat as he came downstairs.

Toki didn’t bother with a coat. She’d been running a little warmer thanks to the magic constantly gathered in her belly. So she smiled up at him, the sleeves of her turtleneck now rolled up to her forearms, and adjusted her purse on her arm. It usually rested on her shoulder, but there was no point since they were going out to the car. “C’mon, handsome. We’ve got a long car ride. You remember how to move the seat back in the truck, right?”

Her poor long-legged boyfriend had to have the seat all the way back to fit his legs in.

She jingles her keys slightly, and pads for the door, leaving him to follow.

"Yes, of course!” he replied as he followed her.

Toki simply smiles, and makes for the truck. It’s bright outside, and she squints slightly, eyes throbbing. Ugh. What she would give for an overcast day- but she couldn’t laze about and do nothing just because her skull hurt. If she did that, she’d never get anything done.

Tossing her purse into the truck, Toki slid into the drivers seat and got the engine warmed up. She had to adjust her own seat when her middle brushed against the steering wheel. She flushed slightly, hoping Papyrus hadn’t noticed.

Papyrus hadn’t seen it, he was too busy with his own seat, climbing in and sighing comfortably.

Good- she got away with it. Toki grins, adjusting her backrest first so she’s not so ramrod straight and then carefully buckles up. Once Paps has finished fiddling with his seat and has gotten himself buckled, Toki starts up the truck and gets it turned around.

She cracks her window, giving herself some fresh air, and settles in for the long drive to town. The sunlight is harsh- and she wishes she had ears, because some sunglasses would do wonders.

"It's awfully bright out. Do you happen to have a pair of sunglasses in here?"

Toki nods, and motions to the glove box. “There should be a couple pairs in there. When in doubt, check the glove box. Or the armrest box. I put everything car related in either of those.”

He chuckled at that and quickly pulled out two pairs. He put a pair on himself, then opened another pair, "I'll put a pair on you, okay?"

Toki openly stared, glad that the road was empty and mostly straight. Her mouth popped open, and she peered at him curiously. “… How do they stay on?” She asks, completely befuddled. There was nothing holding them up- how on earth did that even work? “I mean, I’m not turning them down, but… to quote your dad, that is absolutely fascinating.”

He laughed at that. "Nyeh heh heh heh! Magic!” he replied simply, "Still want them?” he inquired.

Toki nods, and leans slightly towards him. “Well yeah. It’s bright out, and my eyes are a bit sensitive today.”
And with that, he held out the glasses, allowing them to easily slide onto Toki's skull. "There you go!"

They fit a little oddly on her skull, given the slope of the bone where it arched into her horns- and they were a little over sized. But they did their job, and the light was much less piercing. She smiled at him cheerily, eye lights glowing faintly behind the dark lenses. "Thank you, Pap. That helps a lot."

"Nyeh heh heh, of course!" he replied cheerfully.

So long as it worked, she wasn’t going to question the logic of magic. After all, she was a pregnant skeleton- thinking into the logic of it was far too complicated for her tastes. She was a beekeeper and an author, not a scientist.

The trek to town wasn’t as bad as it could have been. The sunglasses helped some, but as they got to the city, the noises of traffic and usual city life grew louder. Cars honking, trains making noise on their tracks, humans’ in general being loud with their voices or booming stereos- Ebott City was a huge noise pollution hazard. For as long as the drive was, Toki enjoyed the relative quiet that being so far out brought. Even the noise from the villagers seemed like peace and quiet when compared to this.

The mall- their true destination, for it was the only massive business that was vastly monster and HTM friendly- was further into the city than the bank was. Her bank was actually on the outskirts- and they’d made a quick stop for him to transfer his gold over to cash.

He now had a wallet full of bills. Toki didn’t ask how much- that was private information that she didn’t feel the need to pester him about.

They’d stopped at a place not far from the bank and had their brunch, and then continued on towards their destination.

Going further into the city brought with it stresses of it’s own outside of the pulsing noises that made her skull want to split in half. Toki did not handle traffic well. A white-knuckled grip was kept on the steering wheel, and her teeth ground quietly whenever someone would honk impatiently at her. It wasn’t irritation- no; she was just a shy when it came to driving in heavy traffic. It made her anxious.

She heaved a sharp sigh of relief when the turn-off for the mall came. Flipping on her blinker, Toki changed lanes, ignoring the irritated honking of someone who didn’t like that she had moved in front of them. When her turn-off time hit, she eased off of the highway, and down a much less busy road.

“We’ll be there in a moment.” She mutters softly to Aliquam. Already she could see the massive overhead parking space. It was fairly empty, which meant they should be able to get a spot on the ground floor. Toki really didn’t want to have to haul bags of clothing- or whatever else they found-up several flights of stairs.

"Sounds good." Was his reply, a soothing smile on his face. He adjusted his jacket, where the inner pocket that held his wallet was kept safe from anyone attempting to snag it, and folded his arms patiently.
Toki gave him a smile, and guided them in. As she hoped, she actually found a parking space on the bottom floor. It was near the exit, which wasn’t too bad in the long run. She put the car in park, and took a moment to exhale and shake out her fingers.

Gods she hated city driving.

Shaking her head, she tugged the sunglasses off of her face and left them on the dashboard, before collecting her purse. The strap is looped on her shoulder, and then she steps from the truck. The underside of the car park is hot, despite the breeze that wafts through from time to time. “Hmm… Not a bad parking spot if I do say so myself.” She chirps.

"Not at all, at least we wont come back to an overheated vehicle, yes?” he chirped, closing the door and looking at her from over the cab.

Toki’s horns were visible above the cab, but that was about all he would see. She pads around the back of the truck and waves at him cheerily. “That’s quite true. My truck doesn’t overheat that bad anyways. It does worse in the cold- doesn’t like to run very well. C’mon. Is there any stores you’d like to visit while we’re here?"

He thought about it as he caught up with her, before offering her his hand. "Perhaps, I’ll think about it as we go.” he replied.

Toki reached out to take his hand, lacing the bare bones of her fingers through his. She smiled at him, adjusting her purse strap, and begins to walk with him towards the front doors of the mall. People coming in and out stare at them, but she ignores their gazes, even if they unnerve her slightly. She was used to being stared at for being so tall- it wasn’t that odd to be stared at for some other reason than that. “If anything catches your eye, just let me know. We’re not on a time limit while we’re here.”

He had long since got used gotten used to these looks, and walked with a carefree smile on his face. "But of course, dear Toki!"

Toki beams up at him and swings their hands. She holds the door open for him, and guides him inside.

The mall itself is pretty big. It’s four floors up, though the higher up you go, the more novelty the shops seem to get. There was an ice skating rink on the third floor, and a cosmic bowling alley on the top floor, for goodness sake. The first and the second floor have most of the main shops from all of the main stores.

Immediately to their left is a men’s tuxedo store. To their right is a woman’s bridal shop. Across the open court yard of the mall is three shoe stores, and a gimmick store that sold action figures and various tabletop gaming things.

Further to the right, down the long hallway, a maternity store and store for babies and small children is visible. To the right are the escalators that take them up to what looks to be an entrance to a super store.

“So!” She chirps, ignoring the stares that they get, “Which way first?”

"Hm.... I say we go to get your clothes first." he replied, sockets scanning over the mall.

“I don’t see a store that sells slacks- at least ones that aren’t for tuxedos… But… maybe it’s on the second floor?” Her sockets wander down the way to the left, however. The maternity store has caught her eye- and she’s definitely going to need larger shirts here soon. She should probably stick
with some cheap and incognito turtlenecks, but… She has a desire to at least look at the maternity stuff. Toki hesitates though, not sure if they should wander down there. Yeah they could play it off that they were buying things for baby shower gifts or something, but she had a feeling they’d be walking out with several bags.

He caught her gaze and he hooked an arm around her. "We'll go there last, okay?"

Toki heaves a soft sigh and nods as she leans into him. He did well to guide her impulses- and she willingly turned to the right and guided him instead for the escaladers up. “That works. Alright- lets go to the second floor. I know the super store up there sells slacks. Are you in need of some new pants while we’re here?"

"I'd probably need mine custom made, but I can certainly see if I can be served."

Toki nods up at him. The escalader is not wide enough to go side by side, so she steps a couple steps up ahead of him, and grins. Her horns are now taller than he is- though it won’t last long. “Well, you do have those long legs of yours. I’m sure we can find something- despite most of us being short, they do actually sell some clothes for tall people. I just don’t know what size you wear.” Length wise, he looked probably like an extra large, or an extra-extra large. She wasn’t good with judging the size of someone’s waistline though. “I’m also thinking of getting some new slippers. Do you happen to know your shoe size? We could get you a pair of house slippers so your feet don’t get chilled on the tile.”

"Despite my size, I think my feet are smaller." he answered, "Perhaps a ten... or a twelve maybe?"

Toki hums in consideration. When they reach the second floor, she snuggles right back up to him and heads for the store with him. “Hm… Well, that might be because you’re got bone instead of added skin. When I was human, I wore about an eleven to twelve in women’s shoes. With the removal of all the extra bits, I wear a ten. Men’s shoes are bigger.” She eyes his boots, and hums. “Hm… I think you’re about an eleven? Shoes all fit different, so we’ll simply have to see. Oh!” She suddenly beams. “We can get matching slippers, Pap!"

"Nyeh heh heh heh! We could!"

“If we find something we like, we’ll totally get matching pairs.” She smiles up at him. Toki stops to collect a hand basket, not thinking that they’d really need a cart. The hand baskets were big enough as it was. She left it hanging on the arm that wasn’t nestled against Papyrus, and scouted out the tops of the isles. Shoes were next to pants, thankfully. “So, foot-ware first? Or pants?"

"Well, which one do you need more?"

“Technically I can’t do anything with them until I buy them anyway, so it really doesn’t matter.” She points out. “Might as well get shoes. It’s the isle before pants is anyways.”

He shrugged loosely and followed her, smiling as they walked.

They arrived at the shoes fairly quickly, and Toki nearly stumbled as a shorter man plowed into her shoulder. He grunted, shot them both a nasty look, and stalked off without a word, even as Toki uttered a reflexive apology. Toki shook her head with a sigh, rubbing her arm idly before continuing in. “Some people.” She mutters.

Aliquam shot a slightly sharp look at the man who shoved past them, but didn’t engage in anything.

Shaking her head again, Toki pads down the isle, and peers at some of the shoes. “… Well, high heels would be fun, but I can’t walk in those to save my life. Boots, boots, boots, ah! Slippers. Here
He followed her willingly, also looking over the shoes. Humans had so many shoes for so many things- even completely inane things. Like for being taller. "Find anything good?"

Toki was silent for a time, browsing the shoes intently. She eventually sighed and tugged out a pair of dark colored house shoes. They were leather, with fluffy padded insides. The leather would hold up against the sharply pointed parts of her toe bones. “I think so. This is in my size- but I can’t see the top shelf where the larger sizes are to tell if they have yours.” Honestly, why stores set up shelves for people who almost always had to use a stepladder to get things from the top, she would never ever know.

Toki holds out the slippers, displaying the thick rubber soles at the bottom. “And look at traction. No more slipping in the mud.” The leather would also be easy to clean and waterproof.

"Those are useful... nyeh heh heh... need a boost to see the higher shelf?" he asked.

Toki chuckled softly. “Normally I’d say yes, but I’d rather not risk my shirt slipping up. Think you can just grab down a couple of the larger ones? And grab a thirteen as well, mister tall guy. There’s always the chance you might have a larger shoe size than we thought.”

"Heh, alright, alright." he reached up and pulled down a few pairs of slippers, smiling at her, "Here!"

Toki took the boxes with a smile, and motioned for him to take a seat on one of the movable booth things. “Alright. Boots off- both of your feet are the same size, right?”

"Of course." he sat down and removed his boots.

Toki simply smiled slightly and knelt down at his feet. Kneeling was unpleasant- the change in motion made her skull throb, eye lights momentarily blinking out before she shook her head. Ugh. Migraine, migraine, go away, don’t come back another day. “Alright. Let’s start with the tens and go from there- Oh wow. Your feet are the exact same size. That’s pretty cool.” Her bones were too- But she knew humans who didn’t. Kon actually had one foot that was a full size larger than the other one. He simply bought in the bigger size and tied the other shoe tighter.

Toki smiled and set to slipping the shoes diligently onto his feet. They fit- but they looked fairly cramped. Hard to tell with the fluff though. “How do they feel?”

He looked at them and wiggled his foot lightly, before he curled his toes, "Not bad at all...!" he replied.

“Try walking in them. Shoes feel different when sitting verses walking. This looks like it might pinch your feet together slightly…” She hums, scooting back so he can take a few steps up and down the isle.

"Alright." he got up and gave them a quick back and forth lap... "Ah, you may be right. One size higher?" he asked.

“I knew I pegged you for an eleven. Alright- foot up.” She would let him use the top of her skull for balance, even if it made her head throb all the more, and carefully swapped out for the elevens. “Okay- those look a lot better from here. If it’s still too tight, we can try an eleven and a half.”

He was kind enough to not resort to doing that, but after a lap up and down the isle in the new shoes, he gave her a thumbs up.
Toki beamed at him. “Now we know. You run about an eleven.” Proportionally, Aliquam had really, really small feet for someone as tall as he was. But she wasn’t going to comment- every body was different and amazing. She shifted and got to her feet, bending down to pick up the boxes of shoes. The two pair that they were going to get were tossed into the handcart, and she beamed at him. “Bam. Slippers have been achieved.” And they were even nice slippers, so she wouldn’t feel bad wearing them to official meetings and the like.

"Fantastic." he said happily, leaning over to take the handcart from her. "That's one thing off the list, now what?"

She let him take the handcart without a fuss. “Slacks- and you said you’d help me choose a long skirt or two.” She wasn’t looking forwards to trying things on in a cramped dressing room built for humans much smaller than she was. “Skirts and stuff look like they’re right across from the slacks.”

"Very convenient, wouldn't you say?" Aliquam hummed happily.

Toki nods and chuckles. “C'mon, you. Skirts and slacks await. At least I don't have to buy bras. I can’t imagine dealing with bras and having bones. That just sounds like a mess waiting to happen.”

Toki ended up walking away from the store with three new pairs of slacks- all of them several sizes too big- and a belt to hold them up. She also was now the proud owner of not one, not two, definitely not three- but five long skirts. How Ali managed to find five of them that looked good on her, she had no idea- but she honestly didn’t care. Sweat pants were easier, and she’d invested in several pairs of those too. She’d also gotten a couple more turtlenecks- though not many. She was saving most of her shirt shopping for their last stop.

They’d also managed to find him slacks too- two pairs, actually- and several new pairs of sweat pants on top of their new matching slippers. He also now owned a couple of dress shirts- in case he had wanted to accompany her out somewhere that wasn’t Grillby’s.

All of their stuff fit in three bags, of which Aliquam insisted upon carrying. Toki hadn’t fussed- her skull was too tender for her to fuss too badly over being babied- and they’d proceeded to explore the rest of the mall.

The mall had proven to be almost painfully loud in some spots, and despite some interest being shown, neither of them actually ended up investing in anything else from any of the other stores despite the hours that they wandered. They’d broken for lunch, gotten some surprisingly delicious burritos from one of the mall vendors, and then decided to head down to their last stop.

That was, as promised, the Maternity store. Toki had all but beamed on going in, though she side eyed the young man at the counter.

He watched her intently, eyes narrowed ponderously for a time, before he’d glanced away and resumed reading. He watched them out of the corner of his eyes though, intent and unflinching.

The store was, unsurprisingly, empty except for them. They’d gotten that a lot- despite a lot of friendly greetings, there were a lot of people who would leave mid-shopping when they came in. Not once had they been asked to leave though- and Toki had suspicions on that resting on her, simply because of how known she was.

Either way, she wasn’t going to let a bunch of assholes ruin the mood. Toki tugged Papyrus away from the entrance, and padded through hoards of baby clothes near the front. The actual maternity
clothes were at the back- and even if she didn’t buy a lot, she wanted to look.

They bypassed racks upon racks of baby clothed though, from tiny blankets, to even tinier shoes.

"Oh my stars!" And that is when Toki heard the cutest noise come from her boyfriend. "Tokiii, look at how small these shoes are!"

Oh… oh no, that was cute, and she hadn’t even seen it yet. Toki obediently turned, and padded back to Papyrus. She blinked at the little shoes, and quirked a grin. She reached up to snag a pair of tiny, tiny sneakers, and held them up for Aliquam to ogle. Her hands didn’t dwarf them as much as his might, but the shoes were still painfully tiny. “I know, aren’t they?” Too bad they wouldn’t know their little one’s shoe sizes until they got there.

He looked at her, a childish gleam in his expression before he cooed. "I never have seen shoes this small before~"

“Oh these are baby shoes,” she smiles. “These are for very, very new babies, to keep their feet warm if you don’t want them in onesies all the time.” Her eyes glimmer with an entirely different gleam, and it takes conscious effort not to rest the little shoes against her belly. Instead, she holds them out for him to take, and tucks her hands happily into her pockets. Her voice drops low, very low, so only he can hear her. “We’ll definitely have to get some for our little babybones.” Not now, but when they were larger…

"Of course.” he giggled and held them effortlessly in one hand as he then let her take the lead for this shopping trip.

Toki smiled a secret smile when he pointedly did not put the little pair of shoes back. They’d need two of everything, she realized. Twins was double everything. Shaking her head quietly, she padded back for the maternity section.

A long turtleneck- which was far, far bigger than she actually needed now- caught her attention. It was black, designed for someone probably late term, and embroidered on the belly was a pot of honey with bees buzzing around it. “Oh gods, the irony. Hey, Pap, look. Should we get one…?” It appeared to also come in Orange, but the black looked nicer.

"Yes, it would look nice on you.” he said as he came over, "Though black absorbs more heat.”

Toki pursed her mouth and nodded faintly. “That it does… It comes in orange too, but… I dunno. It’s sort of an off orange? Not sure if I like it.” It wasn’t the same orange as his magic. His magic was her favorite orange. She shrugs, and snags one of the black ones regardless. The human can’t see them from back here, so she drapes it across her front, and checks to see how it fits against her neck and the width of her shoulders. “Believe it or not, if my change in body temperature now is any indication, I don’t think it’d going to matter much what color I wear.”

"I suppose you have a point.” he agreed, "Well, you're the one wearing it, it's up to you.”

Well if that wasn’t just a slight bit of disapproval she detected. Toki arched a brow at him and playfully stuck her tongue out, before folding the shirt up and draping it over her arm. Consequences be damned, she was going to wear the shirt with a honey pot on it. “Yes. I’m definitely getting it. There’s lots of shirts here, Pap. You’re perfectly entitled to suggest shirts- I’ve got a terrible taste in fashion as it is.”

"And you think I’m any better? Didn't you see what I wore for at least a year straight?” he asked with a laugh.
“I remember seeing your battle body from Halloween, yes.” She offers him a wry grin, and begins thumbing through the racks. She selects a lot of darker colored shirts—simply because she was going to be massive as it was, and didn’t really want to be labeled a massive, colorful blimp. “Really though, you do just fine now. You helped me get those skirts, didn’t you? They’re really pretty.” They’d been pretty pricey too—she’d bought them, because they all had elastic waistlines.

Speaking of prices. She stopped and peered at the shirt she had in her hand, proceeded to balk at the price, and quietly put it back on the rack. She wasn’t shelling out thirty dollars for something that wasn’t even her favorite color. No indeed. She needed to watch her money anyways—she only had so much in royalties, and didn’t want to have to tap into her savings.

He noticed and let out a quiet hum, before looking at her.

Hm… A lot of the shirts she had were expensive. Really, she shouldn’t have been expecting anything otherwise. She remembered hearing her sister in law complaining about the prices when she had been pregnant. Toki tilted her head, contemplating just getting the ones she had already grabbed and calling it good. She ended up meeting his gaze by accident and arching a brow at him questioningly. “What’s that look for, Pap?”

"Nothing important, just thinking.” he replied softly.

“Hmm… penny for your thoughts?” She shifts, pacing to another rack. This one is simple colors, reds, oranges, blues, greens—cheaper than the last. The material though… That itched over her bones just touching it.

"I sell them for a dollar.” he snickered; quoting a conversation they’d had what had seemed like forever ago amused him greatly. Aliquam stopped her for a moment, just to hug her from behind again and nuzzle his face into the back of her neck. "..." He then had a realization and he smiled, "You know, I just remembered a great place to buy clothing. It'd do well for you.”

Toki leaned back into him with a soft sigh, letting him nuzzle the back of her skull quietly. The plastic bags pressed against her arms, helping keep her pressed back into him, and she took the moment to look up at him with a gentle smile. “Didn’t I tell you I’d be willing to pay two or three?” She thrums affectionately. “What sort of place were you thinking of?” And how would it do well for her?

"It's run by an old friend of mine.” he rumbled, "Back in Snowdin. A trip well worth it.”

“Oh?” Well, she was all for doing business with monsters. She purses her teeth slightly, and hums. "Hm… Well, that would definitely work. I still want to get the black shirt though. Who’s your friend? I don’t know if we can make the trip today. It’s like… almost five hours from the city to the mountain.” It was already well into the day—nearly two in the afternoon. She paused her words for a moment, and puffed her cheeks.

“Actually it might not work. I’ve got human currency— which as far as I know isn’t taken Underground yet.” Mostly because humans weren’t allowed down into the underground from their own government’s laws; Asgore didn’t actually have anything to do with that yet.

"Her name is Lana Vestimoves. She's a dressmaker, and it's okay, I still have gold at home to use if we were to go." he explained and assured, "But she's made clothing for all body types, so a pregnant body shouldn't be an issue.”

She grinds her teeth quietly, ignoring the sparks that fall. She keeps only the black shirt, setting the rest onto a nearby rack, and then turns to face him. Toki peers up at him slightly, and her teeth grind
again- it’s her equivalent of chewing on her lip. “I know you do- I’d just feel bad for you using your gold.” She tried to keep what the monsters paid down to a minimum at most times. Aliquam had hardly paid for anything, with gold or with human cash. “I’ll get this for now, yeah? I’ve got my pants- and my turtlenecks still fit for now. We can make a run up there and see about getting some clothes made later.”

"Sounds good, Toki." he purred gently, leaning down and kissing her cheekbones softly. “They’re my little ones too, Toki. Let me help cover some of the stuff we’ll need, okay?”

Toki smiled at him and nuzzled his face gently, happiness tingling through her. Tilting her head up made her dizzy, so she only did it for a short time. “Mkay. Lets go pay then, and head home. I don’t know about you, but I definitely want to run our clothes through the wash before we wear them. Gets all of that store bought stiffness out of them, y’know?” She tugs his fingers and smiles at him, guiding him back towards the front of the store. “You want to get the baby shoes?” She wiggles her brow with mock sassiness.

"Yes, I want to get the baby shoes.” he replied with an equally sassy brow wiggle as he followed her.

Toki giggles softly and reaches out to snag an identical set of baby shoes as she passes. “Got to remember to buy in doubles then, Pap. We’ve got two, you know.” Her words on it fade off though, as they approach the register.

The man at the counter is both young, and looking at them with not-very-veiled distaste. His nametag was smudged and old, but the name Joey was vaguely imprinted on it. “I take it you’ve found everything you wanted?” He droned, eyes wandering over them intensely. They settled on her for a moment, observing her front, before he arched a brow at her.

“Uh… Yeah.” She doesn’t really like the look on his face. Still, she takes the baby shoes from Pap, sets them on the counter with the shirt and the second set, and then goes digging for her wallet.

“Forty six fifty.” The man mutters. “Cash or card?”

“I’ve got cash for it.” Toki clicks.

Toki tugs out her wallet and pays- the man is quick to bag their items, and hands it over tartly. The skeleton doesn’t take offense- no, she simply gives him a bitter smile, takes her change, and then tugs Pap back out of the store. She sighs heavily through her teeth. “I don’t know about you, but I am ready to go home. My feet are starting to kill me a little bit.” They’d been walking for hours after all- and she did not have near the same stamina that Aliquam had.

Aliquam had gave the clerk a smile and a light "Thank you" before he followed Toki out. He lingered behind her, stealing the bag from her hands and adding it to his own pile of shopping that he had been carrying for her. "Well we should head home then, yes?"

Toki nods. “I’m completely down for that.” She digs her hand into her purse and collects her keys once Aliquam takes the bag from her hand, and then gives him a warm smile.

She leaves him to follow her, and pads for the exit to the mall. She guides them back for the entrance, quietly rubbing the back of her neck as she walks.

"How do you feel, Toki?” Aliquam asked as he walked into the parking area with her. “I’ve noticed you’ve been a bit off today.”

“To be honest? Not very well. I’ve got a bit if a migraine.” She admits softly. “I’ve had it all day. It’s
pesky.”

It’s bright outside, and she squints her sockets shut idly. Toki rolled her skull back, taking a breath of semi-fresh air, and enjoys the pressure on the back of her hand trying to ease the tightness in the back of her skull. Truth be told, it wasn’t really helping that much- but it was better than nothing. The pressure just kept building and building- and her skull wanted to split in two.

Really it was stupid that these headaches were a thing. She didn’t have a brain in her skull- there was no logical reason for her skull to be pounding like a hurricane wanted to escape. The noises, the light, the sounds of cars in the distance, none of this should bother her. Skeletons really were strange things- and she was slightly tired of being the weird one with strange problems out of the bunch.

It’s about three steps later that her eye lights go out, her legs buckle, and she drops without a word, skull bouncing and clanking dully as it hits the cement ground below them.

Papyrus hadn’t expected what just happened, having been just about to respond to her about her headache and why she hadn’t told him about it before, but his reaction is panicked and instantaneous. "TOKI!"
Chapter 41

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: As I said, this is actually something that’s happened to my mother. It’s a genetic quirk that unfortunately did not skip my generation. We both get migraines. I’ve got light sensitive triggers, and there are certain foods I can’t have. I can’t drink diet soda, because Aspartame is actually a trigger for my migraines. Anyways, this happened to my mom. She had a bad migraine, went into the kitchen to take something for it, and tried to rub some of the pain away. She ended up tilting her head back, and she woke up on the floor several hours later with our dogs pawing at her frantically.

She actually has to take medication to keep those from happening now. It sucks, and she has her bad days, but we manage. Heh. Toki’s are this bad because she’s been unable to take anything for them, and is assuming that they’re completely normal. They’re not entirely so.

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It had seemingly happened in slow motion. She’d said her words, and had proceeded to cross the walkway to the direction of the truck. Her legs had just crumpled mid-step, and he had been both too far away and too shocked to see her drop to do anything about it.

The sound of her skull on the cement was horribly loud, and it echoed in the mostly empty parking place. Her keys fell from her fingers, skull lolling to the side. Her sockets were empty, mouth slack and opened faintly. Toki’s purse thankfully had a zipper, or it would have no doubt spilled across the ground along with her.

With her legs and arms akimbo, body lying flat where she had fallen, Toki proceeded to not rouse or even twitch when Aliquam had all but shrieked her name. She laid there, limp and still, shirt hitched up faintly over the green of her middle and clothing askew.

She had dropped like a marionette without strings- but the glow of her middle was enough to let him know she hadn’t just spontaneously died.

"Oh my god... TOKI!" He cried as he came to her side, kneeling down and checking her worriedly, first making sure she didn’t do too much damage to her head.

The bags of clothes clattered around her as he crouched down. She was unresponsive to his touch- but thankfully her skull seemed unharmed beyond a few scrapes from the hard cement. She was breathing too, slow, steady breaths, like she had simply gone to sleep standing upright.

"Toki..." he sighed in relief, then he carefully picked her up, the shopping bags were temporarily abandoned as he moved her to the car. Careful of her horns, he laid her in the back seat. He carefully loaded up the bags onto the floor space of the back seat, rummaging in one briefly to pull out one of her turtlenecks. Using it to pillow her head, the tall skeleton let out a worried sound. Okay that was good... now...

"Nyeh..." he’d have to either wait for someone to help him...
Or he'd have to drive…

He always did want to drive, but had only a little practice...

As luck would have it, he wouldn't have to drive. There was a familiar face that knocked his knuckles lightly on the bed of the truck, and held up his hands peacefully. He had his badge in his palm, and offered a calm smile as he kept his distance. The last thing he wanted was a defensive monster turning on him—particularly since he remembered the bones that could be summoned. “Hey big guy. I don’t know if you remember me—but I think I remember you. I’m Mark Sheppard—the police officer from the last attack on the compound. I’m off duty, but I’m a cop at heart. You’re Papyrus, right? I recognized you and Miss Nara there. I saw her fall, and my wife sent me over to check on you both—is she okay?”

The knocking on the bed of the truck startled him but he turned and looked at the other, before his expression lightened up. "Oh, thank the stars." he sighed, before he came over, "Yes, that's me." he then gave the other a relieved smile.

"I remember you, you helped us greatly that day. I am still thankful. However... I don’t know why Toki fell like that..." he sighed, "I checked her though, and her head didn't take enough damage to be worrying... the young souls are okay too... so..." he rubbed his head, the back of it aching slightly at thinking about her own damage. "Sadly I don’t have enough experience with driving to get us home..."

“It’s best you didn’t try to drive her, Papyrus. Monsters don’t have the legal rights to do that yet—and you could get your guardian in a lot of trouble if you tried.” The officer gave him a soothing smile, and edged around closer to the driver’s side. Mark took a peek inside, and ran his fingers through his short-cropped hair. He leaned into the truck, squeezing past the much larger protective monster, and carefully snapped his fingers near her ears. She didn’t respond, and he frowned. “Okay. She doesn’t look like she was too hurt by the fall from what I can see, though I don’t see the… young souls you mentioned? Did she respond at all when you lifted her?”

She looked unconscious to him—but he isn’t sure how to treat something that didn’t have flesh.

He moved out of the way, looking down at him, "No... and ah..." he gestured to her swell, "She didn't land on them, so they're most likely okay.”

“They…” He paused, and took a closer look. He didn’t touch her shirt—but Mark was an observant man. He could also spot a bag from a maternity store. “Shit, she’s pregnant. Okay… The hospital really isn’t going to know what to do with this. Okay. Uh… Do you guys have a doctor back at the Village?” They had managed to handle the skeleton’s ribs after all—and they looked quite solid under her shirt.

"Yes, my father." he replied, "We also have another came to us not too long ago."

“I heard about that one. We’re still on the look out for his wife.” Mark made a face. “Okay. Your dad’s a doctor though—I remember him. Big fella, kinda scary.”

A rev of an engine came from behind the truck, and Mark’s wife rolled down the window. “Is she okay?” She called, leaning across the passenger’s seat as she shifted the car into park.

The back window was open, and two curious canine heads poked out. Both of them looked nearly identical—both being dark colored German Shepherd’s. One had his tongue lolling out, intelligent eyes intently watching his partner as he stood on the lap of the other. The other had a headband on, and a coloring book clenched in one paw. The officer’s daughter kept quiet, looking on curiously.
“She’s not responding, Susan.” Mark called back. “This fella can’t legally drive, and their doctor is all the way back at Nara Village.”

“There’s no way he’s going to fit in the back with Jenna and Charlie.” Susan nods. She shifts the car into gear, and pulls around so the truck can be backed out. “I’ll follow you up.”

“We’re gonna go to Nara village?” Jenna’s voice perks up from the back seat. “Cool!”

Mark watches her pull out, and gives Papyrus a faint smile. “I’ll drive you up. You might want to sit in the back with her and keep her still. Got the keys?”

“That’s a good idea.” he agreed, before he went and pulled the keys from where they’d been tangled in her finger bones, holding them to Mark. "I just need a moment to get comfortable. And thank you again.”

“To protect and serve,” Mark quotes, taking the keys patiently. He leaves the skeleton to climb into the back cab, and clamors into the front seat. He has to move the seat forwards quite a bit, as his feet wont touch the pedals. “As far as I’m concerned, you guys are citizens of this world too, so that means we’ve got to protect you too. Alright, I’m not going to crack down on you if you don’t buckle up this time.” The back seats hardly looked like they had buckles designed for monsters of his stature. He turns on the truck, and leaves it to warm up while the skeleton gets situated between his pregnant girlfriend and their shopping bags.

Aliquam had to have the other seat all the way forward and he put the bags there instead as he stretched out in the back. He laid Tokiko across his chest, stroking her head gently as he settled her carefully. "You have my thanks, Officer Shepherd.”

“Yes, they're mine." he replied, "As for how it's evaded the news, we haven't told enough people... We've kept it rather under the rug, as we don’t want anyone... dangerous finding out."

"Yes, they're mine." he replied, "As for how it's evaded the news, we haven't told enough people... We've kept it rather under the rug, as we don’t want anyone... dangerous finding out." Mark nods, eyes on the road. “Smart choice. HAM’s been on the move. There’s been more occasions of HTM’s being attacked- several home invasions as well. We’re trying to crack down on them- but they’re slipperier than a fresh fish.” It was common on the news- but he wasn’t sure Toki had television out there. It was, as he was concerned, way out in the boonies. He hit a speed bump, and his eyes flicked to the rearview mirror as the unconscious skeleton groaned just faintly at being jostled. “Sorry, Papyrus. Speed bumps are terrible no matter how you hit them.”

Aliquam stroked her skull gently, running his fingers over the scrapes on the bone. "It's alright, I'll be her cushion when you go over them." he replied softly, before he sighed. "Why can't they just leave us alone...?"

“Everyone always asks that, kid.” He sighs. He shifts from the back streets up onto one of the main streets, dodging cars expertly. “No one really knows. These criminals… they’re not right. The hurt they can cause- the death, the pain, the sadness? There’s something not right inside of them. Good people- good people don’t do this to other people; no matter how strange they look. We at the PD are doing all we can to help catch them.”
He sighed and nuzzled Toki. "I'm glad I'm here to at least protect my friends." he murmured, gently kissing her head as he let healing-magic seep into her through every point of contact.

The healing magic makes her shift, and a slight whimper escapes. The slack bones of her face tense in something akin to discomfort as the scrapes to the back of her skull heal over, and she trembles in his arms. She doesn't stir though.

“And protect those that are more than your friends.” Mark smiles faintly. “Being a dad can be pretty scary. Being a first time dad in a scary time can be even more so. How you holding up, kid?”

"I'm nervous, honestly. But. There are many at home who want to support me, my Father, my Brother, Grillby..." he said with a soft purr, "Toki felt reassured when I told her I wasn't going to leave it to her.” he looked down at her and stroked her head, hushing her gently to comfort her.

“If neither of you are ready to be parents, or if one of you isn’t, there are other options.” The cop says softly. He watches him through the mirror, and smiles quietly. “Honestly, I think you’ll both be okay. It really seems like you love her. Y’know, my wife and I, our daughter was a surprise too. We weren’t even married- we actually married when she was four. She actually brought us together.”

Toki settles faintly, her bones trembling from time to time. She shifts slightly and falls limp once more.

"I love her very much... She's done so much for everyone... She's wonderful." he leaned down and kissed her head gently, smiling quietly. "Marriage... I... don’t think we're ready for that yet..." he chuckled, "But I think about it every day."

He then sighed and leaned back, "You know... I think this may help strengthen the bond between Monsters and Humans." he mentioned.

“Your kid?” He questioned curiously. “Marriage is… tough. Not everyone is meant for it. Hell, a buddy of mine on the force has been with his woman for thirty years. They’ve got kids together- and they’re not married. They’re probably the happiest couple I know. If the time is ever right… you’ll know. Both of you will.”

He nodded in agreement, and then sighed and smiled, "I love you." he murmured to Toki, before closing his eyes.

Mark watched with a soft smile of sorts, and sighed. He let them relax, trusting the skeleton to say something if the unconscious woman began to rouse.

Toki was silent the entire drive home, her small fit of whimpering having been the last noises she’d made. She was warm though- perhaps too warm, as she lay draped on Aliquam.

Mark turned into the driveway, following the grooves of the tire marks over to where he thought was the usual parking spot. His wife stayed at the entrance, parking her car in the visitor parking spot. As soon as he slid the car into park and stepped out, he found the truck surrounded by wary wolf guards.

“Uh… Chill, guys. Officer Sheppard, Ebott City PD. I was driving home for Miss Nara. She, ah, needs a doctor. Papyrus? These are your guys, right? Can you have them put the spears away?”

He lifted his head, and turned as best he could. Reaching over and knocking his knuckles against the glass loudly, he gave them a thumbs up and called to them from inside the cab. "He's okay!" he told them.
The guards shifted, and backed off.

“Uh- the other car’s my wife and daughter. She’s here to take me home. Uh… Yeah.” Mark unlocked the doors, and shifted to open the back one for Pap.

One of the guards, now that there wasn’t a threat, took a step back. He perked his ears, spotting Toki sprawled limply, and gave Aliquam a dutiful salute. “Stay there, sir. I’ll go get your father.” Dark brown fur bounces as the guard jogs as fast as he can in his armor, heading out of the main compound and towards the village proper.

Another of the guard’s shifts and peers in the open back door, furry ears flicking upright and alert for any orders that might come. “Sir? What happened? Was there an attack while you both were shopping?”

"Toki passed out.” He murmured. He didn’t move- didn’t want to risk doing anything bad to the woman on his chest. “I don’t know why. I hope that Father will be able to answer that once he’s seen to her.” he replied.

Speaking of the phantom, Tenebris was settling down in his chair, lighting his pipe and taking a few puffs. He exhaled the smoke and lay back, taking a deep breath before sighing again in contentment.

A heavy brown fist knocked against his front door in a slightly frantic rate, no doubt jarring him from his relaxing.

Tenebris jumped, then groaned as he got up, "Coming, coming..." he called, puffing his pipe as he walked to the door. "Yes?" he sighed as he opened the door.

The strong smell of mint made the wolf-monster’s sensitive nose wrinkle, but he saluted Tenebris nonetheless. “There has been an incident of some kind, sir. Miss Nara is unconscious in the back of her truck. Your son is with her.” Aliquam knew how to heal- so whatever was wrong, it wasn’t a physical wound that he knew how to handle.

He blinked once, and he nodded sharply. “Thank you for telling me.” he rumbled, before he grabbed his coat and started out, pulling on the black garment.

The guard was not far behind him, making sure to shut the door once the bigger monster had stepped around him. Long furry legs carried him quickly, despite the heavily clanking armor, and he pulled ahead of the longer-limbed monster quite easily. All of the training that Aliquam had been pushing them through was showing through. The guard rounded the corner of the street first, disappearing from view, and headed back over towards the main gate.

Mark was near the gate, talking with his wife and daughter quietly, with his dog sitting obediently at his side. He lifted his head when the guard came back, eyes perking up as he waited to see the doctor no doubt trailing behind.

The rest of the wolf guards had spread out, taking defensive posts near and around the truck where the skeletons remained. One stayed by the door, in case she was needed to fetch something.

"At ease, Men." he growled sharply as he approached the truck, noticing Aliquam's head on the passenger side door. He came over and opened it, immediately looking Toki over. He looked at
Aliquam when he couldn’t see anything physically wrong, who then proceeded to explain what happened.

"Understood." He then turned. "You two come and collect these bags." He ordered two of the guards, "Please take them to Toki's home."

The one by the door nodded faintly, flicking her tail at her companion. “I can handle the bags, sir.” The bags are collected swiftly, leaving Aliquam free to leave the back seat with Toki, and then the wolf is bounding up towards the house, armor making a ruckus.

There was a lot of noise as the guards dispersed, returning to their usual positions. The one with brown fur broke from position- and was joined by the cop and his family. They headed off into the village, presumably with the intent to give him and his purple-clad daughter a tour.

Toki, meanwhile, groans just slightly. It is faint, brought on by the loud din of many sets of clanking armor, but it is there.

"Aliquam, how easily can you get Toki out?" Tenebris questioned

"I imagine if I lay flat I can slip her from my arms to yours." The younger skeleton replied.

"Alright, let's do that." Tenebris lowered to a kneeling position and Aliquam laid back, carefully shifting his hold to Toki's hips as Tenebris reached and gripped her underarms. "One, Two..."

With a swift pull, Toki was out of the car and in Tenebris' arms, securely held in a bridal-carry.

"Good job." Tenebris praised as Aliquam then climbed out of the truck, stretching his legs and shaking them to wake them back up.

It was getting dark, but it was still brighter than inside of the truck. Toki’s body was lax, but that same groan escapes her again as her skull lolls limply over his arm. Her limbs settle into his grasp, and he would find that she is a few pounds heavier than she used to be. Her sockets remain empty and closed, but her fingers twitch just slightly.

And for a moment Tenebris had hoped she would have stirred from that.

"Hrm..." He then sighed, "We need someone to pull the truck into her parking spot, I'll get started on her." he said calmly.

But immediately it had worried Aliquam. "Father... Is she okay?" he pressed.

"I... I don’t know. Aliquam. But I'll find out."

She woke up in her room. The last thing she remembered had been telling Aliquam that she had a migraine. She had been walking towards the truck so they could go home, had tilted her head back and pressed to try and relieve some of the pressure- and the rest was blank.

She could feel her sheets draped lightly over her. She was settled on her side, facing towards what she could assume was Aliquam’s half of the bed. There was… something pulsing on the back of her skull. Something that wasn’t the headache- which was still there, but marginally lesser.
Groggily, her sockets flicked halfway open, eye lights coming on dimly. She groans quietly, much louder than the last, and her fingers curl into the sheets. Toki is a little dazed, a little confused—she wasn’t supposed to be at home, was she? “Nng…”

"Are you waking up now, Miss Toki?" Was the calm, gentle voice that was Tenebris Gaster. "I suspected that was the concern... Ah, don't try to move." He murmured soothingly.

“Nng…” Toki’s eye lights flicked slightly and brightened some. The back of her skull hurt slightly, but the pulsing thing was helping the ache of her migraine. “Mm… Yeah… I’m up now. What… happened? We were walking to the car…” She blinks slowly, and shifts faintly. Not a lot of movement, but enough to feel something shift against the back of her skull. “What’s on my head…?”

"You passed out. Stay still, I’m almost done." he told her sternly, before slowly moving. Something slid out from the inside of her skull, and as Tenebris moved away, Toki would have a second to look to see just what had been in her head.

“Done doing what?” She manages. When he’d pulled away, the strange thing on the back of her skull drawing back, and taking with it the vast majority of her migraine. This was the least painful it had been in a long while. She turned, and caught sight of it.

Extending from somewhere under his coat was a long, black tentacle.

“Uh…” Her sockets are quite wide. She’d seen him completely undressed before- and she had never noticed anything like that. Toki shifts, rolling onto her back gingerly. “What… Was that doing to my skull?”

"Siphoning pent up magic that had gathered in the back of your skull. It is the reason you passed out. Speaking of, how's your head now?"

She sits up slowly and cradles her skull in a palm. “Huh… That explains the migraine that wouldn’t go away.” She mutters slightly. “My head feels better. Better than it has all week, actually. It still hurts, but… that’s probably from hitting the cement.”

"Most likely, my recommendation for that is an Ice Pack." he chuckled quietly.

“That’s my recommendation too. Uh… how long have I been out?” She shifted and placed her feet on the floor. Toki was still a little woozy, so she took a moment to scrub her face. Once she’s sure she’ll be fine, Toki clamors to her feet and gets her balance. “So… what caused the migraine?”

"The magic." he said again, "There was too much pressure on your inner cranial." he explained.

“… Huh… Well I guess it wasn’t just a pregnancy thing then.” She ground her teeth quietly, and then flicks her gaze up to Tenebris. “I’ve been having migraines for the past while. I thought it was just a pregnancy thing- googled it and whatnot.”

He shook his head. "Not this time, this symptom is monster in origin."

Toki makes a face. “Ah. Alright. Well… do you think it’ll come back? Because that would be bad to pass out going down the road.” She moves then, straightening her clothes as she pads for the door. She grimaces. “I am still a little lightheaded. Will you make sure I don’t fall on my face going down the stairs? I want that ice pack."

"If your magic builds up again, it will no doubt return." he sighed and followed after her. "Yes. I will help you to the couch. Then I'll retrieve the Ice pack myself, as Aliquam will no doubt come check on you.”
Toki rolls her eyes slightly, but does use him to get down the stairs. He makes a good brace for going up and down- but she does pad stubbornly for the kitchen to collect the icepack herself. Lightheaded she might be, but helpless she is not. “I can get the icepack, Tenebris. Though… crap, Pap probably freaked out when I fell. Ah hell.”

She rummages in the freezer for one of the larger icepacks, and then pads for the couch. Toki claims a seat, leans back, and lets the ice pack be held up by the back of her skull. “Mm. You were right. Ice feels good. So… what was that black thing that drained my magic?”

He sighed and sat down in one of the chairs in the living room, before he let his eyes glow gently. His coat harnessed the magic before tendrils rose from it, inky and black just like the one from before. "One of these."

Toki stared out from one socket, the other closing as she let the ache in her skull fade and waited for Aliquam to come around. There was no telling what he was doing. “That is simultaneously freaky and very, very cool. So you just… what, absorbed my magic? Huh… It’s not gonna like, hurt you to do that, is it?”

"Yes, I did. And no, I do not think it will be a problem for me." he replied, taking his pipe into his teeth and letting it hang there.

Toki nodded. She fell silent, and watched him for a moment, before just closing her sockets. She relaxed, hands coming to cradle the noticeable bump of her middle, and just zoned out. The ice on the back of her skull felt nice, and she was still a little woozy from having essentially fainted.

"Toki!" the door flew open as Papyrus appeared; his eyes alit with great worry.

Toki didn’t even jump. She stayed relaxed, silently breathing and letting the chill soothe her skull. “I’m on the couch, Pap.”

He was on the couch next to her before she could even get her sockets open. His arms looped around her, and he held her close. "I was so worried about you!"

Toki squeaked as the couch was invaded, and leaned into his grasp. “I’m sorry I scared you.” She murmurs softly, nuzzling to his chest. “Your dad said it was a buildup of magic in the back of my skull or something.” Something likely pregnancy related.

"I see..." he whined softly, "I'm sorry. I wish I knew sooner..."

Her teeth purse together faintly, and she reaches up to gently flick his cheek. “Stop that, Ali. It wasn’t your fault- I didn’t know that could happen, or I would have told you. I thought it was a human thing- so it was my error, not anyone else’s.” Still, she snuggles closer, leaving the icepack draped over the back of her neck. “Besides, your dad fixed it. With his… weird tentacle sucky things.”

"Father, you used your tendrils!" Aliquam shot a look at him.

Tenebris just shook his head. "Aliquam you know that they assist in my work when they’re necessary."

Toki glanced between them, befuddled. “… What’s so bad about them?”

"Well... Mhh..." he huffed softly, "N-Nothing... but... well...!"

“Just spit it out, Pap. Are they straining on his magic or something?”
"He's always so tired after he uses them! I worry about him!"

"Papyrus Aliquam Gaster. I'm fine. I did it for Toki's sake."

“And now you can sit there and relax. Also, he did sort of like… I dunno, suck out my magic?” Like some sort of tentacle vampire thing. She shivered, and huddled closer to Aliquam. “Does he get to keep the magic or does it just… poof?” So many questions now that her head didn’t hurt as bad.

… now that her head didn’t hurt, she could finally get back to doing paperwork in her regular workloads. A contemplative look crosses her face.

"I don’t know." he growled quietly, still looking at Tenebris, who lit his pipe and took a few puffs from it.

"Give me a good night's rest, Aliquam and I’ll be as right as rain." the older replied calmly.

Toki nodded quietly and shifted. “Why don’t you rest? I can go make some tea. I need something to eat anyways.” Her magic, now that it wasn’t over supplying to her skull, felt… empty? Like he’d drained more than just the pesky pool bothering her head.

"I s'ppose..." Tenebris took a deep breath and settled down, looking at Aliquam who nuzzled Toki before he let her go.

Toki used Pap’s shoulder to get up, and offered him a faint smile. “You want to join me in the kitchen, Pap?” She thought she’d offer- since she had an inkling that he would be following her regardless.

He got up and nodded. "Of course." he said quickly.

Toki smiled at him and slid the icepack off of the back of her neck. Her skull was still tender to the touch, but at least there were no scratches. She took a breath and padded for the kitchen, casting a longing glance towards the box of cocoa that she couldn’t have. She gave a soft buzz, and rubbed her hand over her middle as she contemplated what she, and therefore the ever-picky twins, wanted to eat. Speaking of… “… How did we get home, by the way?” She’d seen the bags by the stairs.

"Did you ever meet Officer Mark Shepherd?" he asked, "He saw you pass out and he drove us home."

“I don’t think so.” She blinks. “He sounds nice though. I’ll have to tell him thank you when I can finally meet him face to face.” For now though… food. She scrubs her face, blankly staring up at the cupboards. “I have no idea what I have the energy to make right now. Any suggestions?"

"How about I make us something to eat.” he offered, "Some stew maybe.”

"Stew sounds good.” She shifts to sit on the counter. “Sorry I’m not much help right now. It feels like I’m still a little out of it.”

"No, Toki, it's completely fine” he helped her onto the counter and pressed a gentle kiss to her head. "Knowing you're okay is satisfaction enough.”

“I’ll be okay up here,” she kicks her feet pointedly, and tucks her chin so she can watch him. Truthfully, she didn’t really want to go sit down elsewhere. Fainting was scary, now that she could actually sit and think on it. She had no desire to be anywhere but close to Papyrus. “And I’m even more okay since I’m with you.”
He halted for a moment, and his smile grew before he embraced her tightly. "Nyeh~" he purred gently.

Toki giggled softly as he wrapped around her. She leaned into his embrace, and thrummed softly. "Careful with the squishing me, love. I’m a bit harder than our little jellybeans. We’re really lucky my accident didn’t hurt them today."

"Nyeh..." he whined softly and moved his squeeze to higher up, "I won’t squish them." he promised quietly.

She nodded and nuzzled closer to him. Her arms loop around his neck- and she finds herself reluctant to let go, even though her middle is begging for food. “Mm... good. I don’t wanna let you go...”

"Nyehh... Then why do you think you have to?" He turned around and pulled her arms over his neck, before reaching behind him and grabbing her legs, "Nyeh!"

This was a familiar position- but over a much less plush back. Still, she hooked herself onto him with a content purr, and nuzzled her face into the back of his neck. The curve of her belly fit perfectly in the small of his back. “Yes. This works just fine. I wont get in the way of cooking, will I?"

He shook his head. "Just don’t attack my neck more than necessary and we'll be golden." he giggled, securing her legs before he got started.

Out of it or not, Toki’s eye lights gleamed mischievously. “I’ll be good.” She purrs lazily. It was lies and blasphemy, in all reality. Because as soon as his hands are away from sharp objects, Toki took the opportunity to use her teeth and nibble lightly at the vertebrae of his neck.

He didn't notice at first until an especially hard nip made him gasp out and nearly drop the can he was holding.

“Mmm, butterfingers today, love?” She questions with mock sleepiness.

"You cheeky little fox." he huffed, "Behave back there." he warned her.

Toki chuffed softly and smooched his neck. “Only because I love you.” She purrs. Her fingers though, will trace his collarbone. After all, behave ‘back there’ meant back where she was. His front was free game.

He shivered and sighed, "You little minx." he chuckled softly.

“I love you,” she purrs. She burrows her fingers against his bones, and nestles in. She may actually nap while clinging to him. Her limbs tighten faintly.

He sighed and chuckled, "I love you too." he purred softly.

Toki nuzzled her face between his shoulders, and sighed out a warm breath against his shirt. Nap maybe not- but doze, yes. Half doze, more like. “Mmm... so what type of stew are you making...?”

"A meat stew.” He replied.

“It smells almost as good as you.” She blinks sleepily.

He chuckled quietly and stroked her leg. "Nothing smells better than you, you know~"

“Mmm, I’m thinking you’re telling me a fibula there. Trust the pregnant skeleton on this one. You
smell way better. All musk and yummyness. It fits you.” Her legs shift around him, tightening slightly, and she adjusts herself better on his back.

He smiled at her and chuckled, "You're sweet, Toki~" he purred gently.

His purr felt nice against her front. She buzzed softly to him in turn, and nuzzled closer. “Mhmm... I’m only sweet for you though.” Not really- she was kind and sweet for everyone. Though, everyone else also got some low-key sass from time to time.

"No you're not, you're a wonderful person to everyone you meet.”

“Mmm, true.” Kindness was her inherent trait after all. She shifts, and accidentally bumps her horns to the back of his skull. “Shit- sorry, Pap.”

He blinked and shook his head with a chuckle, "Nah, it's okay!"

“If you’re sure, Pap.” Still, she leans up to kiss the spot she clocked, and then settles down patiently to wait for their stew to be done.

He seemed to be making it by near scratch, as he was working with her on his back for at least an hour.

In that hour, Toki ended up dozing right off, clinging to his shoulders. They completely forgot to get Tenebris his tea- but he would probably survive, given his napping state out in the living room.

She was completely out of it, arms locked around him and soft snores bubbling up from over his shoulders.

Papyrus couldn't stop smiling as he cooked. Despite how their day out had ended, he still found his mouth angled upwards into a content grin. The entire reason for that grin was located on his back. She was so sweet…

Though after enough time had passed, the stew was complete. Leaving it covered to keep it warm, he carried her to the couch and sat her down, before he sat down as well, and pulled her close. Gently clacking a soft kiss onto her head, he murmured softly to her so as not to wake his dad from his nap in the other chair. "I love you so much, Tokiko Nara."

She stirred faintly, nuzzled closer, and settled back down. Aliquam didn’t have the heart to wake her. He’d let her nap until she was content- and then they would go and eat. After all- to quote Toki, ‘having a girlfriend with fire magic had its perks’. And one of those perks, was the ability to rapidly reheat food.

He gently stroked her head until their mutual warmth overwhelmed him, and he fell asleep with her safely tucked in his arms.
The first of April was there before they knew it. The migraines continued to be a thing, and there
was nothing they could do about it. But, now that they knew, they could siphon the magic away
before it could get too bad. She ended up being pretty well babied for the first several days, much to
her amusement. She did understand though- and Toki imagined that if the positions had been
reversed, things would have been quite similar.

Passing out was a serious thing, and completely terrifying. So, she made sure to pester Tenebris to
drain away the magic whenever her head would hurt worse. They’d found that if she regularly used
at least some of her magic, however, it prolonged the need for them to drain away the excess that
caused her pain.

April first also meant that Toki was wary as hell. It was literally the one day of the year dedicated to
pranks and shenanigans- and even she wouldn’t put it past Papyrus to pull something on her on a day
like today. Well… Maybe not Pap. He was too sweet for anything seriously prank-related. She could
see him maybe putting a sticky note with something embarrassingly cute on her back, but that was
about it.

She personally didn’t have any pranks planned- but pranks had been more her brother’s forte than
her own.

It was a surprisingly dry start to April, so Toki was spending the day outside tending to some
weeding around the compound. She hadn’t tended to them all winter, and the flowers were infested
with weeds of various kinds. She needed the flowers to bloom well, so her bees would have a good
supply of honey for the summer.

Dirt clung to the bones of her hands as she dealt with some up-rooted bulb plants. Toki wasn’t alone
in the garden though. No, she was exercising her magic. She had several different bees bumbling
around her garden, using their larger size and strength to hoist some weeds out of the ground with
her. Stripe was with her too, though the large queen was firmly wedged between her horns and
seemed to be sleeping.

The harness around the bug pressed awkwardly into her skull, but Toki didn’t mind. They made for
pleasant company between the guards that checked in every so often.
The Gaster family was not the only one that was overprotective. The guards checked in often— and would then tattle to Aliquam if she was ‘overworking’ herself, and he would come make sure she took a break. It really was sweet, even if it was a little pesky.

Aliquam was coming into the garden, a gentle smile on his face, he wasn’t coming to worry her, rather had a plate with a sandwich and a glass of lemonade in hand, "Toki." he called to her, carefully stepping between the flowers as he made his way over to her.

The bees flitted over to greet Aliquam, bumping into him like affectionate flaming sausages, before returning to their tasks. One of them lingered, investigating the glass of lemonade for a moment, before attempting to steal a sip from the glass.

Toki lifts her gaze, and waves at him with a smile. She leans back, rubbing her knuckles into her lower back, and beams at him brightly. Stripe waves a lazy leg from atop Toki’s skull. “Hey Ali. Did I lose track of time again?”

He shooed the bee away from the glass with a soft laugh before he knelt by her. "You did. Here, I brought you a PB’n’J and some lemonade. I crisped the bread too, just how you like it~"

Her sockets brightened, and she beamed. She’d been having a real craving for anything involving peanut butter. As he knelt down, she leaned up and gave him a soft kiss. “You are literally the best, like, ever. I’ve had a hankering for peanut butter all morning.” She dusts off her fingers, dry soil falling away from her bones and clinging to her shorts instead, and reaches out to take the plate and glass. She adjusts her kneeling position, and settles for criss-cross instead.

"I love you too~" He giggled, handing her the plate first as she got settled. "How are the twins?" he asked.

“They’re playing hell on my lower back, but they’re doing good. I keep getting these ticklish feelings inside. Fetal quickening I think it’s called. Your dad would know the term.” Sort of faintly like bubbles popping behind her bellybutton- it was going to be a prelude to actual movement later. It was a good sign, for sure. She settles the plate firmly in her lap, the glass on a nearby rock, and takes a big bite out of her sandwich. A moan tugs free at the taste of the creamy peanut butter and the crispy outside of the sandwich. “Shit, yes, this is amazing. They also might be craving peanut butter. Mmm…”

He giggled and lowered himself so he was carefully sprawled on his stomach. Papyrus reached out to caress her stomach with gentle fingers. "My silly Jellybeans," he giggled softly, "Being so hard on momma~"

Toki smiled and lifted the plate out of his way as he pretty much made himself at home in her lap. Munching through her sandwich, Toki used her non-busy hand to guide his fingers to one side of the small swell. God damn, this sandwich tasted amazing. The lemonade that chased it down was like the icing on the cake. “I feel the tickling here. I’d say it’s gas, but I don’t have organs that do that anymore, so it can only be them starting to move. I can’t feel anything from the outside yet, but probably in a couple more weeks, we’ll be able to actually feel them. Mmm… how is it you knew exactly what I wanted to eat? This is just… mmm…” She was probably making a fool out of herself over a sandwich and a drink, but she was with him, so she really didn’t care.

He giggled quietly and shifted as to press his face against her swell, giving a happy murr as he tried to feel for the vibrations of the twins. "I'm your mate. It's my job to know~" he chuckled.

She finishes her sandwich in record time, her magic swirling contently in her middle. Toki sips at her lemonade after making sure her fingers were clean from peanut butter and jelly, and rubs the top of
his skull with a soft laugh. “True that, true that indeed. Still, very insightful of you. Mmm… whatever that noise you’re making is, it really tickles.” She giggles.

He giggled quietly and kissed her stomach a few times, "I don’t mean to tickle, nyeh heh heh, but I just love touching you like this," he cooed softly, "You're so soft and warm."

Toki smiled and leaned back slightly so he had better access. She giggles again and tugs her shirt up, obliging him with some bone to flesh contact. “I enjoy your touch,” she thrums, also enjoying her lemonade. Her fingers trace soft lines over his skull, circling around the back. He’d been getting what his dad called sympathy headaches- something about him being in tune with her systems. He didn’t need the actual magic drain- usually he could dump it into her belly in a donation and negate it- but she still felt bad about it. So she rubbed, knowing he probably didn’t have one, but knowing the motion usually felt good. “Soft huh? Certainly wouldn’t have to do with the two little jellybeans blooming in my belly, would it?” She winks down at him.

He cooed happily and pecked her stomach a few times. “Nyeh. Does it matter?” he huffed, "It's still you either way."

“That is very true.” She chuckled. The bubbling feeling continued behind her middle for a time, before it faded off. “Heh… You know, I wonder what they look like…” There were times that she wished ultrasound machines worked on monsters- but they didn’t. Something about the magic that made up monsters messed with some of the delicate hospital machinery.

He looked at her stomach and his gaze softened as he watched the little souls floating in her middle. "They're going to be big and healthy." he purred gently.

“I certainly hope they’ll be healthy. They’re already getting big. I’m showing at fourteen weeks, Pap.” She can’t really crane down to kiss his head- her middle no longer flexes like that- but she does purr for him. “Probably because their daddy is a giant.” She teases.

He giggled gently, his soft laugh fading off slowly. "You're so tiny too" he told her, before nuzzling her, "It's not bad for you is it?” he then asked, a little bit of worry wiggling into his voice.

“What, me being so tiny? I’m actually quite tall for what I was. Plus I’ve got the extra inches from my horns, if that counts.” She giggles softly. ‘I don’t really think it’s bad that I’m much smaller than you.” She had a wide, wide pelvis after all- she could handle what he threw at her. “I mean, yeah it could cause complications with the twins later, but we really don’t know how they’re gonna come into the world until they’re well on their way. We’ll handle it, Pap. I’m made of some pretty tough stuff.”

He sighed and nuzzled her softly. "Well, you know... Father is a doctor, worst case... I ah... I know he could help us if things got bad..."

She gently taps his glabella and offers him a reassuring smile. “There is that, but I don’t think we’ll have a problem. I’m very certain we can bring our little ones in without too much problem. I’m healthy- you’re healthy. They’re healthy. At least, that’s what your Dad has been saying during the checkups. Heh. You and me though, Pap, we’re in this together. We’ll handle what all is thrown at us together.”

"Of course!" he said happily, "I don’t want you to ever think anything else!" he sat up then, and pulled her into a hug, nuzzling his cheek into hers.

He was still here, three months and some odd weeks after the initial conception- she was pretty certain he was going to stay and handle all of this with her. Toki leaned into the hug and nuzzles him
back with a soft thrum. “Never.” She assures him. “But you and me, we’ll handle it together. If complications happen, we’ll handle it. Smooth sailing? Definitely handle it. We’ll just be careful, y’know?”

Stripe buzzes on the top of her skull, smooshing her legs against Pap’s skull when it gets close to her seat.

"Of course." he nodded, "Which means we should take care to make sure YOU don’t hurt yourself." he huffed, nuzzling her.

She gave a befuddled sound, and inquired after his comment. “Me? How am I going to end up hurting myself?”

"I don’t know..." he whined softly.

She pats his cheek, and smooches him gently. “Life happens, Pap. I’m a bit of a clutz- I’m bound to hurt myself sooner or later. But, I will be extra careful, and make sure not to try and move the couch on my own if I lose my toe under it again. Sound fair?”

He giggled again and returned the kiss, "Deal." he purred gently, before he sat back, "You want to finish your lemonade?" he then asked.

Toki grins and does, indeed, drain the last of her lemonade. “Mmm… that answer your question?”

She gives him a cheeky grin, gathering the plate and the used cup into a pile on her lap.

The bees buzzing around the plants, in the meantime, have gathered many weeds into their pile. One of the bees is settled on the pile of weeds, and seems to be rapidly dehydrating them with the heat of its fires. The plants were crumbling to dust under its touch.

"Indeed." he replied, before noticing what her bees were doing. He let out a chuckle. "Nyeh heh heh heh, what a way to multitask." he commented, "It’s rather adorable!"

“Aren’t they just?” She watched them for a moment. “They’re quite helpful out here. Of course, Stripe here would rather nap. But she makes a good companion.”

The bee on her skull buzzes at the mention of her name, fat limbs nestling closer to Toki’s bones.

“She's adorable, but I can see why she likes my brother so much." he joked, "She's a little bit on the lazy side, now isn't she?"

“She is.” Toki scoots back, leaning back so she supports her weight with her elbows. “She’s not actually sure why she likes Cae- from what I can get from her thought process, anyways. Maybe it’s because they’re kindred spirits?”

The bee, quite well and done with all of the shifting that the skeleton had done, proceeded to buzz off of her head and settle back down on the exposed green swell of her belly. She sprawled stubbornly across the green flesh, buzzing faintly over her navel.

"And just as keen on protecting the queen while she's at it!" he laughed gently, reaching out to pet the bee.

“I think she was more annoyed that she kept getting jostled.” Toki giggled softly. The bee currently warming her belly buzzed faintly, a happy sound, at his touch. It brought a peal of laughter to Toki, and she struggled not to squirm. “Oh stars, the buzzing tickles!”
"Nyeh heh heh heh!" The laughter was contagious and Aliquam found himself laughing as well, before he reached and gently coaxed the bee onto his hand, "Come here you, and lets not torture Toki with your ticklish buzzing."

Stripe was easily herded into his palm, where in she began to sluggishly trek up his shoulder. She buzzed at him mulishly.

Toki swiped at her sockets, her giggles stirring up a flurry of the strange, bubbling feelings in her belly. “Gods above, that tickled something fierce.” She rubbed her fingers over her middle to soothe the bubbly feeling.

He smiled and reached up to pet the bee's head, "That's a good girl" he cooed happily, before leaning in to gently kiss her side, as her head was too small. Attempting a kiss on her abdomen was weird and dangerous.

Stripe buzzed pleasantly at the affections, her fires curling around his fingers harmlessly.

Toki sat up as she picked up the sounds of shoes slapping across the ground. She rolls her sockets, fingers still soothing her middle, and laughs slightly. Well- it was about time that Cae tried something. “Don’t even try it, Cae.” She couldn’t see who it was over Papyrus’ shoulders. “Your shenanigans can wait until later.”

The sound that comes from behind Aliquam is not a laugh, nor an amused chortle from the portly skeleton. Instead, it’s feminine, and hellishly amused. There is the cock of something that sounds like a gun. “Huh. I guess Joey was right. You really are pregnant, aren’t you? The bosses are going to love seeing this. Letting yourself get fucked by beasts- it’s no wonder you keep so many of them around you, whore. Added my husband to your harem, haven’t you? I wonder who the father even is.”

The sound of a gun cocking immediately has Aliquam on his feet, standing protectively over Toki as he looks in the direction of the voice. "I don’t know who you are, but I request you do not speak to Toki like that. It's very rude" he spoke with a stern tone.

Toki too scrambles to her feet, and peers through the gaps in Aliquam’s arms. Her bees abandon their tasks and flock to her, all of them, even Stripe, taking to the air. They hover around her, wary.

The woman before them had curly brown hair, pulled up in a ponytail. Green eyes glittered at them darkly. She was in a tank top and long pants, displaying the large collection of burn marks on her flesh. The largest of them was around her neck- and burnt into the shape of a familiar small skeletal hand.

Black boots and pants were tinged gray- and flecks of dust scattered in the breeze. There was dust along her gun as well- and Toki recognized that it had a silencer on it. It took her a moment to see who it was- because the last time she had seen her, she had been more plump and many, many times less threatening.

Toki’s eyes lock on the dust. Oh… oh no…

“Really?” The woman offers him a lip-curling sneer, eyes flitting to the bees. She levels her gun at them in a precautionary way. “Your bitch of a master didn’t tell you who I am? After I shattered her arm, tried to cave in that ugly mug of hers, and she burnt the ever loving fuck out of me with her freaky magic bullshit?”

Immediately Aliquam's magic flared up and he summoned a bone that he held in his hand. His
primary weapon was at the ready, though it wouldn’t be helpful against a gun. "She is not my master." he growled, before he reached back and firmly tucked Toki behind him. "Who is this woman?" he then questioned his mate his voice unintentionally a growl towards her as he quickly grew defensive.

Toki didn’t even fight being moved. Her sockets were wide and dark- because that… That was monster dust on Vikki’s clothes and gun. She flinches faintly at his growl, but it serves it’s purpose and brings her back. She violently shoves her shirt back down into proper place, and her bees hover closer to her. “That’s Vikki,” She mutters. “Remember I told you about Todd’s wife…? That’s… her.” Except she no longer had the soccer mom look to her.

No… This was not the same Vikki from several months past.

“That’s me indeed,” She offers a wide grin. “Vikki Hanes, at your service once more. Only this time…” She grins, and taps something on her chest. It’s a camera- broadcasting back to her HQ over a live feed. “I’m not alone. Not really. And I’m much, much stronger than I was before. Heh. I’m stronger than you now. I’m here to finish what I started- and to convey a message.”

"...." His eyes narrowed and immediately took a step forward, magic pulsing from his footstep and raising a wall of bones that blocked Toki from view, protecting her in the same motion. "Stay there." he ordered with a growl.

Once she was safe, he shifted his stance; the bone now in both hands as his right eye glowed bright, "And what kind of message is that?" Was his tense question to the woman threatening them.

Toki’s bees didn’t thicken- because she didn’t risk switching her defense into her offense. The ones that fluttered around her were strictly defensive… and did well to keep her informed of the interactions she could no longer see. Some of them flit up to the sky, buzzing loudly in a sound of alarm.

Vikki smiled nice and wide. “Yes, definitely your master’s pet. Guarding her diligently like the dog you are, aren’t you?” Vikki laughs again, and shifts the weapon. The silencer cracks- and she relishes in the pained noise that Toki makes as one of the bees hovering outside of the bone wall explodes into a rain of flaming internals. “Every kill I do makes me feel so much stronger… It’s intoxicating, the power I can feel in my veins. I wonder… how much stronger would you make me if I killed you?”

She aims the gun at Aliquam, and prepares herself to dodge should he lunge. He was larger than her by several feet- she was smaller than even Toki. But she was fast. faster now than ever before. “My message, hm? Heh. Cruelty knows you, Kindness. He knows you, and knows what you are…” She all but purrs. “And you are nothing but a toy for him to break. You and your monster spawn.”

He growled at the human's words, but shook his head, "You don't have to do this." he warned her, "You can prove that humans can have a change of heart. Put. The gun. Down."

“If you’d have said that to me last time, I might have actually listened. It’s cute, how you think that would actually work.” She turns, lines up the shot, and fires at him with a wide grin. She aims for the broad part of his chest- after all, the wolves at the gate had been dropped just as easily. “I don’t think so, beast. Boss has shown me how the world can be- and it is a better world without all of you to taint it.”

In one solid move of his hand, the bone in his grasp takes the bullet instead of his chest, and he sighed softly. A growl followed his sigh, and he gave her a tight look. "So be it. I'm sorry." He then twirled the staff and gave a snarl as he then slammed the head of it into the ground. Magic flew out in
a shockwave before waves of bones flew at Vikki.

Vikki was no brave soul. No, she ran and ducked, dodging around the bones and bolting to get around the wall of bones he’d put around one of her primary targets. She found it solid, all the way around- but that didn’t mean she didn’t shoot at any bees she could see.

She relished in the cries of pain from Toki, and the way the human turned monster drew her bees back to her, tightly tucking them behind the barrier of bones.

Vikki grasps for the nearest tool- which is an ax at the base of a pile of wood- and takes it in one hand. She bolts back around, shooting towards his back and trying to dodge any bones he flung at her.

He was twirling the bone now as he effortlessly was able to slide a foot and dodge the bullet, before he grinned and reached out a hand towards her.

Plink

"Nyeh heh heh heh..." He then donned a grin to challenge his brother's, and his gaze sharpened. "You're blue now. That's my attack."

Vikki was weighed down by something- she wasn’t sure what it was. But something in her chest felt heavy, sluggish- like she couldn’t move against the forces of gravity. Still, her soul surged, and she struggled through it, forcing her arm to lift so she could take another shot towards him. She can’t quite aim high enough- but multiple bullets rip for his legs.

Thankfully, being bone, the bullets would tear through his pants and go through to embed into the ground. But one hit enough to crack the bone as it went by and he roared out in pain.

1980/2000HP.

He leaned against the bone he held in hand, having landed the head of it into the dirt, and he growled, before he sent a single surge of magic to numb it as he straightened again. He then extended a hand, then twisted it and brought it up again. Bones flew from the ground, one of them spearing the gun, the other avoiding her hand and arm completely.

“Fuck,” she hissed. The hand wielding the ax lifted, and she made an attempt to swat the bones away from her arm. The gun was useless- shit, it wasn’t even in her hand anymore. She shifted, making an attempt to move. “Why am I so slow?” She snarls, befuddled and beyond angry.

"Because. I turned you blue." he answered, coming closer with his weapon in hand.

Vikki struggled to move- she really did. He had her damn near rooted to the spot. So she forced all of her energy into her arm, and swiped at him with the bladed end of the ax. “Well make me un-blue, so I can kill you,” she snarls. “I’ll rip those disgusting abominations out of her belly and end them. But don’t worry. I’d make suuuure to spread their dust with yours.”

He blocked the swing effortlessly, and used the tip of his bone to tilt her chin up, pressing it into her throat to make his point. "Do not. Threaten. My Children." he growled. The orange in his eyes was now furious, burning what could be considered a bright red. His fangs were bared, emphasizing his long canines as his expression was one of barely restrained rage at her words. And yet, despite his expression showing his true emotions, his words came on a calm tone.

"Surrender now, and this will not end badly for you." he ordered next, pulling his weapon from her throat as he then hit one side and make it spin, sharply swatting the hand that held the axe as to make
her drop it.

The ax was dropped, and she was stuck in place, helpless against him. But her face only grinned wider, and she simply smiled up at him. Her eyes were a flinty emerald- the same ones her daughter had. Hers lacked the spark of life- of hope, of compassion. No, they were twisted and jaded now, as were her words. “Your children should have been aborted the moment you found out about them. Quick and easy, a few hits to the middle would have ended them.” She bore her teeth at him. “You haven’t hit me once, coward. End badly for me? Hell, you won’t even fight with the intent to hurt me. A coward like you? You’re just going to lose your kids later anyways. I promise, I’d make it much more… humane… for the little abominations than my boss will.”

The rage that resonated from his soul could even be detected by those lacking magic and he let out an enraged snarl, before he rose his weapon, He then tensed slightly, and he gripped his arm, forcing it back down, just words... they were just words...

"No one will harm my children. Or my mate. Not while I have a soul pulsing in my chest," he growled, "and I don’t intend to let it be snuffed out." he then dropped the bone in his hand, and instead grabbed Vikki by her free arm, he then moved behind her as he twisted it, holding it there tightly. "You are done here," he growled. He kept a tight grip on her soul as well as he retracted the bones, allowing Toki to go free as he then lifted Vikki up off her feet, starting for the front gate.

"Tokiko. Call the police." he ordered her, his tone cold and unraveled, the boiling hot rage suppressed by it, "Tell them that we have caught and apprehended Vikki Hanes."

Toki was quivering slightly where she stood, arms looped protectively about her middle. Only three of her original summons were at her side- Stripe, and two others, were clinging protectively close to her, buzzing and humming loudly. One more was returning- it had gotten away before Vikki could shoot it from the sky. No doubt, it had gone to alarm the guards.

It takes the full calling of her name to draw her out of it- out of just what Vikki had been spouting and absolutely horrifying her with- and she fumbles for her phone in her pocket. It’s pulled out, and she dials the police. Her voice is shaky, as are her hands- and she nearly drops it as she calls the police. It only takes a few words- the mention of Vikki’s name- and then there is officers being dispatched.

Vikki snarls with rage and squirms as best she can. Her fingers claw at his wrists, and she howls her anger loudly. She was foiled- she hadn’t been expecting this blue magic shit. “In the end you’ll all die,” she snarls, “you’ll all die, and I’ll get to watch your dust scatter in the wind. Hell, once I get free, I’ll go piss on your graves. You wont get away. Nowhere is safe from us- we have eyes everywhere. We see all, we know all,” she hisses. “And us humans will rid the world of all abominations, be they born or unborn.”

He held her tightly, her nails doing little to his bone as he carried her towards the front gate. "The only abominations upon this world are those who cannot come to accept those they share the world with. People like that heartless organization. People like you."

“That might be so,” she grins, “But in the world we make when we’re through with animals like you? We will be revered for removing the plague that has befallen us.”

There was a barking call that went out across the village, and the sound of all of the guards kicking into overdrive.

When Aliquam gets to the gate, he will see two piles of armor littered in dust, weapons dropped and discarded.
He knew they would be there and he felt regret swell in his gut, before he shook his head. "Humans without kindness are the plague," he said simply, before he gave a loud whistle, "GUARDS!" he barked out sharply.

The noise of the guards came pounding for them. Several of them let out distinct calls of warning-echoing through the trees to the guards who were patrolling past the perimeter. Calls echoed back-and everyone was on high alert.

Guards on duty and off duty rushed out of the village proper, fur raised and snarls upon their teeth.

Wolfen was among them, and his eyes darkened at seeing the piles of dust, and Aliquam restraining the frothing woman. He was the first to reach them, and his hands came out and closed over her wrists with bruising effectiveness. His hands were large enough to hold both of them in one hand-which let him take her from Aliquam, force her face down into the dirt, and bind her hands tightly behind her back with a length of rope procured from his working belt.

The rest fanned out, taking post and listening for orders.

"Make sure she does not worm away from you, do NOT use violence unless it's absolutely necessary." he ordered Wolfen, "She wants us to act like the monsters they think we are. Do not let her win."

He then looked to a pair of guards, and motioned to the piles of dust. "Have these guards identified and their remains collected to be given to their loved ones." he ordered them. Another guard is also given an order. "Take post and watch for the police, they are on their way." he told him, before he sighed, "I need to go console my mate." he then told them.

He looked to a swift-runner scout, a messenger among the guard, "Stay with the lookout, come find me as soon as the police are spotted." and with that, he was on his way back to the house, running in a full sprint.

The guards moved as ordered. Training really had paid off- but not enough for the two who now lay dead.

Toki was where she’d been left, though she wasn’t really doing anything. She still had her arms curled around her middle, shoulders hunched up. She was in a distinctly defensive position, her four bees buzzing agitatedly around her. Her sockets were dark- and she was lost to complete and utter terror.

HAM knew. HAM knew who she was, what she was. HAM was lead by Cruelty. Cruelty knew about her children. And they… And they… They wanted to do…

Walking closer, Aliquam began to hum gently to catch the bee’s attention as to not startle them. And once close enough, he gently spoke, "Toki?"

The bees buzzed louder in response, but had seen him coming for a ways off. They parted, but did not disappear. No, they flitted around them, broadening their range as they took up a defensive position.

Toki however lifted her gaze to Papyrus. Her sockets beaded with silent tears. “They know…” She whispers. “They know… They… wanted to… Oh god Pap, Cruelty, the anti-heart, oh god, they know about me and now they know about the babies-”

He moved to his knees before her and pulled her into a tight embrace, tucking her against him protectively. "Shh... shhh... It's okay, Toki... It's okay... They won't touch you or the twins...” His
voice tightened and darkened, and he held her tighter. “I won't let them.”

Toki remained on her feet, but she slumped slightly into him. She was trembling in his grasp, arms still clinging tightly to her middle. Tears came, hot and heavy, and her eyes blossomed back into color, bright and distressed as warbling sobs escaped her into his shirt. Shock left her shaky and trembling- even though she wasn’t even the one to fight. No- she’d had to stand by and listen, feeling her bees be slaughtered by her bullets, and listen to her speak. “She got in, Ali.” She whispered, voice cracking. “She got in, and… and others could do the same… She had… Dust on her shoes and she wanted to…” Her voice fades off into more sobs.

Vikki could get in.

Who’s to say others couldn’t just kill their way in too?

"Shh.. shh..." he hushed her still, before he picked her up, cradling her close. "Shh... I'm here..." he told her firmly, "That's enough. Don't think about it. You'll scare the twins..."

They were already doing the bubble thing in her belly, reacting to the stress of her soul. She didn’t think they could get any more scared than that. Her sockets burned slightly, the force of her glow almost blinding as she shifted her grip. One arm came to cling to him, and she shuddered and shook. “I can’t stop thinking about it,” she whispers roughly. “I… I can’t...” Toki simply buries her face against him and cries. “He knows, Pap! Cruelty knows!” Cruelty was apparently leading HAM too, if Vikki was honest with what she said.

Emotions had been on the fritz for her anyways with her pregnancy, and she and her babies and her mate had just been threatened with a gun- and they had been given a message from the head of HAM himself.

It was little wonder why she was a distressed ball of panic as she clung to him.

He lifted her up without effort as he rose to his feet, gently squeezing her to comfort her. His leg throbbed with the additional weight being supported by it, but it was hardly something he couldn’t handle. "I'm going to call my father, he'll come and get you. I have Royal Guard duties to attend to, it's very important I see to them... But Father will take you, and will be with you until I get back, okay?" he murmured into her neck.

Toki managed a shaky nod. She still had her phone clutched in her hand- the one pressed to her belly- and managed to hand it over as she trembled. Tenebris was safe- so was Ali, but he… he no doubt had remains to collect, and… and deal with Vikki. “O... Okay...” She whispered roughly.

He slowly took the phone, and dialed, holding the phone to his ear.

“Yo.” His elder brother answered on the second ring, having apparently picked up Tenebris’ phone. “Cae here. Whatchu need Pops for, Toki?"

Caeruleus would work just as good for this particular task. "Are you busy, Sans?"

"Pap?" He sounded confused, but that faded off as he took in his brother’s tone of voice. "No. What's up?"

"This is an emergency, I need you to get Toki to Father as soon as possible. There has been an incident, and I still need to handle it."

“Shit... Is she okay?”
"... No Sans. We’re out back in the court yard."

He didn't even need to hang up before there was the sound of Caeruleus appearing, his slippers slapping against the ground.

"Tokes!" The older brother padded up and reached out, checking over his honorary sister with a careful inspection before looking at Papyrus.

Papyrus hung up the phone and pressed it into Toki’s pocket when she failed to take it. "I need you to get her to Father," he said again.

"You can count on me, Pap..." Sans could see it, the hellfire that was in Aliquam's eyes, masked by the worry and love for his mate. It wasn’t an expression that he often got to see. Something really, really had pissed his brother off.

The taller skeleton gave his mate a soft kiss, and then slowly set her down in Cae's arms. She shifted her hold onto the older brother easily, curling up in his grasp. Papyrus watched her until Sans was gone, the sound of displaced air cracking loudly following their disappearance.

Howls cut the air, the wolves communicating out to him. The Police had arrived.

Turning, Aliquam took a deep breath and started back to the main gate, looking around upon arrival, before looking to the officers who showed up.

The cops were there indeed. It was Officer Sheppard and his partner. His partner was down with Wolfen, attempting to keep the shrieking banshee of a woman still enough for them to get the cuffs on her instead of the rope. The large wolf’s hands were more detrimental than helpful, given their size. They made it hard to get the cuffs on without letting her loose.

They looked like they had her under control though.

Two guards were still collecting the remains.

Mark caught sight of Aliquam- and took note of the rip in the monsters pants, and the anger that lurked in the orange hellfire of his eyes. He was a little bit intimidated, because whatever that woman had done had brought out something in the taller skeleton that spoke of impending doom. But he stepped closer to him regardless, giving him a firm once over. He had a tear in his pants- but he looked like he had fared well. “Your guards were unclear,” he says softly, “As to what happened… But those piles of dust… She’s been screaming that all of you deserve to die, so I think I know what happened, but… Son, will you clear it up for me? Give me a concise story?”

"She tried to get the drop on me and Toki, came armed with a weapon that I disabled. It's in our backyard. She's traumatized my mate with threats on the lives of my unborn children, and though the apprehending was easy enough, I was wounded." he explained calmly, before he sighed, and summoned a bone to lean on. His leg was starting to hurt. "Apparently... she killed her way to get in." he sighed, looking over at where the guards were carefully collecting the dust.

Mark gave him a concerned look. “If you got hurt, son, you need to sit down. I can see you favoring that leg… is Miss Nara alright?” He shifts to offer Aliquam a hand so the monster could sit instead. “I see... I’m sorry you lost good monsters, Papyrus. We’ll need to collect the weapon as evidence, as well as any bullets that may have been fired- but this woman isn’t going to get out. Ever.”

There was a shout of pain from Wolfen as a steel-toed boot slammed into his mouth. Vikki flailed hard, and dislocated her thumb as she ripped a hand out of the cuff. She forcibly rolled, grabbing the partner’s gun from his hip holster in one swift motion- and turns to fire back at Mark and Papyrus.
The bullet flies true- and clips the police officer in the upper arm as she cocked back to prepare another shot.

Aliquam tensed as he heard the gunshot and like that, his mind lit alive again. He lunged, abandoning his cane as he grabbed Mark and pulling him out of harms way, summoning bones to disable her once more.

BLAM!

This one sank into his shoulder and as he screamed in pain, his magic surged to act upon his order.

Bones flew from the ground underneath Vikki. But unlike last time, he had not been able to keep true to his aim.

Pointed bones stabbed through her extended arm. Her leg. Her chest.... And as Papyrus looked up, he saw blood running down the final bone that had speared through her head, from under her jaw, right out the top of her head.

She had been killed instantly.

"..." He slowly released Mark... and he took a step back, his eyes widening, "... N-No... I... I didn't mean... I... Oh god... What have I done...?" he whispered, his hands covering his mouth. He wanted to look away, he wanted to so badly... But he was frozen. Unable to look away from the bone that was now stained red with chunks of gore clinging to it.

Mark had stumbled when he’d been shoved, but he recovered well enough. His shoulder ached- but it had only nicked him in passing. Though... he couldn’t say that the sight he turned around to didn’t curdle his stomach just a little bit. From the one on her skull, he could see bits of her brain matter had been blown right out the back with the force of the strike. The ones shoving through her body had broken through her fragile human bones, dragging with them spires of ruptured organs and blood.

She was very, very dead.

“Shit...” he hissed softly. The tall skeleton seemed lost in the sight, and despite the ache in his arm, Mark jerked him around to face the other way. Other squad cars pulled up. “Papyrus- you did what you had to. She took an officer’s weapon.” And he could see a recording device still active on her chest. “You defended us- and yourself. Sometimes it happens, kid. It’s hard- and I hope you never have to do it again.”

His partner was already up and at the other squad cars.

Mark swallowed slightly. “This is going to be a mess. Is this the first time you’ve killed? You don’t... look like you can honestly handle questions right now.”

Once turned around, Pap looked down at him, "I'm sorry..." he whispered, "I didn't want to kill her...!" Every word was strained. He was a royal guard member, but never before had he needed to resort to such means, Monsters were always so peaceful, they never needed to be killed...

“You killed in self defense, kid.” He soothed. “... Yeah, you’re in no mindset to be answering questions. Okay... Okay. Can you... de-summon the bones? We’ll... handle the rest of that while you go see to those bullet wounds okay? I can cover for now. You... Well, you definitely need rest- we can get statements from the guards.”

His magic deactivated immediately and he felt like he was going to be sick as he heard the sound of the body falling to the ground.
An arm went around his stomach while the other covered his mouth as he made a horrible retching sound behind his hand. His sockets flinched shut, and he struggled not to heave right then and there.

Mark’s eyes widened, and he put a hand to the skeleton’s back, trying to stay out of the splash zone. “Oh boy.” That was a grisly noise to hear from something that had no guts.

"Papyrus!" There was suddenly Sans' voice as he appeared nearby, running closer until he stopped, freezing at the sight before him.

His younger brother, HP now at 1825, sobbing and looking close to purging his magic...

The body... Bone spears disappearing into the earth...

It reminds him of the times when there's a spray of blood as bones spear through the blue and pink jumper. Of brown hair askew with the sudden angle as there's an expulsion of blood from both the human's puncture wounds and their mouth.

It reminds him of bloodstains on the points of the bones, and how it runs down the pillars of bone to pool into the tile.

The knife in their hand clatters to the ground as the child's final breath is drawn.

A small red heart that cracks. Then shatters.

His eyes widened as he shook himself from the memory and immediately shortcut to Aliquam's side. He looped his arms around his younger brother, pulling him down into a tight hold.

It caused Papyrus to fall to his knees, but he didn't care as he immediately hid his face in his brother's chest.

"It's okay, Papyrus..." Cae looked down at him, stroking his fingers soothingly over the distressed skeleton’s skull, before he glanced up at Mark.

Mark grimaced. “He killed her when she shot at us. She winged me- and caught him in the back. I don’t know if it just went through his ribs or not. He... He really needs some time. I can cover for you guys here- take him somewhere that he can calm down and be healed. Bullets suck.” His own shoulder was weeping and staining his uniform, but some bandages would fix his problem.

"I owe you one." Cae replied softly, hugging his brother tighter and taking him away from the gruesome scene.

They landed outside the Gaster household. Papyrus immediately shoved away from Sans and stumbled to his feet. He lurched to bushes when he could no longer hold the sick feeling back. One hand kept a hold on his stomach as he hunched over and threw up into the bush, purging his magic roughly in a wave of sticky orange goop.

"Shit... Pap..." He never killed a human before... He was always so careful... how the hell... "Pap, it's okay," he slowly came over and rubbed his back to help soothe him.

"I-I'm sorry, Sans... I'm so sorry..." the younger whispered, choking and spitting to clear his mouth. "I didn't mean to..."

"I know... I know... Just... Get that out of your system, and we'll get you and Toki cleaned up, okay? Pops is already taking care of her, so let your big bro take care of you.”
Papyrus gave a slow nod, before another retch took his attention away from his brother. He heaved again into the brush, orange magic staining his teeth a ghastly hue as the puddle of sludge grew at his feet.

Cae grimaced, but rubbed his back in soothing circles. It helped that he had some practice helping Toki with her morning sickness, so he just kept rubbing as Aliquam sobbed between heaves of orange goop. “Better out than in, Pap.”

After Papyrus had purged the magic gained from what had been his own cooking, and recovered enough that he wasn’t dry-retching every few seconds, Sans walked him into the house. He could hear an ethereal sound that played delicate notes on seamless vocals- and he identified it as his father singing.

*Pops must be singing to Toki to soothe her... he was always good at that*

Sans slowly sat Papyrus down, and let him take a moment as he got him some water.

Upstairs, Tenebris was humming and singing tenderly to his Son's mate, cradling her gently as he sang an old song of monsterkind's past to calm her mind and settle the twin souls inside her.

Toki had stopped sobbing a while ago, but she was limp and listless as she was cradled. Her head was curled towards his chest, sockets still glowing with upset, and tiny tracks of tears trickling down her cheeks. His room was just the same as before- and the simplistic style of it left her nothing to stare at. So his chest worked, and did well to absorb her drizzling tears.

She blinked slowly, very slowly. The music was soothing. She had her fingers folded over her middle, doing her best to focus on the sounds that Tenebris was making, and not the thoughts that kept plaguing her. The little souls in her belly had stopped moving a while ago, the bubbling sensation fading off as they obviously tired themselves out during their quickening.

Toki shifted, hearing the front door open vaguely over the melodious sound of the big monster singing. She wasn’t sure who it was- couldn’t discern that much details- and found herself unwilling to move. She pressed her face to his chest again and shivered softly.

Tenebris had heard it but did not stop singing until the song was over. He slowly moved and laid her on his bed, covering her up by the lush blanket. "Rest. I'll be right back, okay?" he murmured.

By the end of the song, most of her tears had ended up drying. Now her face was simply stained with the remnants. Toki clutched the blanket to her like a lifeline and nodded faintly. "Okay…” She muttered softly, shivering just slightly as she curled up tightly.

He stroked her head gently, "I'll bring you something to drink when I get back." he murmured, before he walked out, leaving her in the darkened room. He hoped she would get some rest, especially when he heard Aliquam's drying sobs from downstairs.

"Aliquam... Caeruleus." He spoke as he came downstairs, going immediately to his sons' side. He took Aliquam into his hold to comfort him as Sans took this chance to explain what he knew.

Once his eldest son was done, Tenebris nuzzled the top of his youngest’s skull. "... I see..." he sighed, "This is awful... I'm so sorry, Aliquam..." he said softly.
Rest she would not be getting. No- as it got quiet, she picked up on the sound of Papyrus’ sobbing. She shifted slowly, and clamored out of the bed. The blanket isn’t taken- no, she simply fiddles with the hem of her shirt, and pads to the door. Pap… Pap crying was not good.

He’d be at her side if the positions were reversed- and she was damn well going to be there too.

Toki makes it to the stairs before she makes noises, and that’s just a quiet sniffle of her own. “I… heard crying…” She murmurs softly. Her eye lights flick over the three of them as she descends, and she scrubs her hand over her cheek quietly.

"There was an accident..." Tenebris explained gently as he stroked Aliquam's head, "Aliquam is very shaken from it..." he then sighed, nuzzling his boy comfortingly.

"If you want to come down, Tokes... S’not like he's gonna bite." Cae attempted to joke to try and lift the mood.

Cae got an upturned quirk of the corner of her mouth for his efforts, but it was gone as soon as she hit the bottom of the stairs. Toki nods to them- but doesn’t say anything else though- and simply goes to sit with him. She doesn’t say anything- doesn’t press for what happened, because sometimes doing so right after was not the thing to do. Instead she loops her arms around him as best she can, and holds him like he would hold her.

Her body buzzes just faintly, a soft, subsonic sound to try and comfort him.

While staying in his father's hold, Aliquam turned and hugged Toki tightly, hiding his face in her shoulder. He didn’t say anything- he simply cried.

"Toki. You and Aliquam both have had a long day. I want you both to stay here tonight. " Tenebris insisted, not going to take no for an answer.

Toki didn’t have it in her to tell him no. Instead she simply shifted, cradling him close and tucking his skull gently into her neck. Her hand rubbed the top of his head, and her sockets closed tiredly. When they opened again, they were glowing gently to help soothe him in time with the low buzzing.

She did reply to Tenebris though. Her voice was quiet, slightly rough from crying, but thankfully steady. “Thank you. That… That sounds fine to me.” She says quietly. “I don’t think either of us are… are good to go home right now.”

The stimulation was soothing to Papyrus, and the young Skeleton found himself starting to grow calm in the sound of his mate's buzzing, like a troubled worker being soothed by his queen.

Tenebris reached and gently stroked Toki's head, smiling at her gently, "You're welcome to stay here as long as you need to... Quod nostrum est tibi."

Toki leaned into the head strokes quietly, her sockets glowing even as she closed them. She kept up the buzzing- his calm was helping her calm. It was a good symbiosis. She murmured to the biggest monster quietly as she continued to soothe her mate. “I don’t know what that means, but… thank you.” She murmurs weakly. Her arms tighten lightly around Pap, and she nuzzles her head to his.

“Thank you…”

"What's ours is yours, Toki." he purred gently, slowly releasing Papyrus, "Sans... Come with me to the kitchen, let's leave them be."

"Sure thing, Pops..."
The two monsters stood and walked to their kitchen, leaving Papyrus and Toki alone.

"... Toki... I... have an odd request..."

Toki listened to them go. She shivered slightly, and turned her attention to Papyrus. “What request?” She asks softly.

"I've seen... that bees like to swarm..." he murmured, "When we've rested, and you think that your magic has replenished by then... could we rest in a swarm?" he asked. "I... Admittedly... Have come to love the sound their wings make..."

“I can handle that now.” She answers softly. “I didn’t use much magic...” She murmurs. She buzzes gently to him, and nuzzles him softly. “Think we can fit in your old bed...? Her fingers brush over his shoulders, and she frowns slightly as her fingers brush a hole in the fabric. “Ali...? Are... you hurt?”

He winces slightly as he comes to remember and looked at his shoulder, "I... I had forgotten about that..." he murmured, "I... I got shot..."

Her finger brushes what feels like a bullet mushroomed into his scapula. Her hand flinches back, and she glances to the kitchen without hesitation. “Tenebris! Pap got shot!” Yes, that might have been tattling- but like hell was she going to let him wait for the monster equivalent to adrenalin to wear off.

"Owch..."

Though the call immediately had Tenebris coming back from the kitchen, having obviously abandoned what he was doing. "Shot?" He asked.

“Sorry, Pap... He’s got a bullet lodged in his shoulder.” She says softly. “I... don’t know if he got hit anywhere else.” She admits quietly. Toki waves her hand to show where she felt the bullet.

He knelt down and reached, carefully looking at the wound. He got up and grabbed his medical kit from nearby, bringing back a pair of tweezers. He carefully moved the tweezers into the hold in his shirt and caught the bullet, pulling it out carefully. Aliquam let out a soft whine, but it was only once as Tenebris smiled at him, before he had an idea, and he got up again, "Toki... Do you know if you possess healing magic?" he asked. “There is nothing we can do but aid the bone in healing on it’s own- it will take time to fully heal and set.”

“I don’t think I do. I can relax with the fire magic, but... Not heal.” Not anything instinctual. But she did pulse her magic into her hand, using the heat to soothe over where Tenebris had yanked out the bullet in an attempt to at least lessen the pain.

Though it wasn't perfect healing magic, Aliquam seemed to relax. "It will do. I want to give this to the officers before they leave, I’ll be back." he told her, before he hurried outside.

Cae soon came out of the kitchen with a small tray; on it was some tea that Tenebris had started for them.

Toki kept up the heat based magic, and kept Ali tucked close. Her body temperature kicked up a few notches, acting like a living heating pad. She shot Cae a tired look. “Tea?” She questioned softly.

"With honey." he replied with a soft grin, "It's not Pop's Orange Blossom, but he knows it will help you both calm down."

Toki perks slightly- because the honey they had here was the stuff she’d sent underground so long
Her sockets brighten a bit, and she nods quietly. “It’ll help,” she murmurs. She keeps one hand on Pap to keep the heat helping soothe him, and shifts. She can’t exactly wiggle free of Aliquam’s grip on her. “Hey, Pap? Cae’s got some tea… Think you can drink some?”

He nodded slowly. "Y-yes.... yes..."

“Okay…” She shifted then, and pulls away. She doesn’t leave his side- no, she stays fairly well pressed to him, and gives Cae a largely tired look. Silently, she reaches out for a cup. She wasn’t all that thirsty, but the tea would help calm some of the lingering shakes clinging stubbornly to her fingers.

After stirring in a small spoonful of honey, he offered it to her, ”You know, you two are really brave.”

“Paps is.” She agrees gently. She takes the tea and sips it slowly, waiting until Ali drank from his too. It was hot, but good and sweet and everything that she apparently needed from her drink.

Aliquam took a slow drink, but sighed gently

"You're brave too, Tokes.” Cae chuckled softly, "Don’t undermine yourself."

She shakes her head but does neither agree nor disagree. She instead sips her tea quietly, eye lights tiredly resting on Cae’s slippers as she leans into Paps to encourage him to relax with his drink. “If you say so, Cae.” She muttered. She’d dissolved into a sobbing mess- and Pap had to handle the fallout. She was hardly brave. Toki had frozen up and had been essentially useless against Vikki- and against whatever had traumatized him so. No- Toki was not brave. Brave was Papyrus- he was her brave heart.

Papyrus nuzzled close with a slowly growing smile, and wrapped an arm around her, giving a deep breath, before he sighed and took a drink of his tea.

Toki buzzed a little bit louder, the sound humming out from somewhere deep in her chest. She leaned into him, soothing him with her glow and her sounds as she soothed herself with tea. She finished her tea quickly, the hot liquid warming her from the inside. She didn’t really take the time to savor it- but it was still good and helped some. “Thanks, Cae.” She says softly. “Heh… When Paps is done drinking, think it’d be okay if we just… crashed for a bit…?”

"Sure thing. Pops said that you could use his bed." Cae answered.

With her soothing buzzing, it wasn’t long until Aliquam finished his own tea, now looking down at Toki tiredly.

“That’s nice of him. I don’t think we’d fit in Ali’s bed- and I don’t want to lay on him with his shoulder like that.” She glances up to Aliquam, and rubs a hand over her cheek. She’s still got teartracks stained into her bones, but the soft smile that quirks at her mouth helps ease some of those. “Are you ready to rest some?” She asks gently.

He looked at her and gave a nod. "Yes, Toki" he replied softly, "I’d want nothing more than just to rest with you right now." he murmured.

Whatever had happened out there had him horribly upset, she knew. Toki heaved a soft sigh, and gently wiggled free of his grasp. “Okay. C’mon. Need a hand up, love…?" The affectionate nickname escaped without her meaning to, but it felt good to assure both of them that they were okay.
"Yes please." he smiled up at her and favored his wounded leg as he got up. "Nnnh."

Toki shifted and planted herself under his arm on his wounded side, shifting her body to take his weight, sort of like a living crutch. “Okay, mark that down for two wounds.” She mutters. More fire magic should dull the wound enough for him to hobble with her. “Okay, we go at your pace. Unless Cae would like to teleport us to the top of the stairs?” She shoots the elder brother a pointed glance.

Cae held his hands up in a passive gesture to appease her, and then came over. "I'll give you a lift, okay?” he chuckled.

“Thanks, Cae.”

Once he takes them to the top of the stairs, Toki has to take a moment to get her balance- and then she’s guiding Aliquam gently back for the room she had left earlier. She eases the door open, and carefully guides him in. The large bed would suit them well.

He sighed softly as he limped to the bed, slowly attempting to kick off his shoes before they reached the bed.

Toki didn’t let him. She guided him to sit, and then knelt to remove his shoes for him. Once his feet were bare, she helped him lay back. “Do you need anything before I join you?”

He shook his head, and simply looked at her. "You."

Her. That’s all he needed. She smiled softly, and proceeded to do just that. She clamored in, carefully guiding his father’s blanket up around them. She snuggled into his side, body intertwining with his as best she possibly could. She nestled up close and shut her eye sockets contently.

There were a few moments where all she did was suck in his scent and just… bask in him. Slowly, she uncorked the stopper to her magic, and let it flood him, and the room.

From the magic crawling on the walls, bees appeared, lazily fluttering out and filling the open air with the soft, melodious sound of wings.

He had felt nice as he lay down with Toki and for a moment things were all right. Then the humming... he took a deep breath and smiled gently. This was perfect.

He nuzzled close to Toki, and as he slipped into a more peaceful rest, he could feel the warmth of the bees blanketing them both. He took a deep breath, and just before he surrendered to slumber, he exhaled the softest phrase.

“I love you.”
They stayed with Tenebris for several days. They eventually migrated to Papyrus’ old room, and made his old bed fit. The police had come and talked to Aliquam quite often, but did not bring him in. It turned out that the entire incident had been filmed- and it was enough to clear him of any charges that might have come up for what he did.

News of what happened to Vikki appeared over practically every news station- so Toki knew she was dead, but not how it had happened. She assumed that, well, Vikki probably turned on the police and gotten shot. There were endless possibilities. Over the news there were also lots of HTM’s that were starting to go missing. Kids, adults, elderly- they were being taken.

People were suspecting HAM.

A week after the incident, found them back in their house, waiting anxiously for Undyne to arrive. The fish monster had been stuck traveling at the pace of her guards- because after the third ‘attack’ from what was obviously HAM, the king was done with HAM getting the jump on them. The loss of two more lives- both of the guards lost had been unmated- was enough to warrant more extreme measures.

Undyne, as captain of the guard, was being sent to Nara Village to oversee the more rigorous training of the guards there, along with adding more official Royal Guard’s to the roster. The completion of the school and next living district left plenty of space for them to formally move in, and they were due to arrive, alongside more monsters, to the village sometime during this day.

Toki was certainly relieved for extra protection. The house felt… almost dangerous, with how close it was to the entrance of the village. But the house wasn’t moving- and she wasn’t going to even bother demolishing it and trying to have it rebuilt before she grew bigger. This was her home, damn it all. If anything, she’d put in locking gates over the entrance to the village, even if that felt like it would make the open compound seem like a prison. That was the last thing she really wanted…

Though… What she really wanted was to know what had happened to Papyrus. Everyone was keeping it very, very tight lipped. It was something that he had to tell her himself, they’d told her. She understood that- but she… really did want to know what made him wake up in tears, and be inconsolable for hours, or wake up being violently ill.

It had been one such morning- he’d woken up super early in the morning sicker than she had been during her worst days of morning sickness- and she’d promptly hustled him to the couch so he could get more sleep once he’d stopped hurling. She’d left a trash bin near the couch in case he got a nightmare while she wasn’t there, turning on the television and setting the television channel to something humorous and relaxing to give him some background noise. Stripe had been left there too, nestled against his neck where she buzzed soothingly to him to help him sleep.
Toki had then gone to clean up the mess that had been made in the bathroom upstairs, and then gone to do house chores while he slept. That’s how she spent the early hours of her morning, while Aliquam napped on the couch with Stripe.

He slept better with the soothing buzzing of her bees- and even if it was exhausting to her, she was damn well going to let him get the sleep he could. He dealt with her nightmares when she had them- and she loved him. It was the best that she could do, until he confided in her what had happened to him- and with Vikki.

It was well past noon when she finally stopped doing house chores, leaving Papyrus on the couch amidst his nap, and instead took her paperwork out to the front porch and settled down in the sunshine. She had to get the papers for Undyne and the royal guards done, along with the seventy civilians that were coming under her guardianship.

There was a lot that she needed to do- and not as much time to get it done.

"Toki!" Was a familiar bark of a voice not long after she had gotten settled to work.

A familiar flare of red hair on a blue-scaled head was walking closer, but there was fire in Undyne's yellowed gaze. "Who the fuck hurt you? I swear to god if they show their mug here again-" she growled, popping her knuckles. Her fins flared widely, and she bore sharp, sharp teeth with a snarl. Her demeanor changed completely upon approaching the deck, however. "How're you feeling? How's Papyrus?"

The aggressive approach had Toki mulishly tucking her chin, knees tightening reflexively and guarding her middle. She arched a tired brow up at the big fish, and patted the floor next to her in a silent request for the high-strung royal guard to join her.

Behind her, Toki could see the caravan arriving. They were heading straight through the front of her compound, guiding the carts back towards the rest of the village so they could get their things moved into their new homes.

Toki took her time in replying, organizing her papers before she sighed, legs dropping from their defensive position. She crossed them, resting the paperwork in her lap, and looked to Undyne. “Quiet, please. Pap is sleeping. He’s… had it rough.” She answers softly. “It was a long night.” She doesn’t answer how she’s feeling- because she’s tired and there’s nothing to be done for it. “I’m not hurt. Pap was- but he’s healing up decently now.” No one had said anything about Vikki- and the rain that had come the days after had covered anything she might have learned from going close to the front gate. She knew that she was dead- but no one would tell her how or why. Or what her death had done to Aliquam, really.

"Damn it." she huffed as she leaned against the banister instead of taking a seat. "How bad is he?" she then asked.

Toki tapped her pen idly against the paperwork in her lap. “He wakes up in a panic, and sometimes his dreams make him sick.” She says softly. “I don’t… know why. No one has told me anything about what happened. He’s sleeping right now- it was a bad morning, and he needs his sleep.”

"There's only one thing I know that could traumatize someone like that." She murmured.

Toki pursed her teeth together and sighed through her nasal cavity. She shifts, and resumes working on Undyne’s file. As curious as she is, Toki shakes her head and sighs harder. “I’ve been being told to wait until he’s ready to talk about it. He was patient with me- I owe him that much too. I just wish he didn’t suffer with them.” His nightmares left him in such a panic that it hurt for her to see him like
The fish woman nodded quietly. She sighed heavily. "You think I could go in and see if he's awake?" She asked.

“So long as you go quietly.” Toki nods softly. She taps her finger against the front door. “He’s in the living room. Just… go carefully. Stripe is with him, and she will probably not be nice to you if you if you startle her.” Her bees were on the aggressive side when being spooked now, and did not take well to being snuck up upon. Tenebris had nearly gotten swarmed when he’d spooked them by peeking into his room to check on Papyrus and Toki.

She nodded. Undyne entered the house and sighed gently. She padded to the living room. "Pap…?" she said his name quietly, "You up?" there was no reply and she sighed softly, coming into the home before kneeling by Papyrus to check him over, "Shit, Pap..." she sighed softly.

While Toki had remained outside, trusting the Captain of the guard with her boyfriend, Stripe was not quite as passive. She remembers the fish woman and how she'd charged at her hive queen- and that was not quite fully trustworthy with her queen’s chosen mate. The bee wiggles out from between his skull and his shoulder, and buzzes her wings in a warning towards the shape that is leaning over Aliquam.

"Easy. He's my friend, I’m just making sure he's okay." Undyne told the bee, less afraid than she had been before. "Toki told me something happened..."

That didn’t mean that the buzzing didn’t increase, and the more the flames of fur that made up the Queen’s mane didn’t blaze up. She buzzed stubbornly, giving another warning. This was her queen’s mate- and she would keep him safe and protected and calm. Though she did move, patting the skeleton’s cheek with an affectionate buzz.

At being gently patted, Pap shifted and took a soft breath, before his eyes opened. He blearily looked around. "Mmhh...?"

Undyne gave him as soothing of a grin as she was able to do, one of her brows twitching as the damned bee woke him. He was supposed to be resting. Agh. “Hi, Pap. So, ah… How you doin’ with everything, punk?”

He slowly looked up at her, before he sighed and lowered his gaze again, "I... I did a horrible thing, Undyne... And... I can't forget it..." he whined, "I keep closing my eyes... and I see it... and it's... oh god." he covered his face, trembling, "I... I didn't mean to..."

She reaches out and tugs his hands into her own, making it so he can’t hide. She gives him a firm look. “I know, Pap. I know. I got the gist of it from Cae when he called. This… is part of the reason I did not want you in the Royal Guard. We, as the Guard, have to kill from time to time. You are… very kind.”

He wasn’t hard enough to be able to kill what he needed to as a guard. She sighs through her teeth. “I’m not going to lie- it’s going to be with you for the rest of your life. Stars know, mine linger with me.” It might not have affected his LV, but that didn’t mean that he didn’t suffer internally from it. “But… talking helps.” She admits softly. “Finding someone to be a support pillar. Alphys is mine- and I am hers.”

He looked up, and then he sniffed softly and tugged his hands free so he could rub his eyes. "C-Could I talk to you too? I... I don’t want to tell Toki..."
In a moment of gentle affection, she took his skull between her hands and dabbed the beads of tears from his eyes. “I’m here for all of my guards.” She says softly. “I’m also here for all of my friends. Of course you can talk to me, Pap. But… your girl- she’s pretty worried about you. I didn’t tell her anything- so… the only way she’s going to know is if you tell her, Pap. She told me that herself.”

She gives him a snaggle-toothed grin, and blinks at him. “She loves you. When you’re ready to let her in, she’ll love you even after you tell her.”

He sniffs quietly and doesn’t tug from her hands. "Heh... I... I know it was an accident... but I can't stop imagining it... it was awful... Every time I close my eyes, all I can think about is that... scene..."

“Some things can’t be unseen, Pap.” Her webbed fingers spread over his cheeks, and they’re cool to the touch. She doesn’t twitch as the easily irate fire bee investigates her fingers. Her single golden eye stares at him firmly, but gently. She knows quite well that some things cannot be unseen. She has been the captain long enough to have taken at least one human soul before. One did not un-see the limp, bloodied body of a child as it gurgled and cried for its mother at the end of a spear. “But you’re not alone. I’m here to talk to. You can talk to all of us. We’re here for you.” She murmurs. “When they get bad, try to focus on something else. Pick something easy- something you can fill your head with. For the longest time, I used memories of teaching you how to cook.” Now Alphys was her center when she needed to be yanked from traumatic thoughts.

"... Her bees." he replied quietly, sockets half-lidded as he stared at her.

“She sure is.” Undyne retracts her hands, but remains crouched in front of the couch. She watches the bee for a while, and then hums softly. “Some of that might be bleeding over from Toki, I think. Summons are weird. They feed emotions and thoughts and some instincts back and forth… I don’t really get the idea of all of that sciency shit myself. Fuhuhu! But seriously, Pap. You ever need to talk about it- come find me. But, uh… I’d work on building up the bravery to tell Toki too. Keeping secrets in a relationship isn’t good.” It had taken Frisk prodding at Alphys for the dinosaur to tell Undyne about the Amalgamates. That had been a huge, huge secret to discover, and yeah, she’d been low-key hurt that Alphys hadn’t trusted her with it without having to be forced into a corner. But they’d gotten over that hurdle, and were quite happily still together.

"Yeah..." he slowly sat up and held his shoulder gently as he looked at her, "I… Honestly did the best I could…"

“You did.” She agreed gently. “You did what you did- and I think it was for the best. She can’t get away now. Taking a life is hard- and it should never get easier- but sometimes that is the only option.” Now the only thing they needed to worry about was HAM proper.

He nodded in agreement and leaned back with a soft sigh. He contemplated the ceiling for a moment, before huffing slightly. "Undyne... I... I want to tell Toki." he spoke at last.
“You do?” She blinked, pleasantly surprised. “Well damn. You’ve got bigger balls than Asgore- it took me months to tell Alphys some of the shit I’ve done. Very proud of you, Pap. I’m all in support of you telling her.”

"Just... please stay and help me... please?"

The big fish monster shifts on her haunches and nods. “Of course. I don’t mind being a third party.” And as much as she wanted to say ‘and as your best friend, she breaks your heart, I break her face’, she really couldn’t. Punching a pregnant monster was not a good idea. “Want me to go grab her now, punk?”

He gave her a hesitant smile. "Heh... yes please.”

“Right!” She rocked back onto her feet and straightened. Her knuckles curled, and she gave him an affectionate noogie in passing as she headed for the door. She peeked outside, spotting the woman still elbow deep in papers.

Before she could speak, however, Toki beat her to it. “You want to drive, yeah?”

“Fuck yes!”

“Cool.” She scribbled more, filling in the blanks.

That was until Undyne gently yanked her to her feet, and casually stole the papers from her grasp. “All of this papery shit can wait. Pap is wanting to talk.”

“Talk...?”

“About the thing.” Undyne nods. “And I’m here for moral support. Now, c’mon. I can hold your papers and crap while you two talk.” She guides Toki into the house without much fuss from the short skeleton, and nudges her for the living room. She grins widely.

Toki gives her a hesitant smile, still a wee bit intimidated, and pads silently to the couch. “Hey Pap. Did you nap okay?”

"Yes... I slept well." he replied.

“That’s good.” Toki shifted and wiggled onto the couch with him. She settled at his side, scooping Stripe out of the way and resting her gently on the back of the couch. She leans up to kiss his cheek.

“Daww, such fucking cute little skele-nerds.” Undyne grins sharply. Knowing better than to snoop, she sets the papers on a side table and takes a perch in the back of the room. Pap would know she was there- but she wouldn’t be hovering too close.

Toki flushes slightly, and fiddles with her sleeves. “Ah, thanks. We don’t try to be cute.” It just sort of happened. “So... uh... You wanted to...?” She edges hopefully, eyes glimmering warmly.

"Talk. Yes.” He reached for her hands, grasping her fingers shakily in his own. Aliquam took a deep breath, his sockets flickering vaguely with a nervous orange glow. "I... Want to talk about what happened."

Toki nodded. She holds his hands in her own and soothingly rubs them with her fingers. “I’ll listen.” She says softly, giving him a tender and encouraging smile.

He smiled at her nervously, and took another deep breath to steady himself. "Toki... I... I killed
Vikki..." He finally admitted it, voice shivering a little more than he had wanted it to.

"You... did?" She blinked slowly. He had... was that... Well. That explained why the police had wanted to talk to Todd. Toki swallowed slightly, and her fingers tightened just faintly on his. "I... see. Well... I'm sorry that it... came to that. That would explain your nightmares though... Killing is a hard thing to do." She’d had to help Han too. Han still grieved over the people that he had killed- the ghosts of their memories would haunt him for all of his life. Papyrus was too kind a soul to have to kill- and no doubt that would weigh heavy on his mind for all of his life.

Some small part of her soul was relieved though. It was the small part that had been driven into a panic- because Vikki was twisted and broken, and she had been tainted by Cruelty to the point that Toki was absolutely certain that she would have hunted down Toki and Papyrus if she had ever gotten out of jail. Be it in ten years or fifty, she had little doubt... though the loss of life was sad, Vikki had made her selection for the path that she would walk.

Toki lifts his hands and presses them gently against her teeth in a soft kiss, showing that she was willing to stay and willing to listen more. She was supporting- and not judging him for it.

He felt relieved. Aliquam gave her a shaky smile. "It was an accident. I meant only to disable her... But I got shot and my aim went awry..."

"I didn’t think you would do it intentionally." She gave him a soothing smile, and kissed his knuckles again. "It’ll get better, Pap. The nightmares, that is. It's going to take time, but... It’ll get better. I promise. I’ll be here every step of the way on that road too.”

"I've already found remedy in your wonderful buzzing." He hummed gently. "I find myself at peace when I hear it. It allows me to sleep most of the time without nightmares.

She gave him a tired smile. "I know it does. Stripe did well enough to let you sleep today while I had things to get done. You had a rough morning..." The fault in his nightmares came from when she slept too deeply. She couldn’t buzz if she was too far gone- but she didn’t get much sleep if she was conscious enough to keep up a buzzing sound for him. Leaving her bees out all night was exhausting on her magic quantities too. “I’m sorry for that.”

"It's alright, Toki. You're mortal. Can only do so much before you overexert yourself.” He gave her a slight smile.

Toki leaned up and took his skull in her hands. It was similar to when Undyne had clutched at him- but this time it was to draw him down and to press soft kisses to his teeth. “I will drive myself to the brink and back for you.” She says firmly, eye lights glowing with determination. “I… might not fully understand what you feel about this situation, but I am familiar with helping someone through it. So, like I did for him, I am going to do everything I can for you too.” Her little brother had lived with her for a long time until, between her and his therapist, he had felt stable enough to live on his own in the city. “The good, and the bad, right? That’s what mates are here for.” Not just boyfriend and girlfriend- mates, even if not done by law.

He watched her for a moment, seeing the absolute honesty in her eye lights. She was telling the truth. She hadn’t ever lied to him before. Stars above, Toki was speaking honestly with him. She wouldn’t leave him over this- over him having... "Stars above,” he murmured, “I love you.” he sighed happily, leaning in and capturing her in a kiss.

Toki leaned into the kiss gently, and stroked his cheekbones gingerly. “I love you too, Papyrus Aliquam Gaster.” Eyes twinkling, Toki laughs just faintly. “Gods do I love you. You are my world, you silly skeleton. I’m proud that you told me.”
"I am glad you think no less of me..." His eyes were soft, but his smile was still slightly nervous as he sighed.

Toki gently bumped her forehead to his, shifting to sit on her knees so she could actually do so. "Never." She nuzzles her nasal ridge to his. "I could never think less of you. That would be like me thinking less of Han. Do you think less of Han for what he’s done?" Han’s kills, as he had vaguely explained at one point, had been an accident too. He didn’t go into detail how, but... he messed up and people died.

"No... Of course not." he replied before he laughed quietly and pulled her into his lap, hugging her tight.

She settled into his lap like it was made for her, and draped her legs over his with a pleased thrum. Snuggling up under his chin, Toki thrummed a soft, happy buzzing noise for him. "Exactly. I love you no matter what, just like I love Han no matter what."

He smiled gently and held her tight, nuzzling gently into the top of her skull. "My beautiful Toki," He murmured gently.

"My handsome Aliquam," she smiles softly.

"My stars, you both are grossly adorable." Undyne snorts from the corner. "Seriously though- don’t forget I’m here. Pap might be one of my besties, but I really don’t want to see him start necking with his baby mama. That’d be gross."

"I'm not going to start necking her, Undyne!" he countered with a flustered glare to the large fish monster. "Not yet anyway." he then chuckled into her skull.

Toki flushed a bright green and proceeded to hide her face against his chest.

Undyne grinned sharply. "I still don’t want to see two cinimon-buns necking on the couch. So save the sexual wiggling until after I’m gone. Speaking of- you doin’ okay Papyrus?” he certainly seemed like he was in a better place now that he knew he had a support network to fall back on if he needed to vent.

He giggled quietly at that and nodded softly. "Yes, I feel a lot better now. I know i will still be haunted for a while, but at least I have someone to hug when it gets to be too much."

"Hug indeed." Toki nuzzles him gently.

"I suppose so.” Undyne grins. "I’m glad you’re feeling better about it, Pap. You’re not alone in this. Any time you need to talk or vent, we’ll go suplex some stuff and you can talk about your thoughts."

"If you’re going to be suplexing things, please do it outside of the compound. Repairs are expensive.” Toki squints at her.

"Nyeh heh heh heh!" he nodded in agreement and then nuzzled Toki again. "Outside the compound, I promise."

"Good.” Toki nuzzles him back softly and gives him a gentle smile.

Undyne shifted from the wall and paced into the middle of the room. She crossed her arms and gave them both a broad grin. "We’ll make sure to clean up any messes too, don’t worry. Gotta make sure the baby mama doesn’t get too stressed. Don’t want to hurt the guppies, do ya?"
“Most certainly not.” She watches Undyne warily, and settles closer into Aliquam’s hold. Yes—Undyne is intimidating. Very intimidating.

"You don't want to scare 'the baby mama' either, Undyne." Aliquam chuckled, "Why don't you sit down?"

“Fuhuhu! I don’t scare her! Do I?” She grins. “And naw, I gotta scoot once I’m sure you’re all good to go. I gotta get my shit moved in and set up in my room.”

Toki holds her fingers together to show a measured distance and gives her a warily amused look. “You might. Just a little bit. Ah… You come off a little bit terrifying when chasing someone with a spear.”

Undyne breaks out into loud laughter. “Oh hell, I didn’t mean to scare you. We really have to toughen you up if I scare you, though. I’m not that scary. I’m just passionate about fighting.”

"Very passionate." Aliquam corrected her lightheartedly.

The big fish woman flares her fins at him cheerily. “That I am. Fuhuhu! So, if I did scare your lady, what are you gonna do about it, bone boy?”

"Politely ask you to stop." he said with a matter-of-factly tone. "Though if you continued, I'd be forced to turn you into fish sticks." he cackled deviously.

Undyne snorts. “Really? Fish sticks?”

Toki giggles softly. “Deep fried Undyne does not sound very appetizing to be honest with you.”

"You know I'm not good at threatening people." he huffed with a pout.

“That’s okay, love. I can be the scary one for us.” She did have the teeth for it. She winked up at him gently.

“You both are too cute to be scary.” The big fish laughs. “Alright, lovebirds. If you both are okay now, I’m going to get going. You want me to bring you your papers, Toki?”

“Yes please! I need to get those done.”

"Thank you, Undyne, I really dont wanna let her go anytime soon.” The larger monster nestled her closer to himself.

Undyne gave him a lopsided grin and nodded. She went to fetch the papers and handed them over to her. “Well, I don’t blame you. I wouldn’t want to let my Alphys go either. Tell you what- you take the next week or so and spend it with your girl and your guppies. I’ll take some time to get my guards and myself familiar with the terf around here, and then we’ll get to whipping everyone into shape.”

“That sounds good to me.” Toki takes the papers thankfully, and sets them on her lap. Her pen is collected next, and she presses the point out with her thumb. “Sound okay to you, Ali?”

"I would love that!" He responded happily. "Thank you, Undyne."

Undyne leaned over to tug him into a brief noogie, making Toki have to duck so she didn’t spear the fish monster with her horns. “No problem, punk! You take all the time you need.”

Toki, squished slightly in his lap, poked her in the middle with her finger. Oh. Wow. She had
amazing muscles. “I’ll make sure to take good care of him.” Toki did not escape the noogie either- and she was left befuddled and rumpled as she sat there in his lap, having gotten an unpleasantly large fist scrubbing into the top of her skull with enough force to pop a watermelon.

Undyne laughed and stepped away from the couch. “Good! Now I’m off. Enjoy your time together, you cute little punks.”

Toki rubbed her skull and sighed in amusement. “Bye, Undyne!”

He gave a happier ’nyeh heh heh heh!’ as Undyne took her leave, and waved as she exited. “See you later!” he called.

Once they were alone, Toki shifted and relaxed against him. Her papers are shuffled, and she carefully re-opens Undyne’s file. She still had a lot of stuff that she still needed to sign- and she needed to make sure that all of the numbers were correct, since this was the initial paperwork for Undyne’s official release into her custody. Toki sighs and settles in to work. “You’re welcome to go back to napping, Pap.” She gives him a soft smile. “Or we can turn on the television if you want to watch something instead.”

"I heard they just integrated something called 'Webflicks' into our cable signal." he replied, "Maybe we could check that out?"

“Webflicks, huh? Sure!” Toki doesn’t go fishing for the remote- instead, Stripe buzzes up, collects it, and deposits it easily into her lap. She grins at him. “I might have just harnessed my inner Cae there, but here you are, love. You don’t mind if I work while we snuggle?”

"Not at all." he took the remote and began to look through the shows, before he smiled and pressed the ‘ok’ button on the remote.

The TV Show: ‘Funniest Home Videos' started playing.

Toki smiled, eying his selection out of the corner of her eyes. It was a good show, she thought, and would help him relax. She hummed softly to herself and settled into her work. She blazed through what needed to be signed, and then took a closer look to make sure everything was going good. “Okay…” She mutters faintly, not really paying much mind to what she’s saying. “Undyne of the Nara Clan. That just… looks so weird.” She mutters.

"That does, though probably not as bad as it would be for King Asgore.” Pap commented with a chuckle, eye lights locked onto the television. "Though, why would she need to be registered?” he asked.

Aww fuck. She’d said that out loud. “Uh… WELL… Technically all the monsters here are my wards- and therefore apart of my clan.” She admits, fiddling with her pen slightly. “King Asgore is probably the only monster who wouldn’t ever be under it- because he’s the King, and is technically in charge of all of the talks and stuff. It’s, uh, only temporary though.”

She really wasn’t sure how Ali would take that news. Tenebris had been royally pissed at finding out he had a guardian and wasn’t even allowed to be in his own clan.

"... Aha, I see." he nodded gently, "I suppose I am 'of the Nara clan' as well?” he asked.

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"... Aha, I see." he nodded gently, "I suppose I am 'of the Nara clan' as well?” he asked.

“Yeah.” She nods, tucking her chin down and glancing away from him nervously. “Everyone here is. Your father, your brother, Grillby, Wolfen, Undyne… Your dad wasn’t too thrilled upon finding that out, heh… It’s the only reason that you all get to be here on the surface technically, but it’s only temporary!” She assures quickly. “Once Asgore can get you guys your rights, you’ll be
given the choice to stay as clan members, and then you’ll be able to own your own land, businesses-all of that stuff.”

"I wouldn't mind staying in your clan~" he purred, nuzzling her neck.

Toki relaxes slightly, and reaches up to cradle his jaw affectionately. “I know- but I think your dad wants to reform his own clan up top. You’d be included in that, Pap.” She gives him a warm smile. “I don’t think anyone’s going to stay in the clan once they’re free to go, to be honest. I’m a gilded cage- but a cage nonetheless.”

"I might want to stay, I dont know." he sighed quietly, nuzzling her, "I think I'd be happy either way..."

“Whatever you choose, I will support you with your decision.” She smiles at him softly and leans up to kiss him. Then, she returns to focusing on her paperwork. “So, are you excited? The car companies have been working and pressuring the government. You guys might be able to get your licenses and own your own cars here soon.”

"That does sound exciting!" he answered happily.

“Yeah!” She grins. “I’ve been helping them prepare for monsters with special needs. They’ve already designed a driving system to work with those who have digitigrade legs. What sort of car do you think you’d want?”

"Something nice." he answered with a hum, "I dont know, really."

“You’ll want to give it some thought. Look it up online maybe, check out the cars. They’re willing to make custom cars for each monster.” She hums.

Toki smiles faintly and nuzzles closer to him with a soft sigh. His laughter that comes from the videos is soothing- and she finds solice in him finding some joy in the silly inane things of Funny Home Videos.

It let her work in peace, as they occasionally chatted about this and that.
Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: For the record, please excuse any spelling errors from here on out. My auto correct for spelling on my word doc has decided to shit itself, so… y’know, nothing I can quite do about that. Ugh. Anywho, this is a nice short chapter that brings one of Toki’s brother’s home. :3

Alright- for another note, I got a job. I work Tuesday and Wednesday nights, from 5pm until 7am, and I am the one who updates the chapters. I start next week. So, our schedule might be a bit fucked up from time to time- I will try to update, but I’m going to be working pretty much 14 hours of nightshift, come home to sleep, and then leave again for round two.

Ah, don't forget to visit the blog. You can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: The fox and the Han are so cute.

It wasn’t even a week later that Toki had gotten a call from Han. Her brother had been in tears, calling her from the Veterinary hospital. Han had a dog. Well, more like he’d had a dog. Someone had gotten into his backyard, however, and had put firecrackers in the dog’s mouth.

Han had gotten home to his dog missing most of his face- and had rushed his companion to the veterinary hospital. They couldn’t save him in time though- and Han had lost it. He’d had that dog for years- he had been an older rescued animal from a shelter, and Han had fallen in love with him.

With the increased use of firecrackers being used around his home, Han wasn’t in a place that was safe for his mental stability anymore.

So Toki had packed up her truck early on Wednesday morning, and moved him back to the compound. With the monster school nearly complete, he was going to work on applying to work there instead of in the city, so for now he was going to be staying with her and getting into a better mental state. She even had a house she was going to have built for him, since he wasn’t comfortable staying with her for too long.

He was her baby brother though- she would do anything to keep him healthy and happy. Even if that meant he lived with her again for a while, and invaded her house with all of his instruments.

All of them.

It had taken three truckloads between her truck bed and her trailer to get all of his things- and getting him settled in had been rough. Han was still a mess. The ex-military man had depended on the dog a lot for some of his stability, and having lost his companion in such a violent way… Well, it didn’t do well for him.

He was still crying even as he worked to shove his piano into the corner of the main room. A lot of his instruments went out in the shed- but the ones that didn’t handle the weather well had to stay in
the house. His piano was one of those such instruments.

Toki wrung her fingers together and tugged him into a hug once he was done. He slumped into her and sniffled quietly as she stroked his hair. His eyes were a blotchy mess, and his breath kept rattling through his lungs, but she was glad she’d helped raise her brother not to be afraid to cry. Mourning in painful silence was not something anyone should have to do.

Han had insisted upon moving the piano on his own, but the rest of the house was buzzing with activity. Several monsters were in and out, helping bring stuff in and packing instruments into the spare rooms for when they could be moved to the school’s not-yet-constructed music room.

“All right, Han. The piano’s in. Why don’t you take a break and just relax, yeah?”

“Relaxing isn’t going to help…” he mutters, squeezing his eyes shut.

Han was built bulkier than she was, but she towered above him. She had always been taller- and that helped her tuck him further into her chest with a protective rattle. “I know, Han. I know. He was a good boy- he didn’t deserve what those bastards did to him.”

“No, he didn’t.” He sniffled again.

Toki wasn’t sure what could help- but… Maybe… “Hey,” she tilted his chin up quietly. “Hey, why don’t we sing something?”

“I don’t think I can do something happy, Toki…”

She gently bumps her chin to the top of his skull and shakes her head. “Not what I meant, little bro. We could do a sad song. We used to do that when you were little and were upset about something.”

“Yeah… That… That could work.” He leans back to scrub his eyes, and gives a mirthless laugh. “Fucking hell, I can’t see past my fucking tears to play an instrument, Toki.”

“Maybe we can ask Tenebris to play the piano for us?” She murmurs gently to him. The Gaster family were all assisting in the movement as well. She’d been banned from actually moving things- on accounts of her burgeoning middle- so she was left to tend to her brother.

She glanced about to locate the elder monster.

Tenebris was actually standing near the piano now that it was settled in one final place, looking over the piano with an admiring gaze before his hand reached down and played a gentle chord. Music to his ears, he mused, it felt good. He even found himself sighing in satisfaction.

“Hey, Tenebris?” Toki called softly. “You play the piano, right?”

"It has been a while, but yes, i do." he replied, looking towards the duo, "Why do you ask?"

“I was wondering if maybe you could play a song? I have one in mind- I can pull up the sheet music for it on your phone.” His phone had a larger screen than her own did. “Singing usually helped Han when he was younger- I’m thinking it might help him a bit now.”

"Hmm... May i see it? I have an old favorite in mind but if I know this song, I could try.”

Toki nods. She leaves Han to get settled, and goes to take Tenebris’ phone from him. She pulls up the song and types in for the sheet music, and then hands it over. “It’s called ‘If I Die Young’. It’s... well, a sad song, actually, but sad songs help get emotions out.”
"Hmmm..." he looked at it, then he smiled and nodded gently, "I suppose I could give it a go." he rumbled.

Toki beamed at him. “Really? That would be great!”

He smiled at them and set up his phone while he got settled on the bench seat in front of the piano. It was a little small for him, but he could handle it easily enough. He flexed his hands, and began to slowly play the tune, his fingers dancing over the keys with skill barely dampened by time.

Toki drew Han closer to the piano as some monsters paused to peek in at them. She waved to them, and waited until she was certain that Tenebris had the notes down. Once he’d played through once, getting used to how the song flowed, Toki joined in with words.

“If I die young, bury me in satin. Lay me down on a bed of roses. Sink me in a river at dawn, send me away with the words of a love song.”

Han sniffled, but joined in moments later. His voice cracked, thick with tears. “Lord make me a rainbow, I'll shine down on my mother. She'll know I'm safe with you when she stands under my colors. Ooooh, and life ain't always what you think it ought to be, no, ain't even grey, but she buries her baby.”

Smiling, Tenebris hummed quietly to the tune, occasionally peering over to the siblings as they sang.

Toki continued from there, looping her arm gently over his shoulder. For as tough as Han was, death got to him something bad. Going into the military had been one of the worst things he’d done- he had been too gentle for what he’d had to do. Her sockets glimmered a soft green, trying to soothe her brother as best she could with her words and her care. “The sharp knife of a short life, oh well... I've had just enough time.”

“If I die young, bury me in satin. Lay me down on a bed of roses. Sink me in a river at dawn, send me away with the words of a love song.” Han’s voice trailed after her again, melancholy thick in his tone. Tears bubbled up in his eyes, and he leaned into the bony shoulder of his elder sister. Han took what comfort he could get- his big sister had always been there for him. She dropped everything to come to him- just like she would do for any of her brothers. “The sharp knife of a short life, oh well... I've had just enough time.”

“And I'll be wearing white when I come into your kingdom. I'm as green as the ring on my little cold finger. I've never known the loving of a man, but it sure felt nice when he was holding my hand.”

Toki nudged him gently, and gave him a tender smile. “There's a boy here in town, says he'll love me forever. Who would have thought forever could be severed by the sharp knife of a short life? Well, I've had just enough time...”

Tenebris smiles to himself as he continues, slowing down a little now as the music went.

Han managed to give her a teary smile in return. Music always helped- it was part of why he’d wanted to become a teacher. Music could do so much for the world. It expressed so many things that were hard to normally put into words. Already it was helping. It would take more than just one song- but it was a start. Everything had to start somewhere. “So put on your best, boys, and I'll wear my pearls. What I never did is done...”

“A penny for my thoughts, oh, no, I'll sell 'em for a dollar. They're worth so much more after I'm a goner. And maybe then you'll hear the words I been singin’. It's funny when you're dead how people start listenin'.” Toki gently wiped his tears with her sleeve, and simply watched him as they sang. He was already improving. His eyes were brighter- but full recovery would take time. One just didn’t
lose a pet and get over it.

Tenebris hummed quietly as the song neared it's end, and he smiled gently, before he began to bring it to a close.

Han’s voice cleared up some as he sang. “If I die young, bury me in satin. Lay me down on a bed of roses. Sink me in a river at dawn, send me away with the words of a love song.”

“Uh oh,”

“Uh oh,” her brother echoed.

Her voice softened as the song began to reach it’s closing part, and she pressed a soft kiss to the top of his head. “The ballad of a dove, go with peace and love. Gather up your tears, keep ’em in your pocket. Save ’em for a time when you're really gonna need ’em, oh…”

“The sharp knife of a short life, oh well. I've had just enough time. So put on your best, boys, and I'll wear my pearls…” Han sniffled quietly as the lyrics faded off. He gave her, and Tenebris, a small smile. “Thank you, both of you.”

“Any time, little brother. Any time.”

As the last chord played, Tenebris slowly let off the keys, and he leaned back, purring quietly as he looked to them.

“You play pretty good.” Han scrubbed his face stubbornly. “You thought about maybe teaching piano classes to the kids?” Han was proficient enough with his instruments to teach someone, but someone of Tenebris skill would teach it better than he could, hands down.

"I dont know. I could consider once in a while." he rumbled.

Han nodded softly. “It would be really cool if you did.”

Toki smiles wryly, and tugs her brother in for an affectionate hug and a noogie. “You just want him to teach you to play better piano so you can impress Todd, don’t you, bro?”

Han flushed amidst the blotchy tones of his skin, and he elbowed her ribs gently. “You behave.”

As if luck had been called, there was a knocking at the open front door and Todd peered in, a smile on his face. "Hello, Miss Nara! Is your brother here?" he asked.

Toki’s face split in a grin. “We’re in the living room!” She calls back to Todd. “And yeah, Han’s here. He’s moving back to the village!”

Han just blanches slightly. Shit. Fuck. His face was a fucking mess- he didn’t want Todd to see him covered in the remnants of his sobs. He scrubbed his face on his sleeve- which didn’t do much, and struggled not to run and hide.

"I, ah, I brought him a little welcome to the neighborhood gift." he replied. "May I come in?"

“Sure!”

Smiling, the red fox monster entered, his tail swaying behind him gently. "Hi there, Han, Toki." he greeted cheerily.

Toki waved to him and braced her knuckles against her lower back. “Hiya Todd. It’s good to see
you again.” She smiles.

Han offers him a wave too, but his is much more shy. He toes the carpet quietly with his shoe, and hopes the fox isn’t too bothered by his ‘been crying’ face.

"Likewise." he came over and offered Han a small basket with a wax melt bowl and a few cubes. "I heard you were a veteran. I brought you something that might help if something unnerves you.” he explained, "And to thank you for your service.”

Han took the small basket, blinking slowly at its contents. The scented wax melts were definitely nice- and the scent was a soothing lavender. He would definitely put it to use. “This is… Really thoughtful. Thank you.” The basket is kept in one hand, and he throws the other arm around the much taller fox’s neck to tug him down into a hug. The fur that floods his face is comforting, but also brings on a bout of longing. “I… I’ll definitely be putting these to use.” Fuck it- his eyes are watering again, and he hopes the fox monster cannot smell his tears.

His fur fluffed up in surprise, ears pricking upwards intently. Then he smiled and wrapped his arms around the man, patting his back gently. He could smell the tears- and wasn’t sure why he was teary. Han was usually pretty put together, if a little adorably awkward sometimes. "Heh... Hey, no problem.” he replied warmly. "Anything for a fella like you.”

Toki gaveTodd a thankful smile. “Really, thank you. That’s really sweet. He’s had a rough couple days. He, ah, lost his companion animal to some asshole.”

“Fuckin’ firecrackers.” Han sniffs bitterly, but doesn’t back away from the hug. The fur is soothing. He loved his sister to death, don’t get him wrong, but there was something soothing about having your face smashed into soft fur instead of a bony shoulder. His fingers thread through the fox’s ruff, and he holds him tight for a moment.

"Hey... you know what? Don’t think about the firecrackers... We don't have any here," he then hummed softly. "Ah... I am sorry about your companion dog. It sucks to lose a pet... I’ll mourn with you though." he replied gently, before he smiled soothingly. "At least I can offer you something else?” he then shifted and reached up, a paw resting on the other’s back. Fuzzy fingers were warm as they touched him. "I may not be your lost companion. But I still have fur, and I’m sure this isn't the first time you’ve buried your face in a furry form to calm down, huh?” he chuckled gently.

“You’d be right.” Han sniffs quietly. “Thank you, Todd. That’s really nice of you. It… it helps.” He admits. Threading his fingers through fur and hiding his face in it was already helping. Yeah, it made him miss his dog too, but it was the thought that counted.

Toki smiled softly, and wandered off so her brother could have a moment with the kind fox. “I’ll be back- I’m going to go put another load of laundry on.”

"Sure thing." his tail wagged slowly behind him as he sighed, "Heh... So.. I'm wondering... You like coffee?"

“I do.” Han backs up a bit, releasing the fox so he can scrub his face again. “Coffee is basically what keeps me running during early morning classes with kids. I love any and all coffee.” Though he’d have to make sure he didn’t come home smelling of Coffee, lest he kill his poor sister with the smell of it.

"Would you like to go get some, sometime? I mean... Do they even have a café here?"

“Not yet. Sis told me that they’re getting a bakery-café thing here soon, but... I know Grillby makes
a mean cup of ‘jo if you ask him nicely. But uh…” Shit, his face was flushed almost as red as the
fox’s fur. His fingers knotted in his hair as he scrubbed them through. “I mean yeah sure, I’d love to
get a cup with you whenever. Though ah… are you sure you want to? I mean… I heard about the
thing on the news…” News of Vikki’s death had gone viral- though the reason hadn’t been released.
But she was dead- and Todd was technically a widower now. Yeah, he’d been months without his
homicidal wife- but Han wanted to make sure that the fox was absolutely sure. Han came with his
own baggage of sorts.

"Well, yes.” Todd flicks his ears and rubs his arms slightly. “I'm not... not gonna let what happened
drag me down, I have a new life now, me, and my children both. We’re going to be happy here, and
I want to find happiness."

Han nods. “That’s a good way to think. With that… yeah. I’m totally down for coffee. Or a burger-
or both.” His flush only grows, and he twiddles his fingers slightly.

He smiled. "Good, it's a date then, heh...!” he laughed quietly.

Han laughed awkwardly and stuffed his nervous fingers into his pockets. “Yeah! Eheh… Ah… I’m
so sorry I’m so awkward sometimes. ‘s been a couple of years since someone’s asked me to coffee.
I’m a little out of practice.”

"You think I'm any better? I haven't dated in years!” Todd laughed.

“Yeah, but at least you were in a relationship during that time.” Han chuckled softly. He took a
couple deep breaths, relaxing his shoulders, and then went to set the gift basket on the coffee table. “I
guess we’ll both have to get into the swing of things, huh Todd? Though, uh… your kids gonna be
okay with you going out to coffee with me?"

"You're nice, so Rosie will like you, and knowing Felix, if you're nice to Rosie, he'll like you too.”
he assured him with a soft smile.

Han gave him a relieved look. “Your kids are sweet. They enjoy the music lessons I’ve been
teaching on the weekends- I certainly hope they like me beyond just the ‘cool teacher’ thing though.
That’d be awkward, since I’m going out on a d-date with their dad.”

"I know if you saw each other on the street, she'd wave to you.” he chuckled.

Han chuckled softly. “I wouldn’t doubt it. Both of your kids are really, really sweet. Rosie is an
absolute doll. For all of his quiet nature, Felix is really kind and observant.” The young boy was also
proving to be quite proficient with a flute. Rosie, like Toki, had the musical talent of a tone-deaf
walrus.

"Then what are you worried about?” The fox laughed.

“It’s a Nara thing. We worry about some weird things sometimes.” He scrubs the back of his head
shyly and rocks on his heels. “So ah… Maybe tomorrow for coffee? I'll be settled in by then…”

"Sounds perfect." He replied warmly.

Han gave him a lopsided roguish grin. Brown eyes glimmered at the fox monster, and Han shifted to
the side so one of the monsters could slip past him and set some of Han’s movies onto the movie
shelf. “Cool.”

"Heh... I can't wait... but I should go, I'll need to start on dinner for the kids soon. But I'll see you
tomorrow wont I?"
Han nodded. “Of course! Kids ‘ve gotta eat. You go ahead- I’ll swing by your house tomorrow. What time works for you?”

"How about nine in the morning?"

The smaller man nods. “Nine works. I’ll be over to get you then. Ah… Say hello to your kids for me, will you?”

"Sure thing. I’ll see you then!” he smiled. Todd gave him a wave, and took his leave.

Han watched the fox go with a fond expression, only to find Toki tossing her arm over his shoulder with a wide grin.

“My baby bro’s got a daaaaate~” She grins, singsonging teasingly at him all the while being happy that he was in a better mood after talking to the fox monster.

He elbows her in the arm, and pauses when her arm pops off at the elbow. They both still- his complaints failing to come from his mouth- as her arm falls out of her sleeve and rolls over towards Tenebris and the piano. “Uh… Uhhhhh. UHHH… Tenebris shit fuck, I think I just broke Toki~”

“Han, it’s okay. It’s a skeleton thing. You just hit my arm funny- you have really bony elbows.”

Tenebris snickered and laughed softly as he scooped the arm up. He stood and padded over. “It’s quite alright, it happens. Arm please.”

Toki offered out her empty sleeve and rolled it up to her elbow. “It does. At least it’s not as bad as last time. I caught my toe on the corner of the couch- Ali had to lift the couch so I could get my toe back.”

“Dude. That is… morbid.” He watched intently, and then grinned. “Oh my god, Sis. You could literally hit someone with your severed arm. That is absolutely horrifying. I love it.”

"..." Tenebris leaned over and patted Han on the cheek with the skeleton hand before attaching it with a low cracking sound of the bones. Who said he didn’t have a sense of humor?

Toki certainly laughed, loudly, when her brother’s face twisted into something horribly amusing to look at. “Oh my god, Tenebris. That was perfect.”

“… I just got patted with my sister’s severed hand. That… That is an experience that I never thought I’d ever have, holy shit.”

Tenebris chuckled softly as he patted Han on the head. "There there dear boy, everyone gets it once in a while.”

Han just stares up at Tenebris. “You know… I don’t think I ever realized just how large you really are. Until your hand practically engulfed my skull that is.”

Toki grins and bumps her hip to Tenebris’ side. “Tenebris is a big monster. That’s another thing for your book. Being petted by the local adorable giant, no?”

“… Damn straight.” Han grins.

Tenebris laughed and then heard a loud BWOOOPH from upstairs, followed by a pair of voices laughing.

Toki paused, as did most of the monsters currently helping load things in. “Uh… Okay, what was
that?” Her voice calls out loudly in the silence that follows.

Ailence at first, then another *BWOOOMPH* and more laughter following it.

Toki’s brows furrowed, and she proceeded to pad up the stairs towards the sound of laughter.

Han stayed downstairs, intent on letting his sister handle the house disturbances.

Voices floated out the door to her as she approached one of the rooms. She could identify the skeleton brothers quite easily.

Papyrus was laughing loudly, and protesting something. "Sans you are so immature!"

"You're laughing too, Pap!"

"I am and I hate it!"

*BWOOOOPH.*

"Hahahaha!"

"Nyeh heh heh heh!"

Toki opened the door and peered inside, looking to the source of the thunderous laughter.

The brothers somehow found a sousaphone in Han's instruments, and Sans was playing notes on it, but the frequency of the notes was hilarious, and the brothers were laughing hard at the obnoxious noise.

Toki smiled and leaned on the frame of the doorway, propping her hand on her hips. She listened to their laughter, and simply enjoyed it. It always made her smile when she could hear him laugh that hard- it was becoming more frequent now that he wasn’t afraid to talk to her about his nightmares, but it still wasn’t as often as it had been before. She had missed it a lot. Between Papyrus and her brother, Toki could foresee being exhausted very often in the near future. “Good Gods you two. You found the sousaphone, I see.”

"Heeey, Tokes!" Caeruleus greeted with a grin, "Come on in! Yeah we found it, isn't this thing hilarious?!"

Toki snorts loudly and arches a brow at them. “The sousaphone is a lot of fun. But very loud in an enclosed space. Are you both having fun?” She winks.

"Yes, we are."

"The sound is quite silly, though it is a little loud.” Aliquam agreed with her.

Sans grinned at her widely. "Would you at least stay for one whoomph?

“A little loud indeed.” She giggles softly. “But I’m glad you’re having fun. Though… Cae… How can you even play a brass instrument without lips? You know what- give it a toot. I’ll see for myself how it works.” She grins at him playfully.

He cackled, but as he leaned in, his grin disappeared from his face, and he blew against the brass mouthpiece.

*BWOOOPH*
Being so close to the noise made her bones vibrate, and she laughed harder, fingers curling around her middle as the little souls quickened in response to the simulation from the sound waves. “Good gods, that is hilarious!”
Chapter 45

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This chapter is very cute. Very, very cute. Also, side note. Silverwing landed her job- so now we’re both going to be working. We do have some chapters stockpiled up- but if we run out of them, TOTU’s regular schedule will probably become irregular, as we struggle with schedules and stuff. I only work two days- I don’t know what hers is going to be, but it looks like it might be late at night too.

I hope you guys will be patient with us- these jobs mean a lot, and it’s going to help both of us tremendously with our living situations.

Also- don't forget to visit the blog! Shit happens there, and most of it is hilarious, or painfully cute. It's where you'll find all of the TOTU artwork that is out there to see. http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Very cute. Too cute. SUCH CUTE.

Toki had been right. Between her brother and Papyrus, she was running on empty. But she didn’t complain- hell no, she didn’t complain. They needed her- and for her support, they were improving. Han’s nightmares were less frequent than Papyrus’ own were- and they were even less now that the school had been finished. He was now working all during the day, teaching music- and unofficially helping the monster teachers teach the monster kids about human culture and human history.

Papyrus was back to working with Undyne as well. The fish monster would run him ragged from dawn until dusk, and he would come in looking haggard as hell. Toki would manage to stuff some monster food down him, hustle him in to shower, and then get him into bed before he’d crash. He was working hard- so horribly, horribly hard, because he was adamant that he’d be able to defend her and their twins. His determination kept her from complaining- because he was doing this for them, and that warmed her soul.

Day by day, she’d handle the two men in her life. On Han’s days off, he spent them with Todd- the two of them were absolutely adorable dorks. Neither of them were very sure of what they were doing- but with some careful nudging on Toki’s part, they were beginning to get better at the whole dating thing.

They were precious- though it drove her a little bit insane when Han would skip out on doing his turn for dishes for the night so he could go get late night drinks with the fox. Todd was actually learning healing magic- so he was making the drive up to the Castle in the morning for work, and sometimes getting home late too. Toki’d had his kids over for dinner multiple times when Todd was stuck up at the castle super late learning magic. They met up when they could.

A month of the repetitious work was wearing on Toki though. Between managing her boys, the house, and general village problems when they were brought to her, Toki was worn out. She hid it well though- covered it with smiles and laughter- but she found her energy capacity dropping more and more as her middle grew bigger. Her back was killing her too- the weight in her middle was making all sorts of painful knots and cramps form in her lower back.
She needed a magic donation too— but there really wasn’t a good time for her to be pestering Aliquam for magic when he came back each day usually damn near drained from training with Undyne and the guards.

So Toki did what she could.

She settled for taking naps between paperwork and house chores.

Which is what she was doing— taking a light catnap on the couch and pretending that she didn’t have another stack of papers to do— when the sounds of clawed feet over her tile woke her from her light doze. She didn’t stir though— she knew those ghosting footsteps quite well by now. She simply sighed, nuzzled better into her pillow, and shifted a little bit on her side.

Toki was missing being able to sleep on her belly. At twenty weeks along, she was blooming— and sleeping on her belly was no longer possible, sadly. Sleeping on her back made her spine hurt— but her side was still safe, even if it was growing slightly harder to sleep spooned to Pap’s side.

The footsteps that approached were, as she knew it would be, Tenebris. With a cup of tea in hand for her, he ended up setting the tea down on the coffee table once he realized she was asleep. He crouched next to the couch, tail carefully winding around his ankles, and peered at her for a moment. When she didn’t stir, he tsked softly to himself, and very gently hooked the edge of his claw into the bulge of her turtleneck. It had rolled upwards during her nap— but he did need it edged just a little bit further upwards for him to check upon the two little soulling’s nestled in her belly.

The ecto flesh was very dim. Her middle was larger than before, bulging outwards with how her body was resting. The dark green uterus wasn’t very visible with how dim the glow of her middle was. She did, indeed, really need a magic donation. She just needed to find the time to ask Pap— when he wasn’t bone tired. She sighed sleepily, still keeping up pretenses of being asleep, as she focused on him. She could smell the tea— but it was not enough of a lure for her to get up and make her person known.

He frowned lightly and his hand ran over her stomach gently. "Oh dear..." He murmured. Papyrus was exhausted almost daily now... Tenebris thought for a moment, and then he focused and allowed some of his magic to seep through, at least enough that he could see the souls inside her.

"Heh... Hello you two... Giving your mother her share of toils aren’t you?" he chuckled quietly once able to see them.

Her middle brightened as his magic bubbled into her body. Toki hadn’t been expecting that— not at all. His magic felt different compared to Papyrus’ own. Where Aliquam was sunshine and warmth, Tenebris felt deep and dark, like an endless ocean. She shivered faintly.

The little souls in her belly brightened as he fed magic to them, and they did something else too. The extra magic gave them the boost of energy they needed— and under his palm, there was a faint press of a limb from inside, bumping out against his fingers.

"... Did you just... kick me, little one?" he murmured.

His eyes widened... was that...?

He pulled back immediately, removing his gloves and pressing his fingers to her stomach again more firmly. "... Did you just... kick me, little one?" he murmured.

Under his bare palm, he would feel more movement. The energy stirred them into motion, fleeting kicks and punches bumping up against his palm as they feasted greedily upon the energy that had been offered up. Twins took up more energy than a single— and they were steadily draining her magic
downwards. Fleeting bumps and shifts were visible across the dim glow of the surface of her middle.

Yes. Yes, he had just been kicked by his grandchildren- and he was the first one to feel such motions. Well, first one to feel it from the outside. Toki had been feeling them shift inside of her for a while now.

He smiled weakly, breath hitching in awe. "H-Hah.... hahaha...." he began to laugh softly, leaning inwards and pressing his face gently into the soft swell of her belly. His fingers dabbed away an inky tear that welled at the corner of his eye. "Oh my stars... hello you two... It's your grandpapa.,” he cooed softly.

They reacted to his touch and his voice murmuring against her middle, tiny fists and feet brushing out against him briefly. They were chewing through the magic that he had given them, the thick and powerful sample making them active and squirmy. One of them shifted, and a leg poked out, making a tiny bump against his mouth.

Toki struggles not to giggle. Gods, that tickled so bad. That was worse than the quickening she was used to. This was the first time that they had actively moved- and as much as she'd have liked for Papyrus to feel them first… this was something special. She could hear the awe and affection in Tenebris’ voice. It was adorable.

He laughed happily, and nuzzled her stomach, resting his head on it as he stroked over the skin to keep them happy and distracted. "You know... you're the first time I've ever felt a baby kick. I was never married... I never felt this before..." He talked to them gently. "I didn't get to feel my sons until they emerged and I held them for the first time... It's a wonderful feeling... but this... this is new.” His voice was weakening as he spoke. This was really something new for the older monster, and the old sentimentality of a father was flaring in his heart again.

The flurry of movement began to die down as they exhausted through the immediate burst of energy that they had to share. Her middle remained brighter still, but their kicks ebbed off into gentle swishes and slight movements. With his skull resting lightly against the soft bulge, he would feel them shift however, rolling slightly under the thin barrier of ecto flesh that kept the pseudo organ in place. Tiny backs, tiny limbs- all of them hardly developed, but still enough to be felt and seen without layers of muscle, organs, and human fats to muffle their movements.

Toki’¿s soul practically melted at that. Tenebris talking to his grandchildren- shit, that was more adorable than his flush. She shifted slightly, and lifted an arm to rest a hand on the top of his skull. “You’re going to be a great grandpa,” she murmurs sleepily, affectionately petting the top of his head to let him know she did not mind him giving them affection.

He stiffened in surprise, but didn't move against the hand pressing gently on his skull. Rather he just smiled faintly and settled down again. "Sans and Papyrus were both tank-grown... I could put my head against the glass... but I couldn't actually feel them..." he sighed quietly, "It wasn't the same..."

"Well,” she mutters tiredly, shifting slightly as tiny legs kicked at her from within. A solid back rolled to press against his cheek. “You’re welcome to feel them move now… You are, for the record, the first to feel them kick from the outside. It’s kinda cool, isn’t it?” She remembered feeling her little brothers’ kicking for the first time. It had been damn near awe inspiring- and she had pretty much fallen in love with them. Even with Souta, who had kicked her in the nose for their first interaction, had earned her love for the first time when he had kicked her. “Those ‘r your grandbabies, Tenny. I think they liked your magic.”

He gave a weak chuckle, before nuzzling her again, "It's wonderful, I love it." he whispered. "I think they did too... mine's a lot more concentrated than Papyrus' is," he purred quietly. "I don't want to
give them too much though. I'm the grandfather, not the sire. I can give touch-ups once in a while, but unless absolutely necessary, I think I'd have to hold off."

Toki nods sleepily. "Mhmm… I need to talk to Pap about a donation… But he’s been so busy and he comes home so tired, he really doesn’t have the magic to spare.” She yawns, teeth sparking, and she hurries to pat her pillow so she doesn’t set it ablaze. “Mmm…” The flurry of movement in her belly was slowing down to a sluggish crawl again, and she continued to gently rub his skull regardless. It was a relaxing motion, petting someone. “Still, what little magic you gave helped. They’ve been pretty still these last couple of days. I think they’re as tired as I am.”

"I could consider doing a donation, if he’s truly too exhausted." he murmured, before he smiled and closed his eyes, purring quietly. His hand was starting to twitch and flex, almost a kneading motion across her middle.

The purring against their enclosure startled the little souls, and Toki grunted at the tiny reflexive jerk of a leg that booted Tenebris where his nose would be. “Ha- that felt really weird. I think you startled one of them.” She shifts slightly, fingers still rubbing as he kneads her side. “It’s okay. I can manage. I’ve been taking more naps, and my middle’s gotten brighter than it has been. I’ll just need to rest more, until Pap adjusts to his workload and isn’t as tired.”

He hummed quietly and chuckled, "I... ah... hope you don’t mind I get comfy here..." he murmured, "I... can’t find myself with the will to move.”

“I don’t mind. Go ahead and get comfortable- crouching next to the couch cant be that comfortable. I’m not goin’ no where.” She yawns. “I really need to sleep some more… Mm…”

He smiled at that and shifted to get comfortable, before he chuckled, "Getting away from doing your work?” he chuckled, "I'm no help am I..."

“You’re more help than you think.” She murmurs softly. Her sockets drift closed again, and she sighs a soft content sound. He was a lot of help, but he couldn’t be there to do her work with her every day. “I am, yeah. I just… got really tired while writing. Started to nod off while upright. My back hurts bad enough as it is that I really don’t need to be sleeping at the table anymore.”

"I've passed out in my work on more than one occasion." he admitted.

“Do it often enough too- but… ng.” She guides one of his fingers to her lower back, and lets him feel the difference in the texture against her belly. It’s hard, full of swirling knot-like spots. “Pregnancy has brought knots. All the paperwork doesn’t help.” She yawns. “So I’m doing what I can.” She lets his hand go, returns to rubbing his skull, and settles down with a soft sigh so he can pillow his head on her middle once more.

He watched her, and kept his hand where she left it, slowly digging in his claws and shivering his hand where his fingers rested.

Toki shivered, his claws hard against her skin. The motion made her back ache, but in a good way. “Nnng… That hurts. But in a good way? Skeletons shouldn’t get damn back cramps.”

"You usually don’t." he chuckled softly, kneading gently.

“I get them more than you’d think. Probably doesn’t help that I’ve got magic that’s been summoned for several months now. I can’t exactly de-summon it to reset the knots.” She shifts, and sighs softly as he rubs. “Mmm… Your claws are a little prickly, but shit, I don’t care at this point. It feels good.” She really needed to pester Pap for a backrub instead- but she didn’t like to ask for things. That was
something she needed to work on, but…

He chuckled at that and continued to gently knead her back.

She relaxes gently under his touches, her body slowly melting. The knots are something bad- and they’re not all going to come out since he can only rub half of her back, given her inability to lie on her front. But it feels nice- very nice. Toki loosens up further, and her breathing begins to slow.

She was dropping back to sleep under the gentle kneading, with her twins shifting faintly in her middle. They can’t kick hard yet- but it’s still not a soft motion, and is vaguely uncomfortable. She’s dreading what bony little limbs will feel like from the inside when they’re bigger.

Toki is faintly aware of the twins settling in her middle as she settles into a nap once more.

Smiling, Tenebris slowly moved his hands to his lap and he rested there, sighing gently with his skull resting slightly on her middle. No way was he missing any little kicks while they napped.

Toki woke to the front door opening and closing several hours later, along with a pang of hunger in her middle. She yawned, a soft, tired noise, and blearily blinked into her pillow. With the house as quiet as it was, the only noise was a soft purring snore situated roundabouts where her middle was. The sound of the hard wood of the front door was hard to deny, and it jerked her right out of her light snoozing.

She was still exhausted- and, as she squirmed slightly, she also realized that she was very much stuck. The couch had fitted to her body- and she’d been leaned backwards slightly with the weight of Tenebris skull pillowed on her side. His head was heavy on the dim and bare ecto flesh of her middle- and there was no way to move him without jerking the older monster awake. Even if she could get free of his head, she’d need to try to roll to get out of the indent she’d made in the couch, and try not to squish the twins when she made her roll.

The chances of that happening smoothly were very slim. And Cae would never let her live it down if she ever got stuck and couldn’t get up.

She listened for the distinct sound of either slippers on tile, or of his armor clanking. What even time was it? She couldn’t reach her phone from where it sat on the coffee table, no matter how far she stretched her arms. Part of her wanted to summon Stripe- but she needed to reserve her magic for when Papyrus needed to sleep in case she had to go help Han with a nightmare. Toki shifted slightly, and grimaced as a painful throb trailed up her back.

Where Tenebris had massaged had proceeded to knot right back up again since the other side hadn’t been handled. “Agh- shit, that stings.” She mutters tartly to herself, trying to stretch without disturbing the sleepily rumbling boss monster pinning her. He didn’t often relax like this, after all. “Mng… Ali? Is that you?” Her voice softly addressed whoever had entered the house.

"Ah, Toki, I hadn't seen you were asleep until I was inside... I hope I didn't disturb you... Or Father.” He spoke as he approached, saying the last part as he realized the older monster was asleep by the couch.

The monster was actually asleep with his ear holes on her abdomen- and Toki couldn’t shove her shirt down to cover the dim color of it without smothering Tenebris. So instead she twists, peering up
at him as best she can to give him a tired smile. “I don’t think anything can wake Tenebris right now. But I do need up. I need to stretch and move. I’m, ah… stuck. If you can lift his head, I can crawl out.” Provided she could get out of the body dip the couch had formed around her.

"Why did he choose your swell of all places to get comfortable?" He asked as he came around, kneeling to see about lifting up Tenebris’ head.

Toki discretely tried to shove her shirt down a little bit. She shifts some as he comes around the other side of the couch and offers him a tired look. Tenebris was pretty solidly resting on her, but he probably wouldn’t be hard to move. Toki offered up her pillow so that he could replace her middle with it. “He was checking in on the little souls.” She says softly. “And, ah… Well, I can show you once we’re up.” Theoretically, if she fed some of her magic directly into her middle, it might wake up the twins. She’s not sure if it would do anything for the brightness though. “How are you feeling, Pap? You’re home early. I think- I cant get my phone to check the time.”

"It's late actually." he replied, passing her the cell phone she spent so long struggling to reach.

She took a look at the time, and her sockets widened. “Shit,” she hissed softly. “I didn’t mean to nap so long. Shit. I’m sorry.” It was nearly nine at night. “I should have started dinner a while ago. Agh. Alright.” She squirms, and, once he’s lifted Tenebris’ head off of her, she replaces her belly with the pillow and drags herself off the couch.

She lands on her hands and knees, and grumbles tiredly. She shoves upright, using the couch to counterbalance the weight of her dimmed middle. “Okay. Okay. Ah… Text from Han- he’s doing dinner with Todd tonight, and says not to expect him until late.”

"Hey, hey." he reached out and gently stopped her, looping his fingers around her elbow to keep her from rushing off. "Relax. Just relax."

“I am relaxed.” His fingers on her elbow did stop her, but she simply turned, tugging her shirt down over her middle quickly, and offered him a tired grin. Planting her un-claimed hand in the small of her back, Toki simply watched him patiently. “I still need to do dinner though, Pap. I’ve got to feed you and the giant motorboat that had me pinned earlier. You’ve been training hard with Undyne and the guards. I’m actually surprised you’re not dead on your feet right now, though.”

"I have no time to die, I’m going to be a father, remember?” Papyrus chuckled, before he tugged her gently into his arms and hugged her. "How are the twins?” he asked.

He did look less tired tonight- so maybe the magic rich food she’d been packing into his lunches was helping build up his tolerance. Toki leaned into him softly, and sighed as she relaxed into his arms. “Very true. You’re not allowed to die. Never, ever, ever.” She murmurs. She does sigh though, and nestle close. “The twins are okay enough. We’re all kinda tired.” She mutters softly. Which really made little sense. She’d been sleeping for many, many hours on the couch. Sure it had been a light sleep, disturbed occasionally by the babybones shifting in her middle, but it had been sleep nonetheless. She rubs her middle slightly, sighing when they remained still. “We have something to show you once they decide to wake up.”

"I suppose so.” he chuckled, and then he nuzzled her. "Alright, but for now, I want you to relax. I'll make us something to eat."

“Nope.” She gives him a stubbornly loving smile. “You’ve spent all day working. I have literally spent the day sleeping. I’ve got energy in spades.” She bluffs, wiggling in his arms so she could escape and get to doing the house duties. “You’re welcome to keep me company, but I’ll do the cooking.”
"No, no, no." He patted her skull gently. "At least let me help. I know what Father likes when an appetite finally comes around to him." He then leaned in, wiggling his brows slightly. "He gets cravings and his pipe can only sate him so much."

“He’s not the only one who has cravings.” She quirks a faint smile at him. “But… fine. I was going to make baked potatoes. I’ve got a real hankering for potato.” And mustard. And chocolate. It was a weird desire. Still, she wiggles free and leaves him to trail behind her. Her knuckles knead into her lower back. “You’re welcome to make something that will go with the baked potatoes though.”

"You know what goes great with Potatoes?” He grinned slightly and gestured to his snoring Father as he followed her into the kitchen.

"Meat."

And Tenebris twitched where he was, tail rattling quietly.

“Well, I do have those steaks in the freezer. I suppose we can get them cooked up. Think the four-pack will be good?” She wasn’t much feeling red meat- but she’d give the bigger monsters her steak, and eat more potato.

The rattle of his tail amuses her, and she wonders if he’s woken up yet. And if he was going to tattle on her to Pap about things she hasn’t been mentioning. She chirrs softly to herself, and collects the potatoes from the cupboard. Bending down is agony, but potatoes are worth it. Then she’s on the hunt for tin foil. Magic baked potatoes would be good for everyone, even if she was tired as hell.

"I think two will fill him up." he chuckled quietly, "We can share one for if you get peckish later on." he commented, before he smiled and knelt down, pecking her stomach tenderly. "And later you can remind me to feed these little ones as well."

“You need your magic though, Pap. Tonight might be an off night, but I would feel terrible if you came back half dead tomorrow.” She tuts softly to him in turn. Unless he was going to take the day off, she’d feel guilty for leaving him exhausted. She affectionately pats his skull as he takes a moment to nuzzle the soft swell of her middle, before she sets to wrapping the potatoes in foil so she can bake them. “And I’m good. I’m not really feeling the idea of meat tonight. Little ones are craving potato tonight. Well, potato and weird things." She might indulge the weird things once dinner was done.

Aliquam sighed and looked up at her. "Toki, I’ve been neglecting you since Undyne came. I need to do what I have to. To make sure the twins are okay..." he insisted as he stood up. Rubbing the back of his skull, Aliquam gave her a sheepish smile. "Undyne said tomorrow I could rest... I kinda pulled something while training today..." he then admitted, going to start on the meat.

Her face pinched slightly as she watched him go collect the meat from the freezer. “You work too hard sometimes, Pap. You’ve hardly been neglecting me. You’ve been working really, really hard.” She cradles the wrapped potatoes to her chest, and proceeds to begin baking them in her arms. “But… I do admit I’ve been keeping it quiet. The twins, ah, have been sorely in need of a donation for a while. Your dad had to donate some so he could see the soullings today. His magic is… potent.”

He watched her and sighed heavily. "Tonight, Toki. Nothing you say will talk me out of it." he told her sternly, before he tapped the meat, “Tsk, frozen. Think you could defrost these real fast?” he asked, "Once done with the potatoes of course."

“Did you expect it to be warm in the freezer, love?” She arches a brow to him, shuffles her potatoes
to one arm, and then reaches out to take the meat. It steams as she threads magic through it, but it only takes a little bit before she’s handing the now defrosted package back. “Alright, though. I won’t try to talk you out of it since you don’t have work with Undyne tomorrow.” If he did, it would be an entirely different conversation and she would be being much more stubborn about it.

"Even if I did have training, I don’t care.” he insisted, before he smiled, "Thank you~" he then turned on the burner and started on the steaks.

Needless to say it wasn’t long that the steaks began sizzling and there was a groggy Tenebris in the doorway, mouth slightly ajar as he took in the air, "Meat?" Was the only word that escaped him.

Toki had an armload of hot potatoes- and was setting them carefully onto their plates. She kept two potatoes for herself- and had them already split open. It was too late for a formal sit down dinner- so they’d decided they were just going to eat in the kitchen. “Meat’s cooking.” Toki points a claw towards Pap, and eyes Tenebris lightly as she plods for the fridge. “You, mister, are no longer allowed to nap with me when I have paperwork I have to do. You literally purr and act like a giant sleep machine. Totally not fair, Tenebris. That’s, like, cheating.”

She rummages in the fridge for her condiments of choice- and locates the bottle of mustard, the bottle of chocolate sauce for making chocolate milk, and, on a whim, also a small jar of banana peppers. “Mmm…” Yes she is pleased with this. She goes to prepare her potatoes, since she’s not one waiting on meat.

He puffed and grumbled quietly, rubbing his eyes as he came over. For once he was putting absolutely no weight into supporting his tail so it dragged behind him. "Not my fault you let off heat like a blanket." he countered as he sat down on a chair, yawning wide enough that there was a loud pop as his jaw came loose, his lower jaw splitting wide before popping back into place as he closed his mouth. "Papyrus, you don’t need to cook it too much. I like my meat bleeding." he purred lowly.

"If you insist." he gave the meat a sear, then put them on a plate and handed them over to Tenebris. He turned to get him some silverware but heard something and turned to find Tenebris biting right into the meat, using his hand to hold it up.

His eyes were half-lidded, but now sharper and gleaming with a feral hunger that quickly began to turn to satisfaction as the blood coated his tongue.

"Mmh." The beast rumbled happily, black tongue running over his teeth upon swallowing. "Delicious~" he then went in for another bite, his teeth actually going through the bone that had been in it with a nasty sounding CRACK, taking it from the steak as he chewed.

Toki was briefly stunned into silence, first by how fucking wide his mouth could go- and then by the slightly gross display of bloody meat being masticated. She blanched, and made a face of revulsion. “Yep. No meat for me. That is gross. You’re welcome to have my steak- either of you.” She’s content with her potatoes.

She turns back to it, her bones rattling in a shiver as the loud crack of bone breaking makes her think of when those teeth had cracked her own arm. She rubs it idly, and then sets to preparing her potatoes. The insides are mashed with a fork, and liberally smeared with mustard, before being sprinkled in banana peppers and light teasing of chocolate sauce. Salt and pepper finish it off- and probably the most disgusting potatoes to ever exist are left resting before her. Toki’s mouth waters eagerly.

Still, she has more manners. She prepares Ali’s potato, leaving him with only the job of choosing his condiments for it, and collects a couple potatoes as she then goes to take a seat across from Tenebris.
in one of the kitchen chairs. She shifts, half balancing the plate on her belly, and tosses the biggest monster his potatoes. Happily digging in to what is probably pretty foul looking and foul smelling, it is a very pleased noise that escapes her mouth, even if the mass of sticky gross potato sticks to her teeth and mouth like glue. “Mmmm…”

Tenebris gave a tired grumble that was half an apology, but did not look to want to stop eating like a beast any time soon.

Aliquam looked at her potato, and it was his turn to don a slightly disgusted expression. "Pregnancy cravings are... strange to say the least."

Toki gave Aliquam an amused look, and took a large bite of her potato. “Hey now. This tastes amazing. You can’t say it’s gross unless you try it. Which, if you want, I wouldn’t mind sharing a bite with you. It’s really good, believe it or not.”

Toki scoots her chair over slightly so Ali can join them as he finished cooking and fixed up his plate, and then focused on her meal. She’s tired, but the potatoes taste amazing when covered in peppers, mustard, and chocolate sauce, so it doesn’t take her long to finish the first one, and start in on the second. Her body rapidly converts it towards her magic, though since they’re basted with her magic, it doesn’t really do as much as it could to help her levels.

Tenebris finishes with enjoying his meat and goes to wash himself of the blood that had gotten on him as Aliquam dug into his meal. It didn’t take long for the big monster to inhale his food- and he finished his in record time. He was eager to get her magic replenished- and the taste of her magic lingered on his tongue from where she had thawed the meat and cooked the potatoes.

Toki finished her second potato by the time everyone else was done, and carefully stood from her chair. She stretched her back, yawning faintly as she stooped to collect Aliquam’s plate. Dishes could be done later, but they did need to soak or the chinaware would end up with food bits sticking to it. She nudges Tenebris over as he finishes cleaning himself, and deposits the plates in the ‘dirty dishes’ side of the sink. “Mm… Not bad for a semi-rushed dinner.” She has to take a moment to clean her face too- super sticky potato and fangs makes for a messy face.

"Well I certainly enjoyed it." he murmured, "Thank you both.” he rumbled gently, though ended up needing to blast the spray hose attached to the sink right onto his jaw, with the lack of palms and all to hold the water.

“You’re welcome, Tenebris. I’m glad you enjoyed.” Toki gave him a bemused look and simply used the sink and paper towels. When she was clean, she backed away from the sink and rubbed her back slightly. “Hmm…” A yawn cracks her jaw again, and she shakes her head faintly. “Alright. Mm… Well, I feel better. That was one craving that’s been sated.” One strange, strange and slightly revolting craving that had indeed been sated for the time being.

Sated cravings indeed. Tenebris dried himself off once his pale skin no longer had the red blood on it and he stood to the side to let Aliquam wash up as well.

“I’m gonna go gather my paperwork and put it up for the night.” She gave them both a lopsided grin, and then padded from the kitchen while they cleaned themselves up. Paperwork needed to be put into its proper stacks, or Toki ran the risk of losing something. It wouldn’t take long at all to do.

Both came out once they were done, and while Tenebris stepped out to have a pipe, Aliquam moved over to Toki and hugged her midsection, nuzzling the back of her skull affectionately.

The large bony hands that closed about her middle didn’t startle her, but she did smile. She had an
armload of papers at hand- but she carefully organized them and set them down on the coffee table once more instead of toting them to the dining room. Leaning back into him, Toki smiled and buzzed warmly up to him. “Well hello there,” she murmured softly. “Long time no see, hm?” She teased.

Her middle was warm under his fingers, and Toki was hoping the babybones would stir with the added food in her system. They didn’t, however, and Toki hid a soft sigh.

"It's been too long." he murmured, settling his hands flat against the sides of her swell before he released his magic to be absorbed by her.

Like always, he felt like sunshine and warmth. The orange tinge of his magic flooded through her, and she literally sagged into him in response. Holy crap- it had been a long time. She could already feel the lessening of the drain on her systems as his magic flooded in and took over giving the twins what they needed. Toki’s socket’s dropped closed, and she slumped back into him with a soft relieved sound. “Mmm… Far too long,” She murmurs.

Soft kicks and punches start up under his fingers with the new magic flooding them and stirring them into awareness. The twins shift in her belly, stretching and reacting to the newfound energy that brightened the glow of her midsection from under her shirt.

His arms tense around her to heft her weight as she slumps against him. "I'm sorry," he murmured, before he smiled and rubbed her stomach gently. "Hello my little jellybeans," he purred softly, nuzzling his face into Toki's neck. They were moving, fluttering against his palm in motions that were definitely beyond quickening now. The sensitive bones of his hands were picking up every little twitch and every little jab. “Wowie,” he murmurs, mystified.

The rubbing motion stirred them more, and a slightly hard jab to his palm made Toki squeeze out a soft laugh in response. She could only imagine what those would feel like when they got bigger. “Love, it’s okay. You are doing a lot- and I managed well enough while you’ve been working. Heh. The jellybeans do say thank you though. They’re squirming something fierce now.”

He sighed happily, simply feeling his young kicking against his palm for a time. Stars above were they kicking- and punching and squirming and moving. Their movements were small- but he could feel them as they kicked and enjoyed the magic that he was feeding them. Papyrus looked at Toki, and gave her a loving smile. "Will you be coming to bed now?" he asked gently.

Toki nods, relaxing marginally with each rub of his fingers and pulse of his magic. “Mhm. I was planning on it. I’m still pretty tired, even if the jellybeans aren’t tired anymore.” Her middle was already brightened by the magic he had fed into it. Not like she had eaten glow sticks, but more of a healthy, usual sort of glow. Her tiredness was still there, though. She’d been fueling them with strictly her magic for a while. She was running a little on the low side. Not dangerously so- but enough that she was feeling tired and slightly cold.

"Well once they realize you're ready to rest, they'll settle." he chuckled.

She quirked her teeth into a faint smile, and turned her head to press a soft kiss to the bottom of his jaw. “I hope so,” she chuckles gently. “It took them running through your dad’s magic before they calmed earlier. That’s actually why he had me pinned. He fell asleep feeling them kick. Mm… I think that’s enough, love. I don’t want you to drain yourself. I can already feel the difference.” Even if her shirt was doing a decent job of covering most of the glow, she could see it faintly through the spaces in the thread. “Mm… Think your dad would mind overly much if we disappeared upstairs to get ready for bed?”

"He felt them first, huh?" he chuckled, "I'm glad... and Nah, he'll be fine.”
“He did.” She smiled faintly. “I’m pretty sure he teared up. It was really sweet. Heh… He tried not to
wake me, but I was more lightly dozing at that time anyways.” She yawns, and then nudges him
softly when he stops feeding her magic. “C’mon, you snuggly dork. We need our pajamas, and I
need to stretch my back some before we get too lost in feeling the babybones movin’ around.”

He gave her a fond look, and pressed one more kiss to the top of her skull. It didn’t bother him that
his dad got to feel the soullings first. Well- Toki probably felt them first before all. "Okay." he let her
go and instead started upstairs, giving her a cheeky smile.

Toki watched him go with a soft laugh, and set something heavy on her paperwork so it didn’t get
blown around if a draft came from under the door. She followed him up a moment later, leaving
Tenebris to do whatever he wanted to, and followed him up the stairs.

Heading into their room, Toki fiddled with her shirt, and went to tug it off as she looked for her top.
Toki wasn’t going to bother with night pants tonight. Just a long nightshirt would do.

Aliquam was undressing to just sleep in boxers tonight. He noticed her out of the corner of his eye
and he turned to smile at her.

Toki winked at him once she got out of her shirt. It was bundled up and tossed into the dirty clothes,
before she began the process of getting the mostly translucent blue nightshirt slid on. It covered her
belly, but the bright glow was visible. It wasn’t like glow sticks- and the little gray souls were highly
visible through the thick green membrane keeping them and their bodies safely inside.

Shimmying out of her pants and leaving herself in only a shirt and underpants, the skeleton also
flings those into the clothes bin, before planting one hand on the dresser. She shifts, leaning forwards
and extending her pelvis backwards, and stretches her lower back with a soft groan. Her vertebrae
pop and crunch loudly, and she sighed softly shortly after. “Mmm… Like what you see?” She
questions him teasingly, watching him watch her through the mirror while she dealt with some parts
of her lower back pain. He always looked so much smaller outside of his clothing- though his bones
were still massive and strong.

"Very much so, you're beautiful more and more with each passing day." he sighed softly.

“You’re such a flatterer sometimes, Aliquam.” She offers him a small grin, straightens, and then
makes for the bed. Toki sits easily, but getting comfortable is not easy. “Mm… Damn, I miss laying
on my front.” She sighs. Looking at herself briefly, she then glances up to him and leans back
slightly while crossing her legs slightly. “Mmm… I am inclined to disagree. The only thing that’s
changing day by day is my waistline- so it is our little one who are growing more so than myself.”
She teases.

"Nyeh!" It didn’t take him long to squirrel his way into bed. He hugged her gently and while
caressing her stomach, and tugged her backwards on the bed so she was snuggled up flush to him.

Toki giggled softly, turning carefully to cuddle close. The twins kicked gently as she settled her back
carefully against the front of his ribs, and she laughed quietly. Tangling her legs with his felt good,
and she sighed as she snuggled back into him with a pleased sound. “Mm… The twins know it’s
their daddy touching them.” She purrs softly. They were alive with motion, squirming and basking in
the energy suffusing her middle so richly.

"I'm glad~" he chuckled.

"Me too." She sighs softly. She squints up at the light switch, having realized they hadn’t shut it off-
and makes use of a quick summoning to plunge them both into the darkness of the room. Well…
Except it was actually fairly bright. Toki squinted down at her middle, and the bright glow of her belly that highlighted the bones of his hands. “I am once more a living nightlight. Or a firefly.” Except it wasn’t her rear that lit up.

"This is nice though." Papyrus cooed softly. He curled around her, wrapping his body around her as he cradled her gravid swell more securely in his hands. She was getting larger- and she would only continue to grow larger. He couldn’t wait.

“Mmm… Very true.” She gives a tired yawn, and tucks her chin so her horns don’t stab at him as she nestles back into him. “Mm…” She was going to try and sleep, if the bouncy jellybeans in her belly would let her.

"I love you." he purred, stroking her stomach.

Toki smiled sleepily. “I love you too. We all do.” She snuggles down, tucking her chin to her chest with a quiet sigh, and settles down to try and sleep. Though, that’s long in the coming. The twins are awake and moving, and it is not easy to sleep with two tiny bodies squirming inside.

He moved over soon and curled up, now curled around her stomach as he rubbed the skin.

She was rotated easily so she faced him, leaving the curve of her abdomen braced inside the empty cavity of his own. Toki thrummed softly, but didn’t stir, simply relaxing more and more as his hands rubbed the skin of her middle. It felt good, relaxing and soothing her towards sleep, even if it excited the high-strung soulings.

"I love you so much." he sighed blissfully.

Toki gave a tiny rumbling purr, and hooked her fingers into his ribs as she clung to him. Sleepily, she nuzzled her face to his chest. “M’ love ya mostest’s.” She slurred softly.

He chuckled softly at that and kissed her head affectionately. His hands massaged her middle softly, and slowly worked over her lower back as well. Papyrus located knots in her back, and he frowned faintly. He couldn’t really do a deep tissue rub like she apparently needed, but… He could loosen some of them.

She sighed sleepily, and was snoring just softly into his chest shortly, for all of her guff about the wiggling keeping her up. The rubbing and magic donation had her settling straight to sleep as the stress ebbed out of her body.
Chapter 46

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: This is a good chapter. Heh. Lots of cute things happen.

May was ending- and the weather was finally solidifying for the better. The rain was less and less, and the cold was turning towards warmer times- which meant many things. The flowers were coming into bloom, as were the trees and various other fauna that made up the majority of the woods.

And with them coming to life, Toki’s apiary was coming back into business too. She found herself out with the bees one early morning, clad in a pair of shorts and a tank top as she enjoyed the sunshine dancing over her bones. The bees were active, swarming as they stretched their wings and headed out to get pollen. They clung to her and Aliquam, whom she had stolen from Undyne for the day so she’d have some help getting the hives going and getting her honey business going once more.

Undyne had been eager to get more honey- apparently it had been quite popular amongst the citizens of Waterfall- and had readily agreed. She had offered to help too, until the swarming bees dissuaded her.

Toki had the taps turned on, and was steadily draining out the honey that the hive had managed to collect over the winter. It was being gathered in bins that were carefully placed under the taps that connected to her hives. It left her hands free to spend some time deep cleaning the hives- and fixing the front of the one that had the apparent leak. It looked like a warped piece of wood had cracked- which meant all she really needed to do was nail a patch up piece over the large crack, and it would be functional again.

So she hammered away, crouched carefully in front of the hive, and trying to keep her balance while she tapped nails carefully into the wood.

Aliquam was sitting nearby, bonding with the bees. He hummed softly and giggled when the bees crawled over his ribs, exploring under and over his shirt. "Did they always do this?" he asked between giggles.

Toki laughed heartily, huffing when she smacked her finger with the hammer. It stung, but didn’t do much more than scuff her bone. “They did it to me once I made the change, if you recall. They quite like that we’re hollow now. Well- you’re more hollow than I am.” She had a small swarm of them clinging to her belly, obviously perturbed by the green glow that didn’t let them investigate the inside of her body anymore.

She jolted as one crawled into her eye socket, and had to carefully and gently scoop it out. “Eye sockets are off limits, you silly bugs.” She coos to the scout clinging merrily to her finger.

"That is both adorable and hilarious." He snorted softly, giving a lighthearted 'nyeh heh heh heh!'

“Just you wait until they climb into your eye socket.” She grinned at him cheekily. The bees gathered on her skull, forming a buzzing crown of sorts as they basked and enjoyed the warmth of her body. Toki finished up with fixing the box, and then struggled to get to her feet. It was getting harder to get
up from crouching down like that.

"Need some help?" he asked gently, noticing her struggle.

Toki grimaced, and hauled herself to her feet using the top of the beehive to boost her. She straightened, rubbed her back, and shot him a cheeky grin. “Not yet. Soon I wont be able to get up and down without help or something to tug myself up on- but today is not that day.” Never mind that she managed to get up by using the beehive.

"Well still, I worry." he mentioned as he followed her with his gaze.

Toki nodded and stooped, turning off the valve once this hive was done draining. She hefted the tub of honey up, settling the heavy jug on her hip. A little over a gallon of honey was decent for what they had stored up over winter. She just had to heft everything else in with her- but for now she’d cap the jug, and get them all to the forefront of the apiary. “We all worry,” she chirps softly to him, setting the jug down and going to collect the others one at a time. “But we’ll be okay for a little while yet.”

He sighed, and then he smiled and got up to help her carry the honey. "If you're sure."

“I am almost fifty percent sure.” She grinned teasingly at him. His help was handy- repetitively bending and lifting hurt her back something bad. But it was necessary. “Heh. We’ll have fresh honey for a while now. I wont make a shipment out of the village until the next harvest, so we can split this up between us and the villagers.” She wasn’t going to bother setting up a stall at the market of sorts- she didn’t want anything in return from them for the honey.

"Almost fifty?!” He shot her a look, "Why so little?" he asked.

Toki wiggled her brows at him slightly. “I was teasing, love. It was the first number that popped into my mind. Your response made it worth it though,” she giggled, plonking down another jug of honey. She rubbed her back as she straightened, and gently tickled his ribs. She was careful of his hitchhikers, just as she was careful of her own.

He shivered and let out a soft ‘nyeh!’ before he huffed and swatted at her hand. "No tickles," he giggled, "especially while I'm carrying honey!"

Toki rolled her eye lights in amusement and laughed heartily. “These jugs are pretty hearty. If you could break it by dropping it, I would be surprised. So… That means yes tickles.” And her sharp fingers would gently tickle over his bones, before she wiggled out of his reach, grinning playfully at him as a cloud of bee’s bustles out of the neck of his shirt.

"Nyeeehh!” he squirmed and laughed before he huffed and shook himself, "Not fair," he huffed.

“Life isn’t fair, love.” She winked at him, and headed to collect another jug. She ended up snagging two, and waddled slightly as she brought them back up to the front where the rest of the jugs were being collected.

"So all we have got to do is sanitize the bottles and this can get sent out, yeah?"

“Sanitize the bottles, make sure there’s nothing in the honey before we pour it into the jars, seal the jars, and then ship them out.” She chirps cheerfully. Toki plonks down more jugs, and then carefully scoops a bee up as it wanders over her nasal bridge. She pets it gently, and then hums thoughtfully as she squints at it. That little… dot inside of it. She hadn’t ever noticed it before. Was it… a soul? Huh. “Hey Pap? You think this little dot inside the bee is a soul, maybe?”
"Huh?" he looked at her, and then lifted up his hand to look at a bee.

Inside of the bee was a tiny, tiny dot. It took up most of the thorax, and was shaped like a drop of water. It was tiny and gold- and pulsed with signs of life. The bee didn’t even notice that it was there, as it cleaned its antenna atop of his fingers.

Toki peered at her bee as well, squinting and focusing her magic on it briefly. The bee stilled, sensing it’s examination- and Toki caught a glimpse of tiny, tiny stats. Everything was in decimals- and the Bee didn’t even have a natural one for HP. She stared at it, completely surprised.

"How cute!" he purred gently, "It does have a visible soul!"

"With the smallest stats I’ve ever seen.” Toki murmurs. She squints harder, but ultimately stops when her magic makes her briefly sense all of the bees. It was a little disorienting- and she shook her head to clear the non-magic related buzz that flooded it. “That’s actually really cool. Huh.” She let it go carefully, and watched it buzz off to rejoin the mass clinging to her middle. “Bees are really cool. They do so much for us with their tiny, tiny little souls.” She beams contently. “They make hives, pollinate flowers, make delicious honey from their regurgitation- bees are fascinating. I wonder what other critter’s souls look like.”

"I suppose if we get the chance we'll find out.”

“Makes me wish we had a zoo in Ebott City. We could go look at all of the animals and insects and see what their souls look like.” Toki murmured softly. She smiled, watching the bees for a time, before going back to hauling honey. Once all of the jugs were gathered and the taps closed down, Toki heaved a huge sigh. “And now we need to get this to the pantry. All of my equipment is there.”

In the walk in pantry she’d designed specifically for holding her stores of honey and preparing it for shipping and sale.

"Consider it done, nyeh heh heh!"

Toki laughed softly and set to helping him get everything inside to the pantry after she’d put more food out for the bees. She had to brush the bee’s off- because getting a swarm of them in the house was not a good idea- before they went in. By the time they had it all lugged in and stacked on the shelf so she could work on processing it, her back was killing her, and she was exhausted in the physical sense.

“I am definitely out of shape.” She grouses good-naturedly to herself as she directs Aliquam to grab the jars from the top shelf. “Alright. You wanna remember how to prep jars from the last time you got to see me do honey, Pap?”

"I do indeed, Toki." he answered, setting the collected honey down on the table before collecting the jars.

She watched him work with a satisfied nod, and set to work on her own. The sealed jars were disinfected first off, rinsed second, and then honey was carefully strained into it to make sure that the organic substance was pure and good. The wax wouldn’t hurt anyone- but not a lot of people enjoyed eating honey right from the comb. And only a few of her hives still had the harvestable comb- it was good business, but hard work. She preferred the easier tapped hives, where it didn’t distress her bees as badly.

Toki set to work, humming an easy tune as she strained the honey through a strainer, and then got it settled into the jars. Once the air settled, she was vacuum sealing the tops, and setting the finished jars off to the side for labels to be slapped on. Simple and easy.
After a matter of many hours, the honey was all sealed away and put into crates for distribution. "Well, Toki," Papyrus hummed as he looked at their completed job proudly, "I'd say we did a great job!" he sighed happily.

“We did.” She smiles warmly. She shifts to heft a crate up and stack them in the corner. “You’re really quite good at it.” She praised warmly. Toki shifted and offered him a bright smile. “We can hand these out later. Heh… So,” she beams, “Want to make some honey tarts?” She hadn’t made them with her honey for a long while.

"Definitely!" There wasn’t a second of hesitation to answer that.

She grins at him and snags one of the bottles she was keeping for her house, and pads from the room. She rolls her hips slightly, stretching them, and vows to take a hot bath later to soothe the aching bones. Her pelvis was visibly widening- and soon she’d be stuck with that gods be damned waddle she’d laughed at her mother for having. “It’s been a long while since I’ve made my tarts, hasn’t it? At least, my tarts with my honey, verses store bought.” And there was definitely a difference. Homegrown honey always tasted better in her opinion.

"That's very true indeed." he agreed as he followed her out.

She headed for the kitchen, humming to herself. She’d actually need to make the tarts from scratch for once- she had run out of the base tarts the other day. Toki padded in, leaving Pap to follow, and plonked the honey on the counter before beginning to look for her tart making supplies. “Hey, Pap? Do you remember which cupboard I put my baking pan in? The one for my tarts?”

"Ahh..." He looked at them contemplatively, and then he used his foot to open a cupboard near the floor. Inside, he spotted the pan. "That one. Allow me."

"Thanks, love." She shot him a smile as he fetched the pan, and gathered the rest of her stuff. It would take thirty minutes for the tarts to bake- unless she used her magic. Humming thoughtfully, Toki began to get the batter measured out and mixed. “Think we can entertain ourselves for half an hour? Or should I just use magic on the tarts?”

"I could massage your belly.” he answered with a smile, setting the pan down on the counter for her to pour her batter in.

Toki snorts a soft laugh of amusement, and glances over her shoulder as she begins to mix the powdered things into the liquid bits to make the batter proper. “You just want to feel the little ones move again, don’t you?” She teases. “But I’m totally down for that. The ecto skin feels tight and kind of itchy. A rub would feel amazing.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" Papyrus laughed softly. "As you wish~” he thrummed softly.

Toki rolled her eyes good naturedly, setting the oven to preheat. It didn’t take long- the cakes didn’t need to bake at a very high temperature. Once the oven was done preheating, she poured the batter into the pan and eased the first one in. It wasn’t a very big batch she was making- No, it was just a small one for their house. She’d make more later to send with Han to the school, so the kids and teachers could have a treat.

With the timer set, she turned to wash her hands and hum to herself. “Heh. So, you have any idea
how you want me, Pap?"

"On the couch please, as comfortable as you can get." he replied.

“I can do that.” She finishes washing her hands, dries them with a flush of magic, and then gives him a smile as she pads for the couch.

Toki settles on it gingerly, stretching out and easing herself up so she’s not completely flat. Her shoulders rest on the armrest, and she adjusts her tank top slightly as it rides up. Her shorts ride up too, but the bare bones of her femurs feel nice and free against the air of the house. “I’m comfy!” She chirps, adjusting herself just slightly, and popping a pillow slightly behind her knees. It felt good to keep them slightly elevated- and put a little bit less weight on her lower lumbar, oddly enough. Will this work for you?” There was plenty of space for him to flop on the couch with her- he could drape between her legs if he wished, and lounge in her lap- or really anything considering he could just lift her if he needed her moved.

"Perfect!” He chirped and sat down alongside the couch. Papyrus reached up, gently easing her shirt up over her belly before stroking her stomach. It did feel a bit tight- but with how fast it was growing, it was little wonder. Magic or not, everything had it’s limits. He purred softly and carefully began to rub the bare bones of his palms over the smoothly growing mound of her middle.

Toki relaxed as he set his hands to working over the ecto-skin that covered her middle. It did, as she said, feel tight and itchy even if the flesh remained supple and soft under his fingers. The rubbing felt good though, and she rocked her skull back against the arm of the couch with a blissful sigh.

“Mmm… That feels great, Pap.”

The twins stirred under his fingers, and batted at him with tiny kicks as he gently jostled their housing.

"Hello you two,” he chuckled softly as he rubbed, kneading ever to slightly with his thumbs.

His palms practically engulfed her belly, and Toki laughed as a tiny foot ran a long path under his fingers. It felt good, having him massage her, and she let her body slouch contently. “You know,” she hums lazily, “With as active as these two are now, they’re going keep me up all night when they get to be full sized.”

"I do apologize.” he sighed gently, pressing a soft kiss to a passing foot. "But I will do my best to take care of you even then.”

“Apologize for what?” She blinks open her sockets to peer at him curiously. “Seriously, love, I’d rather them be active than not be moving much. I know they’re healthy when they’re tickling my ribs from the inside.” She affectionately strokes Pap’s skull with her fingers as she relaxes. The tight feeling across her middle fades slowly, but it feels better now that the skin was being rubbed. Too bad lotion didn’t work on skeletons. “Besides- all the wiggling just means they’re going to take after you and be very energetic. It’s a good thing.” She winks. “Nara tend to be habitually lazy by nature. It’ll be good to break tradition.”

He giggled softly and nuzzled into her hand, sighing happily as his hands continued to dance over her swell.

The little ones continued to squirm in her for a bit, before ultimately settling down for the most part. A pair of small feet pressed down into what felt like her spine, but for the most part they too were relaxed by the careful dance of his hands over her swell. His rubbing was soothing, and she felt herself relax down into the couch. “Mmm… We’re going to have to do this more often. It’s very
relaxing.” She purrs.

He purred loudly as he smiled down at her. "I'm glad it gives you relief~" he chuckled happily, before he leaned down and kissed her stomach.

She laughed slightly, her belly shifting against his teeth. One of them stretched, and rested a small back against where his mouth kissed. “I am too. Pregnancy is a bit rough, but it’ll be worth it in the end when we get to see our little jellybeans. You’ve been a real sport about all the strange things that happen with it. It makes me very proud of you.” Toki strokes his skull again, her bones letting off a pleased buzz.

He nuzzled her hand and sighed happily. "I'm a sport because after everything you've done for us, it's time for you to be repaid, even if it's not in full.” he purred happily

Toki’s fingers rubbed soothing circles on his skull, and she leaned her skull forward so she could offer him a quiet smile. That hadn’t been the response she had been expecting. “I don’t want you to do things just because you guys think I deserve something in return. None of you guys owe me anything.” She says softly.

"Nyeh, you say that." he huffed softly, turning to nip her hand.

She squeaked as he snagged her thumb in his teeth. “I say that and I mean it, you goober.” She curled her fingers along his jaw, tickling the edges as he held her thumb. The only thing she could think that she wanted from him was his love, and she was pretty sure she already had that.

He giggled softly and licked her finger before letting it go. "Well, I say we're a shoulder you can lean on if it's needed~" he purred, "And if you needed anything at all, you could count on us.”

Toki gave him a bemused look, and cleaned her thumb off on the shoulder of his shirt. “Very mature, slobbering my finger like that.” She teased. “I know you guys are here if I need anything. I’m just not the sort of person to ask for help.” Hence why she spent most of her days plowing through her paperwork alone, unless Tenebris decided to volunteer to help for the day. “Or ask for anything in general.”

"I know you're not, but we're not afraid to help where we can, you know." he murmured.

“She strokes his jaw again, thumbing over his cheekbone with gentle affection, before she grunts softly, and presses her fingers to a spot closer to her back. She rubs gently, and rolls her eye lights in her sockets. “That was a tiny foot to my spine- and that felt really, really weird.” She didn’t lie on her back often anymore, because the babybones tended to kick her in weird, weird places. It didn’t exactly hurt- but it was a slightly uncomfortable sensation, and it wouldn’t feel very nice when they got larger. “Heh. I think they’re gonna have your feet.”

"You want to know what would be worse?” he grinned.

She gave him a wary look. “What would be worse?” She inquired lightly.

"If my father's 'genetics' passed down to his grandchildren." he snickered. "They'd have very powerful legs.”

That made Toki literally groan. “Oh gods, Pap. Lets hope they don’t. That would probably suck when they get bigger. Some of their kicks are already a bit uncomfortable at times. If they had his leg strength, they could probably kick their way right out of me.”

"Exactly." he nodded, continuing to stroke her stomach as he then let out some magic for her. "This
should feel better for you.” he murmured.

The magic did feel nice, though it stirred up the babybones inside of her. “It feels nice,” She nods, “Though I didn’t really need it. The glow is still bright enough from last time.” Though now, it was brightening once more. Toki laughs, and joins her fingers with his briefly to guide his fingers to the side of her belly where one of the soullings was jabbing small bony limbs outwards. “They really enjoy your magic. It wakes them up.”

"I'm glad.” He purrs. “I would hope it does. It reassures me that they're healthy.”

Toki laughed gently and let his fingers go so she could ease her fingers against her middle and shoo the poking foot to the other side of her belly with her fingers. “They’re healthy, I’m fairly certain. With as much magic as they take, I’m certain that they’re very, very healthy.” She also made sure to eat stuff that was rich in calcium from time to time, to help with bone growth.

"They are really powerful kicks, yeah?” he smiled at her, "I'm glad.” he purred gently.

“You and me both.” She chuckles softly. “And yeah. For something so small, they kick pretty strongly. It’s only going to get stronger as they get bigger.” She chirps softly. Toki shifts, smiling at a foot that presses against his fingers. “It feels really, really weird though. I can’t even describe it.” She murmurs. “Hm… hey, Pap? I’m what… Around twenty-one weeks along? We don’t know how long it’ll be, but… forty weeks is the norm for humans, and it’s less than that with twins. So… We haven’t really talked about names, and we’re probably half way there.” She murmurs softly.

"I guess it never came to mind... do we wanna wait to name them until we know what they'll be born as, or should we start thinking now?” he asked.

“Well, not all humans choose to know.” She murmured softly. “We could pick two names for each just in case? Or something gender neutral, if it comes to us.”

"I can do that... let's see, there's... Alex, Skylar, Adrian..."

“Oh? Those are nice. Skylar,” Which sounded very weird with her accent, “is a lovely name. Not going to suggest fonts though, to keep up the family tradition? Eras is a lovely name for a little boy. I don’t know many fonts, admitted. Hmm… What about…?” She closes her sockets briefly, thoughtfully rubbing her fingers along his skull. She found one that she was slightly fond of, the more she thought about it- but ended up shaking her skull and muttering to herself. “No, no, that one’s dumb.”

Papyrus perked, eyes brightening slightly as he all but chirped against her middle. "What is it? Lemme hear it!"

His exuberant tone made one of the twins startle, and she dropped her fingers to soothe the spot that their tiny little limb lashed out at. “But it’s silly though.” She peeked at him, and then glanced away. A green flush bubbled up over her cheeks, and she tucked her chin shyly. “It’s… not really gender neutral though, but… Honey for a girl maybe? I know it’s a silly name, but…” It wasn’t even customary to her family’s naming traditions, but it would pay homage to the other half of her genetics. “I kinda like it…”

He blinked, and then he lit up even more. "It's adorable! I love it!" he laughed happily.

Toki laughed softly, face still flushed. Shifting her legs so her ankles were crossed, she peered at him happily. “So… That’s one name down then. Heh… What did you think of Eras? It’s a font- like your name is. It’s more masculine- but we could go with two gender neutral names, and one of each of the
He snorted and laughed softly. "Oh that's clever. I say we go for it."

"Hm…” She closed her sockets again, and rubbed her middle thoughtfully. “I like it. What about you two? You two like the names, hm?” She smiles and gently laughs as something tiny taps her hand in response to the stimulus. “So we’ve got Skylar, Eras, Honey… We need one more font, just to make it even. Uh… All I can think is Times New Roman, but we are not naming anything that. Uh…”

"Nyeh heh heh, what about Verdana?” he inquired, fingers traveling her middle to brush where the little one was kicking. Absolutely wonderful!

She smiled widely. “It’s not quite gender neutral- but… I get the feeling we’re going to have a little girl. I dunno why. Mother’s intuition, maybe?” Her mother had said that boys carried all in the front, and girls carried all around. She was sort of in-between that- and had no idea how to judge that with twins. “I like Verdana. Hey, Pap? Which surname are they going to take?” Light bulbs were flickering on in her skull, and her eyes opened and brightened with her thoughts. She really liked all four names- and had a thought about just… mixing and matching them.

"...! Ah... Probably mine?” he asked, "They take the name of the father, do they not?"

“We’re an untraditional couple.” She quirks a slight grin at him, all sharp teeth and love. They weren’t even married- and that was going to be a whole barrel of monkey’s to get into if they ever did get married. “Hm… Skylar Eras Gaster. Hm… I kinda like that. A lot. Though… It’ll be interesting, since the firstborn will be heir to the Nara clan. Heh. We’ll be making up a lot of traditions as we go.” Her eyes glimmer eagerly.

Toki had always been fond of making new traditions.

"The fusion of clans.” he agreed, "It will be very interesting.”

“Very.” She nods slightly. “Will it be a true fusion though? I know Sans is older- technically isn’t he heir to your clan after your dad? I don’t really know how monster clans work, though I know you do have them. Your dad was in quite a snit when he found out you all were technically apart of mine for now.”

"I will have to ask Father of this." he cupped his chin in thought, "I wonder..."

"Hm?” She folded her hands on her middle, feeling more relaxed. Well, up until the timer for the tarts went off. She squirmed, and tapped his skull lightly. “Time’s up, love. Gotta get them out. Give me a hand getting up? I got a little too comfy. Tell me your thoughts though, while I fetch the tarts from the oven.”

"Alright.” he stood first, and then reached out and gently took her hands, pulling her up. "I probably am not the first to receive the role of alpha, but as first married... I do not know.”

“We’re not married though.” She blinked up at him lightly as she settled on her feet. She took a moment to catch her balance, make sure she wasn’t going to fall backwards, before padding off towards the kitchen and leaving him to follow and ponder his and her words.

Toki made haste for the oven, and plucked the tarts from the oven, before turning off the timer and heat from inside. The more her magic had settled into her bones and the more familiar she got with her magic, the more she found that hot things were bothering her less and less.

The hot tray of plain tarts was carefully set on the stove, and the tarts removed and set on a cooling
rack. They were still too hot for him to eat yet—so they would both need to wait to put the honey on until it could be safely handled.

Papyrus hadn't followed. He had gotten rather stiff as he let slip what he had said. Her ignorance however made him sag and sigh in faint relief. She hadn't caught on, he thinks... phew...!

Toki pads back out to him a few moments later, scrubbing her fingers against the fabric of her shirt to try and cool off the bone so she didn’t burn anything. In one hand, she has the jar of honey.
“Anyways,” She continues once she’s back in the main room, “You were saying?”

"Oh! Ah... I actually lost my train of thought." Papyrus chuckled quietly. "Sorry...!"

She propped a hand on her hip and gave him a warm, lopsided smile. “You are a precious pumpkin, you know that? Well, your train of thought will eventually return to its station.” Toki winks.
“Anyways, the tarts need to cool before we can eat them.” More for his sake than her own, really, but she didn’t mind waiting a little bit.

"Right, okay!" he stretched where he was standing, and looked at her, "What should we do until then?"

She had several ideas— and many of them were heading down a different path that was not so innocent. “Well, there are lots of things we could do.” She grins at him coyly, and pads closer. The lights of her eyes take on a slightly mint colored tinge, and she gives him a demure smile. “We are all alone, after all~ How about we close the curtains on the windows and see what sort of mischief we can get into with a bottle of honey?”

Mood swings could be powerful things— and she felt herself going from zero to horny rather rapidly.

His socket’s lit up. "Oh now you're giving me ideas.” He took the jar of honey from her fingers as he met her in the middle of the room. Aliquam wrapped an arm around the small of her back, tugging her gently to his chest, and smirked down at her devilishly. "Nyeh heh heh~"
Chapter 47

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: And finally a hella good thing for the Monsters. A light in the dark, if you will.

Don't forget to visit our blog! Lots of stuff goes down there. You can ask us or the characters questions if you like. http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: *Makes awful joke related to 'im in me mum's car, broom broom'*

It was only three days later that Toki got the best news possible. Probably the best news she’d ever gotten, even over becoming pregnant. She had toiled and toiled the last couple of days against a sudden onslaught of paperwork- working through the night and into the next day even- and low and behold… It paid off.

It paid off big time.

Since they came to the surface, Asgore had been working to help monsters achieve their rights. Rights that they should have had from the start, and rights that they should have had from the moment they had stepped out from the underground. Humans had denied them that- denied them the right to even be on the surface without someone to keep an eye on them.

And now… She didn’t care if she was tired, she didn’t care if she had large dark marks under her eye sockets from lack of sleep, and she certainly didn’t care that she probably looked like hell from pulling the all nighter she had. She gathered her papers and deeds and files, which were no longer technically hers anymore, and sent bees to fetch her loved ones. Toki could tell the rest of the village later- but for now, she sent some of her fastest fire bees out to find the Gaster family.

Toki had gotten a very, very important phone call from Asgore.

They had enough votes- enough supporters- and they managed to secure the monsters all of their rights in a single landslide. She had no idea how he did it- he sounded as exhausted and excited as she did- but he managed it, and that in itself was like some sort of heaven sent miracle. Monsters now could own their own land, businesses, cars, and homes. They could also get married and legally have it recognized.

Monsters could also marry HTM’s. Humans were not there yet- but HTM’s were a gray area on their scale, it would seem. She had some sort of inkling as to why that particular part had been pushed through- and would have to thank Asgore when she went to visit the castle later that day.

She’d spent the morning on the phone with Simmons and various other legal agencies after Asgore’s call- and had gotten it cleared through all of them for her to give the land they were living on to them, along with all of the land still scheduled for development. They would consider it a donation of sorts- and she’d see that pay off on her tax return next year, so she really didn’t want any payment from them.

That wasn’t the point. The point was- they were free. Finally free.
Toki’s socket’s beaded with happy tears.

She’d also managed a call to some of the bussing agencies- and they were agreeing to send up busses to bring everyone up to the castle later that day. Well, everyone who would be buying cars. They needed to choose the car designs they liked- and some of them needed to be specially fitted and sized to some of the monsters- so that was going to happen too.

Toki was so happy that she felt like she might explode.

She waited, documents and official paperwork in hand, for the Gaster family to come to the house.

It didn’t take them long to come barging in the front door. Caeruleus was the first to show up, but Tenebris and Aliquam soon joined him, both looking harried and like they had rushed over.

"Toki, what’s going on? Are you okay?" Aliquam inquired, eyes roving over her, and then assessing if there was a threat.

What a sight she must have been for them to see, with her all teary eyed and exhausted with her arms full of important files and deeds. She gave them a water laugh, and shifted the pile of things in her arms so she could dabble at the glowing tear tracks on her face. “Everything is fine, Quinn. Shit. Just… hell, everything is amazing. Come in, please. I wanted to tell you three first and give me the chance to compose myself.” She motions for them to come to the dining room with her, and then carefully deposits her armload onto the table. Behind her on the floor is boxes and boxes of paperwork- enough for the hundredfold monsters under her care.

They looked at each other, and followed her. Tenebris noticed the boxes almost immediately, and his eyes narrowed slightly. "Was there an update about our residency?" he inquired, peering between the boxes and her.

This would be the first that Cae had heard of it, as he was the only one to her knowledge that hadn’t been clued in as to what Toki really as, but… “Yes.” She beams, sniffing without shame as fat, happy tears rolled down her cheekbones. “I’m no longer your gilded cage- you’re free. You’re all finally, finally free. And this- this is yours. Your files, your paperwork, your identity, all of this belongs to you now. Your clan is your own, Tenebris, if you so choose. You are free."

They all seemed stunned for a moment, silence overwhelming for a short time. But Aliquam was the first to respond, his sockets widening. "We're free..." He lit up and scooped her up in a twirl, "This is wonderful!" he laughed.

Tenebris took a deep breath and he purred softly, eyes wide and happy. "Thank you, Tokiko."

Sans however had a conflicted look in his eye sockets. But after a moment he sighed and smiled, letting the look fade. "Cool."

Toki had seen the look on Cae’s face, and knew that she owed him an explanation. But she was swept into Pap’s arms before she could do that, and ended up giving a choked laugh as she looped her arms about his shoulders. The twirling was overwhelming, but she was too overjoyed to care. “It’s wonderful indeed!” She sniffs, smiling brightly. “And, ah… I got it cleared for everyone to have the homes they have now. Th-the deed to your house is in with Tenebris’ paperwork. It’s yours now, as is the space of land behind it.” All of the houses had yards of sort, and spaces for cars to be parked. They’d made sure of that when they’d been built, and it was finally time to put them to use. She scrubs her sockets again, and laughs. “You’re all free now. It’s… Gods, I can’t stop crying, and it’s dumb that I cant, but I’m just so happy for you guys.”
He nuzzled her and wiped her eyes as he hushed her. "I'm proud of you, Toki~ I'm so proud of you." he purred happily. "I love you so much." he cooed.

Toki sniffled and nuzzled into his hand as he cleared her cheeks. "It has nothing to do with me- Asgore managed to get all of your rights in a landslide. Well, almost all of them. Monsters still can’t marry humans. But monsters and HTM’s, monsters and monsters, all marriages will be legally recognized now. You’re your own people now- and now everyone can make their own choices regarding staying apart of my clan, or breaking forth, or if they want to keep their homes here or sell and move to the cities. Hell, you all can go to different countries now if you want to see the world."

"That sounds wonderful" Tenebris laughed gently.

While nuzzles from Papyrus continued, he was positively beaming with joy. "I can't wait...!"

"Hey Pap, you can finally get that car you wanted!"

"... Oh my Stars!" he pulled back, his eyes gleaming, "I can! Nyeh heh heh!"

“You can,” she laughs, scrubbing her face on Papyrus’ shoulder. The tears still glimmered in her eyes, but the flow began to ebb off. “That’s something else too. I’ve got busses coming today- everyone is going up to the castle. The car companies are there- they’re going to take orders today for those who want cars, and get them fitted and sized for the monsters that will be using them. All of you will be getting cars once you decide on a model and a make.”

"Awesome!" Cae's grin widened.

Tenebris cupped his chin, "That would be quite interesting to have my own vehicle..." the older monster rumbled loudly.

Toki sniffed and nodded, and patted Pap’s shoulder slightly. "Lemme down, love. I love you to death, but all the twirling is making me dizzy. But yeah- You’re welcome to ride with me if you want. I’m going to drive up. Busses are the only vehicle I get car sick in, so I’m going to stick to my truck.”

"Sounds good." Cae and Ali agreed, though the taller of the two eased her down onto her feet with a fond gentleness.

"I wouldn’t mind riding in the bed of the truck. There will be enough room for me there." Tenebris hummed.

“I can toss some pillows back there to pad the bed. Metal isn’t very comfortable.” On her feet once more, the tired looking skeleton scrubs her sockets with her sleeves, and then goes to separate the paperwork. Each pile is slid towards its intended owner. “You’ll all be taking a drivers test while you’re up there- there’s a manual in each of your folders for you to read and look over. It’s the new one that’s going to be released soon regarding monster vehicles on the roads. I have one too.” As a driver on said roads, she needed to be aware of any new laws added. “You’ll also want to keep all of this information safe. Like, seriously safe.”

"Sounds good." Ali nodded with a smile.

“I’ve got a lockbox you can put yours in if you want, Pap.” Since he did live here after all, he was free to use hers until she could get him his own lock box. She glances to Tenebris and offers him a slight smile. “So… do you think you three can help me get everyone’s paperwork passed out to them before the busses come? There’s a lot of monsters for me to handle on my own.” And there were stacks of boxes that she would have to carry as well. They were heavy- and she’d brought them in
the house on her own as it was.

"I can do that." Papyrus nodded.

"Sounds easy enough." Cae nods, cracks his knuckle joints, and grins wider.

Gaster folds his arms. "Indeed"

"Thanks, you guys." She gives them a relieved smile. Toki plants her knuckles into her lower back, and gives them a warm look, before moving to take a box. "The busses should be here in an hour and a half. Or roundabouts that time. Between the four of us, I’m sure we can get the deeds to their homes and the files all handed out."

They actually ran a little over than the hour and a half- but the bus drivers were cool with it, thankfully. They waited the extra twenty minutes it took to get everyone their papers and for everyone calm enough to board the busses. Not everyone was going- even with ten busses, they couldn’t fit all of the citizens. But they agreed to make multiple runs- and Toki would shell out the money to help pay for the gas. It was expensive- but she didn’t mind. Soon everyone would be able to drive on his or her own.

The ride up there was actually very quiet. Toki was exhausted, and could barely fit behind the wheel while giving Cae enough legroom in the back seat. Both the boys and Tenebris spent their time reading up on the driving manual.

Truth be told, Toki was getting a little tight behind the wheel anyways. Her middle kept rubbing on the steering wheel- and her legs couldn’t reach the pedals if she let herself sit back much further. Such was the curse of carrying twins, truly.

But thankfully they were almost there. The castle loomed ahead, and now all they had to do was wait for the line of busses to file in and get parked, before Toki could get her truck parked.

She adjusted her seat belt with her fingers and squirmed, trying to shift a little bit backwards to give her some more space against her middle. It didn’t work. "How goes the booklet, guys? Think you understand it enough to ace your test?" The back window to the truck had been left open- so Tenebris wasn’t out of the loop in case they talked.

"I am currently trying to figure out how we intend to make these 'pedals' work with my... own anatomy." Tenebris mentioned, lifting up one of he legs and curling the toes a little bit.

She tilted her skull, truck idling quietly as she waited her turn to park. One of her fingers tapped idly along the steering wheel. "Probably about the same that they’re going to do for the wolves. I don’t really know yet- but it might be some sort of specialized dash with room for your legs. It would make sense. We’ll have to see when we pick up the cars, I suppose."

He shrugged and continued reading.

Toki let him be after that, and adjusted herself again. That was about as good as it would get- and the boys were obviously engrossed in their reading.

It didn’t take long for them to get in, and she parked her truck well out of the way as the first hoard
of monsters filed into the castle. Once the truck was safely parked, she squished out from between
the seat and the steering wheel, and rubbed the sore spot on her middle from where it had been
rubbed on by the wheel when she’d had to adjust her course. “Well, we’re here.” She hums.

Tenebris slowly got up and leaned on the roof of the cab as he looked out.

“Watch those elbows up there, big guy.” She chirped up to him. “You’ll dent roof. The roof isn’t as
reinforced as the body is.” She stretches her legs and then leans her head in the car to address the
skeletons in her rig. “Hey, you two. You want to keep reading until the crowd at the entrance thins
out?”

"We have the whole day, don’t we?” Cae asked as he read his manual.

“We do indeed.” She yawns faintly. “I’m going to make an attempt to nap in the back of the truck
then, if it’s all the same to you. Wake me up when you want to head inside, yeah?”

"Fair enough." Aliquam replied, smiling at her as he glanced up from his reading. "Want me to lay
with you?”

“I certainly wouldn’t mind it if you’d like to.” She quirks a smile to him, and rubs her cheek
thoughtfully. “Though I dunno if all three of us can fit back there. Your dad is pretty large.” And her
truck bed was a normal sized one, which meant it was about eight and a half feet long, and maybe
five wide. Both Aliquam and Tenebris were quite broad in the shoulder.

"I could go for a walk." Tenebris suggested.

“Reading and walking is not easy to do- unless you think you’ve got the manual down good
enough?” She leans back out of the truck to look at the bigger monster over the roof of it.

He arched a brow at her and curled his lip slightly. "I am a scientist. Do you not think I have honed
my ability to do just that?”

Sans piped up from inside the truck without ever looking up from his page. “Pops, aren’t you
retired?”

Gaster’s hands tightened, and he tapped the top of the truck carefully with his gloved finger. "Sans
Caeruleus Gaster. I will find a way to completely halt your access to ketchup."

"Aw come on!"

Toki giggled softly. “You are getting up there, eh, Gramps?” She teases lightly. “You could just kick
Cae to the front seat and stretch out like you did after Valentine’s Day. It’s probably more
comfortable than wandering around in the crowd and getting your tail trampled on.”

"Oh come on don't encourage him.” Cae groaned.

"Well as nice as lounging sounds, I'm starting to lose feeling in my feet, and I can easily tuck my tail
away. Thank you anyhow.”

She rolls her eye lights in her sockets, but nods. “Looks like we’re on for lounging then, Pap. Mind
giving me a hand up before you hop out, Tenebris?” Getting into the back of her truck was doable,
when one wasn’t nearing twenty-two weeks pregnant. She leaves Papyrus to get out of the truck on
his own time, and makes for the back of it with a hum. Her truck was pretty tall- and the top of the
sides of the bed came up to her under arms.
"No problem." Tenebris drops the back of the truck and he reaches down gently, hooking his hands on her under arms. "Alley oop." he chuckles, lifting her up gently, before setting her rear on one of the many pillows he was given to rest on.

“… It still amazes me how you guys just lift me like I’m a child. Seriously.” Toki had dangled like a child from his hands, and he’d hefted her like her mom had when she’d been a toddler. Toki settles down on one of the pillows with a soft sigh, peering up at him with a grin. “Heh. You may end up toting the twins a lot. I think that excited them.” They were going to town inside of her belly, kicking up a small flurry.

"Isn’t that a duty of a grandfather?" he hummed, helping Aliquam up before he hopped down onto the ground.

“That depends on the grandpa.” She chuckles. “Mine certainly didn’t heft me. Read to me a lot? Yes.” She nestles down, and pats the pillow next to her for Papyrus to join her. The pillows only did so much, and she had intentions of at least relaxing into him a little bit, since she couldn’t lie on her front on the pillows.

Aliquam sat with her and purred as he pulled her close, nuzzling the top of her skull softly.

"Well I suppose I would fit the quota regardless, yes?" Tenebris chuckled, "I’m going to go look at the different kind of vehicles. See you later." he rumbled, turning to go. Of course he was. Toki rolled her sockets and snuggled into Aliquam. “You would indeed.” She murmurs softly. A sigh escapes her, and she shifts, spooning into his side as best she can. “Are you okay to read like this?” She could flop on her back between his legs and nap that way, reclined against his chest. Her horns would make a good spot to balance the booklet.

"Oh yes, of course!" he replied, stroking her stomach gently. "No problem at all~"

She winks up at him softly, and nestles her head somewhere against his side as he cups her belly with his hand. The twins are stirred up- but their kicks aren’t too strong yet. “Mmm, good. I don’t want to disrupt you learning to drive. We might need it before long. I’m getting a bit tight behind the steering wheel.”

"Sure thing." he rumbled, "Alright, where was I…" he murmured, looking to his book. Toki carefully pointed at a page that had recent signs of use, and then settled down with a sleepy sigh. Her sockets closed, and it didn’t take long for her to be snoring away against his chest, relaxed and limp and very dead to the noises of the world.

He held her gently and hummed soothingly as he read, though after long enough ended up joining her in the peaceful nap.

The sound of engines revving caught Tenebris' attention and he came over curiously.

There was a tiny wisp of a thing sitting in the driver’s seat of a newer model mustang. She was maybe five feet tall, and built like a twig. She had a sales tag on though- her name was Sue. She eyed the massive monster that approached the car, and arched her brow in a friendly manner, teasingly roaring the engine at him. “Hiya!” She chirps, all bubbles and happiness in her voice.
“You're a big fella, aren’t ya?” She spoke Japanese, but heavily accented.

He looked down at her and smiled, "Yes, I suppose I am. I came to see what there was to choose from the selection." He answered. Looking at the engine of the car, he knelt down, and then he let out a loud growl to challenge the roar of the engine.

The growl startled her, and her foot pressed down on the gas. The engine roared back, but not nearly as strong as his growl. Sue licked her lips nervously. “Well, uh, if you're interested in muscle cars, we have a lot to choose from. Uh… I can show you some more, if ya’d like.”

He chuckled lowly, then he gained his feet again. "I'd like that, thank you."

“Sure, no problem, sugar.” She turns off the car, giving it time to rest, before clamoring out. She glances up and hums. “Okay. Follow me, please. I’ve got some Mustangs, and some more Cameros. I’d say a Ferrari, but they’re a bit… uh… probably too spendy for most monsters, to be honest.”

"In my line of work, I may be able to afford a little luxury for all my years of service." he chuckled quietly, "I suppose we’ll see."

“I suppose so. Alright then!” Her cheer snapped back quickly, and she guided him off to try out different cars. “I’m Sue, by the way. Who’re you, big fella?” Sue took him along a row of mustangs, and waited until he pointed at one, before going to get it started up for him. She popped the hood, and revved it so he could take a look at how it worked inside.

"My name is Tenebris. Pleased to meet you, Sue." he knelt and growled as the engine revved. Still his resonance was stronger, and he shook his head lightly.

She stepped out of the car, eyes glimmering thoughtfully at him. “Hm… Are you… trying to find one that’s louder than you?” She asked slightly. Sue was observant, trained to look for tells which might help increase the likelihood of a successful sale.

"I'll admit." he chuckled softly, "I am indeed searching for something who's resonance speaks as loud as my own." he replied, "The beast in me demands a perfect match, so I am but a servant to seek it's approval."

“I think I can help you with that.” She grins. “Though, a lot of our louder cars are the older models. Is that going to bother you and your… beast?”

He laughed softly, "Oh no, no... that wont at all be an issue." he assured her.

Sue hummed, but nodded. She motioned for him to follow her again, and then set off at a surprisingly fast pace for someone with such short legs. She out paced him easily enough, and led him down to the older cars. “We don’t have many to choose from, admittedly. We don’t make these anymore- but some we were willing to make an exception for, based on popularity. We’ve got some Dodge Chargers, some ’69 mustangs- lots of really sweet rides. And, if all else fails, glass-packs do exist if we cant find one that matches your roar."

"Fascinating..." he rubbed his hands together, keeping pace well enough. "Well, I suppose now we shall see which engine stands superior." he rumbled.

“Mhm! Come check this one out. I know the color is horrible, but I love how the engine on this one sounds.” She guided him over to a mustang- which was a horrible, horrible shade of flesh colored- and motioned for him to wait for her to get it going. The mustang was in front of a dark colored Dodge Charger- and another salesperson was climbing into it to give a demonstration to a large fish woman.
She fired it up, and gave it a roar for him to compare to. To her ears, it sounded damn near close.

He bared his fangs and gave a snarling roar, but still he shook his head. "It's not enough, it's very close but-"

A snarling roar started up behind him as the salesperson got the Dodge started up. He revved it, looking up to the large fish woman, who was flexing at him with a highly pleased expression.

"LOUDER!" She hollered cheerfully.

Obligingly, he revved it louder, flooring it and making the engine all but shriek a horribly terrifying sound. Several sheep monsters flocked away from the noise.

Tenebris jumped sharply at the roar and he tensed, his form going straight as his eyes widened, before his pupils immediately turned to slits. He then lowered and turned to face the engine, his eyes glowing and tail lashing as he roared back at the engine.

The man in the seat squeaked, and his foot jerked off the pedal. The roar of the engine cut off, and instead it rumbled at the crouched monster staring at it intently. "U-uhh…"

Sue jerked out of the Mustang, killing the engine with a quick motion as she stood. “Uh… Tenebris? Ya’ alright, big guy? The car’s not gonna hurt ‘cha.”

Tenebris' tail continued to lash as he started rumbling at the engine, before he looked towards the man in the driver's seat. He then tilted his head and his jaw slowly unhinged, not yet splitting before he rumbled slightly louder, his stance changing.

He wanted him to do it again.

Sue hesitated, and shared a look with the guy through the window when he sent her a desperate look, like a rabbit caught in the sights of a fox. She nodded slowly.

The man behind the seat trembled, but he gunned it, making the exuberant red-haired fish woman whoop again, punching her fist violently in the air. The Charger roared again, engine rattling in its frame with the force that it was packing.

His eyes flashed and his jaw came open as he roared his loudest, a pitch that seemed to finally have found its match.

Far across the lot, Aliquam and Cae sat up fast. They could hear the roar of the engine, as well as the shrieking roar of their father.

"Was that pops?"

"Yes it was."

Toki had been startled awake when her pillow had jolted upright, and she blinked her sockets open, letting him go on instinct. She caught herself before she dropped back, and glanced at them quizzically. What…? Oh. There was a noise. “What’s going on?”

"We have no idea" Cae replied, getting out of the truck, "But I'm damn well about to find out...!" he
then quickly shortcut away from the truck.

He showed up to find Tenebris huffing softly as he glared at the vehicle before him. After a moment, his jaw shifted and reattached, before he closed his eyes and rose back to his hind feet. He rolled his neck, before he reached up and wiped his mouth with a soft rattle. He smiled warmly at Sue, as if what had just happened didn’t even occur.

"I do believe I found what I was looking for." he purred.

“Uh… Okay. So a '69 Dodge Charger then. Uh… Okay.” Sue, to her credit, hadn’t lost her smile, though she did seem a little bit more nervous. “Alright. We need to get you tested for your permit, and then we’ll get you measured and work on designing the car to your standards. Oh, uh. Can I help you, mister teleporting skeleton dude?”

"Just need to speak to Pops here..." Cae replied to Sue, before he walked up to his father. "What the hell just happened?" he demanded, leaving his hands in his pockets.

"I got curious. I wanted to find a car that would match me well."

"By roaring at it so loud we could hear you across the damn lot?"

"... Yes." He said it as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

“Uh…” Sue looked slightly uncomfortable, and cleared her throat. “If you two are going to have an argument, I’m going to have to ask you to step outside until you’re finished.”

"There's no conflict, miss Sue." Tenebris waved it off with a gentle smile.

"It's just not reassuring when you hear your pops roar from where you're parked.. all the way across the lot." Cae sighed.

“I suppose it wouldn’t be.” She offered them wide smile. “He’s fine though, I promise. Are you here to take your test too?” Some of the monsters had passed on it, saying they didn’t want to, or their spouse was going to be the one driving.

"Well yeah, but we were gonna wait until it had cleared out a bit." he rubbed his head, "My brother is gonna do the test too..."

“Well, the testing booths are open right now. Everyone is still looking at cars, so if you wanted to get your tests out of the way, now would be the time.” Sue chirps softly.

"Oh sweet." Cae grinned a bit, while Tenebris adjusted his sweater slightly.

"I'd say I'm rather eager to do this test." He rumbled happily.

“Then how about you go grab your brother, and I’ll get you three cuties all set up and ready to go. You’ve all studied, right?”

"Indeed."

"That I have."

"Father! Sans!" There was Aliquam, right on cue.

Behind him was a tired looking Toki, who kept dodging through the masses as the longer legged monster practically drug her along behind him. She was walking faster than she usually did- and thus
had a small bit of a waddle plaguing her as she tried to keep up.

“I’m going to assume that’s your brother and- Miss Toki?” She blinks. “You’re well acquainted with Miss Toki?”

“Well yeah, my brother’s mated to her.” Cae answered.

“M-mated?” She blinked, confused by the term. “Er… alright then. Ah! Miss Toki! It’s good to see you again. You look tired.”

“My nap was interrupted.” The pregnant skeleton huffs slightly, and flicks a look up and down Tenebris to make sure he’s okay. “It’s good to see you again too, Sue. I take it you’re helping Tenebris here?”

“I am, yes! We found his car of choice, and now he, and presumably his sons, are off to take their test.”

“Might as well,” She yawned faintly, “We’re already in here.”

“If you don’t mind waiting, I could take the test.” Ali hugged Toki gently.

“I’m not going anywhere without you three,” She yawns, “But there is no guarantee that I won’t find a corner to stand in and sleep.” Nara could sleep anywhere. She leans up to kiss his cheek, and then motions them off. “You go ace that test, love. All three of you should ace that test.”

She would laugh however if, for all of his boasting, Tenebris got the lowest score out of the three.

Sue nods cheerily. “I’ll go get them all set up and going. Speaking of- did you get your license renewed, Miss Toki?”

“I did.” She nods. She’d had it done shortly after she’d gotten back to her home after her change. “Take good care of them for me, Sue.” This would be the first time they’d had to do oodles of paperwork on their own. She was glad she’d made them bring all of their important information with them.

“Will do, Miss Toki. Follow me, boys! You go find a place to get off your feet, Miss Toki. I imagine your poor bones are sore.”

“A little bit.” Standing for long sets of time made her bones ache. She was glad that she couldn’t get swollen ankles and feet- but sore bones seemed to be the equivalent.

“Well, come on then.” Tenebris sounded eager as he smiled at his boys, before going to follow Sue to where they would perform the test.

Sue guided them off with a cheery wave back to Toki.

Toki waved them off with a smile, and then went to go wander. It would probably take them an hour if they found the questions hard. She could go hunt down Asgore… She did want to talk to him about some things concerning the village and the guards, which were technically able to seek employment elsewhere if they so chose.

Toki was still technically supposed to be under twenty-four-hour guard.
But Tenebris was a fast learner, and his boys did the same without flaw, and it was safe to say that they passed the test without issue.

Perfect scores all around.

When they came out, they’d find that Toki, true to her word, had taken up post against a pillar, and had apparently dozed off while remaining upright. There were a couple of wolf monsters hovering near her, trading off their unofficial guard duty from time to time so they could all browse in their own time.

They kept an eye on her and made sure she wasn’t disturbed while the Gaster family had been busy.

Aliquam giggled quietly as he walked over and dismissed the guards, before he took a place to rest besides her, smiling to himself.

Cae walked out, looking at his new ID card. "I shoulda brought a prop for this, damn it." he puffed, before snickering to himself.

At least Pop's ego would drop a little with how much trouble he was having with getting a proper picture taken.

Toki woke when the sounds of bones near her jolted her out of her light doze. She yawned, sharp teeth sparking as they ground together, and peered over at him slightly. “Mmm. How’d it go?” She’d never tracked down Asgore- and running laps around the inside of the castle to find the massive goat monster was not on her to-do list. She’d call him later. “You guys pass? Where’s Tenebris?”

"We all passed." Aliquam answered.

"But Pops is having the time of his life with trying to get a picture taken." Cae cackled.

“I bet he is. He’s absurdly tall.” She snorts softly. Toki shifts, leaning away from the wall, and her joints make a horrible crunching noise as she unlocks them. “Ahhh. Sweet relief. So, you both want to take a peak at the cars? He’ll be busy for a while yet. They’re going to need him for exact measurements on his height, the shapes of his legs, who all he’ll be having ride with him- all sorts of horribly fun and boring stuff that you both get to go through later too.”

"It's not because he's tall." Cae commented with a loud cackle, "But yeah, let's go car-hunting."

“Oh? What’s the problem then?” She tilted her head curiously, and stretched. She offered her arm to Pap, and smiled softly at him. “C’mon. You both have an idea of what sort of vehicle you want?”

"He doesn't have eye sockets." he snickered. That was the only hint he dropped, before answering her question. "I want something that can be a mess but still work really well."

"I wouldn't mind something simple, efficient." Aliquam mentioned.

“Work reliably well… Hm… Well, first thing that pops to mind is a truck. People take them out mudding and they function just fine, so long as the exhaust pipe doesn’t get clogged.” Toki loops her arm with Pap’s, and then snag’s Cae’s hand with her own to tug him down in the opposite direction. “Eh… Well, they don’t have anything quite… simple and efficient, unless you want a Subaru.” She pointed with her chin to the tiny, tiny gas efficient cars that were behind the mustangs. “And to be honest, love, Subaru’s… squish… really easy.”
"Heheheheh, trucks huh?" Cae immediately was interested, obvious by his tone of voice.

"Well what would you advise, Toki?" Aliquam inquired.

“I really don’t know, Pap. Something… safe, I guess. Humans can be crazy drivers, and we’re going to be parents here soon. What would you feel safe taking the twins for a drive in is the better question.” She abandon’s Cae’s hand to pat her middle, and grunts as she’s nailed in the rib. “All the commotion and noise has them grumpy.” She pouts. “But yeah. Trucks. Probably a nice short-bed one for you, double cab so you can take Grillby places and bring stuff home inside if it rains. They might have something in the Ford section.”

"I'll go see if there's one I can afford." with a cackle, he shortcut away, leaving Aliquam to face palm loudly in his wake.

Toki just shook her head and sighed. “Well, now it’s just us. What sort of car do you want, like, body style? Muscle car, speedster, and truck… uh… minivan? I can honestly not see you driving one of those, but one never knows. I could see you rocking a sports car.” Though those were definitely not infant friendly.

“Well...” he hummed quietly, looking around. "Those sound like fun, but I suppose I'll want resourceful before indulgence at this point."

She bumps her hip to his, and nearly knocks herself off balance in the process. “Pap, this is your first car. If you want a speedster, get a speedster. You’re tall enough to fit in my truck, so we can cart the twins around there until they’re old enough to go in a speedster.”

He blinked, then smiled at her. "I suppose there no harm in some indulgence."

“Indeed.” She grins at him wryly. “C’mon. Lets go see if any of the speedy cars catch your interest. Mustangs are good cars. Powerful- a little bit more sturdily built than… I dunno. Ferrari? Though, those are basically expensive coffins on wheels.” She chuckles quietly.

"What about those?" he hummed, pointing to where there was a few Mercedes being shown.

Toki tilted her skull thoughtfully, but obligingly guided him that way. They had to thread through a flock of sheep monsters, though they parted easily enough for the large, respectable skeleton that she was tugging along. Once on the other side of the fluffy mob, she hummed and smiled. “Mercedes are good cars. Expensive- but very good. Why don’t you try a couple out? I think you should fit in most of them.” Maybe. He was a leggy giant- but he wasn’t going to be driving it, so he didn’t need to fuss about legroom for the pedals quite yet.

"Why not!" he moved on ahead to find one of the assistants who were showing the cars.

He found a man not far away, who was just finishing helping a rabbit monster. He turned to the skeleton with a friendly smile on his face. “Ah, hello! I’m Lee. Are you interested in getting a Mercedes?”

"I am, yes." he replied, looking down at Lee. "They are very nice looking. How well do they perform when it comes to showing off?" Aliquam inquired.

Toki watched from afar, smiling and simply watching as the interactions happened. It was his car- he’d be the one driving it, so he needed to be sure it was one he liked and really wanted, and not just one that he got out of convenience. They could work around whatever he chose. Her truck was child friendly enough.
The shorter man grinned. “Oh? Want to showboat to impress a pretty lady? Or gentleman- I don’t judge either way. Mercedes are the best when it comes to that. It’s no Lamborghini, but a Mercedes is one of the best. C’mon, let’s see how you like it. Mercedes isn’t loud like, uh, the noise incident from earlier, but it is a powerful engine, and can go quite fast.” Not many monsters quite understood horsepower- so Lee did not explain it. He simply said fast, slow, very, very fast, or whatever the car qualified as. He guides him to one of the newer models, and pops the hood so he can look inside, before going to the driver’s door. “You look like you might fit- so did you want to sit and see for yourself how it feels?”

"I'd love to, yes." he replied with a smile, looking at the engine before he came over to the driver door, "Are you sure it will accommodate my size?"

“You should be able to fit your legs in enough to make the engine rumble if you want, but driving it? No.” He shakes his head. “This is just the model for the car. When you get yours, it will be custom made and put together, and then you’ll all return here to get your cars and drive them. Once you’ve decided on a car, we’ll take you for measurements so we can design the inside to better fit your body. Miss Nara has been sending us base designs for the sorts of body types that will be needing cars- the measurements will be basically just affirming what we know, so we can compile our data correctly. Ah- keys are in the cup holder, by the way."

"I see, she really has been on top of this. Clever Toki." he chuckled. He moved the seat all the way back and smiled as he found himself just able to fit. "So far so good!" He announced, stretching out and placing his feet on the right pedals to get a feel for it.

Lee leaned on the door and watched, nodding thoughtfully. “She really is. I dunno if she’s kept you all in the loop, but she’s been great. Between Asgore, the other companies, and herself, we managed to get all of you guys your rights. It’s pretty sweet business- though surprising. I’ve heard rumors that Nara are notoriously lazy and unmotivated.” He chuckles, voice full of praise despite his ending words. He taps the wheel. “We don’t have covers on, but once you own the car, you can get your steering wheel a cover for it, if you like.”

"I know this will sound silly, coming from a skeleton, but do you happen to have anything with a bone design?" he asked.

“We do.” He nods. He pats the skeleton’s leg, having him shift for a second, and then reaches back under the seat. He tugs out the binder that each of the show cars have, blows it off, and then opens it. “You can special order your steering wheel cover while you’re here. Most of the ones with bone designs can get really cold in the winter- but you don’t really have skin to get cold with. Hm…” he flips a couple pages, and points to one that has three skulls on either side, all stacked up and having one long, continuous crack that runs through it. “This one is one of my favorites. We’ve also got a lot more… stylized ones, I guess. Skulls with roses and thorns, skull and crossbones, all sorts of gimmicky skeleton stuff.”

"Nyeh heh heh, how interesting! I'll have to have a look before we're done here." He cackled softly.

The man laughed and nodded. “I suppose so. You’ll be given the option to choose matching seat covers too, if you need it. Anyways- why don’t you start up the car, see how it feels? How do you like the seats and the wheel? Window size okay?”

"Windows are alright, yes." He replied, putting the key in the ignition before he started the car up. He seemed to enjoy the sound of the engine, giving a sigh as he smiled. "This is nice."

“That is one sexy sounding engine, am I right?” Lee grinned. He loved the sound the engines made- particularly his favorite type of car. “Well don’t be shy- you’ve got your foot on the pedal, dude!
Give her a rev! Let's hear this baby purr."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

"Alright."

Lee closed his eyes with a pleased hum. "Oh yes. Mercedes does have quite the pleasant purr, doesn’t it?"

Toki finally made her way over, and laughed softly as she leaned her hip against the trunk of the car. "That it does. I contemplated getting one when I was younger, but never could afford one." She could now- but she rather liked her truck.

"Well I suppose now you can enjoy your dream car when I go and take you on drives, especially when the twins are born." he told her with a happy laugh.

"True that." She chuckles softly. Toki pads around and offers Lee a smile. "Hi, Lee."

"Miss Nara!" he gave her a delighted grin. "So I’m assuming that this is your boyfriend?"

"And the father of the twins." She smiles fondly, rubbing her fingers lightly over her middle.

"Heh! I approve. He has good taste in cars thus far." He grins.

"I thought that much." Papyrus commented with a chuckle.

"Mhm." She smiled fondly, and grinned to him. "So, how do the seats feel? Comfortable?"

Lee simply grinned. "So, are you both excited?"

"Hm?" She turned a curious gaze to him.

"You know? The marriage thing?"

"They are comfortable, yes." he then looked at Lee and smiled, "I am very excited, yes."

"As am I." She nods in agreement.

Lee grins. "My half sister’s excited too. She’s been fostering a nice bird monster over in Europe- she’s an HTM like you, Miss Nara- and they’ve hit it off quite well."

Toki nods and smiles. "Tell them congratulations for me when you next see them, then." She shifts, and leans down slightly to peer into the car. "Hm… It looks very nice inside. Back lit dashboard too. Very good."

"I like it." Ali decreed happily, "The seat moved back and down enough, and I can see just fine."

"That’s good." She nods, pleased. "Not much leg room though. But that’s what getting it custom sized is for. So… you think this is the one, love?"

"I know one would suggest looking around a little more, but I think, yes, I like this one." he nodded in confirmation.

"Sometimes it’s easiest just to go with what makes your heart feel right. Err… Soul." Lee coughed slightly, and stepped back as Toki stepped away from the door. "If you’re sure this is the one you want, we can go get your paperwork done, and have you on your way to getting fitted for the car."
"That was easier than I thought it would be." Papyrus chuckled as he got out again.

“For some, finding their car happens fast. For others, it does not.” Toki smiled at him warmly.

Lee motioned for him to follow. “Alright, c’mon, big guy. We’ve got paperwork to sign, and a price to haggle. Miss Nara, if you’d be so kind as to give us a bit?”

“Of course.” Toki smiles. “I might head back out to the truck though. My feet are sore, and I haven’t the foggiest idea why.”

“I’d say you were having swelling in your feet and ankles like a lot of pregnant women get, but you don’t have flesh. Who knows- maybe it’s just a lumbar thing?” Lee shrugs slightly. “Get some rest, Miss Toki. You look exhausted- and your boyfriend is going to be busy for a while yet.”

"I'm sure that Father will be done soon enough. Why don’t you go find him, and he'll escort you back to the truck?” Aliquam suggested, closing the door behind him.

Toki offered him a smile. “I’m sure your dad is going to go hunt down the King while he’s here.” It would be stupid of him not to. She shakes her head. “I’ll be okay. You go get your paperwork done- and choose a nice color for your mustang, yeah?”

"Of course." he smiled and leaned down to press a smooth kiss to the top of her skull. “Nyeh~ I'll see you later.” He purred.

“I’ll see you later too.” She took the chance and smooshed his jaw, before hefting her purse higher on her shoulder. She gave him a wave, and then began making her way through the crowds, intent on going out to the truck and resuming her nap. Paperwork for cars could take hours, after all.

Lee watched her go, and then grinned up at Papyrus. “Alright. Lets go get you all set up, big guy. You’ve got a lot of paperwork to fill out.”

"Lead the way, then!" he said with a happy hum.

Lee nodded, and off they went.
Chapter 48

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: Heh. We get to hear about what the cars are like- and if you’re curious about them, you’re welcome to google exactly what they are. Pap ended up with a maroon 2017 Mercedes GLC for Pap’s car- since at this point, they’re actually well into 2017. Sans ended up with a deep blue 2016 Ram 1500 Express. Tenebris ends up with a purple-obsidian colored 1966 Dodge Charger.

Don't forget to come visit our blog! Also sorry for the late chapter, folks. I slept in later after work than I thought I would. You can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

It took them nearly two weeks to get the first shipment of cars done. Among that shipment of cars were the cars for the Gaster family- and they’d had to call the busses again, and those who could get their cars all went to get them. Toki drove the Gaster family up herself- and then followed them back once they had gotten their cars of choice.

Papyrus ended up keeping it a secret the color he’d chosen- and it turned out he got himself a maroon colored 2017 Mercedes GLC. It had been horribly expensive- but given the gold-to-cash change over, Papyrus had been able to afford it quite easily. Sans got a deep blue colored 2016 Ram 1500 Express- and it was a damn fine truck.

Toki might have been a little jealous. Her own truck was much, much older, and was beginning to show it’s age with some of the noises it was making.

Tenebris actually got an older car, which hadn’t really surprised her. In the end he’d made the decision to get the 1966 Dodge Charger, instead of the ’69, though she wasn’t sure why. The engine on the ’66 seemed to be a little louder than the ’69, as far as Toki was concerned.

She’d let the monsters loose with their cars in an open field, and just let them get the feel for driving.

Now that everyone had cars, the village was even more alive. Monsters were coming and going to the city, and the castle, now that they were mobile. All hours of the day she had people coming in and out- and the noise of the cars coming and going would take some getting used to. Slowly her little slice of silence was becoming a small burg- and the sounds would have to be adjusted to.

Not that she minded- everyone was… well, happy. After all of the shit from HAM, and the reports that kept coming in on the news, getting to drive, getting freedom, was exactly what the monsters needed.

There was actually a payroll set up specifically for the village guards, coming directly from the castle itself, because the threat from HAM and Cruelty was not over. Toki had talked to Asgore- and all of the guards there were on a payroll for their work for the king. It was a hefty sum too- several thousand gold monthly for their work- and that made Toki happy that the Guards could finally get an official payment for the work they did.

It certainly helped boost the town economy that was for sure. Monsters were definitely spending coin
on gas with as frequent as their trips to the city tended to be.

Speaking of- Toki would need to take a trip to the city herself.

She was once more in front of the mirror in the bedroom, looking at herself from the side, and sighing with a disgruntled look on her face. “Can’t get this buttoned either,” she grumbles, and adjusts her turtleneck with a huff. She wasn’t big enough to break out the one with the honey pot, and wasn’t really interested in wearing it yet- but her current turtlenecks, the ones they’d gotten from the maternity store so many weeks back, were finally starting to no longer fit. They rubbed uncomfortably over the sensitive ectoplasm of her middle, and rode up whenever she lifted her arms. “Ugh. I don’t know of any other stores than the one in the mall.” She mutters to herself. And that store had been managed by a HAM agent, apparently, and she was understandably hesitant about ever going back to it.

Aliquam had heard her grumbling and approached with a smile. "Toki, you know we could go and see Lana now." he suggested softly. "Remember when I told you about her?"

“I vaguely remember, yes.” She tilts her head with a soft sigh, and makes one last attempt at buttoning her slacks. In the end she huffs irritably, and jerks them down off of her hips. Damn it- she liked this pair. She’d just broken them in and gotten them comfortable, too. Ugh. She grumbles all the while, making a low, irritated buzzing noise from somewhere in her bones. “I wouldn’t mind- none of my pants seem to fit today, and I’m pretty sure these two had an overnight growth spurt or something.” She rubs her middle with a quiet sigh, and then heads for her dresser.

She had a small waddle now- she’d only had it for a couple of days, but it drove her a little bit batty. Toki rummages around, and tugs out one of the skirts that had the stretchy waistband types. She shifts and puts it on, leaving it resting around her hips. It too was getting tight- but it worked, and wasn't sweat pants. Toki kept getting hot flashes of sorts, and sweat pants were positively miserable when they happened. “Skirts still fit. Your friend’s name was… Lana, right?”

"Yes." he replied, "Come on, it'll give me some more practice with my car, and you'll get to see how it runs!"

“You sound excited.” She arched a brow at him, and adjusted her turtleneck with a soft sigh. Toki stretched her back and puffed out a plume of warm air. “Nnng. I feel a little bit like I am becoming a whale.” Given she was growing bigger each day, it wasn’t much of an understatement. “Alright. Uh… is that going to be okay though? I don’t have gold to pay with, and I know you just bought your car.”

"Toki." he came over and cupped her cheeks, stroking over the bone gently with his thumbs as he peered down at her lovingly. "Let me do this for you. No strings attached."

“I never imagined that there would be.” Still, she leaned into his fingers with a soft sigh, sockets closing. She struggled a little bit in letting others help- particularly financially. Toki was fully aware of it, though. “Okay. Okay. I need clothes, and I’ve only been through the underground once. It’d be nice to visit it again.” The times she’d gone to the underground, she’d never gone past the castle. She’d always been there on business of some sort.

He smiled and kissed her head gently. "Get something comfortable, and we'll set out, okay?" he purred.

“I’m about as comfortable as I can get when nothing wants to fit. I just need my shoes.” Which were downstairs, along with her purse. “And maybe a banana from the kitchen?” She had been hungry more often, and found fruit did decent enough to cover her random bouts of hunger.
“Sounds good.” he nodded gently, "I could prepare a few sandwiches too." he offered.

“That would be good.” She smiled to him gratefully. “Thank you, love. C’mon. It’s going to take me a moment to get my shoes on.” She wanted to wear her old sneakers, rather than ruin her new slippers by getting them soaked in Waterfall. It would take her a while to tie them, given her inability to bend down properly to do it anymore.

She gives him a soft kiss, and then Toki heads for the exit to their room so she can go down stairs.

He let her go down first and started for the kitchen once he had reached the bottom of the stairs.

Toki let him slip past her, and then scooted her shoes to the stairs. Once they were there, she eased herself down with the railing, and took a seat on the bottom step so she could work at getting her shoes on. Her middle didn’t quite offer the ease of movement that it used to- and folding over into herself was not something that she could do. So she had to crane and position herself, dealing with grumpy soulings kicking her ribs for squishing them like so, and then make an attempt to slip her bare bones into her shoes. The pointed ends of her toes fit nicely into the end of her sneaker- and then came the problem of lacing, which required more than one hand, so therefore more craning.

Pregnancy was as rewarding as it was difficult, and she looked hilarious attempting to get her shoes tied.

Quinn came out of the kitchen after about five minutes and he smiled gently, "Here." He put the bag of sandwiches down and knelt down to tie her shoes.

She flushed slightly, but sighed and leaned back to let him finish the laces. “Thanks, Pap. I, ah, didn’t think I’d need help doing this so soon… Guess I’ll be sticking with my slip-on shoes here soon, yeah?"

"Mnhm~" Aliquam quietly chuckled as he looked up at her, before resting his head on her swell softly. "Hello in there."

They responded to his touch quickly, booting him in the bridge of his nose as the twins twisted and squirmed. She sighed, leaning back on her elbows so he could give them some attention. “They’re having a tantrum.” Toki chirrs softly. “They didn’t like the contorting I was doing.”

He laughed at that as he leaned back, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "Well hopefully they find some other way to vent that won’t involve bruising you." he joked.

She chortled pleasantly. “My bones can take a beating, my love. They don’t really have anything to take out their problems on at this point anyways. I’ll just need to be careful not to squash them when I need to bend over. Besides- they're not big enough quite yet to be bruising me.” It would probably be soon though. Their kicks were getting stronger and stronger each passing day. With him leaning back, she leaned upright again, and offered him a slight smile, before hauling herself upright while using the railing on the stairs.

He picked up their snack and rose as well, offering her his arm with the slight quirk of a handsome grin. "If you're sure."

She looped her arm in his after snagging her purse, and leaned into him with a soft buzz. “I am very sure.” She chirped. Toki reached out to take the snack bag from him, cradling it carefully to her chest so nothing got crushed, and then joined him in heading for the door. “C’mon, love. I’d love to see how good you’ve gotten at driving.”

"As she wishes!" he giggled and led her to his car, "Isn't it nice?" he asked with a bright expression.
His car was pretty. It wasn’t a traditional looking Mercedes, but it was more… family oriented, almost. Fast, controllable- and a beautiful shade of maroon.

Toki smiled and nodded. “Your car is amazing.” She pads for the passenger door, letting Pap go free so he could go around to his side while she got herself situated. There was an unholy amount of headspace for her to sit in- obviously it had been designed so that tall monsters could ride in it. Her horns didn’t even touch the roof of the car- which they did quite often in her truck. “I am going to admit,” she says, as she settles into her seat with an awkward grunt, “Your seats are amazing. I might be a bit jealous. I thought my truck had nice seats- these are practically luxury seats.”

He laughed as he climbed in as well, stretching his legs before he sighed and got comfortable. "Lots of leg room too! Even Father could ride in this without a problem!"

She smiles and nods, and carefully twists to set her purse in the back. The snack bag is set near her feet, and she gets herself buckled in, adjusting the strap slightly as it rubs on her middle. Her shirt rides up- and Toki yanks it down viciously with a huff. “There is a lot of leg room. Headroom too- I’ve gotten used to my horns scraping the roof of my truck. This is really nice.” She confesses. She has room to stretch out, and she can angle the back of her chair slightly so she’s not sitting straight up.

"Isn’t it just?" he sighed happily and started the car, smiling, "It sounds wonderful too~"

“And so it does.” She listened to the purr of the motor, and smiled slightly. She shifted and settled, reaching down to check inside of the bag. “Is it alright if I eat the banana in here?” it was, as always, right atop the sandwiches that had been prepared. “I promise not to make a mess.”

"Yeah of course!" he began to pull out of their little 'driveway' and started slowly for the gate of the compound.

“Thanks, love.” She peels it carefully, and nibbles on her treat. She’s careful to pick up any of the silly strings that tend to shed from bananas, and toss them carefully into a napkin for later disposal. “So far so good, eh? It rides very smooth.” Her driveway of sorts wasn’t a smooth concrete- it was pitted and rough, worn down by the countless construction machinery that had come through for the building of the village. It felt like floating over a cloud. “Very nice,” she purrs.

As he pulled up to the exit of the compound prior, he looked to the guards and gave a smile.

They waved at him cheerfully, and one of them, revealed to be Wolfen, leaned down to peer in his window. “Taking your mate out for a drive?” He hummed softly, and wiggled a brow. “Or for some alone time~?” It was the weekend, after all, and Han was in and out of the house often times.

Toki flushed, and very nearly choked on her banana.

"Very funny." Papyrus huffed, "No. I'm taking her to see Miss Lana." he answered.

Wolfen chortled with amusement. “Ahhh, clothes already not fitting? Bo had that problem too when she carried. Good luck, you two. Have a safe drive!” He pats the top of the care carefully, and then leans up and steps back so they can go on their way.

Toki chuffs slightly, finishes her banana, and then stuffs the peel in the bag as she carefully cleans her teeth.

"Thank you, Wolfen." he smiled at him, and then pulled out of the compound. It didn’t take him up long to begin picking up speed as they headed for the mountain. "This will end up being very helpful to us." Papyrus hummed happily.
“Oh yeah?” She gets comfortable, settling her palms above her middle. Banana always sent the twins into a flurry of movement, and she settled in for the long haul as they made their happiness at her meal apparent. “How so?” She gives him an affectionately bemused look.

"Being able to drive now means if you're unable to, Father, Sans, and myself can easily provide our services now that we're able to!"

Toki chuckles. “That is very true. And believe it or not, that day is coming soon. I almost can’t reach the pedals in my truck.” Hers was a much older model- her pedals didn’t slide forward to accommodate the seat being moved backwards like a lot of newer models did.

"That's no good." he hummed. "Well, you have more than enough room now, yes?"

“Oh definitely.” She chuckles. “But I’m not behind the wheel. Passenger, I do just fine. This is really, really nice. Plenty of space, lots of room to stretch out.” And if her feet started to hurt, she could even sit cross-legged if she needed to.

"Good." he sighed happily, leaning back as he drove.

The trek to the top of the mountain didn’t take very long. Aliquam kept to the speed limit, if just a few miles per hour over it, and made it there in the usual time. Toki had admittedly napped for a bit of it, having fallen asleep with the smooth ride. Naps were a frequent thing in her pregnancy, as her stamina had waned quite a lot. Not that she minded- naps were amazing.

Still, she roused moments before they arrived, a great yawn splitting her jaw. “Mmm, sorry I fell asleep, Pap. You’re a very good driver.” She usually was wide-awake when someone else drove, dealing with the serving, the bobbing, the wobbling, and bumps in the road. His car, if anything, was an amazingly smooth ride.

"Thank you, Toki. I've practiced a bit since I got this car." he admitted proudly.

“Just a bit, huh?” He’d been out driving at least once, if not twice, a day since he’d gotten it, and Toki had let him practice on his own. She shifts in her seat, stretches, and then peers out the window. The castle loomed ahead, just around another corner.

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" he giggled innocently as he found where they usually park when they've reached the entrance to what had officially been the castle parking.

After he got out, he came around and opened her door, offering her his hand like the gentleman he was.

“Thank you, Papyrus.” Toki, of course, was all too pleased to make use to his help. She grasped the sandwiches, in case they decided to break for lunch while down there, and let him pull her from the car. "I'm going to leave my purse in here, m'kay?" Nothing in it would work down there anyways, and the cash she had was useless.

"Sure thing." He tucked it under the seat once she was clear and locked the car once he closed the door. "Shall we then?" he asked, offering his arm once more.

Naturally, she linked her arm with his, and settled at his side with a warm buzzing sound. “We shall.
Lead the way, my dear. I haven’t actually been past the castle since Cae took me on that tour that one time. I remember the hotel- I wonder if they ever fixed the fountain. I suppose we’ll see, won’t we?”

"Indeed so! But River would be happy to give us a lift to Snowdin, so we just gotta go a little into Hotland to catch their Ferry!"

“River?” They had walked all the way back, and teleported twice to get back to the castle. She blinks thoughtfully, guiding him up into the castle and towards where the elevator was. “That’s good. I think I can handle going a little bit into Hotland, even if it is sweltering in there.” She was doing better with fire- she was confident that she could handle Hotland now.

"It won’t be too bad, you don’t have skin anymore! So I wouldn’t recommend a dip in the lava, but the warmth is really nice, like a summer day!” he then got a little giddy, "I’ve always wanted to say that, now that I know what a summer day feels like~" he giggled happily.

She let him have his fun, and simply patted his arm with a fond expression. “Yes dear, but you’re not nearly six months pregnant. Hot flashes are a legitimate thing with fire magic.” She chuckles still. “It is warm down there, and it felt nice at first. A little hotter than a usual summer day, though. On the hotter days, it makes me think it’s probably cooler down there.” Their area was full of extremes. The magic in the land made the weather unpredictable sometimes.

"I suppose we’ll have to see.” he sighed, before he realized, "Oh yes! River is what we call our Ferryperson! I believe Father came up with the name and it more or less stuck, they like it at least!”

“Oh yeah?” She blinked. “Huh. Well, I’d love to meet them.” She smiles warmly. The elevator looms ahead, and she waddles for it contently, glad that Pap never seemed to comment on it. Or notice it, really. ‘Alright- down to the MTT resort we go. Heh. One of the kids told me they sell something called a ‘glamburger’, and it’s apparently covered in sparkles?”

"I tried one." he stuck out his tongue, "Didn’t exactly enjoy it..." he admitted.

The orange glow of his tongue was adorable, and she reached up a finger to teasingly poke it as they slipped into the elevator. It was empty, just like the first time. “To be honest, sparkles, unless created for that purpose, are not actually edible.” She giggles softly. She reached out and pressed the button to send them down.

"Uh-huh...” He laughed and waited for the elevator to finish moving. Papyrus grinned as it arrived, the doors opening swiftly. He guided them out into the heat of Hotland. "Well, this is L-1... River isn't too far from here!”

The air was hot, and they stepped out to the bubbling hiss of Lava as it dripped and scorched across stone. She found herself swallowing roughly, fingers locking tight onto the bag and his arm of their own accord. She hadn’t been to L-1 before- and the, ah, Magma was not expected. She supposed they weren’t going through the resort then. Toki stepped with him, her eyes drawn to the glow of the magma that filled the cavern. “Y-yeah.”

Papyrus had smiled gently, but got worried when he glanced over and saw her expression change. "Are you okay?”

“L-Lava.” She clenched her sockets shut as she watched a rock slowly sink into it, and turned her face towards him. Toki could feel her soul fluttering in her chest, pulsing faster and faster towards a full-blown panic. It was a struggle to keep moving, and eventually she stopped, arm still clamped on his, unable to walk further for the panic fluttering through her soul.
She tried to fight it— but it had been a long while since she had felt this intense of anxiety. Months, even.

He tensed and wrapped his arms around her. "Hey... hey!" he held her tight as he pulled her into the elevator again, letting the doors close and cut off the heat. "Toki...!

The change in temperature was good— and she hadn’t been totally lost. She could hear him— which was an improvement from the other bad ones she’d had— though she could do nothing to respond to him for some time. Eventually she began to tremble, and she clung to him Shakily as her soul made an attempt to slow its rapid fire stuttering— and the distressed buzzing that she was letting out.

"S-s-s-sorry," She stuttered, socket’s still closed as she exchanged the smell of brimstone and magma for the smell of Papyrus’ shirt and usual aroma.

"Hey, it's okay... it's okay..." he assured her, one hand coming up to smooth over her skull, petting gently over the crack and between her horns. He hummed softly, and let her cling to him, rocking her gently where they stood.

"H-h-h-haven’t h-had one tha-that bad in a l-long time.” His touch is soothing, and she shivers into him. “Thought I could h-handle the m-magma.” She murmurs Shakily. “It’s n-not as b-bad as last t-time though. I d-didn’t sh-shut down like last t-time."

"..., " he sighed and stroked her head gently. "Easy... it's okay..." he murmured, "What can I do to help you?"

"You’re h-helping r-right now. S-smell changes, c-cooler temperatures, and talking and touch. It a-all helps to r-remind me I’m not back there again. Ah... W-we can try again. Just drag me along if I lock up, o-okay?"

"Alright... would nullifying your senses help?"

She’s not entirely certain. “It can’t hurt, c-can it?” Thank the gods, her voice was starting to calm down again. So was her soul— its rapid-fire staccato beat against her chest, and his, was easing off, and leaving her aware of her passengers reacting to her upset too. There was nothing to do to soothe them, however, not until they were past Hotland.

Reaching up to his neck, he carefully undid his scarf, and held it in front of her to see. "I'll put this over your eyes." he told her, "and you can put it over your nose and mouth so the worst thing is your hearing."

That... might actually work. “Okay.” She closes her sockets and manages to lean back, so he can loop it around her skull. She’d adjust it once he had it on for her. “You’ll just have to hurry me along, Pap. I’ve got shorter strides,” particularly with her waddle, but she’d rather eat a cactus than admit to that, “but I can keep going if you can guide me.”

He nodded gently and pressed a gentle kiss to her head, before he wrapped the scarf on her skull, giving her one end to breathe into while the rest blinded her. "Toki, did I ever tell you about the time...

His words trailed off into general babble and stories as the door opened. Aliquam kept the stream of chatter up, filling her hearing with noise rather than the sounds of the cavern, and began walking through Hotland. The whole time, he talked... he went on about everything that came to mind until he had to change the topic to something a little more pressing. "Going down some stairs."

His chatter helped, as did keeping her breathing slowed behind his scarf. The heat itself wasn’t that
bad, if a little sweltering under her clothes, and she found herself not as badly off as she could have been. “I feel them.” Her tennis shoes tapped lightly as she walked, and she felt her way down carefully so she didn’t trip or fall.

When they reached the bottom, she shivered, and clenched her hand tighter over his. It was helping, though the panic was trying to remain in her soul.

He smiled and took off the scarf. "Was that so hard?” he asked her with a bright smile.

His bright smile was the first thing she saw when she opened her sockets, and she blinked hard for a moment to adjust to the change in light. She nodded though, with a tiny smile. “It wasn’t as b-bad. I still feel shaky- but it helped. It helped a lot. We’ll n-need to do that when we come back too. So is this where River is?”

"I am right here." She startled, still slightly flighty, and bumped full on into Papyrus as she lurched around to find the voice. “Ah… Hi…?”

The hooded form looked at them, though it was Aliquam who spoke up, "Hello there, River!"

"Hello there, Papyrus. Who is your disoriented friend?" they asked.

"This is my mate, Tokiko Nara!" he answered.

“It’s n-nice to meet you.” She cleared her nonexistent throat, and slowly padded forwards to the figure perched on a strange looking boat. “Sorry about not noticing you at first, River. I don’t handle lava very well.”

The hooded figure seemed to nod. "It is understandable. Word traveled of your fate... Will you be requiring my services today?"

"Yes please, we'd like a lift to Snowdin."

"Alright, all aboard."

Aliquam boarded first and turned to offer Toki a hand, "Here we go."

“Thank you, love.” Toki nodded, and took his hand. She eased onto the boat, something she wasn’t really familiar with traveling on, and then carefully eased down into a sitting position on one of the benches. “Thank you for the lift, River.”

"Ho hum~" the boat set off and River hummed a soft tune as the boat set off once the taller skeleton was seated. "Hmm... Somewhere, it's a Thursday." they hummed gently.

Toki was immediately befuddled. “But… it’s Saturday?” She glances to Aliquam, leaning into him slightly as the boat raced off.

Aliquam just lightly shrugged, letting the Riverperson enjoy their tune as they ventured down the river.

Soon the air cooled, then turned to cold as they moved from region to region, ending up at the Snowdin dock inside of forty minutes or so.

Going from hot, to wet, to freezing cold had Toki a little bit chilled, but nothing her magic couldn’t warm up. When they docked, she eased out of the boat, and stretched her legs. “Thank you for the
ride, River!” She beams up at them, all sharp teeth and happy kindness. She offers Pap a hand, since he was sitting on the ‘outside’ of the boat.

"Until next time. If there is one," they nodded to the duo, and turned their head away.

Aliquam took her hand and got his feet on solid ground, before he took a deep breath of familiar icy air. "Ah...! Shall we?"

Toki linked hands with him, and guided him out into the snow, trying to ignore the vaguely creepy message from River that had her slightly unnerved. “We shall. Ah, I can enjoy the snow more. I have shoes this time. It was actually really cold on my feet when I came here with Caeruleus. So, you know the way, right? I only went in as far as your old house.”

"Of course I do!" he answered.

“Cool.” She smiles. “Want to lead the way then, Pap? I have no idea where we’re going, and we don’t want you to end up a Papcicle if I get us lost.”

"... Oh my god." he sighed, before he just kept walking. "Toki. Why."

“Because I love you, and I hang out with your older brother too much. Speaking of... Heh. Want to know something amusing?” She grins up at him, falling back so he took the lead in guiding them through the thick snow. “I actually told him a pun while we were here. Heh... I remember it too. Best one ever. You wanna hear it?” It wouldn’t be as effective as incidental ones- but it was still the best one she’d ever come up with.

"Oh god... let's hear it," he sighed.

“Sometimes I feel like such a whore for pasta.” She grins broadly. “I just want to eat all of it. Does that make me a…” pastatute?

"... AAAAAUUUUUUUUUUUUGH."

His groan of frustration is fantastic. Toki laughs heartily, mouth falling open. Her laughter rings over the snow, echoing amongst the trees and houses dotted here and there. “Oh my gods, that is the best. I’m not even sorry for that.”

"Sans will rue the day." He mock growled as he walked with her to a large house hidden in a copse of trees. He reached up and knocked on the wooden door. "Lana? Are you in?"

"Oh my! Is that Papy dear?" There was a clatter and sounds like hooves on a hard floor, before the door open and a fluffy pink sheep monster bound forward and hugged him around the neck. "Welcome baaaack to Snowdin!” she bleated cheerfully.

Toki blinked and stepped away to let the friends reunite. She smiled warmly though- the fluffy pink sheep monster was absolutely adorable.

"You're still so warm, Miss Lana." Aliquam laughed gently as he hugged her back firmly. "Nyeh heh heh heh"

"Oh of course I am, silly!" she giggled. "I'm a fluffy laaaamb after all, I'm bound to be soft and warm too!"

Toki can’t hide her soft giggle. “Hi, Miss Lana.” She dips her head respectfully, tucking her free fingers into her shirt to tug it better down over her middle. She still has a hold of the snack bag, after
all. “I’m Tokiko Nara. It’s nice to meet you!”

The sheep moved away from Papyrus to light up at the sight of her. Her eyes drifted down to her swell, and seemed to grow even larger. "Oh my Gosh! Miss Naaaara! I’ve heard so much about you! It’s so nice to meet you!" she squealed, offering a hand, "I’m Laaaana Vestimoves! It’s so nice to meet you! Oh, I already said thaaaaaat." she bleated, before she covered her face, "I'm sorry, I’m just so excited to finally meet you!"

Toki hadn’t expected such an exuberant greeting, but offered her a broad smile in return. She shook the offered hand, and let go when the embarrassed sheep woman covered her face. “It’s quite all right, Miss Vestimoves.” She smiles. “I’m not quite used to such an enthusiastic greeting- but I’m glad meeting me has made you so excited.” She shifts, adjusting her skirt, and ends up fiddling with the end of her shirt with an awkwardly warm smile. “Papyrus told me you’re quite the seamstress.”

She giggled at that, "Thaaaaat I am indeed!" she then knelt down and squished her cheeks as she cooed. "Oh goodness, baaaabies!"

Toki chuckled and nodded, caressing her abdomen fondly. “Growing twins.” she nods. They kick her fingers, and she rubs where they kicked. “Wiggly and feisty twins too. They’re growing bigger by the day, though I think they take after their father in size. And, ah, I’m a bit… wary to go to the shop we went to last time up on the surface, and my clothes no longer fit. Papyrus said you might be able to make something that will fit?"

"Oh of course! I can easily make you something that will fit nice and comfortably!" she gave a confident nod, gently clapping her hands together. "Oh so easy!"

“I would be very happy if you wouldn’t mind.” She offers a lopsided smile, and a hand to help the sheep back into a standing position. “Think we could get maybe a set of clothes made today? If you’re not to busy, that is.” She had to adjust her shirt again when it slid up, giving a faint peek at the glowing green ectoplasm that made up her abdomen.

"But of course! I'm a maaaaaster seamstress after all! Let's get started." She beckoned her to follow her as she started for the back of the house, and what was also obviously a store of sorts.

Toki blinked slowly, and then tugged Pap along with her. “Of course.” She smiles faintly, following her inside of the house. She keeps him close by out of vague nervousness of being in a stranger’s abode for the first time. “So what do you need me to do?” She asks curiously, glancing around as she did so.

"Just stand with your arms apart, we could also do this while you are seated." she told her, looking at her supplies, "Oh! Colors! What would you like?" she asked.

Toki found a spot to set the snacks down, and then did as asked. She spread her arms, taking an easy stance between two mannequins, and then glanced over to her boyfriend. “Hm… I dunno. I like green, blue, and I’m fond of some shades of orange. Black too, from time to time. What do you think, Pap?"

"Nonono, this is clothes for you! Not Paaaaapy! You maaaaake the decision." She told her, waving a finger in front of her in a scolding manner.

Toki chuckled softly and smiled quietly. “I don’t really know what I look good in though. At this point, I look like a whale in most colors that are bright- so darker colors maybe? I… kinda like dark green. I wear a lot of it. But I like black for pants- black doesn’t stain if something falls on it. So… Those colors, maybe?” She wasn’t sure how the sheep would get measurements from her legs with
her in a skirt, but she would figure it out in time, she supposed.

She tapped her fingers on her chin for a bit, and then she grinned and turned, her hands glowing. "Little bit of green, aaaaand some darker green, ooh blaaaaack!"

Toki couldn’t help the soft giggle that escaped her at the sheep woman’s pronounced ‘aaaaa’s in some of her words. “What’s with the glowing hands?” She asked hesitantly, eye lights peering at them curiously.

"Maaaagic!" she replied happily. The cloth unraveled from its bolt, passing over the air and coming over to wrap around Toki’s arms and chest.

Well, seeing the cloth magically float through the air answered a lot of her questions almost immediately. Toki nodded hesitantly, and stood still while the cloth looped about her limbs and chest. “It’s pretty cool,” she mused thoughtfully, and shot a look to Papyrus. She winked at him slightly, and wiggled her feet in her shoes. Her bones were a bit sore- but nothing too badly yet, she mused.

After a moment she picked up a couple of needles and a few spools of threat, "You want loose and comfy, Yes?" she asked.

“Yes please.” Toki nodded. “Maybe a couple sizes too big please? They’re growing like weeds, and if you make it fit now, it won’t fit next week.”

"Of course! Say no more!” a twitch of her hands and the fabric loosely hung around her gut. She then moved in, pinning where needed before she hummed a little tune to herself. The way her hooves moved on the floor almost sounded like she was doing a dance on them, "Alrightie! You can slip out of the clothing now, yes?" she asked.

Toki nodded, once she was able to, and then carefully slipped out of the pinned form of the turtleneck. She did her best not to disturb the pins- and ended up with her own shirt tugging up with it. The glow of her middle flashed as she got the shirt in progress off and into one hand, and she tugged her shirt back down about her middle with a soft huff. “Oh. Uh- are these going to be machine-washable?” She blinks. “I can do hand washing if need be.” It would kill her back, but it was doable.

"Of course!” she bleated again, "I do a pre-wash with my fabrics to ensure all washable, hand is optional." she told her, before she took the clothing, cut it from the rolls, and let them re-ravel as she walked over to a sewing machine.

Toki nodded and smiled faintly. “That’s good. I hand dry all of the clothing I do- fire magic and all that- but hand washing tends to be murder on one’s back.” Her knuckles knead into her lower back, and Toki stretches with a pleased sigh. At least Lana had her size for her shirts down now. “Little babybones also kicking at their mother’s spine with little feet is a pain in the back too.” She mutters faintly to her middle.

"I will make something to support your baaaack." she told her, "But for now, you can go sit down with Paaaapy, while I finish your clothing."

Something to support her back? She had no idea what she could make that could do that- but she wasn’t going to turn it down. She nods and smiles slightly. “Thanks, Lana. If you need me for measurements for pants, just let me know.” That said, Toki pads away, snagging the snack bag first, and then goes to take a seat across from Papyrus at one of the many side tables. She plonks the bag on the table, and smiles warmly at him.
"I told you she was good." he told her with a soft laugh, watching the sheep dancing to a tune in her head as she used the machine to put the bits of fabric together, sealing them to be used and worn until such a garment was no longer needed by Madame Nara.

After long enough she seemed, to have a tune going in her head that came with lyrics as under her breath she sang. "Расцветали яблони и груши, Поплыли туманы над рекой. Выходила на берег Катюша, На высокий берег на крутой."

Aliquam blinked once. That was not a language he immediately recognized.

Toki watched too, crossing her legs as she reclined as best she could. “She’s pretty cool.” She smiles. “And very good at what she does. Heh… Interesting song. It’s… Russian, I think. I didn’t know monsters knew different languages other than Japanese. I know a few, but Russian isn’t one of them.” She wondered what the song meant. “Think she’ll ever come topside?”

"I don’t know… Perhaps?" he shrugged, "She finds herself most at home here in the snowy terrain of Snowdin." he hummed softly.

“She’d probably like our winters.” She chuckles softly. “Though Nara Village has rougher snow than the stuff here.” Toki sighs, and glances over to Lana. “Hey, Lana? Is it alright if I nibble on my sandwich while we wait?” She didn’t want to eat if food wasn’t allowed- but the twins were making their demands known with kicks and squirms.

"Oh yes! Of course! No harm in feeding yourself and little ones!" She told her with a smile.

Toki flicked her a broad smile in return and nodded. “Thanks, Lana.” She nudges Pap with a smile, and rummages in the bag, curious as to what sort of sandwiches he had made. Hopefully he had made something with radishes and mustard, and maybe peanut butter on it too. “Want your sandwich, Pap?”

Well, there was peanut butter and jelly. "Yes please." he replied.

She hid a pout- but figured she could indulge when she got home. It would have to do. She tugged out the sandwiches and passed his over to him with a smile. “Here you go, Pap. Bone-appetite.”

He shot her a look as he took a bite, though luckily for her a bite of the sandwich distracted him long enough for him not to make a grumpy sound about the pun."

Toki chortled and took a bite out of her sandwich. She was enjoying it well enough despite the lack of things she was craving being on it. A soft hum escapes her, and she winks teasingly at him as she reaches out with her shoe to poke his leg gently, pretending to be entirely innocent the entire time. “Mmm, ‘s a very good sandwich,” she chirps. “You’re a bone-a-fide good cook~”

"Oh by the stars." he groaned, hiding his face in his free hand. "Why do you torture me?"

“Because I love you dearly, and it amuses me.” She smiles at him coyly, and nudges his leg again. “I’m a real rib-tickler, no?” Oh she knew she wasn’t funny at all- but his amusement made her smile, and she’d quit once he was sufficiently flustered.

After all, sometimes her darling boyfriend required a little bit of a nudge in order to get him to play. But what she mistook for amusement was an underlying annoyance, "Toki... please..." he groaned into his palm.

“Alright, alright.” She did know when to call it quits- and she knew him well enough to read the
growing annoyance in his voice “Sorry, love.” She offers him a sheepish grin.

"Thank you." he sighed, before he looked over at Lana, who was still singing in Russian, looking to be nearing completion of the garment.

Toki fell quiet, letting him cool off while she finished her sandwich and listened to the sheep monster singing as she worked her craft.

Soon she finished and gave a final snip before she folded the garment inside out, or rather, right side out. Admiring her work, she gave it a good shake, and stood from her stand. "All done!" she announced happily, coming over to Toki.

Toki had finished her sandwich by then, and she nodded with a smile as the sheep woman padded over. “It looks good!” She smiles, and carefully boosts herself to her feet using the side table. “Wow,” she blinks, peering at it in Lana’s hands. “That’s really good craftsmanship.”

"I'm so glaaaaad you think so! Try it on! I want to see how it fits!"

Toki nods softly, and collects it from her. It’s a soft fabric, and her sockets light up eagerly. “Ah~” She purrs. “It is soft.” Still, she obligingly shifts, and slips it on over top her current sweater. Removing her top around the guys was one thing- but getting in the buff around a stranger wasn’t on her to-do list. Not with the slight body-shyness she was feeling. The turtleneck settles around her shoulders nicely, drapes down loosely over her middle with plenty of space to grow. “How do I look?” She inquires, turning slowly so Lana can see if anything is sitting funny that she cannot immediately see.

Papyrus was lit up with happiness, his mood shifting as he took in his mate in one of her new shirts. "Oh Toki...! It's perfect!"

“Is it?” She peers at herself, looking at the dark greens and blacks on the soft turtleneck. It looks good on her, very sleek, and it’s very soft. A pleased buzzing vibrates loudly through the air as she rubs her fingers along the soft material of the sleeves.

"You look fantastic." he exclaimed happily, while Lana led Toki to a mirror so she herself could see.

Toki took a look at herself, shifting, twisting, and examining- and then she lit up like a star, a happy glow appearing in her eye sockets. “I love it.”

Lana clapped her hands together a few times in happy glee. "Wonderful! So happy you like it!"

“I love it.” She repeats again with a smile. The smile settles to a shyer one, and she peers back at them through the mirror. “Do you think you could make a couple more like it…?” She didn’t want to get too many, since she wasn’t the one buying them.

"Of course!" she replied happily, "I can easily repeat the design, I could even improvise, pockets, hood, zippers maybe?"

“A hood might be a little impractical.” She motions to the horns that make wearing anything on her skull quite difficult. “But pockets would be nice. Not sure on the zippers though.” These were shirts, after all- and a zipper against her bare bones wouldn’t feel very nice, she’d wager.

Toki shifts and adjusts her skirt. She wanted to get a couple pairs of pants too. At least one set of slacks- she did have meetings still, even with everyone technically out from under her guardianship.

"Alright. You want paaaaants too?" Lana gave her a cheerful smile.
“If that’s okay?” She glances to Papyrus for that, finding she’d rather have him confirm a yes or a no on that. “I really want a pair of slacks.” At least one, since she’d be out growing them probably quickly. “And… Maybe a pair of sweatpants?” Since hers were bordering on tight again.

"But of course!" She replied, "Come! Must size you for pants now!"

Papyrus had no change of expression. He just smiled as he watched, crossing his arms and relaxing contently as he made sure his mate was well dressed.

Toki smiled slightly, and fiddled with the bottom of the shirt, before carefully slipping it off. Now back in her basic clothes, she hands the sweater over so she can use it for the base pattern if she needs. “Uh… How are we going to do this? I mean… I have a skirt on- so… what’s going to be easier for you?” She did have under garments on, so she could technically take her skirt off if she needed her to. It wasn’t like the seamstress probably hadn’t seen bare bones before.

Lana shook her head and quickly returned the sweater. "Got measurements while unraveling, so you can keep wearing that. If you have something under your skirt, you can remove it. If not, do not worry!” she told her, "I can still work with that."

Toki took the shirt back with a smile and a nod. “I might change shirts when you’re done measuring me then. And I don’t mind- I imagine it’s easier without extra clothes in the way.” She didn’t mind all that much. She slung the new shirt over her shoulder, and then eased her skirt down and stepped out of it. It left her in her undergarments, and her shirt, which was too short in the front to fully cover her middle. “Besides- not much but bones and ectoplasm to see. I suppose you could see the soullings.” She muses, “Though I don’t know how well you’d see them. They’re kicking up a fuss.” And the little souls tended to become hard to see- at least to her- when they were moving.

She smiled at her with a soft giggle, then she hummed and her hands glowed once more. "Blaaaaack? Green again? Or would you like Blue?” she asked.

“For pants, I think I’d like black, or a dark blue. I tend to spill things on my pants- so whatever stains less.” Though her methods for getting out stains could get out almost anything, she’d rather not have to deep clean her pants every time she drops something on it. So, hence black. She shifts, and spreads her legs so that the cloth can slide as it needs to without being hindered. With that done, she holds still as best she can, only shifting positions when she absolutely must for the sake of comfort. Toki would need to get her shoes off before she could try on the pants when they were finished- as shoes were impossible to safely get through the leg of most pants.

"Consider these pants made!" she announced happily, the fabric coming around and wrapping around her, before the fabric was sliced and wrapped around her legs.

Toki nods and smiles wider as the fabric slides over her. She holds still so the sheep can pin the material as she needs to. “Oh! Can you maybe do deep pockets maybe? I don’t know about you, but I like my pockets to hold more than just the tips of my fingers.” She was firmly in the belief that women’s pants had decorative pockets only because they needed to urge women to buy purses.

"Deep pockets!" Lana parroted, slicing off some fabric and pinning them in place, the pockets went down to her mid-thigh. "Deep pockets" she giggled softly.

Well Aliquam was laughing now, so that was a plus.

Toki laughs too, but nods slightly. “Why not? My cell phone and my keys would never fall out again.” She chortles.
"You could hide a lamp in your pocket!" she giggled as she continued to mark the sewing point.

"Maybe not a lamp," she laughed softly. "But definitely a large number of things. I can even probably carry some things for you when we’re out and about, Pap."

"If there’s anything you can carry, I will let you know." he chuckled gently.

"Aaaaaaall done, you can step out of these paaaaants now!" Lana told her cheerfully.

Getting out of them was easy- they were still loose enough for her to slip her shoes through. Once she’s tree of them, she hands them off, and puts her skirt back on. “Thank you for doing this, Lana.” Toki shifts, and adjusts her top, before padding back over to where she had been seated prior. She reclaims her seat, and sets to her attempt at removing her shoes.

"My pleasure, Miss Toki!" she giggled, "Anything for a friend of Paaaapy's!"

Toki nodded and smiled. She let the sheep get to work- and once her shoes were off, and the woman’s back was turned, Toki wiggled out of her old turtleneck, and into her new one. It settled over her bare bones, feeling amazing without the old sweater to muffle it. It hid some of the swell of her middle too, about as best it could given the growing size of the twins.

It wasn't long after that the pants were completed and held out to Toki, "Ta-da!"

Toki stands, and takes them with a smile. She changes into them too, and discards her skirt for the time being. She looks good, dark slacks and green shirt- almost like her usual self. She stretches in them, rocking her hips thoughtfully and feeling how the material rubbed over her body. “Hm… I like them.” She twisted, moving to the mirror and taking a look at herself. It even looked good with how her body filled out the loose fabric with magic. “Howdy-doody, I got the booty,” she mutters unconsciously in a low tone to herself, hoping neither of them heard her.

"Wonderful!" she bleated happily, having missed her muttered words. "Oh you're so cute in your fluffy clothing!" Lana beamed warmly.

Toki flushed, and adjusted the neck of her turtleneck. “Ah, thank you.” She smiles. “I really like these. They fit good- and I have room to grow.” As she fiddled with the band, she realized that she had lots of room to grow. She might actually have to use her belt- but that meant she wouldn’t have to get resized for what she hoped was a long while.

"Then I’ve done my job!" She announced proudly, "Paaaapy, will you want me to prepare more of these garments?"

"Yes please, Lana. I'd appreciate that."

"Is it alright if I just leave the pants on? They’re very comfortable.” Much less constricting on her chest, even if she had to fist her pinkies in the belt loops to keep them from slowly working their way down her hips. Toki does shoot a look to Papyrus though- and it is a thankful and happy look for the new clothes that she had needed.

"Oh yes you can wear them right out the door!" Lana giggled. "Do you need anything, Paaaapy?"

The sheep woman turned an inquiring gaze to the tallest monster. "You look like you need something new soon! The threads are weakening." she mentioned.

"No, no, I'll be alright. This was a trip for my mate." he assured her.

"Alrightie then! I suppose all that's left is to check out, yes?"
“I suppose so.” Toki returns to her seat, and begins the task of once more putting her shoes on. It was no easier than the attempt Papyrus had helped her with. “Papyrus? If you need some new clothes, we can get a few pairs less of mine and get you some new stuff. I do take care to wash yours gently, but even I’m beginning to notice a few threadbare spots in the material.”

“Toki, I'll get something for myself, but I'm not going to stop her from making your clothes!” he admonished gently as he got up, leaning down and kissing her head with a smile before he went to join Lana at her register.

“Alright, alright.” She smiles softly, thrumming at the kiss. It takes her a little bit, but she soon has struggled into both of her shoes, and manages to haul herself upright so she can go follow Papyrus. Her old clothes are gathered and stuffed into the snack bag so she can carry them home without them getting soaked on the boat ride.

His measurements were taken relatively quickly, and he soon came over to Toki once more.

"We could go get lunch and she'd have these done by the time we get back. What do you say?"

She nodded to him with a smile. “That sounds lovely. What were you thinking for lunch?” Toki was a bit of a bottomless pit at this point- the sandwich from earlier had been filling, but the magic it had been made into had been greedily devoured by the hungry, squirmy babybones in her belly.

"Well, we have Grillby's." he answered, "Or rather, it's Fuku's now." he joked.

Toki laughed softly. “I've heard of Fuku from Grillby.” Not a lot- the man was very private, even if he was a warm individual. “Well, there’s no harm in seeing what she has for sale, right?”

"Of course not. We can go as soon as you're ready."

She laughs and links her arms with his. She took a quick stock of her person, and deemed herself presentable. At least her clothes fit now, and draped along her frame pleasantly instead of clinging tightly to her frame. “I think I’m good to go, so long as you think I look good enough to take on a date.” She winks up at him warmly.

"Most definitely. Though, maybe even more so than myself.” He laughed quietly before he leaned in and pressed a soft kiss to one of her horns. “We'll see you soon, Lana!” he called gently.

"Can't wait for you to come baaaack!” she bleated happily as she waved to them.

Toki waved back, and stepped out with him. The snow feels chilly against the warmth from inside of Lana’s home, but Toki’s magic churns and warms both her and Papyrus as they set out into the chill. “Hm… Think she sells milkshakes?” She wonders curiously.

"She's a fire elemental.” Papyrus arched a brow. “We'd have to make it ourselves if she even has the ingredients."

“True that.” She sometimes forgot that fire elementals didn’t usually handle liquids. She was so used to Grillby handling alcohol, cocoa, or whatever liquid someone requested. But, she supposed, there was a reason that Grillby had gone topside and Fuku had still not gotten past Waterfall.

The taller skeleton chuckled softly. "Indeed, but I'm sure we'll find something good to eat anyhow."

It wasn’t hard to locate Fuku’s. It was bright green- a more obnoxious green than even the glow of her middle. She angled towards it once she spotted it, and chuckled softly. “I’m sure. I could probably settle for some fries if all else fails.”
Aliquam chuckled and held the door open for her as they came in. "She always has made the fries less greasy than her father does."

Grillby did tend to make his fries quite greasy. They were very good when one was in the mood for the grease- but grease wasn’t something that was particularly pleasant in thought to her sense of taste.

Toki stomped her shoes free of snow as they stepped out of the chill and into the warmth inside. It was slightly warmer than Grillby’s bar, and the usual glow was a different tone. The bar itself was more up to date than Grillby’s more traditional approach was- and it was surprisingly busy despite the changes. Most of the booths and tables were full, and being waited upon by the cheery looking green fire elemental.

She waved them in, and motioned for them to sit wherever they liked while she tended to another order.

Toki simply blinked. “Uh… Where do you want to sit?”

"Sans enjoys the seats at the bar."

“But what do you enjoy?” She quirks a brow at him. “The bar seats seem to be the most open.”

He chuckled. "Well the booths may be too small for me."

“If they’re too small for you, they’re probably too small for me.” She wiggles her fingers towards her middle with a soft snort. “Alright, bar stools it is. C’mon.” She pads for the bar, leaving him to follow as she weaves through busy tables and avoids any messes on the floor. She takes a seat at one of the open stools, and smiles to Pap. There’s an open seat next to her, with plenty of leg space for him.

He nodded and sat down with a smile. "Comfy!"

“Very!” She beams back.

It doesn’t take long, but soon Fuku is coming by with menus, and a smile on her face. “Hi! Long time no see, Papyrus. I didn’t think I’d ever see you in here again unless you were picking up Sans.”

"Hello again, Miss Fuku." he greeted warmly, "Not this time, I have come hoping for something we can enjoy while we wait for Lana to finish our order." he explained easily. "What do you have?"

Fuku shot both of them a curious look- she didn’t get much news down here, and running the television wasn’t something she had time for, or to really listen to the gossip- but nodded. “Lana does good work.” She nods. “Lets see…” She shifts and offers the menus out. “I’ve got burgers, fries, onion rings, steaks, baked potatoes, tacos, salads. I’ve also got the basics for alcohol too- though…” Her eyes flick down to the shorter skeleton’s middle, “I don’t think your companion can have that… Uh… I’ve still got the tap hooked up, so I can get you some water?”

“Only if you can do it safely.” Toki smiles.

Aliquam nodded. "Agreed. Only if you can without harming yourself."

“I can manage.” She beams at them. “So what sort of grub can I get for you two?”

“Hm…” Toki peers at the menu, contemplating it thoughtfully, before pointing to the fries. “‘A side of curly fries, please.’ Potato tended to ‘stick to the ribs’ as the saying went, and though she didn’t want a baked potato, she could totally handle a curly-fry. “Do you have mustard for them?”
“I do.” She nods. Fuku cheerfully scribbles on her note pad, and then waits patiently for the larger skeleton’s order.

"Your father had a milkshake recipe he made me one time,” Aliquam hums, “do you know if it's still a possibility?"

“I’ve got that in one of my books.” She nods. She glances to the other skeleton when she perks, and smiles slightly. “Do you want a milkshake too?”

“… Maybe.” She grinds her teeth slightly, and glances to her boyfriend.

“Two milkshakes then. We’ve got chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, and banana. What flavor would you like?” Fuku smiles.

“Banana for me.” All the way- Bananas tasted amazing for Toki today. It was basically the food of the gods. “For us, rather.” Toki laughs softly as she’s kicked, and curls an arm over her middle.

"Strawberry!” he piped up happily.

“One strawberry and one banana shake, and a basket of curly fries coming right up.” Fuku smiled. She scribbled the total for the meal onto the ticket, set the copy of it down for Papyrus, and then stepped back to complete the order for them. “So, who’s the father?” She asks cheerily.

Toki blinked. This was probably the first monster that didn’t know. “Papyrus is, actually.”

“Really?” She blinked. “I thought that he was dating Tokiko Nara?”

“I am Toki,” the shorter skeleton laughs.

Fuku flushes brightly. “Oh. Well, I certainly feel silly. I’m so sorry- I’m usually too busy to keep up on the gossip, and I don’t always watch television.”

Papyrus laughed gently, "It’s quite alright, your father may not have told you, but Toki was actually an HTM!” he explained.

“I know who Miss Nara is- I just didn’t connect the name with the face.” She laughs hesitantly. “Dad’s told me a little about you- about as much as he knows, and as much as Sans says.” Fuku offers the skeleton a smile as she cooks. “It’s nice to meet you though! Dad says you’ve gotten him a really nice bar with sealed doors so the rain doesn’t creep in.”

“I did.” She nods. “It should hold against all but the harshest of floods. His home is upstairs, so he does have a place to retreat to in case someone leaves the door open and it floods. And it’s okay- unless you watch a lot of television, you wouldn’t know my face.”

“I honestly didn’t connect the name to the face.” She chuckles. “But congratulations! To the both of you. Dad said it was twins?”

"Yes, twins." he replied happily, "They're both very happy too."

“Mostly. They let me know when they’re unhappy.” She rubs her middle softly. “They don’t like when I tie my shoes.” She chortles.

“I can imagine.” She giggles, “Bending over probably squishes them if they take after their daddy in size.” It takes her a moment, but she’s soon presenting two shakes, and a large boat of curly fries. The fries are not very greasy, compared to Grillby’s, and they’re flavored liberally with salt and some
Fuku just grins back. “No problem.” She slides the condiments down for her to flavor her fries, and then turns as a patron calls out to her. “If you need anything, just holler, yeah?”

“Of course.” Toki nods. As the fire elemental leaves, she shifts to sip at her milkshake. It is thick and creamy- and has little chunks of banana that taste amazing. “Mmm…”

“So good…” he sighed happily as he took a drink of his own. Thick, sweet, and strawberry- it hit all of the good spots.

“Very.” Toki took a few more sips, before nibbling on her fries. “Mmm… Fries are good too.” She puts a bit of mustard to the side and dips her curled spring of potato within it, and then eats it. Nudging the fry boat over, she offered it to share.

He reached over willingly. "I shouldn't resist." he chuckled, before he took a few fries and chomped on them. "Mmm~"

“Good, aren’t they?” She grins slightly. “Even better with mustard on them.” But mustard seemed to be her condiment of choice when it came to most of her cravings.

"Nyeh... I'm not sure about that."

Toki shrugs slightly, and nibbles another mustard covered fry. “Don’t blame me for my odd taste in things.” She chuckles. “Your little ones are very… fussy eaters, I suppose. They certainly enjoy mustard.”

"Well... You're the one gonna be cleaning up their mustard mess, I can't stand the stuff." He stuck his tongue out slightly.

She shrugged and nodded, glancing away from him to quietly munch on her fry. Toki was admittedly a little bit self-conscious with a lot of the stuff that came with pregnancy. She knew that her random taste in food tended to revolt other monsters- and was a bit… Easily bothered by it at times. “Yeah, I know.” She murmurs softly into her shake.

He smiled and reached over to gently pat her back. "Don’t worry, I still love you." He laughed lightly.

Toki shifted at the pats to her back, and kept her eyes on her shake. “Mmm, I love you too.” She murmurs again. Her shake is cold and delicious as she sips it through her straw. “I know my weird cravings gross you out. I’m sorry about that.”

"Don’t be. You cannot help it." He shook his head and took a slurp of his drink.

“Can’t help it, love. Pregnancy does weird things- and I am surprisingly self-conscious about this when I know I shouldn’t be.” She shrugged helplessly, and finished her portion of the fries. She elbows the other half- the ones not slathered in mustard- over for him to finish, and then focuses on her icy treat. “I’m self-conscious about a lot of things.” Though he knew that quite well, with as often as she tended to apologize for things.

He leaned over and pressed a soft kiss to her skull regardless. "I know, I know, but I'm still gonna
love you anyway, you silly woman."

His smooch makes her teeth turn upwards into a slight smile. “And I still love you regardless.” She says softly in response. Toki nearly choking on her straw however, as a pained shriek floods above the usual noise in the bar. She turns in her chair, spitting out the end of the straw she’d bitten through, and searched for the cause.

Fuku was being ushered away from a mess of glass and plastic, a horrified rabbit monster babbling apologies as he ushered the bartender back towards the bar. Fuku’s front was drenched, and she had her hands clutched to her face, which was blackened and looked burnt. Her palms were no better looking, and parts of her ‘skin’ flecked and cracked, showing green magmatic blood below as it fell away and dusted.

Toki’s socket’s got wide. “Holy shit- Fuku!”

"Fuku!” Papyrus jolted out of his seat and went to her side, quickly moving her somewhere she could sit.

Fuku ended up seated at a rapidly emptied table, shaking and trembling as her fires struggled to relight the flesh that had been painfully extinguished.

Toki wasn’t far behind Papyrus, but she had to wade through the worried crowd that had gathered. Her teeth ground as she worked her way in, sparks flying in worry. “Fuku! Oh no… Pap, can you heal her?”

“N-need fire,” Fuku whimpered softly. “Need to r-relight. S-s-so cold…”

"I-I don’t know if I can, I was never able to with Grillby...” He trailed off, before he came to a sudden realization as he glanced at his mate. "What about you! Your fire!"

Her fire? She… Well, it could work. Toki nodded, and stepped forth. She carefully lowered down in front of the much smaller fire monster, and eased the burnt hands from the girl’s face. Her face was a mess- someone had obviously hit a tray that had liquids on it while she had been carrying it, and it had poured all over her. She eased her hands up onto the girl’s head, trying to fight the faint urge to panic as she felt the burnt parts of her face- memories tried to surge and were subsequently battled back into submission. “Easy, Fuku. Let me help you.”

Toki poured her magic into her hands, and let the heat of it wash into her face.

Fuku nearly sobbed in relief as the magic dried the water that saturated her. Her eyes creaked open as the extinguished parts of her caught fire again, slowly at first, and then more rapidly as Toki expunged more of her magic into her. It was unpracticed- not at all like her father healing her extinguished spots- but it worked, even if it was no doubt tiring on the healer’s end.

"Toki... Well done!” he praised happily.

Toki wobbled in place, inexplicably tired once she’d flash-dried the flame elemental’s uniform, and relit everything that had been extinguished. She also found herself slightly stuck- she hadn’t crouched where she’d have a way back up. Fuku was healed though- healed and looking much more energized.

The skeleton’s rear nearly hit the floor as the fire elemental lunged and tugged her into a hug. “Thankyouthankyouthankyou,” was the babbled mantra that came from the green being.

Toki simply blinked, a little dazed and a lot tired, and patted her shoulder softly. Fuku was a lot
younger than she originally thought- and it made her wonder if Fuku should even be running a bar. It didn’t take long for the elemental to let her go though, and she valued her freedom as she was set loose from the iron grasp. “I’m glad I could help you, Fuku.” She said softly, and struggled to get upright.

Aliquam stepped over and looped his arms around her from behind, helping her stay up and balanced. "You did wonderful,” He sounded pleased, “and I’m so proud of you."

Toki quirked a gentle smile for her mate, leaning back into his support and letting him help her keep her balance, and peered down at the shorter fire elemental. “Did I manage to relight everything?”

Fuku nodded and laughed tiredly. “Yeah, you did. Thank you. Thank you so, so much. Why don’t you go sit and enjoy the rest of your meal- free of charge. It’s the least I can do.”

"That's very sweet of you, Fuku. Thank you. Come on, Toki, let's get you back to your milkshake.” Papyrus gave her a warm smile, and moved to guide her back to their seats.

The crowd parted to let them through, mutterings about the ‘guardian angel’ rising up among them. Some of them turned to go back to their food and seats- but others watched them curiously.

Fuku joined them as they headed for the bar, and smiled quietly. “You’ll need the food. You expended a lot of magic.”

“You still have fries to eat too.” Toki chuckled softly. She didn’t fight being guided back towards the bar- getting to sit again was fabulous, and she relaxed onto her stool when she could. “Mmm…”

He stroked her back gently. "I'm so proud of you." he cooed to Toki, pressing a soft kiss to her skull.

“So you’ve said.” She smiled wryly, and resumed drinking her milkshake. It was starting to melt, making it much easier to consume. “You can sit, Pap. I’m not going to fall off the stool, I promise.”

"Alright." he chuckled, sitting down and getting himself comfortable again. He sighed and relaxed.

"My milkshake is melting.” he realized, before going back to it.

“Well, the bar is warm.” Toki smiles to him slightly as she idly watches as Fuku gets back to work, replacing the order that had been spilled all over her front. “Ice melts in a warm environment, love.” The richness of the milkshake helps ease some of her energy problems, and she relaxes contently with a soft sigh.

"Mmh.” He hummed in reply.

Toki finished her milkshake swiftly, and then turned so she could recline her back against the bar itself. She looked over the sea of tables, and found most of the monsters had returned to their business, though a few still glanced over from time to time. “Ah. That was a good shake.” The twins were asleep, shifting only faintly in her middle, and Toki rubbed a hand soothingly over her belly as she relaxed.

He finished his milkshake around the same time, and once finished, he leaned back and sighed with a pleased look on his face. "Indeed."

“Mmh…” She relaxed contently.

"It's a tip." Aliquam told her, not taking the coins even as she pushed them back. "Thank you. We hope to see you again sometime!"
“Alright then. I’ll look forwards to seeing you two again!” She gave them a cheerful wave, and inched the coins into her apron pocket, where all of her tips were collected.

Toki nodded and waved, and then guided them both through the maze of tables and busy customers. Going outside was a shock of cold against the warmth of the bar, and she couldn’t suppress the sudden shiver that overtook her.

He wrapped his arms around her and nuzzled her gently before he began the walk back to Lana's.

Toki leaned into him, tired and content to enjoy his company as they walked. The snow was falling again, and it danced over and around her horns as she walked. Snowdin was nice, she mused. She probably could have lived here, if she’d been one of the monsters trapped under the mountain.

Aliquam began to whistle quietly as he walked, his arm around her as they returned to Lana's store.

There was the ding of the bell above his door, before a shrill, happy voice called to them in warm words. "Welcome baaaaack!"
It had been a complete surprise to her. Yeah, she knew she had some meetings- but she’d basically been summoned to fly out of the country for this one. Apparently they were going to set up a ‘village like her own’ out in the United States- and wanted to know how she had designed it, what sort of facilities they would need to accommodate monsters of all sizes, and how it was run without any obvious leader or official now that she wasn’t their guardian any longer. It was the government actually requesting her- and she was going to be taking a private flight out to the international airport over in Oregon, where the meeting was being held.

So she was being rushed out for an emergency meeting- and, by common vote of the monster populace of Nara Village, she was going to be taking ‘guards’ as well. HAM was still a threat- a major one- and they weren’t willing to lose her like other HTM’s were being lost.

Given that the monsters technically originated from Underground-, which was considered it’s own ‘nation’ within a nation- most of the topside monsters already had ‘passports’ in their information. Toki had been assured that they would be enough to get her through the airports as needed. Which was good- because Aliquam was adamant on coming with her on such a long trek. She was taking Tenebris too- two ‘guards’ was more than enough for one woman. Sans was staying behind to keep an eye on things with Han- after all, they had another business up and running, and things needed to keep rolling smoothly with the integration of the bakery.

Toki didn’t even have the chance to go try any of Muffet’s goods. She had to leave the day of the opening- and hope that she got back in time for the fireworks at the start of June.

Toki had enough things packed into her carry on to last her the week, along with all of her travel information. Now that she didn’t need things like deodorant or hair care supplies, it was down strictly to clothes, which she now had plenty of. Lana had made more than enough clothes for her to have several sets- and she was very, very pleased by it. Lana had also made a wrap that went around her belly. It didn’t make a whole lot of a difference with the amount of cramps she got in her back, but it did help support her middle and make her back ache less in general.

Her suitcase was packed and ready to go, and she was dressed and also ready. She’d gotten her bees
fed, next order of honey collected and put into jars, had made sure the house was clean for Han to use when he was here.

The flight itself was only going to be a relatively short jaunt of roughly four hours- but she had to be there much earlier, in order to get through customs.

In the end they had taken Quinn's car, with Cae coming along to take the car back home for them.

Tenebris was grumbling as he adjusted a wrap they had put on his tail. "Damn thing... the sooner we get this off..."

Toki was hauling herself out of Pap’s back seat, having opted to give the tallest monster the spot with the most leg room, since she could turn sideways and drape her legs across Sans’ own, if she wished. She tugged her carry on with her, laden with her purse and other papers along with her clothing, and slung it over her shoulder as she attempted to gain her feet. “Sorry to say, but you’re stuck with that for another several hours, Tenebris. At least we’re flying over on a private jet, so we’re not stuck trying to fit you and Pap in a commercial airline.”

Tenebris bared his fangs in frustration and leaned his head back in annoyance, his tail thumping against the ground, instead of its usual sharp tapping sound the blade would make normally.

Aliquam was smiling as he helped Toki out of the car, making sure to mind her baby bump as he did so. "Careful now." he hummed gently.

Toki was thankful for the help- she’d always been a bit of a klutz, but the additional extra weight in her middle did little to help that. She let him haul her upright, and smiled at him thankfully. “We’re okay. Thank you though, Pap.” Her bag is hauled higher, and she loops both arms through the straps. It doesn’t help with her balance either, but it wasn’t too bad.

She laughed softly and stepped aside so she could shut the door. “You all have everything you need, right? Passports, identification, paperwork?”

Papyrus pressed a soft kiss between her horns and then held up two passports. "Mine and my Father's." he replied as lifted his other hand with an envelope clutched in it. "Paperwork for us both.”

“Good.” She smiles warmly. Toki shifts and lets him tuck it away, before heading to the back hatch. She opens it, and goes to tug forth the other two duffle bags that they had brought with their things. She hefts them up into her arms, looking ridiculous as she does, and then closes the hatch. “Cae- you good to get the car back home? I know your phone has GPS, but GPS can be bullshit from time to time.”

"Yes, and don't worry, I've got this in the bag!" he waved her off with a bright grin as he traded seats and got into the driver’s seat. It didn’t take him long before he started the car.

"Sans! Do not be generous with my gas tank!" Quinn told him sternly.

"Yeah! I gotcha Pap!" he told him. "I'll be good to your tank!"

“I’ll chip in and fill it when we get back.” She smooths a hand over Aliquam’s arms lightly, and then pads to Tenebris. His bag is held out to him. “I don’t know what you’ve packed, but it feels like bricks in here.” Though monster clothes of his size were bound to weigh a lot when there were many of them in a tight space.

"Nothing illegal if that's what you're worrying about." he chuckled, sling it over his shoulder.
"I’m fairly certain we’ll know if you have anything illegal when your bag gets searched." She snorts. "Just so you know- you can’t smoke on a plane. Alright- come on, you two. We’ve got a long walk,” or waddle in her case, “To where we depart.” She hefts her bag a bit more, and adjusts her grip on Aliquam’s bag, before setting off at a fast walk.

Fast walking pregnant skeletons waddle- but at least her larger stature and speedy pace urge the humans to keep their space. Her mom liked to call it ‘walk and think murder’, and usually people would get out of the way. Though- her mom was tiny, so she often had Toki do it. Size meant something sometimes.

Aliquam rolled his eyes and chuckled as he followed her. "Wait for me, Toki!" He laughed.

Tenebris shook his head then chuckled and went after them while Cae took his leave.

"You both have longer legs than I do! If you can’t keep up with one fast walking pregnant woman, then you are both sorely out of shape.” Which was ridiculous, because Aliquam could run laps around the compound without issue- and she suspected that, despite Tenebris being retired, he could probably do the same as well. She was really the only one who wasn’t in shape. She was a hilarious conundrum, really. A boss heart in the body of a civilian was an interesting thing. Still, she laughs, and keeps on trekking. Toki can only go so fast with two bags on her back and two babies in her belly, or risk falling over someone’s luggage. As it is, she’s easy to see.

Besides one other monster form- some form of bird monster stepping into one of the elevators-they’re the only monsters in sight. Her horns stand out quite nicely above the crowd.

"Well I would slow down! You know that!” Quinn insisted, walking slowly at her side once he caught up with her.

Tenebris made sure to watch and make sure that Sans got out of the parking lot safely, and then he easily caught up with them once his eldest was out of sight.

Toki, framed by two large monsters on either side, was quite a sight. She laughed softly at Aliquam, however, and grinned at him. “If I walk my usual pace, we’d never get anywhere. The airport is pretty big.” The building itself could hold half the village in it, if not more. She headed for some escalators, and eased herself onto one of the ones that went down, leaving the guys to file on behind her. “And I’m usually a pretty slow walker, you know that.” She took her time getting places usually.

Ebott City International Airport was massive, plainly put. There were gift shops of all kinds, bars, food places, lounges, wifi areas, and all sorts of things to distract the attention of those waiting on their flights. It was a pretty big place- and easy to get lost in.

When she reached the bottom, she patiently turned to wait for them to join her, adjusting her burdens with a soft huff. Toki was not by any means a monster built off of endurance.

They had surprisingly kept up well enough, though Tenebris had his tail stepped on more than once. He was holding it in one hand and grumbling to himself as he walked.

Toki slowed down as the crowd thickened, and she found herself wishing for personal space quite quickly. She eased back a bit between the two monsters when a harried woman who rushed past her without a second glance roughly jostled Toki. “Alright. The place we need to go is this way, I think.” To the left of their entryway should lead to their terminal. “Look for terminal E7.”

"That way.” Tenebris gestures to a Terminal labeled as E7.
Which was, as she thought, down to the left. She nodded, and hesitated but a moment before plunging into the crowd. Toki could project the ‘murder’ vibe, but she was by no means good at it—and everyone here was too busy to notice the tall monster. So she had to work with weaving her way here and there when she could, guiding the guys through as well.

Getting to E7 was a pain in the ass— and she nearly dropped the bag as they got there. “Fuckfuckfuck- we gotta go.” They were apparently taking off for Portland within forty minutes and were doing last call for boarding— ahead of schedule by two hours. And they hadn’t even bothered to send her a text or call. Yeah, she hadn’t paid for the tickets— the governments had— but the next flight to Oregon was in eight hours.

Sighing, Tenebris reached out and took Toki’s hand, giving gentle ‘pardon’s and ‘excuse me’s as he moved through the crowd.

Toki took a hold of Pap too, so the trio of monsters could get into line. She sighed heavily, nearly dropping Pap’s bag from her shoulder when she’s bumped again— but with the massive monster leading the way, it doesn’t take all that long for them to get into place. And then, now that they were in line, it was simply a waiting game. “Thanks, Tenebris. People move for bigger monsters, I guess.”

"Ta-Da.” he chuckled gently as he looked at her, before he looked back at the line. He noticed a few first glances from the guards, who noted the presence of the larger male. They then greatly considered if they were going to need backup or not.

Toki chuckled gently in turn, and handed Papyrus his bag. The line itself was swiftly moving, and there weren’t a lot of people flying private to Oregon. It wasn’t long before they were at the front of the line, passing bags over for inspection. “I’ll go first so you two can see how it goes, yeah?” She beams up at them warmly.

"Alright.” Tenebris rumbled as he stepped forward to let her pass.

Toki slid around him easily enough, and stepped forwards. “I’ll take the pat down, thank you.” She smiles to one of the guards.

He eyes her teeth and gives her a wary look. “Alright. Please step forwards, hold your arms and legs out, and stand still.”

She does as asked, standing spread-eagle for him, and hums softly.

The guard gives her a quick pat down, starting from the top and working his way down, though to the other skeletons watching it was probably something super invasive looking. He stands once he’s done, looking completely befuddled by the muscle and body that he felt under the skeleton’s clothes, alongside the bulge of her middle. “Alright…” He mutters softly. “You’re clear to go. Please take your bag and proceed forwards.”

Toki nodded, collected her bag, and then moved to patiently wait.

Aliquam walked up to the machine where he was to put his bag and put it down, before approaching the guard as well. "I suppose I will do the same as she had." he told the guard, fixing his stance slightly to do as Toki had done.

“Alright.” The guard looks slightly intimidated by the skeleton that looms over him, more than a foot taller than he was. He stands on his tiptoes, and just barely managed to give the same rundown that he did for the woman. From the shoulders to the feet he pats, his touch just as professional as it is invasive, and ends up looking just as befuddled as before. “How even…?” How on earth did
skeletons have muscle? And manage to feel as well stacked as this one did? It just made no sense. “You’re good to go, sir.”

“I’ll get the next one, Terry.” A shorter woman approaches, and pats her comrade on the shoulder. “You look like your mind is going to explode.”

“A skeleton has muscles, Yuki.” The guard doesn’t fuss, and steps off to the side so the shorter woman can take over. “Muscles.” He emphasizes. “I don’t understand how that even works!”

“Magic, actually.” Toki supplies easily, giving Papyrus a grin and a wink. “Don’t worry, sir. I was confused at first too. It’s better just to roll with it and enjoy the view.”

“I like my men with a little bit more meat on their bones,” the woman, Yuki, laughs slightly. “But to each their own. Okay!” She turns to the biggest of the three, who is nearly three feet taller than she is, and blinks up at him. “Next one up- whoa, okay, big guy, you’re not going to fit through the scanner without breaking it. You going to be alright with a pat down?”

Tenebris was looking down at her, the angle unfortunately making it more like a leer from her vantage.

"I suppose it will be alright." he rumbled. He set his phone and wallet down on the counter, and then knelt down and stretched his arms to the side. At this angle, his more gentle, calm gaze could be seen.

Even kneeling, he was massive. Yuki swallowed down nerves and nodded. “Thank you.” She padded closer, and started from his shoulders. She patted firmly and professionally, and worked from his shoulders to his arms, and then to his underarms. Holy hell, this guy was stacked. The skeleton from before was ripped- this monster was a fucking tank. She eased her hands down and paused, and her fingertips brushed something hard against the side of his chest. “What is that?” she asks warily.

He blinked once. "What?" he questioned.

“This hard part- you have something under your shirt.” She was wary now, and it carried over into her voice. Bombs could be easily strapped to things, and while she didn’t think a monster would ever do something like that… Well, there was no telling with people.

He blinked again, then he reached up and felt...

"... ah." he then smiled gently, "That's my shield you're feeling." he explained.

“Shield?” She questioned, still wary.

“He’s got a… I almost want to call it an external rib cage almost, that goes over his skin?" Toki taps her chest to motion where. “It’s a part of his body, like his tail is. It’s made out of some sort of hard bone, I think. It protects his chest. At least, that’s my understanding.”

“Oh. Er… Forgive me for not fully trusting you- you would not believe the things people will sneak onto a plane. Will you lift your shirt please, sir, so I can confirm your companion’s words?” She steps back and around so she faces him.

He blinked once, and then he sighed heavily. "Very well.." He reached down, grabbing the hem of his turtleneck, as well as the underlying tank top he wears. He then lifted them both up, revealing his torso to her. True to their words, his shield gleamed in the light over where his inner rib cage resided.

She inspected it for a moment, and then nodded and motioned for him to put his shirt down. Damn.
He was ripped. Damn her mild monster fetish. “Alright, I believe you. Your torso is clear- if you can stand upright, I’ll sweep your legs, and you’ll be free to go.”

He nodded, and slowly stood, his tail stayed behind him, rattling quietly.

As of now, the only ‘weapons’ he had were his claws on both hands and feet, and his tail.

The tail she took notice of. The claws not so much- a lot of monsters had them. The tail on the other hand was new. Still, she did her customary pat down, running hands down his legs and his inseams, and then she peered at his tail. “Well… I suppose since it’s covered…” She muttered. Laws about Monster’s flying were still very open- and it was to the discretion of the security for now, until they could hammer out specifics.

“His tail will remain dulled until we land.” Toki chips in.

“I’m sure it will. I guess you’re good to go then.” The woman still looks a bit unnerved, but she waves him onwards. "Collect your things and enjoy your flight, sir."

"Thank you." he walked by and picked up his bag.

Once Tenebris had his bag, Toki offered them both a happy smile, and motioned them on. “C’mon you two. We’ve got a plane to catch.” With that said, she offers her hand to Papyrus, and sets off down the hall at a much slower waddle. Her burst of speed had been temporary, it seemed.

"Of course." Aliquam stayed at Toki’s side, looping his fingers affectionately into her own, and walked with her down the way.

Tenebris slowly moved ahead, looking for the gate that they needed to go through.

The gate was easy to see- there were a few people still waiting to get in, and it had big flashing letters broadcasting which flight it was.

Toki beamed and headed for it. “That’s our flight right there. Ah! I haven’t been on a plane in a long time. It’s going to be so exciting!”

"Hmm... Fascinating." Tenebris murmured.

“Uhuh!” She smiles happily. Toki is, admittedly, a little out of breath from all of the speed waddling by the time they reach the gate, but she doesn’t let it bother her. They reach the gate in time to be the next ones that go in. “Ah- I do believe we have private seats.”

“Under which name?” the one guarding the gate flips through his note pad.

“Should be under Tokiko Nara. If not, check for the last name ‘Gaster’.”

“Nara- right at the top of the list. You and your... guards?” he arches a brow at the note, “Your guards are to be housed in suite D3. Please inform your hostess, and she will guide you to it.”

“Thank you.” Toki nods pleasantly.

The man steps aside and motions them in.

"Thank you." Aliquam smiled at the guard and walked through the gate.

Toki followed, with Tenebris behind her, and they made their way to the plane.
The plane itself was large, definitely something Toki wouldn’t ever pay to fly on out of her own pocket. Once they were in, and informed the hostesses of where they needed to go, they found themselves guided down a long hallway, and brought to a decent sized private room of sorts. It had four seats, and areas for luggage.

“You will be on the plane long enough to receive a lunchtime meal, and this particular seat comes with a fully stocked mini-bar and snack bar. Though… I will make sure to bring by some soda for you, Miss Nara.” The hostess smiled as she ushered them in. “Are there any first time fliers here?”

“They are.” Toki nods to the two larger monsters and goes to tuck her carry on into the luggage rack so turbulence won’t knock it loose. She does tug loose a book first though, and settle it carefully next to what she’s chosen for her seat. “I've flown a lot as a kid. Nothing this nice, but I have been on a plane before.”

“That’s good then!” She smiles. “It’s good to fly with someone who has experience. Now- our flight is pretty straight forward, though we will be making one stop in Tokyo to top up on our fuel before we cross the Pacific Ocean. You will all be told when it is alright to move around and take your seat belts off, but until then, please remain seated and buckled so turbulence doesn’t cause you any problems.”

Tenebris looks around as soon as he’s done copying Toki, putting his bag up on the rack with little issue. Claiming the biggest of the seats, which had a bit more legroom for him to work with, he stretched out his limbs before he curled his claws contently.

Toki helped Papyrus get his bag in place, before taking her own seat. She fiddled with the buckles, and got them to the size they needed to be in order to accommodate her growing belly, and then crossed her ankles with a soft sigh. The arches of her feet hurt. “I’ll keep an eye on my boys,” She smiles softly.

“Of course you will. Once a mom always a mom, even if they aren’t yours.” She beams back. “If you don’t mind me asking, when are you due?”

“End of September we think. We don’t really know.” Toki grins. “First time seeing what happens when an HTM has children with an actual Monster.”

“That’s really neat!” The hostess laughs. “Well, I’m glad and hope the father is excited.”

Toki shares a smile, and glances to Papyrus. “Oh, he is. So is the grandfather.” She tilts her chin towards Tenebris.

“Ah! Congratulations to the new additions to your family! A family trip then?” She giggles. “Showing them a little bit of the world before you’re on baby duty?”

“Something akin to that.” She says wryly, no desire to elaborate on the actual reason for their trip.

Aliquam giggled softly and Tenebris was rumbling deeply as he looked at them, "We've a long way to go, so I'm excited to see how it goes... Not sure about the 'flight' aspect.”

“You’ll see how you like it.” The hostess smiles to the taller skeleton, and pads back to the door. “We’ll stop by frequently to see if you need anything. We’ll have sodas brought by once we're up in the air- I advise you to stay buckled until the captain levels out.”

Toki nods. “We’ll do that. How long do you think it will take until we take off?”

“Probably ten minutes or less. There are not that many people to get settled, so we're bit over-staffed
for this flight.” She chuckles. “I’ll let you three get settled in. If you need anything, there is a button here by the door that you can press, and someone will be along shortly.”

“Okay. Thank you.” Toki gives her a smile, and sighs softly when the woman leaves. “Ahh. At least the seats are comfortable. Commercial flight has the most uncomfortable seating ever.”

"Mmhm." Tenebris leaned his head back and sighed gently, smiling as he peered over at Toki though half lidded eyes. "So... this... wont go bad right?"

“Go bad?” She blinks. “Statistically no. This place is pretty well known for being secure and safe. You saw the check in area- they searched you pretty well, Tenebris. The chances of the plane falling from the sky are pretty slim. Honestly, we’re more likely to have a problem with a HAM agent being on board than we are to have the plane crash.”

That thought alone makes even her a bit anxious, but she keeps her calm regardless. It's odd how HAM scares her more than a plane crash does.

"Mmhm." he shifted and rumbled softly, though it was clear he was actually nervous... his tail was rattling softly.

Toki could see his nerves clear as day, though she didn't really know how to soothe them. So she did the best thing she could- and that was keep a calm front.

It was actually closer to twenty minutes later that the plane took to the skies. In that time, soda had been stocked into the mini-bar for Toki, and she had finished the first chapter of the novel she was reading.

The plane rattled and shook like usual as it got up to speed- and then there was the sensation of the ground dropping out from under them as it lurched into the sky in a rapid climb.

Toki hummed, and turned a page, completely unbothered by the bumps and rattles of turbulence that knocked her lightly against her seatbelt.

At first the sensation didn't bother the two males, but when the turbulence hit, Tenebris' claws dug into the chair arms and his tail began to rattle LOUDLY, a semi-panicked look on his face.

Toki glanced up at the rattle, and chuckled softly. "Tenebris," she crooned softly, "It's okay. Take a deep breath- we're okay, the plane is okay. Turbulence is normal, I promise.”

He didn't answer coherently, just let out a series of rattles and clicks, his thin-slitted gaze looking around fast, the whole time his tail kept rattling.

Aliquam was taking it a little better, but still looked a bit tense as he focused on anything he could see in the room.

Well, she couldn’t exactly get out of her seat while they were ascending... So she began to buzz softly, just over the din of his rattling, so he would focus on her and not on the plane bucking below their feet.

It didn’t take all that long for the plane to level out, however, and once the Captain gave the go-ahead, she unclipped her seat belt and eased to the edge of her seat. “Are you both okay?”

"I.. I am alright." Aliquam answered slowly.

Tenebris' pupils opened up and he slowly slumped with a shaky sigh. "I need a pipe." he whined
"You can’t have a pipe until we get to America, Tenebris. This is a no smoking airline." She gives him a soothing smile, and continues her soft buzzing. “I’m glad you’re okay, Pap.” Toki slips her hand over his, and tubs his tense knuckles gently. “That was turbulence. We’re going to feel it several more times while we’re in the air- it may be worse than that, or it might be not nearly as bad. But… try to stay calm, yeah? Have a drink, eat something, read- I actually have a couple books in my bag if it will help.”

Tenebris let out a loud whine and leaned his head back. "At least a cup of tea then?"

Rolling his hand over, Aliquam gently gripped her hand as he looked at her. "Nyeh... I'm alright, Toki." he murmured.

Toki massaged his hand gently as he turned it over to grip her own, and gave him a warm smile. “You’re scared- but it’s okay to be afraid, Pap.” She says softly. “And Tenebris? If you brought your tea with you in your carry-on, or hidden somewhere on you, I do believe there are water bottles in the mini-fridge. I will gladly make you some tea.”

"...." After a moment, he took to his pack down from the rack and rummaged around. It took him a short bit, but he located what he wanted. "Here." he told her, tossing her the box.

One handed catching wasn’t doable, so it bounced off her abdomen and landed in her lap. Toki chuckled softly when one of the twins kicked in upset, and then gently wiggled her hand free from Ali’s. “I'll be right back, love.” She hauls herself out of the chair, grumbling something about chairs needing to have handholds for pregnant women, and then waddles to the mini-bar. As she’s the only one apparently brave enough to unbuckle, Toki is left to getting the water.

Once she’s gotten a couple bottles, she uses the top of the fridge to stand, and then spoons some of the tea directly into the bottle, before pouring her magic in slowly so she doesn’t scorch the dried tea. Shortly, the room smells strongly of orange blossom tea. “Alright, Tenebris. Your tea is done. Pap? Did you want some to help you keep calm too?”

"Yes please." he replied gently, while Tenebris has already begun to relax, purring gently just from the smell alone.

Toki smiles softly to herself, and prepares a second bottle. The aroma doubles, and then she carefully caps them and slips a beer coaster over the outside edges, so the piping hot plastic does not burn them. Tenebris gets his bottle of tea first, carefully settled into his hand, and then she waddles for Papyrus.

Tenebris took his bottle from her and took a moment as the heat seemed to comfort him alone.

Toki ends up tossed into his lap as the plane lurches into another bout of turbulence. The air around Ebott tended to be rough- and that was likely from all of the magical bleed off from Mount Ebott’s old barrier. “Thank goodness for caps, or we’d be wearing hot tea.” She huffs softly.

Aliquam was going to reach to take his cup, but ended up catching her instead. "Nyeh!" he laughed quietly, and then nuzzled her. "Well yes, that is true!" he agreed, before he pressed a soft kiss to her head. "And thank goodness for fast reflexes so I could catch you~"

“Indeed.” She chuckles softly. She still was a bit squished in the middle, and the twins angrily kicked against where they were pressed to him. She leaned up to kiss him back, and then smiled quietly. “Alright- your tea, and then I’ll get back to my seat. I forgot the air around Ebott tends to be rougher
"Thank you," he purred softly, taking his bottle from her with a warm smile sent her way. "This looks good."

"I hope it tastes good. Fast brewed isn’t as good as slow brew, but it should do its job." She smiles, and hesitantly shimmies back off of his lap. She makes it to her seat next to him, and eases down into it. Her buckle is returned to its place around her middle, and then she takes some time to rub her palms over her belly as the twins twist and fuss.

"Hm… y’know," she muses to the men around her, "I can vaguely feel their souls through mine. Not… much yet, but… They’re unhappy about being jostled, I know that much."

"You'll feel them more when they're born." Aliquam hummed softly. "You'll be able to read their aura as well." he explained, rubbing her stomach gently with one of his.

Their father’s hand made a good target, and Toki audibly grunted as tiny limbs turned their tantrums outwards instead of in towards her ribs and spine. "I can feel that they’re in the midst of some sort of tantrum. Ah- ow, little ones, ow. You have sharp little toe bones, and that is mommy’s ectoplasm that you are jabbing." She was officially six months along now- and had another four to go, technically- but the twins were getting big, and some of their kicks were actually beginning to hurt a little bit. These were some of those sorts of kicks. "So, uh, do you get to have a connection with them too?

"Not as strong as yours, but yes." He nodded. "Once in a while I feel them."

"That’s good." She smiles quietly. "I don’t think they much like flying either- must be something they get from you two. Hm. Wish I could soothe them though." Toki sighs and kneads her fingers gently against one side of her belly. "They’re getting to the size where some of their kicks are actually starting to hurt. I think they’re going to end up with the pointed ends on their toes like me and their grandpa."

"That is concerning and I hope it does not cause you more pain than it must," he cooed gently, stroking her stomach to soothe the souls within. "At peace little jellybeans," he cooed softly, releasing a little of his magic to try and soothe them.

The magic did its job, and they eased off some of their frenzied kicks and thrashes. "I think they’ve accepted your magic to pacify them for now." Toki still grunted again as one of them stretched a leg outwards, creating a visible distortion in her middle even from under her turtleneck. She blinked, and then began to laugh. "That is slightly painful, but I don’t even care. Look at that! I think that’s a foot. Tenny! Can you see that from over there? Check it out!" Typical mom- painful yes, but fascinating as well.

Aliquam smiled brightly while Tenebris peered over, smiling gently. "I can, it’s quite adorable, Toki."

Toki hijacked Papyrus’ hand, and pressed his fingers gently onto the lump. Vaguely, through the membrane of her abdomen, he would be able to feel a not-so-small foot. “It’s adorable- and also slightly creepy from my perspective. It reminds me of the Alien movies I used to watch when I was younger.”

The little foot remained jutting out for a few moments, before seamlessly blending into her middle again. She had to rub the spot as it ached. "Ah, this is a good prelude to what the next four months are going to be like." She chuckles faintly, in a good mood despite the faint ache from the foot.
"Oh wow." he cooed gently, "That's amazing. I'm so excited!"

"You’d better be," Toki giggled. “I can tell you now, Nara or not, those sorts of kicks will keep me up at night, and if Momma doesn’t sleep, neither does the Daddy."

“Isn’t that the truth.” It’s the same hostess from before, and she knocks lightly on the open door. “I didn’t mean to interrupt. I came to take your orders for your lunch time meals.” She smiles. “Our menu isn’t typical today, as we’ve had a small mix-up in our orders, so we’re serving dinner for lunch today. We’ve got steaks, potatoes, fish, salads, fruit platters—”

“I’d actually like a steak with some fruit, if it’s possible.” She smiles shyly back, folding her fingers over her middle.

“I’ll see to it.” The hostess nods cheerily.

"A steak sounds delicious, medium-well with a salad please." Tenebris requested, nursing his bottle of tea slowly.

"I'll have one too, please. Medium-well with a baked potato.” Papyrus spoke up next.

“I can do those as well.” She nodded, scribbling it onto a note pad. “What dressing would you like on your salad? And as for your potato, would you like that loaded, or just with butter? Ah- Miss Nara, how did you want your steak?”

Toki ground her teeth a little bit, and contemplated for a moment just what level of ‘done’ she wanted it. Her instinctual response was like theirs- medium well, with very little pink in it. But… something was nagging inside of her for something a little less done. “Um…” She flushes faintly and glances away. “Rare, please?” Well-done steaks had a different flavor than ones that were still a little bit… raw. And whatever was in her little one’s genetics had her suddenly craving something a little bit bloody.

“Rare it is.” She nods cheerfully.

"And here I was worried about letting my primal take over, meanwhile you go and order a steak that'll bleed. I’m a bit envious.”

“Sorry.” Toki tucks her chin, and glances down to her lap.

“Sorry.” Toki tucks her chin, and glances down to her lap.

“There’s no need to be self conscious, Miss Nara. Anyways, I can have yours changed to something more raw, sir.” The hostess nods. “Rare, or perhaps blue? I still need your side of dressing- and if the other sir would like his potato to be loaded, or not.”

"Blue sounds perfect, thank you.” He nodded once, before he smiled to Toki. "I mean nothing by my words, Toki." he assured her.

"What comes in a 'loaded' potato?” Aliquam asked.

“I know you didn’t. It’s stupid of me to feel self conscious about it, but…” She shrugs helplessly, not looking up at him. “Can’t really stop it. Pap deals with it enough as it is.”

Politely, the hostess doesn’t comment to Toki’s words. Instead, she nods to Tenebris, and then turns to Aliquam. “Blue it is. A loaded baked potato is a baked potato that has been stuffed with a mix of chives and bacon, topped in sour cream and sprinkled in various spices, before being doused in shredded cheddar cheese. Does that sound like you would like it.”
"I suppose I can try it." Aliquam replied to the hostess, before pressing a soft kiss to Toki’s head in an effort to comfort her.

Toki ends up leaning into Pap’s shoulder, and sighing softly as she nestles close. “I’m alright, Ali. Just mood stuff again. You know how it goes.” Mood swings were not something that could really be controlled. “Totally go for the loaded potato though. They’re usually really, really good.”

“A loaded baked potato it is.” She scribbles it down too. “Alright- I think that’s everything. Remember, there’s a button if you need any of us at any given moment.”

“We’ll press it if we need something.” Toki nods quietly.

“Good! I’ll take this to the chef then. Your lunch will be served in a couple of hours.” With that said, the hostess gave them a wave, and departed to go take more orders.

"Sounds good." he rumbled softly, before he enjoyed his tea, sighing as he leaned back and scratched his head gently. "Well. At least that was easy enough." he rumbled gently.

"I suppose so." Aliquam agreed, nuzzling Toki again regardless of her reassurance.

She didn’t fight his nuzzles- she only shifted so she could lift the armrest that kept the seats apart, and then shifted so she could lean on him. She craned for half a moment, and then managed to unlace her shoes enough for her to discard them. Aching feet were tucked up onto the seat with her, and she sighed softly. “It was actually very easy, and very high quality too. Most of the airlines I’ve flown on used frozen meals to feed everyone, and those were hit or miss as to if they were edible, or tasted gross.”

Toki leans into Aliquam, and rubs the arch of one of her feet with one hand as she quietly groans. Ugh. Pregnancy aches were the literal worst. She peered across the way to Tenebris, and hummed softly. “Is the tea helping you keep calm…?”

"It's helping." Tenebris agreed gently.

Aliquam looped his arm around her, resting his palm on her stomach and gently rubbing and massaging as he began humming softly to soothe both Toki and the twin souls inside of her belly.

Toki relaxed against him with his touch, a soft sigh escaping her as she practically melted. Tension she didn’t even know she had began to loosen, and the twins settled pleasantly. Her sockets drifted closed, and, unbidden, a very soft and faint pleased buzzing escaped her. “I’m glad the tea helped…” She murmured softly. “If it gets too cold for both of you, lemme know and I can heat it again.”

"Thank you, Toki." Tenebris hummed.

Aliquam continued his affections contently, nestling her as close as the seat belts would allow. ”My darling mate,” He practically purred, “I love you so much~”

“I love you too, Pap.” She smiled softly up at him, and relaxed into his careful touch and love. “I love you a whole lot.” She murmurs softly. Toki shifted and glanced over to Tenebris again. “I brought a book along, by the way, that teaches some Basic English if you want to read it. It might keep your mind busy, Tenebris.”

"I suppose it's worth a try. I might need it." he commented, before he moved to unbuckle and get up, since the plane was a little more stable right now, "Where will I find it?" he inquired as he padded over to their side of the room.
Toki grinned just faintly, rolling slightly so she could better nestle against her boyfriend. “It might not do you much good, given you have only hours to learn, not months- but it’s a start. It’s in my bag-second pocket, should be three books in. Possibly four books in- I don’t remember the exact order. If you have questions, you’re welcome to ask. I’m fairly fluent.” Her grandparents on her Dad’s side didn’t speak Japanese- so she’d had to learn English to communicate with them.

He noted that and rummaged in her pack until he found it. Once located, he put her pack back into shape and re-secured it once more. "Well you know I used to only speak in Wingdings when I was a pup. I grew up learning monster tongue and I had to learn your bloody language so I think I'll be fine.” he reached over and tapped her head affectionately with the book before going to sit down again.

Toki snorted at the tap, and laughed heartily. “English is by far harder than Japanese to learn, Tenebris. English has spoken and unspoken rules- and the sentences can make absolutely no sense.” She shifts, and peers up at Aliquam. A mischievous smile tilts her teeth upwards. “Two skeletons and a lich on a plane sounds like a wonderful start to a bad joke.” She says in English.

Aliquam blinked once, unsure of what she said.

"We will see." Tenebris chuffed, unaware of what he was just called.

Toki grinned, amusement twinkling in her eye lights. “Heh. Hey, Papyrus. I love you. That means ‘I love you’ in English.” She switched fluently between the two tongues, casually teaching him one of the first things she’d ever learned to say in her second tongue.

"Mmm... Can you teach me how to say it?” he asked.

“I can.” She smiled. “Alright. Try to pronounce it like do. This one is pretty easy. I.”

“I.”

“Love.” She smiled.

“Love.”

“You.”

“You.” he then smiled and pressed a kiss to her head, nuzzling her as well. "I love you.” Papyrus’ palm rubbed smoothly over her middle, cradling the swell of his children.

Toki beams. “I love you.” She parrots back warmly, laughing as the twins shift in her middle and relax against the large expanse of his hand. Toki had noticed that they liked to settle against his hand when he held her like so. “You’ve got pretty good pronunciation for a non-native speaker.”

"I am a fast learner, you know.” he purred.

“That you are.” She purred back. Toki gets herself a bit more comfortable, and then rests her book on her chest so she can thumb through it. “Learning English would probably be good. It’s a pretty commonly used language in the world.”

"I suppose so. Alright, I'll let father read the book, while I stay focused on cuddling you~” he chuckled, his arms cradling her closer to him as he smiled down at her.

“Neither me or the twins are certainly going to complain about cuddles from you. Too bad they don’t make buckle in beds on planes.” She chuckles, “Or we could just relax that way. At least the arm
rests move though.” To which end she shifts and loosens her seat belt more, so she can turn fully sideways. Her legs drape over the opposite leg rest, and she thumbs open her book. “You can read with me if you want? I’ll thumb through at your pace, if you’d like.” She was a fast reader on the norm.

He giggled softly and nuzzled the top of her skull. "True. Oh well, I still have you in my arms, so all is right in the world." he purred, "But alright, it'll be easier if I have someone to help me."

“If it would be easier, I wouldn’t mind reading it out loud for you.”

"That'll work too,"

She nods and smiles, and thumbs back to the start of the book. She hadn’t been that far into it yet anyways. Toki clears her throat, and begins to read.
They had gotten the day of their arrival to relax in their hotel, before they were flung headlong into meetings. There were several regular humans at the meeting, and a few HTM’s as well, which was fairly surprising.

The table was fairly quiet, most of them simply taking notes as Toki talked. A few spoke up now and again- though there was one that was just as dense as a tree. A couple curious eyes looked to her ‘guards’ at her back, in chairs of their own as they observed and let her handle things. Everyone had brought guards- She wasn’t the only target from HAM apparently. But most others brought humans to keep them safe.

“Linda,” Toki groaned quietly, her accent bleeding over a little bit in her frustration with the dense woman. “Please, stop. Okay. Listen. Some monsters are bigger than other monsters. The king himself is like… Nearly ten feet tall, I think. You can’t just build all the houses to cater to the smaller monsters- it’s easier to build bigger so the taller ones can visit their shorter friends, and then make it accessible to both types of monsters from there.”

Linda sighed. “But it’s easier to keep them in houses that are smaller- we can fit more monsters into one area when housing is kept smaller.”

Dear gods, this woman. She was going to beat her senseless with the uncomfortable chair she was seated in soon, if she didn’t get what Toki was trying to say. “You can’t just make monster settlements like you do the cheap cookie-cutter houses that you’re used to. It takes more effort than that- and it is an effort well worth it, if you want more monsters to move to your country and find work there, or begin to work with the hospitals to teach how they heal.”

“But-”

“Linda,” One of the elder men there admonished the younger blond woman, “Please. Miss Nara makes a good point. We wouldn’t make those sorts of houses for us to live in, would we? No. Besides- she has blueprints and sketches of the sorts of houses we need, so it’s not as if we need to come up with the designs on our own. You are willing to share them, correct?”

“I am.” Toki nods. She shifts and digs through her purse, procuring the file that had the vast majority of the designs in mind. It’s slid across the table, and she sighs softly. “I have the originals at home. These are all copies- and you are welcome to make copies of them to take them back to your home countries. Speaking of- when you get your complexes up, and if monsters decide to move there, you might have to hire tutors for them. All of the monsters know my mother tongue by heart- but they will need to be taught how to speak, read, and write in the various tongues of the world in order to properly survive and thrive in it. There are monsters who know other tongues- I know one who
speaks and sings quite fluently in Russian- but I am fairly certain that knowledge of a lot of the languages of the world have probably been lost in the time that they’ve been locked underground.”

“We’ll make sure to prepare such things for when they come.” The elder man nods. “Thank you, Miss Nara. I think that’s all we need for today. Now... Before we part- I need to ask. I’ve heard that you have had to deal with several attacks from this ‘Humans Against Monsters’ group. We’ve all had threats, but... you’ve had actual attacks. Why do you think that is?”

She couldn’t outright say that she was a Boss Heart, and that the Anti-heart for her soul color was leading HAM. So, Toki nodded softly. “I think it has to do with the fact that I took in so many monsters. As you are well aware, Nara Village has a population that is beginning to number well into a thousand monsters. That is a large number of monsters densely packed in one area- and HAM seeks to destroy all monsters. Ah- that is something else you will need. Guards, around the monster cities. A lot of monsters are trained to guard- but there are more civilians than there are guards. You too will become a target for HAM once you start constructing the living sectors and getting jobs for them, so you’ll all need to be vigilant.”

“Is that why you’ve brought such... large guards?”

“I wouldn’t have come with guards, but they insisted. Beyond that-”

“Is it true that you’re pregnant with a monster’s child?”

“I am.” She nods. She points over her shoulder to Papyrus. “He’s the father. As I was saying- the father of my children is very protective, so he came along with me regardless of what I said. Likewise, the grandfather,” she sees them look to Tenebris, “is also protective, so he too came along.”

At being gestured to, Papyrus glanced up and gave a small wave. Tenebris merely twitched his tail before he lightly thumped a foot and snorted, "Let us not forget how many times I’ve hit my forehead.” he growled quietly.

Toki caught that mutter and knew this was exactly why she was insisting her point as it was.

The elder man nodded, and eased up out of his chair with the files in hand. “That I can understand... Okay, we’ll call this meeting for today. I’ll have copies of these made and translated for everyone, and we’ll meet here tomorrow for further discussion. Why don’t you go enjoy the city, Miss Nara? Go see the zoo, or go to the mall, maybe, and see all the sights that Portland has to offer. You’ll find that you and yours should be fairly safe here.”

Linda sighed. “I guess I’ll just wait for tomorrow to get the rest of my questions cleared up then.”

“Thank you, Geoff.” Toki smiles at the elder man warmly, and tries not to cringe at Linda’s words. Joy. Just... Joy. “My companions and myself will probably go to the zoo. They don’t have one in Ebott city, and the nearest one is a long drive away. . Do you know if they will allow HTM's and monsters inside?” Not all places were monster friendly, and she wasn't sure a zoo would be.

“They do.” He nods. Everyone else stands, and looks ready to take their leave. “Enjoy your stay, Miss Nara.”

“We will.” She nods again. She doesn’t stand, and simply waits for the room to clear before leaning back and scrubbing her face. Ugh.

As the meeting was adjourned, Tenebris had taken a small yellow treat off an offered tray that had been supplied for the meeting and took a small bite to sate his hunger until they ate later.
Only to immediately regret it.

He made a face then picked up a napkin and pressed his tongue against it, depositing the half-chewed up biscuit onto it. "What the hell is this?" he growled as he sought something to get the taste from his mouth.

Toki snickered softly and leaned back. “One of Linda’s lemon bars. She’s brought them to every meeting we’ve ever had. It’s a running joke that everyone new to the meetings has to learn for themselves what they taste like.” Falling back into her native tongue to converse with her family felt nice.

Toki eased herself out of the chair, and rubbed her backside with a groan. “Ugh. Alright- let’s head outside and try to find the rental.” They had a rental car sized for monsters- and that’s the one they’d ended up taking. It was black- and to Toki’s eyes, it blended in with the cars around it. They’d had a hell of a time finding it in the hotel parking lot that morning. “Want to go to the zoo?” She hums softly. “Beats going back to the hotel.”

"It tastes like dirt. Not even the good kind of dirt." he grumbled before he wrapped up the bar and dropped it in the wastebasket. "No offence but... Egh." One didn’t need to know Japanese to know that Tenebris clearly didn’t like the taste.

It was a good thing that they were the only ones still in here then.

Toki snorted and stooped to try and gather her purse. Bending down wasn’t quite an easy task, after all. “Linda’s bars are gross. Dirt is a polite way to put it. Alright. So- zoo? Pap and I have been wanting to go there and see what the animal’s souls look like.”

"Of course." Tenebris rumbled gently.

“Sounds good to me!” Aliquam nodded. He helped her get her purse, and then looped arms with her contently.

Toki laughed gently, and let him lead her from the building down to the parking garage. Locating the SUV was just as hard as she’d suspected it would be, but soon they found themselves standing before it while they waited on Papyrus to dig out the keys.

Tenebris was looking at the vehicle that they stood before, looking interested as they waited for the doors to unlock. "It is interesting. How did they know to prepare for our size?"

“I told them I would be taking monsters and to plan for us needing a monster car for a rental.” Toki chirped cheerfully.

"Huh... I wonder if they knew you were serious on the 'monster' bit. It seems they were." Tenebris rumbled in amusement.

Toki chuckled. “I informed them that I would be taking literal monsters, Tenebris. They sort of figured, given my reputation. Anyways- do you want the front seat or the back seat?”

"How's the leg room?" he asked.

“Well, the back was pretty roomy when I rode back there on the way here.” She hums. “I’m thinking you might have more room for your tail in the back though, provided the front seat slides forwards enough.” Once Papyrus has the doors unlocked, Toki eases her way forwards and checks to see how far they slide forwards. They go very nearly to the dash. “Huh... They go a long ways forwards. It’s up to you though. What is going to be most comfortable for you and your tail?” Her and her bump
could fit pretty much anywhere in a car like this.

"I'll take the back seat, Papyrus will drive," he rumbled.

“And I’ll operate navigator.” She chuckles. She eases the seat back just a bit, because her legs are not going to be a part of the dash no matter how much she cares for Tenebris, and then slips into the front. Toki digs for her phone while the other two get themselves situated, and then carefully gets the address for the zoo. “Alright. I’ve got the address- looks like the quickest path is a little detour from here. Neat! It’ll take us through some fir trees. You guys got to see some while we were flying in, but Douglas fir trees grow huge!”

"Fascinating." Tenebris hummed, easily able to get comfy once the window was down so he could look out.

“I know what your favorite word is, Tenebris. It’s truly fascinating, I tell you.” She teased. Toki had to lean the seat itself back just a bit- she hardly had the shape for Tenebris’ usual posture- and then got comfortable herself. “Alright- I’m going to hit play, and it’ll guide you from here to the zoo. Sound alright, Pap?” She sets her phone where he can see the display while safely driving, and hits the play button so it could direct him.

"Sounds good." He nodded softly. Papyrus started up the car, and got them out of the parking garage.

Toki grimaced as they hit a speed bump, the car bouncing harshly. “I am certainly missing your Mustang about now. This is not nearly as comfortable a ride when it comes to bumps.” She adjusts herself and her seatbelt, and then sighs softly.

“Turn right in three quarters of a mile.” Her phone intones when they’re out onto the road.

Nodding once in agreement, Papyrus turned the car and stopped at a red light, before hearing yelling and calls. He peered over and blinked once, seeing some young boys calling at the car from Toki’s side.

Toki tilted her head curiously, and rolled the window down slightly to see just what exactly the boys wanted.

"Is that an actual skeleton driving the car?" one of the boys asked.

She blinked, and nodded. “And an actual skeleton riding passenger, yes. Pretty cool, isn’t it?” She gives them a sharp-toothed grin. By far, she is probably the scariest looking of the two, even if Papyrus dwarfs her.

"Yeah!" A younger kid piped up, before looking at Tenebris through the back window. His eyes widened. "Whoa...! That guy is huge!"

“He is.” She nods, lightly eying the red light. “A lot of monsters are very large. Some of them are small, but the vast majority of them are giants. It’s pretty nifty!”

Tenebris chuckled at that. He was large, he knew, large and powerful. The big monster managed a glance down to the boys before the light turned green.

They looked highly interested.

Aliquam chuckled softly and took off.
Toki giggled faintly, and relaxed for the majority of the trip.

The road brought them to a heavily wooded part of the city, and she rolled down her window to enjoy the trees as they cruised down the road. “Douglas fir trees grow so big- it’s awesome.” Some of the trees were towering monoliths that soared a hundred and some feet high, if not more.

"Fascinating." Tenebris murmured as he looked out.

“Everything is fascinating to you.” She giggled softly. Toki enjoyed the fresh smell of pine.

Up until the fresh smell wasn’t fresh anymore. A musky odor blew into the car, rancid and fetid smelling, and she coughed and covered her nasal cavity with her turtleneck sleeve. “Oh yuck, I didn’t think someone would hit a skunk this close to the big city.”

Tenebris was enjoying the smell of the pines, but as the overwhelming smell of death hit him, he gagged loudly and winced. “Holy Stars, why does it smell like that?”

The loud gag startled her, and she lurched forward in her seat just in case anything would come up from him. “Holy shit- Tenebris, are you alright?” The smell of skunk was fresh- and they ended up rolling right past the rank freshly dead corpse as they went down the road. “Skunk isn’t pleasant- don’t you remember the story I told you like, months ago?”

“I didn’t think it would be- be this bad.” He retched, dry and hard, and felt saliva blooming in the back of his throat as every inhale assaulted his sensitive senses with the musk and stench of skunk. "Gonna be sick... Gonna be sick..." Tenebris rasped from behind them.

“Shit- Pap, get to the shoulder of the road please.” Toki fiddled with her seat belt. It must have been the skunk- that would be the first time that either of them had smelled it, and apparently Papyrus had better constitution against smells than his father did.

He nodded and pulled to the side, and Tenebris climbed out of the car and retreated to some nearby foliage.

“I’ll make sure he’s okay.” And since the smell of skunk was lingering in the area, Toki also had some scented stuff in her purse that he could press to… wherever his nose was. She hobbled out after him, and then made her way to where his back was visible, while she rummaged around in her purse for a scented napkin that she had. She too had scent triggers, even as far into her pregnancy as she is, and sometimes they helped.

“Tenebris? You alright?”

He coughed and growled softly from where he was standing, spitting and clearing his mouth of sour tasting saliva. "F-Fuck..."

Toki approached, and gently rested her hand on his back. She pulsed out warmth, and then began to rub soothing circles across the broad and taut muscles below her finger bones. “That’s your first time smelling skunk, I know. If you feel sick, it’s best just to let it out than to suffer lingering nausea.”

"Eugh..." The noise he made was retched, and the black ooze that fell from his mouth was even more so.

Toki had to look away, lest she join him. But she didn’t stop her rubbing, until the muscles under her finger bones stopped it’s rhythmic heaving, and he stopped making ghastly noises.

“Ugh.” He spit to clear his mouth again, and then stepped forcibly away from the pile of black
sludge. Tenebris took a breath, straightened his back, and turned on his heel to stride for the car once his mouth had been wiped clean.

Toki rolled her eyes lightly at his attempted composure, and fished out a scented napkin. It’s pressed into his hand as she follows him back. “Here. Skunk stink lingers, and some of it is on the wheel of the car.” She’d seen little bits of gore stuck in the tread from where it had been splattered on the road. “This might help cover… well, however it is you smell without a nose.”

He takes it and presses it over his mouth. "Mmh... Thank you..." he murmured through it as he walked with her.

She smiled slightly. “It’s no problem, Tenebris. Pregnancy makes you carry nice smelling things around from time to time, in case you come across a trigger. Alright- into the car, and lets go. The stench is starting to bother even me now, and I was pretty desensitized to it after the skunk incident when I was younger.”

Toki eases into her seat, and rolls down her window further to air out the car, and then shoot a quick look over to Aliquam. “Are you doing alright, Pap?”

"I'm alright, yes..." he replied.

“Good.” She settles down and sighs. “We’ll take a different way back to the hotel.” She mutters.

"Thank you." he murmured once back in his seat.

“Not a problem. Stuff happens- and if we can avoid the skunk smell, we will.” Toki hummed softly in response, and waited for Papyrus to get back onto the road.

Once sure Tenebris wouldn’t be spontaneously sick in the back of the car, Aliquam pulled out again.

The rest of the trip was fairly easy, and they arrived at the zoo rather quickly. Toki stared as they parked, and whistled slightly through her teeth. “That is a lot of up hill walking. My feet are going to be dead after this.” She sighs. “Oh well. At least it looks like a nice zoo.” Vaguely she could smell the large mixes of animal smells wafting out, and blamed that on her heightened senses from her pregnancy. She could smell a lot of big cats, mostly, meaning they were probably close to the entrance.

Tenebris leaned his head back and his mouth fell open, taking in the air before he rumbled quietly. “Hmm.”

“I smell big cats.” Toki chirps softly. She hauls herself out of the car once they’re parked, and groans softly. “Oh yes. Definitely missing the Mercedes. My tailbone is so sore from the speed bumps. All right! You two ready to peer at some animal souls from afar?” Gods above, that sounded really weird- but she didn’t particularly care.

Tenebris nodded with a smile, as his taller son gave a bright laugh and hauled himself out of the car. “I can’t wait!”

“Me either! Though you may have to haul me up some of those hills.” The parking lot was even a hill. Hell, the area around her compound was fairly flat, until Mount Ebott. Toki wasn’t used to hills.
Still, she squared her shoulders, and began the waddle for the front gate, slinging her purse over her shoulder as she went.

"That will be easy enough." Aliquam giggled gently, following her with Tenebris in tow.

They would catch up to her before long, and it would be the three of them approaching the gate.

To his credit, the teen behind the counter only looked a little bit startled to see three monsters approach. “Uh… Hi. Three passes in?”

“Yes.” Toki nods. “How much?” She rummages around in her purse for the cash she’d had changed over to American currency.

“That depends on your ages.” He shuffles awkwardly. “Ages twelve through sixty-four is fifteen dollars. Sixty-five and up is twelve dollars.”

Toki nods, and glances back to them. “So… ticket’s for ages twelve through sixty-four are fifteen dollars. Sixty-five and up is twelve dollars” She says to them in her native tongue, watching as the boy’s eyes practically bug out of his head. “Think you count for the senior discount, Tenebris?”

"I am over seven hundred years old." he commented, "So... Perhaps."

Toki chuckled softly. “You are quite up there. Think they do a super-senior discount?” She teases with a wiggle of her brows. “You fall into the same category as I do, Ali.”

"I suppose I do." he replied, and arched a brow thoughtfully. "Though... That's only if I compare my age to a human equivalent. I’ve been alive much longer than that."

“Really? You’ve never told me how old you actually are. You’ve told me the equivalent- and that I am apparently a cougar.” She blinks at him thoughtfully, and then chuckled slightly. She turned her attentions briefly back to the boy. “Two adult passes and one seniors pass, please.”

The boy swallowed and nodded. He fished out the tickets, and took her cash. “Alright. Fifteen and fifteen are thirty, plus twelve is forty-two. Out of- fifty is eight dollars change. Here you go, Ma’am.”

“Thank you.” Toki took the tickets and her change, and handed the men their respective tickets, and took a moment to tuck her change into her wallet, and her wallet into her purse. That done, she had them follow her to the ticket clock in spot, and then from there, into the zoo proper.

They put them somewhere safe, then followed Toki.

"Well, though I am still in my twenties when compared to the age of a human's... I'm actually almost two hundred years old." he commented, "I'm a hundred and seventy five to be exact."

Toki very nearly dropped her purse, fumbling as the strap slid off her shoulder. She managed to keep it in place as she jerked her chin to him in shock. Her sockets clicked open and closed a couple of times, blinking slowly for a moment, before her laughter bubbled forth. “Holy shit. I’m more like jail bait to you then.” She chortled in amusement. “Oh well. At least I can say I’m with the best looking hundred and seventy five year old that I’ve ever seen.”

He sighed, and then chuckled gently. Papyrus leaned over to kiss one of her horns affectionately. "Nyeh heh heh heh, let's grab a map and get started, okay?"

“Okay!” She grinned cheerfully at him, giggles still escaping her. She spotted one of the spots for maps, and made for it. She snagged one, and then wiggled it at the boys. “Alright- who wants to be
the official map holder for today’s adventure?"

"May as well be me." Aliquam replied, holding his hand out for the map.

Toki passed the map over easily and hiked her purse up over her shoulder for ease of comfort.
“Alright- well, lets look at the mountain goats while we’re here.” They had the first enclosure right off from the front gate, just a little bit away from the gift shop. “We totally need to stop in the gift shop later. We can get a souvenir for Sans.”

"I wonder what they have that he’ll like.” Quinn hummed to himself as they went in, Tenebris perked at hearing the goats in the pen and he looked past the glass.

Toki eased over to the enclosure as well, and peered into the glass. There were a lot of females, but it would appear that there was only one male in the herd. The beard reminded her a lot of the King, as did the horns. “I don’t really know what he’d like. I suppose we’ll see.” She shifts, and then sidles up near Tenebris.

She elbows him gently in the ribs, and wiggles her brows up at him as the ram comes near the glass to investigate him. “I think you’re a bit of a goat magnet, Tenny. All the goats go baaaalistic for you, don’t they?”

He flushed slightly and gave a scoff as he folded his arms. "Excuse you, Toki." he huffed.

Toki couldn’t help the giggle that escaped. “Gods above, you are adorable when you get flustered.” It was a rare thing that Tenebris got flustered like so, and she had to enjoy flustering him when she could.

The ram made a noise through the glass, before ducking his chin and marking his beard. It brought over a few of the lady goats that sniffed at his beard and bits before flouncing off. The ram hesitated, made a noise at Tenebris, and then went bouncing off after his ladies.

Toki snickered, and glanced away with heavy amusement. “Goats are a riot.”

He grumbled and turned away, letting the blush on his cheeks slowly ease.

Papyrus giggled lightly and looked at his father, before looking to Toki. "Where would you like to go next?"

“Well, lets take a look at the map.” She pads closer, and peers at the map in his hand. She was the only one fluent in English after all, though the map itself was fairly easy to follow with all of the symbols it had on it. “Well, it looks like there is one path to follow, but it splits off into another one. Do we want to check out the Great Northwest section? It looks like the little path will bring us right back down from Black Bear Ridge and the Eagle Canyons down to the Pacific Shores, and we can go from there.”

Aliquam nodded in agreement, while Tenebris looked over the map, soon nodding as well.

Toki beamed cheerfully. “Alright- looks like a decent jaunt. The path is this way. C’mon, my love. Walk with me?” She offers her hand to Papyrus, and smiles up to him. She would do her best not to make Tenebris feel like a third wheel- but affection was to be had at some point.

Tenebris had no problem with them having their fun; he himself was more interested in the animals.

Toki pauses as they’re half way up the trail, and then pouts. “Shoot. I didn’t really take the chance to look and see what mountain goat souls look like. Oh well. We need to hang a left here, and we
should be able to see some black bears.” Seeing souls wasn’t easy for her. She could feel them and pull them out just fine, but seeing them inside the body was hard. She’d barely managed with the bees.

The two followed her as she led them through the zoo, looking around curiously, one with awe, the other in fascination.

They were surprisingly quiet, the two monsters accompanying her, but Toki didn’t mind. There was something tranquil about the zoo, with its towering trees and sounds of life. Toki didn’t even mind the people that gaped curiously at the trio of monsters as they walked.

The bear exhibit didn’t pan out, sadly. They were all asleep in their caves, so all they could really see were large, fuzzy black butts sticking out of the dens. The bobcats were similar, hidden by foliage as they napped the day away. So that left them making the hike up towards the Eagle Canyons.

And a hike it was, up a mountainside. Toki’s legs were killing her by the time they reached the next fork in the road. “Agh. All right. So, the left path looks like it leads up to the… Well, where the eagles and salmon are. Right path takes us down to something called the Cascade Stream. The stream leads back down to the rest of the zoo.” The left path was up even higher than where they already were.

"I'm curious about the large cat enclosures." Tenebris piped up.

“The majority of the big cats are on the other end of the zoo,” She hummed, pointing down to the Africa section. “But it looks like they have cougars up here too. They’re down the… Right path, it looks like. They’re just after the Cascade Stream, and before Trillium Creek Family Farms. I think that’s a petting zoo?”

"Oh." he rumbled gently.

"Ooh, a petting zoo?" Aliquam piped up with an excited sound.

“Mhm. Lets head to the right then- we’ll make our way down to the big cats, and stop by the petting zoo.” Toki flashed them both smiles, and waddled onwards. The pathway began to slope downwards, so she shifted her weight on her feet so she wouldn’t fall. Down the path quite a long ways, Toki could see covered buildings, which must have been the Cascade Stream habitat.

They both were excited to various degrees, but Aliquam kept a firm grip on her as they headed down the hill, so his mate didn’t even risk falling.

Toki didn’t mind him making sure she didn’t fall- normally it wouldn’t bother her to risk slipping, but it wasn’t just her anymore, and soullings were fairly fragile.

The opening to the Cascade Stream was fairly large, with double doors, though the doors were suited to human heights. Toki’s horns just barely skidded the edge as they passed through. Inside were all types of exhibits, from beavers to foxes, otters, ducks, and all sorts of things.

Funny enough, Tenebris and Aliquam both had to duck to go inside.

Toki grinned, and padded over to peer at the foxes. One of them peered up at her, made a noise, and then bounced off to play with one of the other ones. “Heh. These look like Todd.”

Seeing the foxes, Tenebris rumbled gently in laughter, "That's adorable." he chortled softly.

Toki lights up with a grin, and her magic fluctuated excitedly with her sudden thought. “We have to
get a stuffed toy fox for Rosie and Felix.” One of the foxes yips, and she takes a moment to peer at it’s soul since they’re quite active. She struggles for a moment, but manages to make out a faint circular shape. “Huh… Fox souls look like circles. Or circular, at least.”

"How interesting." Aliquam hummed gently. “And of course! We’ll make sure to get them a toy to match their father.”

Toki nods, and moves over to take a look at the beavers. They too have circular souls, and she hums thoughtfully. Maybe circular souls were an animal thing? “Beavers are pretty cool. They kind of smell though.” Very musky they were. It wasn’t unpleasant, but it wasn’t something she’d enjoy smelling every day.

Tenebris rumbled in agreement, the spot where his nose would be if he had one wrinkling upwards slightly. "I can smell them faintly.”

“It’s not a bad smell, just… strong, I guess.” Toki chuckles softly, and steps back. She wanders over to one of the ponds, and blinks. “Whoa, guys come check this out. This thing is apparently a Sturgeon. It’s bigger than you, Tenebris.” The fish was probably close to nine or ten feet long, and was swimming lazy circles in the water that the ducks were swimming on.

He blinked once and looked at the massive fish, his tail rattling as it wagged back and forth. "How fascinating." he purred gently. "Its length can match his majesty's height." he chuckled.

Toki let out a un-lady like snort, and guffawed. Its length could match the King’s. Length. Shit, no one was too old for dick jokes. She kept her thoughts on that particular part of his words silent, and didn’t end up explaining why she was laughing so hard. “T-that’s very t-true.” She giggled.

He shot her a look, "I meant his height, not his anatomy, Nara.” he huffed. "So inappropriate.” he snorted, though he was rumbling gently with a laugh as well.

“One is never t-too old for d-dick jokes, Tenny.” She chuckled. Toki shook her head through, and strove to banish her giggles. She took a deep calming breath, and exhaled in a soft grunt as one of her ribs was jabbed. Apparently the twins thought she wasn’t hilarious either. Amusement lit her eye lights.

He shook his head and sighed with a soft laugh. "Very funny." he rumbled gently.

“The twins don’t think I’m funny either,” she chuckles. Her free hand folds over her middle, and she shifts, and pads a little further away. The pens themselves are pretty big, but there are only so many pens to go around. Toki perks, and coos as she reaches the otters. “Awww, they’re so cute! River Otters are simply precious.”

One of the otters came up to the glass and squeaked curiously as Aliquam knelt down, looking at their souls. They too were circular, but moved more fluently, as if more like the very water that they swam in.

Toki smiled and made an attempt to mimic the noise back at them. It wasn’t as hard as she thought- she no longer had actual vocal chords. It made her wonder if she would be able to mimic other things. So, she chirped back to the otters, squeaking at them cheerily.

The otter flipped excitedly in the water, squealing and squeaking happily.

Toki laughed happily. “I have no idea what I just said to the otter, but I think I just made its day.”

Aliquam was laughing quietly at her and the otter.
Tenebris just shook his head, rumbling quietly behind her in his usual subtle laughter.

Toki snickered again, and grinned. “Otters are adorable. Alright- you both ready to go look at the cougars, before we head down to look at the other animals?”

The eldest of them nodded. "Yes, of course."

"Let's go!" Aliquam held his hand out to her, smiling happily.

She reclaimed his hand, and guided him for the exit doors to the enclosure. “So, did you notice the souls? They’re all round in animals, it seems.”

"It is interesting." He agreed.

“I guess it makes sense. All monster souls are upside down hearts, all human souls are right side up hearts, animals have circles, and insects have water drop shaped souls. Huh. More you know, I guess.” She leans into his shoulder contently, and continues to ease her way down the surprisingly steep drop down to the rest of the zoo. “Oregon seems to be a lot of hills. I thought Ebott was steep in some places, but I think this takes the cake.”

"You'll have to tell that to me again later when I have something to write that down on." Tenebris commented over his shoulder as he walked.

“Oh yeah- you do sciency stuff. I bet this is something you’ll want to note for your experiments and whatnot.” Toki nods. “I’ll remind you when we get back to the hotel. Ah- we should have checked the fish’s soul. Maybe mammals have different souls than aquatic creatures do. Either way, we can test that theory later. Ebott does, in fact, have an aquarium.”

"Perhaps we will look into it upon returning home." he rumbled gently, looking to find the cat exhibit.

“If we’re not dead tired,” she chuckles, “We can plan a trip to the city with all of us for a day at the aquarium. Ah- Cougars. Oh look!” One of them was out sunning itself on one of the sun rocks outside of the dens, all tan and beige and powerful looking. Toki peered at the large feline through the thick glass that surrounded the enclosure, and grinned broadly. “That is one very large cat.”

Tenebris looked at the cats and slowly lowered to his haunches in front of the glass railing. He reached out and set a palm flat against the glass.

The cougar glanced over, flicked an ear, and chuffed at the big monster.

Toki blinked curiously.

He chuffed back and tilted his head slightly.

The cougar chuffed again, ears perking at the noise. It- a large tom, which was made present as he stood up- rolled onto his feet and padded for the glass. Large yellow eyes peered up at him as the cat bumped against the glass.

“I think you made a friend.” Toki discretely tugged out her phone, and began to take pictures.

He tilted his head a little more and rattled quietly, leaning and resting his forehead against the glass.

The cougar chuffed, sniffed the glass- and proceeded to turn around and rub along it with his body. Toki giggled as she took pictures. “Goat charmer and cat whisperer. Who knew?”
Tenebris rumbled happily as he watched the cougar, before he turned to see Aliquam giggling next to his mate.

Toki grinned, and snapped a picture of the look on the old scientist’s face. “Looks like the big kitty likes you. Have you ever thought about adopting a couple of cats to keep you company?”

“I considered.” he replied honestly.

“You totally should.” She grins lightly. “Cats are good companion animals. I’d say a dog, but… you come off more as a cat person than a dog person.” The only one of the Gasters that came off as a dog person was Sans, really. Toki shifted, startling when the big cat proceeded to hiss at her and Aliquam, and stepped away from the glass. She chuckles softly. “I like cats- but not ones who could eat me for a snack.”

He chuckled quietly, ”Cats don’t really eat bones," he commented.

“No, but you forget that I was fleshy and meaty up until last year.” She chuckles. “Thirty two years of being human is hard to deny- and I can say that instincts still go ‘nope, that is a predator, you should back away’ even if my teeth are now almost as large as the cat’s fangs.”

The feline loses interest soon, and wanders back to his sun rock.

He chuckled and stood, walking back to her. "Uh huh." he shook his head lightly, "Well let's consider this for when we get home."

“Mhm! C’mon, we still have so much to see!” She wanted to get as far as she could before backaches or leg aches slowed her down.

The duo are easily dragged along by Toki, both too amused to argue.
Chapter 51

They came home from America being completely exhausted. The day after the trip to the zoo, they spent all day in the room with all of the other old guardians and government officials, creating plans and solidifying construction designs. They were there from nearly dawn, until dark, and then they turned in once everything was finalized.

Other countries were going to start opening up for Monsters to make homes there too- and they now had solid plans, and solid understandings, for what the monsters wanted and what they truly needed for good living situations. Tutors were going to be offered to those who wanted to move countries, and the governments were going to start working on communicating with Doctor Alphys to help humans better understand how to care for monsters and human turned monsters for when they got sick or ill.

Despite it being an absolutely exhausting venture- filled with lots of Linda’s nasty lemon bars that she insisted everyone eat- it ended on a good note, with a positive impact on the future for monsterkind. Toki went home feeling extremely content with it.

The flight back had been pretty easy, less turbulence on taking off, though they encountered it when they got back. They slept most of the flight- or at least Toki did. She dozed off while the both of them had been talking about something.

When they’d returned back to the compound, Han had informed them that they had a couple days to rest, but then it was time for fireworks.

He had gotten hold of some information about a spot where one could see the fireworks clearly, but hear absolutely nothing from them. Which meant- he could watch the fireworks for the first time in a great many years. He spent those couple of days that they had to ‘rest’ having Papyrus help him plan a barbeque of sorts for everyone that would be coming. He’d dragged the tall skeleton off to town in order to get supplies for a traditional American barbeque, and they’d apparently spent some off hours off doing whatever in town while getting things for those that were coming.

It wasn’t going to be a big group compared to what could have wanted to come- a hundred or so monsters out of a thousand and then some were wanting to come with for various reasons- but it was...
enough to warrant a large space. Which, thankfully, the clearing certainly was large enough to house so many.

That’s where they were currently- it was the evening of the fireworks, which celebrated the beginning of summer starting the second week of June. The clearing was fairly large, and littered with blankets. It was on a steeply sloped hill, surrounded by dense trees on three sides. The cars were parked in rows at the bottom of the hill. It had a straight view over Ebott City where the fireworks proper would be set off, and really, there was no better location.

It was dusk out, well into evening, with the last of the sun’s rays coloring the sky a brilliant mixture of gold, blues, reds, and dark purples. Grillby had wrangled Sans into helping him cook- he was the designation grill master for the barbeque, and he couldn’t quite manage six grills on his own, so, naturally, he asked his intended to help.

Muffet had even come along- and she had a small pastry stand set up to the side. She was selling her goods- which Toki really didn’t mind. The frugal spider lady was nice, and muffin, despite being horribly, horribly scary at times, was actually remarkably sweet. Toki was quite fond of the spider cider too. The warm cider would be a good drink later on in the night.

Which was fine with Toki. She was sort of caught between Han and literally everyone else. They were up to something, she knew- that or Han as just overly clingy because Todd and his kids hadn’t been able to make it to the fireworks today on account of Todd needing to do some things up at the Castle. Han had hardly left her side- and either recruited her into singing for the kids while he played his handy-dandy violin, or got her playing hide and seek in the trees with Thumper, Twitch, and a good chunk of the children.

He kept her busy, and busy had passed the time quite quickly. Still, she only had so much energy, and found herself starting to grow very tired during the last bout of hide and seek. Once she’d been found, she called a tap out, and waddled for their chosen spot. It was near the top of the hill so that the shorter monsters would be able to see the fireworks more effectively. It was necessary; given how many tall monsters she had in her ‘party’ of sorts, if they had sat lower, anyone behind them would have been completely blind.

Toki eased herself down onto the blanket while Han continued to search for the monster kids- the majority of which were running circles around him, darting from hiding place to hiding place. She reclined back slightly, resting on her elbows as she tried to catch her metaphorical breath. There were only so many hiding places she could fit now, and only so fast she could move to reach them.

Toki was quite thoroughly winded- but she’d had fun. And she took the reprieve from Han for what it was, and enjoyed her short stint of solitude while everyone was too busy to notice that she was alone. While Han was with her most times, the times that she wasn’t, other monsters had drawn her over for socialization and catching up.

Though, she found herself joined by an exhausted Muffin moments later- the muffin shaped Great Dane sized spider coming to nestle into her leg like an over sized lap dog. Toki patted Muffin quietly, and laughed softly as Muffet gave a whistle.

The spider gave a canine like whine, and got to its feet again, before reluctantly bounding off to aid its mistress.

Once Muffin left, Toki quite enjoyed being alone on the blanket, even if the grass below her was hard and uncomfortable. She tilted her skull back to enjoy the color of the twilight sky, sighing softly in happiness.
However, Toki was not alone for long as none other than the father of her children approached her and her resting place.

"Toki, you don’t mind if I take this spot by you, do you?" he asked gently, offering her a warm grin.

Toki tilted her skull over to him with a smile and shook her head. She wiggled over a little bit to give him some space, and padded the blanket beside her. “I don’t mind at all. Please- I would love your company. I haven’t gotten to see much of you today since we got out of the car. We’ve both been kept pretty busy though. I’m just trying to catch my breath a bit.”

Papyrus eased down next to her, scooting close and then tugging her gently against him with one arm. "I'm glad!" He chirped. His chipper tone faded though, and he glanced to her, and then away, a bit of nerves making his bones tingle. “I... I wanted to talk to you about something very important.”

“You’re welcome to talk to me about anything, you know that.” She purred softly to him. She leaned faintly into him, enjoying the warmth of his arm over her shoulders. “What is it you want to discuss, my love? Or is this something you’d rather do in a more private location?”

If it was serious, there was no telling if he wanted it to be out in public or not. If all else failed, they could go down to his Mercedes and talk there.

He looked at her for a long moment, mulling something over in his head. Then he eased himself from hugging her, and moved in front of her, resting himself on one knee before her. "Toki... You know I love you... and our children both... right?"

She eased herself up so she was sitting upright instead of reclining, and nodded to his question. “I know you do, and I- we- love you too.” She smiles warmly. Toki wasn’t sure what that was all about, but she waited patiently for him to speak.

He smiled and reached out, taking her hand tenderly into his own. "And you know that I’d want to make sure that you were safe with me, no matter what..."

“Of course.” She nods, watching him with curious affection in her eye lights as she gently strokes his fingers with her own.

He looked at her, and then he reached up and rubbed his head. "Well... I... I want to make it official!" he told her boldly, before he turned and began to feel around his pockets. The hand holding hers soon joined the one searching his pockets when he seemed unable to find something. "O-Official... By asking you... T-Tokiko Nara!" He seemed to panic for a moment before he found what he was looking for. Papyrus reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a velvet box. "T-To marry me!" he told her, holding it out to her with both hands, his face tucked between his biceps, eyes shut tight with nerves.

She was stunned speechless for several seconds, and it took her a moment to realize that holy crap, he was serious. He had asked her to marry him. Toki certainly gaped, and it took her several long seconds to get her nonexistent brain functioning again.

When she could form words with her mind, Toki carefully lifted her hands. One took the box very carefully, while the other tilted his chin up so he would look at her. Hearts danced in her eyes, affection making her soul swell and her body tingle and buzz audibly as her sockets physically lit up in the brightest shade of liquid emerald. “Yes.” She said simply, voice clear and firm. She didn’t even have to stop and think about if it was the right time or not- it just was, and she knew it. “Yes! A thousand times over, yes, yes, yes!”
For the longest time, he was scared... Terrified that he had done it wrong. All he could do was hold his position and try his best not to tremble. But when she touched his chin, and she spoke her words, he felt a profound sense of relief flood him. Papyrus smiled happily and hugged her tightly, unable to do anything but laugh; laugh with happiness and utter relief.

Toki looped her arms around his neck and tugged, sending him sprawling across the blanket with her once more. She snuggled close and hugged him back, laughing gently with the ring box still nestled in her hand. “I love you,” she laughed softly. “I love you so, so much you silly skeleton.” Happy tears welled in her sockets, and she clung tighter to him all the same.

"I love you Toki... I love you..." he whispered into her as he held her, "I love you so goddamn much..."

“You are my world, Papyrus Aliquam Gaster.” She smiled warmly. “I will love you until the end of time.” Toki nuzzled into his neck, and laughed gently. “Let’s get the ring on though, before I drop the box.” Velvet didn’t like to be held by bones. “Will you do the honors...?”

He smiled and took the box from her once he leaned back. He opened it and carefully pulled out the ring before he took her hand, and slipped the ring onto her finger. "Toki," he whispered, giggling weakly.

“Papy,” She smiled at him warmly, eyes bright with the green hearts and tiny, happy glowing tears. The ring fit fairly well as her magic cushioned it and kept it in place, and she turned it gently with her finger. It was a simple, smooth band to mark their engagement. Toki’s eyes watered all over again, and she flung her arms about his neck and clung tightly to him as they sprawled out on the blanket.

There was a click of a camera, and an out of breath Han grinned at them with his phone in hand. “This is going on the Internet and the Undernet.” He grinned.

He held her tightly and peppered her with loving kisses as he rolled over, so that he was now the body pillow for her, his arms around her and not going to let go until she was content. He didn't even care that Han had got it on camera.

He knew Tenebris was hiding with a camera fixed on them anyways.

Toki was content to cling to him tightly, though she had to shift a bit so as not to squish the twins while lying against him. “By everything that is holy, I love you, you silly skeleton.” She hiccupped happily against his chest, and then leaned up to meet his peppering of kisses with a deeper, actual kiss. Her teeth clicked gently against his own, magic pulsing and teasing softly over his bones.

Han grinned and took one more photo of them snuggled together. “Welcome to the family, Pap. More officially than last time. Heh- We’re going to have to go out for a stag night.” He liked the British term better than he did the American term. “Get you truly wasted.”

Toki wiped her tears, content to cling to Papyrus while he held her. “H-heh. If you’re taking him out for a bachelor’s party, you’d better keep an eye on him, Han.”
“Two eyes, as often as I can spare them.” He grins cheekily. “Congratulations, you two.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh." Papyrus laughed gently as he stroked Toki's head, his form glowing with happiness as he held her. "No. No Parties..." he told Han. "I just want as much time with Toki as possible."

Han simply smiled and nodded. “That’s fine by me. Heh… We’ll have the rest of both of your lives to see you sloshed anyways. You’re going to have a lot of time with Toki.” He grins, and wiggles the phone as it buzzes and dings. “By the way- you’ve already got about thirty people wishing you congratulations on your engagement already.”

Toki flushed, and nuzzled close to Papyrus. “You didn’t.”

“I did.” He grinned. “Hacked your Facebook and everything. Heh- alright. I’ll leave you two lovebirds to your snuggling. You and your fiancé are adorable, Sis.”

He blinked once, and then he giggled and hugged Toki tighter, kissing her head more and more as he cradled her close to his chest.

Toki smiled and twisted the ring on her finger. It felt right- cool and metal, though her magic was warming it up for her. She smiled and leaned up to kiss Aliquam again, her sockets fluttering closed as Han stepped away to give them some time.

Darkness fell, food was served, and Toki and Papyrus got free cups of spider cider from Muffet as congratulations on their engagement. Everyone was soon settled down with food and drink, and the fireworks began.

They were faint, barely discernable to Toki’s range of hearing, but they didn’t seem to bother Han at all. He sat beside her and Aliquam on the blanket, watching the lights pop in the darkness.

Toki enjoyed the fireworks tremendously. The display was supposed to be a long one, nearly an hour long- and she looked forwards to it. Every sound of wonder from the children and adults alike made the uncomfortable ground worth sitting on. She even caught Grillby making sounds of wonder from where he sat with Cae cradled against his chest. They were all piled together on the blanket, warm and comfortable in close proximity.

Han leaned over and tapped Papyrus’ hand. “Pst… hey. Can I borrow your fiancé for a moment? I want to talk to her.”

"But I’m cuddling with her." Papyrus might have whined just a little bit as he snuggled her closer to himself. "Will it take long?" he finally inquired.

“Maybe five minutes tops.” He smiles. “You’ll have her back before long, I promise.”

“Think you can handle five minutes?” She tilts her head back to peer at Papyrus, and smiles warmly to both him and her brother. Her brother wouldn’t interrupt unless he thought it was something important that he needed to talk to her about.

"Nyeh." He huffed, but relented and nodded. He helped her get upright, and gave her the blanket that they had been sharing. He was going to be fine without it for five simple minutes anyways.
"Any longer and I'll come after you."

“Soldier’s honor.” Han patted his heart with a smile, and chuckled as his sister got to her feet. The monster-sized blanket swallowed her up hilariously. “C’mon, Sis.” He offered his arm. “I’ll make sure you don’t roll your ankle in any holes.”

“Thanks, Han.” She gave him a smile, and looped her arm into her brother’s own. “I’ll be back, Pap.”

“We’ll be back.” Han nods. He guides her away, towards the trees off to the side of the gathering. Once he’s a fair distance off, he leans back against the trunk of one of the trees at the edge of the clearing and smiles slightly.

Toki waits patiently for a moment, before clearing her throat. “Papyrus was serious, you know. He will come find us if we’re not back within five minutes.”

“I know.” Han simply sighed. “I’m just… Thinking. You’re engaged now, Toki. That’s… hell, that’s amazing. I am super happy. I also approve. He’s the best damn guy you’ve ever dated- and he isn’t even human.”

“I know.” She sighs softly. Her eyes flit over to a bright flash of light in the sky, and she chuckles softly. It was the same orange as Papyrus’ soul and his magic. “I love him. I love him a lot. I never thought I’d ever love someone like I love him, y’know? It just… is.”

“That’s how love is.” He smiles slightly. “I think I know the feeling.” A wistful look slides over his face. “Which brings me around to what I wanted to talk to you about. You’re getting married eventually. Papyrus and you need the house to yourselves.”

She turned to him sharply. “Just because I’m engaged doesn’t mean that you’re not welcome in our house, Han. Never. You’ve always got a place to stay with me. Always.”

“I know. But you’ve got two little ones coming in soon.” He stoops to pet his nieces or nephews, and smiles as his fingers are kicked. “It’s time for you to start a family of your own. The next generation of clan leaders.”

“That doesn’t mean that you have to go, Han.”

“I’m not leaving the village, Toki. I’m not… nearly stable enough for that.” He admits quietly. “But…” His smile brightens. “Todd and I… we… We really like each other. His kids and myself get along great. Felix… Felix is amazing, and Rosie is just a doll. I’m attached.” He admits. “And they are too. Todd and I have been talking, and… He’d like me to move in with him.”

“Really?” She blinks.

“Yeah.” Han admits shyly. “I spend most of my time there anyways. With how often Todd is gone up at the castle learning magic, we thought… maybe it’d be good to have another person around the house to help raise the kids, y’know?”

“I do.” She nods slyly. “So it doesn’t have anything to do with you liking each other, does it?” she grins.

He flushes bright under the next flash of light, and lightly punches her arm. “Oh shut up you. That… might be a little of it. But… He’s happy. And I’m happy. And… we make each other happy. He makes some of the nightmares a little less…”
“Less.” She agrees without him needing to explain. She reaches up and takes his hand in hers. “Baby bro, if you’re happy, you go for it. Todd is a good, kind man. He will take care of you- and you’d damn well take care of him and those kids, or we’ll be having a different sort of talk.”

“I will do my best.” He smiles brightly. “Rosie slipped up yesterday. I didn’t tell you, but… She called me Papa. I don’t think I’ve ever been so damn happy in my entire life, to be honest with you.”

Toki beams. “I’m happy for you, Han. You’re a good man- a good brother. We’ll help you get moved in with him. I assume you’ll want to keep your instruments at my place?”

He shook his head. “The school, actually. They’ve opened up a room for them- I get a full musical classroom soon. Not just the little one- more and more students are joining, and I need more space to teach them all. It’s great, Toki. I haven’t been this happy and hopeful in a long, long time.”

“I’m glad, brother.” She smiles warmly. “I’ve noticed too. I’m just happy that you’re doing better and can finally find your happy place.”

“Me too…” He sighed softly. Han shifted stepped forward to hug his elder sister, making her stoop down just slightly so he could press a kiss to her forehead, and to the scar over her skull. “You are the best big sister a guy could have, y’know?”

“I certainly try to be.” She chuckled softly and hugged him back. The trees lit up with red light as a firework went off, and then fell dark once more.

Han stepped back from the hug after a moment and motioned back towards the group. “C’mon, we’re probably running short on our five minutes. I don’t want to get in trouble with Papyrus for keeping you too long, Sis.”

“Oh I doubt he’d be too upset. You’re my bro- and I always have time for you.” She grinned. Toki turned to stride forwards, round about the time that Han jerked and lunged behind her.

Aliquam had watched her leave with her brother, keeping his eye on her to make sure she didn’t trip in the dark. It truly hadn’t bothered him much to let her go off- though he was feeling the terrible need to keep her tucked close to himself where no one could bother her. Part of that he blamed on some of his genetics, truly, for his Father had a more beastly nature than any skeleton that Papyrus had ever read about. The need to tend to his mate, to make sure she and their brood were safe and cared for, was incredibly strong. That feeling only grew stronger as each day came to pass.

The tall skeleton heaved a sigh and crossed his ankles, leaning back to watch the sky. Fireworks were something he could never forget. The stars themselves were amazing- absolutely breathtaking, in fact. But… Fireworks were something else entirely. The way the colors washed the skies in bursts of light and fire were mesmerizing, and he found himself briefly lost in the glow of one that lit up the same color as his soul.

“Aliquam.” Tenebris scooted forwards to settle by his son. He leaned closer, to keep his words quiet and private, and then spoke again. “I want you to know that I am proud of you, my Son.”

“You are, Father?” He tilted his skull, gaze flicking to the big monster. Tenebris’ eyes were glowing faintly in the dark, pupils flashing with each bloom of color in the sky.
“I am.” Tenebris nods quietly. He rumbles faintly, and adjusts his gloves thoughtlessly. “You have shown your honor in yourself, and in your family name today, for gathering up the courage to ask your mate to be yours. It… makes me happy, to see my youngest son forging a family of his own.”

Papyrus smiles slightly. “You know, for a second I thought I had done something wrong, because she went quiet, and I was so, so terrified that she would tell me no… But then she tilted my chin up, and everything was right in the world.” He sighed softly. “I am happy, Father. I am so very, very happy. Part of me has been gnawing at me to make a claim on her that others could see- a beyond just our children.”

“That would be my doing, my son.” Tenebris sighed happily, before rumbling and reaching up to rest a hand on Aliquam's shoulder. “Instincts are powerful, and you and Sans got them from me. You feel relief- and possessiveness, correct?” The instincts were not all that the skeleton brothers had gotten- and the blossoming growth of Toki’s middle was proof of that.

“I do.” Aliquam nods quietly. “I want to keep her close and never let go sometimes.”

“You do well to control your instincts. Keep your logical mind in control- but don’t be afraid to indulge them from time to time. It is… very satisfying.” The elder monster chuckled quietly. A flash of bright purple caught his gaze, and he rumbled with a pleased sound. Fireworks, even as quiet as these, were hypnotizing to look at. “Despite a few learning missteps, you do well to care for Toki and your young, just as she does well to care for you.”

“Sometimes she does too much,” The taller monster sighed. “I worry when she exerts herself for my sake- or anyone else’s sake. She is…”

“You love her. Worry is natural, Papyrus. We have known her for some time now, though. She is almost as stubborn and tenacious as you can be.” He chuckled softly. “I can only imagine what your children will be like.”

That simple fact made Papyrus laugh softly. “Truly, father, we will have our hands full. Though… I cannot wait to see them and hold them. I can feel them slightly, but… holding them will be the best feeling in the world.”

“Holding your children is certainly an earth shattering experience.” Tenebris looked down at his hands, and laughed quietly. “You were the smallest skeleton I had ever seen when you were born. You were barely the length of my palm- where Sans was nearly double your size, and yet you grew up to be taller than even your brother. I remember when I first held you. You grasped my thumb and held me with a strength I didn’t think you could possess. Holding your child for the first time… your world zeros in on them, and they become your everything.”

Papyrus chuckles. “Father, you’re getting all teary eyed over memories again.”

“Ah, forgive me.” He does dabble at his eyes all the same, and chuffs to clear away any lingering sensations of tears. “You know how it is. Or, rather, you will at any rate.”

The tall skeleton nods. “I can’t wait.” He chuckles.

Another flash of light comes up- but it is accompanied by a sharp crack Pop- and then the monsters on the hill below them are scrambling to their feet. Papyrus’ eyes sharpen and he lurches to his feet, spotting Toki and Han as they tumble from the trees. His gaze locks on them, zeroing in as his soul thundered loudly in his chest.

And from around them pours humans in black clothes with bright red masks.
Tenebris’ eyes widened upon seeing the familiar soldiers, and a feral, untamed energy surges from his mind to his soul, before filling his body with a rage-fueled adrenaline.

H.A.M.

They didn’t have the chance to dodge. Pointblank, the bullet ripped a burning path through Han’s chest, and lodged inside the back of his scapula.

He fell back, tumbling out of the tree line, and Toki went down with him, arms coming to try and slow his fall. Around them, chaos exploded as humans in black body suits and red masks poured out of the woods in a swarm.

Monsters scrambled to their feet as they were nearly overwhelmed, forced back away from the tree line by lashing weapons. It didn’t take long before they were fighting back and human’s fighting them in turn. Black bodies and red masks moved in a blur as monsters surged forth, coming to cut the dark shapes off from harming Toki and Han more.

But no one could stop. No one could drop down to help her, because they had to beat the men in masks back.

Han gasped and choked, sputtering iron flavored flecks of spittle up across his sister’s shirt as she scrambled to see the damage.

Toki’s eyes blazed bright, panic making her hands shake as she rolled him over. He’d been shot- in the right side of his chest. Red was all but spurting out of the hole, and she shoved her fingers against it, trying to stem the flow of blood. “No, no, no, no, no,” Her voice sounded distant to her ears. “Han, oh gods, Han…!”

His eyes rolled slightly, staring up at her, through her, at something she couldn’t see. “I n-n-need-”

“Shh, shhh, don’t talk, just… Just stay with me Han. Please, please stay with me.” She pressed her fingers harder, struggling up onto her knees so she could put better pressure on his chest.

There was so much blood, rushing out from under her fingers with each pulse of his heart. His arms didn’t move, his body didn’t move- but his eyes flicked between her and the sky behind her. “P-please don’t make me go,” he stammers. “P-please.”

“You’re not going anywhere. You’re going to stay here- you’re going to be okay.” She looks up, frantically glancing for anyone who could help. Everyone is pinned down- oh gods, they can’t do anything. There is no one- anyone who could come, even if she shouted. Everyone was engaged- there were guns being shot, knives being wielded, blunt weapons sparking against magically conjured ones. She couldn’t find Aliquam amidst the warring masses- She couldn’t even see the massive form of Tenebris from where she was on the ground. Time both flew and crawled- and it could have been seconds or hours before she could turn her face back to her brother.

“I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry.” Her hands press harder against his chest, trying to stop the bleeding. It just wouldn’t stop. “I’m sorry if this hurts- I’m sorry, oh god, I’m sorry.”

“Toki-Toki, it… it doesn’t.” Han murmured. He swallowed shakily, eyes resting at half-mast. His face was rapidly paling, and he could… feel a stuttering in his chest. But it didn’t hurt. He couldn’t
feel anything- anything beyond this draining feeling that was slowly sucking him away. “It doesn’t hurt. I can’t feel anything.”

That… Was probably not a good thing. Toki’s eyes welled with tears, and she tried not to burn him as her magic fluctuated wildly in her body. The bleeding wouldn’t stop- it was spurting out between the bones of her hands, staining everything on her with the vibrant red she knew his blood contained. Under the flashes of the lights from the fireworks blossoming overhead, she could see the growing stain on his shirt, and how it wept onto her. Her belly was coated in spots of red, and Toki could find no comfort in the lessening of the sizes of the spurts from his chest.

She sniffed quietly, and a hand flicked up to clear her sockets. Blood smeared across her face- and she nearly gagged as she tasted it dripping down against her mouth. “Okay- okay, not hurting is… is good right?”

“Right… I… Don’t make me go, please. I don’t… I’m not ready…” His teeth chattered, and he choked again, blood bubbling up and clogging his airways. She tilted his head and shoulders to the side, and he choked blood out over her arm as she tried to help him breathe.

Moving him hadn’t been a good idea. She couldn’t see an exit wound- which meant the bullet was still somewhere inside of him. “You’re not allowed to go anywhere,” Toki’s voice was shaky, for as firm as her words were. “I love you, bro, you’re not allowed to go anywhere. Not at all.”

“I’m not ready… Not ready… I was just… beginning to be happy.”

“You’re not going anywhere.” She said firmly, words harsh and unyielding, as she pressed tighter against his chest.

“I’m not ready… Todd… Rosie… Felix…” He muttered. “Toki… don’t m-make me leave them…”

“No one is going to make you do anything.” A sob nearly escaped.

“P-please…”

Toki trembled and opened her mouth to assure him once more- but before she could say anything else, his chest shuddered under her fingers and he exhaled out a rattling gurgle. The blood stopped spurting between her finger bones- and Toki watched the gleam fade from his eyes as his body went lax and released all of it’s tensions.

“Han?” No, no… he couldn’t be- he couldn’t…

But there was no response, not even as she shook his shoulder. The only thing that happened was the growing stain on his pants, proof of what she so wanted to deny.

“No!” She cried. Her magic lurched into him, and she tugged, trying to draw him awake and back to life with the warmth of her magic.

Instead, she drew out his soul. Her brother’s soul was small, indicating he was not a boss heart- but it was the most beautiful shade of blue she had ever seen. He was so, so small and worn, and with a few scratches here and there along the surface- but he shown with the most beautiful glow she had ever seen in that color. Her brother had been a beautiful soul, full of life and luster even after all of the pain and guilt he’d had to deal with.

Her first time ever seeing his soul- and she watched as a terrible cracking noise pierced the sounds of battle around her. White marks crackled across the surface, highlighting his LOVE, HP, and his stats, and she watched with growing horror as he shattered in her hand.
His soul disappeared, falling into a broken pile of blue dust at her fingers, before blowing away with the air of the many moving bodies around them.

Her little brother was dead. He was dead and gone- and she couldn’t fix that. She couldn’t make it better. He had died, shattering to pieces in her hands after bleeding out in her lap. She had been completely helpless to stop him, to stop his pain, to stop him dying. She was always helpless against them- even with the training she’d had, she hadn’t sensed them coming, hadn’t heard them- not until the gun had went off and nearly deafened her as Han- her sweet, sweet, hopeful baby brother- had taken a bullet meant to take another life.

But… There was a part of her, a part of her connected to the primal hive mind that her bees communicated through that spoke to her and told her that there was, in fact, one thing she could do. One thing that would prove she wasn’t helpless against the people that had murdered her little brother in cold blood.

She could make it even.

Her magic roiled and writhed in her body, heat billowing off of her. Monsters and humans alike backed up from her location as glowing green bees appeared around her, making a hastily formed shield around her.

Toki’s mouth opened and she screamed, her magic skyrocketing as her pain mixed with a well of growing fury. Her face contorted, jagged teeth splaying wide in a horrifying howl of mourning for the soul that had been lost, rage and grief coating the ghastly noise as she called to something. Above that, an unholy sound filled the air. It was a high-pitched buzzing that deafened those around her. The humans close to her began to scream, covering their ears over their masks as eardrums ruptured.

Across the planes of existence, something answered her call to battle.

Toki clutched Han’s body to her, cradling his limp corpse to her belly with one arm as hot tears streaked down her face. The other hand lifted, and she reached across her magic to the forms she could feel. Toki slashed down with her claws, and above her, in the sky, a whole tore its way into existence.

It was sloppily rent, but the edges were barely visible as a belch of brimstone and fire bloomed in the glowing hole she’d torn in the fabric of space. From the billowing smoke and roaring flames, the buzzing grew worse. Two forms appeared out of the portal.

They were some sorts of hell beasts, both of them. They had two long wings made of black chitin, with glowing green membranes that shaped them vaguely like a hornet’s wings. For all of the buzzing noises, the wings were mostly stationary, only shifting ever so slightly. The wings disappeared under a mane of glowing green fire, from which the head and the body both extended. The heads were vaguely shaped like that of a honey bee- but made out of a stark white bone. The spot where the eyes would be were empty, save for glowing green dots that scanned the suddenly frozen crowd around them. The sockets long and seemingly torn down towards the end of the head, and the skulls lacked any antenna whatsoever.

Under the mouth, two long, bone like mandibles clacked and snapped, baring sharp serrated teeth as they parted and flexed. Two sets of horns curled from the skull. One was pointed and solid black, curling backwards in a titanic version of Toki’s own. They cradled a blaze of green fire that curled up from the creature’s forehead, running between the two ebony spears and joining back into the mane that cushioned the rest of the head. The second set were blackened and curled like a rams, with the underside of them glowing the same color as the dots in their eyes.
Six legs were attached to the thorax, each of them bony and barbed and a sort of color that rested between black and green. The feet on the biggest one were white- the feet on the smallest were black.

From the thorax, a long spinal structure extended, with ribs framing an abdomen made from the same ectoplasm that the wings were. The spine extended all the way to the end of the flying hell hornet’s body- and then ended in long, glowing green stingers. The stingers dripped some green ooze, and it sizzled the grass where it landed.

They were nearly identical, save the colors in some spots, with the largest being fifteen feet, and the smallest being the same size as Toki. She could feel them, pressing in on the back of her mind. They were intelligent- and drawing from her the source of her grief and the fighting around them.

They made a choice- and they, the queens that they were, would remove the problem threatening the hive.

The smallest came down, wings fluttering violently as it came to rest near her. Monsters and humans alike scrambled away from the horrifying hell beasts hovering in the air, the group separating like water and oil to regroup. The smallest hovered close to her, but eyed the humans that lingered near to the human turned monster. The ones in the red masks- they were their targets.

The largest one opened her mouth- and a glowing green light began to blossom between the long mandibles that were ringed with fangs. A horrible screeching noise began echo as the power drawn from both the bee-beast and Toki began to gather and condense, turning into the beginnings of a green beam of magic.

The big one roared as the laser went off, and descended upon the crowd as bodies of humans were blown apart. The laser cut a swath in the group, flinging bodies here and there as trees cracked and groaned, leveling the forest just as much as it did the humans, before many of the humans were picked up and taken into the sky. Up and up they went- and then they were dropped, splattering across the ground in a mass of pulped flesh and bone.

Toki staggered where she sat, wobbling in place as her magic was depleted in that shot. Her vision swooned- but the sure pain and grief and burning rage compelled her to stay upright. These humans- no, these… These things, they had killed her brother, had tried for her and her babies. These things- they did not deserve anything less than death. It… it was wrong- she knew it. But she was lost- lost in the rage and grief and terror around her.

And the hornets were all too eager to comply and keep her from sullying herself with the task. The smallest turned, and latched onto a single man. The stinger sunk in as the mandible closed around his skull, and his body melted in half as the acidic burning poison in the stinger reduced him to nothing more than mush. He screamed for mercy the entire time, reaching a hand out for anyone to save him right up until his head was rent from his melting body, and flung away.

Toki could not look, however, or offer mercy. Her sockets closed tight, and she curled slightly towards her brother with a sob. It was sick- the fighting, the killing. It was sick, and it made her feel sick, so very, very sick. But the queens would not stop- not while her grief was so raw.

Someone shot a bullet through- and it made the big bee scream as it burst through the membrane of her wing. She turned with a roar of rage and descended upon them again, magic gathering for another blast.

The humans opened fire and surged forth, bravery found once more- and they swarmed to take out the one who had summoned the beasts.
A bullet made it past her wall of bees, and Toki shrieked in pain when it lodged itself in her shoulder blade. Her bees thickened, drawing forth more of her magic, and blocked any more bullets that might have came.

Her blood drizzled down, staining her shirt as her HP took a massive dent. She swooned in place.

Three more blasts rent the air, splattering humans across the grass- before Toki couldn’t hold on anymore. Her vision darkened, and she slumped against her brothers’ corpse, unconscious and unable to defend herself and her babies as her magic cut out. The air grew dark once more without the hellfire to light it, only lit now by the fireworks still popping and crackling across the sky and Grillby’s enraged form protecting those he could.

As her wall of bees dissipated with her magic- and the massive beasts rending the humans to bits disappeared without enough magic to tether them to this plane of existence- her world fell dark and she knew no more.

Tenebris had been one who joined the fight, while Aliquam and Caeruleus had moved to getting all the villagers to safety. The beast fought the humans valiantly, but had not expected to see the hellish hornets be summoned...

It was terrifying and miraculous to witness at the same time. They made even the beast stop and take notice, seeing the larger creatures taking lives by the droves. The slaughter was bone-chilling, the noises of the hornets and the screams of those being slaughtered echoing through the night.

Gaster continued his fight until the hornets disappeared, witnessing as Toki collapsed.

Immediately his mind switched from kill to protect. He charged forward on all fours, bowling past any humans in his way to stand over Toki and Han, roaring and screeching as he protected them with claws, tail, and teeth alike.

The ammunition they turned upon the beast was not bullets- but long, thick-shafted darts. They bounced off of his tail, but stuck into his clothes and flesh with backwards facing barbs, and began to pump tranquilizers into him.

There were no monsters that could make it to him- not with the humans gathering around him in a broad ring with guns aimed.

He winced as the darts hit him and he shook his head before his eyes glowed and he screeched loudly as a flare of magic summoned forth a pair of large blasters.

The large blasters roared loudly, and unleashed a powerful blast to clear the area around them. One of them dropped down and took Toki and Han into its maw before it flew off quickly away from the fighting.

The other blaster stayed behind to protect Tenebris as best as it could.

The sharp darts were shot at the remaining blaster as well, though they did little against the solid bone like structure.

“Mama! Daddy!” A child’s shriek split the air above the roars of fighting monsters and the crack-
koom of guns. Thumper was at the edge of the clearing, sitting covered in dust and trying to detangle himself from his mother’s shirt, and his father’s pants. “N-No! S-stay away!” He couldn’t get himself free- and there was a man looming before him with a gun.

The man cocked the gun, and took aim.

However, Tenebris had enough adrenaline running through him to propel himself forwards once more. He charged fast, leaping over the circle of humans that had him caged, and landing over the dust covered bunny.

Tenebris swung the blade of his tail at the human, giving a furious screech.

The man managed to get a dart off, lodging it inside of Tenebris’ mouth, before he was rent in half by the bladed tail.

Thumper trembled, tears matting the dust of his parents to his gray cheeks, and the blood of the man spattered over him in a horrifying display of gore. He shifted and latched onto Tenebris’ arm once he managed to free himself, his sobs coming out hard and heavy. “M-mama…” His Mother and his father were both gone, reduced to nothing but dust as they tried to protect him.

Barking in pain, Tenebris stumbled backwards and was unable to close his mouth until he pulled out the dart. He held Thumper close and began to growl, but he was growing weaker… Whatever was in those darts was clouding his mind, making his limbs slow to react. He was growing numb

With the last of his strength going into holding the child close, he slowly stumbled off the piles of dust backing until his legs stopped responding to him. At that point, his upper half had kept going and he fell with a crash to the ground, rattling and growling weakly before his eyes closed and he slumped, his arm falling from Thumper.

For a time it seemed as if the humans ignored the fallen boss monster and the child, and that gave Thumper enough time to free himself from Tenebris’ grasp. He huddled near the monster’s face, trying to rouse him again for fear of him turning to dust like his dad had done. “C’mon, M-mister Tenebris. Y-you’ve got to g-get up. You’ve got to…”

When the big monster failed to respond, Thumper tried nudging his shoulder.

Acute aware of the threat, Tenebris let out a final, weak vocalization, but was unresponsive to Thumper’s attempts to stir him.

Another firework lit up the sky, shining a beautiful indigo- and highlighting the shadows that closed in around them. Thumper turned his gaze over and looked on with horrified amethyst eyes as red masked humans closed in on them.
Chapter 52

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So yeah. That happened. I hope you all enjoyed the last chapter~ Just so you know, I got really teary-eyed writing this one and the last one. I'm not completely heartless. Heh. Also- like not even an hour of posting, we had 16 anons freaking out in our ask box. Dudes. I love it. Feed me more of your flailing.

Don't forget to visit us on our blog :) http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Welp... After the violent attack that had occurred in the last chapter, it's time to see how our babies are doing.

Also I pity poor Strides (as of 11-14-2016), first the pain of losing Han last chapter plus her coup de gras on her wisdom tooth today (Which I didn't worry about bc mine came in straight, rekt), she's had a looooong day.

Oh well, Enjoy the chapter.

Toki woke slowly. It was a hard process, like trying to swim through a pool of molasses. Her mind, body, and very soul felt heavy and sluggish, like she wasn’t meant to wake up. It was like trying to claw out of a deep, endless hole that kept sucking her back in.

But she did. She pulled herself forth, her mind slowly sliding into awareness with the speed of a slug.

Her shoulder was the first thing she was aware of. It was the right shoulder blade, and laying on it hurt horribly. She felt crusted and gross, her memory foggy. The next she could feel was the bone aching weariness that flooded her. She was exhausted, like she had been drained dry. There was something crusted to the bones of her face, along her teeth, and something that had her shirt stiff over her belly and smelling of iron.

She shifted, and groaned in pain where she lay. Toki struggled to open her sockets, but they soon lit blearily, trying to take in her surroundings and recall the events that lead her to where she was.

It looked like she was back at home. She could see her coffee table, vaguely smell the usual smell of her house over the stench of her clothing, and she could feel the softness of the couch she had been gingerly laid on.

"..." There was pacing behind her, or rather, the back of the couch she was laying on, before there was a panicked calling of her name the moment that she groaned. "TOKIKO!"

Immediately there was a worried Aliquam in front of her, "Toki, oh my god, you're okay...!" he whispered softly.

“N’t s’ loud, Pap,” she groaned softly. His shout rang in her skull, and she nearly lifted her sore arm to cradle her skull. Instead, she hissed softly and clutched at her shoulder with her non-sore hand. “My shoulder hurts...”

He knelt down and pressed his head to hers, sparking off healing magic while keening worriedly.
"You were shot..." he murmured softly to her. "I had to dig the bullet out... I was so worried when you didn't wake up from it."

“Shot...?” She blinked slowly, and let the healing magic soothe her. Her shoulder shivered, but the healing magic did soothe her. Some of her exhaustion too, as her body absorbed the magic and put it towards healing herself.

Toki shivered, and nuzzled his face gently. She was quiet for a moment, before her fingers brushed over one of the stiff spots on her shirt. Slowly, she glanced down at it.

Blood. Her belly was coated with dried blood- all of her shirt was. It was on her bones, on her face- it was just... everywhere. And it took her a moment to think of what caused it- and then the lights in her eyes went out.

“... Han’s gone...” She murmured softly.

He looked at her, and then hugged her gently, stroking her head. "... He is, yes..."

“I... I...” She shifts and lurches out of his hug, forcing herself upright. She shudders, staring at the blood dried into her bones. “I... It’s... His blood is...” It was on her hands, figuratively and literally. Along her palms, the blood was tinted blue from the dust of his soul. Tears bead at her sockets, and her breathing quickens. “I... I need to get it off oh god he’s gone and it’s on my hands...”

"Toki. Toki. Listen to me." he gripped her head firmly, turning her skull to look at him. "It's okay... We'll get you cleaned up... Just stay with me, okay?"

Her sockets were dark, save for the glow of budding tears. Her hands clenched and unclenched, her shivers making her bones rattle. His touch draws her back enough for slight pinpricks to appear again, and they shiver with grief in her sockets. “H-he’s gone, Pap. My baby brother’s g-gone. H-he s-s-shattered in my hands...” He was gone, and she was still there. She wasn’t going anywhere. But the ache in her soul, the sheer grief that dimmed her glow, made her wish she didn’t have to feel any of it. “It’s on my h-hands...”

"Toki... I... I know... I’m so sorry." he murmured, before he kissed her head firmly, turning her skull to look at him. "Let's focus first on cleaning you up." He murmured to her gently. "There’s no point in letting this remain to traumatize you further." he told her, before he gently picked her up. "Come on..."

She trembled as he lifted her, her claws scratching faintly at the blood soaked into her palms. It was on her, all over her, and even over her teeth. She could taste where it had leaked into her mouth, but she was too distressed to be nauseated over it. “It’s everywhere...” A sob escaped her, and her face turned to tuck against his chest.

"Shh, shh..." he held her tightly as he moved upstairs, going to the large bathtub they had in their personal bathroom. "It's okay." he assured her, before he sighed. "I wish Sans was here. I don’t know what happened to him... After he heard about your brother he went pale and disappeared..."

“H-he’s probably s-sad.” She whispers faintly. Toki is not much help when he gets to the bathroom, but she is able to stand mostly on her own while he gets the tub going. She shivers, magic sputtering as it attempts to warm the chill that has settled in. She doesn’t have magic to spare though. Toki manages to strip herself out of her turtle neck. The blood had stained her ribcage and the green flesh of her swollen belly through the shirt, and she shuddered, nearly losing her balance, as she moved to shakily remove her pants. “I d-d-don’t b-blame him f-for being away.” Getting the button undone from her slacks was proving to be hard. She was trembling hard, and her tears blotted out her vision.
He held her firmly with one arm, making sure she wouldn’t fall, and getting her to bare bones with the other. Once she was bare, he started up the hot water and eased her into the tub. He let the hot water rain on her from the showerhead as he grabbed a body sponge and rubbed soap into it to create lather. Keeping it in hand, he reached up to start scrubbing her clean with the utmost gentleness.

Toki was complacent through most of it, and withstood some of the gentle cleaning as she remained shakily in the tub. But it wouldn’t get the stains off fast enough- and she didn’t feel clean even after the stains came off. She could feel it crusted to her bones even if it was no longer there. Her claws scrubbed roughly at the bones of her hands, trying to clean them more thoroughly while he moved the sponge elsewhere.

"Hey!" Without a second thought his hand lashed out and swatted the back of her hand away from scrubbing. "Hands down." He ordered firmly.

Toki’s chin tucked, but her hands separated. She hadn’t damaged herself with her claws- but that didn’t mean that her bones didn’t have tiny scratches. Her fingers curled tightly into her palms for a second, before limply dangling. “I’m s-sorry.” She hiccupped softly.

He looked at her, before he sighed and kissed her head, stroking it ever so gently as he hushed her. "It's okay... it's okay..." he murmured, cradling her head with one hand as he scrubbed her clean, running the sponge over her ribs, and her stomach.

The twins were still in her middle, even under the warmth of the spray and the touch of his hands. Her middle was dim- very dim. The attacks the hornets had used had drained her of almost all of her magic- so the twins were being fed with what little she had, and what little she was trying to begin to regenerate.

Her skull tipped slightly into his touch, and she lifted her fingers to gently clean her face. She made sure to go gently- lest she get swatted for that too. The water dripped off of her in a rusty brown color, mingling with faint green from the wound that had been on her shoulder blade.

"I love you." He whispered softly. "I love you so much. I’m sorry." he murmured, rinsing the sponge before he took a moment to just hug her tightly. One hand slid down to her middle, caressing the swell lovingly, before rubbing soothingly over her hip. ‘I’m so, so sorry about Han.

“I love y-you too.” He was getting soaked with her under the spray, but the bare skeleton couldn’t find it in her to care. She hesitantly looped her now clean arm bones around him, and tucked her head into his shoulder. The engagement ring on her finger clicked lightly against the back of his neck as she looped one arm about his neck. “H… He’s really g-gone… He… He didn’t want to die, Pap. It’s n-not fair… It’s not fair at all.”

"I know, I know..." He murmured, kissing her repeatedly to try and soothe her. "It's not fair, Toki..."

“It’s not...” Her voice trailed off into a soft whimper, and she began to sob in earnest, crumpling into him as her legs shook and gave out under her. “My baby brother is g-gone! He didn’t d-d-deserve to d-die like that.” She couldn’t help the wail that escaped her as she broke down in his arms, clinging to him like he was her lifeline.

"I know..." he repeated, stroking her head gently. It was a good thing he had his arms around her when she fell, as he was able to easily catch her. “Hey... hey.... shhhhh...” he cooed gently, stroking her head as he held her close, "I know... It's not fair." He hummed gently.

She had watched Han grow from a child into an adult, had helped raise him and had watched him grow and change as the events of his life had helped to shape him into the music-loving goober that
he was- but she had never, ever, thought she would have been there to watch him bleed to death.

Toki clung to Papyrus and simply sobbed. Her soul hurt- it ached for her brother, her sweet, sweet, music-loving brother. It ached with loss and grief, and there was nothing she could do to ease that pain. Her bones vibrated, a low toned buzz of sorrow flitting off of her.

She was limp in his grasp when her fit of sobs finally died off into shaky hiccups.

He didn't care how long it took, but he held Toki close, letting her get her tears and sobs out of herself. He'd run his hand over her head time and time again, aiming to console her all he could.

Eventually she was left simply sniffling, exhausted as she shifted to cling to him. Her eye lights were dim, magic sparsely detectable within her. With as little magic as she had, she began to shiver against him. “I’m a bit c-cold…” She murmurs softly. Even with the warm steam of the bathroom, she found herself feeling icy. It was almost a numbing balm to the pain in her soul- though she knew it wasn’t healthy to think of it that way. She leaned back to scrub at her sockets, wiping away glowing tracks with her fingers.

"I know... We'll get you wrapped up, and into something warm.”

She sniffls softly and nods. Toki eases her weight back onto her legs, and finds that she is still very unsteady. Her strength was sapped along with her magic. “I… Is all of the b-b-blood off?” She couldn’t see everywhere. “If so, I w-want to get dressed, please.”

"In a moment it will be." he murmured, giving her a once-over and removing any spots he had missed prior, before he nodded and picked her up.

She felt lighter in his arms, without her magic making her bones as dense and fortified. Toki’s arms came around his neck, and she grimaced as her shoulder twanged. The bone was still sensitive, even without the bullet in it and after healing. “Thank you…” She murmurs softly, and leans a hand down so she can open the bathroom door for him.

He kissed her neck and let her open the door before he walked through and back into their room. "I love you." he murmured.

"I love you too," She murmured back. Her thumb idly played with the ring on her finger, swirling it slightly around the bones of her ring finger. “I love you so much…” She whispered again. “I… I’m going to need you a lot for a while.” Toki said quietly. “For H-Han’s funeral. A-and after.” Her little brother had wanted to be cremated, she knew, and he wanted his ashes spread out in his favorite places. “It f-falls upon the clan head to prepare any funerals within the main family…”

"I know, I know. It's okay," he purred gently to her. "I'll stay with you as long as it takes.”

“Thank you.” She whispers gently. She shifts in his arms, another shiver rippling over her, and then grunts as one of the twin babybones nails her hard in one of her lower ribs. “I think I can stand if you’ll s-set me down.”

"We'll find out." he murmured, slowly setting her down.

Her feet touched down on the tile, damp bones making a muted sound. Her legs shook for a moment, but she took a breath and forcibly steadied them. She stayed standing on her own merit, and gave him a small smile. “I’m steady enough…” She murmurs. Once she’s certain she’s good, Toki steps from his side and slowly makes her way to the dresser. A turtleneck- green in color- is selected, and she eases it onto herself, before fishing for one of her pairs of sweat pants. “… Hey, Pap? Is… Everyone else okay? No one else… d-died, did they?”
He couldn't answer her. He just looked at her, sorrow in his eyes.

Toki swallowed as she got herself into her pants. She took a deep breath, steadied herself on the dresser, and then turned herself to face him once more. His silence answered a lot of things. She reached out and took his hands in hers, leaning against the dresser to keep herself balanced. The ring on her finger clicked slightly against his bones, and she rubbed his hands gently with her own, offering him reassurance and love in turn. “Who did we lose?” She asked quietly.

"We identified the dust piles of Mister and Mrs. Hopperton. We were unable to locate Thumper, however..." he started, "We lost few more guards... And..." the last one made him clench his fists.

When he fell silent, hands clamping tightly over hers almost to a painful degree, Toki felt her own hands clinch gently in his. Her bones groaned with the strain of his grip, her magic not there to fortify her defenses naturally. “Oh no…” Thumper was orphaned then. Poor boy… He was missing too. That was just… terrible. Penelope had been an amazing mother, and an amazing woman to know. Toki swallowed roughly, and soothed her thumbs gently over his knuckles. “Who else, Pap?”

“Father…” He whispered softly.

“Not him,” she whispered back in turn, horror stretching her face. “He’s… gone? Or… Or missing like Thumper?”

"He’s missing... We don’t know what happened... We just... never found him."

“He… He might have been taken then. It’s… The only thing I can think of. HAM has been taking HTM’s... it… They might have taken him too. Both of them.” She swallowed, and closed her sockets roughly. Her hands tightened over his, and her bones audibly groaned. “I’m so sorry, Pap…”

"..." He was silent for a time as he looked at her. Then, slowly, he released her hands to bring them up to cover his face. "Oh Toki..."

She wobbled forth and reached up to cup his skull gently in her fingers. She stroked his cheekbones, and guided him down to tuck his face into her shoulder. “We’ll get them back,” she whispered for him. “We’ll get them back, Pap. I promise. We’ll find them somehow…”

He nodded slowly and hugged her gently. Papyrus took a long moment to compose himself- because his father was possibly still alive, and he had hope that they could save him- and then simply pressed a soft kiss to her shoulder and sighed against her.

Toki held him close and nuzzled nearer to him. She sighed softly, and then gently nudged him with her chin. “C’mon. Lets go b-back down stairs. I… If I don’t keep busy, I’ll start crying again, and I don’t have much more magic to spare for tears.” She murmurs softly.

He nodded and slowly leaned back to let her go.

Toki kept her arm linked with his, and guided him back out of their room. She leaned heavily on him, her legs still a bit unsteady. “I… I think everyone could use something hot to drink.” She murmurs, though she has no appetite for anything.

“Papyrus?” Asgore’s voice rings out as he steps through the front door without knocking. The king is dusty and bloody, and his royal garb is mussed. “I need your help. One of the guards has a bad break- bones are your forte, are they not? Neither I nor Toriel can get it to set correctly.”

They had made it down the stairs far enough for them to see the king. Papyrus gaped at him in horror. "A-Asgore...! Oh by the stars you're covered in dust... and blood..."
“Some of the monsters were covered in human blood.” The king explains—though there was blood that glowed in the way that monster blood seemed to do. “And I had to dig out a lot of bullets. We still haven’t gotten them all out— but that is beside the point. We need your help. One of the wolves broke his leg roundabouts the knee joint.” The dust was from one of the guards he hadn’t been able to save. She’d crumbled to dust as he was extracting a bullet, and he had gotten covered in it.

All of the wolf guards had the double knee joint, like Tenebris did, with their digitigrade legs. Those were hard to heal, she knew, unless you knew the structure intimately. Toki nudged Pap gently and leaned against the railing of the stairs. “Go,” she said softly. “Help them, okay? I’ll be here when you get back.”

“Frisk can stay with you, if you’d like.” The king offered gently, motioning a hand back behind him where the kid had followed him. “They have grown much and learned a lot from Tori. I’m sure they can help keep an eye on your mate, Papyrus.”

“Thank you, Frisk. Toki, I’ll be back in a little bit.” Aliquam looked at Toki with a small nod, kissing her head gently before he followed Asgore out, giving Frisk a pat on the head as he passed by.

The child smiled lightly as they were patted before they approached Toki, offering a hand to shake.

Toki might not have been in the best mindset to baby sit, but she had the feeling she was going to end up being the one being watched. Still, she accepted the hand, gently grasping the child’s hand with the rapidly cooling bones of her palm. “It’s nice to finally meet you, Frisk.” She says softly. “You’ve been very busy making headway across the lands for the monsters, haven’t you?”

They smiled and gave a nod. Busy indeed.

Toki smiled back hesitantly, and drew her hand back to make it down the last couple of steps. She was weak kneed, but managed to stay upright well enough. “That’s good… So, would you… like some tea?” Again, she wasn’t up to food, but something warm… Though tea reminded her of Tenebris, and Tenebris reminded her of other things. Toki stubbornly blinked. She couldn’t be crying anymore.

They did, but smiled gently and shook their head instead of saying so. They would rather Toki sit down to calm herself.

“Alright, that’s a no on the tea then.” She mumbles quietly. Toki heaves a deep sigh, scrubs a palm down her face, and then motions for Frisk to follow. She makes her way for the living room. “You’re welcome to a blanket if you get cold, Frisk. Normally the house is quite warm, but I can’t sustain the heat right now.” She snags one of her quilts, and it’s draped over her legs as she curls up on one end of the couch, propped against the arm.

They climbed up onto the couch, and smiled at her gently. They weren’t too cold really, and Toriel had made sure they were dressed warm.

Toki tilted her head back against the couch with a soft sigh, and shifted slightly. Her fingers dropped to rub over her belly, the motion more to comfort herself than anything as she tried to keep her mind away from things. It didn’t really work entirely all that well, even with the twins kicking her once more. Despite the dim color of her ecto flesh, they were still healthy, though not entirely happy with her. “If you want to, you can turn on the television. I’m afraid I’m not the best company right now. I’m sorry about that.”

They continued smiling, gently shaking their head.
Frisk was a very quiet child, Toki noted. Toki tilted her head quietly, fingers massaging lightly over a foot that kept shoving outwards from within her. “Is there anything you want to do, Frisk? It is… easier to keep my mind occupied than to… to linger on what’s happened. You are, uh, aware of… what happened tonight, right?” She wasn’t sure if they knew what all had transpired or not.

Their smile faded and they nodded slowly. Frisk then proceeded to shake their head. They then tucked their legs under themselves, folded their hands in their lap, and took a slow, deep breath in and let it slowly out.

Frisk did this a few times, and then looked to her, silently encouraging her to do the same.

Breathing exercises were a lot like what Grillby had her do when she had panicked over finding out she was a mother by accident. Though now, it wasn’t panic that had her stressed. It was grief, pure and simple. But Toki suspected Frisk wouldn’t let up until she at least tried it.

So, valiantly, the skeleton took up a similar pose, though not nearly the same, and then settled her hands on the blanket over her lap, and took a deep breath in. She matched the child’s breaths easily, keeping an eye light on them to keep track of their actions.

It did, ultimately, help a little bit. The repetitious behavior gave her something to focus on, though her soul still felt woefully heavy in her chest. Still, some of the tension visibly bled from her face, replaced only by visible tiredness and general melancholy.

They smiled in satisfaction and came a little closer, before gesturing lightly to her stomach. The gesture caught her eye, and she tilted her skull. “Hm?” She took a moment to consider what the child must have silently been asking, before nodding slowly and lifting an arm to welcome them closer to her side. “They’re active right now if you want to feel them move, Frisk. I don’t mind.” Frisk was just a kid, after all. The whole process must have been fascinating to them. After all, how often was it that one got to see a pregnant skeleton?

They smiled and nodded in thanks, before moving closer and slowly reaching to touch her stomach. Her middle was the warmest spot on her at this point, the magic thick and heated under Frisk’s touch. The surface of her middle was calm for a time, before one of the twins pressed a leg out against their fingers in a slow stretch.

Toki relaxed as best she could, teeth tilting upwards in a tired but tender smile.

Frisk smiled and rested their cheek against her belly for a moment, looking up at Toki and letting their smile grow once they caught her eye. They were hoping it’d be infectious.

Infectious it was. Frisk grinning up at her from where they had their face pressed to her belly was absolutely adorable, and reminded her of when she must have done the very same thing to her mother. Toki smiled back, a soft laugh escaping from her chest as the twins tapped Frisk’s cheek. “It’s a pretty cool feeling, isn’t it? I wouldn’t give it up for the world.”

They looked at her after she said that, and their smile faded… this time, it didn't come back.

They knew what she said… but at the same time, they wanted to offer her something. Something that would get her brother back for her.

They would RESET.

Toki saw their smile fade, and slid a hand down to gently rub her finger bones through the short
brown locks of hair that fell messily from Frisk’s scalp. She rubbed gently, and her own smile faded even as the twins wiggled and squirmed against Frisk’s touch. “What’s wrong, Frisk?” She asked softly.

They looked down, and then looked up again, smiling again weakly. "I... can reset." They offered in a near-whisper of a voice.

Toki almost couldn’t hear them, even with how quiet the house was. She blinked slowly, digesting Frisk’s words. “You could… reset? But… why would you break your promise to Sans- oh.”

Frisk had reset whenever Toki had died. Frisk was offering her a reset.

A reset to bring back Han.

Toki swallowed roughly, and glanced away for a moment. Part of her soul leapt at the chance to see her brother- to be able to right the mistakes that had been made throughout the course of the monster’s time on the surface. But…

Frisk had promised no more resets. And… it was a horrible, horrible selfish thought for Toki to want to reset just to bring her brother back. There was no telling if something wouldn’t happen later and he would die then, or if someone else would take his place. There was simply no way of knowing- and Toki knew Han.

Han would be so, so upset with her for giving up everything just to bring him back.

Tears beaded at her sockets again, and drizzled just faintly down her cheeks as she silently sighed. “I… I want to say yes. I want to say yes so badly just to be able to see and hug my baby brother again… But I have to say no. Please. Don’t reset. If you had a way to jump back a day or two, then maybe, but… No. You and I- we can’t do that to Sans. We can’t do that to ourselves. We’ve all come so far…” She swallowed thickly, tears dripping down onto her sweater. “Han… H-Han wouldn’t want me to do that to everyone…”

They looked at her, and lowered their head for a moment, before they had an idea and took a second to focus and they lifted a hand.

A diamond shaped star appeared in their palm.

A SAVE point.

"I can SAVE." they mentioned quietly.

“I… see.” The SAVE star glimmered and glowed just faintly. Toki swallowed, and looked down to Frisk. “I don’t see how a SAVE can help though. If it’s like a game, wouldn’t it just… save our position right now?”

They nodded slowly, and lowered the star again.

Toki swallowed quietly. There might be hope, however. “If you can save, you can… Load a save, right? Do you know when your last save was?”

Opening their mouth, Frisk thought about it, before looking at her again... It... has been a while, they muse, closing their mouth again.

Toki took their silence for what it was. “It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?” She whispered softly, hope rapidly being smothered out.
It was a moment, and then they nodded.

Toki’s sockets closed with a soft click of her bone-lids, and she sighed softly through her nasal canal. “I… I see… Then no. There… There is nothing to be done. People die all the time. It… it hurts, knowing I will never see him again.” But she wasn’t cruel enough to do that to Sans. To demand a reset just so her brother could live again. She… She wasn’t that type of person.

“But maybe… we can prevent something like this from happening again.” She murmurs softly.

And they look back up at her. What did she have in mind?

Toki swallowed again, and glanced back down to Frisk as she scrubbed her cheeks clear. So much for not crying and depleting more magic from her systems- she had failed hard core at that. “You can save. Maybe not every day, because I understand how tedious that would be, but maybe every couple of days instead. That way if something bad happens, you can load back and warn everyone about it and we can go at things differently.”

They blinked, then smiled and nodded, that worked. They then lifted the star again and reached out to it. Did she want them to save now, for example?

Understanding some of Frisk’s actions wasn’t all that hard, truly. Toki nodded slowly, and slumped slightly back into the couch. Tired eye lights watched the star for a moment, before she nodded. “Yeah. Go ahead and save, Frisk. Try and make a habit of it, okay?”

Frisk nodded and the star was touched. It glimmered brightly for a moment, and then disappeared.

Toki sighed softly. “Then that’s that…” She whispers softly. She gently ruffled the kid’s hair. “Thank you for offering that, Frisk. But… don’t offer a reset again, okay? Promise me that. This is the final one. Small loads are okay, but nothing big. Playing with time is probably not something you want to do too much with.” The greater powers that be probably didn’t much like it either.

They nodded and smiled under her hair ruffling.

The gravid skeleton heaved a soft sigh, and felt her sockets drift closed for a short moment. She was so tired… and that little flash of hope had hurt really, really bad when it had been squashed flat. But… There was nothing to be done. She had to roll with it, and recover as best as she could. Slowly her fingers detangled from Frisk’s hair, and she brought her hands up to scrub her face with her hands.

Her ring clicked noisily on her face, glinting a shiny gold color in the dim lighting.

“It’s late,” she finally murmurs. “And I think I need some t-tea to help myself relax. Do you want to help me in the kitchen? I have some honey tarts I can make for a snack for us.” She needed to eat something to kick-start the regeneration of her magic.

Having helped Toriel in the past, Frisk smiled and gave a nod. They stood first, stretching a short moment before offering her a hand to get onto her feet.

Toki disengaged from her blanket for a moment, and then graciously used Frisk’s help to get onto her feet. She wobbled where she stood, nearly dropping if not for the stubborn streak she had, and then reclaimed her blanket. It was draped over her shoulders, creating a shawl of sorts for her to huddle in. “Thank you, Frisk. C’mon.”

Toki heads for the kitchen, using the wall as a brace to keep upright. She was truly, truly too drained of magic to be up and doing things, but sitting around tearfully wasn’t going to be good for her
either.

The child stayed close on her heels, looking around the kitchen with an unheard hum.

It looked like someone had been in here earlier attempting to make something- but they had left a mess on her counter, and a broken pile of glass in another cup. Toki sighed. She would dispose of that later. She padded for her kettle, collecting it and filling it from the tap.

Once it was set on the stove to heat, Toki wobbled back over to where she kept her honey and her tarts. “Did you ever get to try any of the honey I sent up to the Castle last summer?” She inquired quietly as she began to prepare tarts for Frisk to nibble on. The poor kid was probably hungry given how late it was. It wasn’t a proper meal, but it would do well enough to perhaps lull them towards sleep.

“Cae was supposed to make sure that everyone got some.” She murmurs softly. “Speaking of, do you happen to know where he went? Pap said he disappeared.”

They nodded happily in reply, but at the question, Frisk shook their head.

“Hm…” She closed her sockets, and sighed quietly. “I have an inkling as to where he’s gone.” She murmured softly. “But I don’t have the strength in me to go find him.” She sighs.

Toki shifts and continues fixing up honey tarts. “Frisk? Can you get my cell phone from the living room please?”

They nodded and went back to the living room, coming back with the phone in hand shortly.

Toki took the phone once she finished the small plate of tarts, and then carefully dialed San’s phone number. She cradled it to her ear, and brought the plate of tarts over to the small side table and chairs for Frisk to get comfortable on. “Go ahead and eat while I wait for him to answer.” She murmurs softly to Frisk.

They nodded gently and began to nibble on one of the tarts.

The phone rings in her ear, and she waits patiently.

It didn’t take very long for Sans to answer.

"H'illo?” It was Cae, but he sounded horrible.

“Sans,” she murmured tiredly. Hell, he sounded worse than she did. But she was putting up a decent farce and keeping herself distracted. “Where are you?”

"... H-Hey Tokes..." he murmured, "I... I'm at home..."

“Why don’t you come here? I’m in the kitchen.” She murmurs softly into the receiver of the phone. “It’s just me and Frisk… We… would really like it if you were here too. Being… Being alone isn’t a good thing right now.”

"... F-Frisk is there?"

“Yeah… I’m as weak as a newborn lamb right now. Standing is hard… But Asgore needed Papyrus to help set someone’s leg, so they left Frisk to keep an eye on me so I didn't fall and hurt myself or something while I was alone.” She murmurs tiredly. “It… Would be nice to have everyone close tonight.” Her voice is thick, and she fights another wave of tears. Blast it all, she can’t cry. Not now,
not in front of a kid. She takes a deep steadying breath, and totters over to the stove.

"... I'll be right over" and he hung up.

The sudden click of the line going dead was a start, and she glanced at her phone in time to see that it said he’d disconnected from his end.

Toki heaves a soft sigh, and leans quietly against the counter. She is cold, and her shivers are increasing, bones rattling noisily in the cool summer night. “Looks like he’s coming over,” She says to Frisk.

The kettle on the stove finally begins to shriek, and the loud noise nearly startles Toki into falling.

They nodded and watched the door, but were surprised when he came downstairs instead.

"Hey kid... I was hopin' t' talk to you."

Toki was less surprised. He tended to teleport wherever, and walk the rest of the way. “Do you want me to give you a minute or two in the kitchen alone?” She got three cups of tea poured, and left the rest of the pot of water to stay warm on the stove. The tea needed to steep anyways.

"I wont make you move out for our sake, we'll go talk in the living room.”

Toki rolls her eyes. “That’s where I was going to go and take my tea.” She explains quietly. “I’m pretty dea- I’m pretty tired.” Her choice of words was almost poor, and her visible flinch mid sentence showed it. “I was going to go try and warm up under a blanket.”

Sans winced. Oh yeah, he caught the gist of what she’d almost said, and he understood her flinch quite well. "Oh... Then don’t let us stop you... we'll stay here."

“Mkay. Come join me when you’re done, if you want.” She collects her mug carefully, and makes her way out of the kitchen. Toki doesn’t bother with the tarts. She has no taste for anything solid, even if she knows she needs it. She cradles the warm mug to her chest, and heads for the couch to get settled.

"Thanks..." he then leaned against the counter, looking at Frisk. "Hey, kid... Long time no see, huh?"

Frisk swallowed their mouthful of honey tart, and signed with one hand. ‘It’s good to see you again, Dunkle Sans.’ They offered him a soft smile. ‘I wish it was under better circumstances though.’

He smiled. "Glad you remembered I can read your hands.” he chuckled quietly, before he laughed. "Dunkle, you still calling me that? Not that there's anything wrong with it.”

‘Forever my favorite Dunkle.’ Frisk nodded slightly. They licked a drop of honey off of their fingers, a happy smile tugging at their lips. Even with such sad times, such a sweet treat was hard not to be happy with. ‘Of course I remember you can read hands. Not everyone can though. It makes it hard to communicate sometimes. I had to speak to Miss Toki earlier.’ It was no secret that Frisk was selectively mute- and chose not to speak for various reasons. They could do it when they needed to- but it was easier simply not to speak.

"Yeah... I'm sure Pap can teach her a little sign language." he chuckled before he shook his head, "Look, I wanted to ask you something..."

‘From what I’ve heard from Dad, she’s been super busy. I bet she hasn’t had time to learn. I barely
managed to keep up with all of Mom’s paperwork. I dunno how she managed all of yours. But now that you’re free, she probably will have lots more time.’ Once she got past her grief, that is. Frisk tilted their head and finished the tart, nodding for him to continue. ‘Ask away, Sans.’

"So... you know she just lost her brother..."

‘I know.’ Frisk nods softly. ‘It is very sad. I never got to meet Han, but Todd talked about him all the time when I saw him at the castle. He seemed really nice.’

"Yeah... look... I know... we talked about this before... but..."

‘The resets?’ Frisk prompted gently.

"... Yeah..."

‘You don’t have to worry. I’m not going to reset. I promised, didn’t I?’ They offer him a gentle smile, and clamor out of their chair to go get their mug of tea. It smelled really good, and they ended up burning their lips slightly as they took the first sip.

He chuckled quietly. "Careful, we skeletons don’t really have many nerves to burn.”

Frisk stuck their tongue out at him and made a rude noise, before setting their mug down to cool. ‘I’ll be okay, Dunkle Sans. Anyways, you don’t have to worry about the resets anymore.’

"I know I shouldn't be... But... You know how many times I lost my brother... I can’t imagine letting her endure this... there's gotta be something we can do..."

Frisk shook their head sharply. ‘No.’ They said firmly. ‘There isn’t.’

His fists clenched lightly, irritation flitting across his face. So the one time that he would be okay with one, they wouldn’t do it? "How long do you and Asgore plan on sticking around?" he asked.

Frisk noted the tightening of his fists, and swallowed slightly. For as many times as Papyrus had died, Frisk had taken a beating for it. They loved Sans- but some small part of them knew what he was capable of, and feared that. ‘Don’t get upset with me, Sans. It wasn’t my choice not to reset.’

They left it vague and at that. ‘Mom’s going to take me home with her once everyone is healed.’ They say softly. ‘Dad... Dad was going to stay and help start looking for your dad and the missing child.’

"I'm not mad at you, kid... trust me..." He smiled at them just slightly. "Just some personal stuff running through my mind... I'm glad you came anyhow... You're a good face to see in a time like this."

He then hesitated, "Wait... What did you say? Not your choice?"

‘I’m glad you think so.’ They nod slightly. A yawn tugs at their lips, and they sip at their tea again. It was very relaxing to drink and smell. ‘Don’t be afraid to share what burdens you, Dunkle Sans. Sharing is caring, except for in STD’s.’ They say sagely. ‘I did say not my choice. I was told no.’ And there was only one person they had been around during the past while- so it was easy to connect the dots.

"Oh my god kid, you're too young to know that crap." he face palmed for a moment, and then he looked at them again. "Did... Tokes tell you not to reset?"

‘You do realize that I practically live on the Internet when I’m at home alone, right?’ They had also
been through a lot. Years and years had passed Underground via the resets- Frisk was a lot older in their head than they were in their body. ‘I offered. She told me she really wanted to say yes, but ultimately no.’ Frisk responded softly.

"... Well jeez..." he rubbed his face, then sighed and smiled at them, "I guess you can see now just how wonderful she is... she's almost as wonderful as you are." he chuckled softly.

Frisk flushed and grinned at him. ‘She’s nicer than I am, Dunkle Sans. She’s really, really selfless. She told me it wasn’t fair to you or everyone else if it all got reset. But... she does need someone. She’s really, really hurting inside, even if she’s trying to keep it from overwhelming her. You understand the pain. Maybe you can help her with it.’

"Yeah... I kinda hope I can make myself look like less of a mess before I do though...” He sighed. “I don’t want to join the pity party and have her worry about me.”

‘I think you’re a little late on the draw with that one. She’s plenty worried about a lot of things.’ Frisk finishes their cup of tea, and a yawn tugs from them. ‘Looking like a mess probably won’t matter. What she needs is someone with her- and someone who doesn’t look like a kid. She's tried not to cry around me.’ Frisk was observant. ‘She’s had to try quite a lot, actually. I was thinking I’d go flop in one of the spare rooms and sleep until Mom came for me.’

"Haha... Well alright, you go ahead and rest, I’ll clean up a bit and go and talk to her.”

‘Mkay. I will. Also, drink your tea. It’ll help you relax too.’ Frisk smiles faintly, and goes to put their mug and the half-empty plate of tarts up on the counter. ‘You could use something to help you relax.’ With that said, Frisk gave him a jolly wave, and bounced off to go up to the second floor. The spare rooms were easily marked- and they found one that was completely bare to flop in for the night.

"Heh... yeah... see you kid." he took a long drink of his tea and sighed, before going to splash his face with cold water from the sink.

Toki was on the couch, her mug held quietly in her hands. She kept her attention elsewhere as she slowly sipped at the hot drink, letting it warm her bones as she visibly shivered and shook under her chills.

She was miserably cold, and feeling alone- but there was nothing to be done but wait and try not to think about Han or Tenebris or Thumper- or all of the lives that were lost. Toki wasn’t doing the best of jobs admittedly, and her eye lights glowed a lackluster green to show it.

After a moment, Cae had come out of the kitchen, a little more energy in his eye sockets than there was when he went in. "Hey, Tokes..." he greeted gently.

She heard him on the tile long before she saw him. Toki tilted her skull, dull eye lights flicking tiredly over to him. “Hey Cae.” She greeted softly in response. She slid a hand away from her mostly empty mug and patted the seat next to her as she finished the last of her tea. Her mug is disposed of on the coffee table soon after she finishes it. “Join me?” She murmurs softly. “Ah- did Frisk go up to one of the spare rooms?” She’d heard the child’s feet padding over the tile, and the soft squeak of the stairs as they bound upwards. But they hadn’t come back down.
Toki just hoped they hadn’t chosen Han’s room. The skeleton wasn’t sure how she was going to manage it, but… She definitely needed to clean it out. But… Not today. That was for another day. Another couple of days, even. There were things that Toki had to get done first, including getting Han cremated- and calling her family.

She would do that in the morning.

"Sure, and yeah, they wanted a nap." he replied, sitting by her with a small smile.

“I can imagine so. It’s nearly… three in the morning? It’s past everyone’s usual bedtimes.” She murmurs softly. She shifts as he settles by her, and then proceeds to squish into his side with a shiver and a soft sigh. Her bones are cold against his own, even through his clothes. “… Are you okay?” Toki asks softly, gently taking his hand in hers and playing with his visible fingertips.

"Yeah, I’m fine." he wrapped his arms around her gently, smiling softly at her.

Toki leaned into him further with a shiver and tuck her blanket better around herself. "Are you sure?” She inquires gently. “I… Know about your dad and Thumper. You have every r-right to be upset.”

"I... Try not to let it bother me..." he admitted, nuzzling her.

“You remember what I said all those months back when you took me to Snowdin? Crying is okay. Being… Being upset is okay. Today is… today is a sad, sad day.” She whispers softly. Toki leans into him, and quietly loops her arms around his plush middle as she curls fully against him. Her belly presses against his side. “We’ll get Tenebris back, Cae. We’ll find him somehow…” Thumper too. No child deserved whatever was likely happening to him.

He nuzzled her gently and sighed. "I... I know... I just... He's my dad, you know...?"

“I know.” She nuzzles him back and sighs shakily. “We think our parents are invincible,” she muses quietly, “when they’re simply as mortal as we are. Pap and I are here for you, Cae. You’re not alone, you know. You’re basically my b-brother in all but law- and that will be soon enough anyways. J… Just like with H-Han, you have a place here, if you want to stay here un-until we find your dad.” She wasn’t sure if he would, or if he would to stay with Grillby. Grillby was an entirely plausible chance.

Toki glanced up at him. “Is Grillby okay? I know he was t-there. I… I recall the glow of his fires just faintly. Is he okay?”

"Yeah, he's fine.” he replied, before he wrapped an arm around her more firmly and tucked her squarely into his grasp. "You're really something, Tokes."

“How so?” She blinks up at him tiredly.

"You're a sister to me, you're a best friend, and sometimes you act like a mother..." he purred.

The last part made her laugh quietly. “I helped raise my brothers, Sans. Raising eight boys alongside Mom gave me a bit of the mom-mode, y’know? Plus these two.” She drops a hand from his side down to her middle, where his nieces or nephews were kicking away grumpily. Toki’s eyes glimmered warmly, though the underlying sadness was there. She’d helped raise Han.

He nuzzled her gently and hugged her belly carefully. "Yeah, yeah..."

The twins twitched under his touch, and Toki sighed softly. “They’re upset.” She murmurs idly to their uncle, rubbing a tender spot.
"I know..." he murmured, sighing. "I wish I could help as well as Pap does."

“They haven’t gotten to know you as well as they have him, or Tenebris.” Their grandfather always took time to greet them or give them affection - it was adorable, really. Cae wasn’t around as often - he spent a lot of time with Grillby, which was understandable. Toki takes his hand, and gently presses his fingers over where an angrily jabbing foot was. She slowly had his fingers rub, and the kicking turned less aggressive. She smiles at him tiredly. “They’ll definitely love their uncle Cae if given the chance to get to know you.”

"Yeah..." he smiled and sighed quietly. "Pap won't get jealous will he? Me paying this much attention to you?"

“I highly doubt it.” She nestles closer. “He’s my mate. You’re his brother- and my brother. I am a naturally affectionate person. Pregnancy makes me even more snuggly. He’d probably be happy that I’m not alone right now.” She mutters quietly. A grunt escapes her, and she leans up to press her fingers near the tops of her ribs. “As much as the kicks can sting sometimes, I’m glad of it right now. I… don’t really know what I did. I summoned… things. And they drained my magic. I am very empty- and they are not happy that they don’t have the extra to snack on. Greedy little jellybeans.” Her words are affectionate regardless.

"Those things... Heh.. Those were hornet familiars." he told her, "We called 'em 'Hell Hornets'." His fingers hesitated for half a second, before curling over her belly and rubbing gently. "Will it hurt if I share some of my magic?"

“It won’t hurt.” She shakes her head slightly. “Tenebris had to do it once when Pap was running himself ragged.” Under his hand, the twins kick grumpily, and she sighs at the beating to her fragile ribs. Without her magic to reinforce them, the kicks were bordering painful when they didn’t relent. “Hornet familiars? Well… I guess I can understand that, considering I summon fire bees. So I have two types of familiars?"

"Well they're both insects, so you may be able to summon familiars within a family instead of a species." He suggested. "We Gaster's kinda do the same thing... I tend to stick stick to a canine family, Pap summons cats, and I think Pops summons drake heads.” He explained.

After a moment he eased his hand higher on her middle and gently rested it over the top of Toki's swell. A soft pulse of magic later and he's feeding the twins with his spare magic.

“And I summon giant hell hornets.” She murmurs softly. She shifts, and the twins ease some of their fussing as his magic floods into her. Like the aftertaste in the food he makes, his magic is cool and refreshingly minty feeling. Though the chill of his magic doesn’t do anything to help her shivers. In fact, they increase, making her rattle against him like a leaf in the wind. “The twins thank you.” Toki murmurs softly, her sockets fluttering closed. His spare magic gives the twins a little bit to fall back on, and her middle brightens visibly under her shirt, highlighting the spaces between his fingers like small candle. Her turtleneck, she realizes, is one of the thinner ones, designed for summer ware. No wonder she was so cold.

He nodded gently and carefully slipped off his hoodie, bringing it around to cover her up more. "There." he murmured, "You're shivering."

“I’m cold.” she admits softly, and casually burrows into his jacket. “Mild Magi-drain, I think. It feels a lot like last time. And, ah, your magic is cold feeling. Sort of like spearmint?” Where Papyrus was sunshine on a summer day, Sans was more like cool mint on a winter morning. Refreshing and nice - but very bone chilling. The twins at least seemed happy, and as the worst of their tantrum ended, Toki found her sockets drooping tiredly. She had all intentions of staying awake until Papyrus
"I'd've thought Dad's magic was more minty, hehehe..." he chuckled quietly, tucking her back against his side with a gentle motion. "Get some rest, okay? I don’t want Pap thinking I kept you awake."

"Your dad’s is intense." She murmurs softly. Her head is settled against his side, careful not to jab him with her horns. "Deep and dark, like an ocean. Yours is brighter, more minty and... I dunno. Just you." Toki shakes her head slightly and closes her sockets. "I’m tired, but... Going to sleep... I am scared." She admits quietly. "Because I know what I’m going to see when I sleep. I don’t... I don’t want to have to relive him dying again, Sans."

He chuckled gently, before he reached up and touched her head to release more of his 'cool' magic directly into her skull. "I know... I know... But Pap would tell you to do the same. He hates that you'd have to relive it, but he doesn't want you passing out and being forced to suffer while he’s not there to support you. The least I can do is be there when he can't."

The touch of his magic over her bones makes her shiver, and she flicks her eye lights up to him with a huff as she does a magnificent attempt at becoming a turtle between the blanket and his jacket. The twins had enjoyed the cool magic- that did not mean that the mommy enjoyed the cold. "If I can get tired enough, I’ll sleep a dreamless sleep though. Or most likely, anyways." She mutters. "I... know he would want me resting. But... I don’t know if I can. Even with you here- it... it scares me to sleep." Her voice trails off into a quiet whisper.

He stroked her head gently and nuzzled her. "I'll stay with you, okay, doll?" he murmured. "I'll keep my magic going, make sure your mind has something else to focus on. Liiike, see if you can pick up a minty smell to go with the sensation you speak of." he cackled softly.

Toki snorted slightly, and chuffed at him. "I suppose that’s fine. I can… try to sleep, I guess. If I can’t, then I can’t." She rolls her eye lights and shifts. "Mind if I change positions first? If I sleep sitting like this, I’ll wake up unable to feel my legs." She needed to settle on her side. She could probably pillow her skull in his lap, which would work just fine. He was padded enough, after all. "Ah... Will you wake me when Pap gets home?"

"Sure thing," he nodded gently to both requests, "No problem at all, Tokes." he purred.

Toki smiled softly and nodded. She shifted, easing herself down onto the couch. Her sore shoulder was pressed into the seat, which didn’t hurt all that bad, and she eased her head into his lap. His coat was kept, and she draped it around herself as she nestled under her quilt. Toki’s teeth chattered slightly, sending out harmless sparks, before she forced her jaw still, and curled up. “Alright. Thanks, Cae.” She murmurs softly.

Her sockets drift closed, but she stubbornly clings to consciousness.

Caeruelus smiled gently and held her close as she dozed off, stroking her head lightly.

Aliquam had finally been able to come home, and was happy to see Tokiko asleep on the couch... what made it better was that Sans was asleep too, his hand on the other's forehead. Coming over, he knelt for only long enough to press a smooth kiss to both his fiancé and his brother on the head, before he went off to shower so that he may join in on the cuddle pile.
The police had come by, after having begun setting up regular patrols around the compound, and had offered their condolences to both the monsters and to Toki’s family. There were one or two squad cars that rotated shifts and kept watch for the main entrance of the compound- but there was little else they could do to help beyond that.

Caeruleus ended up staying at his house- though he wasn’t alone. Asgore had moved into Tenebris’ room, with Frisk and Toriel taking Papyrus’ old room. The house was full- and they were there to make sure that nothing else could go wrong.

Caeruleus came to keep her company as well during the day, bonding over what was on TV, as well as the random come-to-mind banter... He did seem to make a good comfort for the twins as well, being their mother’s ‘pillow’ of sorts, while Aliquam was kept busy between Toki and continuing to heal the wounded monsters.

Han’s funeral was scheduled for Friday. He was to be cremated, and his ashes divided up between his family members so they could spread him across his favorite places to go with each of them.

It had been hell on Toki, getting it arranged. She did have some help- her mother, once she had finished sobbing with Toki over the phone, had proved to be invaluable at handling a lot of it. It was still up to Toki to do a good portion of it, but her mother was a good guide.

The phone calls were another taxing thing all together. She had to call each of her siblings after she’d informed her parents. Everyone had cried. Even her stoic father had broken down into the quietest and most heart wrenching sobs that Toki had heard. Toki’s soul hurt even more. Grief was a powerful thing, weighing heavily on her soul.

They had offered to come stay with her- but Toki had declined. She needed time to grieve and heal- and on some level, she was terrified that she would lose another family member should they come to stay with her. Losing Han was bad enough- losing any more was not something she could handle. So she pleaded for them to stay away. And, for once- too caught up in their grief to argue- they
listened.

Todd had been told too. The fox man had crumpled where he stood, tears streaking down his muzzle, and Toki had folded herself around him while he howled his pain into her shoulder. The sounds that came from him hadn’t been entirely human anymore- but the meaning was still the same. His fox-like howling had drawn the wolf guards in as well and the area surrounding the village had echoed with the mournful sounds.

Felix had hunched his shoulders and strode angrily away, tears finding their way down his cheeks.

Rosie had openly wept, and rushed into her father’s side, needing nearly the same amount of consoling as her father.

Toki also dealt with nightmares. Whenever she slept too deeply or too long, she would fall into one. It was always the same nightmare. Black figures, red masks, hell hornets- and Han, lying in her lap hemorrhaging out despite everything she tried to do to help. He would beg and plead to stay- and ultimately die. And then the carnage would start- and she would wake up in utter terror as the men in masks screamed and were torn asunder.

There was guilt within her for taking the lives that she had. It was belated guilt- but guilt nonetheless. The Humans Against Monsters were still human, even if they had been twisted and corrupted by Cruelty’s views and desires. Some of them might have even been decent people at one point.

She wept tears for Han, and for the lives that her hornets had taken so savagely, even though rage simmered not far below the surface of her grief.

Between her nightmares and the magi-drain, which had her dealing with bone deep weariness and exhaustion, Toki was worn thin. She might not have been responsible for the monsters anymore, but they deserved her care and comfort all the same. So she stretched herself, helping the monsters plan their funerals as well as working on Han’s. Working herself to the bone let her take short naps where in she didn’t dream.

The harder she wore herself down, the less the nightmares plagued her. She was aware that it wasn’t healthy. But truly, it was the lesser of the evils.

Toki noticed a problem, however. Her magic wasn’t regenerating fast enough to overtake what the twins needed in order to thrive. At first she didn’t think it was a problem- but she encountered what that meant for her shortly after.

Toki had shambled through the house early in the morning while Pap had taken off to do his morning checkups on the wounded, and she had proceeded to sharply clip her left femur on a side table when she’d turned a corner without paying attention. It had sent her stumbling and cursing- thanking everything that was holy that she had been alone for that short amount of time- and she’d barely managed to catch herself on the wall before she was sent sprawling.

She had thought nothing of it- she had wide hips, and her pregnancy waddle had her running into everything under the sun.

But not even forty minutes later, she had been getting dressed for the day and had spotted the nasty bruise blossoming down her femur from her reflection in the mirror. Her magic was tied to her defense, which meant that without her magic her defense was practically nothing. The bruise was tender to the touch, and she had hissed in pain when her fingers brushed over it.

“Shit.” She muttered, staring at the dark green bruise streaking from her hip joint nearly half way
down. The bone was soft and spongy almost, and the bruise was darkening more as she looked at it. Toki finished tugging on a long shirt, and then eased herself onto the bed with her sweat pants half off so she could gently prod the bruise and make sure she hadn’t cracked anything.

Her bone was solid enough, no visible cracks- but the color was deepening, and the ache growing. She really had caught her self good- but she hadn’t been in pants, either. Her clothes were a little less filled out than they usually were, but it hadn’t really mattered. Her nightgown only covered so far, and it was thin. Thin clothes didn’t make good buffers between solid wood and fragile bone.

“Glass canon.” she scoffs irritably to herself, fingers rubbing the area around the bruise as her tired sockets pinch tighter. “More like glass bones…”

There was a soft knock at her door bedroom door. "Toki? Hey, you awake?"

Toki startled at the knock, and cursed loudly. “Y-yeah, I’m awake!” She struggled upwards, nearly tripping over her sagging pants. She worked to tug them upwards.

"Pfft. You are crashing around in there. You okay?"

“Just- ow, OW- dealing with a bruise.” Holy hell, the bruise was tender. Her pants made it hurt like hell, and she hobbled faintly as she made her way to the door. She opened it, and peered at the face across from her.

The skeleton was grinning as usual, but the underlying gleam in his eyes was a dead giveaway that there was something up. "Could I, uh... Could I come in?"

“Of course.” Toki nodded and stepped back, motioning for him to come into her room. She left the door open, and hobbled back to her bed, before taking a seat on it. She eyed him slightly; tiredness making dark circles under her eye sockets, and then canted her skull towards him while patting the space next to her on the bed. “Something wrong, Sans?”

"Yeah, well... No... I mean... I think... I don’t know...." he came in and closed the door behind him before he sat down beside her. "Well... You know how I’ve spent some... Extra time with Grillby?"

“That’s one way of putting it.” She flushes slightly and chuckles softly. “What about it? You two aren’t having problems, are you?” Her eye lights glimmer at him slightly, and she reaches out to pat his leg.

"... Tokes...." he looked at her with a small frown before he reached up and gently rubbed his stomach, "I... Uh..."

She noticed that motion, and her sockets widened marginally. “Are you... pregnant?”

His grin had long since fallen, but now it looked stressed, his teeth clenching together. "I haven’t told him yet... But... I think I am..."

“Shirt and jacket up please. Pretty sure I know enough to confirm or not.” She flicked her eye lights to his face, seeing the tense look, and tilted her skull quietly to offer him a gentle but confused smile. “... Do you not... want it? I didn’t think monsters could have accidents.”

"... I didn't think it would actually happen. We tried a few times but this hasn't happened before..." he explained as he lifted up his shirt. "It was just a comfort thing... We... I didn't think it would actually TAKE this time...." His usual gut was there, a gentle blue in color, but in the bowl of his pelvis was what had woken him up.
There was a tiny speck of light, flickering like a small flame. It was surrounded by a visible ball of aura, connected to the ecto-magic around it by thread like sinews.

Toki eased down to peer into his middle quietly. She hummed softly, eye lights roving gently over the generous swell of his middle. Her fingers followed shortly, bones pressing in with a careful touch as she peered down into his pelvic girdle. "Yeah," She says after a moment, "you're pregnant. It only takes once, Cae. Congratulations though! You're making me an aunt." Her fingers retract, and she gives him a gentle smile. "I... know it might be an odd time, but... this little one is a light in a dark time. We still have hope. When we get your dad back, he is going to be so surprised."

"A light..." he looked at her, then laughed weakly. "A light... Just like their Dad..." he commented as he lowered his shirt again. "I don't know how I'm gonna tell Grillbz though..."

"Telling Grillby should be pretty easy." She smiles slightly. "Just lift your shirt and say 'surprise, you're a dad'. You've been trying- I can guarantee he's going to be excited to see your little ray of hope."

"Heh... yeah, it'll... We'll get there..."

"You seem a little uncertain about all of this." She says softly. "Talking might help, if you have some worries." Given the state of her pregnancy, Toki might be able to offer a fair bit of advice. "I'd say I have an ear to lend, but I have no ears. Which is a shame. I miss my cartilage piercing." She cracks the tiniest joke to try and get him to smile.

"Well... I've gotten so used to things..." He mulls over how to phrase it. "Not working out for me. Like... things get better... and then..." He wiggles his hands. "Poof... It's all back to step one. Now that things are staying... permanently... I just..."

"You're scared of it all resetting again." Toki summarizes gently. "I understand that. Its... hard to adjust, and to believe that this is the last one. You've got to take it one day at a time though. Frisk isn't going to reset anymore. If something else happens, they will load a save."

"Yeah... I know." He sighed gently, before smiling at her, a little more assured now, "Yeah... I'll have to get used to it..."

"You will. We'll help though." She smiled at him softly, and opened her arms in an offer for a hug. "I'm excited to be an aunt again. If you need help to talk to Grillby about your little ball of hope, let me know."

"Yes please" he agreed without hesitating, reaching out and tugging her gently into his grasp. He hugged her tightly, but gently.

"Then I'll help you tell him. How do you want to do it?" She tilted her skull with a warm look, and snuggled into his grasp carefully. Her leg bumped his, and she hissed very softly at the painful touch.

"You okay?" He released her rapidly, looking her over with a worried gleam in his sockets.

Toki shrugs and adjusts how she's seated so her femur doesn't touch him. "I hit myself on a table earlier this morning," she says idly, "and I bruised myself a bit. Its tender."

“Oh.” He winced. “Ow. Bruises suck,”

"Yeah. It's a wicked bruise. My magic isn't up to snuff as far as defending me goes. Its not regenerating fast enough." She shrugs slightly and reclines back on the bed with a soft sigh. "Now did you have an idea how you want to tell Grillby? You're going to have to do it, but I can talk you
"Well..." He huffed. "There's no way to sugarcoat this. I'm fucking pregnant and it's his."

"There you go." She quirks a slight grin to him. "That's how you can tell him."

"..." Sans covered his face with a frustrated groan. "Why do you make it sound so easy?"

"Because it really is." She chuckled heartily. "Grillby loves you, Sans. You literally have nothing to fear."

"... Yeah I know..." He then rubbed his face. "Shit... was it this hard for you too?"

"Papyrus fainted the moment he found out he was a dad, and I had a panic attack that required Grillby to coach me through calming breathing exercises. It was hard, but in a different way." Toki gave him a gentle but warm smile. "You and Grillby were planning to have a kid, weren't you? Planning makes all the difference. Grillby is a good dad, Cae. He'll probably take really, really good care of you." Toki recalls when she had gotten back from her first trip to Lana's place, and subsequently Fuku's. Word had spread over the Undernet that Toki had healed Fuku - and the massive bartender had fiercely hugged Toki the moment that she had gotten home. Grillby had even swung her around like a doll, before stealing her away to his bar for a free milkshake. She chuckles, and reaches out to gently pat his belly. "You, and your ball of sunshine."

He smiled gently and nodded slowly. "Yeah... heh... Sunshine." he reached and rubbed his stomach gently, before he sighed and leaned over to rest his head against Toki's. "Thanks, Sis." he murmured.

Han had called her that too. Toki resolutely did not begin to cry, and instead gently nuzzled his skull. Han would be happy to see the family expanding. "I'm glad I could be here to help, Bro." She smiles softly for him. "Sunshine... That sounds like it would be a cute name. Little Sunny. Pap and I have already come up with a couple of possible names for the jellybeans."

He adjusted his arm around her shoulders to give her a gentle squeeze, his usual grin returning to his face. "You mind if I hear 'em?"

Toki leans into him without issue, and chuckles at the soft squeeze. The skeletons were strong; horrifyingly strong sometimes, in all actuality. Without her magic there to reinforce her body, she could feel how her bones creaked just slightly, even under such a gentle touch. Toki peers up at him with a lopsided grin and twinkling eye lights. "Only if you promise not to laugh."

"I promise."

"Alright." She sighs softly and glances away. Toki shyly grinds her teeth. "We chose four. Skylar, Eras, Verdana... and Honey."

"..." He wasn't gonna laugh, he wasn't gonna- Snrrrk.

Fuck.

Toki frowned at him and swatted his knee. "Sans! You promised you wouldn't laugh!" And to her knowledge, he rarely made promises. She pouted at him. "It's not that funny, Sans." Though she did giggle slightly herself, even under her pout.

"N-no, no, I'm not laughing! Those are some great names!" He smiled at her gently. "I promise, I'm
not laughing because they're funny, I'm laughing cause they're adorable.”

Amusement flickered in her soul, and she half-lidded her sockets at him. She contemplated him for a moment, before gently flicking his forehead. “You’re not always the best liar, Sans.” She chuckles softly. “They are adorable though, aren’t they? We chose one name for each gender, and then two gender neutral names.”

"I think that's a great idea."

Toki nods quietly. “I thought so too. I’m pretty certain I’m having a little girl... At least one, if not both.” She chuckles softly, and rubs her finger over her middle. Her eyes glimmer warmly up to Sans. “You know, our kids will grow up together. It’s going to be really cool.”

He smiled gently and nodded slowly. "Yeah... heh... It will be."

She smiles back at him and shifts. “Mhm... Well, all right. I don’t know about you, but I need to get up and move around before my back cramps up again. Do you feel better about going to tell Grillby now? It’s honestly not as scary as you think it is.”

"Right... we should... as soon as possible." he replied with a smile, standing up before offering her a hand.

She took his hand, and let him haul her to her feet. Her leg throbbed, and she hid a wince as she waddled for her door. “Oh no, this is not a ‘we’ thing. I’ll help you find what to say. This is something you have to do on your own, Cae. Really, you’ll be okay.” Grillby was the one that had asked Caeruleus about having kids, after all.

"..." He rubbed his head and took a deep breath to steady himself. "Right, I... me..." he then grinned at her gently. "I can do this."

“You can do this.” Toki grinned to him, and wigged her fingers. “You’ll have to call and tell me what his reaction is. I have little doubt that he’s probably going to keep you captive for the day. If you want, I can tell Papyrus when he gets back from checking on everyone.” Which should have been soon, barring anyone needing more intense care.

"Alright.” Sans followed her out of the room and down the stairs. Once they were at the ground floor, the ruffled skeleton offers her a slightly nervous wave, and then ducks out the front door to go deliver his news.

It didn’t take him long to make it to the bar. The problem was, it took him a long, long while in order to gather the courage to go into it. He sat out there for a long while, simply peering in as people came and left for the early breakfast rush.

He waited until it was over.

Sans took a deep breath as he walked into the bar. It was empty... good.

He slowly reached and gripped the open sign, flipping it over so that 'closed' was seen from the outside.

Grillby had been wiping down the bar and noticed Caeruleus come in. Setting his rag down, he was going to greet him until he saw him flip the sign. "... Sans... Is there something wrong?" he asked, concern filtering into his low voice. He came around the bar and met his mate in the middle of the bar, taking the skeleton into his arms to hug him close, and caress his skull gently as he felt the other hug him back in turn.
Toki watched him go and shook her head with a tired sigh. Once he’s gone, she slumps slightly, and rubs her fingers over her eye sockets, before padding into the kitchen to begin cleaning it. With all that had been going on, trying to get things planned for Han’s cremation, and just everything else that the universe deemed needed to go wrong, Toki had been remiss in house chores.

Now that everything was finalized- she needed to clean. It didn’t matter if she had the energy or not. Toki wouldn’t be up to cleaning after the cremation. Seeing her family, being with them for the funeral was going to wreck what little fragile peace she had built to keep the festering storm of grief at bay.

Usually Toki would sing or hum when she went about her chores, particularly after getting good news like the news she got from Sans. But, as she swept and mopped and did dishes and bumbled her way around the kitchen, no song found it’s way through her teeth. No hum reverberated through her bones.

Toki simply toiled in silence as she waited for either Pap to come home, or for Sans to finally work himself up to tell Grillby. She was no fool- it would take him some time to work himself up. She knew him well enough by now to tell that much.

Aliquam hummed quietly as he entered the home, closing the door behind him before he looked around. "Toki? I'm home" he called out.

The tile that made up all of the floors was freshly mopped and spotless, darn near shining in the light. The rugs had been shaken, the cobwebs swept, and dust cleared away. The house was clean once more by the time that he had gotten home. But it wasn’t clean enough, obviously. Toki was still hard at work, down in the bottom floor bathroom. It was the one that Han had used- and her brother had left it a mess.

Part of her had not really wanted to clean it- but she’d hardened up her spirit and set to doing so. It was one step at a time. Doing the bathroom- then removing the remainder of his things from the general house- and then tackling the hard, hard task of his room. That was for last. There was so much… So much of Han there, that Toki hadn’t even brought herself to open the door yet. She couldn’t. Not yet.

Toki stood in the shower, working to scrub something off of one of the walls. Human men could be so gross- and that was definitely one thing she hadn’t missed about not living with her brothers. The rest of the bathroom was spotless. The toilet had been scrubbed, the sink cleaned, toothbrushes and other cleanliness products that had belonged to Han had been set under the sink cupboard.

“Toki, hey... how do you feel?” he asked, leaning down and kissing her head.

He padded into the bathroom, having followed the sound of her voice. "Toki, hey... how do you feel?" he asked, leaning down and kissing her head.

“About the same as I did last night.” She grunts softly. Toki spares a moment to turn and give him a soft kiss, before it’s back to scrubbing. She favors her sore leg slightly as she shifts her stance against
the tub. “I’m okay, Pap. How is everyone healing down at the school?” It was the only building with
the space for everyone to heal together in a protected location.

"They’re recovering well enough so far." He murmured in response, eying her as she scrubbed. "I’m
more worried about you."

“You’re always worried for me, Pap.” She responds with a soft sigh, and grumbles as she re-wets
her scrub brush with tub water. Another few scrubs, and the stain to the shower tile began to truly
come off. “I’m glad everyone is recovering steadily. But really- I’m fine. You don’t need to worry
about me.”

"Toki... Are you lying?"

“From time to time a little white lie never hurt anyone.” She doesn’t give him a straight on yes or no
answer, opting instead to focus more upon the task at hand.

He reached out and closed his hand gently over her shoulder. "Tokiko."

That was a tone he hadn’t used with her before. Toki tilted her skull to show she was listening as she
switched arms for scrubbing. “Yes, Papyrus?”

"You’re lying to me now."

“Yeah.” She says simply. “I am.” Toki’s not mean enough to deny lying. Lying is a bad habit
anyways. She’s also never been the best liar, even after growing up in a house full of boys. Toki
swallows slightly, and sighs through her nasal cavity.

He sighed. "Get up and come with me." He ordered, releasing her shoulder to give her room to get
up.

That… sounded suspiciously like an order. Toki’s teeth grind together indecisively as she was
released, and she paused mid scrubbing to rotate her skull and look at him. “I’m not done cleaning,
Pap.” The stain was mostly gone now- just barely even visible. It could probably wait, really.

“I don’t care.” He told her. “Please. Get up.”

“What exactly do you want me to come with you for?” She turns back, looking at the remainder of
the stain, and heaves a sigh. Irritation bubbles within her, but Toki takes a calming breath so she
doesn’t fire off something mean out of anger. At least he said please this time. The gravid skeleton
gives the wall a few more scrubs- lo and behold the wall comes fully clean with those last couple of
scrubs- and then rinses the brush and sets it on the non-slip mat so she can finish cleaning the area in
general later.

Toki probably was a little intentionally sluggish with getting out of the tub and rinsing her finger
bones. But she won’t admit that to anyone. Soon she is standing, hands clean and drying them on a
towel as she looks at him to lead the way.

He led her to the front room, sitting her down on the couch. After a moment he looked at her and
sighed through his nasal cavity. "I can tell that you’re suffering from Magi-Drain again."

“I’ve been dealing with Magi-drain since Han died.” Toki peered up at him from where she was
situated on the couch, and crossed her arms. “And it hasn’t gotten better. Besides, I’m used to the
chill by now.” It wasn’t so much suffering when she was used to the cold. At least she could walk
mostly on her own now. “So I’m fine, Pap. Really. The house needs to be cleaned, and I’m not done
yet. So… can I get back to it?”
"No." His answer was almost immediate.

She arched a brow up at him and pursed her teeth. "Hm… I don’t really have to ask permission to clean our house, do I? So…" She shifted and worked to gain her legs under her so she could get off the couch that she had been guided to. "Your suggestion is taken into consideration, but my work is not done yet. I still have to do the upstairs, and get the laundry done. If I didn’t get stuff done just because I don’t feel well, I would never get anything done at all."

"Toki, no." he said sternly as he stepped up to stop her. "I can’t let you. Not like this. We need to go find Grillby."

"Grillby is busy with some very important things right now." She informs him. “More important than funneling magic into me.”

There was a muffled shout that drifted through the open windows. It was obviously muffled- but the words were clearly Grillby’s and damn near clear as day. “I’M GOING TO BE A DAD AGAIN!”

Toki quirks a faint grin. “I told Sans that he would be excited. Congrats, by the way. You’re going to be an uncle. And Grillby is probably going to keep Sans busy for quite some time today.”

Papyrus stiffened, his sockets widening and his jaw falling open. "C-CAERULEUS IS PREGNANT?!"

His shout was unexpected, and she leaned a little bit away from him with a soft hiss. Her hands fly to her belly, which had jerked with his noise. The sudden yell had startled the twins, and they were nailing her ribs with all of their might. He certainly wasn’t this loud often anymore. "Ow, ow, ow, little ones, it's okay. Daddy is just excited about your new cousin." When the flurry dies down to a little less painful thrashing, she flicks her eye lights back to him. "Yes. He came to me this morning for me to confirm it."

He looked at her worriedly, seeming to debate between running out the door to go find his brother or to stay with her. He made his decision and then he sighed. "I trust Grillby will take care of him. I’m more focused on you."

“Grillby knows best how to care for Sans,” Toki makes one more attempt to get up, using the arm of the couch to haul herself upwards. Getting up isn’t easy, after all, particularly with the big skeleton standing before her like a sentry. "But you don’t need to focus on me, Papyrus. I’m fine enough, okay? I can handle a little housework.” She needed to do the housework. Sitting still, resting, it all gave her time for her mind to wander, and she didn’t want to deal with the thoughts and feelings that she knew would rise up. Keeping busy was how she coped with things- and keeping busy was how she was coping with Han’s death.

"Toki, no." he repeated sharply, "You're not. Not until your magic is replenished."

“Pap, I can’t just sit still and do nothing!” Frustration and growing irritation taints her voice as she gets to her feet. Toki steps around him carefully, and finds herself nearly dropping as she bumps her femur into the arm of the couch in an effort to step around him. She hissed, and took a seat on the arm while waiting for the bruise to stop hurting. "My magic isn’t regenerating fast enough to cope with what the twins are taking, Pap. And I can’t sit still. I can’t, okay?"

"It's not helping that you are draining yourself physically either! You need to rest!" He reached out and gripped her arms gently. "Watch TV, go on a walk, I don’t care what you do, but I want you to rest!"
“I can’t!” Her arms don’t fight his grip, and she just stares up at him through dark sockets. Her teeth curl into a sharp frown. The bones of her arms bend slightly under his gentle touch. Toki is so fragile without her magic to reinforce her bones. “Keeping myself busy is the only way to keep my mind off of Han. I watched him bleed to death in my arms, Pap. I watched my little brother beg me not to make him leave, not to let him die. When my mind is at rest, that is all that comes to mind, because his death is on my hands. I still sometimes think I smell his blood on my bones, Papyrus. I just… I can’t rest, Pap. I can’t. Not… Not until Han is laid to rest, okay?” She tugs just slightly on his grip on her, and frees one hand to rub her leg once more. “I’ll just… I’ll be careful, okay? I know I need to be careful not to run into things right now.”

"What happened wasn't your fault, damn it!" He snarled. "You did everything you could! Han would know this!"

“Just because it wasn’t my fault doesn’t mean that I don’t blame myself!” She didn’t lift her voice to a shout, despite him snarling at her. Her teeth ground, sending sparks over his hands that grasped her. “Han was scared, Papyrus! He didn’t want to die- and there was nothing I could do to stop it. You don’t understand. You’re not an elder sibling- and elder sibling is supposed to protect and guide their younger siblings! I helped raise him, Papyrus! I helped raise all of my brothers! They were as much my brothers as they were basically my children. Han had a hard life, and Han carried ghosts of his own that haunted him because of the things he had been made to do. He was going to find happiness, Papyrus.”

Traitorous tears pebbled in her sockets, and she jerked her arm out of his grasp so she could swipe them away as they rolled down her cheeks. “And he died. He had that ripped away with him just when he was starting to find happiness for once in his life. I failed to protect him. I had to listen to my mother sob over the phone. I had to listen to my dad break down into tears, because I failed to protect my little brother. That is something that I have to live with for the rest of my life, Papyrus. That’s what is in my mind when I’m at rest. That's why I can't rest.”

He watched her, and then he sighed and took a step closer, hugging her gently.

Toki sniffled quietly, but planted a hand on his chest and kept him from hugging her. She scrubbed her sockets and gave him a sharp look. If she collapsed into his arms now, she would shatter what fragile peace she had struggled to maintain. “If you can come up with something that qualifies to you as resting and also keeps me company or keeps my mind busy enough not to think of everything, then please, by all means, tell me and I’ll do it. I am tired, Papyrus. I am tired, and my leg hurts, and I want to rest, but I can’t. Until then, I have cleaning to finish. Excuse me.” She sniffled again, scrubbing her palm against the tear tracks on her face, and stood to return back to what she had been doing prior.

"No.” He let her body go, but his hand stayed folded around her wrist. "Tokiko. You're not going to exhaust yourself any further.”

“Then what do you suggest? Hm?” It is a struggle not to be sharp with him, and Toki knows the edge of it lingers in her voice. Her wrist is weak against his grasp, and she knows she can’t escape it without losing her hand. Tears still bead in her sockets, betraying her upset and her inner hurt. “I already told you. If you can come up with something that qualifies as rest, but keeps my mind occupied, then you are welcome to suggest it.”

"What about a bath... something nice and hot. Just you and me.”

“A bath…?” She was expecting him to pop off with a walk, watching television, or reading- none of which would help. Talking let her think- She didn’t have the focus for television, and that bled over to books as well. Toki took a deep breath, and quelled the instinctive part of her that wanted to
demand to go back to work.

Papyrus was right- and she knew it. She was pushing herself too far; far too far to be good for her, and for their children. Toki’s free hand came up to scrub her face, and she heaved a sigh. It would be him and her in the bath. “Okay. A bath… A bath sounds good.” She murmurs tiredly. Her hand scrubs her eye sockets again. “I’m sorry I snapped at you.”

"I'm sorry I did too." He purred gently and pressed a kiss to her head.

Toki sighed gently and shifted to lean against his chest. Her arms hesitantly come around him to give him the hug she had previously denied. “You were right to be worried.” She murmurs. “I have been pushing too hard on myself and my body.” She nuzzles his shoulder softly, feeling her irritation deflate back into hiding. “Why don’t you get out of your boots, and I’ll go get the bath started?”

"Alright." he murmured, going to kick off his boots and jacket.

Toki pressed an apologetic kiss to the top of his head, and then left him downstairs. She made her way up, the stairs giving her a small bit of trouble with the tender spot on her leg, and then to their bathroom. Kneeling down was difficult with her middle, but she managed, and got the tub running with piping hot water. She toned it down a bit after a moment of consideration. Papyrus wasn’t quite immune to the heat like she was.

After rinsing the tub of any dust, and got the stopper put in the bottom, and left the massive thing to fill while she worked to get to her feet. She really was starting to have some serious problems getting up and down with the weight in her middle. Once upright, Toki slid her shirt over her head and then took a peek at her profile in the bathroom mirror. Her belly was large, distended from the once empty gap in her middle. The magic that wove up her ribs, keeping it in place, faded odd almost perfectly. Her pants sat oddly on her hips from how her belly sat, and she toyed with the elastic band with a small smile. The flesh was dimmer than it usually was, on account of her lack of magic no doubt.

A soft laugh trickled from her throat as one of the twins kicked, and a small lump appeared on her belly. She rubbed her fingers quietly over it and sighed. Her ecto belly even had the bellybutton thing going for her- and now that she paid it attention, it was very nearly on it’s way to being an outtie. “I’m sorry I haven’t been taking proper care of myself for you two.” She murmurs softly to them, the sound of the water rushing through the pipes blocking her from hearing Papyrus come upstairs. “I’ll try to do better from now on, my little Jellybeans.”

Papyrus soon made his presence known, smiling as he walked up to hug Toki from behind. He was mostly undressed, but there was his undershirt left to remove. It meant she was able to feel his form behind her, "Tokiko." he whispered gently.

Toki only had her pants and underpants left to remove, so his arms slid around her bare torso. She smiled slightly. “Papyrus.” she murmured gently in response, resting her hands gently on his for a moment, before making the effort to shimmy out of her pants. Once she got them below her hips, they could fall the rest of the way down her legs, baring them bruise and all, so she could step out. She did so, and once she was completely bare to him save her engagement ring, she leaned back and peered up at him. “I’m sorry I was a bit of an ass down stairs. I shouldn’t have tried to lie to you, no matter my reasons.”

He reached out and slowly ran his hands down to her hips, smiling gently as he looked down at her. "It's okay, Toki." he purred gently, "We're all frustrated... and tired... and..." his gaze lowered and he frowned. "Toki, your femur...!"

She spotted where his eye sockets had drifted, and she tucked her chin slightly towards her chest.
“Ah… Yeah… So here’s the thing. I hit my leg really hard on the side table this morning after you left, and… yeah. My defense isn’t up with as low as my magic is. So… My bones are really, really fragile. More like glass bones instead of glass canon, I guess. It’s just a bruise, I promise. I looked it over when I noticed it.”

Papyrus heaved a sigh and set his hand over it, humming quietly as he released magic to heal it.

Toki sighed as the bruise began to fade and the bone hardened up again. “Thanks Pap. It would have healed on it’s own, you know. There are other monsters who need the healing more than I do.” But still, she doesn’t fight him healing it. It feels good, the healing, and the twins squirm in response to the pleased feeling in her soul. “Mmm…”

He huffed softly and nuzzled her without answering her directly. Once her bruise was healed, he retracted his magic. "I'll get in first.” he murmured. He stripped his tank top off and dipped his fingers into the water. It was hot, but not too hot.

He slowly climbed in and leaned back with a small sigh, before he reached up and offered her his hand.

Toki let him get settled, and then padded to the side of the tub. Offering him a soft look, she accepted his hand and let him keep her balanced as she stepped over the high edge. She reached over to turn the water off, as it was now high enough for them to relax in, and then slowly eased down. Getting seated in the tub was a small chore, but going down was easier than going up was going to be.

She eased herself gently against his chest, pressing her back flush to his rib cage. The water was greatly displaced by the bulge in her middle, and she laughed softly. “Oh sweet gods above, it’s so warm…” The heat from the water felt fantastic, and her bones were practically ice cubes as they pressed back into him. The twins squirmed and stretched, enjoying the heat and letting it be known as they made tiny ripples in the water.

He kissed her skull, happily spooning with her before he set his hands on her stomach and released his magic into her body to make up what he could.

Her middle brightened like a light bulb, the twins greedily devouring what their father put forth. Toki heaves a huge sigh and slumps into him. “Mmm… They take almost more than I can make at this point.” She murmurs softly. “It’s probably safe to say that I’m not going to be able to do much with my magic here soon. We’ve still got four months or so to go, Pap. Provided they keep growing at this rate, of course. It could end up being three or two months- twins are often early.” Their need for magic would only grow. Part of her worried a little bit, about if they’d be able to keep up with it, or if she would be permanently tired and freezing for the rest of her pregnancy. Cae wasn’t going to be able to donate at all now that he was supporting his own, so it would fall to Papyrus more often now. Her worry flitted through her soul aura.

"You cannot use your magic other than what is absolutely necessary..." he told her, stroking her stomach gently to soothe her and the children both.

“I’m starting to see that.” She sighs quietly. “Which sucks, because I really like being able to boil water really fast.” Toki relaxes more into him, her arms coming down to rest along his thighs. Her fingers gently rub over his femurs, more to keep her digits busy than anything else. She can faintly feel the mark where Vikki had shot him. It had healed over nicely, but the fresh bone felt different than the old. “I don’t really know what to do.” She admits quietly. “I need to be able to defend myself, but… I don’t know. Those hell hornets, when they fired off those beams of light… I could feel it sucking my magic, faster than anything else I’d ever done.”
The twins shift in her belly, and one of them nails her in the rib hard enough to make her suck in a
breath. “Okay, okay, no more negative talk from me, I get it. Good lord, you two.” Her finger rubs
along her lower rib, and she grimaces.

"Boiling water doesn't really take too much magic." he chuckled softly, stroking her stomach gently
as he took to humming quietly instead of talking.

The humming and gentle touches soothed them, and she exhaled softly in response. “Ow.” She
breathed. Her rib stung something fierce. “Yeah, that’s true. I suppose cooking will be fine enough in
small amounts.” She murmurs. Toki shifts, and nestles her head contently on his sternum. The glow
of her middle is bright under the water, and the twins shifting within her makes faint ripples between
his hands. “Mmm, they’re enjoying the warmth. So am I, really. It’s… nice. Very relaxing.” As tired
as she is, she can feel her sockets begin to droop, and actively fights against falling asleep.

"Good. Sleep. Rest until fatigue no longer haunts you." he murmured, "I shall always be here to
watch over you."

“Fatigue isn’t what haunts me. Or at least, isn’t the complete cause.” She murmurs back. Toki shifts
against him, scooting up slightly and bracing her arms slightly on his raised knees. The position
reminds her some of something from a parenting book she’d read somewhere- but it was comfortable
enough that she wasn’t in danger of losing feeling in her legs immediately. She flicks her eye lights
up to him. “If… I do rest… Will you wake me if you see a nightmare start to set in?”

"If you twitch out of place even once." he promised, kissing her head again.

Toki smiled quietly. “Thank you.” She murmurs. It takes her a moment of wiggling to find the best
comfortable spot, but as she gets settled, so to do the twins. They settle high against her ribs, close to
her soul, and she relaxes with his hands cradling them. Her sockets drift closed, and she finds herself
drifting to the sound of his humming.
Chapter 54

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And now we actually get Han’s things moved along. And some other plot related things- y’know, nothing big. We didn’t really want to do the funeral- mostly because other than being overwhelmingly sad, it wouldn’t really progress any plot.

Don’t forget to visit the blog! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: RIP Han 2016-2016. Will things improve from here? Or will they continue to get worse?

Only we know <3 Enjoy the chapter.

The funeral had been hell. What fragile peace that Toki had won had proceeded to shatter into a thousand tiny bits when her family brought her into their folds and the crying began all over again. It wasn’t heavy sobs- no, that was her mother’s tears, and her younger brother’s. Toki had long since spent her heavy sobs. No- it was the soft keens of a broken hearted monster mourning with her family.

Most of the cremation was done with everyone there, where all of the monsters and the humans could see. Only a choice few went with- and Asgore came along too. He helped coax the flames to burn hotter- and they got the jars of ashes that same day instead of the weeks that it would normally take to receive such things.

They mourned, and mourned hard. Everyone took a small urn home with them containing parts of Han’s ashes- Even Todd got a small one. Toki’s was settled carefully up onto the mantle of her fireplace, where it wouldn’t be easily reachable by any one who wasn’t a full sized adult.

When it was all said and done, Toki was burnt out. It took her two days to gather the energy to begin to pack Han’s things away. Her mother wanted all of his personal things to keep- which was fine. Toki didn’t think she could handle keeping them, not when seeing and handling them made her want to break down in tears.

Thankfully everyone was helpful. Undyne, Asgore, Grillby, her fiancé and her soon to be brother in law all came trundling upstairs to help her pack. Undyne and Grillby were running the instrument boxes over to the school while Asgore and Papyrus packed the instruments into their cases and the cases into moving boxes. Sans for the most part was tasked with keeping Toki company and keeping her from straining herself in moving things she shouldn’t be. It also kept him from hurting himself or his child- the mother and the little ball of sunshine were fairly fragile considering Cae’s HP level. Toriel and Frisk were watching the wounded for the day. Most everyone was recovering magnificently now- but there were a few still unable to be sent home on their own.

Toki was left sitting on the bed in the instrument room, fiddling with her brother’s favorite and most used violin in her hands, while Cae sat behind her and eased some stress induced knots gently out of her back. The king was settled on the floor, carefully dusting and cleaning the instruments with care before passing them to Papyrus.
Her fiancé was amazing at puzzles- and could fit the most instruments in each box with how he packed them.

She watched him raptly while listening to Cae’s commentary behind her.

“Hmm, do you think Undyne will be able to handle a box this heavy?” Asgore murmured softly, eying the box that the big skeleton was packing.

“She’s really strong, Asgore.” Toki chimed in softly. “She’d probably be offended you thought she couldn’t handle it.” And if she couldn’t, Toki was fairly certain that Grillby could.

“Ah, I know she is strong- but I worry, you know that. I trained her, after all. A teacher worries about his student.” Still, Asgore finishes packing up the next pile of instruments, and passes them over for Papyrus to pack.

Toki watches for a time, and simply hums in response to Asgore. Her fingers stroke over the violin in her grasp, bones making odd noises against the strings. She hums softly, and fingers the well-worn neck, where her brother’s fingers had held. “Hey… Pap? Would you like Han’s violin?”

His effortless packing came to a stop as he looked to her sharply. "His... A-Are you sure?” he asked.

“I am.” Her eye lights are soft as she flicks her gaze down to the worn instrument. It was well cared for, perfectly tuned, and still sounded good. A soft smile tugs at her mouth. “Maybe you can teach the twins to play with it if it won’t fit you.” It was sized for a human, after all. She strokes the sides of it once more, and sighs through her nasal cavity.

Asgore watches on silently, gaze flicking back and forth between the two.

“Han used to say that the older the violin, the sweeter the music.” She murmurs softly, mostly to herself. He’d mostly used it as an innuendo, spurring her on that while she wasn’t getting younger, her age wouldn’t be an issue for someone who truly liked her. “But yes. I would like for you to have it. You know how to care for an instrument, and I know you would treat it right.”

He smiled gently and scooted over on his knees to give her a soft kiss on the head. "I will treasure it like no other instrument," he purred.

Toki smiled up at him and gently stroked his jaw. “Good.” She purrs softly. “I know you will.” She shifts, and reaches to the side to snag its case. She packs it away carefully, and then nestles it on the bed next to her. “I’ll leave it here so it’s not accidentally packed up.” Though the case was telltale that it wasn’t a school instrument. The case was worn, with stickers and pictures stuck and taped to it.

“Hey punks! No kissing and bein’ cute while there’s work to do!” The fish woman flexes into the room and scoops up a big box. It’s shoved into Grillby’s arms, nearly knocking the fire elemental back out of the room as he appears behind Undyne.

Grillby looks slightly out of breath, his flames expanding and contracting with his heavy breathing. Elementals can’t sweat, or he surely would be soaked. “Undyne, they’re well within their rights to be affectionate.” He admonishes. “They are engaged after all.”

Quinn nodded in confirmation at Toki’s words before he looked to Undyne. "I get to be cute if I want to, just like you with Alphys!” he countered.

“But we’re cute in private!” Undyne huffs and crosses her arms. “I’m too tough to be cute in public.”
“Too tough, hm?” Toki’s sockets glimmer slightly, and she nudges Pap a little bit before wiggling her brow. “C’mere, Undyne. I want to show you something before you run off again.” Too tough her tailbone. The big fish woman was easier to melt than an ice cream in Grillby’s hands.

“Eh?” She squints at the skeleton warily, but does as requested. She pads closer, carefully stepping around boxes and bony legs, and perches next to Papyrus. “What do you want?”

Toki snags her hand, and guides it to her middle. There is a flutter of feet under a massive webbed hand, and Toki watches Undyne’s fins flutter in response.

Her eye dilates from its usual slit, and it practically sparkles as she coos. The pads of her fingers stroke over the wiggling lumps, and she coos again in admiration. Undyne liked many things- and she had a soft spot concerning children. “Awww, the guppies are swimming! Hello in there! It’s your auntie Undyne~”

“Too tough to be cute, huh?” It was like a piranha was fawning over her middle, really, and Toki was both unnerved by it and amused.

“Oh fuck you,” Sharp teeth are bared at her, and Undyne flushes and snatches her hand away. “You’re lucky I cant thump a pregnant skeleton, or you’d get Gib-smacked.”

“Oh gods, who let you watch NCIS?”

Cae and Aliquam both began to laugh.

Asgore echoed them, chortling heartily.

Undyne flares her fins at Toki and hisses, mock-angry as she rattles the bones of her fins at her.

Toki guffaws, but curls her fingers into Aliquam’s shirt, just perchance they actually managed to anger the fish monster into an actual rage.

Undyne huffs eventually, collects a box, and then pads for the door. “Gonna have to punch a fuckin’ wall to feel tough again. Damn guppies.”

“Everyone has to have their weakness,” Toki giggles, watching Undyne draw Grillby out after her. “Aww, I probably shouldn’t tease her too much. Sometimes I think she really wants to flatten me.”

“She has always been an easily flustered child.” The king chuckles in response, moving to take over packing while Papyrus takes a moment for his mate. “Does she truly scare you?”

“Sometimes.” Toki admits. “She reminds me of a shark sometimes. She’s a nice lady- but she is unintentionally intimidating sometimes.” And given the fragile state of her bones, Undyne thumping her, even mockingly, would probably be very bad. She already bore some blooming bruises from running into things while trying to help move things. Hence why she was being babysat.

“Well if anyone knows anything about being careful with themselves, it's me.” Cae assured her.

"And I know damn well I love you too much to stand by and let that happen." Quinn told her as he smooched her cheek affectionately.

Toki chuckles and smooches Papyrus back. “You both are very sweet. I do recall you threatened to make her into fish sticks if she intentionally tried to scare me, didn’t you Pap?”

Asgore bleated out a very goat like laugh. “Oh Stars, did he really?”
“He did. It was very sweet of him.” Toki grins. Even if it had been the most adorable threat she had ever heard.

"Nyeh heh heh~" Papyrus laughed quietly as he nuzzled Toki. "Well I don’t plan on letting anyone hurt you, Toki. Even his royal fluffiness will have to get through me first.”

“I wouldn’t dream of hurting your mate,” Asgore chuckled softly.

Toki pressed a kiss to Pap’s skull, and folded her hands over her belly. She doesn’t say that he can’t promise for nothing to hurt her- because promising such isn’t possible. Not with Humans Against Monsters still around. “I know you won’t.” She smiles gently instead of voicing her doubts. “I love you lots, you silly skeleton.”

"I love you too." he cooed happily, pecking her cheek a few more times. “And I love them as well.” Her abdomen is the next thing peppered with kisses as he snuggled her.

Everything was lighthearted despite sadness of the days prior. The group spent hours laughing and chatting in the room as Undyne and Grillby toted boxes back and forth. They even tackled her brother’s room proper, and everything was packed up and put away shortly. They had migrated back to the instrument room with the instruments that they had pilfered from Han’s room, and had taken time to get those packed too.

Riiiiiiiiiiing.

Toki perked as her phone went off. She shifts, leaning to the side to dig her phone out of her back pocket. The loud ringing echoed, and she was quick to answer it. It wasn’t a number she knew- but then and again, a lot of people were calling and offering their condolences for her loss. “Hello?”

"I’ve heard about the casualties, Miss Nara... I do apologize for your losses." The voice then chuckled, "Unfortunately, I realize you must already know that this is far from over."

Her voice tightened. “You apologize?” Confusion briefly flits through her tone, before the lights disappear from her sockets. “Who is this?” She demands.

Asgore goes quiet, and motions the skeletons to do the same. His ears prick, lifting as he listens in on her conversation.

"I need not say who I am. I assume you’ve already had a hint, my dear." The voice spoke with a calm tone, their words moving quick to the point, spoken smoothly.

“Cruelty.” The lights in her eyes flicked on and narrowed. She rumbled. “How dare you call me after what you and your people did.” She snarls. “Why are you doing this? What on earth could possibly have made you desire to do this? To create Humans Against Humanity?”

"There is a reason they were cast underground a millennia ago. You fail to realize that they were never destined to return, that they were cast from our world to live in the result of their sins upon humanity."
“And just what sins did they commit?” She hisses. “Just what gave you the right to decide that they deserved death? Hm? Monsters are kinder than any human I’ve ever met. None of them deserve this—none of them deserve the genocide that you keep trying to commit, Cruelty.”

"But this is what you think, reincarnate. I've been around for far longer than you have. I remember their sins. They know what they did."

“Anything that they did, it hardly garnered genocide and imprisonment.” She hissed. Toki took a deep breath and heaved a sigh through her nasal cavity. Her fingers clenched tight over her knee. “You don’t have to do this, Cruelty. People can change— you aren’t defined by your soul color. You can choose to be kind. You can call this off, disband your cultists, and turn yourself over. You can choose the right path.”

"Oh, don't get me wrong, my dear kindness... I tried. I was kind for so long. So many lifetimes... I was kind and generous right alongside you." He chuckled. "And as a result, I was cast out. I seemed to disgust the monsters and humans alike once they realized who I was... You failed to stay at my side. Just like now, you chose the monsters over our love. So in my eyes, you are another chess piece on my board. And you're in check, Kindness."

Toki frowned. “I’ve never met you before. I don’t even KNOW you to have ever left your side.” Unless one of her exes… But she had never dated anyone who had shown any sort of cruel tendency. “I’m in check, hm?” Her teeth parted in a ghastly snarl that had Asgore stepping away warily. “Fucking bring it. You might not have pulled the trigger, you asshole, but you sent the man who killed my brother. By proxy, his death is on your head. You leave the monsters out of it.”

"The monsters have always been a part of our feud, Kindness. I wish it weren't so. But not even the love you felt in your past lives remained." After a moment, he sighed. "So be it. You have fourteen days. That's two weeks, to cease all communication with the Monsters and send them back to the underground. If you do not comply, you will not like what I will do to you. Perhaps I will give you a taste of the betrayal I felt from you? Either way, I truly do hope you comply. They do not belong on our world. They've taken too much from us, and it would be far too easy for you to die again in this lifetime, Kindness. Our game is far too new for that yet."

"If you call the police, they will be silenced. Including humans into our fight will leave them just as dead as your brother. That nice officer- Mark, if I recall- would be a shame to lose. He has a family you know. This is your final warning " the line then went dead.

Toki’s finger’s clenched over her phone as the line went dead, and the force of her grip cracked one of her weakened finger bones with a loud snap. She stared ahead of her, sockets black and body tense, not even noticing the grip that was denting her phone and her hand.

Two weeks. Two weeks. She had a horrible, horrible feeling that something was going to happen in two weeks. Her insides churned with anxiety and anger, and her lack of magic was the only thing that kept her bones from roiling with heat. She wouldn’t give into his demands. No- not at all. Cease all communication? She had two monsters growing in her belly- there was no way to cease it. She was engaged to a monster. But… The other civilians would be in danger.

They needed to evacuate them. But where? Where would they be safe?

It occurred to her, sitting there with glowing marrow dripping from the crack in her fingers and slathering her phone in glowing color, that the only place safe was probably the Castle. But how could she voice that? How could she suggest that?

Aliquam slowly scooted closer. "Toki?" he then reached up and gently gripped her shoulder.
“Two weeks.” She croaks. Her phone is still clenched in hand, her dark sockets staring at the glow slowly soaking it. “Two weeks. He gave me two weeks to either cut all communications and send you all back Underground, or… He didn’t say. But… I don’t imagine it will be good.”

Asgore eases forwards as well, his large hand coming to cradle hers. His fluffy fingers gently tried to ease her fingers off of their death grip on her cellular device. “Let go of the phone, Toki. Please— you’ll hurt your hand more.”

Numbly, her fingers released it, and the phone dropped onto her leg with a faint clatter. Green magic and marrow dripped from her fingers like slime.

Aliquam took her hand and kissed it gently as he released healing magic to soothe her gently, “That’s enough. We need to cure you of your magi-drain.” he told her, before he glanced to the door.

Grillby returned again, to take the last box. Undyne wasn’t far behind him. He paused, seeing the healing wound on her hand, and frowned at the three skeletons and the king in the room. “What happened?” He asked.

“Did you hit your hand on something?” Undyne blinked around Grillby’s shoulder.

Toki shook her head and tucked her chin towards her chest. “Cruelty,” she murmurs. “Cruelty called. I… have two weeks to get you all back into the Underground or… or he’s going to do something. He didn’t say.” She murmurs quietly, not bothering to mention her need for magic. Papyrus could spout that off.

“Grillby, she’s been suffering from Magi-Drain and hasn’t listened to me when I told her to go find you.” Aliquam was not ashamed to say he was tattling on her.

Grillby frowned at her.

“Please don’t, Grillby.” She was in no mood for a lecture. “Give me magic if you wish, but don’t feel obligated to. Not with the shit that’s going down. I don’t… Know what to do.” She mutters quietly.

Grillby heaves a sigh and comes closer to the bed. He eases his hands down onto her shoulders, given that Papyrus has one of her hands captive, and then begins to fill the deep well of her magic from his own ocean of stores. “You should have come to me sooner.” He murmurs. “Papyrus, you should have brought her to me regardless of her fussing. Magi-drain on a gravid monster is not good. It teeters upon the edge of malnourish both the carrier and the unborn. Usually it is not a problem. Magic production is increased during pregnancy- but twins sap that more than a single one does.”

Papyrus ducked his head with a sigh.

Asgore heaves a sigh through his nose and shares a look with Undyne. “Captain,” he murmurs. “Your thoughts?”

The fish woman looked contemplative, a dark frown on her face. “If this Cruelty punk plans to cause problems, it’s likely he’ll target here. I’m sure as hell not abandoning Toki to this crazy person’s wrath. But… There’s too many civilians here. There’s no guarantee that if we took Toki elsewhere that he wouldn’t still target here regardless.”

“That’s what I thought.” The king mutters softly. “Then we’ll need to send the civilians underground, won’t we…?”

“I will start the alert to initiate the evacuation.” Cae offered Toki a comforting pat and hauled himself
up from the bed. He wore a frown on his face. “I’ll see that that everyone’s got cars in working order.”

“Yes please, Sans.” Asgore nods. He draws himself upward, swelling with all of his kingly nature, and puffs a breath of hot air through his nose. It had been a long time since he’d had to put wartime actions into place. He no longer had the army that he used to. Everyone was retired or no longer alive. Of his army, only the Royal guard remained. “I want everyone who isn’t part of the Royal Guard back at the castle and the Underground. Undyne- ready the guards. I want twenty-four hour surveillance around the compound and the city walls. Armed surveillance. Everyone needs to travel in threes, if not in sets of four.”

“Yes sir.” She salutes him, and is off out the bedroom door and back down the stairs after taking the final box of instruments.

Asgore sighs. He glances to Grillby. “You’ll be expected to leave with the rest of the civilians too, Grillby.”

“I’m only going if Sans is going.” And the chance of Sans going was very small, given that Papyrus would stay with Toki, and Toki would be staying here. If she went with them, there was the chance the coming attack would simply be directed right to the castle itself. He eases more magic into the woman below his hands, and sighs heavily. “It has been a long time since I have fought, but I do remember how to, my King.”

“It has been a long time since either of us fought, general. Either way…” The king simply shakes his head, and then flicks a look to Papyrus. “Papyrus. You’re to guard Toki. These humans are not above underhanded tactics. You will need to be observant. You are to stay with her at all times. Is that understood?”

"Yes sir, your majesty." Aliquam replied with a salute.

"I'm not going anywhere." Sans growled softly.

"In an ideal situation, both you and Toki would be tucked away with the rest of the civilians to protect your young.” The king sighs. “But…”

“But I’m a risk.” Toki mutters softly. “I’m only one woman, Asgore. I understand. There’s a high chance that if I went with the civilians, the castle could be targeted. I… It’s best that I am here, where no one else is at as much risk. You can’t risk all of your people for one person. I’m not selfish enough to ever ask that of you.”

“We wont leave you on your own, Toki.” Asgore sighed. “I will be remaining alongside all of you. If this organization thinks it can continue it’s heinous acts, it will find that it is sorely wrong.”

Grillby smoothed his fingers gently over her shoulders, finally feeling a change in her magic levels. His own stores were nearly a third down, but hers were starting to regenerate more on her own now that she wasn’t running on fumes. He pumps a bit more in, and then draws his hands away. “Your magic is now regenerating at a more normal rate. You simply got too low for your systems to handle on their own.” His gaze flicks to Papyrus. “If she gets that low again, you take her to me, or any other monster you trust to do a donation, Papyrus. No matter her fuss- you do it, or you risk your children’s health.”

He gave a nod. "I'll bring her kicking and screaming if needed." he murmured, before he nipped the base of her horn.
He got a face full of sparks for his nip. She chuffed at him, and flailed her fingers vaguely towards his face. “If you think you can just throw me over your shoulder like a brute, you’ll have another thing coming, Pap.” Though tossing her over his shoulder wouldn’t work on account of the growth in her middle. But the statement holds true regardless.

“As your mate, he is entitled to care for you if you are being too stupid to do it yourself.” The fire elemental gave her a solid flick in the middle of her skull once he was certain her defense was back where it was meant to be. Grillby huffed, and glanced to Sans. “I’m coming with you to help you get things started now that I’m not needed here.”

Asgore straightened with a deep huff. “I must go inform the monsters in the village. There will be guards outside your home shortly. Please, try to stay inside of the private compound that surrounds your home proper. Your apiary will be acceptable as well, once we have a guard set around it.” With that, the King took his leave, leaving the two pairs of parents in the main room. He had things to do—many, many things.

Sans sighed with a tight smile and nodded to Grillby, "Come on, Grillby." he murmured to him, before he flashed a less strained smile to Toki. "Tokes, take care okay? I’ve got cars to prep."

Toki offers him a faint salute, and gains her feet. “Mhm. I’ll try.” She murmured. How she would do that, she didn’t know. Anxiously bubbled up inside of her, churning like a storm within her chest and soul. When Grillby and Sans are gone, leaving only Toki and Papyrus there, she turns to him and gives him a troubled look. Her mouth opens, closes, opens again, and then seals shut a final time before Toki shakes her head. Her fingers are stuffed into her pockets, and she proceeds to pace out into the hall to start, well, pacing.

Papyrus followed her after a moment. "Toki, hang on..."

“Hang on to what, Papyrus?” Her shoulders hunched, and she continued pacing, heading down the stairs towards the main room. From there she paced wall to wall. “I don’t know what to hang on to anymore. Cruelty is set on destroying it all and killing or locking you all away and I don’t know how to help stop it, and he’s going to come here and make me pay for my apparent betrayal from lifetimes ago and I don’t know what to do.” Was that panic escalating in her voice? Why yes. Yes it was.

"Hang on to me. To Caeruleus. Grillby, Asgore, Undyne, Wolfen, Todd." His arms boxed her in, bringing her pacing to a halt as he tucked her tightly into his chest. "Everyone." He murmured.

“I’m afraid,” She admits as she tucks her face into his shoulder. “I’m scared and I’m angry and I’m terrified and it’s a horrible, horrible mix that makes me feel like I’m going to explode. I don’t want to lose anyone else, Pap. I don’t want to lose you or Cae or Grillby or Undyne or… Or anyone else. I can’t handle another funeral.” She whispers. Tears bead in her eyes again and they trickle into his shirt. “I can’t, Pap.”

He held her tightly, slowly picking her up and walking with her to the couch. "You can't... That's why we're not going to have any more... we're going to win against them, they will not take any more of us.”

“You’re always so optimistic…” She murmurs with a quiet sniffle. The couch was a good idea, but sitting upright didn’t appeal to her very much. The couch wasn’t wide enough to spoon either.

“There’s no guarantee…” She whispers softly. “The only thing we can hope is that Frisk keeps their promise and saves daily. If… if something happens, they can load and we can try something else or run if we have to.”

Toki wasn’t the boss heart of bravery. Running was not something she was above doing, like any
person with common sense. She sniffs quietly and shakes her head. “I really wish I could lay on you like I used to,” She whispers softly. “It’s silly, but I always felt so safe like that…”

"Who says you can’t?” He set her down carefully, and then took off his shirt. Ribs bare for the world to see, he then got settled on his back on the couch and opened his arms for her. He wiggled one of his brows, a roguish smile being flashed to her. "Come on, you know where to go~"

Know she did. “I never thought of that.” She mused. A soft, watery chuckle escapes her, and she carefully straddles him to start. She eases herself down, resting her chest to his, and leaving her belly to dangle almost weightlessly in the open space of his abdomen. Toki stretched out on his chest, nestling her arms into their usual spot while her legs tangled pleasantly with his. “Ah- holy shit.” She mutters. “Oh my gods, this feels so good…” Her back didn’t have the weight on it like it usually did. She could feel knots and tension ebbing off slightly, and she basked in it with a pleased sound. “Mmm…”

He cooed happily into her ear and reached up, pressing his fingers into her back gently as he gently kissed what he could of her skull and horns. "Nyeh heh heh heh~"

“Mmm… A little harder? Yes, right there. Ah, that knot’s been there for weeks.” Holy shit that felt amazing. Toki slumped into him quietly, sockets flicking idly over to the television. Her stressed tears were ebbing as he soothed her as best he could. It wasn’t gone- but she was calmer now. Being in a familiar safe position helped with that most certainly. She wiggled her fingers. Toki couldn’t reach the remote, but Stripe could.

With her newly borrowed magic, the green queen bee was summoned. She fetched the remote, set it next to Toki’s hands, and then proceeded to drape herself over Papyrus’ skull and buzz contently. She tapped the bridge of his nose affectionately with her foreleg. She had missed her television buddy.

He chuckled happily and reached up, his hand blanketing the queen bee effortlessly as he pet her for a short moment. "Hello, my darling Stripe." he cooed, before he returned his attention to Toki with a well articulated treatment of massages, caresses, and kind words that were muttered almost by the sound of his soul beat rather than his voice.

Listening to his soul beat below his bare ribs was soothing in many different ways. Toki felt her sockets drooping as she listened to the soft thrumming pulses, feeling his hands kneading and massaging at the ectoplasmic flesh that made up her lower back. The twins, hanging weightless from her middle, twitched and squirmed in response to the slow easing of her stress levels. She took the remote and turned the television on, settling the channel on some cartoons. The sounds of shenanigans were amusing. Almost lazily, Toki stroked her fingers over the side of his ribs as she listened and watched. "I love you, you know that?" She murmured. "You are my world."

Stripe buzzed in a pleased way and settled in to watch the television with her skeletal hive mates.

"I love you more, do you know that?" he purred, stroking her head gently before he leaned in and kissed the base of her horns softly. "Nyeh heh heh~"

“Nuh-uh. I love you more.” She quirks a soft smile and nuzzles up into his kiss. Toki angles her skull so her horns wont jab him, and then carefully presses a kiss to his sternum. The long scar that wrapped around her left horn was no longer as sensitive, so it didn’t sting when she pressed it into his kisses. “I love you. All of you- from your silly ‘nyehs’ to your happy laughs. I love you- all of you.” Her fingers curl into his ribs, clinging to him solidly. “You are my rock, Pap. I’d be lost without you.”
"Well I can't beat that." He purred happily, hugging her tight.

Toki kissed his chest gently, and smiled. “You don’t need to beat it.” She chuckles quietly. Shifting herself slightly, the skeleton scoots up as much as her belly will allow, and presses a soft kiss to the bottom of his jaw. The twins shift in her belly and their feet kick at his lower ribs, booting them firmly with hard little feet as they swish and turn inside of her.

He chuckled gently and kissed her happily. "Nyeh heh heh heh, oh well." he cooed gently, before he grunted and winced sharply at the kicks. "Ngh..."

Toki blinked at his wince, and tilted her head. “What- Oh! Did they kick you, love?”

Sure enough, another couple of kicks landed roughly against his ribs as the twins squabbled for space.

"A-Ah OW!" he winced and turned her soul blue to lift her up a little bit. "Nngh... They were attacking my ribs." he murmured, rubbing them gently.

Toki squeaked as her soul was made blue. She didn’t flail as she was lifted, but she did proceed to laugh gently. ‘Oh goodness, Pap. That’s what their kicks feel like from the inside. Kinda painful at times, isn’t it?” She was probably used to how hard they kicked. Toki squirmed, and scooted back down, so her middle wouldn’t brush his ribs or his pelvis. “You can let me down now. They shouldn’t kick you from here.”

"A-Ah, sorry!" he carefully moved and put her down on the couch. "Sorry..." he rubbed his ribs again.

Well, she hadn’t meant for him to set her on the couch proper, but whatever made him happy. He’d been fine until she’d scooted up- she had hoped to have gotten to stay in the same position. Toki rubbed her fingers gently over where they had kicked him and gave him a wry smile. “It’s alright, Pap. I didn’t think they would turn around and nail you. That’s about what they do to my ribs on a daily basis. I’m used to it- but I forgot you have sensitive ribs.” She rubs gently to soothe where the twins had kicked. “Is that better?”

He smiled gently and sighed. "It is, thank you." he purred, leaning to kiss her head.

She smiles slightly and sighs softly. “Silly jellybeans,” she pats her middle with a sigh. “Mommy was comfortable until you went and caused mischief for daddy. Naughty, naughty jellybeans.”

Toki receives a sharp jab for her efforts, and grunts softly.

He chuckled at that and sighed. "Oh well...

She gives him a slightly hopeful smile. “Maybe another time when they’re not as fussy- ow. Ah. They’re squabbling over space. I guess they must be getting pretty tight in there. We’re…. Gosh… heading towards seven months now, I think.” She blinks slowly. “Anyways, that was a really nice position. But definitely I have to remain settled lower so my middle doesn’t bump your bones.”

He nodded and snagged her close into a hug so he could kiss her.

She settled back against him with a content sound and pressed a soft kiss to his mouth. Toki sighed softly, and stroked his cheek, before chortling as Stripe came bumbling down to settle on her belly. The bee padded until a kick startled her. Her wings ruffled upwards, and she pressed down lightly on the foot prodding her.
“I love you.” She murmured softly to Papyrus. A soft sigh escaped her. “We’ll handle whatever comes, right? Together?” Two weeks wasn’t long to prepare for whatever HAM was planning. But... they could manage.

"Together." he promised, kissing her gently before steadily adjusting so that she was once more nestled into his form. "Let them come. With you, we cannot be stopped."

“All of us are strong together.” Once more nestled back as she had been, Toki settled down with a pleased buzz. Stripe, having been dislodged and jostled, grumpily settled on the back of Toki’s legs, and began to idly knead the back of her thighs.

As anxious as this tended to make her, Toki knew they would be okay. They were all strong, they were all loyal to each other- they could watch each others back. And if she rested well enough, she could play her role as a shield.

Toki, with anger simmering below the surface of her soul, settled down to rest and relax with Papyrus as she worked to stockpile and build the stores of her magic as best she could. She was going to need it.
One week into the wait had left Nara Village a ghost town in the literal sense. Every civilian and guard with children had left for the castle. The castle had been shored up, the front gates locked and sealed, leaving no way into the Underground. It also left Asgore, Undyne, the Gaster brothers, Toki, Grillby, and a massive platoon of guards locked outside.

There still had been no sign of Tenebris, and many feared the worst, but the brothers knew their father better than that, and held onto their faith that he was alive.

The sounds of village life were suddenly gone. The nights were nearly silent, save the noise of armor clanking on the guards. Everyone was in their armor during their shift. Asgore even took to wearing his armor once more.

The only one without armor was Toki. Even Undyne had her armor- heavily built, full bodied plate armor was hefty and nearly impregnable.

Toki was on total compound lockdown. The front drive way had been blocked off with trucks, and other than Grillby’s bar and her apiary, she wasn’t allowed out. Toki was generally a homebody, but she wasn’t even allowed to go walking the streets of the city without an armed guard. She was beginning to feel cooped up, caged in the walls of her private compound, and the semi-closed off field of her apiary.

She had jarred that weeks honey by day two. By day three she had paced the compound walls. By day four, she was damn near losing her mind. She could only pace the same walls for so long before it began to grow irritating.

By the end of day five, Toki was angry. Her anger just kept simmering and boiling and roiling- and there was little she could do to stop it. Meditating, relaxing, distracting herself- none of it worked to release the anger that boiled inside of her. She was snappy and irritable, sparking her teeth at monsters when they got too insistent with her. No one escaped- not even Papyrus. He bore the brunt of her sour mood, taking her grumbling with a good-natured grain of salt.

Despite her mood being the most sour he's ever seen it, Papyrus had held close to her, showing her the most support he could provide. The days of silence had affected him as well, the quiet scaring him once in a while, but he knew that Caeruleus had the worst of it. His brother was almost always in Grillby's company, and showed severe paranoia when he was absent.
It spilled over on day six, and over the most inane reason. She dropped a glass of lemonade while she was out walking the yard. It was her favorite glass- and she made an irritated noise as her magic roiled inside of her. Papyrus had stepped inside to fix them sandwiches so they could eat outside- and she had stumbled over a stone in the yard and the glass had shattered at her feet.

Maybe it was a combination of pregnancy hormones and moodiness alongside the trauma and the pain that HAM had caused, but…

It made her snap.

The guards patrolling the outside wall gave her an alarmed look as her buzzing filled the air. She didn’t even have the chance to stop it, before two massive shadows fell over her.

The larger hell hornet fell before her, landing heavily. It- she, her mind supplied- regarded the broken glass apathetically, nudging it with the spiny carapace of her foot. The hornet gazed at her blandly, the glass clinking against hard chitin. The big beast gave a hearty chuff, puffing air over her and over the pile of glass that had angered the skeleton so.

Toki swallowed nervously, staring down a horned hornet that stood easily taller than she did, but nearly thrice that in length. Her anger simmered still, but she could feel the hornets feeding on it, draining it away from her like poison drawn from a wound. They drained her magic no more than her flaming bees did so long as they weren’t using those horrible energy blasts.

The smaller of the two was about the size of a pony to her, and she bounced in place with the energy of a young beast. The hornet shoved forwards, butting her head into Toki’s side with a warm clack of sharp jaws, and proceeded to nuzzle her affectionately.

Hesitantly, Toki rubbed her finger bones through the blazing mane of fire as the smaller hornet nuzzled into her side like an affectionate hound. “Well… hello there…?”

The guards on the outside wall looked on with alarm, but really could do nothing. They had heard the tales of the decimation they had caused. They were understandable wary, but there was little that they could do to make them go away.

When he went in to make some sandwiches, he didn't expect to be interrupted by the booming sound from outside. Immediately going into guard mode, he ran outside expecting a fight, instead he came to see his mate among the company of what they had long deemed 'Hell Hornets'. Two of them, in fact.

"T-Toki!" he exclaimed after taking a moment to find his voice.

“I’m okay!” She calls back. She stumbles slightly as the smaller one nudges her again. “I, ah, lost my temper and they sort of… appeared.” He would no doubt notice the glimmers of glass shards littering the ground around her bare feet.

The largest hornet swings a massive head to Papyrus, and large jaws clack at him threateningly.

“Ahh, no! He’s good, he’s good!” Toki frantically waves the big one’s attentions back to her. “He’s mine. Don’t hurt him.”

The big hornet eyes her, and then huffs sharply. It makes a dismissive buzz, and begins to steadily take stock of the compound, wandering around on strong legs, ectoplasmic abdomen bobbing with each step. The ground trembles under it’s surprisingly large weight.

Papyrus warily approached, his shoulders tense as he observed them. The smaller one didn’t seem
aggressive, but the large one had turned to him with the intent to harm. "Aren’t they heavy on your magic?" he asked as he snagged an arm around her and tugged her protectively to his chest.

Toki went with him willingly, leaning into his build as the smaller of the two proceeded to invade their personal space. She nearly tripped as her lower set of ram like horns hooked on Toki’s leg and nearly took her leg out from under her. “Only a little bit more than Stripe does.” She says softly. She runs her fingers through the green mane of fire, and strokes over the hard bone like structure of the skull. “It was the energy beams that did me in last time. They’re also… I don’t know. It feels like they’re eating my anger, or sucking it out of me.” He would read it in her aura that she was already much calmer. Her tone of voice was less hostile, and she sounded more and more tired and close to defeated as the wind was dragged out of her sails.

The bigger of the two approached again, nudging the smaller one out of the way, before shoving a large face into Papyrus’ own. Her mouth dropped open, double hinged jaws dropping down. She could easily fit his skull in her mouth and crush it like a pebble. Instead, she huffed, taking in his scent more like an animal might instead of an insect.

He could tell and he smiled warily up at the thing huffing in his face. "I'm glad they're helping you then." he purred happily.

“She.” Toki murmured faintly. "They both feel… female, almost. As close to female as their kind can get. They’re not… quite full queens, almost. I think… They’re too small? They’re… well, queens of my hive, I think. If I am understanding her thoughts right. She doesn’t think very slowly for me to understand completely."

The hornet gave Papyrus a steady look, and then rumbled an aggressive warning in his face to test his response. Thick green liquid dribbled from the inside of her mouth, and sizzled slightly against the grass.

The littler hornet padded around to sniff at his boot, and butted her broad skull against his thigh in a request for attention.

He reached down and pet the smaller hornet gently before he summomed a bone and brought it up, gently bopping the larger hornet on the nose with the round part of the end. "There will be none of that, missy." he said sternly.

A plume of fire is snorted from her mouth as she jerks her head back. She rears up a little bit, leering down at him through extended sockets, and clicking her mandibles in thought. It doesn’t take her long to come to her decision, and her gaze flicks over to Toki.

Toki grimaced and clutched her skull as a flood of thoughts hit her like a tide wave and made her wobble in Papyrus’ grasp. “A-aha, ow, okay, s-slow down there. I can’t understand- it’s too much.”

The hornet gave her a disapproving look, and slowed the sensations down.

“A-ah…” Her skull was left ringing from the sensation. Toki cradles her temple with a wince. “I’m going to need to get used to that. You’re louder than Stripe… Ah… She likes you, so that’s good. If she didn’t, she might… have eaten your arm?” She looks alarmed at that. “There will be no arm eating for anyone, or I won’t let you out. No negotiations there.”

The large sockets narrow down at Toki, but the queen does tilt her head in stubborn submission. She chuffs, steals the bone from his hand, and then trundles off back to her examination with her prize.

Well good enough, better the bone than his arm.
The smaller hornet, however, is right back nudging at his hip and making excited buzzing sounds as she nips at him insistently for more attention.

He looked at Toki with a smile, then turned and knelt to pet the hornet seeking his attention.

Toki laughed softly, and cradled her hand to her eye. This was not the time to be getting a headache of any sort, particularly with Tenebris being missing. Thankfully, the ache in her head seemed to be fully internal and towards the front, so it was more like just sore bone instead of a magic problem.

Kneeling was probably a terrible idea. The smaller hornet took this as an invitation, and proceeded to head-butt him square in the chest to knock him flat. She then clamored into his lap, and buzzed happily with her wings fluttering faintly.

"OOF!" He went down quickly, flopped mostly flat out in the grass.

Toki giggled softly and carefully settled down into the grass near him, which put them a little bit away from the spot that had the broken remnants of her lemonade glass. "The little one seems to be very… affectionate?" Having been mentioned, the littler hornet squirmed enough so she could plop her horned head into what little of Toki’s lap that wasn’t taken over by the swell of her belly. Obligingly, Toki stroked along her mandibles, carefully investigating the surprisingly sharp bone teeth that interlocked with the ones on the skull proper.

Papyrus glanced up to Toki with affection dancing in his sockets, before he sighed and smiled. "You're even more beautiful from this angle." he cooed.

Toki flushed warmly, and let out a genuine laugh. She hadn’t laughed like that since before her confinement to the family compound proper. “You are a flirt, Papyrus. I probably look like a beach ball with a head and limbs from that angle.” Not quite a beach ball, but it did look like she was smuggling something obviously under her shirt. “Hardly flirt worthy material,” she teases gently.

The big hornet stretched between them is ultimately content with where she was. She was getting scratches and attention- and she could turn and press her sharp nose gently against the flexible swell to buzz softly for the twins within.

"Well, you're still a pretty beach ball." He purred happily, petting the hornet splayed out on top of him.

"Thank you, Pap. I’m your pretty beach ball, and I hope you enjoy the view as best you can. You did after all say you wanted me forever. There’s no take backs.” She smiles warmly and briefly fingers her engagement ring. Toki scoots closer, and then carefully eases herself down so she can lay flat. It’s not, by any means, comfortable- but it lets her relax back with him into the grass. Peace of mind floods her, and her next sigh is deep and tranquil. “Whatever the big one is doing, she’s taking as much of my anger and stress away as she can.” She murmured softly. “I’m… I’m really sorry I’ve been such a raging bitch to you and everyone else. I’ll try not to do it anymore, yeah?"

The larger hornet wanders back finally, and snaps the bone into splinters, before spitting it out. She huffs, and settles behind the duo. Her wings stretch out, casting translucent green shade over the both of them as they lounge in the warmth of the sunlight.

"It's quite alright," he replied with a hum, before he shifted the best he could to rest his head in her lap. "But I am pleased to see you have found a new outlet for your fury." he purred gently.

Her fingers found his skull, and she propped herself up a little bit so she could actually see him over the dome of her belly. She found aid when a large chitin-covered leg pressed in behind her and
created a stiff surface for her to lean against. Toki offered a hesitant smile up to the larger hornet, receiving an amused look in turn, and then began to gently massage the crown of his skull. “I shouldn’t have taken out my anger on any of you.” She says softly. “And it’s not so much an outlet as they’re literally eating it out of me instead of eating magic. It’s… weird. But I think it’s intentional. I’m not complaining though. I don’t like being angry.” She very rarely got angry. Nara were generally level headed most times.

The smaller hornet shifts and plonks her head onto Papyrus’ chest. A long green tongue flicks out and licks the bottom of his jaw, coating him in warm, brimstone scented saliva.

"You couldn't control it, but it doesn’t matter. What matters is that you now have a good venting method." he told her with a smile. It lasted until he was licked, and then he cringed and groaned, "Eeeuuuuugh!"

Toki laughed softly, and gently fluttered her hand to make the hornet leave him be. She scrubbed off the saliva, and wiped it into the grass. “I think the little one likes you.” She chuckles. “But I suppose so. It’s… nice not to feel so angry. I felt like a ticking time bomb.” She admits. Toki shifts, adjusting herself against the large hornet’s legs, and then resumes massaging his skull. “Hey, Pap? You can summon things right? I remember the skull you summoned last year. You used it to clear a path in the snow if I remember right.”

Toki just shook her head as the excitable hell beast took off like a puppy in a field.

"Oof." he rubbed his chest once he was free and looked up at her. "Well yes... Alright." he slowly sat up for a moment and his eye glowed, before after a moment two large cat heads appeared. One of them vocalizing like one would hear from a puma, the other rumbling gently in a idle purr.

“I didn’t mean you had to summon them,” Toki chuckled softly, eying them curiously. “You named them, right?” She couldn’t remember what he had called them, but she thought he had called them by name.

The large Hell Hornet buzzed at the cat skulls, and shifted slightly to defend the skeletons if the need arose.

"I did, yes." he whistled gently and they turned, lowering to nuzzle him gently. He reached up and pet the one who had spoke up, tracing marks over her face. "This is Bastet." he told her, before reaching and stroking the other, who purred loudly in response. "And this is Neko."

“Bastet and Neko?” Toki smiled slightly. She lifted a hand and offered her palm for them to investigate and rub on as they liked. “They’re really cool looking, Papyrus.” The hornet she was resting against was larger than the skulls, and Toki could feel a vague amused thrumming from the one behind her. “They’re sentient, like the hornets are?”

"Indeed."

Neko was the daring one and they leaned over to nuzzle Toki’s hand, crackling happily.

Toki smiled and gently rubbed her palm over the cat skull’s nose. Her sharp finger bones were gentle as she gave Neko a good scratch, watching the skull to see if it enjoyed the attention. “Hm… I should probably name the hornets, shouldn’t I? I can’t keep thinking of them as the big one and the
little one forever.” She just had no idea what to name them.

The smaller one took notice of the skulls, and bustled back near with a snarl. Toki held up a hand and focused on the smaller hornet, and guided her thoughts over. The snarling came to a stop, and the smaller one regarded the feline skulls with something between a puppy’s curiosity and the wariness of a seasoned guard dog.

Bastet regarded the hornet almost in a bored manner, while Neko ratted and chirped quietly.

The smaller hornet eyed both skulls, which outsized her quite easily, before buzzing and lowering her front half towards Neko. Intense green eyes flickered brighter, and the hornet gave a playful buzz, bouncing slightly on her front legs.

Toki looked on with an amused look. “The little one reminds me of a sweet puppy. A very large, very deadly puppy, but a sweet puppy none the less.”

Neko’s eyes flickered happily and she rattled happily, clicking her snout together a few times before going over to the smaller hornet.

"She's sweet like sugar, isn’t she?” he purred gently.

“Sugar… I kinda like that for a name.” She muses slightly, watching the newly named hornet. “I think Sugar fits.”

Sugar bounced slightly, and reached a leg up to tap the cat’s snout. A little white chitin foot clinks against the bone of Neko’s snout, and then Sugar bounces briefly in place before taking off at a slow lope, trying to lure the friendlier feline skull into a game of chase.

A game of chase was definitely in order. The cat skull's pupils go wide as she lets out a happy yowl, quickly giving chase after the running hornet. She was content to play with her new friend.

Toki laughs softly and watches them run around her house and the surrounding area within the clan compound walls. “Sugar is very energetic. It will be good for her and Neko to tire themselves out. So what should the big one be named? Spice maybe?”

The bigger hornet chuffed and bumped the back of her skull with a disapproving hiss and a touch of her mandible.

“I don’t think the big one likes Spice. Darn. Sugar and Spice would have been adorable matching names.”

"Mmm... What about... Clover?” he suggested.

“Clover?” Sugar and Clover didn’t really fit together, but honestly, they were giant hell hornets. Who was going to mock their names and survive? “I like it. What about you?”

The big hornet simply chuffed and nodded, settling down. Clover approved.

“I think we’re golden then. Clover will be Clover then.” Toki chuckled gently. She slowly patted her lap again, offering him the chance to once more pillow his skull on her either her leg or her belly.

He smiled and snuggled into her lap with a purr. "Alright, perfect~"

“Indeed.” She chuckles softly. Her hands find his skull again, and she massages gently, content to bask in the sunlight with her fiancé. “Sugar and Clover. Heh… odd, but I like it. Thank you for
"You're welcome." he piped up happily, nuzzling her belly with a content sigh. "I love you, Toki, more than you may ever think."

"I think I know the feeling." She smiles and chuckled as he nuzzled her middle and fingers. "Mmm…" As Toki relaxes, she eases her free hand to her middle, rubbing along the tight skin at the top. "You and the twins are my world. Even if they’re steadily making me into a planet with my own gravitational pull." Amusement glimmers through her voice.

"Nyeh heh heh heh! I guess that means I’m a planet now, yeah?" he teased.

She snorted in amusement, a soft laugh escaping between her teeth. "Not quite, my love. I would have to be a sun for you to be a planet. But you’d be my moon." She rubs over the pale dome of his skull with a warm smile.

"You glow like a sun when you are happy, my love." Papyrus purred up to her.

"Do I really?" She blinked down at him curiously.

"It's unbelievable how beautiful your smile can be, the way your eyes glimmer when you're happy.” He smiled up at her. Toki flushed, and smiled warmly. "Gods above, I love you." She can't lean down to kiss him like this, with her belly preventing such movement, but she does buzz happily for him. "I'm glad someone likes my smile.” She certainly didn’t. Her teeth were the only things she didn’t like about her skeletal form.

He rolled over gently and sat up to pull himself close to her. His sockets glowed softly with the light of his eyes, and he gave her a soft look before he began kissing her with a lover's passion.

Toki leaned into his kiss, meeting it with the same passion. Her hand came up to cradle his cheek, stroking over the bone and cradling his skull warmly. She brushed her fingers back along the vertebrae of his neck, her other hand clutching at his shirt. "Mmm…”

He smiled gently and reached down to hike her legs up onto his waist, pinning her gently against the hornet her back was against. "It's been a while since I have treated you, my love." he whispered. "Let me touch you and bring you relief.”

It had been a while since they had gotten to enjoy each other. They had abstained while Han had been there after he nearly walked in on them at one point. And after… She had been too stressed and her soul had hurt too badly. The stress was still there, underlying in her body- but perhaps they needed this. They needed to relieve themselves through some passion and love. Toki nodded slowly and kissed him gently. "Please… Touch me. But… not out here? The, ah… Guards.” Sheflushes.

He smiled and kissed her gently. It didn’t take much effort for him to stand and heft her into his arms. He kissed her again as he stole her away to take her inside. "As you wish.” he whispered.

Toki waved her hand over his shoulder, and the sky rent itself asunder in an opening of hellfire and brimstone. Smoke rolled out, thick and cloying, and Toki gave a nudge to her hornets. Sugar and Clover took to the skies, returning obediently to their home. Once they were gone, the hole closed, and Toki tucked her face into his neck to press soft kisses along his spine where she could reach him. “Bedroom?” She murmurs as she mouths gently over his vertebrae.

With everyone coming by often enough, the living room was a risk of a walk in. Toki would
probably combust if Asgore walked in on them.

“Bedroom.” He repeated, hefting her easily up the stairs once they got inside. Bastet and Neko faded as well as Aliquam lost focus on keeping them tethered to this plane of existence.

Toki gave a pleased sound. Once they reached the bedroom, she carefully opened the door for him, and then returned to loving on his neck with gentle nibbles and kisses. The bed loomed ahead, and she hummed. She needed to remove her slacks, but the current position didn’t let her get at the button with her belly in the way.

He tutted gently to her and instead laid her down, kissing her neck as he reached down and undid the buttons on his own. Her pants were guided down over her hips.

Toki lifted her hips for him to slide her pants and undergarments down, wiggling her legs so he could get her slacks off. Soon she was simply in her turtleneck, shivering slightly as he worked over her neck. “Mmm…” Her sockets fluttered shut, legs parting to let him settle against her as best he could. If he let his abdomen fade away under his shirt, he would probably be able to fold over her like he used to be able to.

He smiled and nuzzled her as he came to lay at her side, he pressed loving kisses to her stomach and side as his hand ran down, slowly rubbing against the bones of her pelvis as the ecto flesh gave way to smooth bone. "Summon something for me, please~?” he cooed gently.

Settling at her side was definitely better than folding over her. She nestled closer and gave him a smooth kiss. “Of course~” She purred. A moment of focus later, and the ecto flesh extended down and created her nether bits for his fingers to peruse. She shivered as the cool air of the room brushed against the sensitive magic, trailing one of her fingers lightly up his ribs through his shirt as she slowly warmed the room with her magic.

He smiled gently and kissed her stomach as his hand moved to between her legs, caressing it gently before he pressed his fingers to her slit, rubbing it gently.

The twins were calm in her middle, kicking only every so often. They didn't stir at his kissing, only shifting just slightly below the surface as his teeth pressed gently in on them.

Toki was another story. She shivered and trembled slightly as his mouth slid over her belly. Her flesh felt a little overly sensitive and receptive to his touch, and it left her making a soft pleased sound as his digits stroked over her lips. Her legs parted a bit further to allow his larger hand to settle between them without issue.

He purred and ran his tongue over her stomach before he pushed a finger into her slowly.

Toki couldn't hide the soft gasp that escaped through the tightly locked net of her teeth. The flesh of her stomach shivered, and she fist ed her fingers in both the blankets and the back of his shirt. "Ah~” his fingers were warm, and so much thinner than his actual member was. But she enjoyed them nonetheless, feeling each ridge and bump of his knuckles scraping intimately over her insides in the most pleasant way.

He purred and pushed his fingers in a little more before he curled his fingers, running them over her innards skillfully.

She trembled with a moan, and rocked slightly into his fingers. “Oh~” The curling of his fingers had her toes splaying, trembles trailing up her bared legs. “Ahh~”

"Does that feel good, my darling?” he purred happily.
“Gods yes, Pap~” Her mouth slides open, sharp teeth parting as she pants slightly. Her fingers knead slightly, gently rubbing his shoulder through his shirt. Slowly, she works her fingers up so she can stroke his neck, rubbing each vertebrae individually. Her hips rock into his hand, her walls trembling around his digits and slicking them up with green fluids.

"Good." he smiled and licked her stomach gently, giving gentle nips as he added another finger to his treatment. "Toki, I love you so much... without you, Monsterkind would not have gotten this far, you've made such an impact on us, we can never repay you." he whispered. “Without you... I don’t know where I would be.” His voice is soft, as he nuzzles her stomach gently. Without her, he would be a very different monster.

She squirmed a little as his tongue slid over her belly, a shiver making the surface of it ripple and shimmer brightly. “Without you,” she groaned softly, “I wouldn’t have half the joy that I do now. I love you- and I regret nothing about helping you guys stay up here. Y-you’re the best fiancé a girl could have.” The second finger felt good. It wasn’t the stretch she craved, but his fingers were more textured than his cock was. Even ridged along the bottom, it had nothing on bare bones. She trembles again, claws working the sheet as her legs shake. “Ah~”

"You're the best fiancé a monster could ever hope to call his own." he whispered in reply, before he kissed over the twins and smiled into the ecto-flesh as he once more curled his fingers, a third one slipping in with an effortless push.

The twins shifted inside, pressing slightly into him with a vaguely sleepy feeling bleeding over to the connection to their parents. Toki mewled as the third one slipped in, her hips bucking slightly into his fingers. Her hand fist once more into his shirt, her head rolling back on her shoulders as a moan tugs free. “A-ah! Mmmm, yeEEESS.” Shit that was louder than she thought it would be. “Ah~ You are mineeeeee.” She purrs. “And I am yoursssss.”

He chuckled and nodded to her, looking at her with a loving smile as he continued to treat her. He wasn't dramatically careful when it came to pleasuring her, but he knew her well enough to know how far to go to bring her bliss.

She rolled her hips again gently, and shifted to stroke his neck, sliding down there to stroke along his spine from under his shirt. Her hips rolled a few more times, finding his knuckles amazing to grind her button gently against. Between his attentions to her stomach and lower parts, and the sensitivity that pregnancy had brought for her ecto flesh, Toki found herself clamping around him shortly with a soft cry of his name.

He stayed still as she came around his hand and he smiled, pecking her skin softly as his purring never quieted. "Do you feel better?" he asked once she seemed to have recovered enough.

Any lingering irritation she might have had prior was wiped away by the after effects of an orgasm. Toki shivered, her magic bubbling through her bones and warming the air around them. “I do,” she purrs. She shifts, and snuggles closer to him. “Mmm... Your turn?” She was a little bit relaxed after that, but it was only fair that he got attention too.

"No, no." He shook his head. "You rest, I'm perfectly content." he purred.

“Are you sure?” She nestled closer, nuzzling her head under his chin. Her fingers stroke over his ribs, trailing gently down his side. “I would like to enjoy you if you would enjoy it too...” She murmurs softly. Though it wasn’t uncommon to simply seek to give pleasure and not receive it, she liked to make sure that her love was sated too.

"I will ask you no such thing, you're already tired and in need of rest. I'll be fine if left without." He
assured her gently.

She tilted her skull and began to gently kiss along his neck. “Bringing you pleasure isn’t exhausting. I want to please you,” She purrs contentedly. She could use a nap- but it would be even better if he joined her in a blissful nap. Her teeth gently nibble along his neck, tugging his collar aside so she could kiss and nibble down to his collarbone. “Will you allow me this?” They both needed the touch, the love- the devotion to please the other without seeking pleasure for her self. To share love and affection- it is what they should have been doing, like Sans and Grillby. But her own sour mood had kept that from them- and she had a lot to make up for.

He stroked her body slowly, looking at her tenderly for a time, before he smiled and kissed her head. "I will be alright. I did this because I wanted to please you, not for my own gain."

Toki smiled softly up to him as well and snuggled close. Her bare legs draped over his, relieving some of the pressure that laying in that position tended to put on her pelvis, and she simply pressed a soft kiss to his neck and settled with a quiet sigh. “Mm… Mkay.” She murmurs. “You are the best…” Not many men she’d been with had ever pleased someone just to do it. It was another reason she loved him. He was different- and different was amazing. “Nap with me?” Yeah they had been going to have lunch, but she was more tired than hungry at this point. After days of wanting nothing to do with anyone, she found herself just wanting him close.

"You know I would never refuse such a request~" Aliquam purred happily. "I love you so much."

“I love you too.” She smiled softly, and snuggled tighter to him. The twins squirmed in her middle, and she gave a soft chuff of amusement as they stirred into motion. “Mmm… I think we woke them,” she says lightly. “Heh… I’m glad that me looking like this doesn’t bother you.” A tiny yawn escapes her. His hands settled onto her belly, rubbing and massaging the tight flesh to gently relax the twins into slumber or rest once more. "Are you kidding me? I don’t think I’ve ever seen you so beautiful."

Toki snorted a soft laugh into his chest. “Oh my gods, you’re such a dork. So waddling and awkwardly fitting clothes is what you like in a woman, hm?” She teases gently, eye lights glimmering warmly with love and affection.

"So what if it is?" he purred.

“Then I guess I’m the luckiest skeleton alive.” She leaned up to kiss him deeply. “And so are you. You’re marrying the smallest skeleton with the biggest waddle.” She teases gently. That reminded her… “Mmm… We’ll want to do the ceremony once we find your dad, right…?”

"Yes, once we know for sure that he is okay..." he rumbled gently, before he chuckled. "You may be small, but I don’t care. You're beautiful, inside and out, and I think you're perfect."

Toki smiled and nuzzled closer to him. “You’re far too sweet to me, Paps.” She chuckles. A pleased sigh escapes her, and she finds her sockets drooping slightly even with as active as the twins are in her lower belly. “Mmm…”

"I love you so much.” he whispered again, pressing his face to her shoulder as he cradled her. She looped her arm around his neck, cradling his skull to her as they lounged back on the bed. “I love you too, Pap.” She stroked her fingers along the back of his skull, and nuzzled him softly. “Rest,” she crooned softly. “You must be tired from handling me all week.”

"Nyeh heh heh." he sighed gently and settled down with her in his arms, staying put until slumber
overwhelmed him and he allowed it to wash over him.

Toki buzzed softly for him to help him ease into sleep. Once he was snoring softly in her ear, she used Stripe to shut the bedroom door before nodding off in his arms.

Rest was something they would need. She needed to stockpile what magic she could because she didn’t know what HAM would be bringing. She needed to be ready. So did everyone else.

Toki didn’t have armor to repair- but she had bees and magic to prep. She would be ready.
Chapter 56

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And this is the chapter ya’ll have been waiting for. Enjoy, guys~

Don’t forget to visit the blog, lovelies~ http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: I am so sorry.

They call came in near dawn- and went straight to voicemail. Toki didn’t get the message until nearly ten in the morning, when she finally located her phone. She had played it while making breakfast, and had proceeded to drop her phone nearly in the eggs she was scrambling.

The message had sounded out, and the smooth voice of Cruelty floated over the speakers to her. “Good morning, Kindness.” He had purred. “Seeing as you haven’t answered it, you are surely soiling yourself while rolling in the hay with the beasts. We know you didn’t obey- and that was your final warning. It is time, Kindness, for you to feel a small taste of the betrayal that I felt. A package will arrive for you sometime today. It’s encoded for your magic, and your magic only. If someone other than you opens it, it will self-destruct and... well, kill the gift hidden inside of your punishment. It would be best if you were to open it, I assure you. You would mourn if it were to... explode... It should arrive near noon today, Kindness, just outside of your home. I’m even so kind as to do front door delivery. I won’t even charge you extra this time, Kindness. Be prepared.” And the line had gone dead.

She had shrieked- and everyone had come running.

The message had been played over, and over, and over again. They dissected it as best they could.

Inside her punishment, which was surely inside the container, was obviously something that could be killed. There was no way of knowing who it was- and when she tried to make a call out to her family, she found that there was no signal anywhere in the village. Someone had tampered with the phone lines and the cell phone towers.

They had cut them off from society- and there was no way of knowing if HAM hadn’t put one of her brothers in the crate. She wasn’t going to risk it.

They’d had two hours to prepare. She’d shoved food down everyone to make sure everyone was topped up, and then it had become a waiting game.

Near noon found everyone outside. Guards were still on patrol, but they ran in sets of two, while the rest of them took cover near Toki’s home. Toki herself had been bundled up in the strongest material they could find, and was seated on her front step. Undyne stood off to the side of the compound, talking struggling to maintain a connection to Alphys over the Undernet.

Whatever had scrambled that had made the connection to the Undernet quite unstable- but it was enough for her to relay to Alphys all that was going on.

Grillby was suiting up in his old armor, making use of some of the guards to help him get the old latches on. It still fit, surprisingly, and he looked intimidating done up in ebony colored plate armor.
that had vents for some reason. A long black long sword was settled at his hip, and a shield that was nearly as tall as she was dangled from his other hip.

Asgore was in his full armor as well, though he bore a helmet this time that covered most of his mane and skull. He stood off with the guards, making sure that everyone was outfitted. If someone couldn’t summon a weapon, he formed one for them with his magic and pressed it into their hands.

Toki wasn’t the only one not in any form of armor- but she was the only one who couldn’t dodge worth a damn. Sans was in his usual gear, but his dexterity was horribly high. Her stomach churned with nerves. It was a waiting game now, and they were at the mercy of time at this point.

Her fingers worried at the edge of her sweat pants, toying with the fabric briefly before tucking her shirt back down further over her burgeoning belly. It took all her concentration not to let her inner upset let her freak out. Her magic was already hair trigger with her nerves, and the last thing she needed was to set someone who was innocent on fire.

Aliquam, dressed in his armor, stood nearby Toki, a bone spear in his hand, his eyes narrowed as he waited as well.

Cae was quiet as he stood with his brother, shifting from one foot to the other, his breathing slow, but uneasy. His brother noticed and stepped closer to assure him with a touch to his shoulder. The two looked at one another, then looked away again as Aliquam returned to Toki’s side.

At first... Silence reined over the compound. Then a sound growing closer... and closer... It was a reverb of the air being sliced above their heads.

A pitch-black helicopter was coming closer. From the underside dangled a large crate branded with the mark of HAM. It had the same sigil that marked their masks.

As if planned and rehearsed, the helicopter swung low at the last minute and with a loud CLANK, had released the crate, allowing it to land on the ground as they quickly took their leave.

The guards got in position, while Aliquam went to Toki’s side, hugging her gently with one arm and helping her to her feet. “Are you ready?” he murmured.

“No.” She swallowed dryly. Toki honestly felt like she would be sick, but she controlled her nerves. “But I have to be.” The crate was large, perhaps big enough to fit a large animal in it. It made her wonder just what they had there. At the top of it was the binds, just within reach for her fingers to pull off, and attached was some sort of scanner and a bomb. The bomb made her nervous.

“Wait here, okay?” She glanced to him, rattling nervously as she slowly made her way towards the crate. “If it’s a bomb, I’m more equipped to handle the heat of the flames than you are.”

"Just give me the word and I will come." he murmured.

“I know you will.” She turned to him, and leaned up to kiss him soundly. “I love you.” Toki gave him a firm look. “I love you a lot...” And then she sighed, stepped away, and made her way to the crate.

Hesitantly, she tilted her skull towards it. It was quiet, save for the faint rasping breathing of something large inside. She swallowed again, and reached for the scanner. She pressed her hand to it curiously. It did nothing at first, not until she channeled magic into it.

The scanner gave a shrill beep that startled her, and then clicked sharply. The bindings that held the crate together retracted with a mechanical sound, leaving the disabled bomb and scanner on top of
the crate. Toki hesitantly set them to the side, warily eying the explosive material. It looked inactive, but Toki wasn’t one that was good with bombs and explosives. There was a possibility that it could be a trap.

Her hands worked at the top of the crate, and it took effort to tip the top off. But once she did…

The sides fell down, and revealed inside a large form. They were curled up like a beast was. Their front limbs were bound together with metal clamps, as were their hind legs. A cuff hooked on the creature’s tail, a tail decorated with a scythe-like blade at the end, and kept it pinned by the beast’s foot cuff. She recognized the blade, as well as the pale skin...

Slowly she knelt to get a better look. Sharp looking spines protruding from its shoulders and back decorated the form. It reminded her of a porcupine’s quills in a way, but she couldn’t be sure of its identification, as over the beast’s head was a massive clamp that hid the creature’s head completely, drowning out sight, and potentially both hearing and smell as well. It looked to be a reinforced muzzle. The breathing echoed from within the muzzle, the sound escaping through only thin openings in the snout of the clamp.

She slowly scooted closer to the form and reached out, one hand touching the beast’s shoulder, the other resting on the smooth metal of the muzzle.

"Tenebris...?" Toki whispered softly.

There was a moment of silence from the beast, before he lurched in panic, pulling on the binds holding his limbs together while kicking his rear legs, missing Toki by inches as he then let out a distressed screech.

Toki lurched into motion, crooning softly even if he could possibly not hear her. “Easy, Tenebris, easy. It’s me. It’s Toki- you’re safe now, I promise.” She brought her hands up to the clamp on the muzzle, and made to remove it amidst his thrashing while she tried to undo the ones on his front paws. Gods above, whatever HAM had done to him, they had corrupted him. The tail was a dead give away as to who it was, but only the tail. “Shhh, you’re safe now, Tenebris. It’s okay. They’re not going to hurt you anymore.” This must have been the ‘gift’ that he was talking about. But what was the ‘betrayal’ she was supposed to taste?

Unfortunately, as soon as the muzzle was off, the 'betrayal' was revealed.

As a sharp snout opened wide, a jaw unhinging with feral purple eyes above it as he lunged, aiming for her throat as he roared.

Toki couldn’t back pedal away fast enough with how she was crouched. Pregnancy kept her limited in her range of motion, and all she could do was rush magic into her bones and reinforce her body as she fell back with a loud shriek, the chains on his front paws falling off as she got those undone by accident.

His snap missed her neck by millimeters, if less than that.

The roar and the shriek got the attention of everyone and without warning there was movement. Asgore, Grillby, and Aliquam were all racing to secure Tokiko's safety and seize Tenebris.

Tenebris' hands-

No.

His front paws came free as the cuffs came undone, sharp claws sinking into the ground as he used it
to project himself forward. He was stopped by the chains still on his feet, so he hit the ground hard, but he took not seconds to recover before he lunged and grabbed her tightly by a leg, pulling her closer and baring his fangs, sinking them into one of her legs as his other paw lifted, aiming for her stomach.

Her arms went to protect her stomach but she could only do so much as pain burned through her leg. But when his paw lifted, she screamed. His paw hit her hard, cracking over her forearms and pushing them into the soft ecto flesh of her abdomen.

His arm lifted again to swipe once more, and do more than just crack the bone.

Thankfully, Aliquam shot out a well-aimed shot and a bone flew through the hole in Tenebris' paw, pinning it to the dirt.

It caught his attention enough for him to disengage Toki long enough for Cae to shortcut in, grab her, and shortcut her back out of range.

Tenebris turned his head and snapped at Aliquam before he turned his attention to his feet instead. His jaw unhinged, then to everyone's surprise, his throat glowed and a powerful blast of energy flew out, burning the cuffs and freeing both of his legs and his tail.

"Oh shit!" Aliquam gasped, bringing his staff up to block as the feral monster that was once his father rolled onto his feet before he lunged, his jaws still wide open as he screeched loudly.

Despite the magic she had pumped into her leg, the full force of his bite had practically shattered it. It was held together by the magic that she had used to reinforce her bones, and dripped thick green marrow from the bite impact. He had clamped down around her knee, which shattered part of her femur, and both her fibula and tibia. If not for her magic, he’d have shorn right through the bone.

Toki collapsed, terrified and in pain near the steps where Cae had brought her to. Her arms were cracked too, and a bruise was forming on her middle from where they’d been battered against her belly- but the twins looked okay. Other than the aching pain from the bruise rolling in tight waves through her belly, they looked okay even if they were utterly terrified inside of her.

She could see Aliquam fending off Tenebris attack, and her soul flew into an outright panic. There was nothing she could do- Cae would die if he went in, and she couldn’t help. Undyne looked frozen, glancing between the king and the feral beast that was Toki’s to be father in law.

The guards had created a subtle wall, caging the beast in with their weapons and their bodies so he had nowhere to run to escape the compound. They were on the defensive, looking to their king for direction on how to respond to the situation.

Asgore, having secured Toki’s immediate safety, looked torn.

This was the betrayal that Cruelty had mentioned. Turning Tenebris on them, and setting him loose in what was obviously not his right mind. They would die before they tried to kill him. But… maybe subdue?

Her bees could fight. Toki grit her teeth and leaned up enough from Cae’s grasp to shove one of her cracked arms for the sky. She pushed thoughts of subduing Tenebris, of not killing him or maiming him too badly- and then tore the sky asunder in a belch of hellfire and brimstone.

She wasn’t going to let Papyrus get killed just because Asgore didn’t know what to do.

She didn’t get the bee she called for- but perhaps it was for the best. Sugar burst forth, her wings
fluttering slightly as she took note of her orders, and took stock of the beast rampaging below. She buzzed, loud and long, a challenge from one beast to another to draw his attention from his son before Papyrus could be dusted.

Tenebris had managed to kick Aliquam back, but he turned at the summon of the hornet, and the challenging buzzing it gave off.

He growled, and then he screeched and unleashed another blast of energy from his maw, aiming for the hornet.

The thick chitin that made up the vast majority of Sugar’s body took the brunt of the blast, and the hornet came out remarkably unharmed. That sort of non-physical hit was shunted off with barely a flicker to her HP.

Toki had to tug at her connection when the hornet went to fire back instinctively, and she watched as Sugar swallowed down a glowing green blast.

At her prompting, the insect dove down and barreled into him horns first, landing as she rammed him with the broad part of her skull. Following that, she slashed at him with her legs, the sharp spurs on them glinting as she worked to keep his attention off of Aliquam, so her Queen’s mate could regain his footing.

The spurs tore his already destroyed clothing and he snarled. Unfortunately for Sugar, there was no one telling Tenebris to hold back. His tail swung around, the blade sinking deep into Sugar’s back as he pulled himself upward. His hind claws dug into the exoskeleton of the hornet and allowed him to climb her form as he pulled himself over her face, before he roared and grabbed the base of one wing in his teeth, the other in his claws.

Sugar screamed, a horrible rasping wail, as his teeth sank into the base of one of her wings. The mane of fire around her skull flared up, burning him in an effort to get him off. Her head lashed, abdomen automatically stinging the ground as she tried to backpedal, and her horns gored at the shield on his chest, while her mandibles bit and snapped at his legs.

Toki echoed her cry, fractured arms flying up to her shoulders. The pain echoed through the link- and she could feel the wings pulling, pulling, like her shoulder blades were being ripped outwards.

"Toki!" Caeruleus wrapped his arms around her tightly. "You gotta call her off! Get her away from him!" he hissed.

Tenebris reacted with pain and screeched. He left the wing he bit into half-attached, but as he broke away the other was torn almost completely off. He landed on the ground and backed up fast, panting roughly and snarling in pain, his legs trembling at the damage placed upon them by Sugar.

Her wings tried to flex and flicker, but they were too torn. There was no such thing as half-attached for an insect- and as she staggered, they fell from her shoulders, turning into a cloud of dust. Sugar was grounded- and there was no way to get her up into the sky. Green fluid poured down her shoulders, dampening the fire that bubbled upwards.

Her cries did not diminish, the aching pain of losing wings nearly making her ill. Cae’s tight hold widened the fractures on her arms. Toki’s sockets glowed green like the fires of her portal- and the open door way in the sky suddenly wrenched wider as she reached across her connection and demanded for her to appear.

Clover descended, regal and massive and dripping heated venom. She lowered down over the fallen
Sugar, long legs coming to grasp the wounded hornet. She hovered, well out of Tenebris reach and nearly double his size, and then roared a sharp warning to him to submit.

He snarled and his jaws snapped together a few times, a loud ugly sound that was soon accompanied by another roar, his automatic refusal to the bigger beast.

But this was the opening that his majesty needed, and he charged when the beast unleashed his piercing roar. As he lifted his trident, all he could think was ‘forgive me, old friend’.

Asgore swung it like a bat, the round of one of the trident prongs slamming into the back of Tenebris' head. The roar cut off in a choke and Tenebris went down, wincing in pain as the blow had stunned him. Asgore was trembling as he regained his grasp on his trident. But he saw the look in Tenebris' eyes... there was no familiarity, only rage...

"Forgive me." he whispered, before he lifted the trident and brought it down again on Tenebris' neck.

The silence that washed over them was almost haunting after that.

This monster... Was this truly the kind, fatherly elder that everyone had appreciated, the same monster that the king felt love for...? Or was this a shell of what remained, his mind lost to ferocity and unbiased hatred?

Asgore slowly dropped his trident, and he knelt before the beast. He was unmoving, a black welt forming in the back of his head where Asgore had struck. But he was not dead, he was still breathing, albeit labored and painful... His neck was intact, his skull maybe cracked, he wasn't sure...

He reached out with a shaking, furry hand, and set it over the horns that seemed to be growing out of the back of Tenebris' head, before he lowered his hand to rest it over the beast's forehead and now-closed eyes. "Oh Tenebris... My dear old friend... What had they done to you...?" he whispered.

Clover watched impassively as the beast was dropped. Once the threat was contained, she shared a look with her mistress, and disappeared back into the gaping gate into the hell plane. Behind her, the brimstone and flames disappeared, and the sky was right once more.

Toki couldn’t say the same for herself. She trembled in Cae’s arms, leg in agony and arms beginning to hurt more as well. Her shoulders throbbed with phantom pain, and her magic stuttered and cut out as her abdomen throbbed and pulsed tightly. She curled her arms around it, curling up as best she could. Shards fell from her shattered leg, tinkling into the grass as she shook and shuddered. Her abdomen throbbed, stressed and jarred by the heavy hits she’d managed to block the most of, and then contracted tightly. “A-ahh,” she groaned softly.

Grillby left the carriers by the stairs, having moved to guard them as best he could. He bypassed Papyrus, and the king, and went to the crate. The intact shackles were claimed, as well as the muzzle- and he returned to Asgore. Wordlessly, he settled down and began to muzzle him again, shackling his front paws.

There was no chance in hell he was risking him freaking out again. Grillby shared a sharp look with the king. “His house.” He murmured. “Now. Shackles stay until...” Until they were sure that he was sane. And if he wasn’t... Grillby wasn’t sure what to do at that point.

"..." Asgore nodded slowly and after he secured the muzzle, he picked up Tenebris, frowning sadly.

Grillby followed closely behind, barking an order to Undyne and the guards. The explosives were to be deposited outside the gates, and they needed to call the police. The guards were going back on
rotation just per chance that HAM had anything else planned- and then he was off, striding after the massive goat monster and the fallen beast.

Aliquam slowly got up, leaning against his bone staff for a brief moment before he hurried to Toki. Asgore had his father- and Aliquam had a duty to his mate and children before he did to his dad. "$T-
Toki, oh my god..."

“A-ahh, P-Pap,” She groaned softly. Her middle ached and throbbed tightly again, and she winced as it contracted roughly. “Ch-check the twins, please, I tried to shield them, but-” But the bruise blossoming under her shirt bore the imprint of her arm bones, where they had gotten pressed into her middle. She hurt- and they felt panicked and terrified. Their terror bled into her and sparked up terror within her too. What if she was losing them? What if they were hurt and she couldn’t see it? Toki leaned a little bit heavily on Cae, her strength sapped away by the ache in her middle. “P-please, it hurts…”

Fuck her leg, fuck her arms- but please, please to all that was holy… Don’t take her babies.

He pressed close to her and hushed her gently while he removed his helmet and gauntlets. Once his hands were free, he was pressing his hands onto her cheeks and resting his head on hers, unleashing as much healing magic as he could. Once it was lit up in his body, he reached down and one hand went to her belly, the other going to her leg, glowing brighter as he worked to mend the bones and heal the damage to her belly.

Toki’s fingers clutched onto his armor as best she could. The edges of it were hard to grip in the bones of her fingers. The healing magic felt soothing, but she would rather have him focus on the twins first. Her sockets pinched closed as another rippling ache traveled over her middle, able to be felt under his fingers as a slow tightening of the ectoplasm. She whimpered just a little bit as she nuzzled her face slightly to his. The ache eased off a little bit, though the twins were eerily still.

The bones of her leg were trying to mend. Some of the bone shards continued to fall out, but the force of his magic blew through her limbs. The smaller cracks healed up, but the vast majority of the larger cracks and holes refused to seal. The bleeding stopped though, thick green magic and marrow slowing in its oozing down the cracked remains of her leg. Her arms still oozed slightly, but it was not nearly as bad as her legs had been. His magic wasn’t like his fathers- piecing together her leg wasn’t something she was sure he could do.

"Steady... steady..." he whispered gently, pulling back to help her legs by carefully reassembling them, only to tense up as he realized there was something embedded in her bone... He slowly reached, and gave a small tug. It didn’t budge. However, a firm tug had the thing coming right out of her leg.

It was a tooth...

He observed the tooth. It was broad, pointed, with a strong base. "... Sans... I think this is Father's tooth."

Cae looked at him with shock, "He lost his teeth?" he questioned in shock.

Aliquam nodded and looked down again, resuming helping her leg heal by putting the puzzle together, but not until he had extracted what had to have been many, many more fangs. All of them
were from the beast that had attacked Toki moments ago.

"Oh Father..." His voice was sad, scared for the sake of the older monster, but even though he looked as if he was close to crying, he continued to work until her leg was at least solid enough to be moved. "O-Okay... I think the magic will hold the shards together... You should be safe to move inside now, Toki." he told her, moving up to kiss her, while resting a hand on her stomach, releasing magic to heal and assure the young within.

Her leg wasn’t healed completely, but his magic held it in place as best it could. The pieces shifted loosely in the binding of his magic, and she struggled to keep her leg still regardless. She wasn’t going to risk putting weight on it quite yet. Not for walking, that was. “I might h-have a pair of crutches in the sh-shed.” She murmurs shakily. She could get around on crutches, and wouldn’t be completely immobile with them to help. All she needed to do was probably bind her bones so they stayed in one place.

The hand that wasn’t on her middle was clutched, and she rubbed his bones gently, trying to comfort him. Her other hand moved to Cae’s knee, and she shakily patted it, offering the skeletons as much comfort as she could while Papyrus worked to soothe her middle. Now that his entire focus was on her middle, he made more progress. The tight clenching eased slightly after one more pulse of discomfort, and her shirt was edged up enough to show that the bruise was starting to fade under his magic.

“Ow…” She hisses softly. “Ah- Are they o-okay?” The twins were still afraid, but they were hesitantly moving again, just slightly under his fingers. She winced as they pressed where the bruise was. There was a reason pregnant women weren’t supposed to fight.

"They are distressed, but yes. They're okay..." He had Sans switch sides with him, holding her gently by her arms as he went to her back to give it attention as well.

“A-ah… Good.” She was rattled mostly, but the grasp that Cae had on her arms was painful. She grit her teeth and bore it as ooze slid through her shirt and stained the elder brother’s palms. “I was w-worried we would l-lose them.” Her back was not as bruised as her middle had been, but it was tight and knotted from the intense cramps that were fading from her middle. Toki takes a deep breath and shudders, grimacing as her leg jostles. “Are you two okay?”

Cae nuzzled Toki and smiled slightly. "I'm fine, Tokes..."

"I am alright too. A little battered, but my armor protected me." Aliquam assured her, before he moved again to pick her up.

She wasn’t hard to lift, but she did wince as her leg was touched. It was shattered from mid femur down to about the middle of her shin- there was no place on her leg that wouldn’t hurt to grasp, particularly as her leg dangled downwards. Her arms came to cradle her middle, and she shivered. “I’m glad you’re both okay,” she murmured softly. Toki glanced to Cae. “Will you get my crutches out of the shed? They’re tall metal sticks with padded ends. They should come up to about your arm p-pits. I just need to bind the b-breaks and they’ll help me walk.” Of course, her forearms were littered with cracks too- but she would have to make due.

He nodded and ran to go and find them.

But as he did, Aliquam stopped at the top of the stairs, shivering suddenly as his arms seemed to start struggling to hold her. "T-Toki... have you gained weight from the twins...?" he asked.

“Rude. You’ve never noticed it before. I have, yeah.” She eyed him and his quivering, and
squirmed. “Put me down- you look like you’re going to drop me.” And if he, and his suit of armor, fell on her, she would be in a bad place.

He slowly set her down, but didn’t even last a few seconds after, unable to keep his own footing. "I... I don’t feel good." he murmured, leaning against her as little as he could.

Shit- Had he used up all of his magic? Toki shifted her shoulder under his arm to brace him upright, curling her arm around the back of his legs to keep him upright as she sat on the stairs. He was heavy- horribly, horribly heavy with all of the armor. “Did you use too much magic?” He had poured a lot into forming the orange casing piecing her leg together, and a lot into stabilizing the twins. “Easy, Pap… I’ve got you.” She murmured. She had magic to spare- she could, theoretically, put magic into him. She just wasn’t sure how to do that. Toki hesitantly pushed a little bit of her magic into him from where she was touching him.

"Nnh..." he shivered roughly and looked at her before he groaned softly, his eyes closing for a moment as his legs trembled... His last mistake was trying to take another step before he went down with a crash.

“Shi- Shit!” She instinctively went to try and catch him. It didn’t help, but she did manage to force her arm under his skull before he could crack it on the cement of her porch. “Shit.” She scooted closer to him, and hefted his upper torso up as best she could to settle his chest and head in her lap. “Pap? Please don’t faint… C’mon, be awake…”

He wasn’t.

It was about that time that Cae turned the corner, spotting the crumpled pile of armor on the deck with the smaller skeleton next to it. "PAP!" Cae ran over with the crutches in hand. "What the hell happened?!" He demanded sharply.

"He used too much magic in healing me I think." She pressed more magic into his skull, trying to rouse him carefully by filling up and replacing what he had spent. "He collapsed. I’m trying to give him a little bit of my magic to rouse him." He was surely going to get Magi-Drain, and she needed to tend to him until he was back in good health. "Can you get him inside in your condition?"

"I'm pregnant, not useless." He sniped. He helped her upright, and got her crutches under her arms. Once she wasn’t going to topple over, he pinged Aliquam's soul and carefully helped his brother inside.

That was one thing he wasn’t that she was. Useless. Toki heaved a sigh, sockets flitting over her fallen mate. "I forgot that you can do that little cheat with your magic." Once she was stable on her feet, Toki hobbled after him slowly. Being pregnant on crutches was undeniably the hardest thing to do, not counting the cracks racing up and down her radius and ulna. "I was referring to the fact that his armor is ridiculously heavy, and pregnant people aren’t supposed to lift a lot of weight. I suppose your method is the best method. Put him in the bedroom please. He needs to rest." She was damn near intimately familiar with Magi-Drain by now, and they needed to get Papyrus out of his armor and onto the bed. Then she could let him rest, put a little magic in him, bind her limbs, and go see what the King was doing with Tenebris.

"Of course." he guided his brother carefully around the things in the house, watching her all the while. "You gonna be okay while I get him out of his armor?"

Toki nodded slowly. “I will be, yeah. I’m coming up the stairs after you. My medical stuff is upstairs, and I need to wrap my leg and forearms.” Once the bones were braced, she would be okay to continue hobbling safely from there. She starts up the stairs after him, awkward and wobbling and a
bit unsteady, but going well enough on her own. Each hop hurt her leg, but fuck, nothing wasn’t
going to hurt it at this point.

"Stay there." He ordered. "I'll be back to get you." He got Quinn to the top of the stairs.

"You get my fiancé up to our room.” She eyes him tightly, and hobbles a few more steps up
rebelliously. She was pregnant and hurt, but gods damn it, she wasn’t going to feel more useless than
she already did. Toki refused. “I have to get up and down these on my own until my leg heals, Sans.
Go on, shoo. Take care of your brother for me, okay?”

He watched her, then sighed and took him out of her sight and into their room.

Toki watched him go, and made her way to the top of the stairs. It hurt, but hell, she did it. And then
she was slowly making her way down the hall. The medical kit was in the guest upstairs guest
bathroom, mostly so that she didn’t have to deal with someone who wasn’t her or Pap having to go
get it if something happened.

She made it there, and left the door open as she collected it from the cabinet. Toki took a seat on the
closed toilet seat, resting the crutches against the shower, and then carefully took bandages from the
box. She started carefully wrapping her forearms, twining the bandages around each cracked bone to
help stabilize the still leaking cracks, and reduce the marrow that could escape while she listened to
the clanking and clattering of Sans removing Papyrus’ armor.

The older brother occasionally had to grunt to get the armor from his brother to the floor, but it was
done by the time Tokiko had finished. What would not have been expected was what she’d come
back to.

Caeruleus was curled up into his brother’s side, one arm over the younger brother’s rib cage ribcage
as they both glowed a gentle blue color. Cae's eye was lit up brightly as he tried to help cure
Aliquam's case of Magi-Drain.

Toki came hobbling in to the sight, and made her way to the other side of her unconscious mate. She
made her way to the side of the bed, and eased herself down onto the side. Her sleeves had been
rolled up, exposing the beginnings of stains on the slightly sloppy arm bandages, and that allowed
her to press her fingers to Aliquam’s ribs. She shared a look with Cae, and then began to pump
magic into him as well to ease off the strain from Sans’ magic stores. “How’s he doing?” She asks
softly, stroking a hand up to his skull and cradling it as she eases magic in through there as well. Her
magic was warmth and life, like basking next to a fireplace, or being covered in a heated blanket.
Her poor mate… He had done well to heal her, and he had managed to reverse whatever was
happening to the twins. He had done well… And he was so drained.

"He's not as weak... if I stay with him, he should be okay in a few hours." he murmured.

“Don’t forget that you’re pregnant, Sans.” She gives him a faint smile over Pap’s chest, and
continues to feed her magic in as well. “Just keep an eye on your magic levels. Pap would feel
terrible when he gets up if you hurt yourself or your little ball of sunshine.”

He chuckled quietly at that, "Well yeah... but he's my brother, I gotta take care of him..."

“You’re not alone in this, Cae. He’s got a fiancé too- and you’ve got your little bun in the oven to
think of. Our kids… They’re fragile right now.” She knew that quiet well, and one of her hands slid
to her belly. A soft flutter of feet reassured her, and a deep sigh escaped between her teeth. “I can
pick up some slack.” She wasn’t going to be good for much else. She swallowed thickly, and
hummed a soft tune to fill the quiet. “Besides- you’re going to want to check on your dad eventually.
Pap is going to want to know when he gets up.”

"... Yeah... I guess you're right." he sighed softly, before he shortcut off the bed, landing nearby on his feet. "Go ahead and stay here then." He chuckled to her with a light grin. "I'll see you two later."

“...Yeah... I guess you're right.” She mutters dryly. “I’ll see you later, Sans. If you need anything, you know where I will be. I’m not going on long walks for a while.” She shifts closer to Papyrus, and props her leg up on the bed. The sore bones are settled next to his legs, so she’s glad he’s not overly squirmy while he’s unconscious. Toki settles, and resumes steadily feeding her his magic. Human magic was generally quite potent, after all.

"Heh... see you." He gave her a tired salute, and was gone between one breath and the next.

Toki watched him leave with a quiet sigh, and gently leaned her side against Pap’s. The twins could feel her disquiet, and though they were out of distress, they were upset and frightened, and they squirmed against their unresponsive father’s side. Toki petted them soothingly, and stroked his skull as well, her eyes closing as she focused on him. It had been a long, long day. A long day. But she couldn’t help but wonder… If Tenebris was the ‘betrayal’… Then what was the prize…?

Asgore was silent as he sat by Tenebris' head, the beast still unconscious and tied down securely. He couldn't believe this was his old friend. What had those humans done to him to make him so... Feral? He sighed softly and stroked his shoulder gently, before he looked up at Grillby. "I've never seen him like this before...

"Neither have I, milord.” They had put Tenebris in Papyrus old room. The room was the most structurally sound, and escape was nearly impossible from there. Grillby was carefully looking over the wounded beast, and doing his best to stitch up the wounds of his flesh. He quietly pressed and checked for broken ribs. “I... believe he might have been tortured, milord.” Grillby’s fingers and eyes located several spots that had broken and healed slightly wrong. His fingers worked over his bare abdomen, investigating and carefully noting spots that Papyrus would need to tend to when he finished with Toki. “There is... Well, frankly, a lot of damage here. Monsters... We do not handle torture well, milord.”

He’d seen similar things during the war. But most others fell before they reached this stage of violence.

He nodded slowly, before he reached and set his hand on the muzzle. "The look in his eyes... he was blind with rage. Or... a blood thirst... He didn't recognize me... even after I had struck him down the first time...”

“Those tortured either fall,” Grillby said softly, “Or become like this. Because of his more... beastly nature, Gaster seemed to have survived because he could regress into his base instincts.” Grillby’s hands flitted over the slit, and he frowned. “Has this always been here?” he inquired to the king, motioning to the long mark that ran up his abdomen.

He blinked and moved to take a look to see what he had meant, "Ah, He did not have that before his disappearance, however when he returned to us, it seems his torso had become a hollow cavity." he explained.
“I see.” Tenebris was an odd one. Grillby ran his fingers over the edge and frowned. “It looks like it’s gotten cut a couple of times. The edges are ragged here. He should be able to heal it once he is back in his right mind.” Grillby shifted, and pressed his digits a little bit inside, following the curve marks. “It goes in deep. Whatever did this was quite the blow. Perhaps his own claws?”

Asgore lightly shrugged, lethargic as he stroked Tenebris head as gently as he could.

Without warning there was a sharp flurry of kicks to Grillby’s hand.

Grillby startled, and his fingers pried open the flap swiftly. Inside, he spotted a dirty, bedraggled rabbit child.

He tilted his head, mouth falling open. “… Thumper?” he murmured. Was this what the voice mail had meant? The gift within the betrayal?

".... M-Mister Grillby...?" the child’s weak voice crackled out.

"By the stars." Asgore murmured, ears perking.

“Thumper,” Grillby gasped softly. He reached in gently, large hands so very gentle in collecting the battered and dirty child. “By the stars… We thought you were gone. You’re okay now. You’re back in the village.”

He was trembling and covering his eyes as he was brought out. "T-Too bright..." He spent too long in the darkness of Tenebris' cavity. "W-We're home...?"

Grillby’s hands weren’t much better, but he cradled the child to his chest, and gently covered his eyes with a warm hand and forced his flames as dim as he could make them. From behind Thumpers eyelids, it should help him adjust. “You’re both home, you and Tenebris,” he soothed gently. “You’re home and safe now. Milord- you can heal minor wounds, can you not?”

"I can... but this is considerable damage. I will do what I can." The king answered, reaching out and slowly taking the bunny. His fur was warm, and Thumper was curling up in his hands as he released some magic.

Grillby watched them for a moment, and nodded. He flicked his gaze to the King, and then back down to the fallen beast laying on the bed. He cleared his throat. “Once you’ve been healed a little, how about you and I go get you something to eat? I think Miss Toki has some of her honey tarts made up. Would you like some of those?” The poor child likely hadn’t eaten since he had been taken. They needed to get him fed and washed, and into new clothes. Grillby could handle two out of three of those- but perhaps he could convince Toki to help get Thumper washed up if she was healed enough.

"Y-Yes please..." he murmured, before he sniffled softly, "Momma... and Poppa…?", he started softly, unsure.

Grillby reached out to gently stroke the child’s dirty cheek, giving him affection that he had no doubt been starved of for some time. “Your mother and father did not make it, Thumper.” He said softly. “We… We had feared that you had been dusted with them.”

He leaned to his hand, nuzzling his palm slightly. "... Mister Tenebris protected me," he murmured.

That would explain why they had both been taken then. Grillby nodded softly. “We know.” He said gently. “He did a good job too. He got you back to us.” The fire monster gave him a warm smile. “And now that you’re both back, we’re going to take care of you both.”
He sniffled quietly, then nodded, leaning in to Asgore as he held him closer.

"I'll go wash him..." The king told Grillby. "Can you stay with Tenebris?"

"I will." The bartender nodded. "Take him to Toki’s place after. She should have honey tarts and some leftover food from breakfast. He needs to get some food and liquids into his system.” Children were strong, but even the strongest child could be devastated by undernourishment and dehydration. They’d seen it enough in the war, with orphans who couldn’t get enough food. Many of them fell down, or simply turned to dust.

He nodded and carried him to the bathroom.

Nearly an hour later and two tubs worth of washing and copious amounts of obnoxiously sudsy bubble bath, Thumper was finally clean. The boy had been bundled in one of Cae’s old shirts, as he was the smallest skeleton in the house size wise, and then promptly taken over to Toki’s.

The kind king padded up the front stairs with Thumper cradled to his shoulder, and slipped silently into the house. He came in just in time to see Toki carefully hobbling off the last step from the upstairs, bandages covering the leg that she was keeping her weight off of. Bandages also covered the woman’s arms, and Asgore felt a small manner of guilt and worry. Hadn’t Papyrus healed those?

Toki caught his eye, saw his look, but was distracted by the familiar bundle of fur in his arms. “Thumper?” She startled, sockets blowing wide. “By the gods- is that you?”

"H-Hi, Miss Toki." he greeted with a weak, tired smile

“Oh Thumper, baby…” He looked so tired and thin- but she knew better than to ask immediately. Every instinct in her cried out for her to take him into her arms, get him fed, warm, and tucked some place where he could be safe and could recover from his ordeal. She controlled herself only on the fact that she couldn’t carry him and hobble on crutches. She glanced to Asgore and jerked her chin for the kitchen. “Let’s get you something to eat, sweet heart. What would you like? I’ve got some honey tarts made up, and I’ll make you anything you’d like to eat.”

The king followed her into the kitchen, keeping pace with the fast-hobbling skeleton. More or less so she wouldn’t fall and hurt herself, or her babies. He nudged Thumper gently with his chin, and chirred softly to the rabbit. “I can cook as well, if you would like to sit with Miss Toki?”

"O-Okay." he replied to Toki... after when he was asked that question by Asgore, he smiled gently, "Y-Yes please..."

Asgore beamed brightly at the child, and nuzzled the soft fur between his ears. “You heard the lad, Toki. You take a seat and rest your leg with Thumper, and I’ll get some tarts out. Maybe some juice?”

"There’s apple juice in the fridge.” Toki nodded. Toki eased down into the larger of the chairs that was parked in the corner of the kitchen, usually reserved for Tenebris, and then patted her lap invitingly. “C’mera, Thumper. I could use some snuggles from my favorite fluffy bunny.”

The king eased the child down carefully into the skeletons lap, nestling the boy right up against her middle as Toki’s arms came to hold him as close as she could manage with her belly.
He was quick to curl up against the warmth, his dry nose twitching gently as he took in her familiar
smell. It was a smell that had brought comfort to all the children of the village, all of them who had
laughed and played with the wonderful woman.

"Mmmh~" He didn't stop the blissful sigh that escaped him as he quickly had grown comfortable.

Toki cradled him close, adjusting him so he curled around her belly and could pillow his head on her
shoulder. Her fingers stroked gently through his fur, and she cooed softly to him, nuzzling the top of
his head gently. He smelled clean, but underlying in his scent was the smell of dust, and fear. He had
been afraid for a long, long time, and it lingered in his scent. Hopefully, curled to her middle and
curved up with her, the scent would begin to fade away by other emotions.

Toki was warm, and she radiated warmth to the child, both through her limbs and through the gently
squirming surface of her middle.

Asgore smiled as she practically enveloped the rabbit monster with her body. “So, what would you
like to eat, Thumper?” He smiled warmly to the both of them, and rolled up his sleeves so he could
get to cooking without having to get his clothing covered in food bits.

"Anything... I'm so hungry..." he answered quietly, surrendering into Toki's motherly touch without
a fuss.

They would need to start him off small, lest he make himself sick. Asgore nodded and smiled, and
proceeded to raid the woman’s cupboards. He found lots of pasta, and some strange ingredients that
he concluded must have been a part of her pregnancy cravings. “I'll make up some buttered
noodles.”

“That sounds good.” Toki smiled softly. “Pots are in the bottom cupboard by the stove.”

“Thank you!” The king hummed. He set a plate of honey tarts on the table near the chair, and then
set to work.

The skeleton laughed gently as the king bustled about, ducking here and there to collect the things he
needed to. In the mean time, she gently kissed the top of Thumper’s head. “It's good to have you
back, sweet heart.” She murmured gently to him. She collected a honey tart, and offered it to the boy
with a warm smile. “Here- let's start with a sweet treat. Not too many tarts though. We don’t want to
spoil your appetite for some good noodles, do we? Don’t worry about crumbs either, sweet heart.
My belly makes a great table from time to time.” She winks playfully to him.

He nodded slowly and took the honey tart... Resting on her, he held the treat close and gradually
nibbled on it, small bites that were only the result what had been shaved off by his teeth per nibble,
though after a few minutes, he lowered his treat and swallowed, "I-I'm sorry... C-could I just have
some lettuce? O-Or a carrot?” he murmured quietly, offering the tart back to her.

“Of course, Thumper.” Toki nodded, and set the treat on the edge of the plate to be handled later.
Asgore was busy cooking, but she could use her bees. She was running a little low, but not
dangerously so. Toki gave a tug, and Stripe appeared with a fiery pop, shaking her fluffy self out
from atop Toki’s crutch.

A few quick instructions, and Stripe was returning with a bag of baby carrots for him. The bee
dropped the bag into Toki’s hand, and she offered the open end to the rabbit with a warm smile.
“You’re welcome to as many as you want. Carrots are good for eye sight, you know?”

He took the carrots and began to crunch on them, slowly, but with great happiness to him. "Mmh~"
It took only a portion the bag before he offered it back to her, his shrunken stomach content with what it had taken in.

If he was full now, the noodles could be nibbled on later. Little meals frequently would build him back up. Toki smiled and kissed his little nose once she set the carrots aside and let Stripe disappear. “Feel a little better, Thumper?” Food could do wonders for how one felt. She adjusted him gently, rubbing his thin legs to keep him warm. Rabbit monsters naturally consumed more ‘calories’ than most monsters did, simply because of their energy levels. He hadn’t likely had food since he was taken- it was little wonder that he felt as light as he did and was so hungry, but ate so little.

Asgore set down a glass of juice in passing as he worked on a meal for later times. Toki offered it to him to take a sip.

He took a gentle drink and smiled at her gently. "Thank you." he sounded better now that he had something to drink.

A wet throat could definitely be helpful to talking clearly. She smiled, and snuggled him closer to her once the glass was set down. Her fingers stroked through his fur, combing the long spots idly. Her good leg tilted the chair slightly, and she rocked a little bit to help him settle, and to keep the twins wiggling against his side from bothering him. “Are you warm enough?” She asked gently. It was a warm summer day, but being malnourished and tired could leave anyone chilled.

"You're warm." he hummed quietly, giving a nod.

“Good.” She didn’t have a blanket to wrap him in, or he would have been bundled up. As it was, the long shirt that smelled of Sans was more than enough to act like one on the small rabbit. Toki shifted him slightly, adjusting him so his weight wasn’t on her forearms so much as it was her elbows. Toki’s fingers stroked his cheeks. “I know you’re probably tired,” She began gently, “so I’m not going to ask a lot of questions, okay? When you’re ready to talk about what happened, we will listen. Sound alright to you, sweet heart?”

"Mmhm..." he nuzzled her and sighed, "You can ask." he murmured.

Asgore perked his ears, listening without obviously showing that he was.

Toki continued to rock the chair just slightly, humming softly to him. She needed to invest in an actual rocking chair- the motion was surprisingly relaxing to her. “Sweet heart,” she murmured softly back to him, “I don’t really know what to ask. What I meant by that was, no one is going to pressure you to talk before you’re ready. When you want to tell us what happened, you are welcome to. But not before you know you’re ready. We want you to start to feel better, not stress yourself and feel worse.”

He nodded gently and sniffled lightly, before he buried his face in the fabric by it.

Toki crooned softly and hiked him up closer to her neck. “You’re safe now, sweet heart,” she murmured softly to him. “I’ve got you…” Her fingers smoothed circles between his shoulders.

He smiled and closed his eyes not long after. He was so tired…

Toki shifted, and glanced up as Asgore gently draped his cloak over them. She tucked it up and around the rabbit, who was likely too big to be cradled like this really, and gently pressed a soft kiss to his forehead. There was no way she was going to let him go. Not now, not while he was so tired and fresh from having been found. Toki tucked him in, blocking the majority of the glaring light from the kitchen lights, and then began to buzz softly to help relax him.
Toki was quite the visage of motherhood, rocking on one leg in Tenebris kitchen chair, with a sleepy rabbit tucked into her shoulder and curled around her gravid belly. “Go ahead and sleep, sweet heart. I’ve got you.” she murmurs gently to him. Sans was up with Pap- and Pap would understand why she wasn’t up with him whenever he woke up. She just hoped he wouldn’t panic and rush down to try and find her.

"Toki, is there anything else I can do to help?" Asgore asked gently, keeping his voice low for Thumper's sake.

“Once the noodles are done, maybe you can help me into the living room?” she responds just as softly, keeping up her low buzzing to keep the tired rabbit lulled against her. “The chair is nice, but my leg really hurts.” Keeping it down so much had the bones throbbing painfully. “I’m not going to be able to carry him and walk on crutches.”

"Yes, of course." he nodded to her, before he leaned against the counter, looking at her quietly. Toki glanced back over to him, offering him a tired smile. “How is Tenebris doing?” She inquired softly, eye lights glimmering with worry. “Any improvement...? Cae didn’t tell me much when he got back, other than Grillby told him it wasn’t very wise to have him around him at this point.” Something about not knowing if Tenebris would wake up coherent and himself, or still a beast.

"He was still unconscious. But I fear he is no longer the Tenebris we knew..." he sighed. "What makes this worse... I know not if we will be able to wake him up from this reversion..."

“Give it time.” She said softly. “Try studying some of the human studies of psychology. It might help you at this point to try and bring him back once he’s awake. He... He’s not going to be the Tenebris we knew. Thumper isn’t the same Thumper that we knew. The experience that they went through... No one would be the same going through it.”

He nodded gently, before he sighed. "Are you okay?" he asked, "I know Tenebris’ strength, but un tarnished like that... we are very lucky he had not killed you with one blow..."

“I threw all of my magic into my defense.” She admits quietly. “That’s the only reason that he didn’t shear through my leg. He broke off teeth in my femur though.” Her leg throbs with the memory, and she grimaces slightly. “My defense on the norm rests at about two hundred. I threw all of my magic to reinforce it. My HP doesn’t always take huge damage to befit my body. My bones are pretty fragile. So... I’m not okay.” Her HP was still down a significant amount. Toki’s jaw tilts down, and she swallows. “When Tenebris comes back, please don’t tell him this. But... Pap had to dump a lot of his magic to stabilize the twins. I... We almost lost them today. When he cracked my arms, he battered my middle.”

She had realized not long after Sans had left that the pains she had been feeling had been forced contractions. Tenebris had nearly thrown her into a super early labor- and if not for Papyrus dumping his magic in to stop it...

His eyes widened in shock at this news. "Oh dear... I'm so relieved that the brothers were there to take care of you... Are the children okay now?" he asked, "and Papyrus... Making sure he didn't lose you or his children both... I worry he may have gave himself Magi-Drain."

“He did.” Toki nodded. “I gave him as much magic as I could before Sans returned again. He collapsed on the stairs trying to bring me inside. Cae’s up with him now, slowly giving him more. He’s still out of it.” Toki sighs softly, and adjusts the cloak covering Thumper, giving him a bit more cover. Trapped between her scent and that of the King, she hoped he was feeling safe and wouldn’t kick in his sleep. “I... think they're okay.” She murmurs. “They’re moving and stuff, but still really
freaked out. I think Pap not responding has them pretty upset.”

"I'm glad you're alright." he rumbled, coming over to her for a moment to smile at her and the bundle in her arms. "It would have been disastrous to lose you."

“Everyone says that.” She smiles dryly. “I’m just one person, Asgore. I am just one person. It would hurt- but in the grand scheme of things, I am just one person. I am glad today went better than it could have. Despite… one of my Hell Hornets being maimed, things could have gone worse. No one died.” Just barely. Her sockets nearly water, and she shifts Thumper a little tighter to herself. “And we saved two lives today. We’ll help Tenebris get better. I know we will.”

He smiled and nodded in agreement. "That old predator is too cocky to go out like this." He chuckled, "I have hope that he will awaken to chase another day." He then snorted into a fist and started chuckling. "With his rattling tail behind him." He chortled.

“More like chase your fluffy little goat tail another day, hm?” She arches a teasing brow at him.

Asgore sputters at her, a faint blush growing under his pale fur.

Toki chuckles very softly, and jerks her chin towards the pan on the stove. “Your noodles are scorching.”

“Oh goodness!”
Chapter 57

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Little chapter with some stuff with Tenebris, and a bit of Toki and Pap to be seen too. Also- i might hold off on the next update until thursday when i get home from work. Otherwise i owe a reply Wednesday, and i barely have time to get ready for work before i have my next shift, let alone to squeeze in a chapter update. I'll try- but if it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen. It'll be out Thursday evening or early Friday morning if all else fails. So thanks for being patient with me, guys. :)

Don't forget to visit the blog, yo. http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Welp, only so much shit could hit the fan before we decide to give you guys a break...

Here you go <3

For everyone who remained at the compound, the days were tough. Tenebris had not yet come out of his primal state, so Asgore and Grillby had to think of ways to help him recover.

Finally they came up with the idea of company.

Binding him extra just in case, the casing had been removed from his head and replaced with a simpler, but nonetheless strong, muzzle. Lighting a bowl of the spearmint he would smoke in his pipe, they'd sit with him, and mind their own, but in the later days, they would then go and sit by him, he'd still be aggressive, but not frantic.

Finally, a miracle had formed.

Tenebris' breathing was slow, as it was always in slumber. The duo had just come to check on him to find his form had reversed. The spines were no longer poking out of his shoulders and back, his hands had returned to normal, though his claws were still long on both hands and feet, and his face had collapsed again back to it’s usual flatter form, giving him a less bestial appearance. His purple eyes were half lidded, pupils wide and no longer slit like a beast.

But Asgore's approach caught the beast's attention and he slowly looked up at them

They didn't know what to expect, until with a dry, croaking voice spoke to them. "A-Asgore...? Grillby?"

Asgore was the first one to step closer, taking care to move slow just per chance that this was only temporary. “Tenebris?” he spoke lowly. “Old friend? Are you back with us?” Stars, his voice was so dry and crackly… He shared a look with Grillby.

Grillby nodded, and collected a bottle of water from one of the side tables. He handed it to Asgore, but stayed back so he didn’t overwhelm Tenebris.

He pressed his cheek against the floor as best he could as he closed his eyes for a moment. He took a few deep breaths, before they opened again and focused back on Asgore. "W-Where am I...? Wh-
Where's...." he was asking about the child he had hidden within himself.

Asgore crouched down near him, and gently reached out a hand. He didn’t touch, but he offered him the chance to reach out on his own. They needed to remove the muzzle to give him something to drink. “You’re home, old friend.” He says softly, and pantomimes taking a deep breath. The room smelled slightly of Papyrus- but most importantly, it smelled like the Village. “Both of you. Thumper is with Toki right now. She’s been taking care of him, and he’s loath to leave her. He wants to see you, but…” Not until they were certain that Thumper would be safe. Only Asgore and Grillby were allowed near him at this point, both of them old enough and strong enough to handle restraining him.

He shifted his hands, before he squirmed and looked down at the cuffs over his hands.

“Those need to remain for a little bit longer, my friend.” Asgore said softly. He reached out, and gently thumbed over the clasp holding the muzzle on. It was removed easily, and Asgore slowly lowered it down. The bottle was opened, and offered to the large phantom monster. “Here- drink. It will soothe your throat. You haven’t eaten or drank much since you returned to us. It’s been a little under a week.” They’d been unable to give him much while he’d been aggressive. Asgore had a few bites along his forearm from his attempts to care for Tenebris during his moments of intense aggressiveness- and subsequently, Tenebris had lost more teeth during it too.

Tenebris looked at him and then smacked his lips dryly, realizing at that point that he was missing several teeth. His tongue ran over where the fangs once rested and he rattled in distress. He was missing so many…

Asgore gave a soft croon to him. "Peace, my old friend. We will explain some once you have had a drink. Would you like to take a seat?" The beast had been more vested in being on the floor, Tenebris perhaps might like to sit upright like a person, now that he was himself for now. "Only your hands are bound, so I will help you stand if you would like, my dear."

He nodded slowly, slowly attempting to sit up on his own. "O-Old friend…" It sounded hard for him to talk.

Asgore carefully hooked his free hand under Tenebris' elbow. He helped ease him upright, and then pressed the bottle into his cuffed hands. He should be able to hold it and move his wrists to drink on his own. "It is good to have you back, old friend." He smiled at him gently. His eyes glimmered warmly. "Please, take a drink before you try to talk. We don't want you hurting your throat."

Tenebris nodded slowly and steadily drank the water from the bottle. Though he proceeded to empty the damn thing, dropping the plastic bottle onto the ground as he wiped his lips, swallowing once more to make sure his mouth was fully moist. The big monster sighed and looked at Asgore tiredly.

Asgore gave him a smile. "Do you feel better?" He inquired. "Grillby can make you something to eat if you would like something." He had kept the house stocked while he was staying in it.

"I'm starving." he replied, but he gave a small nod, smiling slightly. "Water... helped."

"How about a steak to start?" The protein would be good for him. "And another bottle of water with it?" The king gave him another smile, brightening at the smile that the smaller monster gave him.

Tenebris' tail began to wag as he rattled happily. "I would like that very much." he made a pleased sound.

The king nodded to Grillby, and the fire monster left the room to go begin cooking.

Now alone, Asgore carefully set himself down on the ground across from him. "May I see inside of
your mouth?" He asked gently. "You lost a lot of your teeth, and some of them are cracked. I haven't been able to safely tend to them this far."

Tenebris looked up at him and opened his mouth easily.

The king slid closer and very gently slid his lip down to check his gums. He didn't touch, but he did observe and check a couple of his teeth. What ones he had still were pretty securely in the gums, even if they were cracked, and his molars looked like they would be okay. His sleeves slid up, showing his bite marks that had sheered off some of his fur. "You are recovering. It looks like your teeth are going to be regenerating, but it might take some time."

He looked up at him and rattled sadly as he saw the bites. Once his mouth was free to close, he gave a sad sound. That was his handy work, and the teeth marks matched up with what he could feel to be missing.

"Oh Asgore…" he reached out and carefully took his arm. He nuzzled his face into the fur before he ran his tongue over the bite a few times, grooming it apologetically. "Forgive me, old friend..." One could easily compare Tenebris' expression and demeanor to that of a guilty dog.

"There is nothing to forgive, Tenebris." He smiled gently, his palm turning to cradle his cheek. He rubbed a fluffy thumb over his cheekbone. "You were not yourself, old friend. It was not you who did what you did. There is no fault to you, and no one has laid any blame upon you. It is... it is reassuring to see you back. We were worried."

The warmth of the fur was welcomed and he rattled quietly as he nuzzled it, taking a deep breath of the familiar scent. His purple eyes closed after a moment, and he chirred softly. "Old friend… I'm so tired..."

"I know... let us get some food into you, and then you can rest. Though... we will need to keep the muzzle on for a while." The king looked like it made him sick to even voice that.

He looked up at him at that. "Asgore... What have I done...?" he asked hesitantly.

"A lot." He doesn't elaborate past that. "The agents of HAM... they intended to let you loose upon the compound for you to destroy things. I can tell you that you did not kill anyone while you were not yourself. I... we managed to subdue you before that. You might find the back of your skull tender... I had to strike you twice."

He looked up at him, and then he reached up with his chained hands, looping them behind his head to test what the king had said. He winced at the ache in the back of his skull. "Of course... Ouch..." He sighed quietly, before he looked up at him, chirring softly in response. "I... I tried so hard to stay strong..." He insisted, shifting one of his legs before immediately regretting it. His pupils turned to slits in reaction to the pain before he winced, claws tensing up as he hissed in pain. "O-Ow... Ow..." his body ached now that he was a little more aware of it. He didn't want to look, but with the pain infecting every ounce of him, he suspected that he retained physical damage from the abuse at the hands of HAM.

"A-Asgore... Thumper... Where is he...?"

"I told you before, Thumper is over with Toki. She's been taking care of him while we have been caring for you. He's also been helping her while Papyrus is recovering from Magi-Drain." Asgore gave him a patient smile, and reached out to ease healing magic into his leg. He wasn't the best, but he could ease the pain a little bit. "You held on as long as you could. More importantly- you came back to us. You came back to me."
He looked up at him, and then chirred quietly and pulled himself closer to nuzzle into the king's chest, his tail rattling quietly, "I still cannot help but feel..." he then shook his head and keened quietly, "I'm sorry, old friend..."

"You are forgiven, old friend." Asgore welcomed him into his arms gently, bundling him closer as he continued to numb his wounds and aid them in healing as best he could. Now that Tenebris was awake, they could begin to bring people back to their homes here. Asgore nuzzled his muzzle into the top of Tenebris' skull. "I have missed you, Tenebris."

He nuzzled close and began to purr, leaning his head back to rest it into the crook of Asgore's neck, "I missed you too, Asgore... I held on by thinking about you... and everyone else I promised to protect..."

Asgore tilted down and gave him a gentle, chaste kiss, nuzzling his furry nose to the bridge between Tenebris' eyes. "We have all been looking for you." He murmured. "I am so glad you're back, Tenebris. It pained my soul to see you so... lost. You're back now. And once Papyrus is back on his feet, he can help heal your wounds." The skeleton kept setting himself back, because he kept trying to mend Toki's bones further. "But... Until we are sure you will stay with us, you need to wear the muzzle. I am... so, so sorry about this. But..." It was for everyone else’s safety.

Grillby knocked, and then stepped inside. He had a tall glass of orange blossom tea, and a plate piled with steaks. They might have been a little less raw than Tenebris would like, but Grillby literally cooked food when he handled it, so there was no escaping it. “I have food.” And there was a fork and a knife for the meat to be cut up. Tenebris wouldn’t be able to rip and tear with as fragile as his teeth were.

"It's humiliating... but if it means that I don't hurt anyone..." he murmured, before smelled the air, a smile growing on his face as he smelled the meat. He lifted his head to look up at Grillby, but his pupils had turned to slits again as he let out a loud, eager rumble, tail rattling again as it wagged.

The slits had Grillby warily stopping a few steps away, as he eyed the bladed tail that wagged at him. He tilted his head, fixing him with a calm and flat stare, and then crouched down to hold out the plate. “Remembering your manners will save what is left of your teeth,” he mutters, “and help us be sure you are keeping in control. A relapse… would be bad.” He states softly.

The king takes the plate from the fire monster that kept his distance, so as to not crowd the monster in the king's lap, and then brought it into range for Tenebris to use. “You only have to wear it until we’re sure you’re going to stay you.” He says gently. “Let's see how you're doing in a week, okay?”

He looked at Asgore, then nodded. "I understand, Asgore... I will wear it if I must." He then looked at the knife and fork, before he looked at his hands, and back up to Asgore. "I... hate to ask... but I cannot use my hands properly with these... Cuffs."

“The cuffs are coming off.” The king nodded. “But it is a two-handed job. If you can hold the plate, I can remove the cuffs.” And once he was holding it, the king carefully worked the cuffs and got them off. He eased them off of his wrists, and then eased magic into the chafe marks to heal them up. “Here you go,” He smiled at him warmly. The cuffs were set to the side. “We wont require you to wear those, old friend.”

Grillby heaved a soft sigh, and scrubbed his face tiredly. He groaned slightly. He was tired- he’d had to top up Sans, because he had drained himself a little lower than he should have in trying to help Papyrus. “Muzzle yes, cuffs no. This one we modified so you could see and hear. It’s a bit more... comfortable. We can redesign one for your face currently as well. It would perhaps allow you to open your mouth and speak, eat, what have you, but it would limit how far you can open your...
mouth.” If they could limit it a bit, he wouldn’t be able to bite someone.

"Thank you, Asgore..." He nuzzled into Asgore’s fur and got comfy as he began to slowly start into the meal. He did eat with control, but the plate was clean not long after.

Asgore smiled and let him eat. Once he was done, he took the plate carefully, and then handed it up to Grillby. “You look tired, General.”

“I had to give Sans magic this morning.” Grillby collected the empty plate easily, and held it as he watched the two of them. “He drained himself too much in tending to Papyrus for it to be good for the soulling. I have large stores, so I will be alright.”

Tenebris hesitated at that, swallowing a drink of tea to clear his mouth of any food debris, and keep it out of the healing holes where his teeth were missing. “Sans is... carrying?”

“He is.” Grillby nods. “It was... not long after you were taken. We took some comfort in each other and... it happened.” It was no secret that they had been trying- but they hadn’t expected it to happen then.

Asgore nodded as well. “Toki has done well to help Caeruleus thus far. When not with Grillby, he has spent a lot of time with her.” He nudges him gently with a growing smile. “More grandbabies, Tenebris. That is good news indeed.” He pretty much purred.

He sighed gently. "I'm glad he is supported in this..." he gave a pleased smile.

“He is.” The fire monster nods. “And once you’re back in good condition...” He smiled slightly. “He’ll be glad to have his father back in his life for this.”

“Once you’ve had some rest, we’ll see how you’re doing.” Asgore nodded. “You’ve missed a lot- and I’m sure you’ll be eager to catch up. Everyone has missed you. Maybe tomorrow, if you’re up to it, you can take a walk around the house. The smells might have changed a bit. Toriel, Frisk, and myself have been staying here.” This room smelled slightly like the ex-queen and the human child, as they had been staying here as well. It wasn’t as strong as Papyrus’ lingering scent from when he had lived here prior.

"A walk does sound nice... Thank you." he purred gently.

Asgore smiled and nodded. “Alright. Tomorrow then. For now, rest. Once you finish your tea, we’ll get you up and into your room, and get you settled in for sleep. Okay?”

"Yes please." he purred gently, smiling up at him. He took his tea again and lifted it to his lips, drinking the blend.

Orange blossom tea wafted up his nose, and he chuckled gently in response. “Tomorrow.” He nodded. “Tomorrow for sure. But for now... Rest. We’ll see how you do tomorrow, and then we’ll see about visitors, okay? You need to rest and heal. My healing skill is not so good as yours is, my friend.” Once Tenebris finished his tea, they would head to his room. “Maybe once you’re settled in your room, you can... try to tell me what all happened to you? If you are up to it?”

"Of course." He sighed. "It's not a pretty tale to hear, I'm afraid."

“I didn’t expect it to be.” Asgore murmured gently in return. Once the phantom had finished his tea, Asgore set the glass to the side, and carefully lifted Tenebris, taking the muzzle in hand as he got to his feet and helped the phantom stay on his. “C’mon, you. Grillby? I think he and I will take a little time to ourselves.”
“Of course, milord.” He smiled gently. He collected the glass, and opened the door for the king. “Go enjoy your time, and call me if you need me.”

He slowly stood up, needing to cling to Asgore to stay up. "Nnh..."

“Easy, old friend.” Asgore gave him a soothing look, and hooked an arm around his waist. He kept him supported easily, and took a few steps to take him out the door. “You likely have not been upright in a long while. Lean on me- I will help you.”

"Thank you, Asgore.” He murmured as he walked with him. "I feel... very heavy right now.” he admitted softly.

Grillby shut the door behind them, and then headed down the stairs with the dishes to put them in the sink.

“You're actually quite light.” The monster was still in the nude at this point, so his pale skin wasn’t burdened by anything. It did feel a little… loose. But it was likely from his dehydration. “We’ll take our time. How do you feel? I’ve tried to numb the pain of your wounds as best I can. Does it hurt to walk?”

"N-No... If anything..." He tensed, eyes widening in horror as his irises darkened, "I feel... Numb..." he then winced as his legs suddenly buckled as his skin started to darken, as if his blood was rising to the surface of his skin, staining it black before his form started to melt.

“Oh…” Well, that hadn’t happened to him in a long time. Asgore managed to keep the rapidly melting Tenebris from dropping to the ground. “Well, old friend, this hasn’t happened in a long time. Your meds are in your room somewhere, correct?” He kept a calm and cool tone, to help keep Tenebris calm as well. He continued his way towards the room, hauling the oozing form carefully with him.

He didn't want to dig his claws into Asgore's arm but that was the best he could grab hold of as his body continued to break down. But at the knowing question, he gave a slow nod.

Asgore gave him a soothing smile, slightly struggling to keep the blob from slipping between his fingers. The claws in his arms didn’t hurt too badly. It didn’t take long for the king to bring him to his room. The door opened, and the room smelled like a mix of Tenebris’ lingering scent, and the sweet musk that Asgore exuded.

The king brought him in, and gently guided him to the bed. “Pills- point, and I’ll get them.”

He huffed quietly and looked up, scanning the room before he raised a hand, pointing to the bedside. They would be where Toki had found them before.

Asgore opened the drawer and rifled through. He hummed softly, and pulled out the familiar bottle, and then unscrewed the top. He tapped out the usual two, and then offered them to the liquefying Tenebris. He gave him a gentle smile. “Here you are, old friend. At least you didn’t stain my fur like the first time, no?” He teases gently.

He shot him a look before he licked the two tablets out of Asgore’s palm, leaving a stripe of saliva in his wake as he leaned back to let the tablets work.

Asgore stared at the black saliva now tainting his palm, and chuckled with hearty affection. He felt some of the weight on his soul ease. “Good to see your sense of humor is intact, old friend.”

He kept his gaze playful but sour as he sat there, slowly allowing his form to come together once
more. However, as he came to sink down to the floor, his coat now covered him. "..." He looked at it, and then let out a soft 'huh' sound.

His reversion went faster than normal, which was good. “Well… At least you’re not as naked anymore?” The turtleneck and slacks hadn’t come back, but there were plenty in his dresser. “Would you like for me to get you some clothes for you?”

"I would appreciate that, old friend." he sighed, nuzzling into the coat.

Asgore smiled slightly, and went to fetch clothing. He returned momentarily, and offered it up to him with a soft look. “Here you go. Lets get this on you, and then get you in to bed. Regressing to that form usually makes you tired, does it not?”

"Exhausted." he answered quietly, getting to his bed and sitting down before he slipped on his clothing.

Asgore smiled and nodded. “We can wait,” He said softly. “For your story on what happened. I want you to rest first, okay? First and foremost. You need rest. Though…” Asgore frowned sadly, and held up the muzzle.

He hesitated, and reached up to rub over his chin. He didn't want to, he looked at it like a cat would glare at a bath... "Even within my own home...?"

“Grillby and I agreed that it was best…” Idly, Asgore rubs at the bite mark displayed on his forearm, looking sad and upset at the idea of having to do this to his lover. “I don’t want to, but…”

"..." A deep breath, and he reached up, his palm facing up as to receive the item.

Asgore settled it carefully into his palm. “I am sorry, old friend. If all goes well, you won't have to wear it for more than a couple of days, I promise.”

He looked at it for a while, and then he sighed before he lifted it and slowly put it on. Securing it around the back of his head, Tenebris looked up at Asgore. His gaze was understanding, but upset and embarrassed. "...

Tenebris gaze upset the kind king too, and Asgore silently begged forgiveness with his eyes. “I know you don’t fully understand why you have to wear this, but… Thank you for being brave enough to put it back on.”

His gaze lowered and he sighed quietly, giving a small nod before he lifted his legs and rested them on the bedding, stretching them out before he turned and rested his head on his pillow, his tail coiling around him.

Asgore shifted and collected a blanket from the side of the bed, and carefully draped it over him. “Rest well, old friend. I will be here when you wake.”

He nodded gently in acknowledgement, but with the muzzle keeping his mouth closed, he rattled in his throat, but that was all he spoke.

Asgore gave him a fond pat to the head, and then went to take a seat in one of the few chairs in the room. It wasn’t largely comfortable like Tenebris recliner was, but it suited his needs. He took a seat, tugged out a book, and settled in to read and keep an eye on the old royal scientist.
Toki woke in the middle of that night with a frightened sound and a sharp lurch, flailing her way right out of the side of the bed. She hit the floor with a faint thud of bone on tile and scrabbled back, terror lighting her eyes a bright green in the darkness of the bedroom, and her bandaged leg ended up getting dragged with her.

The thing she’d seen in her dream had been large, with sharp teeth clamping around her leg as long talons curled and sliced for her belly. But instead of being saved… no one had come. She had been mauled, bones cracked, marrow and magic splattered, belly torn asunder and children taken. Toki had screamed and screamed and screamed, until it had gone dark… And then it had started again, with Tenebris lunging for her neck with teeth that shattered bone no matter how much magic she reinforced it with.

She had woken in a panic, and in her panic had bolted away from the nearest source of life, no doubt jostling Papyrus in his slumber. Not that she went far or fast. Her crutches had gotten scattered in her tumble, lost on the floor in the dark, but she didn’t stop backing up until her back hit her dresser, and she could curl her undamaged leg in front of her belly to aid her arms in guarding it.

Toki heaved for breath, eyes wild and alight with the fresh sensations of her nightmares.

Papyrus had been awakened with a start and he sat up fast, his magic stuttering to life. "Toki?" he gasped, eye lights tracking the panicked glow of her form through the dark. "Oh stars...!" he got out of bed as quickly as he could untangle herself and went to her side. "Hey!"

Her eye lights flickered to the quick moving form in the dark and she flinched automatically, curling in on herself with a desperate buzzing sound. His voice registered to her ears several seconds later, and she squinted her eye sockets shut tightly. "I’m not there, I’m not there, I’m not there," she muttered tightly.

"Toki!" he hugged her. "It's okay! It's okay."

His touch was calming, because it was familiar warm bones, a familiar smell, and not hard teeth gnashing through her. She rattled noisily, and leaned into him. It took her a while, but she calmed enough to stop hyperventilating and rasping rapid-fire muttered words. When she could put together a coherent sentence, she loosened her defensive position, and glanced to him. "I- I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to wake you." She murmured.

"No, no it's fine..." He shakes his head roughly. “You had a bad dream..."

Toki swallowed slightly and nodded. “I know.” Her palms come to her face, and her sharp tipped fingers dig into the base of her horns as she shakily tries to calm herself down. “Still… I’m sorry.” Another deep breath, and she shudders on its exhale. Toki was hesitant to talk to Pap about it. How on earth would she explain that her future father in law had left her with nightmares? She was just barely starting to get over the ones from Han. At least the ones from Han didn’t send her fleeing from the bed. “Why don’t you go back to sleep? You need your rest.” She murmurs softly.

"Because you do too." he told her sternly.

Toki shuddered slightly. Her middle was bright through her nightgown, and it provided a bit of light that kept the shadows of the room from being too dark. “I’m not very tired anymore.” She mutters. She was tired, yes, but she didn’t want to go back to sleep to experience the nightmares once again. Toki ground her teeth and shook her head. “That was a lie. Sorry. I’m still a bit tired, but… I don’t want to see that nightmare again so soon.”
"Come on, you're sleeping with me." he told her, picking her up.

Toki squirmed in his arms, and tried to wiggle away. "Papyrus Aliquam Gaster, you don't need to be straining yourself. Just get me my crutches." She sighs. "I was sleeping with you, you silly skeleton." She just hadn't been pressed to him, because he liked to try and heal a little bit more of the fractures on her leg while she wasn't awake to scold him for doing it. He'd already healed the fractures on her arms, but the ones on her leg were a lot worse.

"Nyeh." he nuzzled her stubbornly as he carried her to the bed, laying her down before climbing back into bed alongside her and pulling her close in a protective hold.

Toki fussed a little bit, but ended up just slumping against him, her soul thundering on at it's rapid pace in her chest. She shivers sharply, and peers at him quietly. "You're too stubborn for your own good." She sighs, and nuzzles her skull to his chest, carefully angling her horns away from his face so she doesn't hook one into his jaw. "I don't know if I'll sleep immediately…" She could end up lying awake while he drifted off.

"I don't care." he purred gently.

She sighed into his ribs, and peered up at him tiredly. "And what if I had wanted to go for a walk to clear my mind before trying to sleep?" If she had cheeks, she'd have puffed them up at him. As it was, she simply puffs hot air through her teeth and into his chest.

"Then I would walk with you, of course." He yawns, his statement matter-of-fact.

Toki swallows and nuzzles him softly. "Can we go on a walk then? I'm a little wound up…" She needed her crutches, and her slippers, and then she'd be good to go on a walk.

"Of course." he replied softly. He let her go, and rolled out of bed so he could go fetch their coats.

Toki took that moment of freedom to scoot to her side of the bed. Her crutches had gotten knocked out of her immediate reach, so she hauled herself upright, and hobbled for them as best she could. Bending to get them was hard, putting all of her weight on one leg and trying not to let her pregnancy throw her shaky balance off any further, but she successfully collected them, and shoved the padded ends under her arm pits as she righted herself. Toki's gown was thick enough not to be improper for going outside in, but thin enough to let her middle glow through like a night light.

She gets her slippers on, and then pads closer towards the door to meet in the middle with Pap and the coats.

He smiled and helped her get her jacket on, keeping her balanced as he slid it over her gown and let the front hang open. "Just a little walk around the house?" he inquired quietly.

"Yeah. Just around the compound yard." She might take a seat at the base of the clan tree, and just sit for a bit. For the first week of July, it was still slightly chilly at night. It would begin warming up soon though, and soon everything would be sweltering day and night. Toki shifts, adjusting her jacket, and muses that the zipper in the front will no longer go over her belly anymore.

She hobbles to the door and opens it, pulling it inward with a soft hum. She blinks, surprised to see someone on the other side.

Thumper had managed to start walking a little bit on his own a few days prior, but he tired out easily. His body had wasted away as his magic devoured itself to keep him alive- and they needed to build him back up again. He was standing at the door, his blanket tucked around his shoulders. One hand was rubbing his eye sleepily, while the other was poised to knock.
“Toki?” He blinked up at her slowly. “I had a nightmare…” He began softly. “A… Are you going somewhere?”

Toki offered him a soft smile. “I had a nightmare too, sweet heart. We were just going on a walk to help me calm down. Do you want to come with?”

“I want to, but I might get tired though…” The rabbit’s ears drooped, and he tucked himself further into his blanket.

"Allow me to fix this, then." Papyrus spoke up, gently scooping up Thumper, "Nyeh heh heh~" he then nuzzled him gently.

Thumper yawned slightly as he was lifted, little pink nose twitching. Papyrus’ scent wasn’t one he was as familiar with, but it carried an undercurrent of Toki’s smell, and Tenebris too, so he relaxed nonetheless. His arms looped around the skeleton’s neck, and he nuzzled him back, furry ears flicking back so their length didn’t bump into his face. “Mmm… This works.”

“Here- if you hold him close, we can zip him up in your jacket.” The shorter skeleton suggested with a warm look. He looked good, hefting the child up to his chest. Thumper was less heavy than Toki was, and therefore less of a stress on Papyrus. He was still sometimes unsteady, though his Magi-Drain was rapidly recovering.

Toki shifted around in front of Papyrus, and took hold of his jacket. She tucked Thumper in a little bit better, more than used to the slightly traditional method for carrying small children that her mother had used. She leaned around him to secure the blanket, keeping Thumper’s limbs from falling- and leaving the blanket as a smooth surface for the rabbit to lean into without fear of falling out from under the bottom of Pap’s coat.

A quick zip upwards, and soon there was a sleepy rabbit face visible from the front of his jacket.

He smiled at Thumper gently once he was settled, and then he turned to go. "Come on, let's go then~" he purred softly.

Toki shifted, and set off through the door. She headed for the stairs with a quiet sound. “Of we go indeed.” She chuckles softly. The stairs going down are more of a challenge than going up, but she’s not going to let Papyrus simply tote her down. She eases herself down carefully, leaning backwards and not forwards so she doesn’t go toppling face first down the stairs.

Thumper snuggles up inside of the skeleton’s jacket, another yawn stretching his mouth. His soft fingers sleepily cling to Papyrus’ ribs, and he latches on securely, snuggling close. His eyes are droopy, but he’s trying to watch and listen to what which is going on around him.

Pap easily helped her down the stairs while keeping one hand on Thumper, a smile on his face as he hummed gently.

Once they were at the bottom, Toki hid a yawn, and hobbled slowly for the back door. Her leg ached- but there was nothing they could really do to dull the pain. So she simply had to deal with it.

The rabbit was tiredly nuzzling to him, the humming coming from his chest lulling him slightly.

Toki guided them to the back door, and slipped out, yawning as the glow from her middle under her nightgown lit up the back deck area. She could vaguely see the glow of wolf eyes turning towards them, guards investigating the disturbance of noise so late at night. Toki chuckles slightly. “Well, you’re not going to lose me in the dark.”
"Not at all." he giggled quietly, before he kissed her head gently. "Come on~"

Toki nodded, and smiled. She couldn’t really take his hand, but she could hobble slowly beside him. She headed out, over the well-traveled grass path, and began her usual walking rout. Crutches gave her horrible back cramps, but she valued walking at this point over comfort. The twins were fussy in her belly, and she hoped that they would settle in her belly with some walking, and once her mind calmed down too. “It’s a lovely night,” she muses softly. “A little chilly for July, but not too bad.”

"I think it’s quite pleasant... What about you, Thumper?"

The rabbit child stirred, and tucked his head a little closer to his sternum. “It’s really pretty and nice out tonight,” he slurred tiredly, “and Miss Toki looks like a firefly.”

Toki flushed slightly, and chuckled gently as she hobbled on.

He laughed softly at that. "Oh yes, a very pretty one at that~"

“Mhm.” Thumper peered at her tiredly, and nestled his head back to Aliquam’s chest. “She lights up the dark.” He mumbles. “Like a star or something. ‘S nice not to be in the dark.”

Considering he’d been contained in the darkness of Tenebris chest, she could understand that a lot. “I’m with you there. For all of their fussing and wiggling tonight, the babybones make good nightlights.” She hums softly.

Thumper slurred a soft giggle. “Beeeebbybones.” He murmured, completely butchering the words into an audible pun. “Baby skeletons are called really weird things. How do you make them stop squirming?”

"I was thinking more like you said before; a firefly." Quinn replied with a soft chuckle as they walked. "I suppose when I give them a little of my magic, they get excited but then don’t take long after to settle down. Aren’t I right, Toki?"

“Very right. The excitement is sometimes really weird feeling, but it’s nice when they finally calm and settle down.” But that didn’t mean she was going to let him make a donation until he was back in perfect shape. Toki smiled over at the both of them. “A star, a firefly, a nightlight- I pretty much fit all three of those things.” Her crutches knock into a rock and send it skidding, and she startles a guard. Toki waves an apologetic hand to him, and continues on her way once his fur stops bristling.

“Mm…” Thumper’s little ears twitch and flick slightly at the sound, and he peers up at Papyrus gently. “It felt really weird when they kicked my nose yesterday. Babies are weird.” He decided sleepily. “So when are they going to get-” He yawned. “Get here?”

"We actually don't know yet." he replied.

“So far it seems like I’m following a pretty usual pregnancy as far as human ones go. I’m a bit bigger than most women with twins, but I’m following the same schedule from what the online websites seem to show. If we continue with this rate of growth, I should have the twins towards the last week of September, if not earlier. Twins run early verses singulars normally.” Toki elaborates easily, continuing to trek along on their walk. She veers towards the tree, inhaling the cooler night air and enjoying it greatly.

“Ahhh…” Thumper yawns again and closes his eyes. “Okay… I can’t wait to meet them…”

"Neither can I, Thumper. Neither can I." he purred happily.
The rabbit fell quiet, his fingers tightening slightly on the skeleton’s ribs as he clung to him. A faint noise of agreement leaves him, before his breathing starts to slow.

Toki hums softly. “I can’t either.” She hums. “I’m both curious and very nervous as to how it’s going to happen, you know? The whole… having them, thing.” Toki glances to Thumper, and chuckles as his soft snores float up. Well, they were safe to probably talk about anything now, so long as they did it quietly.

“We’ll be alright, Toki.” Papyrus smiled as he shifted Thumper gently, adjusting the slumbering child so he was better seated in his jacket. Now it was a hands free job, so his hands dropped down and tucked into his jacket pockets. "Toki... there's something important I want to talk about."

“Lets take a seat first.” Toki shot him a slight smile. The leaves on the trees rustle in a late night breeze, and Toki hobbles to the thick, gnarled roots. She takes a seat on a tall gnarled root, stretching her sore leg out with a soft sigh. The bones were throbbing- but it was a distracting sort of throbbing. Toki pats the root next to her and smiles up to him. “What did you want to talk about, Pap?"

"Toki... I want to have a wedding... and I want it to be as soon as possible.” He took a seat next to her as he spoke, and gave her a bright smile.

Well, that was not what she was expecting. But she could roll with it. “Okay.” She simply grins at him. “Well… it takes a little bit of time to plan one, but… we can do a simple one. Maybe… Sometime in the first week of August, if we can find someone to officiate it?"

He nodded once, "Perfect... I don't want anything else to happen before we do..." He purred.

Toki nods and gently takes his hand in hers. She laces her fingers with his, and hums gently. “I don’t either.” She says softly. She shifts, leans her head on his shoulder, and smiles down at the snoring Thumper tucked in his jacket. “We’re not going to be able to throw a big wedding, but… I think a small one would be perfect.” She murmurs softly. “Get you a tux, and me... Well, I’m not going to fit in any wedding dresses from any of the shops, but we can find something that isn't slacks.” She probably wouldn’t wear white. White was a sign that that you were a virgin- and given the state of her middle, she was as far from that as possible. “What are your thoughts on it, Pap? First week of August gives us… what… between two and three weeks to get a wedding planned. Think it’s doable?"

"It sounds perfect." he purred gently.

She lifted his hand and pressed a kiss to his knuckles. “It’s going to be a lot of work,” She warns. “We both are going to have to plan this… Where we’re going to have it, who all is coming, what traditions we’re going to follow, be it human of either culture or monster ones… It’s going to be a lot of work.”

"I know, and I don’t care.” He hummed.

She reached up to gently pinch his cheekbone, smiling at him as she wiggles it playfully. “Wedding planning tends to be stressful, you dork. So… What sort of wedding do we want? Like… I don’t know monster traditions. I actually like American style weddings over traditional Japanese ones.” Traditional Japanese ones tended to be elaborate, and there was no chance in hell she was putting on the multiple layered kimono that the clan head had to wear for her wedding in the middle of the summer. “Maybe… Asgore could officiate for it?"

The tall skeleton gave her a smile and an easy suggestion. "What about a monsterkind-originated wedding? It's simple and you don’t even need to wear anything super fancy unless you want to."
“That would work.” She nods. “I wouldn’t mind wearing something nice, but not very fancy. They don’t make a lot of fancy clothes for women in my size.” She rubbed her spare hand against her middle with an amused look. “What are monster weddings like?”

“You can always ask Lana, silly.” he purred. "They're never the same." He then answered. "It could be private, or as grand as a crowning ceremony, or everything in between."

“That is very vague.” She blinks slowly. “Well… Clan tradition states that the clan head have an elaborate wedding- but I really don’t like following all the rules.” She makes a face. “So maybe something… Private? Just immediate friends and family?" It would, of course, become big news if anyone found out there was a date for it. “That’s if it doesn’t get out to the rest of the villagers.” Amongst the monsters she was pretty well known. She had an inkling that if she had it anywhere in the village, probably more than half the population would show up for it. “I know I could ask Lana- but I am a silly skeleton and I don’t want to have to buy a fancy thing that I’ll only ever wear once- because I can assure you, I wont fit in it for anything else. I doubt I’ll ever get this big this fast when we next have kids.” Twins were pretty rare after all. Her family weren’t prone to them.

He shrugged loosely, too tired to really think too hard on everything just yet, before he blinked once at the last part of her statement. "M-More... Ah... Nyeh heh heh…"

“I’d kinda like a big family. I grew up with eight brothers. That’s a lot of kids, I know, but… It was nice. We all had a good relationship.” She was down to seven now, and she would miss Han for the rest of her life. Toki rubs his thumb gently, and glances up at him. “If you don’t want more than two of our own, I understand.” They may end up with three, if Thumper decided he wanted to stay with them permanently. She wouldn’t turn the child away if he chose them.

He smiled gently and leaned over to press a kiss to her horns. "I'd like that too~"

“Good.” She beams up at him softly. “We might end up with a third really soon though.” She jerks her chin towards Thumper, the little rabbit snoring and drooling peacefully against Aliquam’s sternum. “It’s his choice as to who he chooses to stay with- but there is a chance he could choose to stay with us.” All of Thumpers things had temporarily been moved from his old house and into one of the guest rooms.

“That's fine... I wouldn't mind taking him in." he chuckled, stroking the bunny's head.

The rabbit monster shifted in his jacket, nuzzling a tiny skull into a large skeletal hand, and settled right back into slumber without a fuss.

Toki watched him with tender eyes, love swelling up within her soul. She plopped her chin into her palm and watched him through warmly glowing eye lights, pupils affectionate little hearts. He was going to be a great dad. “I didn’t think you would, but I wanted to make sure. We’ll see what he decides. I'll support his choice either way.”

"Same here," He nodded, before he sighed. "The wedding... I still can't believe I actually get to talk about having one..."

“I know. It’s kinda surreal, isn’t it?” She shifts and nestles into his side, adjusting her crutches so they better lean against the root. “Your dad is back and awake- and with any luck, he’ll be in good enough shape to attend the wedding. I’m both excited and dreading the planning.” She chuckled. “I helped plan Ryushi’s wedding with Sarah. That was a nightmare and a half, and we had six months to get theirs planned. You and me have probably three weeks, if we do it towards the end of the first week of August. Speaking of- we totally need to invite Lana. She’s awesome.”
"I think she might like the surface," he agreed. "I don’t think we need THAT long to plan our wedding, honestly." he hummed gently.

"With the vast majority of the monsters on the topside, she might like to maybe move up here. I know a lot of the monsters here go to her for custom tailoring." She tended to recommend her to the monsters- because Lana was awesome. The Russian sheep was very sweet. “I’m actually going to need another couple shirts here soon.” The one coated in Han’s blood had been thrown out, as had the pair of pants. She couldn’t bring her self to clean it so she could wear it again- and she hadn’t even been sure she could wear the shirt she wore when Han had died in her arms. It brought unpleasant memories. And Tenebris had ruined another one when he had mauled her. The rest of them were starting to become a little tight across the peak of her belly. It had been a around six weeks since they’d gone to her for tailoring, and Toki had grown substantially in size from back then until now.

She offers Papyrus a wry grin. “Papyrus, dear, have you ever planned a human wedding? It takes ages to get everything ordered and arranged, and then there’s seating, catering, finding a location, securing said location- It’s a huge, huge mess, but ends up being really, really beautiful if done right. Why don’t you Google some of the different types of human weddings tomorrow, and see what I meant about planning. I take it monster weddings aren’t nearly as complex? That would be really nice.” She wasn’t sure how well she would handle too much stress at this point. She was still a bit… leery, after nearly losing the twins.

Papyrus chuckled. "There is no right way to do it with Monsters." he told her. "The only thing that is consistent is the blessing of his majesty." He explained.

“Well, that is quite easy then, huh?” She blinks, and chuckles softly. “We’ll still want to decide what we want to do for our wedding though. We do want it to be memorable, after all. We only get married once.” If you went into a relationship with thoughts of what came after it, it was doomed to failure. Toki shifted and nuzzled into his arm, a tiny yawn escaping her finally.

"Well that's the thing! We could have it right here!" he told her, turning to rest his hands on her shoulders with a smile. "In the compound, where friends and family alike will be able to watch. We can provide food, or everyone can bring a little something from home. We can have magic performances, we don't have to, every variable, every this-or-that you can think of!" he told her happily.

His exuberance is amusing, and she blinks as he takes her shoulders in hand. “You’ve been thinking about this for a while, haven’t you?” She grins slightly. “I’m down for all of it. Magic performances, the cooking, family and friends- I’m definitely down for it. We can have it in the court yard maybe, under this tree?” It was the clan tree. Clan ceremonies had been done here for centuries. It was old- probably older than the clan itself.

He looked up at the tree and he smiled. "Now you're getting it, take into consideration what makes you happy, what makes your life worth living..." he then cupped her cheeks. "And in this time... be wed to the one you want to spent that very same life with." he purred happily.

One of Toki’s hands come up to cup his cheek tenderly, and she smiles at him warmly. “You, my friends, and my family make my life worth living.” She says softly. “And there is no one else that I would rather spend the rest of my life with than you, Papyrus.” Toki leans up, careful not to jostle his burden, and then kisses him tenderly. “We’ll figure out our wedding plans.” She smiles. “There will definitely be dancing and music.” She did want to dance with her Dad- and with Papyrus too.

He smiled and hugged her gently with one arm, before he slid from the root and knelt to kiss her stomach. "I have many things to live for, Toki... but you... You three..." he smiled and pecked her
stomach gently again. "You are what gives me life."

Toki’s smile grew, and she buzzed softly with love. “I love you, Pap.” She purrs. “I love you so much.” And the twins squirmed against his kisses, and tapped at his teeth with their limbs. “And they do too.”

Unfortunately, the tender moment was interrupted by a yawn that tugs her mouth open. She was finally relaxing and winding down from her nightmare, and tiredness was setting in. She still wasn’t completely over the Han nightmares either- so sleep was precious at times.

He smiled at her gently and reached up to pet her head softly as he lifted to his feet. "Come on, let's go home.” he purred, "Get Thumper in bed, and get you in my arms again.” He told her.

Toki nodded and collected her crutches again. She hauled herself upright, and hummed. “I’d like that. I’m finally settling down.” Toki set out slowly for the house, finding her leg slightly stiff from not moving it. It ached, not entirely pleasant, but getting in a nice warm bed would help soothe away that ache. “You might need some help getting him off.” She giggles softly. “He seems pretty firmly latched on.”

He set out after her, his legs eating up the distance easily so he could keep up with her. "If I can't get him off, then I suppose we could have him sleep with us, right?”

“Of course.” Toki nods. “The bed has plenty of room, honestly.”

The walk back to the house was pretty straight forward and short, and she slid the door open for the both of them once they got back. She hummed slightly and stepped through, motioning him in after her. “You’ll want to go up the stairs first, my love.” Going up was slower than going down.

He smiled and turned back to her, reaching out and offering her a hand, "Come on, I’ll help you up.”

“You can’t carry me and Thumper, dear.” She gave him a loving smile. “But thank you for the offer.” Still, she waits until he starts up, and then heads up slowly after him. “I might take a while, but I can get up there mostly on my own. I’ve been practicing. I used to be slower.” She sounds a bit proud of herself. She was more surefooted with the crutches now than she was before. Practice made perfect.

"I don’t want you falling.” He insisted.

"I won’t fall, love.” She gave him a grin. “At least not backwards. Now c’mon, your fine booty is blocking the stairs.”

"Nyeh~" he chuckled and turned, going upstairs and looking back at her to make sure she didn’t trip.

Toki saw him watching, and playfully stuck her tongue out at him. “Nyeh~” She teased, and made her way up after him. She was a lot slower, but she took her time so she went safely. And soon, she was at the top, and continuing on her way down towards Thumper’s room. “Lets see if we can get him settled in bed.”

He nodded and walked to where they had let him rest.

Toki edged into the room with Papyrus, and moved to wait by the bed. She abandoned her crutches, putting as little weight as possible on her leg, and then reached out to help Papyrus unzip his coat. Thumper stubbornly clung to his ribs, not even budging as his main support eased away. Toki smiled, eye lights glimmering a warm green in the darkness, and reached up to gently ease her fingers around Thumper’s fingers so she could slowly remove them from Pap’s ribs.
Thumper squirmed slightly, but his grip began to loosen under Toki’s gentle touch. “Mmm…” he sleepily mumbles, not stirring beyond his soft noise.

“Catch him as I loosen him, Pap.” She couldn’t quite lift the rabbit without using both of her legs to support the weight, and the cracked one would probably crumble more if she tried.

He nodded gently and settled his arms carefully between Thumper’s shoulders and under his backside for when he loosened.

Thumper gave away suddenly, his fingers curling towards his chest and clutching his blanket tighter to him. He was limp in Aliquam’s hands, snoring softly.

Toki smiled and tugged the sheets back, motioning for the bigger skeleton to settle the rabbit gently in bed.

He caught him effortlessly and smiled happily, laying him down in his bed and covering him up gently.

Toki took a moment to tuck him in, making sure his pillow was fluffed and that his ears weren’t caught under his head. Once he was sure to be comfortable, she hobbled a step back, and reached back to collect her crutches once more. She held a finger to her teeth to mimic keeping quiet, and then quietly hobbled back for the door.

He smiled happily and walked with her to the door, before he sighed quietly in contentment. "That was easy enough."

Once they were out, she eased the door shut and nodded to him. “Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn’t. If you rub his fingers gently, he’ll usually let go. Sometimes he won’t though.” She smiles at him slightly, and then heads for their room. The door was still open, so she didn’t need to open it to slip in. She hobbled for her side of the bed, and carefully set her crutches down, before wrestling herself out of her jacket.

Balancing on one leg was tiring, she noted as she got herself free. Toki had to gimp a couple steps to the bed, none of which felt good, before she could ease herself down onto it. She leaned back, and rubbed a hand over her middle. “Of course, when I get tired you two decide it’s time for a dance party.” She remarks in tired amusement.

Papyrus wasn’t long in joining her, shedding his jacket and leaving it to be picked up in the morning. He chuckled as he climbed onto the bed and reached out, petting her stomach gently, "Come on you two." he chuckled.

Toki settled back carefully, and then rolled onto her side so that she faced him. This left her sore leg pressed to the mattress, which kept it still and less likely to be moved and bumped. Toki smiled up at him sleepily, and then snuggled close to him. “Mmm… They’re just excited because their daddy is close,” she purrs softly. They weren’t kicking too hard, so it wasn’t like it would disturb too much of her sleep.

He pulled her close and kissed her gently as he reached up to massage her stomach, "Nyeh heh heh, they have my energy alright." he purred.

The massage relaxed her, and her sockets drifted closed as she smooched him back. She nuzzled her head to his chest, and rotated slightly so he could rub easier. “That they do.” She thruns. “They wiggle all hours of the day. But when they sleep… They sleep like I do.” She tended to sleep like a log when she was tired. And tired she was, nightmares notwithstanding. “Mm…”
His mate was surely sleepy, and she was relaxed and warm as she snuggled up tightly to him, eager to be encased in his grasp and settle into the safety of his embrace.

He kissed her head, and wrapped his arms around her, holding her tight.

“I love you.” She murmurs softly. Her breath slips out in a soft sigh- and she finds herself in blissful nothingness, as she latches on tightly to him.
Chapter 58

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: The breaks only last for so long… >) Also Silverwing sobbed during this chapter. She is such a soft little cutie patootie. Also, I got the chapter out for ya'll.
Thanks for being patient with us :)

Come visit us at the blog, bros~ http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: so I don’t know if this is a recovery chapter or another angst chapter but either way I don’t care. I'm going into depth about Tenebris here, stuff I have shared on his RP blog and then some.

Tenebris has to be the most emotional Gaster I have ever seen.

A week had rolled past. The civilians had been brought home a couple days after Tenebris had proven stable, and they were simply overjoyed to be back. The civilians visited from time to time, but they worked with Tenebris and Asgore to help reintegrate the old royal scientist into city life.

The town was abuzz with noise again, and it was perfect for filling the near silence that had been there when they had all been gone.

Toki’s nightmares continued, and kept her from actively visiting Tenebris. She had tried- but actually visiting wasn’t doable. She’d passed by the house, and had flinched upon seeing Tenebris through the window. He hadn’t been doing anything besides eating something, and she’d nearly stumbled on her crutches.

She didn’t visit- because it wasn’t fair to him if he were to see her weakness. It was obvious he didn’t remember what he had done. Asgore had even said as much. So Toki blamed her lack of visiting as being busy with getting things arranged for the wedding with her down time.

Her leg kept her in the house anyways. Some of the bones were still loose, the cracks slowly healing- but she wasn’t going to allow Papyrus to drain himself again to try and re-do the cast he had made for her leg out of his magic. She wanted him to be functional- and she had time to heal. Besides, he dealt with her nightly nightmares. The nightly walks were becoming a regular thing in order to get her to settle down enough to sleep without them.

Toki wasn’t the only one who had nightmares though.

And her nightmares were not nearly as violent as his.

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He could hear the hard footsteps approaching and though his body wracked with fatigue, he slowly pushed himself up onto his hands and feet, looking up as he gave a low growl, his tail lashing as he backed up in the cage he was trapped in
"You might be big and scary, but you're still a fucking monster, and that means you can easily dust like one too." The H.A.M. guard taunted, sparking an electric prod he held in front of the cage.

Darkness consumed him, and when he could see the light once more, he was tied down. "No... STOP!" he screamed desperately, or, so he tried. The muzzle that held his jaw closed stopped him from having his final chance.

The masked human walked up, leering at him with cruel eyes.

A snap of fingers, and a breathing mask was lifted. It was shoved over his mouth and no matter how hard he struggled, he stood no chance to the gas, and his head grew heavy. His senses grew faint, but he could still sense what felt like beacons in the consuming darkness... he could see Thumper in a cage nearby... hearing him crying. A flash of white, the sound of an electric saw...

Suddenly agony as his shield was penetrated.

Then... a fatal spray of black.

Tenebris' eyes shot open, his pupils needle-thin in panic as he let out a screech, or, at least as best he could with the muzzle over his face. He rolled and bucked hard in the bedding, his tail and feet lashing without coordination before he fell over the edge of the bed.

He barked in shock from impact, and immediately pushed himself back, clawing desperately at the muzzle, cutting his own cheeks with his claws in the process.

Asgore had been vigilant but had ended up almost nodding off when Tenebris suddenly burst into action. He could not get near him with his legs kicking, and had to wait until he was on the ground once more before he could try to do anything.

"Tenebris! Snap out of it, old friend!" he barked out to try and get his attention as he approached. And he got it all right. Tenebris looked up at him then moved to his hands and feet, arching his back and hissing as his tail blade swung around threateningly.

Asgore held up his hands and stepped back. "Easy, old friend. You are here in the village- you are safe. You are going to be okay." He soothed gently, keeping his hands up in a non-threatening manner to try and ease Tenebris back to reality.

He rattled in panic and clicked his teeth together a few times as he felt his rear meet the wall, before he swung his blade again.

This is when Asgore struck. He lunged forward and grabbed the blade by the base, rendering it no longer a threat as long as he held onto it. Tenebris screeched and swung at him, but he used his strength to push the panicked beast to the wall, long enough for him to get the muzzle off. He could tell it was no doubt part of what had him so freaked out with the way he attacked it to desperately. Without letting a single moment pass, Asgore put his other arm around Tenebris' neck and tightened, slamming him to the ground and pinning him.

Tenebris' legs bucked without coordination and he screamed out now that his jaws were free, but Asgore continued to hold him. He held on through the bucking, the snapping, until the fight faded from Tenebris, and he was trembling underneath the king.

"Tenebris. Is that you again?" Asgore murmured softly in the other's ear.

His breathing rough, Tenebris slowly looked up at Asgore, his pupils loosening and opening slowly
to look at the king, a moment to swallow, and he nodded

With that confirmation, Asgore let go of him and instead sat back, letting the terrified phantom crawl into his lap to be comforted.

"A-Asg-gore…"

"Shh... It's okay, Tene..." he murmured, using an old nickname of his, "It's over, you're not there anymore... You're home... with me..." he purred gently, tilting Tenebris' chin up to press their foreheads together. "You are safe..."

After long enough, Asgore's loving gaze settled the terrified beast, and the king relaxed where he sat, holding and cradling the phantom until dawn.

Tenebris hadn't been able to sleep since his nightmare, so he and Asgore had migrated downstairs. The muzzle was kept nearby in case Tenebris panicked again, but he looked to be fine for the most part as he waited for Asgore to return with tea.

Having been given help with refilling and lighting his pipe, Tenebris was quietly puffing at it until Asgore came and put a tea tray on the coffee table, though it seems Tenebris was going to drink from a thicker cup, instead of a fragile teacup.

"Do not worry, old friend, I know how you like yours." Asgore rumbled, making him his tea while he slowly put aside his pipe. The last exhale of smoke was released and Asgore held out the mug. Tenebris took it with trembling hands but Asgore kept his hands on the smaller pair as to make sure he didn't drop it in his trembling.

"Steady now, Tene. I don't want you to choke..."

Steady was considered, and slowly Tenebris was able to get down a gulp of tea, before he surrendered it to put it back down.

"There you go..."

There was a knock at the door, and Asgore sighed softly before he could take a seat. “I’ll be right back, old friend. Take a moment to relax- and take a drink when you think your hand is steady.” Asgore gave him an affectionate touch, and then the King was off towards the door as the knocking resumed again.

Undyne stood on the other side, clad in her armor, once he opened it. She saluted him. “Asgore, sir, I’ve come with the report from night shift.”

Asgore glanced back to Tenebris, and then motioned her in. “Come in, come in, Undyne. Please, sit. You must be tired.”

“A little bit.” She admits. “I’ve pulled doubles, and Alphys has been guiding me into setting up a security system along the outer walls, so she can help keep an eye on things too. All of that science and technological bullshit is beyond me, really, but she’s not comfortable coming out here without Todd being fully trained to cover medical problems in her stead.” She steps in, heavy armor clanking, and pads closer to Tenebris. Undyne offers him a sharp-toothed grin and a wave. “Hello,
Tenebris. Drinking that gross grass-water again, huh?” She liked tea, but orange blossom tea tended to offend her senses. Oranges were gross.

"Hello, Undyne." Tenebris returned the greeting, before he folded his arms. "And yes. The tea often is able to calm me after my... less than pleasant nightmares..." he replied, rubbing his face with a sigh.

“Maybe try walks?” She suggests. “It’s helping with Toki. I see her and Papyrus out and about almost every night now.” The big fish monster flutters her fins, and glances back as the king joins them once more. “Anyways, sir, so far the nights have proven to be good. We’ve had a couple scares, but it’s mostly been animals in the woods. The wolves have been on guard- but wolves will be wolves, and if a rabbit farts in the trees, they’re all over the noise.” They were hyper vigilant for a good reason.

The king chortles at her choice of words. “I’m glad everything is going well. Perhaps when Tenebris is feeling up to it, he might be able to assist with setting up a security system?” The scientist was good with many things, after all, and it would give him something to focus on rather than his nightmares.

"It's been a while since I’ve calibrated something like that... but I’m sure if I just put my mind to it." He replied with a small smile, before he rubbed his eyes. "Better than just... sitting around, unable to do anything."

“That’s about how Toki sees it.” Undyne nods. “Though Pap is keeping an eye on her most of the time now. Since the scare with the guppies, and with her being on crutches, pretty much everyone is keeping an eye on her.”

Asgore nods. “It is for the best. I’ve heard that you’ve been recruited to help her clean house a couple times?”

“I did back when Pap was still on bed rest. He didn’t want her doing too much and risk more scares.” The fish lady nods. “Either way, I’d definitely appreciate the help. Alphys would too. She’s patient, but to me the red wire and the green wire are both wires and it doesn’t make sense that they could explode when crossed.”

"...!" What she said got his attention though. "Scare with the children? What happened?" he asked worriedly.

“Uhhhhhhmm...” Undyne glanced to Asgore, and then rubbed the back of her head. “Uh, well... it happened when she, uh... broke her leg.” They’d agreed to keep most of the damage quiet from Tenebris- about who caused it. “The guppies- well it doesn’t matter, really. Pap fixed it so that’s what matters, right?” Stars above, she wasn’t good at deflection.

"She broke her leg?!” He was now visibly concerned. "What happened to her!?"

“Aaand cracked her arms, but those are fixed now!” This was spiraling out of control. Undyne tugged slightly on her hair and heaved a sigh. “Uh... Well... Technically... HAM caused it...?”

Asgore sighed through his nose. “She is fine enough now, old friend. She’s on crutches, mostly because she is stubborn about Papyrus trying to re-form the cast he made for her leg. But she is healing, and has help around the house.”

Tenebris' tail rattled loudly with worry. "Is there anything I can do to help her?"

“Uh... well, you could probably heal her? But you’re probably not in the condition to do that yet.”
The captain shrugs, and glances away. “She’s healing, but slowly. Some, ah, parts of her shin keeps falling out of the cast. But you know Toki- she’s stubborn when she wants to be, and she doesn’t want Papyrus to drain himself again. Between her leg and the guppies, he fainted on the stairs.”

Asgore cleared his throat. “Let’s not stress Tenebris now, Undyne.”

His tail was rattling louder now. "This happened when I was gone, didn’t it... I should have been here to protect her..."

“Uh…” The captain shifted awkwardly. “About that… It wasn’t… before…”

“Undyne.” Asgore gave her a sharp look.

“Look, Asgore, he’s a big monster, he deserves to know.”

The blade slowly lashed back and forth on the floor where it rested, "Undyne."

The goat king’s fur ruffled slightly as he watched the tail on the floor.

To her credit, the fish monster didn’t look cowed by either of them. Undyne heaved a sigh. “Fine. It happened after you got back. That’s all I’ll say.”

“Damn it, Undyne.” Asgore glared at her.

"I... I don’t understand..." Tenebris sounded distressed now, reaching to grip his tail under the blade as to keep it from hitting anyone.

“You’re smart, Tenebris.” Undyne said softly. “Think about how you’re acting now… and how you were when you got back.”

He shook his head, "Undyne, I can’t remember a thing... The last I remember is being at the mercy of those terrorists..." he growled

“That’s not what I meant.” The fish monster swallowed. “You are smart. You’ve been wearing a muzzle, and that’s mostly for our protection. Put that big brain of yours to work and put two and two together if you want to know what happened with Toki.” Undyne’s fins ruffled slightly, and she eyed the looming form of the King. “I’m going to excuse myself now before Asgore reduces me to a paste.”


“I’m going, I’m going.” The fish woman huffs.

The door shuts gently behind her, and Asgore’s fur flares as he glares at the door. Damn it, damn it, damn it, they weren’t supposed to tell Tenebris. Not until they were sure he could handle it.

"..." A precaution well thought out... The angry confusion began to fade and the horror appeared to replace it in the phantom’s eyes. "... I did it...?"

The king hunched his shoulders and sighed roughly. He did not speak though. He refused. Instead he returned, and took his mug of tea to drink some. “Drink your tea, Tenebris. I’ll make us lunch soon.”

"Asgore... is she telling the truth...?" He growled weakly, looking up at him. "Did I attack Toki?"

“You’re not going to drop this, are you?”
“No, Asgore, I’m not.”

Asgore heaved a heavy sigh, and looked at him sorrowfully. “Yes, you did. Along with Papyrus, Grillby, and myself. You squared off with one of Toki’s summons, and that was the distraction needed to incapacitate you.” He didn’t need to explicitly say what Tenebris had lost most of his teeth in Toki’s leg, or that Tenebris had nearly killed his grandchildren.

Voicing that out loud was not a blow he could ever deal to his lover.

... He immediately moved to get up. "I have to see her..." he insisted.

“Alright. I need you to stay calm though, okay?” Asgore stood, and set his mug down. “Let me get my jacket.”

He rattled quietly and sat back down, his face in his hands, before he looked up. "Asgore... I want to go myself."

Asgore hesitated in putting his coat on, and glanced back. “Are… you sure?” He couldn’t exactly tell him no. Tenebris was not a prisoner, not by any means- and he was proving to be in control so far.

"Yes, I’m sure, old friend." he murmured as he stood up.

Asgore heaved a sigh through his nose, and nodded slightly. “All right… All right. Just… Please be careful. Try to keep a level head, okay?” He would be keeping an ear out for any such noises of Tenebris getting aggressive.

He nodded gently. "Of course, old friend."

The king nodded and motioned for him to go ahead and go as he went to resume his seat on the couch.

He walked to the door and slowly reached, gripping the doorknob... However, his tongue shifted and he was reminded of his... condition...

He released the doorknob and turned, looking upstairs before he teleported upstairs quickly for a moment.

The king blinked in befuddlement. “If you’re looking for your muzzle, it’s down here.”

But he wasn't looking for his muzzle...

He was looking for something to potentially use to hide his mouth, his embarrassingly fangless mouth...

There were a couple scarves in his room that Asgore tended to wear. It was about the only thing that would work.

That'd work. He took hold of a black one and wrapped it around himself, taking in the scent before he teleported back downstairs. "Alright, I’ll be back."

“Be safe.” Asgore nodded.
Toki was in the living room, having just sent Thumper upstairs for a nap. He hadn’t gotten much sleep the night prior- his nightmares had been bad, and he’d slept poorly. So he was going to get some sleep while she relaxed in the living room.

Toki had dug out her old yarn from the shed, and had settled down to do something she hadn’t done in a while. Crocheting was as frustrating as it was relaxing- and she was reworking an old pattern to make a set of matching beanies for Papyrus, Sans, and Tenebris, now that the elder monster was back and aware.

Toki had her leg propped up on a pillow as she relaxed, crutches perched next to her on the arm of the chair. The house was mostly quiet, but her phone was on the coffee table playing some quiet music as she relaxed and tried to keep the yarn from tangling between her finger bones.

The air was peaceful with the melody of the music she enjoyed, and left uninterrupted until there was a gentle knocking sound from the front door.

Toki made a slightly flustered buzz, and dropped her yarn on the table. Toki shifted, carefully using the crutches to haul herself to her feet. At thirty weeks along, it was damn near impossible to get up and down now, and if not for her crutches being in arms reach, she’d be stuck.

Toki padded for the door, crutches making a soft tktk tktk tktk on the tile as she made her way over. Toki swung the door open with a soft hum. “Yes?”

"Miss Toki." Tenebris' gently voice resonated from behind the scarf he wore over his mouth. He had lowered to sit on his haunches after knocking as to prevent scaring her with his height, he knew he had a bad habit of doing that, even without intention to.

It probably would have been better if he had towered over her. His height had never bothered her- but crouching on his haunches reminded her of his lunge, of large teeth coming for her death. She flinches back just faintly before she can stop herself, but forces herself not to back away. If she didn’t have such a death grip on her crutches, she’d have curled her arms around her belly. Either way, she shifted just slightly so the large swell was just slightly blocked by her crutches. In doing so, it looked like she was welcoming him inside. “Tenebris.” She smiles at him, slightly. “It’s good to see you up and around. I’d have visited but getting around on crutches is murder. Please, come in. Are you feeling all right? What’s with the scarf?”

"Mmh... " he slowly straightened upright again, taking a half step as to be sure that the invitation was just that, and not an assumption on his part. "It's quite alright, I’ve needed time to recover from the poor treatment I had received prior." he answered, "Ah, The scarf is... Well, ah..." he murmured, trailing off after a moment.

"Ah... Teeth?" She guessed lightly. Toki took a couple steps back to let him in, hiding another flinch as he straightened and stepped towards her. Keeping herself off to the side so he didn’t trip on her crutch, Toki motioned him in. It was indeed an invitation. Toki gave him a sad smile. “I’m glad you’re back.” she said softly. “We’ve all missed you. Thumper would love to see you, but I just sent him up for a nap. He didn’t sleep well last night.”

He rubbed his head lightly as he looked at her, before he turned and walked in, "I missed you too, I was worried sick..." he murmured, before he looked towards the stairs, "Poor lad... he had to deal with a lot..."

“You both have. You’ll have to take some time and visit him when he’s awake.” Toki leaned around him to shut the door, trying not to brush too close. Her nerves were not fair to him, and she struggled not to become distressed over her unease around him. He was a good person. He was a good
monster. He’d been forced to do things he didn’t want to do- and this wasn’t right. He didn’t look like he had, all beastly and feral- but she was still unnerved. “So what’s the cause for your visit? Did Asgore run out of your tea again? I have some extra.” The king had made Tenebris’ tea while he had been missing- mostly because the scent had reminded him of the royal scientist.

"No, no, we’ve enough tea at home..." He replied gently, "I... I just wanted to talk to you about something... something important."

“Oh.” There was the chance that he knew about what happened… Nerves flittered through her again, making the twins lash out in response. She exhaled roughly at a kick to her ribs, and motioned for him to follow her. “Well, let's go take a seat in the living room. I was resting my leg a bit while trying to crochet. But I’m not very good at it.”

"Of course, lead the way." he responds, following her to the main room.

Toki is a lot slower than he is, but she makes her way to the living room and reclaims her seat. She eases herself down with a soft groan, and settles the crutches next to the arm of the couch. Once she’s seated, she motions for him to take the other half of the couch, and stretches her wounded leg out to prop it up on the coffee table so she didn’t take up a lot of space. Toki exhales heavily, and pats her middle as she’s kicked roughly. “Ugh... Really glad the wedding is in a couple weeks, or I won't be able to fit in anything nice without looking like a beached whale.” She mutters.

"I'm proud of you, Toki." he sat down, making sure his blade was pinned behind him as he looked at her. "You and Papyrus have come so far..."

“We’ve all come so far.” She murmurs softly. She adjusts, and stuffs a pillow behind her lower back to help support some of the weight in her bulging belly. “I’m proud of you too.” Though she wouldn’t glance over at him to start. It took a lot to sit there calmly, and not flinch at seeing his tail. Toki heaves a soft sigh, and forcibly relaxes as she itches slightly at the healing cracks in her leg with her other foots toes. “So what’s up, Tenebris?” She blinks, and finally shifts her gaze to him, rubbing her middle slightly to soothe the irate twins. They really did not like when she stressed over things, and at thirty weeks along, they were big enough now that most of their kicks, with their monster strength behind it, tended to be painful from the inside.

"Well... Undyne just stopped by my home.... And informed me of some... rather disturbing news..."

Toki was not a good liar, and she couldn’t meet his gaze as her shoulders tensed. “Oh... What sort of news?” She inquired lightly, fingers soothing her middle. Her non-wounded leg tapped her toes on the tile floor.

"... Is it true, Toki?” he then asked, looking at her intensely. "Did I do this to you?"

“She wasn’t supposed to tell you.” She muttered quietly, and hunched her shoulders with a sigh. “We were going to wait until you were healed and... and mentally prepared to hear about all of it.” It would destroy him if he knew about the twins. Tenebris was so excited to be a grandpa- losing them… Well, it wouldn’t likely be good. Toki swallowed. “You... bit my leg.” She admits slowly. “That's why all of your teeth are gone. If not for my defense, you’d have probably bitten clean through.”

Were he not already sitting, he would have felt his legs buckle in shock. "Oh Toki... I-I'm so sorry, were I aware, I never would have done such a thing...!"

“I know, Tenebris. I know.” Toki’s arms curl protectively around her middle, and she swallows softly. “You weren’t you.” She says simply. “The blame falls onto Cruelty for doing this to you. To
both of you.” She idly rubs her lower abdomen, and forces her shoulders to relax. Toki heaves a deep breath and shakes her head.

He looked at her, and then he sighed quietly. "M-May I...?" He asked as he looked to her stomach.

Oh gods she really didn’t want him to touch her middle. She really, really didn’t want him anywhere near her middle with his hands. His claws had been trimmed when he’d been groomed up, and his hands no longer looked like paws, but... Toki heaved in a shuddering breath and shakily nodded. “S-sure. Just... gentle. Please.”

He nodded and slowly moved closer, before he reached and carefully touched her stomach, slowly feeling the pups inside with a shaky smile. "H-Hello you two." he purred weakly.

It had been five weeks since he had consciously seen them. She had grown a lot since HAM had taken him- and they were more active than ever. They shied a little bit away at the first touch, reacting more to her nerves than his- but the familiar voice that murmured to them had flurries of excitable legs kicking and stretching out to greet their grandfather.

It amazed Toki how aware monster children tended to be. It must be a magic sensing thing, because human kids weren’t this aware. They didn’t know who he was, but they knew he was family. Still, the flurry of kicks made her wince slightly, sockets tightening. Her middle was a bit tender since the scare, and a lot of their movement was beginning to become uncomfortable now. “They’ve missed you,” She manages against their slightly uncomfortable squirming. “They- ah- are very excited to have you back.”

They almost hadn’t been around to greet him though, because of him. Toki keeps that quiet, and lets the large hand on her middle simply feel the twins shifting and churning energetically within her. Part of her wished they took a little after her and were a bit less squirmy, but such was life.

He slowly lowered his form to sit by her legs and he smiled gently, stroking her stomach lovingly. "Oh Toki... I am so glad you're all safe." he purred gently, the sound growing stronger.

With him seated on the floor next to her legs, she found herself instinctually scooting her wounded one away from him. Toki swallowed and smiled just slightly. The purring was soothing, but her nerves and tension levels didn’t drop with the sound. She forced her body to relax. This was Tenebris. In his right mind, he wouldn’t ever hurt her or the twins. “We nearly weren’t, but here we are. I told you that we Nara are tough.”

He noticed her discomfort and he slowly let her be, moving away again to sit on the opposite end of the couch. "Indeed." he murmured in agreement.

Toki could tell he was slightly dejected, and her soul hurt for him. She took a deep breath, and then motioned for him to come back. “C’mere, you. The twins weren’t done demanding your attention.” She quirks a soft grin to him. “It... Really isn’t fair that you don’t know why I’m so uneasy, is it?”

"I wouldn’t want you to get too uncomfortable, I understand your fear."

“My fear is stupid, and I have to work to get over it, just like I did with the fire. You are you- and you weren’t you two weeks ago.” She wiggles her fingers at him. “I don’t think you do. What all did Undyne tell you, Tenebris? What... Well, did she tell you everything from start to finish?” She didn’t want to hurt him- but if she were in his position, she would be more afraid of the things she could have done, and would rather be told even if being told would suck.

"She mentioned an incident with the children... that... it didn't happen until after I came back... I was
confused... then she told me... I've been wearing a muzzle... and it's most been for their protection...

“Wait, wait, wait, they muzzled you?” She stiffened where she sat, and her teeth ground, angry sparks flying over her couch. She squished her fist into an ember that tried to catch, and extinguished it. “If you’ve been conscious and no longer biting Asgore when he gets too close, then you shouldn’t have to be muzzled. For their protection my non-existent ass. You’re a sentient being, not a fucking animal to be chained and bound.” The muzzle and chains had been useful while he had been out of control- but now that he was back in it- enough for the villagers to come back- there was no honest need for it anymore.

Toki fumed for a moment, buzzing irritably, before grunting as the twins proceeded to try and bruise her floating ribs in retaliation to her irritation. Her anger rushed from her like a deflating balloon at the reminder. “I… almost lost the twins.” She said softly. “That’s what she meant by incident with the children.”

"Tokiko... They thought it was best... They have me wear it when I sleep... In case I wake up in an episode of terror... Like I did this morning," he explained, before he bit his lip, "It was because of me... Wasn't it..."

Toki ground her teeth slightly, and looked away. “You’re not the only one that gets nightmares.” She murmurs softly. Toki takes a shuddering breath, and nods. “Yes. It was… You had me down, and went for the most vulnerable spot on me. My arms took the blows, but it jostled them and… Pap had to dump most of his magic into healing them to get contractions to stop. Tenebris, it wasn’t your fault. Whatever HAM did to you… It turned you into something that wasn’t you. Despite my body’s reactions, I don’t blame you. Neither do they.”

His head had tucked into the scarf, his form trembling as he dug his fingers into his pant legs. "Toki... T-That's... that's where you're wrong..." he whispered.

Her sockets flicked to him as he did a good impression of a turtle into his scarf. “What… do you mean? What was I wrong about?” She asked, befuddled and uncertain.

"... That... was me..." he murmured, "What you see, who you know... It's all a facade I had developed when I grew into adulthood... I'm a Blaster Beast, Tokiko, born of an Alpha's blood and raised by monster kind’s magic. Just like you, a human, changed by the blood of your ancestors, and the great magic that was released upon the destruction of the barrier...” He said.

“My body grew in the blanket of magic that developed me to become more humanoid, I retained so few of my original features... But my mind, no matter how far I’ve come, how wise or how great, I am still a beast. The Heir of an Alpha, or so speaks my blood..."

"Distress forces a do or die when it's severe, and... I believe that my mind had collapsed, fallen back to primal programming... I was cornered for too long, I automatically wanted to kill anything or anyone near me to protect myself... Whether a Human working for a terrorist organization... Or my Son's pregnant Fiancé coming to ensure I was unharmed..." His voice cracked near the end and he reached up to cover his face with his hands, his tail rattling loudly behind in distress.

"I'm sorry, Toki... I'm so... So sorry..."

She… wasn’t entirely sure how to handle that information. That was a lot of information to swallow in one go. Toki’s spine crawled slightly with the knowledge that the beast inside was still in fact there, and that deep inside, it was still lurking and could come back. But… She never intended to let him get taken like that again, or get ‘cornered’ as he put it. She would find a way.
Sometimes someone needed a little touch of kindness, particularly after the cruelty he’d been exposed to.

Toki shifted on the couch, her sore leg dropping from the table so she could scoot closer to him. Toki reached out hesitantly and gently rested her tiny hand on one of his massive thighs. Her fingers rubbed soothingly over the thick muscles. “Instincts happen. After what you had gone through, I completely understand. It is a surprise, but… they happen.” She says softly. “What I said still stands. I don’t blame you. We don’t blame you. Despite what happened, despite my nerves, I still love you dearly… Papa.” She murmurs gently to her father in law, who was basically her second father. “Nothing will change that- not knowing who you are, what you are, or what you can do. I still love you. And so do they.”

He slowly stiffened when he heard her call him 'Papa', and for a moment he silenced, before he shakily reached out and took her hand... Massive hands, though tamed, could still easily destroy her hand, and yet they held it with extreme tenderness. "T-Tokiko..." he shakily moved to slip off the couch, and sit once more by her legs, but this time was looking up at her. His pupils were dilated as black tears welled in his eyes, and with so many of his teeth missing, he almost looked like a child from here, "I... I love you too..." he whispered.

Toki shifted as he slid off the couch, and gave him a warm smile. Her fingers curled up, and gently hooked on his scarf to tug it down. His hand still claimed one of hers, but she still had one free. It smoothed up and over his cheek, gently thumbing over the corner of his gap-toothed mouth, before sliding back to the back of his head. She leaned forwards… and sharp teeth pressed a tender kiss between his eyes, as she hugged him around the neck. “All is forgiven.” She says tenderly. It would take her time for her nerves and fears to fade- but she did not, for one second, blame him, no matter what his natural form was.

He looked up at her, tensing at first when she came close to him, but as she trapped his neck in her embrace, the shame he had felt, the disgust in himself and the unfathomable worry that he destroyed his relationship with his soon to be daughter-in-law... It all shattered, and with it, Toki was able to witness something that so few others had witnessed.

One could only be strong for so long. Tenebris had fought, he had suffered and survived, learned and served, adapted, created, and suffered some more...

His walls had been damaged in his resilience, and the relief of Toki's love, the love of a daughter and motherly figure in the same, had finally allowed him to break.

Tenebris completely broke down in her arms, reaching up to hug her as he pressed his head into her shoulder, not just crying into her form, but releasing a beast-like crying of his own. Howling wails, what almost sounded like screams... It could be compared to the anguish of a lost child...

Perhaps... He was crying for more than just the experience of his adult years...

Perhaps... She was hearing the fear and hopelessness of a lost pup... Crying for the one who loved him the moment he took his first breath of air, for the one who'd give him sharp nips to get his attention... For the countless scents and howls that would resonate when the full moon gazed upon their home...

He would cry out...

But nobody came...

Nobody came- but he was not alone. It was not a howl or a cry that would answer; no, it would be
the kindness in her soul reaching out to soothe his pain and remind him that he wasn’t alone anymore, and that he was loved. He was no longer lost- that he was home.

His sounds broke her heart. Nerves or not, this was someone who was crying- and she looped her arms around his neck, cradled his face into her shoulder, and let him sob. Toki held him firm, and began to buzz gently, a soft crooning leaving her mouth as she rubbed her hands gently up and down his shoulders, one of them coming to smooth over the top of his head gently.

It didn’t take long, before a gentle piping filled the air, a call from a queen to soothe a wounded hive mate.

He held to her for what felt like forever, screaming his anguish into her shoulder before he pressed his forehead against it instead, his screams free now to fill the house and escape into the air. But the queen’s song was gentle, and loving. It brought the aged creature before her a sense of security, and though it was no grooming tongue like he would have had from one of his own kind, it seemed to soothe the burning in his soul.

His sounds gradually reduced from the screams, turning instead into soft hiccups and faint sobs as he lowered himself slowly, sitting on the floor to rest his head beside the twins in their mother's lap. His hands came up and softly rested on the ecto flesh, stroking it with his thumb before his eyes closed and he started to knead, a quiet purring starting to cut through his weeping as he finally came to settle down.

Some part of her tensed as he started to knead, those large claws on his fingers making her instinctively want to duck away. But Toki was more than her instincts when she tried to be. She firmed up her resolve, and rested her hand on his head, slowly stroking it as he occupied what was left of her lap and pressed close to her middle.

The twins had gone still with all of the noise, but the purring staring up near their enclosure eased them back into motions. They made Toki grunt in discomfort as a large foot pressed out to poke the bridge between his eyes.

Toki begins to hum very softly alongside her buzzing, and silently offers what comforts she could to him.

He grunted when he was kicked but chuckled lightly, and sighed softly as his breathing finally slowed, his breakdown passing, replaced with the happiness of feeling the children moving within their mother.

There was the soft clearing of a small throat, and Toki turned her head to see Thumper standing in the doorway, awkwardly shuffling his toes. "… Room for one more?" He asks, hopefully, eyes tired and wanting to seek comfort between the two monsters.

“Always.” Toki smiles gently, and welcomes him close.

He settles half on the couch, and half in Tenebris’ lap, burrowing his head against the other’s abdomen and looping his arms around his middle.

The heartbeat in his lap caught his attention and Tenebris lowered one arm to give attention to Thumper. "Young one.” he purred happily, his hand reaching up to stroke the bunny's ears gently, "I'm s-so glad t' see you safe..."

“‘It’s good to see you too, Mister Tenebris.’ The young rabbit murmurs softly. His tired eyes closed as his ears were rubbed, and he wiggled some, bony limbs probably jabbing the bigger monster,
before he settled in his lap.

“Did we wake you, Thumper?” Toki asks gently.

“I didn’t get to sleep before…” He muttered tiredly. He hadn’t gotten to sleep before Tenebris had gotten loud.

"Thumper... I did not harm you, did I?" Tenebris asked quietly, his eyes closing slowly.

Toki continued to rub his skull, resuming her soft humming.

Thumper shook his head. “No, Mister Tenebris.” He murmured softly. “You didn’t let them get me. I hid in your chest.”

“He was in there for a long time.” Toki added gently. “We’re working to put weight back on him. He’s very thin.”

He sighed quietly and wrapped his arm around Thumper to hold him close to the warm fabric of his turtleneck. "At least I did that right..." he murmured. His hand that had continued to knead stopped, and instead moved under Tenebris' head as he used it for a pillow.

At this moment, the front door opened, and a frantic Asgore stormed in and glanced around to find her, surprisingly gentle on closing the front door despite his panic for her safety. "Toki!? Are you all right? A guard told me they heard screaming..."

“Shhhh,” She calls softly to the large goat monster. “We’re okay in here, Asgore. Nothing’s wrong.” Her once red shirt is stained black with his tears though, so it looks like she’s covered in some form of his body fluids. “Come on in- I’d stand to greet you, but my lap is full.”

Thumper clings tightly to the monster, and sighs contently. He doesn’t bother greeting the king- he’s wrapped in a scent he’d had to go to sleep to for weeks, and next to another that helped bring him comfort when he needed it most. He yawned- and was out before his next exhale.

Asgore walked to the room they were in and grew relieved to see Tenebris was settled in her lap, but at the same time... "What happened?" he asked, unable to tell off the bat what fluid had stained her clothing. "Your shirt..." Though as he approached he was removing his cape as to blanket the phantom and bunny.

“It’s not blood, if that’s what you’re worried about.” Toki used her hands to better adjust the cape to blanket Tenebris, and looked up at Asgore. “He broke down.” She said softly. “He knows what happened now... But we’re still okay, aren’t we, Papa?” She smiles gently, and rubs Tenebris’ head. “Why don’t you take a seat, Asgore? The couch has more than enough space.”

Asgore was surprised to hear her designate Tenebris as 'Papa', but was soothed as Tenebris began to purr quite loudly in reply. "I suppose I could" He came over and once he made note the location of Tenebris' tail, he sat down and sighed. "I was very worried. He said he wanted to talk to you alone and then I am told that there's screaming from your home... I was frightened that I had made a fatal mistake in letting him come alone... but now I am just very relieved that I was wrong..."

Toki nodded, and continued to pet Tenebris gently. She shifted some, her back sore. “He was upset.” She says softly. “Sometimes we have to break down completely before we can build ourselves up again. The screaming was him letting go.” She doesn’t mention her nervousness around the monster in her lap, but she’s sure the King can probably read a little bit of it lingering in her posture.

“Speaking of a mistake...” She squints at him. “A muzzle? Really? He’s quite aware. Think of how that must have made him feel, given where he just came from. Shame on you. He doesn’t even have
that many teeth left to bite with.” And what ones there were would probably shatter if he bit anything harder than a soft steak.

"I know it sounds inhumane. I plan on speaking to Grillby about our alternative, as the one we have now seemed to prolong this morning's episode." his glance goes to Tenebris' cheek for a moment, before looking back to her, "We don’t know how quickly his teeth grow back, if they were capable of returning overnight, then we would have needed the muzzle. Even now we still do not know. But at least Grillby is working on a more gentle one that he can wear comfortably."

Toki tilts her head and sighs at him. “If they were going to grow back over night, they’d have done it in the two weeks it’s been since he broke them off in my leg. But I understand your wariness about it.” The collection of teeth had turned into this pile of weird, black sand. She had it in a jar somewhere in her fridge, and planned to give it to Tenebris to study at a later date. “Maybe try a night without the muzzle? At this point, all he can probably do is try to gum you to death. Hm… He might need dentures of some kind.” She murmurs. “Or he’s not going to be able to eat much.”

He nodded in agreement at that, and chuckled lightheartedly at the ‘gumming’ comment, before he took a moment to think. "I do not know if we have anyone capable of creating such a thing for Tenebris..." He hummed quietly.

“… I think I have a pair of giant toy teeth in my shed. We can modify them and see if they'll fit in his mouth. Well… Once I can find them.” They would be buried in her Halloween props. With any luck, they might fit the large phantom monster. Toki shifts, and ends up leaning slightly against Asgore’s arm as she stretches her back. The twins shift and kick, and she lets out a whoosh of air as she’s winded. Her free hand comes to pet them and soothe them.

"Toy teeth..." Asgore chortled at that, "I assume they're a mimic of a human's dental pattern?" he asked, "I know for sure that he's going to abhor that, after so long with pointed teeth." he joked.

She chuckles gently. “They are indeed. They’re basically a set of giant teeth that you can wind up, and they’ll clack noisily. I’ll need to do some work with them, but I should be able to make them work for his mouth. I don’t think he’s going to want to be stuck eating blended foods for weeks on end.” Toki shifts again, and her fingers come to press along the side of her belly. There is a stubborn foot shoving outwards in the direction of the king. “It wont take long to do them once I can find them. But I’m limited.” She tilts her chin towards her leg. “I can only do so much before parts of my shin fall out. Pap did a decent job, but he was more focused on the twins than on my leg.”

He chuckled into a fist as to keep quiet, not wanting to wake Tenebris with his laughter, but voicing her concern about her leg had him perking up.

"Ah, then allow me to help making that last bit a bit easier." He smiled at her, then he turned and his hand glowed gently, "Now I might not be able to do much compared to Papyrus when it comes to healing bone, but I still remember some healing magic that could do some good in keeping your shin connected." He chuckled quietly, focusing on her leg for a moment.

It actually ended up working, as a few of the lesser cracks actually began to close as the magic holding her bones together felt a little more reinforced.

Toki gave it an experimental twitch, and felt less bones shifting and rattling out of place than she normally did. She brightened slightly. “Thank you. I’ve had to have Thumper on bone duty, because parts have been falling out of the open parts of the cast. It doesn’t feel like anything is loose there anymore though.” Toki shifts and end up leaning firmly against Asgore with a soft sigh. “I wont be able to test it in walking for a while though. I’m pretty well trapped. Oooh. Your arm is very soft.” He made a surprisingly good shoulder rest with all of his fur.
He blinked at the sudden shift of topic, before he smiled and took a moment to shift and get comfy.
"I say you should rest too, my dear. You've had a long day, and you deserve a nap after what you've done for Tenebris." he rumbled gently.

"Napping probably wouldn’t be good for me at this point.” She said gently. “I find that unless Pap is here, my nightmares come more often.” And with the object of her nightmares literally sleeping in her lap, there was the high chance she’d end up with one right out of the starting gate.

"Ah, I see... well, if it's alright, I think I’ll stay here and keep an eye on Tenebris." he rumbled, before he looked down at Tenebris, though he could see his face shifting, his form twitching lightly.

He carefully reached over and gave Tenebris a hard flick on the bridge of his face. The phantom jolted in reaction and his eyes opened for a moment before they lulled closed again and he began to purr quietly once more, letting out a soft, relieved exhale.

"I am literally trapped between you, the sides of the couch, and Tenebris. I can’t go anywhere with him rumbling in my lap.” She arches her brows. “So you’ve got company. You’ll just have to put up with me using you as a leaning rest as best I can. Back aches and whatnot.” Too bad Pap wasn’t there to give her a back rub. With as tense as she’d gotten over Tenebris showing up, it was little wonder she was forming knots. “Also, really, was that necessary? There are other ways to rouse him without flicking him.” Adjusting her legs usually worked to rouse him. "That's fine," he rumbled, before he looked at Tenebris again. "He was starting to fidget. The last time he did that was right before his episode, so I at least had to ensure that he wouldn't have one here. If you've other ways of stirring him, feel free, though I’ll have to watch him with you, make sure we both can see if he's starting to have another one." he rumbled gently.

"I understand that.” She hums softly. She begins to buzz faintly, and fire magic pulses down her arm and into the crown of Tenebris’ head. She rubs warmth along his skull, and uses the sound and touch to try and keep his nightmares at bay. Sound and touch usually worked for hers- Papyrus couldn’t buzz, but he could gently rattle or hum, and she would usually settle. “Still, there are less rough ways. You just need to experiment and see what works for you and what doesn’t.”

Toki heaves a soft sigh, and rubs her middle. “I wish the usual soothing methods would work for the twins. They’re all worked up because Tenebris is back. They’ve missed his visits.”

The beast let out a soft rattling chirp and purred happily, nuzzling his arm again.

"Heh..." Asgore smiled and sighed, "He's precious..."

“He is.” She nods quietly. Toki lets her head relax against the King’s arm, and she sighs. Her sockets close, and she hums a soft soothing tune, continuing to rub along his skull as she eases herself into a tranquil state. Being wound up wouldn’t do good for her kids, or for Tenebris- so relaxing would be the best thing she could do.

She would need to work on her reflexive flinching when he makes an unexpected movement though. It’s not fair to him.

Asgore held onto Toki gently, smiling as he kept her warm. Tenebris had looked more peaceful here than he had in his bed, and with that, Asgore was brought his own sense of relief, allowing him too to close his eyes and rest.

Toki kept watch for the king and her magic kept the three resting monsters warm. She didn’t bother clicking on the television, and simply just basked and let her mind wander where it would while she
radiated peace and tranquility.
Chapter 59

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And now a nice break. Family camping trip ahoy!

Don't forget to visit the blog :3 http://sinoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: Well, this chapter is a confirmed cute.

Also, for anyone who's wondering what kind of mask it specifies Tenebris wearing, it's This (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B013XOY2JO/ref=twister_B013XOY39I?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1) one.

I actually own this one, i love it <3

It took Toki an age and a half to find them, and then nearly four days to get them cleaned up— but she got the plastic teeth shaped slightly using her fire magic, and designed more to be used in his mouth. She had them all cleaned up and perfect now though, and had them in a nice carrying box to give to Tenebris. He’d definitely need them where they were going.

It was decided on a whim one morning that they were going to get a camping trip in now that the Gaster family were all back together once again. Toki, Thumper, and Asgore were going along, Grillby having opted out since they were going to go to a lake, and his business was usually busy all times of the day. He didn’t want to lose business hours either, which Toki totally understood.

Everyone had to pack a bag— they were going to go for a couple days, after all. Toki knew a private lake that not many went to, simply because the water was generally horribly cold. But, in the heat wave that had settled in on Ebott County, the cold water would feel amazing. Even she was feeling sweltered, and had taken to stealing a couple of Papyrus’ undershirt tank tops so she didn’t have to wear sleeves.

Thankfully Tenebris had enough magic to heal her— so she found herself on her feet by the time they were going to be heading out. Since nothing had to be re-grown, Tenebris had been able to help Papyrus in advancing the healing, so now all that was left on her legs were the bright and freshly healed bone. The spider web of healed marks would have to fade in time, but for now the middle of her shin all the way to the middle of her femur were covered in almost tattoo-like markings.

On Wednesday morning, Toki had all three bags packed for her, Thumper and Papyrus, and had her swimsuit on under her clothes. Thankfully, because she was simply bone now, her swimsuit still fit. The top fit a little weirdly, since she didn’t have breasts, but a bit of magic helped fill it out and keep it from sitting too oddly. She just hoped she didn’t look too weird in it. A pregnant skeleton in a bikini sounded like the start of a very, very weird joke.

She’d packed swimming trunks for Papyrus though, and made sure that Thumper had swimming trunks too.

A fourth bag had been packed the night prior with usual camping cookware, and food inside of that too. They could do some fishing if they wanted, but there wasn’t really any need to do so when they
could just bring food to cook with. Stuff that needed to stay cold was packed into a cooler and
layered with ice to keep it chilled. They would stick it in the water when they got there, and let the
cold water of the lake preserve it for the days that they were going to be there.

They had to pack everything into the multiple cars. Toki had plans of taking the tents in her truck.
She just had to bring it around to the back near the shed so they could get it loaded up with the tents
and the sleeping bags. She had a lot of them- and planned to bring all of them, since the bigger
monsters would need more than one or two.

Toki slid her feet into her slippers, carefully tugged her shorts up to make sure they wouldn’t slide
down, and called through the house to Thumper and Papyrus as she adjusted Aliquam’s tank top
over her belly. Toki snagged the keys to her truck. “Pap! Can you get the bags out of the bedroom?
Caeruleus will be here any minute with Tenebris and Asgore, and you need to put them and the
coolers in his truck. I’m going to take my truck around and get the tents out of the shed.”

"Sure thing!” He called back and went and to collect the bags, bringing them over to her. "They'll go
in your truck, right?” he asked.

“Sure! Bags and coolers are going in the back of Caeruleus truck. I’ll be shoving tents and sleeping
bags into my truck, and I have to take the extra large tents since everyone is a giant.” She chuckles.

“Except for me!” Thumper had his game system in hand, and extra charging packs to keep it going
for the few days they’d be out there. “I’m not a giant.”

“You will be when you grow up.” She affectionately ruffles his ears as he bounces past her. Toki
gives Pap a grin and jingles her keys. “Go ahead and put them on the front deck. I’m going to get the
truck pulled around back.” She leans up, kisses him, and then is out the door with a gentle spring in
her step.

Thumper watches her go, and gives Papyrus a wide smile. “She’s in a good mood today!” He chirps
softly, thin cheeks spreading thinner over his cheeks as he beams up at the massive skeleton.

"I'm so thrilled to see her so cheerful.” he agreed happily, before hearing his brother's truck pull up.

Toki stopped not far before her truck, which was just in front of her house, and turned to wave at
Caeruleus and his gaggle of companions. Toki turned to her truck, and opened the door. The seat
had been slid back, like it usually did with the short circuit it had, so when she clamored in, she was
nowhere near the pedals. She sighed, turned on the ignition, and then began to slide her seat
forwards with the electronic controls.

Asgore stepped out from the back seat, having let Tenebris take the front seat in his Son’s truck. The
front was less restricting, after all. He waved to Toki, and then to Papyrus and Thumper from where
he could see them through the open door. “What all do you need help loading up?” The king calls
cheerfully. He was out of his armor and cloak finally- and was settled in a sporty pair of sandals,
cargo shorts, and a horrible monstrosity of a Hawaiian tourist shirt.

Toki guffawed at his clothing choices, and found her belly squished against the steering wheel as her
feet barely pressed to the pedals. She frowned, and sucked in her belly as best she could- and it
allotted her not much more space. Toki sighed. She could still push the pedals, but not enough to
safely drive. “Well shit.” She muttered. “I guess I can’t drive.” She went to push the seat back again-
and there was a grinding noise, before the door popped noisily and sparked. She squeaked- and
found her seat locked into place, with her wedged tightly to the steering wheel. “Oh my gods, are
you freaking kidding me? You choose now of all times to finally go out?” She mutters sourly to her
truck.
Tenebris now had a soft cloth mask he wore his mouth as he climbed out of the truck, going to help pack things up into the truck as per Papyrus’ orders.

Cae killed the engine on his ride and climbed out of his truck. It took him only a moment to notice Toki's issue, and he headed towards her open door. "Tokes?"

Toki squirmed slightly, and pushed against the steering wheel. The seat refused to budge, leaving her sufficiently pinned to the wheel in an uncomfortably tight position. “So, uh… the mechanism in my door just broke, and my seat wont move.” And as she tried to slide out, she found her body trapped between the seat and the wheel. A soft laugh escaped her. Oh gods, she was actually stuck, wasn't she?

"...! Uh oh." Cae leaned down and took a look. Finding that he couldn’t quite see what the issue was with her sitting on it, he sighed, before he grabbed the seat and jerked hard to make it release. He grinned as he succeeded. "Got it!"

Her seat gave with a horrible grinding snapping noise, and then proceeded to scoot freely upon its tracks. Toki blinked, bracing her legs so she didn’t immediately bounce back and slam back into the steering wheel. “Well, uh… Thanks?” She wiggles, and escapes, turning off the ignition with a sigh. She nudges her seat- and it moves fluidly. Yeah, car seats weren’t supposed to move like that. Oh well! Her car was in need of some work anyways. “… Hey, Papyrus? You’re going to want to get your keys. The truck broke.” She lowered her voice again to speak with Caeruleus. “Uh- do you think we can fit the tents in your truck, Cae? We can probably fit all of the sleeping bags in Papyrus’ Mercedes.”

"Ah... Sorry about that...” he said quietly, before he smiled, "Yeah, they'll fit no problem."

“She patted his shoulder with a sigh. “My truck was breaking down anyways. I need to get a mechanic up to look at it.” She just didn’t really want to shell out to fix it. There was a lot that needed fixed. Toki sighed, and pocketed her keys. “Alright. Will you bring your truck around to the shed? Between you and me we should be able to get the tents in the truck. They’re not that heavy.” Gangly and long, yes, but they were also made from a fairly lightweight canvas.

Given that Papyrus didn’t respond, Toki turned, and called again. “Pap! Did you hear me?”

"Sure thing, yeah.” Cae nodded and turned to go back to the truck.

"Yeees!” Was the answer that came back from the house.

“Alright!” She called back to Papyrus, before heading around the outside of the house and for the shed. She bypassed her truck, and set out at a speedy waddle for the shed.

Once she got there, locating the tents was easy. They were just inside the door, four large sixteen-man tents. There were more than that- but they hadn’t done a clan gathering since Toki had taken over as clan head. She snagged one, finding it slightly heavy but manageable, and lugged it out the door to wait for Sans and his truck.

Sans backed in the truck effortlessly, a casual grin on his face. Papyrus soon caught up and gave his contribution of loading up as well. Though it seemed Tenebris had gone astray with Asgore towards the Phantom's private garage.... What they were up to?
"Take a marvel at this beauty, Asgore~" Tenebris was wagging his tail as he looked over his Charger. "Isn't she just magnificent?"

Asgore chuckled softly, running his fingers back through his mane. Even he was starting to get hot in the heat of the day- he was looking forwards to taking a swim in the lake. But for now, he ogled the dark colored car and nodded. “It is quite a magnificent ride.” He praised. It was a little dusty, but he hadn’t known it was there, or he’d have kept it immaculate for Tenebris. “Were you thinking of taking a third vehicle with us?” He inquired lightly.

"Not unless it was necessary, my friend... I just thought I’d come and admire her." He purred gently. "This vehicle has the magnitude of a roar to match my own." he chirped happily.

“I imagine she has quite the nice ride too.” He grinned slightly, though his ears perked. “Perhaps not roaring now though. It appears,” amusement tinges his voice, “you have a follower.”

Thumper had followed them- and though he didn’t enter the garage, the little rabbit was peering in curiously, trying not to interrupt.

He chirped happily, then he turned, and though it was hidden behind the mask he wore, Tenebris smiled. "Thumper, come on in. I was just admiring my vehicle."

The rabbit wandered in when called, and kept his hands to himself. His nose twitched, and his ears flicked curiously. “It’s a really nice car, Mister Tenebris.” The small rabbit settled by the larger monster’s legs, and looked up to him. “Are you going to take it with us today?”

“It is likely more economical if we all go in two cars instead of three.” Asgore chuckles softly. “The price of gas is rising once more, after all.” The king gives them both a fond look.

He nodded in agreement, and then he turned and gently pat the bunny's head. "If we do not fit in the cab, worst case scenario we ride in the truck bed." He chuckled.

“I think they’re putting stuff in the truck bed.” Thumper blinks up at him, and nuzzles the gloved palm of his hand. “Toki’s truck broke, so they’re going to take Papyrus’ Mercedes.”

“Ah yes, I did hear the seat break. Sans helped her get unstuck, but that does create an unsafe driving environment.” Asgore hummed. “I’m sure that between the two cars, all six of us will fit just fine. Who do you want to ride with, Thumper?”

The little rabbit flushed and looked away, his fingers coming up to curl quietly around Tenebris’ fingers. He wanted to ride with both Toki and Tenebris- but he didn’t get to spend as much time with the bigger monster. That’s who he’d rather spend the drive up there with.

He blinked once, and looked down at him, before he smiled gently and brought a hand down to effortlessly scoop the bunny up, "Riding with me then~" he chuckled.

Thumper squeaked as he was scooped, and hooked his hands around the neck of his jacket to keep himself upright. “Y-yes please, Mister Tenebris.”

Asgore chuckled softly. “Lets get back to the cars- we did just leave two pregnant monsters- one heavily pregnant, mind you- and Papyrus alone to load up tents and whatever else they deem to bring along.”

He nodded and nuzzled Thumper, before he turned to head out of the garage. "Alright, I’m done admiring. Let's go."
Heading back to the vehicles would let them find Toki rubbing her sore back, with Wolfen scolding her for trying to heft a cooler into the back of the Mercedes while Papyrus and Caeruleus tied down the tents so they wouldn’t fly out.

“Wolfen, really, I’m fine.”

“That cramp in your back says otherwise.” He’d been drawn over after seeing her attempting to lift something heavier than she should have been at her size. He gently shooed her away from the back seat of the Mercedes, and then carefully slid the cooler in for her. “You need to be more careful, Miss Toki. You’re quite a bit… farther along now- you need to treat yourself delicately. This is far more than thirty pounds.” It was closer to ninety- and he had no idea what she had put in there to make it so heavy.

Toki grumbled good-naturedly at him, and waved over to Tenebris, Asgore, and Thumper. “There you three are! We’ve got almost everything loaded up!”

"I do apologize for going astray, but I do not think Asgore had seen Eclipse yet." He purred happily, walking over before he gently pressed his mouth to her forehead, giving her a kiss through the cloth mask. "I hope you've saved the heaviest for us, you know." he chuckled.

Thumper too leans over to smooch her, planting a soft fuzzy kiss to her cheek as he giggles from his position in Tenebris’ arms.

It took a little bit of nerve not to squirm away from the kiss- but she was better in control of her instincts when she was on her feet and could flee if the need came. She wasn’t pinned between a couch and a sharp mouth. “You named your car? That is adorable.” She chuckles softly to the kiss, and gives the child a fond ear rub in return. "Ah… Well, no.”

“She did not.” Wolfen crosses his arms and huffs at her. “She was lifting the coolers, and they are far more than she should be lifting. Honestly, she shouldn’t even be toting the honey jugs to and from the hives.” He flicks his gaze over the bigger monster, and to the king, and waggles his finger at them scolding. “Hopefully you weren’t flirting in the garage with poor Thumper there to see it.”

"Not at all." he snorted, "I was just... well I can't lie. I was showing off my car." he admitted, before he lightly thumped his foot. "Now Toki you should know better, you're already carrying so much weight with twins on the way." 

Toki gives him a mock offended look. “I do quite believe you just called me fat.” She winks at Thumper, making the rabbit giggle, and then kneads her knuckles into her lower back. “If that’s the case, I’m sure I’ve exceeded my weight limit a long time ago. I'm okay though, really.”

“You nearly dropped the cooler.” The wolf tattles.

She socks him in the arm for it, and huffs. “Yes, well, if you have the number of cramps that I do on a regular basis, you’d drop things too.”

Wolfen chortles. “Bo was much like you. You need to be gentle, Miss Toki. They are not nearly so tough as you are.”

“I know, I know.”

"You know damn well that's not what I meant, Toki." he snorted gently, before he shook his head. "Toki, you should relax, you're pregnant after all." 

Toki planted her hands on her hips and cocked a brow up at him. “I am probably the most high
strung Nara you know.” Her brothers were only rowdy when they were all together, really. “I don’t relax well. But... I guess I’ll try? I’m going to be relaxing at the lake with you guys, so there’s that.” Maybe she could find a sectioned off part of the lake and make a hot tub of sorts to relax in. Either way, the shortest skeleton quirked a grin up at the Phantom. “Oh! Speaking of high strung- I was busy these last couple of days...” She turned, and leaned into the front seat. She procured the box with his teeth, and then offered them out. “I made these for you. You’ll definitely need them later tonight.” Eating smores without teeth just wasn’t feasible.

He blinked once as he was offered the box and he set Thumper down to open the box, and pull out the... teeth...

He blinked, and then examined them quietly. "... Fascinating... false teeth..." he chuckled, before he placed them back in the box, "I will try them later, but thank you very much, Toki." he purred happily.

“I figured you’re old enough now that a set of false teeth would do you good, eh Grandpa Tenebris?” She teased slightly. “I’m glad you like them though. You’ll definitely need them. I brought lots of meat in the cooler so we can grill some up over the campfire.”

Thumper taps his foot on the ground to get their attention, and then points to the passenger seat. “Miss Toki, please sit! You know if you rest your back your knots don’t hurt as badly.”

She ruffles his ears gently. “We’re taking off soon, Thumper. I’ll sit then, okay?” Toki glanced over to see how Sans and Papyrus were doing. They looked to be about done... She flicked her gaze to Wolfen. “You’ll keep an eye on things, right?”

“Two eyes, as often as I can spare them. Which...” He trails off.

“You’re on shift.” She nods. “Go ahead- thanks for your help.”

“My pleasure.” He chuckles. He jogs off, leaving the two bigger monsters in charge of the stubborn pregnant one. It would be interesting to see who would win a battle of the wills there.

He thumped a foot in light insult, but at the mention of the meat his tail began to rattle eagerly so he was sated, but he tucked the box in his coat before he went to get the last of the gear. "Well, best Asgore and I finish up here."

Toki chuckles. “Payback for the comment on my weight.” She does nod though. “Alright. You’re all going to be riding with Caeruleus, yes?” The back of the Mercedes was woefully full of things. Not that it had much storage space. It was more designed for monster space than storage space.

“Mhm!” Thumper nods. “So sit! I don’ wanna hear about you having problems with the babies again.” He pats her belly softly.

She chuckles and ruffles his ears again. “I’m not going to have problems, Thumper. But all right, all right. I’ll sit.” And she does. She eases herself down into the front seat and relaxes some. Gods his seats were comfortable.

The king chuckled. “It wont take long, Miss Toki, and then we’ll be on the road.” They were going to be following Papyrus- since Toki knew where they had to go.

"Yes, Asgore and I will be riding in the truck. I plan on letting him... what's the phrase... 'Ride shotgun', as the front seat can be lowered, hopefully giving Asgore some extra room."

Toki didn't know what was worse; the way he sounded as he said that, or the sense that using that
A half hour more of packing, making sure that everything was secure and wouldn’t be tossed out by the winds, and what had already been two hours of driving had Asgore relaxing in the front seat, humming a soft tune that seemed to sate the need of ambience in the truck.

Caeruleus seemed content enough with the humming, Thumper had dozed off, and was now snoozing against Asgore’s side in the spacey front seat. Tenebris was silent in the back seat, no doubt the vibrations and familiar growling of the engine enough to let him get in a nap during the drive. Thumper had kind of wanted to join him but had been reassured that he could use Asgore as a pillow if he really wanted a nap. Though Asgore had keep his arm free as to reach back and occasionally give Tenebris’ head a gentle rub.

"...." Cae would be even quieter than he usually was, and Asgore caught wind of it when he’d hummed along to a silly part of a song- and had gotten no reply from the skeleton monster.

"Sans, I know you are worried about your father...” The king spoke softly, so as not to wake Thumper and Tenebris. “He has gone through a lot, and frankly I’ve seen its effect on him..."

"Is that why his claws were filed down and his blade was padded?” Cae attempted to joke, to hide his worry. Caeruleus used to pride himself for the fact that he never used to wear his metaphorical heart on his sleeve. He usually kept himself safely secured behind a wall of humor and terrible jokes—only a few had been given the privilege of seeing behind it. His brother, his father, sometimes Toki, and Grillby too had all seen behind the wall at various points.

But, pregnancy it seemed made him a bit more open to read.

"Yes, Sans.” Asgore sighed softly. “The little mask we gave him seems to have helped him. He doesn't wake up in fear, and when he does, it barely lasts but a few seconds as he realizes that which hides his mouth is but a simple cloth." The king glanced back to the mask, smiling a little as he looked at the little bit of decoration given to it.

It had been given a layer of white material, and drawn on to look like teeth, more specifically, his teeth, turned up into a ghoulish grin.

"Has Pops... told you about anything that he endured?” Cae asked after a while, quietly guiding the truck around a corner and a couple potholes in the road.

"I haven’t pushed him- I told him he can tell me if he wants to, but I wouldn’t ask specifically." Asgore responded, having a hunch by his panic when he’s coming out of a nightmare, as well as not wanting him to rethink it and reopen old wounds, both mental and physical... "That if he was going to tell me anything, it was on his own time..." He could remember the first morning that Tenebris had truly returned to them. To him... The vision of the pure panic in his lover's eyes, the streaks of black blood running under the straps of the muzzle that he had insisted Tenebris wear that night... The screaming still rung in his ears, even with the sounds of the present rumbling around him, and he still felt his shame coursing thick.

"Fair enough... He'll open up when he feels like it." Sans nodded, then he smiled, just slightly. "Hey,
"I think we're finally slowing down." He flicked his blinker on and then followed Papyrus as he turned in to what seemed their own little portion of wilderness to savor while they were on their much needed vacation.

“So it seems.” The king turned his attention to the window, and hummed softly as he watched the trees give way. He turned his hand back, and gently shook Tenebris’ shoulder to rouse him.

The thick forest gave way to an open lake. It wasn’t overly large, but it was big enough to host several different campsites at the same time. However, the lake was bare and empty of people. It was far, far out of the way, but it was one that the Nara as a clan tended to use often. Or had used often—because it had plenty of space for the old clan meetings. The compound was a little small for the two hundred plus people who had used to attend. There would be more than that now if Toki ever hosted another one.

The lake was decent sized regardless. It a deep blue color that told of its depth, and it had sandy beaches for about a hundred feet out from the water. From there, there was a stretch of pebbles, before it opened up into thick grassland. There were logs here and there on the beach, making seating areas that had been placed carefully a long time ago.

The Mercedes pulled over into a flat stretch of ground that had plenty of open space and then came to a stop. The passenger side door opened once the Mercedes was parked, and Toki’s arms and legs appeared, grasping at the top of the door so she could haul herself out. It took a bit more effort than one would think, and she heaved a deep breath of fresh forest air. “Well,” She chuckled to her fiancé as she waved at Cae’s truck, “We’re here. Welcome to our own little slice of paradise. Gods above, I haven’t been here since Grandpa died.”

The truck pulled in to stop near the Mercedes and Cae climbed out once he cut the engine, grinning as he looked around. “This is a neat little camping spot.” he chuckled.

He turned to see Tenebris slowly pulling himself out of the truck, taking a moment to stretch on all fours on the ground before he slowly rose to his feet, rubbing one eye as he looked around. He was soon awestruck as well at the beauty of the lake.

Toki grinned and waved at them cheerily. “My clan has used this place for a gathering spot for decades. I don’t do mandatory clan gatherings anymore simply because we really don’t need them.” In the new day and age, old traditions needed to evolve and change.

She heaves a soft sigh, and pads for the truck. “Alright! Lets get the tents up, and then we can cool off. I don’t want to try and do them after we tire ourselves out in the water.”

Thumper was awake when he and Asgore slid out of the passenger side of the truck, and he looked up at Toki as he stretched. “Awww.” He pouts. “Do I have to help put up the tents?”

“Nah,” she chuckles. “Leave the boring stuff for the adults. You’re free to explore- but don’t go past the tree line. There are toxic plants here that can hurt you if you don’t know what to avoid.” She did not want to imagine trying to help Thumper with poison ivy, or if he found a patch of stinging nettles.

“You’re not supposed to do stuff either, Miss Toki!” Thumper chuffs slightly. “Putting up tents doesn’t sound like an easy job.”

“It’s frustrating more than it is hard.” She chuckles.

"You're sitting your ass down, missy." Cae told her stubbornly. "I'll turn you blue if I have to."
Toki tossed her hands into the air with a frustrated sound. “Oh my gods! I’m pregnant, not injured. I can put up a tent, I promise!”

Asgore patted her on the shoulder and shooed her away from the back of the truck. “Really, Miss Toki, there are four of us here that can put up a tent, and there are only three tents. Please- sit, relax. We’ll dig out one of the camping chairs and then you can sit down and unwind. Why don’t you go locate a suitable spot for our camping location? Caeruleus and Thumper can join you.” Unlike Toki, Sans didn’t have the extra defense to buffer himself from overworking his body. The king had all intentions of making sure both of the gravid skeletons took it easy and relaxed.

Thumper grinned up at Sans. “You might have to turn her blue, Sans, or she’s going to end up helping anyways. We all know Miss Toki too well.”

"That goes without saying Thumper- Wait, wait why do I have to sit out?” he shot a look at Asgore.

The kind king grins sheepishly. “Well, you’re both pregnant. The rest of us are not. And since it wasn’t safe for Grillby to be here, I promised him I’d keep an eye on you for him. So… sit and keep Miss Toki out of trouble?”

“I’ll show you trouble.” She mock threatens, an amused grin splitting her face. Toki plants her hands on her back and sighs. “Alright, alright. I’ll go find a spot and relax. I’ll even be good and not clear a spot for a fire pit.”

"Alright, alright, right behind you, Tokes.” Cae chuckled, following her with his hands in his pockets.

Toki collected the promised camping chair first once the king dug it out, and then set off at an easy waddle. Toki ruffled Thumpers ears when the rabbit tried to steal the chair from her, and made use of her height to keep it out of his reach, giggling softly at his flustered huffing.

The skeleton lead the both of them some ways down the side of the lake, to a large grassy flat spot at the edge of the trees. It was well shaded, and slightly cooler than the rest of the air around the lake. Toki would have been sweating if she’d have been human- but as it was, her bones felt like they were covered in condensation. She was absurdly overly warm, even in the tank top and shorts that she habitually lived in.

The clearing had a couple of logs they could use for benches or whatever they might have needed them for. She was a little out of breath in the heat, but it wasn’t too bad. “Alright!” She chirps. “This is a good spot. Sheltered, shaded, and not too far from the water.”

“It looks good!” Thumper took a running start, and then flopped and rolled in the short, shady grass under the trees.

Cae caught up to Thumper and sat in the grass with a sigh.

Toki didn’t drop into the grass, but she did pad into the shade with them. She opened the chair and dropped into it with a soft sigh. “Gods, it’s hot.” She huffs. “I can’t wait until we can all go in the water.” The shade was cooler, but not much. Toki fanned herself with her hands, and waited not so patiently for Asgore, Papyrus, and Tenebris to get everything moved over to the clearing.

Thumper giggles and strips off his shirt. His ribs weren’t as visible any more, and he was putting on weight again. Weight went on slower than it came off when it came to magic starvation. “Neither can I. But the grass is cool and feels really good!” He rolls in it slightly, and then pokes Cae in the side. “The grass feels good on my fur. Does it feel nice on your bones too?”
"It does." he sighed happily, "Come on, Toki! Join us!" he grinned up at her.

“If I flop in the grass with you, you’re going to have to haul me up with a crane.” She chuckled softly, adjusting her shirt slightly. She slips her slippers off and threads her toes through the grass though, enjoying the tickle of the green blades over her bones.

He laughed at that. "Naaahh. Bullshit."

Toki snorts. “Bullshit my ass. Just wait until you’re as big as I am, and then you try and get up off the ground.” She shifted in her chair, folding her hands over her middle with a deep rush of air from between her teeth. “Ah… Alright.” She eased herself down onto the grass, and proceeded to crab-walk back to flop next to the both of them. She couldn’t quite flop as flat on account of the large swell of her middle. “Heh… The grass does feel nice.” The twins didn’t enjoy the position though, and kicked at her pelvis in retribution.

Thumper shifted and carefully flopped across Caeruleus so he could pet her belly. They fascinated him with their movements, and he enjoyed cuddling close and getting to look and listen to them moving. “Don’t worry, Miss Toki! I’ll help you get up if Sans is too lazy.”


“Well, he’s not exactly wrong, is he?” Toki shifted and rested her skull on her arms as she folded them behind her head. She smiled over at the larger skeleton and winked playfully as the grass tickled over her horns.

Thumper giggled softly, and patted her belly again. “They’re getting all wiggly again, Miss Toki.”

“Mhm.” She hums. “They don’t like it when I lay on my back.”

“Why not roll over then?” He hums, draping his light frame across the lazy skeleton’s chest.

“Laying on the ground on ones side is not comfortable.” She shortles affectionately. “It’s alright. They’re not kicking too hard, so all is well.” She grins, and elbows Cae gently. “You get to experience the joys of a fussy babybones too, huh bro?”

Cae snorted at that, then grinned at her. "Well I guess, but they're not exactly kicking YET but they will probably soon enough." he mentioned.

“You’re… nearly seven weeks? Or just at seven weeks, if memory serves.” Toki hums. “The twins started kicking at twenty weeks. You’ve got another thirteen before that, I’d bet. How are you feeling, by the way?” She had started getting sick at about seven weeks herself- but each pregnancy was a completely different experience.

"I'm taking this awfully well...” He mused. “Even though Grillby has cut off my Ketchup supply, lets me put a little on my fries but come on man.”

“Oh gods, please don’t get me started on Ketchup. I really want some on some ice cream right now.” She heaves a soft sigh. “Cravings, dude. They’re the most horrible things to exist.”

He covered his eyes with his arm and gave a loud sigh, a dramatic one.

“Ewww Toki.” Thumper made a face.

“I know, I know.” She covered her face with her hands, letting her skull plop onto the grass. She was still self-conscious as hell about her odd cravings- and usually didn’t voice them unless she
trusted the person she was telling. “It’s so gross, and I know it. I’m definitely not going to ever indulge in it. I don’t even like Ketchup all that much. Mustard is so much tastier.”

"..." Sans wasn’t sure if he was going to disagree on that one, or find himself agreeing to it.

Toki peeked out of her fingers over at him. “Saaans? I didn’t gross you out, did I?” Heavens knows she did it to poor Papyrus often enough.

"I don’t like mustard... but I want it." he whined.

She was silent for a moment, before bursting out in guffaws. “Oh my god. Instead of morning sickness, you got early cravings. Oh my goodness,” She chuckled, heaving for breath as the weight of her middle winded her. “I- I packed mustard in the cooler,” she giggled softly. “Oh goodness, Sans. That is adorable.”

“Wehhhh.” He groaned at her and flushed slightly under his arm.

Toki giggled softly in response to his groan. She shifted as she picked up the sounds of footsteps approaching, and flailed as she tried to sit up.

Thumper slid out of her flailing range, and reclaimed his spot on the grass.

Asgore was leading Papyrus and Tenebris along, the guys having packed their arms full of everything in the traditional fashion, so a multi-trip set of camping gear suddenly became a single trip set. “Getting comfortable already, are we?” he smiled cheerfully.

Sans sat up and hefted her up gently by the shoulders, before grinning up at Asgore. "Hehe, yeah. The grass is nice and cool.”

“Thanks, Sans.” Toki nodded softly to him, and crossed her legs so she could lean her elbows on her folded knees. “The grass is nice. Looks like you all made it in one trip.”

Asgore had three tents tossed over his shoulder, and he gave the three on the grass half-amused looks as he carefully set the coolers down. He eased the bundle of tents down, and hummed as he arranged them gently. Aliquam dropped his load of bags, and then began to fiddle with one of the tents. “I will admit, the grass and the shade sounds like it feels amazing, but I personally cannot wait until we can go swimming.”

"I just realized... Can Pops swim?” Caeruleus then piped up.

“I don’t actually know.” Asgore blinked. “Old friend? Can you swim?”

“If not, I’m sure the shallows are shallow enough for him to cool his feet.” Toki gave him a bright grin, and then flicked her eye lights up to watch Papyrus. “You all brought your swimming trunks, right?”

Tenebris rattled quietly and he looked to Asgore. "I haven't tried... for a while, but... I’m sure I am." Though at the mention of swim trunks, Tenebris blinked then chuckled. Swim trunks...

Asgore shared a look with Tenebris, and tilted his head. He had packed a pair of swimming trunks for both of them, but using them was up to Tenebris. The phantom, like the skeletons, didn’t have anything to show unless he was aroused. “I do have swimming trunks for both of us, yes, though, like yourself, Tenebris does not really need them.”
“I suppose we’ll see after we get the tents up.” Toki hummed slightly. “I know skeletons sink, but we don’t need air. Speaking of tents… I rested while you all got everything over here, so that means I should be golden to help, right?” Getting up, however, was proving to be a feat she was incapable of. “Not needing them… Well, that is images I did not need flashing through my skull, thank you. If you don’t need them, don’t wear them if you don’t want to? I’m still going to wear my swim suit, simply because I would feel a bit naked without it on.” Never mind that it was literally a two-piece blue bikini with little deer tracks on it, and that it covered only parts of her pelvis and chest.

"There's not really much to help with, per say. Aliquam just finished setting up the storage tent." Tenebris answered.

Toki hadn’t been paying much mind to what her fiancé had been doing from her limited point of view on the ground. She leaned around the two monsters and blinked slowly. “Oh. Well then.” In the time that they had been talking, master puzzle solver that he was, Papyrus had gotten all of the tents up and was just adjusting where they were sitting. “Well alright then. That’s the fastest record ever for setting those up. The poles never like to cooperate. Huh… Well, I’d still like to get up. Can someone give me a hand? I’m stuck.”

Asgore had no problems stepping closer and carefully grasping her hands. He helped heft her up and gave her skull a soft pat. “Perhaps you’d best use the chair from now on.”

“Probably.” She chuckles softly. “Alright!” She claps her hands cheerfully. “Well, we should probably pick tents once Aliquam is satisfied with them, get our bags in, and then hit the water before we all get heatstroke.”

“I didn’t think Skeletons could get heatstroke.” Thumper blinked up at her.

“Extremes of any kind of weather aren’t good for anyone, including skeletons.” Asgore answered easily. “With heat like this, it is entirely possible to get heat sick, even for the skeletons.”

"It's not fun to get overheated." Tenebris agreed. He helped Sans to his feet, and scooped Thumper too, before heading to the tents to get his bag into one of them.

Toki watched him go with an amused look and waddled to Papyrus. She helped him get their bags inside of their tent, the sleeping bags being shoved into the fourth storage tent for now. Thumper and Cae would be rooming in the third tent, which left two monsters per tent. It worked out.

Once all of the stuff had been stored away, Toki stepped out of the tent again, squishing past Papyrus, and began to strip off her tank top and shorts. It left her bare of everything except for her bikini- and the blue deer track print fabric didn’t cover a whole lot. The breeze over her bare bones and belly felt scandalously good, and she stretched, rubbing her fingers along the glowing green flesh of her back and sides.


She being the first to undress to swim caught the boys' attention and one by one they began to follow suit.

Cae was the first ready, wearing a pair of black swim shorts with blue stripes on the sides, much like how his normal pants had a white.

Aliquam was next, and definitely didn’t look the same as he did when clothed. Though he had a bright, and strong looking ribcage that gleamed in the light, his swim shorts were a bright orange color, plain and simple.
He looked to Toki and smiled happily, "I agree, it's very nice."

Toki definitely admired the view that Aliquam gave off. Damn did he have a nice ribcage, and that was all hers. She grinned at him and winked slightly. "I am so ready to get out of this heat though. It's hot even on me."

"Probably even more so." Asgore chuckled. He slid from his shared tent with Tenebris, clad in dark purple shorts, with all of his fuzzy fluffiness for show. "Those of us with fur or fire natured magic tend to feel the heat more. At least those with ice natured magic can cool themselves off." He chortles.

Thumper was the last one out, and he bustled from his tent in a jumble of limbs, falling flat on his face. He huffed and pushed himself up, and finished tucking his tail into the hole designed for it. His swimming trunks came to his knees, and were gray with little carrots on them.

Aliquam got a soft chuckle from how cute Thumper was, and he stretched before he sighed happily. "Where's father?" he asked.

"I refuse to wear these things!" came from the tent.

Toki giggled. She'd bought swim trunks for him ages ago- and they were lavender, like his soul, with mint leaves on them. "But you’d look adorable!" She calls back cheekily.

Asgore hides a chuckle. "If you don’t want to wear them, you don’t have to." So long as Asgore kept his hands to himself, Tenebris wouldn’t have anything to flaunt.

Cae was cracking up where he was standing while Tenebris moved out of the tent, folding his arms with a soft huff. "Thank you, Tokiko, but unless necessary, I refuse to wear something while swimming... Except these." he then held up the black and purple webbed gloves he was wearing and he had a pleased smile.

It was now completely clear where Cae and Aliquam got their build. Lowering his hands once more, he walked around to Asgore, looking at him, "I don’t look too out of place, do I, old friend?" he asked.

“Not too much so, old friend.” Asgore gave him a smile, and chuckled softly.

Thumper’s nose twitched and he giggled softly. Mischief lit up his purple eyes, and his tail twitched excitedly behind him. He bounced slightly in place, before his back paws rocked further up onto their toes. "Excluding Miss Toki ‘cause she’s got bigger babies, last one in the water is a rotten egg and has to do the dishes after dinner tonight!"

And like lightning, the rabbit was off; sprinting for the water with loud giggles echoing after him.

Toki watched him go with an amused snort.

Tenebris' tail perked upward as he looked towards Thumper after his challenge announcement and he chuckled, tugging Asgore along, "Come on, old friend" he chuckled.

To Thumper's surprise, Cae was already testing the water with his foot when the bunny got there. "Oh, took ya long enough." he smirked.

Thumper flopped into the waves and made a face at Sans as he splashed in the shallows. The water was really cold compared to the heat outside. "Teleporting doesn’t count!" He stuck his tongue out.
Toki laughed, and urged Papyrus along. "Go ahead, love. I'll catch up." She was slow in waddling for the water, having no desire to heat herself up any more before getting in the water.

Asgore chuckled and scooped Tenebris up into his arms. He set off at an easy lope, his mane bouncing and a playful grin stretching his face. He didn't mind doing dishes, no matter who lost.

Cae cackled smugly, before moving into the water. "There we go" he sighed, shivering.

Tenebris let out a gasp as he was scooped up, before he laughed and looked ahead, his eyes gleaming at seeing the bright blue water.

Papyrus smiled and shook his head, taking her arm with his, "I always do the dishes anyhow." he purred gently.

Toki smiled up at Papyrus lovingly, and rested her head gently against the bare bone of his upper arm. "I'll help you." She promises softly.

Asgore hit the water like a freight train, nearly tripping as the water created resistance that he wasn’t expecting. He waded in some, the thick fur of his legs sucking water in like a sponge- and then grinned mischievously. He hefted Tenebris some, and then tossed, sending him a little deeper into the water, but not someplace that he couldn’t stand upright.

Thumper grinned and proceeded to splash water at Caeruleus.

Toki watched the mischief as they finally made it to the lakeside, and then smiled softly in amusement. “You know, for all that I am a girl, I have never been flung into the water like that. I always flung my brothers when we were younger- which was hilarious.” Kon had hated to get tossed- so naturally, she’d had to toss him multiple times, just to laugh at his angry sputters as he made an attempt to drown her in retribution.

Cae splashed back with a cackle, "It's on, Fluffbutt!" he cackled.

Tenebris gasped as he was lifted and let out an "ASGORE!" as he was thrown. He hit the water with a massive splash. Tenebris surfaced and gasped, yelping and whining in complaint, before he huffed and shifted to have his back on the surface, tail serving as a rudder as he swam around. The gloves were doing him some good, as he was getting around well enough.

Papyrus giggled lightly to see his father's attitude ease up, and he gently tugged on Toki's arm. "Come on." he purred, guiding her into the water.

Toki giggled softly, and padded into the water with Papyrus next to her. The water was cold and it lapped up and over her bones. The water around her legs heated rapidly. She chuckled slightly, and walked deeper, enjoying the sand between her toes. "Ah~" She let out a pleased sound.

Thumper squeaked and laughed, and dove under the surface to rapid-fire kick waves of water at Cae.

Asgore laughed and sank down to float as best he could. With all of his fur, he looked like a melting pile of pale pudding.

Papyrus blinked and sighed happily, basking in the water that was warming up around him and Toki. "O-Oh... Nyeh heh heh, I forgot you could do that~"

Sans shielded himself and cackled. "Oh come on! That's not fair!"

Tenebris swam over to Asgore after a while and nuzzled against his fluff, purring happily.
Toki gave him an apologetic look. "Sorry, Pap. I'm not very good to stay near if you want to cool off." She didn't venture too deep, but she did go out to one of the logs that rested not far out from the shore. She took a seat on it, and sank up to her chin. "It feels good to let off this heat though."

Thumper had to come up for air eventually, and he came up sputtering and laughing, valiantly trying to swipe water from his eyes.

Asgore welcomed Tenebris close, and laughed softly. He rumbled happily back, and tickled his fingers slightly over the others side. "The water feels good, doesn't it, old friend?"

"Are you kidding me? This feels so good!" Papyrus settled by her contently, and purred as he held her close.

Cae knelt down and did his best to swipe the water away from the rabbit monster's face. "Here." He chuckled.

He shivered at the teasing fingers and swatted his hand lightly. "Indeed, though the initial shock of the temperature was... less than pleasant." he admitted, "If you had planned to throw me into the water, perhaps I should have worn those shorts..."

"Does it?" Toki gave him a smile and leaned into his side. She snuggled to him contently and enjoyed the cool water flowing over her. It chilled her bones, and the twins kicked eagerly as they tossed and turned within her. Toki couldn't help but giggle. "The twins are enjoying the cooler temperatures. They've been pretty fussy."

Thumper giggled and scrubbed his face with his fingers. "I'm good now. Fur leaves water that drips everywhere."

Asgore nodded and cuddled him closer to his fur. He was warm and radiated warmth, similar to Toki did. "I am sorry, old friend. I couldn't resist." He chuckled. "You could always get out and get them on?"

"Though you're making it pleasantly warm~" he purred gently.

"Yeah, you'll have to really dry yourself off when you're done swimming." Cae chuckled.

Tenebris purred happily and chattered softly, before he scoffed and shook his head, "Nah, I'd rather swim as my predecessors did... Only with these gloves..." he murmured.

"Well, I do make warmth naturally," she chuckled gently. Toki shifted, and then grinned slightly. She peered into the water, and watched a fish swim curiously around her middle, before starting into Papyrus's rib cage. "You have a curious fish friend, Pap."

"In this heat? I'll be dry in half an hour. King Asgore on the other hand..." the king was a fuzzy monstrosity. Thumper grinned up to Sans, and then mischievously wiggled his fingers. "Hey Sans... you don't have to breathe, right? You should totally go tickle Papyrus's feet. Or Toki's."

"The gloves are very useful since you don't have palms." The king hums softly.

"I have a feeling I'll get kicked." Sans quickly replied, shaking his head.

"Very helpful. I can never be thankful enough to Toki for these." he purred happily.

Thumper pouted slightly. "Can't you teleport though? That is like the ultimate gift for doing pranks!" The gray bunny huffs slightly, and crosses his arms thoughtfully. "Hm..." he could play mischief
later, he supposed. He had energy to run off after all and he could do some swimming instead.

Asgore chuckled. "Indeed. Just how fast can you go in the water with them, old friend?"

"Go ahead and play, kiddo, I’m going to go relax a bit." Sans pat his head then let him go.

Thumper made a face at him and nodded. “Okay.” And he was off, with mischief in mind, to swim some circles around the lakeshore that they were on.

Papy looked down as he was told of his guest and he blinked once, "Nyeh?"

"Now isn't that a question." he rumbled, before he turned and took off from the king, swimming almost effortlessly thanks to the gloves, as well as the nature of his feet and tail.

Toki giggled softly, and swished water through his ribs. The fish swished, brushing mucus-covered scales across the inside of his ribs, before zipping down to investigate the loose insides of his swimming trunks. “Nyeh,” she teases slightly. “You have a fish checking out your pants.”

Though the fish fled swiftly once Tenebris took off. Many others also were fleeing to deeper waters.

Asgore chuckled, watching Tenebris shoot off, and straightened up some so he could stand and see him better.

He was indeed getting a shiver from the feeling on his ribs, but he sighed as it fled. "Not the first being to do some diving in there." he teased her, before he turned to see his Father swimming, "Oh, looks like he's a natural at that.” he giggled, "Must be those gloves you bought him.”

Well that made her flush a bright, bright green. Toki giggled into his shoulder. "I do believe I have first dibs," she laughed softly. Seeing Tenebris swimming was an interesting thing. He moved fluidly, reminding her almost of a crocodile in the water. All he was missing was teeth like hers. “Probably is. I figured, y’know, since he’s got those holes in his hands, he’d need something to help him swim.”

"Well it helped, and I think he's very thankful." He wrapped an arm around her side and pulled her close, tilting up her chin to kiss her.

Toki smiled warmly and leaned into his kiss with a soft, jubilant sigh. Her fingers trailed up and gently stroked along his jaw, tracing the strong bones back and up to his skull with a tender and loving touch. “He’s not the only one who is.” She purrs to him. Gods above, she loved this skeleton.

"Well at least I’m able to show my thanks." he purred teasingly as he pecked her cheek.

Toki giggled softly and smoched along the strong line of his jaw.

Right up until she got a rabbit powered water blast to the face that had her sputtering and shaking water out of her eye sockets.

Thumper literally cackled. “That’s what you get for doing gross adult kissing stuff on a family trip!”

"NYEH! Hey!” Pap shook his head and shot Thumper a look. "She's my mate. I'm allowed to kiss her if I want to!"

Toki couldn’t help giggling as she drained her skull. Oh heavens above, Thumper was such a dork, and so was her Papyrus.

Thumper grinned at him in childish glee. “Of course you are, but kissing is so gross! Cooties are a
thing!" And, with Papyrus looking at him, he took a wave of water straight into his face, followed by the rabbit’s mischievous giggles.

Toki splashed back, laughter trailing from her chest. She caught Thumper squarely, and watched as he sputtered and had to shake his ears out. She could enjoy a splash war with the kid- he did need attention, after all. She was in charge of him, after all, until he chose whom he wanted to stay with.

"Hey Toki…" he then grinned at her, "Why don’t you go give Thumper a little kiss?" he chuckled deviously.

“Oh no, no, no, no, I don’t want any Toki-cooties!”

The rabbit wasn’t fast enough in water to escape the hands that ensnared his ankles though. He squeaked, holding his breath as he was tugged slightly under water, and then into her arms. Toki settled him atop her belly, his weight lessened by his buoyancy, and then peppered him with kisses.

He shrieked with laughter, legs flailing and stirring up a load of bubbly lake foam. “Tokiiii!” He shrieked. “Nooooooo! No kisses!”

"Careful not to kick the babies, Thumper." Pap told him, knowing that would trap him for sure.

“My l-legs aren’t n-near enough to- AHH NO TICKLES!” His shrieks hit another decibel, squeaking as he laughed and flailed, splashing a wave of water into Pap’s face in retribution.

Toki roared with laughter, his thrashing rattling her just slightly. She peppered him with another couple kisses, fingers merciless against his side. She didn’t last long though, before the sensation of being out of breath hit her, and she slowed, her laughter fading into a few sparse giggles.

They were giggles that were shared by Thumper as the rabbit went limp in her arms, limbs twitching from time to time with lingering pulses from his laughter.

He sputtered as he was splashed and coughed gently, to clear the water from his skull, before he smiled at the sight of the cuteness between his mate and the orphan nestled so adorably in her arms. "Nyeh heh heh heh, how precious~" They truly were. She was good with children, and seeing her settled against his side, frame swollen with his young, giving attention to a child who needed it desperately made him feel warm and happy. He loved her so god damned much.

Thumpers foot gave one more twitch, a weak splash flailing towards the biggest skeleton. He giggled softly, limp and lazy against Toki.

Toki panted slightly, but her sockets were bright, and her being radiated with peace and happiness. She adjusted how Thumper was floating in her arms, cradling the tired bunny against her chest, and then leaned into Papyrus. She was a bit worn out from that, but her energy bursts were a lot smaller since the twins wore her out more often. Toki winked up at him. "I," she panted, "Know we are. Heh. You're precious too."

He smiled and kissed her head gently, rubbing his fingers over her back to soothe her breathing. "I love you~"

"I love you too." She nuzzled up under his chin with a soft purr.

"Mmm... You didn't tire yourself out, did you?" Thumper blinked up at her slowly.

"I'm a little winded, but when you're as pregnant as I am, that's pretty common." She chuckled softly.
"Nyeh heh heh." Kissing her head, Pap held Toki closer, smiling at them both.

"I'm sorry." He hummed to the both of them. He wiggled some. "Lemme go please? I wanna go see if I can get Mister Tenebris to play some."

"Making your rounds, hm?" She smiled softly, gave him one more smooch to his cheek, and then let him lazily swim off. She relaxed into Papyrus's side, sighing gently. "He has so much energy," she mused. "Think ours will be like that?"

"I don't know." he shrugged loosely with a chuckle, "I guess we'll see what happens, yeah?" he purred.

Toki chuckled. "We'll see indeed."
Swimming had ended up exhausting nearly everyone who had gone to enjoy the water, but after they had dried off and settled down in warm clothing, it came to be time for dinner.

Various foods had been cooked over the fire and set out for everyone to enjoy, while Tenebris himself had been given barely seared meat, which he was able to eat with his new dentures. Dentures that you could just TELL he didn't like, but it tore the meat and let him eat, so he was content enough for now.

"Dessert time!" Cae announced, bringing over a plastic bag with various treats inside, more specifically, Graham crackers, Chocolate bars, and Marshmallows.

"Who wants a S'more?" He laughed as he sat down.

Tenebris' attention was caught. "What is a S'more?" He inquired.

Toki beamed across the fire to Tenebris. She had her feet propped up carefully on Ali’s lap. All of the activity of the day found her feet hurting something terribly, and rather than demanding a foot rub, she opted for elevation instead. "A S'more is a culinary delight." She giggled. "Cae knows. I figured I'd need help in showing you all, and I was right." She was sore and achy, but she didn't want to just sit around. "Gimme a hand up and I can help make them. They are chocolate, marshmallows, Graham crackers. We're going to need sharpened sticks."

Thumper looked excited as he shifted in his chair. He hopped up, eagerly flicking his tail. "I'll get the sticks!" He called as he bounced off to gather a small collection of them from the edge of the forest.

Asgore smiled softly. "How about we just move your chair closer, Toki? You need to rest your feet. How are they feeling, by the way?"

"Sore."

"Sore." She admits. "But moving my chair would work. I still need to get up though to move my seat."

"We could use Dad's tail." Cae joked.

Tenebris thumped a foot roughly on the ground and growled at his eldest. "No."
Asgore chuckled softly. He stepped out of his seat, and then grasped the back of both Toki and Papyrus's chair. He hefted them up and set them down a bit closer to the flames, so she wouldn't have to get up. "There. Problem solved." He chortled.

Toki blinked, and then laughed softly. She successfully hid a flinch at Tenebris’ growl, well hidden by Asgore having moved them. “Well, that's one way to do it.” She relaxed as best she could, letting her ankles stretch in her fiancé's lap as she folded her hands over her middle. She was clad in shirts and a tank top again. "You remember how to make a S'more, Cae?"

Pap had squeaked in surprise, tightly holding onto Toki’s leg out of reflex, and then he smiled up at Asgore. "Ah, thank you." He smiled at him, then reached out and collected her ankles into his hands. He kneaded them and the bones of her feet, rubbing the sore bones to soothe them.

"Course I do!" Cae replied with a grin.

Toki couldn't help the pleased groan that pulled from her as his palms worked over her feet. "God's yesssss, Pap."

"You can ask, you know." Asgore chuckled gently. "That is what mates are for." He thrummed.

“I know,” Toki sighed blissfully. “I don’t like to ask though.”

Thumper squeaked as he came bustling back, arms laden with sticks. "It's really dark out there."

"Oh well done, Thumper. All right! One stick for everyone!" Sans exclaimed eagerly.

The boy grinned cheerfully. "Uuh! They're pretty sharp." Still, he passes out a stick to each person, and then flops eagerly in his chair with his stick. "What now?"

"We put a marshmallow on the point and hold it over the fire, you can let it catch fire, or you don't, whatever floats your goat." Sans grinned at Asgore.

The king snickered good-naturedly at the joke, whilst everyone else groaned.

Thumper grins slightly. "Cool! Gimme, gimme!"

Toki chuckled softly. "Manners, Thumper. We'll pass the marshmallows around. Cae? Will you be a dear and hand me a small thing of chocolate and a thing of Graham crackers?"

"Sure, here." he passes her the chocolate and the crackers, while giving everyone else a marshmallow to start. He took chocolate and crackers for himself.

She grinned to him in thanks and carefully cracked the cracker in half. It crumbled over her belly as she rested it carefully there, balancing one half as she plopped a small bit of chocolate on it. She grinned wider, speared her marshmallow, and then held the stick out over the fire. She didn't let it catch fire, but it began to turn a golden color as she rotated it.

Thumper shoved his right in, and it caught fire. He looked at it curiously, and blew it out. Then he shoved it in his mouth and squeaked. "Ah! Tho hawt buth tho thweet!"

Pap was careful with his and smiled as his ended up a golden color as well, "This looks good!"

Cae didn’t care about burning his, a grin on his face as he watched the external layer burn, before he blew it out and looked to Toki. "Ready for my cracker and chocolate when you are" he chuckled gently.
Tenebris blinked once as he watched his turn golden brown before he retracted it and looked at it curiously, taking in the roasted scent, "Mmh." he then blew on it gently and without thinking, popped it into his mouth, chewing before he swallowed slightly.

Right before he started to smack his lips, his tongue pressing against the top of his mouth, and got stuck.

Toki grinnned at Cae and motioned for him to ready his. She smeared hers gently onto her chocolate, smashed the second cracker down, and lifted it up to take a bite. Chocolate and marshmallow stuck to her teeth as she made a pleased sound. "Mmmm..." her eyes closed as she savored the taste. It was so sweet, but so good.

Thumper giggled as he watched Tenebris.

Asgore meanwhile was dealing with marshmallow gumming up his beard and the fur of his lips.

Tenebris began to rattle in distress, before he took his thumb and tried to dig out the marshmallow off the roof of his mouth.

Thumper dealt with his own gummy mouth, and he reached over to offer his glass of juice to the big monster. "Winse! Mallows ah schticky." He slurred around his mouthful.

He attempted a growl, ended up gurgling around the gooey mess that had his mouth gummed up, and took a drink of the juice. He swished a couple times, and it took some working at it before he successfully got the marshmallow free from his mouth and dentures. "Ah!"

Toki giggled across the way at Tenebris, finishing off her S'more quickly. "Ah. Heh. Twins enjoy the sugar." Not that they needed the energy. They would be fussy all night. She still didn't regret it. "Sticky mouth, Tenny?" She grins to him, cheekily swiping her glowing green tongue along her teeth to clean off the chocolate and crumbs stuck with the marshmallow.

He shot her a look and licked his teeth before he huffed.

Cae offered him another marshmallow, "Try to wait for the rest of the S'more this time, Pops" he chuckled, letting him take it and put it on his stick, going to go ahead and get his graham cracker ready for his first S'more while his father roasted the marshmallow.

Toki watched them both with a soft smile, and left her hands folded over her middle. Sans had the rest of the mallows, but she didn’t want to go pester him for them. So… Instead, with a flick of her finger, there was suddenly a glowing bee raiding the marshmallow bag to bring everyone their second round of mallows.

Stripe cheerily went about her task, and then settled on Toki’s knee until she was needed again.

Toki petted the bee gently, and chuckled. “I have embraced my inner Nara late into life. My grandpa would be so proud.” She snickered.

“Inner Nara?” Asgore blinked.

Toki grinned. “Nara are known for being very smart, but horribly, horribly lazy and un-driven. Most of us find things to be too troublesome to really do with effort. But, from time to time we can be motivated. I’ve always been a very active and motivated Nara. My grandpa blamed it on me being only half-blooded." She wiggled her fingers at Stripe. “I just used my magic to fetch sugary treats so I didn’t have to move or have someone else move. I totally embraced my inner Nara.”
Thumper giggled softly. “Well, growing babies is hard work. Using magic makes things easier!” Rabbits weren’t known for strong magic, sadly, and he wasn’t much different from the norm. Rabbit monsters were mostly earth based, which meant they could grow awesome crops. He was faster than most rabbits when he was healthy- but that was the only thing he had going for him. Speed didn’t mean much in the long run. “I wanna make a S’more!” he nudged Cae. “Can you show me how you put it together?”

Caeruleus cackled at Toki’s cleverness and shifted in his chair to be level with Thumper in his. "Come on, kiddo. I'll show you."

Thumper beamed and nodded eagerly. “Yes please!”

Toki giggled softly, shifting her legs in Papyrus’ lap. “So… You know another fun thing that my family used to do while we were camping?”

Asgore, having just finished clearing his beard of the gooey mess, glanced to her thoughtfully. “Hm? What other traditions did you follow?”

Toki grinned slightly more. “Scary stories. I will warn you now, I am the biggest chicken when it comes to scary stuff, but I love it too. I know a couple scary camping stories.”

Tenebris rumbled quietly as he carefully assembled his S’more, before he took a bite of it, able to eat it a lot easier now that it had other stuff alongside the marshmallow.

"Stories huh? Cool." Cae grinned at her. "So do we wanna go for really scary or somethin’ else?"

“That depends on Thumper.” She tilts her chin. “You want some super scary stories or some milder ones, sweet heart?”

Thumper contemplated as he assembled his S’more, and then nodded. “I want scary!” he grins. “I’m already rooming with Sans. If I get scared, I’ll flop with him.” Or if he got too scared, he’d go find Tenebris or Toki. But that was left unsaid.

Toki nodded. “Super scary it is. Though… I dunno if my human scary stories will really scare you guys. It’s based off of what humans instinctually fear.” She hums thoughtfully, thinking through her repertoire of stories she had collected over the many years. “So… who wants to go first?”

"Well, I have an idea for a story, but it's not exactly scary." Tenebris murmured, licking his claws to claim the chocolate smeared on them. "Why don’t you go first?"

“M’kay. I have two that come to mind- so I’ll tell the shorter one first. It’s actually told as a poem, so I hope you all don’t mind it.” The pregnant skeleton shifted and cleared her throat.

“A poem can’t be scary.” Thumper insisted.

“We’ll see.” Toki winked. “It’s not as bad as my second story, but I think it’s creepy.”

Asgore chuckled, and motioned for her to begin as he leaned back. He forewent more marshmallows and instead nibbled a cracker with melted chocolate on it.

Clearing her nonexistent throat once more, Toki got settled and then began to speak. “The shortcut through the corn field,

Tempt you as you're walking home.
The clouds above keep the moon concealed,
As you enter the swaying corn, alone.
The corn grows tall and thick, my friend,
The path you chose is muddy;
It grows in rows without scope or end,
And in the dark, you hurry.” She grinned slowly, sharp teeth glimmering in the firelight.
“You don't see the standing forms,
As you pass them on your way.
They stand still amongst the swaying corn,
Which hides their pallor, and decay.
Hundreds gather in this field tonight,
Though you see none at all;
Yet still you look around in fright,
But the corn grows too thick, too tall.
You tell yourself as you continue through,

'Its merely the rustling of the leaves,'

But they see you, and they hear you.” She leaned forwards slightly in her chair, and her eye lights glimmered in amusement.

“And they might not let you leave.”

Asgore’s fur had steadily fluffed up as he sat in his chair, and he swallowed slightly, chin tucking down into the fur of his beard and chest. “That was…” Well spoken and creepy, to be honest. “Very good.” He coughed slightly.

Tenebris cupped his chin while his tail rattled quietly, "Fascinating." he murmured.

Toki chuckled softly. “You think everything is fascinating.” She teased.

Thumper shifted in his chair, rubbing his ruffled fur. “Okay, poems can be scary too.” He glanced over to Tenebris, and scrambled over and into the bigger monster’s lap when the fire gave a crackling pop. The rabbit settled there, and curled his arms around his chest. “Okay! More scary stories please!”

Toki grinned. “I’ve got another one- but is there any that anyone else wants to tell first? My second one is really long.”

“Well... We're listening.” Tenebris rumbled, leaning back and nestling Thumper more firmly to himself.

"Don’t be shy, come on then!" Pap piped up with a smile.
“Alright, alright.” She chuckled. “The second story is actually based here. It’s something I’ve experienced too.” She chirps softly. “This is one that all of my brothers and my cousins and myself were warned about while camping here. It’s probably not true- but there’s always the chance. My family has a long and rich history- and we know monster magic was involved.” Given her current form, it was quite obvious that magic used to exist in her bloodline. The shortest skeleton shifted in her seat andiggled one leg free from Pap’s hands, letting it rest gingerly on the dirt that had been cleared away from the fire pit. She tapped her toes on the dirt, and was satisfied by the noise it made. She would need it later. “All right. Here we go.”

“Many centuries ago, back when the world was still filled magic and wonder, the ranges of our clan spanned far beyond this lake, nearly to the main mountain proper. The forests were ours to roam, ours to wander and to settle- but as time moved on, people encroached and began to take from us that which was ours. They murdered and they razed and ravaged, and slaughtered many of our kin.” She spoke softly, looking back on how her grandfather had told it as they sat around the fire.

“The elders and the healers took desperate measures here in these very woods. They took to heart our given name, and took upon them to catch a stag. The stag was tall and broad, pelt as pale as the moon, twelve points his antlers bore, and sharp were his hooves. They took his blood, they took his heart, and a sacrifice was made. Six men, six women, six children, and six elders gave their lives to lay a curse upon the woods just behind us.”

Toki took a moment to breathe and take a sip of her drink. She wet her teeth to prevent sparks, and then hummed softly. “The lives given were enough. The magic of the world took to vice the mortals’ plea, and took each life that was given and turned it into a beast. Its hide was pale as the moon; it’s fur short and thick. It walked on both two legs and four, a crown of thorn tipped horns sprouting from its head. It took most of the shape of the stag they slew, and during the day that is what it simply was. A pale, ghostly stag, eyes as black as coal and hide as white as the snow. By night, though, the beast took its ghastly shape, with a tail long and barbed, teeth sharp and strong like iron, eyes as black as it’s patchwork soul. It was truly a ghastly mix made by the blood of Nara and stag. Terror reined- and those who stole and ravaged and razed were slaughtered in the dark.”

There were a few crackles from the logs in the fire, and Toki tilted her head thoughtfully, sockets dark and ponderous. “The curse laid in place said that no land would be forcibly taken. None whose blood did not call to it would be allowed to wander its domain- and land not willingly given would house it forever. Those who wandered in when they were not of the blood were taken and never seen again.”

“The land where we live is the last of the land- and it is land that can’t be claimed forcibly by anyone. Given yes- taken no. But here at the lake, and the many, many miles between here and the Village, is land that was taken by the rising governments of the times. It was never given back- and the curse is said to still stand, even if it was smoothed over and payment was given many centuries later for the land that was seized.”

She shifts, rubbing her fingers quietly over her belly. “My grandpa warned us- warned me especially, since I was only a half-blood even if I was the Clan Heir- that it is said that age and time has warped the creature. Blood magic, black magic, the type that my ancestors had committed did not bode well to exist for long. They made an error in letting it continue- but the last who knew how to dispel it had died to give it life.”

“It haunts this lake, and walks the camps, taking any who wander out alone. We were warned to walk in pairs and, and to keep light on us at all times. We were to keep the fire going at all times of the night, for the beast feared it above all else. It had started to take even those of Nara blood, so twisted was its curse. He told us to listen for it. It had a distinctive gait, he said. We would hear the
thumping of it’s steps, and the sound of it’s tail dragging. Thump. Thump. Shhhh.” She thumped her foot in the dirt, once, and then twice, and slid the bones slowly through the dirt to echo the noise. “He said that was the only warning we would have. It was said that it’s unholy creation rendered it mute.”

Thumper shivered.

Toki hummed softly. The twins stirred and settled lower in her middle. “When I was little, perhaps nine or ten, I thought that my grandpa was full of crap as most kids do. I had to use the bathroom, perhaps around midnight or one in the morning, and I didn’t bother to wake my little brothers or any of my cousins.”

She quirks a faint grin. “Worst mistake of my life, let me tell you now.” She chuckled softly, sockets black as she recalled her addition to her grandfather’s story. “Our campsite was large, so we had to go fairly far into the woods so we didn’t come across someone’s business in our exploration. I took only a flashlight and toiletries, and went down to the end of the lake.” She pointed behind her, away from the cars.

“It was quiet, and I was in the brush all on my own. I had just finished my business, when I heard it.” Her foot thumped slowly. Thump. Thump. Shhh. Thump. Thump. Shhh. “I froze like a deer in the headlights, and I fumbled with my lamp. The sound was slow at first, and it seemed to come close.” Her foot pressed harder, ignoring the ache it brought. The thumps grew louder.

“It got really close to where I was. It suddenly went silent though- and for a time I simply thought I had been hearing my own heart beat and had gotten scared.” She closed her sockets and her bones rattled faintly as she shivered. “I remember,” She said softly, “The bushes around me suddenly rustled. I shined my light on it, and found legs. Pale, pale white legs with cloven hooves. And I looked up, and up, and up, and found dark eyes glittering at me, soulless and mad. Teeth, similar to mine now, gaped at me as it reached for with human-like hands.”

She fell silent for a moment, gathering her thoughts. “I threw my lamp at it and ran as its jaws snapped shut.” She said softly, her jaws opening and closing with a horrifying snick of sharp, sharp teeth. “I ran in a panic. I know it gave chase- I had stalled it, left it spooked by the light of my lamp suddenly in it’s face. Pretty sure that’s what saved me.” She quirks a soft smile. “I made it to the supply tent on the edge of camp, and I ran inside. I zipped it shut, and hunkered down inside one of the old food crates. I was there all night.”

“It followed me to camp- and it circled the tent from there until dawn. Thump… Thump… Shhh… Thump… Thump… Shhh…” Her foot echoed each of the noises that she vocalized. “My family found me when the sun came up, but no one believed me. I kinda ended up not believing it myself, really. I’m pretty sure I just got spooked in the dark and was hearing things, and maybe my brothers and elder cousins were playing a mean prank. It was dark, and I was young. Kids have active imaginations, you know? And cousins can be mean little shits.” She chuckles. “Still- best to stay in your tents tonight, yeah? If you hear the sounds, beware and don’t go out alone. Well… Okay, we’re all monsters, so I’m pretty sure we can handle anything out there.” She chortles. “Besides, there hasn’t been a missing persons case in several decades.”

Pap’s eyes were wide as he leaned in to listen to the tale.

Cae was munching absentmindedly as he listened.

Tenebris had brought in his legs, gripping his seat tightly as his tail rattled loudly, caging Thumper to his chest.
Asgore was doing his best to hide in his fluff, while Thumper was peeking out nervously from where Tenebris had him caged to his chest.

Part of Toki felt really, really bad about unnerving them. Part of her had forgotten that Monsters were generally very, very nice people, and scary things weren’t likely to be good for them. She grinned slowly, and, in the back of her throat, she mimicked the sound of thumping and scratching, making it seem like it was coming from behind her. “Just beware,” She mused, watching as Stripe buzzed off of her to settle into the campfire’s flames, “If you go out tonight. Take a buddy, take a friend- and don’t go out alone.” She let the thumping start out low, her foot returning up to Pap’s lap so they wouldn’t think it was her.

The thumping and scratching picked up pace, thudding like a heart beat, louder and louder until it sounded like it was upon them- and Toki snapped her teeth again with a loud sound, and watched to see what would happen. Toki wasn’t a successful author for nothing, after all. She was good at spinning a story- even one from memory.

Asgore turned into the hairiest ball of fur that she had ever seen, his fists curling tightly over the edge of his seat as his eyes darted warily around.

Thumper covered his face and hid his eyes.

Tenebris’ tail lashed faster and he bared his dentures as he screeched reflexively, expecting something to pop out. One arm came tightly around Thumper, protectively holding him closer.

Caeruleus and Aliquam both tensed up slightly, the older rising slightly in his seat just in case he needed to teleport people away.

The screech was not expected, and Toki’s amusement disappeared in an instant as her limbs tensed up under a flash of fear, locking defensively about her middle. Her sockets bled dark, and she froze in place, tense and unable to bolt if needed.

Stripe buzzed up and out of the flames, little green bug planting herself between her frozen Queen and Tenebris.

“Old friend?” Asgore was calmer than the understandably nervous skeleton across the flames. “Easy now, or you’ll squish Thumper. It was just a story- a very good one that did what was intended.”

The child was a little bit crushed to Tenebris’ chest, but he didn’t mind overly much if he never had to hear that sound again so close to his ears. He whined slightly and held his ears in his paws. “That was really loud…”

At that moment, Papyrus reached out slowly, touching Toki’s shoulder with a broad and warm hand. His tail rattled before he slowly loosened his grip on the child and clicked in apology. "I'm sorry, Thumper." he murmured, before he looked to Toki, "Tokiko?"

Thumper was content not to leave Tenebris’ grasp, and thus stayed in his lap. His fingers massaged his ringing ears all the same, and he tried to listen to what was being said.

Toki was stock still, sockets dark as she stared blankly ahead. She was fully coherent, but that didn’t stop the flash of nerves that flooded through her. It Papyrus resting his hand on her, and Stripe gently buzzing down and resting on her knee for her finally exhale and close her sockets. Her arms didn’t move from their cage about her middle. “I’m okay.” She murmurs, not looking at anyone as she works to calm down. It was just Tenebris- she’s heard his sounds before, and this time she had startled him. He hadn’t been going for the twins- he hadn’t been going to hurt her or his
grandchildren. He'd simply been scared. It was stupid that the screech was enough to make her lock up like a deer in the headlights. “Just… Give me a moment. I’m all right. It’s all good.”

Asgore stared across at her and took a deep breath. “Take a few deep breaths, Toki.” He suggested gently. “Perhaps no more scary stories for tonight, hm?” His fur was starting to lay flat again, and he eyed the gravid female’s mate, arching a brow at him.

Papyrus resumed gently rubbing Toki’s feet, hoping to help her relax a bit more. She did have to work through this mostly on her own, but he would support her as best as he was able to.

Tenebris looked at them, then he sighed and groomed Thumper lightly, though after a moment, he looked up at everyone. “Why don’t… I tell a story now? It's not frightening, but a tale of the past. It will settle us for slumber at least…”

Thumper simply slumped in his arms as he was groomed, and sighed contently as the ringing in his ears began to fade. “Sure!” he chirped softly. “We could all use something not scary.”

“Tale of the past?” Toki inquired softly, sockets remaining closed and body relaxing as Papyrus helped her ease out of her nerves. “I would love to hear it.”

“So would I.” Asgore nodded slightly, and resumed nibbling his crackers. They were quite tasty, even if they were a little dry.

He smiled gently, and nodded, "Alright." he then leaned back, and his hands glowed lightly, his magic harnessing the smoke from the fire to create little shadow forms, "This is a tale of a time since passed. Of a great species of beast. And of a pup." he murmured as he let the shadows start to shift form.

Toki leaned back slightly, sockets opening finally so she could see. Her hands rubbed soothingly over her middle to calm the twins from their upset from the moment prior, and she smoothed her fingertips slightly over the soft ecto-skin hidden under her tank top. She listened to his words, taking them in as she watched the smoke begin to change. Her hand stole up carefully and claimed Pap’s, holding it and rubbing his knuckles gently.

The king and the rabbit listened and watched raptly.

"There was a great race of beasts that lived in the forest, beasts of many kinds, Canis, Draconis, Felicae, Avian, the genetics were unique in every beast. Though different, they were always together in packs. They would have an alpha couple, but even with that, they were a family. Our story is of a pup birthed of an alpha." he murmured, letting the shadows take form of a smaller form than the first shadows he summoned forth, each and every one with bright purple glowing eyes.

"More specifically, it is the story of a runt, whose tale is unlike any other." he explained.

The start of the story had Toki’s rapt attention. Her eyes watched him thoughtfully, glimmering a pale green across the fire.

"This pup came into the world knowing naught but his mother and the siblings that wrestled on either side of him, each and every one seeking their mother’s milk. With many mouths to feed, one knows that many species would sacrifice abandoning the runt for the sake of the other pups.” The shadow of the runt could be seen as it was pushed and shoved by the larger pups to be cast away from the mother so that they could claim her teats.

"But these beasts would not allow this. They were a noble species, they were forever mated to their destined, and were dedicated parents, protecting each and every of their pups until they were old
enough to join the hunt. And this runt was no exception." A second form, no doubt the shadow of the father, approached and nosed his snout between the pups before lifting the runt and putting him back where he could easily clamp onto his mother to suckle once more.

That was definitely different than a typical animal would do. Toki slowly eased her grip off her middle, leaving one resting just along her girth so she could entertain the twins. The other came up to pillow her chin, giving herself a headrest.

Asgore shifted slightly in his seat, eyes flicking between the purple-eyed beasts and Tenebris, making quiet connections.

Thumper was simply ensnared by the shadow play.

"The pup was happy, he had a good life, and as the son of the alpha, great potential. But there was tragedy that soon struck." Another wave of shadows and the beasts took a protective nesting form around the pups.

"There was a storm, a terrible one. It blew for a day and a night. The pup was terrified, its siblings were too, but the mother and father protected them valiantly through the terrifying time... But when the pup stirred the next morning..."

A wave of his hand, and all the shadows shifted to form a broken nest around the pup.

"He was alone. His Mother, Father, Siblings... All gone. He cried out, but the entire pack was empty, there was no one to respond to his calls." The big monster hummed softly.

"He was alone in a broken nest, with no sight or sound of his kin. It was as if the storm had simply... Carried them away."

Thumper sniffled slightly in his arms and watched raptly. He knew all too well what it was like to be orphaned- he knew it all too well. It was a very fresh wound to the heart indeed.

Pretty much everyone did as they listened and looked at his shadow play of the events to follow.

Toki slightly recognized the larger forms of the beasts the more she looked at them, and her eyes, slightly misty, darted between them and Tenebris. They looked like he did when he had… well, mauled her, to be frank. She tilted her skull, teeth grinding thoughtfully as she listened and watched.

"He called out for hours... Days... He was growing hungry, he was cold and scared, and growing weaker with each wail. But to his despair, no one was there to reply..."

The pup continued to cry out, before it collapsed with a puff of shadow smoke.

"Eventually, the pup could cry no more, and collapsed in his nest. The scent of his mother faded to the wind. He let out a final cry before his world went dark. But he knew not that his ancestors had given him a miracle."

Shadows formed around the pup, humans.

"He had been heard."

Thumper’s ears perked slightly and he swiped his nose, wiping his hand on his pants after.

Toki blinked slowly, watching the shadows.

"The pup had been found by hunters who heard it's last few cries, and had been taken to their home
where they took care of it. They raised it until it was a little older, and then to their surprise," the pup suddenly lifted upright to walk on it's hind legs, "It was walking like they did, adapting to their habits, even starting to show signs of speaking their common tongue."

The pup was starting to look more and more like Tenebris did when he had been lost. Part of it was unnerving- and did little to help soothe Toki’s internal upset. But she faked it well, keeping her body slowly relaxing as she looked on and listened.

Thumper brightened slightly. “That looks like you did when you were all angry.” Thumper chirps softly.

Tenebris rumbled gently, then he sighed and continued. "The child grew in their care but it soon came time to send the child away from the forests, to where he could grow up with other monsters, as that is what they thought was best for him... They loved him too much to prevent him from reaching his full potential with the world he now knew."

The child grew taller than the humans before the smoke showed the humans bidding the child farewell.

Toki watched thoughtfully and nodded with a soft sigh. That would explain how Tenebris came to be with the monsters, then. She shifted some, stretching in her chair, and pressing her fingers against a stubborn foot pressing at her navel.

After a moment, he 'yawned' and dispersed the shadows, letting the smoke drift back into the rest of the air. "Ah... that's enough of story time..." he murmured.

Thumper pouted. “Awww! Okay…”

“Maybe he can continue his story tomorrow night?” Asgore hummed soothingly to the youngest monster.

“Yeah, that would be good.” Toki didn’t quite fake her yawn- her teeth parted in a large yawn that had her bones rattling. She shifted some, and scrubbed her sockets. “Sugar in those marshmallows or not, I’m actually getting pretty tired.”

"I'd say it's time for some shuteye." Cae sighed tiredly.

Papyrus nodded in agreement, getting up with a tired sigh.

Toki’s legs were jostled out of his lap, but she honestly didn’t mind. Toki shifted, and tried to haul herself to her feet. No such luck- her center of gravity had her stuck. She casually let Stripe go back to her home plane, and then sighed. “Pap? Can you give me a hand please?”

Asgore chuckled softly. “I think you are right. Come- let us retire to our tents. We could all use some sleep before we go frolic in the lake again.”

“I wanna have swimming races tomorrow. Well... For those of us who can swim. The skeletons can have... walking races? Along the bottom?” Thumper did his best to come up with something to include them, and squirmed in Tenebris’ arms. “Mister Tenebris! I need to get into my sleep shorts. Can you let me down?”

"Oh, right." Tenebris smiled gently and let him down, before he sighed and slowly stood up. "Ngh." he then pushed on his back, letting it pop.

Asgore flicked his gaze over to Tenebris and hummed. “Perhaps I can rub it for you before we sleep,
old friend.”

Thumper bounced off for his shared tent to get into his sleeping shorts. “C’mon, Sans! We gotta get the sleeping bags laid out, or the ground is going to be all hard and not comfortable.”

Toki, once Pap helped her up, straightened as well. She kneaded her palms into her lower back, and then sighed softly. “Alright. We should be okay to let the fire burn out tonight.” The flames were pretty low as it was- and some part of her still believed a bit in the superstition her grandfather had instilled in her. That didn’t mean she wanted to feed the fire all night- but at least until she was asleep, perhaps.

She shifted, and made her way for her tent. She wasn’t going to change- none of her night gowns were decent, and if Thumper had a nightmare and came to them per chance, she didn’t want to flash the poor lad. She shifted, and eased inside, carefully easing down onto her hands and knees so she could begin spreading out the sleeping bags she’d portioned out to pad her and Pap’s tent floor.

"I would love that." Tenebris chirped happily, giving Asgore a tired smile.

Sans got up and laughed. "Alright, alright, I’m coming kid." he chuckled.

Papyrus had come with Toki, spreading his own sleeping bag before he smiled at Toki. "Thanks for bringing us out here, Toki." he purred, "It seems we all needed this.”

“I figured we all did.” Toki answered as she listened to everyone getting ready outside of their tent. She shifted some, stretching her back as she layered another sleeping bag out, spreading it so it could fit as a ‘mattress’ of sorts for both her and Papyrus. Her fiancé was, after all, horrendously tall in comparison to her. All of her sleeping bags were sized for her much tinier brothers, after all. Once a few layers had been settled, Toki shifted and crawled for their pillows. She was already down, after all. Might as well make use of it.

Once pillows were placed, she shifted, and tried to right herself so she could sit on her knees. It took her a moment, before she got herself upright. She heaved a few deep breaths in, and pressed her knuckles to her back. “Going to say it now- next time, we go camping before I’m this big. Getting up and down sucks.” She chuckles. Now to try and lay down… This was going to be interesting.

He kissed her gently, and helped her ease back. "God I love you." he purred warmly. "I'll make sure I help you, okay?" he purred.

She leaned in and kissed him again as she settled carefully into a seated position. “I love you too,” She purred softly, fingers coming up to cup his cheek. Her dainty bones rubbed along his broader ones, and her eye lights softened. “You are the best fiancé a girl could have. You’ve been a tremendous help.” He was generally aware of when she needed to get up, or wanted to sit down, and always seemed unbothered by assisting her to and fro.

He smiled and pressed a couple kisses to her, nuzzling her a few gentle times as well, before he settled down and closed his eyes, giving a final sigh to settle himself next to her.

Toki shifted, carefully rolling onto her side. She wiggled back, tucked her chest shoulders against his chest, and settled down to try and sleep.

Sleep was long in the coming, however. But she did, eventually, fall asleep with his slow breathing whistling across her skull.

Her dreams were another matter.
Chapter 61

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Toki has a dream~ Also, interesting note. The camping chapter was going
to be a single one- and it evolved into three, just because of how well the rp flowed
between us. It was really, really nice. Anyways, enjoy.

Don't forget to visit the blog~ If this chapter leaves you with questions- which it should
;));))- then feel free to ask, and we may possible be inclined to answer. Or to not.
Depends on the question ;3 http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: So, someone's probably asked (tho not to us) what about AU's?

Well... here's your answer.

Enjoy~

Her bones ached, her pelvis throbbed with the last remnants of long spent need- and Toki
remembered this moment. But it wasn’t the same. Not at all. The ache was worse, the burn deeper,
and she felt her face frowning at someone she couldn’t see. Her fingers were tipped in claws,
sharper than the sharp bones she had now, and she watched as she crushed a mug of cocoa and
splattered it across a familiar sink.

A black robe was draped over her, rolled up to her elbows, and it swished as she turned her head to
glare at the one behind her. “It wasn’t fucking cool that your dad didn’t warn me about it, Pap.
Really. I’m supposed to be his pet science project- I set half the damn village into a heat, and now
half of them are out for my goddamned blood again.”

Wait… What? Why would she be saying that? She… couldn’t get her mouth to take it back. Her
mind stalled, however, seeing Papyrus before her. What…?

"Tch. Don’t sound so thankful that I managed to get you out of sight before they realized it was you.
And even if they did, these monsters are idiots, but they’re smart enough to stay away from you if
you’re stupid enough to get near them." She was given a swat on the back of the head before
Aliquam turned away, a sneer of annoyance on his face as his deep red gaze looked at the front
room.

The way he stood, with his hands on his hips, it could tell this wasn’t the sweetheart she was engaged
to. He wore deep black armor that spiked on his shoulders and dark black jeans, part of his spine
showing as a result of his armor not completely covering his torso, only making it to the bottom of
his ribcage. On his feet was a pair of deep black boots that came up to almost his knees, with the
point of the toe being just that, a point.

"Fucking Caeruleus, that lazy twit. He didn't clean up his mess last night." he growled, and from
where she stood, the sound of knuckles popping could be heard. "He's probably at Grillby's Club
again... He's lucky if Father doesn't find out about this." he snarled.

What… What had HAPPENED to him? What had happened to her? Where- Where were the twins?
She couldn’t feel any weight, and what little she could see of herself proved that there was no green glow. What happened?

“I am more thankful than you’d think.” She snaps sharply at him, a hand coming up to rub the back of her skull where he had clipped her. Her fingers traced her left horn- it was partly missing, snapped off around the top, and her scar wrapped up into it with cracks. “I know what they would do if you hadn’t pulled me away.”

This was wrong. This was wrong, wrong, wrong, and that wasn’t her Papyrus. This wasn’t HER.

She felt herself walking forwards, and she jabbed a sharp finger into his back. “Leave your damn brother alone you asshole. He’s probably at Grillby’s because it’s the only damn place in this hellhole that you monsters aren’t allowed to kill each other in.” A thought flashed over to her- Grillby didn’t like his floors getting dusty. What. Just… What the fuck was all of this? “That includes your dick of a dad.” She sneers. “You tell him, and he goes after him there, he’s going to come back singed to high hell, and I can laugh my ass off at him like he did to me when I became this thing.”

He grunted sharply at the finger to his back and he turned to swat it away with a gloved hand, before he folded his arms. Sharp teeth glinted at her as he peered down at her. "One thing you would definitely have in common is that you ended up like that due to unfathomable stupidity on your part." he scoffed. "And you know as well as I do that I would save beating him to a pulp for after I’ve dragged him out of the club. What do you think I am, suicidal?"

“Isn’t that how you got the scar on your face?” She mocked, eye lights flicking to the ones trailing down over his eye socket. “Kindness isn’t stupidity, Papyrus. You know it isn’t. A little kindness could make the world a better place.” Her hand retracted and curled into her chest. She glanced away, and peered down at his boots instead.

Kindness? She had gotten this way because she had been kind? What… What world WAS this?

“No. You’re not suicidal.” She sighs. “But you’re far too slow to catch Caeruleus and you know it. You’d get angry and then you’d break something and storm off in a snit like a little bitch.”

His eyes flashed in fury and he clenched his fists tightly, before he turned and roughly backhanded her with a snarl. "How DARE you!" he hissed loudly, "If it weren't for us, you would be a measly pile of ashes, so you best learn to watch your mouth." he snarled, "You damn well know what happens when you try to be kind in a world like this, so remember it, human!“ he snarled again, before he stormed out of the kitchen, a bone shooting from the ground for him to snatch it up into his tight grip.

The front door slammed behind him as he made his exit.

Her hand flicked up to her face, finding a nasty crack running up from one of her now missing teeth. She collected the sharp thing into her hands, cradling it as her green blood dribbled down from her cracked upper mouth. “I’m not human anymore you ass-wipe,” She snipes back, watching him leave.

Toki felt the ache in the bone like it was her own. Her Papyrus was strong, and this one was no different. What strength had always been gentle with her had promptly split her mouth and knocked out the very same tooth he’d tenderly put back into place. This was wrong. It was so, so wrong, and she couldn’t control her actions or her words.

Her body moved, walking from the kitchen to the living room, where she began rifling through her clothes. The couch was shredded and stained green and red, and Toki couldn’t help but noticing that
a lot of her clothes bore bloodstains. She picked out dark colors, and dragged a tattered shirt over her ribs, and an even more haggard pair of pants.

She had but only a little time to herself before the door opened once more. But there was no bickering of brothers, only rough, pained breathing as a massive form entered the home, pushing the door closed behind him.

Toki felt her body turning almost robotically to face the form, ducking her head nervously. Her eye lights didn’t move from him though, and she felt herself spit a glob of blood onto the floor. “I’d say welcome home, but this isn’t home.” She snipes sharply. “So welcome back to hell. Please, enjoy your stay.”

Oh gods, oh gods, oh gods why couldn’t she keep her mouth shut?

Sharp violet eyes glared at her with pure anger, a bright red ring in the middle of the irises glowing brighter than the purple had.

"Watch your mouth, Nara." Tenebris spat, before he winced and spat a glob of his own blood on the floor, bringing a hand up to rub his lip where it was split. "Gh... His Majesty was especially grouchy today..." he hissed quietly, limping to the kitchen.

“You probably deserved it, you sadistic psychopath.” She muttered under her breath, grinding her teeth in a spray of sparks that he missed. Still, she moved forwards without her desire to, and found her offering her hand. “Do you want some help with that, Gaster? It looks like he hit you pretty hard.”

He twitched at hearing her first comment, but he looked at her, his glare softening in the slightest. "... I suppose if you want to." he scoffed, getting the medical kit off the fridge before he turned, revealing his true damage to the skeleton.

The crack leading up his temple was wider, and where the split had shown on his temple, it was completely missing the middle section of skull, a black smoke seeming to waft off of it. It had a light layer of his black blood around it, and it seemed to bother him as he reached up and scratched over the edge of the bone, though at the same moment it hurt him as his claws were un-kept and would prod the blackness under his skull., "Gh."

Oh gods he was missing part of his skull. Oh gods, oh gods she could see the inside of his brain. How- how was he alive and how was he not a vegetable? Oh gods-

“Don’t touch that, you idiot.” She swatted his hand as he came closer and glared at him. “You’ll make it worse.” She huffed. Her hands took the kit, and she began to tend to him like she always had. “So what did you say to set him off this time when you went crawling to him?” Toki’s tone was scathing and rough, but there was genuine worry under the rough tones.

Just what was sweet, gentle Asgore like if this is what Papyrus and Tenebris were like?

He growled in annoyance as he lowered his hands, his gaze sharp again as well as his hands and tail twitched, really fucking close to slicing her at the neck bones. "I told him exactly what he wished to fucking hear. A pity he wasn't satisfied enough, the rotten bastard." he hissed, "And watch your mouth. I spared you once already, don’t try your luck."

“You call pulling me from a fire to laugh at my misery sparing me? You call poking and prodding and taking samples from places that shouldn’t be touchable sparing me?” She snorts, and is a little rougher with her bandaging job than Toki felt she should have been. But she didn’t have control of
this alternate Toki. She was realizing she was along for the ride. “You’re a coward if you let him beat you like this.”

He winced sharply and snarled in pain, but his glare was promising hell to pay as soon as she finished what she was doing.

She finished tending to his face, and then shoved the kit into his lap. “This is the last time I tend to your wounds after he’s done with you. If you’re monster enough to beat me for ‘misbehaving’, you can surely handle some asshole goat king.” She huffs, flecking oozing magic across his limbs as it spatters from her teeth.

This Toki apparently could not read the signs- because the Toki inside quavered at that look. That was not a look that boded well for them. She didn’t want to turn her back on him- but that was exactly what her body did. She turned, and strutted away from him, heading back to the living room.

As soon as she turned his blade had swung, and sunk right into her leg with a sharp, painful sounding crack.

She hit the ground with a cry, feeling the pain reverberating through her own leg. Toki turned, sockets lighting as she tried to pull free from the tail that tried to cleave her leg in half. “S-Stop!”

“You. Are incredibly foolish, Human.” He growled, putting the kit on the counter before he came closer, his tail pulling free before lifting again in a prepared position, “You speak so boldly, yet you do not understand just how lucky you are that I did not slaughter you on the very day you were pulled from that fire.”

“You lacked the balls,” she hissed sharply, scrabbling back away from him once he let her leg go. “Oh, that’s right! You’re a monster, not a human. None of you have balls of any kind. Must explain why you’re all bloody fucking cowards to attack someone weaker than you.” Her fingers heated, scorching his floors as she scrabbled from him. If she could get away and give him time to calm down, maybe hide in a closet until he finished his rage, surely that must work, right? “I’m not even human anymore. I’d rather be a human than be a cruel beast like you.”

His eyes flashed and his tail came down again, sinking into her other leg.

Toki shrieked again, bucking and trying to pry his tail from her leg. “P-Papyrus!” Papyrus always got her out of situations before- he couldn’t be far, right?

No, no, no this was all wrong- this, this never happened! This wasn’t- this wasn’t right! Not at all!

"Papyrus isn’t here, human. He can’t save you this time." The beast growled as he walked closer, his tail lifting again, his grin widening as his pupils thinned to slits.

He wasn’t coming. Not this time- no one would come.

Toki shrieked, and turned back to him with claws, stabbing her sharp little nails into his tail and leaning up to sink her teeth into the vertebrae as he tried to pull it back. “Then I’ll save myself!” She snarls.

No they couldn’t- they couldn’t handle a beast like this. He would crush them just as easily as he had crushed their legs- Gods above they were going to die-

No. No, no, no, this wasn’t real, it wasn’t real.

But it felt real.
The tail was protected, her teeth sinking into the hard plating that made his tail able to rattle, before he came with claws, grabbing her by the back of the skull and clenched hard as he used his other hand to push past her mouth, before he roughly pushed her jaw down to force it open, break it if he had to.

Her jaw popped open easily, leaving another tooth in the hard plating of his tail, as she squirmed and shrieked. Her magic lashed, untrained, and made an attempt to scald him.

He growled lowly before he moved his tail out of the way and threw her to the opposite wall.

She landed with a rattle of bones, her legs unable to keep her up. She cried out, landing in a pile of snarls and hisses. “Just stop! You’ve made your point!”

"Have I? Have I." he growled as he stalked closer, "Have I really?"

They quavered. Kindness was their strong suit, not bravery. “Yes!” Toki stammered. She curled her arms up around her skull, submitting with a shaken sound.

He glared down at her, and then he leaned down and picked up her leg bones, throwing them at her, "Pathetic. Learn your place, or see to it your last wishes are fulfilled." he snarled.

“Last wishes?” She laughed softly. “To put you all back under that damn mountain where you came from! Care to fulfill that?”

He glared down at her and his tail came around once more, lifting up before slamming right across her hipbones.

Pain seared across her body, her bones already sensitive from their prior heat, and a scream tore from her throat.

Toki fought hard to deny that this wasn’t real- it felt so very, very real. With him bearing down on her, she could feel panic fluttering through her in ways she couldn’t act on. No bees would come, no fire would light- she just screamed and screamed and tried to claw away.

He held his tail there until he decided to lift his tail up, looking at the glowing green blood on his tail with satisfaction before he turned and hissed. "I’ll be in my lab. Do not bother me." he growled, teleporting away just as the sound of bickering could be heard from two brothers.

She nearly sobbed as he finally let her be, shakily pushing herself up with her forearms. She hurt-they hurt, so, so badly. It was hard to tell where the phantom pain parted from the real pain- and she turned agonized eyes over to Papyrus and Sans as they came through. “P-Papyrus…”

"Why you gotta ruin my break?!”

"Break my ass you lazy fuck! You left the living room a complete mess!” the door slammed open before both brothers stopped at the sight of Toki laying on the ground

"Looks like he finally snapped." Cae commented, grinning widely as he looked at the carnage.

"Shut up or I’ll give you a second fucking gold tooth." Pap punched him and approached Toki, kneeling down and picking up what was left of one of her legs. "You ran your mouth, didn't you.” he chuckled lowly as he looked down at her.

“Y-yeah.” She stuttered. She shifted, rolling onto her back and propping herself against the wall. “I did…”
How could they act like this was normal? This… This wasn’t normal! No! No this wasn’t!

“H-help, please. It, ah, h-hurts a lot. C-can you fix my leg?”

"Well… cant say for sure, but I can definitely stop the pain.” he hummed casually.

Cae spoke up, almost eagerly. "Oh wait, wait, bro… Can I do it?"

The younger shot a look at Sans, before he rolled his eyes and sighed lowly, "Fine."

"Awesome." Sans stepped forward and his eye glowed a ghastly red, before bones suddenly tore
through the ground, and through her body, missing her soul by inches.

She cried out as the bones tore through her body, shoving through her ribs and sternum and pinning
her to their wall. “S-Sans,” She rasped. “P-Pap…”

Why?

Why would they…?

Why would they do this?

Why?

Why…?

"Sans you fucking idiot!” Cae was struck back hard and he hit the ground while Aliquam sighed
gently and summoned another bone into his hand. "I wanted that to be easy. Oh well.” He tilted her
chin up. "Ah... a pity... You were rather pretty. Perhaps, perhaps I could have even come to love
you." he sighed, before he brought back the bone, holding it over his head. "I do apologize, Tokiko
Nara, but this is goodbye."

Toki gave a sad smile, her soul pained for what was to come. “You always were too kind.” She
murmured softly.

No- nonononononononoNONONONO!

His eyes shifted for a moment, but he didn't break eye contact, even as he swung the bone down.

There’s a fatal crack in the top of her cranium, but in the same moment, a loud sound of greenery
rustling.

A sound not in the dream

And she jerked awake with a start, tense and trembling. In the heat of the night, Papyrus had rolled
away from her, and thus it allowed her to jerk upright with a panicked inhale.

Oh gods. Gods, gods above, that had been a terrible, terrible horrible dream. It wasn’t real- it wasn’t
real, it wasn’t real. She could feel the ache in her jaw from being cracked across the face, feel the
pain of Tenebris’ tail- and the feel of… Of…

No, no, no, he wouldn’t. He wouldn’t ever. No- it had to be a dream. It had to be. Nothing more
than a horrifying pregnancy induced nightmare. She shifted, rolling onto her knees. In a feat that
surprised even herself, she stumbled onto her feet, jittering and shaking. She… She needed to walk.

Papyrus wouldn’t ever hurt her like that.

Yes- yes a nice walk would calm her.

She didn’t hear the rustling- or was too disturbed to notice it- and made her way out of the tent. She shook and trembled, her feet guiding her away from the camp and down through the pebbles to the sand along the shoreline. Once she was some ways away, Toki hiccupped, and felt tears begin to trickle down. Stripe was summoned, giving her just enough light to see the ground before her.

Once she was down at the water, she sunk her toes into the sand, and began to walk the length of the lake, scrubbing a hand over her cheeks as she sniffled. Her mouth ached, but a quick check let her know it was phantom- no teeth were missing.

What a horrible, horrible dream.

In the greenery, not far from the tent where she slumbered minutes before, was a plump mouse seeking a meal of bugs. It knew not of the predator nearing it...Until it turned to see the beast coming right at it.

"SQUEEEAK!

Toki heard the faintest of sounds, that of perhaps a rodent getting squished, and it stirred her from her quiet tears. She turned, eyes trying to take in the camp and the surrounding trees. It was dark, the fire long dead to the quiet of the night. She rubbed her sockets again, and also traced her belly. She sniffled. “H-hello? Pap?” It was always possible she had woken him, after all. She hadn’t been very quiet when she’d scrambled out.

The bushes rustled, before the mouse ran out in a panic. The predator lunged, revealing a large pale form with sharp claws. Their pupils were wide and illuminated in the moonlight as they lunged and brought a hand down on the mouse, only to need to reach with their other hand as it literally hopped through the hole in the larger creature’s hand. Though another smart lunge from the larger had the mouse hanging from his mouth, wriggling and squeaking in panic.

The white beast that burst forth startled her, along with the animalistic way that the beast chased the mouse. In the dark she couldn’t make out anything more than white- but though her tear-blurred vision she thought she could see horns and cloven hooves. She couldn’t run, couldn’t flee- her legs wouldn’t work, and she locked up. Toki didn’t stop to think, her panic and pain too fresh to forget, the dream-but-not-dream lingering with her. She curled her arms around her middle, protecting what was most important first- and then called across her bonds as Stripe vanished in a puff of flame.

The sky split asunder with a silent belch of green hellfire, and Clover came to rest not far above her. In the dead of the night, the glow of the hornet illuminated the lake, her fires flickering gently as acid green eye lights took in the familiar form of the beast.

Sugar slid out behind her, falling and landing roughly in the sand. Wingless and wounded, she still came to stand beside Toki, giving the rattled skeleton something to lean on. Sugar trembled as she stared at the form that had torn her wings from her- and part of her wanted to run. Only the instinct to protect her Queen, her hive, kept her from fleeing.

Toki closed her sockets and shivered, trying to banish it from her mind. Surely it must be a trick played in the dark- surely, surely it must. This wasn’t fair- it wasn’t fair that she had to have such a dream, and then deal with the predator before her.
With the mouse still hanging from it's mouth, the form lifted slightly and bright glowing disks stared back at her... before the mouse was dropped and the disks thinned to slits. The eyes flinched closed for a few moments. When they opened again, Tenebris blinked slowly at her. "Toki? What are we doing outside?" he asked, slowly rising before he stuck out his tongue and pulled a small hair from it. "Bleh." He flicked the hair away, then stiffened at seeing the two large Hell Hornets. "...!"

Sugar cowered into her leg, but valiantly tried to bristle and keep her supported and defended. The bee looked utterly petrified of him- and missing two very noticeable things since the last he saw her.

Clover on the other hand eyed him, large mandibles clicking slowly as she drifted down. Heavy legs came to bracket Toki on either side, not touching the ground, but looming all the same. She watched him with a warning in her gaze.

Toki’s hands came up to her face, and she covered her face as she tried not to flinch away and cry. Of course. It was Tenebris- she had called the hornets out on Tenebris. Again. And Sugar was so, so terrified that she was damn near cowering into her leg.

She hiccupped, scrubbed her cheeks, and utterly failed to stop crying. “I-I’m s-sorry.” She stutters.

He tilted his head slightly in confusion, but seeing her start crying had him tensing, and slowly coming closer. "Tokiko, hey... hey... It's okay, sweetheart." he told her gently, looking at her with a small frown before he looked at the hornets, "These creatures... aren't these the hornets from the first battle against HAM?" he asked.

He thankfully looked less threatening now that he was no longer on all fours. He was wrapped in one of his softer turtlenecks, the one that made him look more like a marshmallow than a predator, and that helped his image as he continued his slow approach.

Marshmallow or predator, it was still the same monster in Sugar’s eyes. The bee quavered, and let out a soft warning buzz.

Toki smoothed her hand into the mane of fire for the smaller bee, and then blindly swiped her hand. A hell portal opened next to her- and it didn’t take much urging for the smaller hornet to turn tail and flee from the bigger monster. She disappeared into the flames, which closed behind her, and left the world a little darker.

Clover remained, and slowly came to settle behind Toki. The hornet towered over her, but still watched Tenebris warily.

“Y-Yeah,” she sniffled. “Th-they are. This is C-Clover. Sugar was the one w-with no wings.” Her palms swiped over her sockets again, shoulders trembling. She refused to look at him until she didn’t feel at risk of fleeing for her life. “I-It’s n-not okay. It f-felt so r-real…” She leaned back into Clover, the large hornet guiding her away from the water so she could ease them both down into the sand. Toki curled at her side, one hand cradling her middle, the other swiping over her eyes.

He slowly continued approaching until he was able to sit at her side. "Toki... What happened...? Did you have a nightmare?" he asked gently.

She hiccupped again and nodded. She didn’t uncurl as he came to sit by her. “I d-don’t know if it was a n-nightmare.” She whispered softly, shifting as Clover moved behind her so that Tenebris could be watched and regarded while he comforted the distressed skeleton. “I was m-me, but I w-wasn’t. None of you were you. You... You had a hole in your head. We...We were all so... so mean. I c-could see and feel and hear- but I couldn’t control myself, and it was so, so scary. I c-can feel his hand hitting me- and his w-weapon…” She curled her head closer to her chest with a soft
sniffle. “It h-hurt. I felt it… But it wasn’t real. It can’t be real. I’m h-here, y-you’re here, and y-you’re n-not h-him… P-Pap isn’t like h-him. He wouldn’t…”

She had to take a deep breath, before she distressed herself more. “I w-wanted to t-try and w-walk it o-off without w-waking Pap.” Toki shivered. “Y-you c-came out of the brush. You… scared me…” She admits quietly. “I w-was already on e-edge. I panicked and c-called them.”

Tenebris looked at her, rubbing his head gently, then he sighed and moved closer, before he reached out and hugged her close. "Hey... Hey... Things have been chaotic, and even here they haunt us... But I’m still here if you need someone to talk to, all right? You are going to be considered my daughter soon, after all." he chuckled.

“I know.” She gave a watery chuckle in return, and slid slightly to lean against his side in the dry sand. This was the Tenebris she knew and loved. Not... Not the one she saw in her dreams. “I s-shouldn’t be so upset. It was j-just a dream. And n-not even a u-usual dream.” Her hands scrub his sockets, and she trembles faintly. “P-Papa? W-what were you d-doing outside a-anyway?” She sniffled softly. It was stupid- it had just been a horrible, horrible dream. Toki should not have been this upset by a dream.

Clover shifted behind her, one leg coming to rest next to Tenebris. The long, pointed barbs on the back of the chitin-made limb mirrored some of the scars on his body, though much smaller. The Hornet buzzed faintly, and remained wary of her surroundings, and of the large monster leaning against her ectoplasmic abdomen.

"I don’t know." he replied, reaching up to slowly touch Clover's form, examining her gently as his other hand moved up to caress Toki's head. "I was dreaming I think..."

“I think you were.” She murmured. The touch to her skull had her flinching just faintly at first- but when it didn’t accompany the sharp sting of a hit, she relaxed. Toki heaved a deep breath and made to forcibly relax herself as the twins twisted fussily in her middle. “At l-least your dream seemed like a good one.”

Clover moved slightly, and her head peered down at him as he touched her. She rumbled softly. Unlike the chitin that made up the rest of her body, the ectoplasm was warm and soft. It was thick though, several inches thicker than his arms were, in fact, and it connected up with the skeletal part of her back. At least his touch felt nice along her belly. A pleased rumble left her.

He chuckled loudly and gave Toki a gentle squeeze. "Well how about this... I’ll stay with you tonight... make sure that no more scary dreams get their hands on you. It's not healthy for you or the pups." Giving Clover a slow petting, he turned his attention to carefully hook his arms under Toki's and heave her into his lap, where he was able to wrap his arms around her protectively and set his head on hers, purring loudly for her to feel and hear. "I'll keep you safe, Toki. Or my name isn’t Grandpapa Tenny." he purred gently, before he then reached up and poked her cheek, "A name that stays between you and me...” he then grumbled.

Grandpapa Tenny. It was fitting, and horribly, horribly adorable. Toki shifted slightly in his lap, her legs dangling over his, and leaned into his chest with a soft laugh. She had to take care to angle her skull so her horns didn’t jab his jaw. “Grandpapa Tenny.” She mused softly. “It’s very fitting.” She smiled. Her fingers curled around her middle, and she sighed softly. “A name that stays between us… at least until they start to talk, hm?” She wiped her tears away, trying not to let the green stain into his sweater, and then hummed gently. “Nightmares are pretty common now. Pap and I do a lot of walking until I tire out enough to sleep.” She murmurs to him. “You don’t think he and Asgore won’t be too upset if they wake up and can’t find u-us immediately, do you?”
The large hornet behind them is pleased enough by the pats not to be bothered when his attention left her. She had to be on guard, after all. There were still things out there that she needed to keep an eye on.

"Perhaps at first, but when he realizes I’ve just come out here to take care of you..." he hummed gently.

"Yeah... Should we move closer to camp maybe, so they don’t get too upset...? Pap is pretty protective of me, and Asgore seems to be like that for you too.” She sniffs softly, and nuzzles her head to his chest. The twins were fussy, and kept trying to knock the wind out of her.

"How about we go sit in the bed of the truck?" he rumbled gently, carefully boosting her to her feet, and then climbing to his own.

“That’s no nearer to the camp.” She chuckled softly as she gained her feet. The trucks were at the other end of the lake.

"Point made." he rumbled, stretching his back slowly as he yawned.

Toki chuckled again softly. “Lets just go back to camp. I’m feeling a bit better- and sleeping out here without anything soft is not going to be good for either of us.” She was still a bit shaky, but she felt better enough to go curl up with Papyrus again. She just hoped she didn’t wake him when she got back.

She waddled for camp, sighing softly to herself. Toki planted one hand in the small of her back, and found her other hand occupied by the large hornet that followed her closely. “If you don’t watch your feet, I’m going to step on them.” She informed Clover in a matter of fact tone.

Clover glanced over at her, seemed to scoff, and then turned back to the task at hand of escorting the Queen and the pale one back to their campsite.

“... I can’t even see my own feet, let alone someone else’s feet.” Toki snorts. “Best watch your tail, Tenebris. Your grandbabies have ensured that I have a very limited view.”

"My tail has been stepped on more than once." he chuckled, though he did pull his tail to the other side where she wouldn’t come close to brushing it. "Though I suppose it would hurt something nasty to trip on it... Alright, I’ll see you’ve safely returned to your tent, then I’ll have a pipe and return to bed as well." he then yawned gently, "I’m not as young as I used to be. I will actually need to sleep if I want to resume my nocturnal habits..." he rumbled.

“Being up super late isn’t good for you, old man.” She teased gently. “Grandpas need their beauty sleep to keep up with the grandkids.” Still, she didn’t mind him accompanying her. “I suppose I should send Clover back before her glow wakes everyone.” She hummed a soft sound, and carefully opened a hole to the Hell Verse. Sugar was very briefly visible, before she backpedaled away from where she could see Tenebris.

Clover glanced at the both of them, and then padded inside without an issue. It left the camp dark, now only the faint glow of Toki’s middle through her tank top to guide the way.

“Excuse you. I’m not old.” he chuffed, thumping a foot as he walked.

Toki leaned out to take his arm, using him to guide her. She wasn’t very surefooted in the dark- and night vision did not translate over into being a skeleton. She pats his bicep gently. “There’s nothing wrong with being old,” She crooned teasingly. “Han used to say that the older the violin, the sweeter the music. Of course, he said it with dirty intentions, but if you don’t take that into account, it’s a
very sweet saying.”

He blinked and then nodded slowly as he put thought into it. "I suppose it is very true..." Though his tail then rattled softly. "I mean, if you wanted to use his primary intentions I’m still plenty ample at this point." he smirked.

Toki thumped him on the arm, which probably hurt her hand more than it did his muscular structure. She stuck her tongue out at him and made an obviously fake grossed out sound. “I don’t need to think of you chasing Asgore’s fuzzy little goat tail, Tenny. That’s like imagining my parents in bed. That’s just gross. I’ll stick to the more innocent meaning, if it’s all the same to you.”

Tenebris chuckled lowly, and pat her head gently.

Toki chuckled gently and gave him a tired but warm smile. As they arrived at the tents, she shifted and let his arm go. "Alright. Enjoy your pipe, and I'll see you in the morning, yeah?"

She padded for her tent, and paused outside to give him another tired smile. “Good night, Tenebris.”

He nodded gently, and smiled at her warmly. "Good night, Toki..." he purred gently, "Rest well, my dear."

“You too.” She gave him another smile, and then slipped inside her tent once she shook any lingering sand from her bones. She tried to move quietly, but there was only so much quiet that a pregnant person could stick to. Toki awkwardly got settled onto her hands and knees, and then began the process of easing down onto her side, trying not to stir her fiancé.

Papyrus seemed undisturbed as she climbed in, but once she had lay down and gotten settled, he rolled over and wrapped his arms around her. He nuzzled her as he glanced at her through dimly lit sockets. "Toki?"

“Did I wake you, Pap?” She whispered softly, snuggling closer to him despite the heat of the summer night. Her arms looped gently around him, and she tucked her abdomen into the empty cavity of his own so she could lie flush with him. Toki did her best to tangle her limbs with his, to take in his gentle touch, strong bones, and bask in the fact that this was her reality, and that whatever that dream was… Well, it was just that. It was only a dream.

"No." he murmured, kissing her gently as he helped her do what he sensed she was up to.

With his assistance, Toki was firmly tangled with his body. She nuzzled close, tucked one of his legs between her own, and then let out a content sigh. “Mm... Obviously I did,” she purred softly, “Or you wouldn’t be awake.” She wiggled her fingers, and then sighed happily in his hold. Yes- he was home and he was safe. She leaned up to kiss him again, gentle and soft. “Go back to sleep, Pap. I’m back now- I wont go out again tonight.”

He kissed her head again and smiled sleepily. "I love you so much, Toki..." he purred gently.

“I love you too.” She nuzzled her skull gently to his and smiled softly. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you I was going out. I just needed a little bit of time to myself.”

"Nyeh~ I don’t care." "Don’t care that I went out all alone with the Nara-eating beastie out in the woods, hm?” Amusement trickled through her as she referenced the story she told that had spooked everyone.

"No such thing." he murmured as he nuzzled her.
“Mhm.” She hummed softly. Toki nuzzled up to his chin, and nipped his collarbone gently. “Lets get back to sleep, Pap.” And hopefully her mate’s grasp would keep the nightmares away.

He hugged her tightly to his chest, and fanned his fingers out across her shoulder blades. They were so, so small under his hands… “Toki. Do you want to talk?” he asked gently.

Toki contemplated that. Did she want to talk? Did she… want to tell him about what she saw? She swallowed. “I… Yeah. I would. That is if you’re not too tired. It was a… bad one.”

“I’m listening.” He purred softly to her.

Toki nodded, and closed her sockets for a moment. She took a deep breath, before sighing. “Alright… Well… The dream was about months ago- just after my first heat, in fact. But… It wasn’t like here. I could see, and hear, and feel- but I couldn’t control any of it. I couldn’t say what I wanted to, do what I wanted to. It was like I was seeing through the eyes of another… version of me? I know it wasn’t me- the other me was missing part of the left horn. I was there though- and I couldn’t escape. I felt… everything- but I knew it wasn’t real.”

Her sockets screw up, and she sighs. “It sounds crazy. But… You were there too. You, Tenebris, and Caeruleus. But… None of you were you.” She whispered, a soft shiver trailing up her spine. “You… were probably the edgiest set of armor I had ever seen. You had teeth more like your dads- and scars over one of your eye sockets. You were… I dunno. Sharper. You and I were arguing about me being stupid- apparently if you weren’t there, the villagers would have… probably killed me, I guess. We argued- and I said something about how you got your scars. You… hit me hard enough to knock out one of my teeth and crack my jaw. Then you stormed out.”

She nuzzled close to him and hummed, running her tongue along the inside of her teeth. All of them were there and nothing hurt. Not even phantom aches now. “Not long after you left, your Dad came back. Your dad… Well, he was missing part of his skull and brain. He was… really, really mean. He, ah… Well, lets just say he left me in a bloody heap at the wall with no legs.” She shivers again. “I had cried out for you- but you didn’t come. No one did. Not until he was done, and he left for his lab. After that… you and Sans came home. Sans… Well, he had a gold tooth, and a nasty attitude.”

“I asked for help- but instead, the both of you… well, you,” she flicks her eyes open and looked up at him, “you put me out of my misery. That’s when I woke up.”

Aliquam’s eyes were bright with shock, before he wrapped his arms around her neck, holding her tightly. "Toki... O-Oh my god... That's horrible...!"

“It was just a dream though.” She muttered. “It had to be.” She shivered, and leaned into his grasp. “That’s what had me out there calming down. I woke up when I died. It wasn’t… fun. I just… don’t understand why I had that dream.”

He whined softly, and began to pepper her head with loving kisses. "Tokiko... My Toki..."

“I’m okay, Pap.” She nuzzled into his kisses, and returned them with a gentle fervor. “I’m here, and I’m me, and you’re you. You are safe.” She snuggles closer. “With you, I can rest…”

"That's for DAMN sure.” He murmured firmly, kissing her before he nuzzled her closer to his chest. She didn’t mind the tight embrace. Toki nuzzled closer, and sighed softly. “Lets go back to sleep, m’kay? I’m kinda tired now that I’m relaxing…”

"Nyeh heh heh heh~” His laugh was soft, just like his smile, and he pressed his teeth gently against hers in a soft kiss. "Of course, my love.” he purred.
“Sleep well, Pap.” She murmured gently to him. She nuzzled her head under his, casually stuffing her pillow behind her back with one hand to better support her, before she settled down.

It was an interesting start to the camping trip- and Toki hoped that the dreams would stay away for the next several days. At least until they could go home.

And lo and behold they did- She didn’t have another nightmare the entire time that they were there. However- as they were driving away to return home, Toki, out of her peripheral vision, caught sight of a white flash in the trees.

A white stag stared out at them from the brambles, eyes black as coal as it watched the cars leave along the road.

She held eye contact with it for a short time. However, when she blinked, it disappeared from sight.
Chapter 62

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: BABY SHOPPING!

Don't forget to visit! http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: So, bonus info, these cats are actually based off two of mine.

One of them (Gracie) I gave to Strider since she needed a companion kitty, the Siamese point is actually named Sans, and he's still a sweet kitten

Though they actually are family

Gracie is Auntie Gracie to Sans and his little sister Frisk (A grey kitten)

They were all exhausted when they came back from the camping trip. Everyone got everything put away, and then it took a couple days to recharge their metaphorical batteries.

Well, most everyone. Asgore, sadly, had to return to the castle for work. Now that Tenebris was stable once more, the king had duties to handle back at the castle. Paperwork and other meetings had been put on delay, and were now piled up.

His departure left Tenebris upset and saddened- and the big monster took to seclusion in his house. Sans had seen him rarely- he was mostly up in his room.

Toki hadn’t seen him since they came home- and she had been too tired and sore to make the jaunt over to his place to go bother him. Camping for several days on only sleeping bags was not a good way to supply comfort during pregnancy. Not a good way at all.

She had all intentions of going to get him today though- but she had gotten distracted. While vacuuming the house, Toki had turned on the television to a basic channel and let it play while she cleaned up the living room and removed cobwebs from the damnably high ceilings. Some careful footwork and use of hose extensions had the cobwebs being sucked away.

That lasted up until the commercial that made her realize something hugely, hugely important.

She was thirty-two weeks pregnant- and they had no idea when the twins would actually come. It could have been between then and eternity for all she knew. And she only had one old hand-me-down crib in her shed.

They literally had nothing for the twins- the room wasn’t even done. Hell, they hadn’t even picked a spare room to clean out for the twins yet.

That brought her all sorts of anxieties that she didn’t even know she had the capacity to have. She barely finished vacuuming, managing only because freaking out over it was more energy than it took to actually finish the chore, before she had to go find her phone. Papyrus was once again back on duty- but a quick call to Undyne had his schedule for the day cleared away. The fish monster, faced with an anxious expectant mother, had been all too eager to soothe her worries, if only for the ‘sake
of the guppies’.

For all of her toughness, Undyne was practically a blob of goop when it came to children.

The next call was to Papyrus himself while Toki gathered her purse and got into a fresh pair of clothes. A loose skirt and a loose turtleneck were chosen- because damn the hot weather, she had a desire to look semi-decent. Toki tucked the phone into the crook of her shoulder, and waited patiently for him to answer.

She needed only a few rings before the line went through. "This is Papyrus." His voice piped up from the speaker.

“Hey, uh, Pap… Can you come home?” She tried not to let her anxiousness bleed into her voice- but lo and behold it did. Her voice was fairly distinctive- and no one else was going to ask him to come ‘home’, after all.

He definitely picked up on it too. "... Are you okay?" he asked gently, seeming to move away for a moment to allow his side to go quiet before he resumed speaking to her.

“Physically yes,” She answers once he’s presumably able to hear her better. “I’m a little- actually, I’m really, really anxious right now, and trying not to freak out.” Her fingers tapped on the strap to her purse, and she tapped her slippers slightly on the tile. “Pap, the twins could be here any time between now and infinity- and we don’t even have a room picked out to be theirs, let alone cleared out, and we have only one slightly old crib and I was going to give that to Sans for our niece or nephew so we don’t have any furniture for them let alone anything to set up a nursery. I’m babbling. Shit. I’m sorry. I’m just…” She sighs. “It’s probably a stupid reason but… It’s making me really, really upset.” Most mothers got nesting instincts far, far earlier.

But between losing her brother, and all of the shit from HAM… Toki really hadn’t had time to consider it really. And now, thanks to a god damned commercial, it was hitting like a ten ton wrecking ball of anxiety and stress.

"... I’ll be right over. Sit on the couch and take deep breaths, okay? Keep calm." He told her. "I love you too." She echoed to the ending tone of the call. The abrupt silence on the other end didn’t do well for her nerves- but she took deep breaths, and finished getting herself together. She set her purse on the table where it usually went, and slipped her phone into one of her skirt pockets. She didn’t bother sitting on the couch proper- she needed to get up, after all- but she did take a seat on the arm of the couch and stroke her middle to help calm the twins. They reacted to her stress anymore, and she figured it was from the links in their souls.

She just had to wait for Papyrus- Papyrus wouldn’t likely take too long, though moving in his armor couldn’t possibly be easy.

It wasn't minutes before Papyrus made it back. He took a short moment to shed his armor and tuck it into its usual location, before he came to her side and tugged her to him. He hugged her tightly.

She slumped slightly in his arms and nuzzles her face into his chest. “I’m sorry I interrupted your patrol.” She said softly. Her anxieties were completely valid, however. They were entering uncertain waters at his point- thirty two weeks seemed far, far too soon in her opinion, but they were already large and making themselves known. There was no telling when they would come. “But… Thank you for coming.”
"Hey. You’re my mate. You're always a first priority to me.” he purred softly, nuzzling her gently.

She nuzzled him gently back, and let off a soft, pleased buzz. “Thank you.” She says earnestly. “So… I kind of… cleared it early with Undyne so I could have you today. Do you think maybe you could drive us to the city so we could get some stuff for our jellybeans?” Her truck was still out of commission- and with as round as she was, she couldn’t drive anyways. Toki was entirely dependant on the monsters at this point if she had to go somewhere.

"Oh of course." he smiled at her happily, "Get your coat, I’ll go change."

“Alright.” She gave him a lopsided smile, feeling a little bit of the anxiety ease off. It probably wouldn’t be gone until the room was done though. She shifted out of his arms, and got to her feet again. She was foregoing her coat- it was nearly ninety-five outside- but she did need to get her purse and get Thumper.

While Pap ran up to the room to change out of his under-armor clothing, she collected her purse and then called up the staircase. “Thumper! We’re going to town! Grab your shoes, kiddo!”

Thumper appeared at the top of the stairs, fresh from a nap, and then shook his head. He looked tired, but he did have his shoes already on. “I don’t really want to go to town.” He frowned slightly. “Can I just stay here…?”

“You’re too young to be on your own, sweetheart.” Her middle twisted slightly, and she tapped her finger on her purse strap.

“Can I go stay with Mister Tenebris then?” He perked slightly at the thought.

The boy had missed the monster while he’d been in his reclusion. Thumper had been having a lot of nightmares since they had gotten back- and the only one who really knew what they were about was not around to talk about them. He talked as best he could with Toki, but it wasn’t the same.

Toki nodded slowly. Even she knew Tenebris wouldn’t turn the boy away. “Sure, sweetheart. Do you want me to walk you over?”

“Nuh-uh. You and Papyrus go get stuff for the babies- I want to go spend some time with him. I can make the walk- I’m a big boy!” He offered her a tired grin. He loped down the stairs and hugged her gently, pressing a soft kiss to her belly and nuzzling it gently. “I heard you earlier. It’s gonna be okay! Papyrus will make sure you and the babies have everything you need to feel better.”

She rubbed his ears fondly. “When did you get so wise, hm?” He was growing up each day- it absolutely baffled her how much he was maturing. Sure, a lot of it happened because of his parents, but it was still quick. But, she supposed, she had matured quickly too. Some kids did.

“I’ve always been wise!” He smiles up at her.

“Wise when you dared Twitch into the clan tree, hm?” She winked at him, ruffled his fur, and then gave him a soft kiss on the cheek. “How about you go ruffle Tenebris’ feathers and remind him that there’s lots of other people here who love him and miss him.”

He simply grinned and nodded. “Uhuh! I plan to. Heh.”

“Walk safe,” She said gently, “And pay mind to the cars. You don’t always watch, and not everyone drives slowly here. Be good. If Tenebris isn’t in any mood, go see about getting everyone- and an adult- and going to play at the river.”
“I will!” He smiled up at her, and hopped up to kiss her cheek. “I love you, Toki! I’ll be good! You go have fun with Papyrus!”

And while she was still reeling over his words, the rabbit was off and running. She was left at the bottom of the stairs, cradling her cheek with the softest smile on her face. Thumper was a hell of a good kid.

Aliquam smiled at Thumper as he ran out the door, and then walked down the stairs to Toki's side, wrapping an arm around her before kissing her cheek tenderly.

Toki simply smiled and leaned slightly into him. “He’s going to go see about spending the day with your dad.” She informs him absentmindedly. “Heh… he’s a good kid.” She murmurs softly. She takes a moment to collect her thoughts, and then claps her hands slightly. “Alright! We’ve got a mission. Did you find your wallet? I found it in the laundry basket this morning, so I put it on your nightstand.”

"Yeah, thanks a lot." he chuckled, before he let her go. "I'll bring the car around if you'd like." He offered. "Or do you need help with something before I do?" he then asked.

Toki shook her head. “I can walk with you to the car, Pap.” She smiled slightly, and claimed his fingers in hers. She was good to go for now. “C’mon. Sooner we get to town, the sooner we can get shopping. Do you think we can fit it all in your Mercedes?” It was sized for a monster- but cribs could be big. And they needed two of everything, literally.

She tugged slightly, and waddled for the front door with him in tow.

"I figure it will. It was made to accommodate for us larger monsters, so, I’m sure it'll fit the parts easily." He assured her.

“If all else fails, most places do deliver things.” She muses. Toki heads down the steps, waving to one of the guards who gives Papyrus a knowing and bemused look, and then heads to where they keep the cars parked. “I’m thinking we’ll get paint too. I want to paint their room… What color though? I don’t really follow the whole colors determine gender crap; so really, we can choose what we want. What color do you think would work?” They’d probably ultimately decide once they were there- but she wanted to have a general idea of what color to look for.

"Why not complementary colors?" he suggested as he walked with her, "Or contrasting ones?"

“Hm… That’s a thought.” She mused. “I’m thinking just a solid color to start though… if all else fails, we can add another color later. So… Maybe a nice red? Or a blue? Hm… Green? Green could be paired with… Yellow maybe?” She’d suggest perhaps black and orange, but she didn’t want the walls of the nursery to be in Halloween colors. As they reached the car, she parted from him so he could go to his door. She opened hers, and carefully eased into the seat.

He nodded gently as he got into his seat. "We'll have to keep thinking about it as we look around."

“Mhm.” She nods. “But first- furniture. Cribs are a must- and we need something to put clothes in.” They needed clothes and bedding and pillows too. She got herself settled in her seat, and got the seatbelt clicked into place, before exhaling a great rush of air as she was kicked from the inside. “Do you need to top up on gas at the gas station?"

"It'd be smart to." He answered as he buckled himself in. Once he was certain her seat belt was secured, he started up his Mercedes, enjoying the purr of the engine.

“I’ve got some cash we can use to put into the tank.” She hummed. She adjusted her seat some, and
then draped her arm over the armrest, and relaxed for the long drive to town.

"No need for that. I have money of my own, thank you." he chuckled, driving slowly to the front gate to confirm with the guard before they headed out.

They didn’t go back to the mall. Instead, they ended up going to one of the larger stores specifically for infants and the like on the complete opposite end of the city. It was infants and toddlers- no maternity wear in sight.

Or at least, that’s what they advertised. As Papyrus turned off the engine for the car, Toki undid her seat belt and carefully eased out. A couple other couples stared at her openly as she stretched, her shirt displaying her bump marvelously. Obviously they’d never seen a pregnant skeleton before.

The staring made her a little bit self conscious, and she adjusted her skirt and shirt before hefting her purse up and over her shoulder and waddling around the car to get to Aliquam’s side.

“Ah… That was a long drive.” She sighed softly. “It’s good to be upright again.” Sitting, standing, she could only do either for so long before she cramped up and had to move. “You know what I want to get? A rocking chair. It’s more of a western thing. My grandmother- my dad’s mom- has one. It’s amazing. I wonder if they’ll sell them here…” Her royalties on her books were in, and she’d just gotten paid for a shipment of honey- so Toki wasn’t particularly strapped for cash. Besides- this was for her little ones, not for herself. That was an entirely different scenario.

Papyrus made sure she got out well enough before he locked the car and walked to meet her half way between the sides with a smile, offering his arm. "A rocking chair does sound nice, now doesn't it?"

“It really does.” She nods. She laces her arm through his, and leans against his shoulder as she curls her fingers around his bicep. She sets off at a slow but steady pace, eying the carts near the entrance of the store.

She strives valiantly to ignore the mutterings of a few judgmental women who eye them both like they’re death incarnate walking into a children’s store.

Toki snags a basket, and carefully plonks her purse into the spot where it folds out along the top. “One should do for now.” She muses. She didn’t see a furniture trolley- but this would have to do for now. “So, you want to push the cart, or you want me to?” She grins up at him lightly.

"I'll get it, you just look around-" he turned and gently tugged down her turtleneck to make sure it wasn’t riding up, before he pressed a tender kiss to her head, "and see what you find that you'd like for the twins.” He purred.

She smiled at his tender doting, letting him make sure her turtleneck wasn’t riding up anywhere, before returning his kiss gently. “Alright. Heh. If you see something, speak up too. They’re ours, after all. If you see something you’d like to see in the nursery, let me know.” She smiled. She trailed slightly ahead of him as she set off at an even pace, her skirt swishing around her legs as they passed from horribly hot outside air, into the nearly freezing inside of the children’s store.

He secured his light coat around him and sighed softly, before he followed her with a small smile, humming a soft tune as he looked at a few things.
There wasn’t much to see near the front save for the several families that stared at them with open befuddlement or wariness, only a few with vague hostility, and several clerks who looked extremely tired of the angry toddlers they had to deal with on a regular basis.

Once they got past them though, the store opened up into isles of infant clothes that ranged in sizes. Several onesies caught her eye, but she also eyed the tiny baby socks, and tiny baby shoes. “Hey Pap.” She grinned. “Look there. Tiny baby socks- it’d fit those tiny baby shoes you bought months ago.”

He laughed gently at the sight before he spoke. "We should also take into consideration the potential that they will not grow like humans do. From what Father recently told me, he, as well as my brother and I, grew awfully quickly as we reached adulthood." he advised.

“Hm… Like how fast?” She inquired, turning to look at a slightly larger toddler shirt. They were going to be probably pretty big to start anyways, given the size of their father. If they grew like weeds… Well… “Humans take eighteen years to be considered an adult.”

"From what I remember. Father explained Blaster Beasts were considered being fully mature when they were considered able to 'be one with the hunt' for males. He did not explain what it was for females however..."

“Hm… Well, women tend to mature faster than men.” She shrugged slightly. That was more vague than she could have hoped. “We’ll have to see. I’m not like you and your dad. He’s… well, whatever he is, and you’re part of that too- but I’m just a regular skeleton. I’m pretty sure our kids are going to have some funky growing habits in general. Considering how massive I am, it’s not hard to expect.” She looked right around ready to pop with a single at this point, and it wasn’t hard to explain some of the stares the couple got from other patrons when they were out and about.

Toki thumbed over a tiny shirt, and then smiled and snagged a pair. On the front, they said ‘Thing one’ and ‘Thing two’. Twins totally got all the gimmick twin things. It was too cute not to. She shifted and added them to the cart, before sighing and rubbing along one of her ribs. “I know they’ve got your family’s abnormal strength. Pretty sure I’d have cracked bones if it wasn’t for my abnormal defensive stat.” With how hard they hammered her at times, it was little wonder they hadn’t hurt themselves. “To be honest, we really don’t know all that much about this.” She said softly. “This pregnancy is pretty new to even your dad- we have no idea how things are going, or where they’ll go from here. We’re going to have to play it by ear, as the saying goes, for both the duration of gestation and their childhood growth rates.”

He nodded in agreement. "I'm sure Father will love to help raise them, though I’ve a feeling he mostly will want to unleash the full potential of his bloodline." He warned with a soft laugh.

“There will be no blaster or serious weapons training until they’re at least a year or two into school.” She warned back. “Kids will be kids until they’re ready to learn that sort of stuff. Learning the basics of what not to do will be fine- but not beyond that. I won’t mind your dad helping with them- in fact, I’m counting on it, since he’s got all sorts of advice to give- but no weapons until they’re old enough to realize exactly what the weapons are for.”

Heaven forbid there be tiny cat skull blasters flying around, or tiny Hell Hornets flying around and causing all sorts of mischief.

That stated, Toki hummed, and collected a couple small shirts and baby-stretch pants, before returning to the onesies. She imagined a single piece of cloth would be easier to manage on what would be amounting to a tiny skeleton, so she collected a couple in various sizes. They wouldn’t know until the twins came- but she suspected they were going to be on the large side of the size spectrum.
"He'll be stubborn on that." he chuckled gently, though after that he quieted and looked at the clothes she picked up. "Let's start simple. Remember we could have Lana help us out any time." he told her, "She'd have no issue making clothing for the twins."

"That’s very true. I think we can do that- it would be nice to visit her more often anyways. Besides- we still have the two onesies Grillby gave us at Christmas. It should hold them over to start." She hums softly. Though, truly, she would pay money to see Lana try and measure a wiggly infant or toddler. They weren’t known for being easy to work with. She still takes a couple gimmick shirts though, but does relent on some of the other bits of clothing. Toki snorts as they bypass the diaper isle. "You know, I think I lucked out in becoming a skeleton. We don’t have to buy diapers now."

Diapers had always been her least favorite part of taking care of her baby brothers.

She kneads her fist into her lower back, and sighs thoughtfully as she pads along. They bypass an elderly worker arranging baby clothes by size and type on one of the racks, and then continue on back towards furniture.

"I've heard the less than pleasant comings and goings with diapers. Bleh." He then stuck out his tongue and made a gross noise.

Toki giggled at him. “Oh trust me, if I get any more nieces or nephews from my brothers, you’re bound to witness diaper changes. They consider me the diaper master- I’ve had to give lessons to both Kohaku and Ryushi concerning diapers. And, as Uncle Papyrus, you get to learn too.” She grins cheekily at him. Toki bade pause by a small rack of toddler beanies, and held up one that was designed like a little bumblebee with the cutest little antennas. Her eye lights glimmered as she held it up for him to examine.

He would handle diaper duty if it ever came to him. A soft laugh pulled from Aliquam’s throat as he glanced at the tiny bee-shaped hat. "That is adorable!"

“It is,” she purrs. “I’d like to get a pair- but I don’t know. What if they have my horns?” Hats with her horns were damn near impossible. Which sucked- she enjoyed beanies and knitted or crocheted caps.

"Then we can improvise, yeah?" he suggested with a small smile.

“I suppose so.” She smiled softly. Toki fingered the little hat, and then snagged a matching one. It was settled next to the rest of the clothes, and then Toki resumed her trek back for the furniture section. “I’m sure between you and me we can make it work.” Papyrus could sew, after all. Not on Lana’s scale, but she’s certain he could probably open up a couple little holes for horns.

Papyrus smiled and took a moment to gently press a kiss to the top of her skull.

Toki smiled in turn, and fell back to walk with him instead of ahead.

The furniture section was tall, with shelves far, far out of her reach. Displays were set on the ground level, with bulk products up high. They were organized by product- so each row had different things. Cradles, dressers, bassinets, rocking chairs, changing tables, toddler play sets- each had an isle dedicated to that specific type of furniture.

There was a lot to look at, and she was more than a little overwhelmed by all of the choices there were to make. “So… Cradles first?”

He nodded gently. "Yes. What do you think would work best, a solitary or a grouping cradle?" he inquired as he steered the basket for the isle with cradles and cribs.
“Hm… Well, I don’t know about monster twins, but human twins are often very close, and take comfort in being close to one another throughout most of their early lives.” She followed him down the isle, peering at the various models. “I did not know that they made round cribs. Those are weird.” She decides. They were aesthetically pleasing, yes, but weird as well, and not very good for saving space in a bedroom. “I’m thinking a grouping crib, maybe? That way we could reuse it for a single later?” The crib back at the house was not big enough for two babies to lay in- but some of the ones here were designed for it. “The jellybeans are close, despite their little spats over space.” Of which, they were in the middle of another one.

He nodded in agreement as he looked around. "I agree. A grouping crib sounds best."

Toki nodded. She padded along, and took note of the grouping cribs they had available. Several were single cribs that joined together at some point, but it wasn’t what she wanted. They were cute- but not what she liked. No- she found one that she quite took a liking to. It was probably too massive- but for fast growing skeleton children, who would probably take their size from their daddy, it seemed like a decent sized crib. It was dark wood of some kind, and she ran her fingers over the floor model in contemplation. “What about this one?” It wasn’t super fancy, and was decently priced for the size. It was also sturdy, and would hold up to the large monsters that would, no doubt, end up hip-checking it from time to time as they made their way around the children’s nursery. “It would hold them for a long while, I think, depending on how fast they grow.”

"It looks great." He agreed, smiling at her. Papyrus scooted the cart up near her, and then nuzzled her softly. "I say we get it." He smiled, before he stepped away from the cart and looked at the crib a little more, examining it with a hum.

Toki nodded and smiled. “I like it. I think the mattress for it is- ah, there it is.” The mattress was on the shelf above the boxes of cribs, which meant it was far, far out of her reach. It was well out of his reach too. “Y’know, for a store in a city of very small people, how do they think we’re supposed to reach things up that high? I mean, you can get the crib- probably- but the mattress is all the way on top.”

He shrugged, and then peered up at the mattress. It was way, way up there, just like she said. "You think I can reach that?"

“We probably could together, but being lifted up that high while I’m this big is definitely not something that is safe.” Her teeth grind thoughtfully. “… Hey, Quinn? You and Cae have similar magic, right? Do you think you could use your magic to bring one of them down?”

"I could try." He stepped back and his eye glowed as he lifted a hand and twitched it lightly, carefully pulling the mattress off the shelf and lowering it into reach. "Ta-da!"

Toki clapped slightly, and reached up to take the mattress. It was way, way up there, just like she said. "You think I can reach that?"

"Unlike Sans, I think that it's more worth earning something through true effort... but getting that mattress without magic would have been ridiculous.”

“That it would have been.” She nodded in agreement. She shifted, and reached up to try and edge one of the crib boxes over so she could help get it down and loaded up. “You’re not a lazy skeleton either- that was kind of a dumb question for me to ask, wasn’t it?” She chuckled.

He helped her slide it over, smiling gently as he nuzzled her. "Only a little~"
“It’s probably pregnancy-brain. Women get a little less logical as they get closer to having their kids.” Toki giggled softly and nuzzled him back- before grunting and very nearly dropping the crib as it slid down into her arms. That was heavier than she was expecting- but it contained solid wood parts, along with metal reinforcements to keep it stable. Really, pregnancy brain had her so addle minded. “Heavy.” she grunts softly. “Can you grab this? I’m going to end up dropping it if I try to pull it away from the shelf.” It was also far over her weight limit- and she wasn’t really thinking when she’d caught it from sliding off the shelf.

Aliquam chuckled and gently took it from her. "Up we go!" He hummed before he set it down carefully in the cart, making sure it wouldn’t crush the mattress with it’s weight.

“Thanks, Ali.” She smiled up at him. Toki rubbed her middle as it cramped slightly, and she sighed. “I need to watch how much I’m lifting.” She chuffs. “That was way over thirty pounds.”

"Let me sweat the weight, okay?" he purred as he kissed her head.

“M’kay.” She smooched him back gently, and then padded down the isle. “I can see blankets and the like down here… But I think I want to have Lana make a couple instead. Do you know if she does baby blankets?” Monster made was more likely to hold up against any possible sharp bits baby skeletons would have.

"Oh of course! As far as I know, she does pretty much everything." He replied with a smile.

Toki chuckled gently. “Good. Then we’ll definitely go to her for blanket ideas.” She hummed. Toki left him to bring the cart, as it was definitely going to be heavy, and then padded for another isle. “Dressers are up next it looks like!” She chirps softly.

There was a lot that they had to get- but each item collected soothed some of her inner anxieties bit by bit. They were definitely long overdue for this shopping trip.

Piece by piece the list was cleared and by the end of their shopping trip, the cart was snuggly filled, and Pap smiled happily at Toki. "Well! This was successful!" he said happily, starting for the cash registers.

“That it was.” She grinned. She was glad they had everything. Her back was starting to hurt again- Lana’s support band she made for her helped to some extent, but it was starting to work less and less to ease the weight off of her spine. Toki hummed, and eased her arm through his so they could walk in peace.

They were joined by a younger woman who was, like they were, out shopping for baby supplies and quite ready to check out. She eyed them curiously as she guided her own cart down the isle- she too was pregnant, but not nearly so round as Toki. “Getting some last minute shopping in?” She inquired curiously, giving them both a friendly smile.

"Indeed.” he replied with a smile. "How far along are you?"

The woman smiled wider and freed one hand from her basket so she could pat the small curve of her belly. “I’m only twenty weeks. It’s been a long twenty weeks though. Morning sickness was a bitch to handle on my own. How far along are you? You look… well, ready to pop!”
Toki chuckled softly. “Believe it or not, I’m only thirty two weeks along.” She hummed.

“No way!” The woman gaped.

"Nyeh heh heh..." He rubbed his head gently with a sheepish grin. "It's no lie, ma'am!"

“That’s unbelievable.” She might have gaped a little bit.

“Twins.” Toki chuckled. “Twins who take after their father in size.” She tilts her horns towards Papyrus, and gives her a bemused look. “And in strength. Some of the kicks are killer.”

“Twins would explain it. Doesn’t that mean that they could come sooner though? I heard twins are more likely to come early than a single one is.” The lady chuckled. “My little girl just started kicking a couple days ago. Happiest moment in my life thus far. Made all the sickness worth it, y’know?”

"My father was the first to feel the twins kick. He was so happy he started crying." Papyrus laughed gently.

“That’s really sweet.” She smiled. “My Dad’s been huge in helping me with my baby. He makes sure I get to my prenatal appointments, and my ultrasound appointments. He got to hear her heart beat- he damn near cried too.”

Toki smiled. “That’s really cute. Heh- you might not have gotten to feel them first, but you’re the only one who can simultaneously rile them up and calm them down.” She grins up to her fiancé.

"Nyeh heh heh heh!" He laughed and grinned smugly.

“Pap also drives- I can’t fit behind a steering wheel and reach the pedals anymore.” Toki chuckles. “That and my truck broke.” She eyes the lines at the registers, and notes that they, like most stores, have twelve lanes, and three checkers manning them.

“Oh yeah? That’s good.” She chuckles. “I don’t drive- Dad’s waiting for me out in the parking lot. I just stopped in to get a head start on baby clothes and blankets.”

“We stopped in to get- well, everything.” Toki grins sheepishly. “It hit me today that the twins could be here whenever, and we weren’t even close to ready.”

“Nesting hit you late, hm?” The lady smiled softly. “I’m glad you’ve got a doting man to help you shop though. That crib looks like it’s heavy duty. Did you get some of the paints from the painting section?” The store, oddly enough, had a section dedicated to painting babies rooms.

"No, we’re still trying to figure out which color we wanna decorate with in the first place.” Papyrus laughed gently.

“Choosing colors is hard.” She chuckled softly. The lady veered off slightly, heading for one of the shorter lines designed for smaller numbers of items as her phone began to ring. “Ah- that’s my dad. It was nice talking with you two!” She gave them a wave, before she was answering her phone and heading out of earshot.

Toki smiled slightly. “She was nice.” She chirped, butting her head lovingly against Pap’s shoulder. “Speaking of colors, we really do need to decide. I almost just want to do a burgundy color. Nice and rich and quite lovely, you know? We can get the paint later though.” No way in heck did she want to walk all the way back through the store again to go hunt down the painting section. They only had pinks, blues, and yellows at any rate. Toki didn’t particularly like yellow, and pink and blue were lovely, if stereotypical. She helped him choose a checkout line, and thus began the waiting
game.

"What about burgundy and... A gentle blue?" he suggested.

“I like that idea.” She nods, pleased. “We’ll stop at the paint store another day, yeah?”

She relaxed against him as they slowly moved up in line. Her eyes flicked to the television that faced their isle, playing commercials after commercial for this, that and the other.

It didn’t take long for a different commercial to play- and the sad sounding music floated out as flashes of pets who were obviously at a shelter played across. “Starting a family?” The commercial questioned. “Every family needs a pet- and every pet deserves a loving family. Ebott City Humane Society has an influx of dogs and cats who so direly need the tender love and care that a family can provide.” It flashed over to kittens reaching out towards the cameras, and squeaking sadly.

Toki sniffled.

“Ebott City Humane Society is adopting out pets to good homes every day. Please- it would mean the world to these animals if you would stop by and take one of them home. Every dog deserves a child, every cat deserves a companion. Please consider Ebott City Humane Society for all of your adoption needs. Expand your family a little more- and make a new family member for a lifetime.”

Papyrus looked at the TV as the commercial came and went, then he looked at Toki. "... Are you okay?"

“Nooo…” She sniffled softly. “Those kittens looked so sad…” She makes a soft, sad sound, and presses her palms to her sockets. Oh no- it was a mood swing. Shit.

He rumbled softly and hugged her gently. "Oh there, there." He crooned warmly, rubbing her shoulders gently.

Toki sniffled softly and nuzzled into his shoulder, trying to keep quiet so she didn’t draw attention to her sniffling. “They were so cute, Pap. So cute and so sad…” She sniffed. “I just want to take them all in and give them a home, y’know?”

"Yeah...” He sighed softly, before he smiled and tilted her chin up gently. "Hey... why don’t we go visit the animal shelter?"

“Really?” She sniffs softly, eye lights glimmering up at him gently. “I... I’d love to. Can we go after we check out?” Which they were about to do. The lady in front of them was just finishing, and the checker was giving both skeletons a deeply amused look. Embarrassment flooded her, and she hid her face in his chest again. She’d just broke down in tears like a sissy because of a commercial. Toki wasn’t sure if she hated mood swings or morning sickness the most.

Aliquam pressed kisses to the top of her skull and smiled gently. "Of course! Now come, perk up! We're not done yet."

She sniffled and swiped her sockets again as she leaned back. Toki gave him a soft nod, and fetched her wallet from her purse. “You’re right.” Getting the mood swing under control wasn’t really feasible, but it was soothed by the knowledge that they were likely to adopt one of the family-needing pets at the shelter.

As the register person motioned them closer, he offered them an amused grin as he came around to scan the items in their cart. “Don’t feel too bad, lady. You’re the ninth woman today to burst into tears with that commercial.”
He chuckled gently, smiling at the clerk. "They did that on purpose, huh?"

“They did indeed. It’s targeted towards expectant moms, to urge them to get a family pet before their kid arrives. By the sound of it, it worked on you two.” He quirked a smile. “It’s a marketing ploy—Usually works on the moms. Surprised it worked on you though, big dude. Not every day you see the dad suggesting getting cats. Usually it’s ‘we’re not prepared for an animal, sweetheart’, or other excuses not to get an animal.” He carefully made sure he got the hats rung up too, and her rocking chair, before moving back behind his register to check for sales, coupons, and the like. “I’d actually suggest waiting— your… girlfriend? Wife? Whatever she is, looks like she’s about to pop. Taking care of a baby and acclimating an animal is a lot of work.”

Toki sighs. “I’m not due yet.” At least she hoped not. “I’m only thirty two weeks. I’ve got plenty of time to get an animal used to the house before I have them.”

“Ahh. Multiples. Always funny how big some women can get with them.” He whistled a merry tune, and casually input a coupon code. “Your total comes to two thousand, eight hundred and ninety nine dollars even.”

“I’ve got it.” Toki rummages through her wallet to find her card. It was expensive— but for everything they got, spending nearly three thousand wasn’t bad. It all could be reused too. Besides— she got an ultra padded rocking chair. She was going to enjoy that once Papyrus figured out how it went together.

Well it was pricey, but that didn't sound too bad since they had gotten quite a lot. Pap hummed quietly then he smiled at Toki.

Toki gave him a smile back in turn, and paid quietly. She was handed her receipt and her card back shortly, before she tilted her chin to him. “Thanks. Have a good day!”

“You too.” The clerk cheerily waved at her. “Good luck getting pets!”

"Thank you sir." he said warmly as he gave a small wave, pushing the cart away from the checkout and out the doors of the store.

Toki trailed along with him, sighing softly as they went. It was bright and hot outside, just like it had been before they went inside the store, and she fanned the front of her turtleneck with a groan. She just had to choose a warm shirt on a summer day. Oh well— at least she could roll up the sleeves. She began and completed the process of doing that while Papyrus shoved the cart towards the car.

“So, I think the animal shelter is near the mall.” She says conversationally, collecting his keys and going to open the back hatch for him so he could begin loading stuff in.

He nodded gently as he packed things in. "Not too far at all."

“Indeed.” She grinned cheerily. Though, it faded slightly, and she sighed. “You know, we don’t have any supplies for adopting a pet. I think the shelter will send a care package home, but… Are you sure you’re okay with it? I mean… We have a lot coming up. The wedding is only a week away, and I’ve heard rumors of Mettaton visiting for something or other… We’re going to be pretty busy.” She didn’t think he’d say it just to soothe her mood swing, but there was really no guarantee.

"Oh, of course...” He gave her a soothing smile. “A pet sounds nice to me, especially one that isn't a pet rock.”

“Your brother’s pet rock was… charming.” She chuckled softly, her smile returning. “Good. I think I want a cat. Maybe two cats, so they can entertain each other and not get into mischief. Though…
Cats bring litter boxes.” And she couldn’t bend down to do them, or she wouldn’t be getting back up. Toki also wasn’t sure if she should even do them, given that what was in them wasn’t good for pregnant women. Though, she wasn’t sure that applied to monsters. It was wholly possible.

She takes that time to take the now empty basket over to its drop off location, and then go get settled gently in her seat.

"Well... remember Monster Food doesn't digest like human food does." he told her.

Toki nodded, waiting for him to finish arranging things how he wanted them to be. “I suppose that’s true… But can you even feed monster food to a cat? Cats have pretty sensitive systems. How would they even react to magic?” Toki shifted, and quietly massaged her middle. It felt good to be off of her feet. Her lower lumbar was aching terribly.

"I'm not sure... but we will have everything in case it come down to needing it, all right?" He rumbled.

She pursed her teeth slightly, and then hummed. “Okay.” She sighed gently, and relaxed back.

The drive over to the shelter wasn’t ultimately that long, but it was just enough for Toki to rest her back some. Back cramps had plagued her for most of her pregnancy, but the larger she got, the larger they seemed to get too.

She hauled herself out of the car, purse and all, once they got there, and leaned slightly against the side of the Mercedes to let her spine stretch and pop. She closed her door, and glanced at the shelter just across the busy street. They’d have to jaywalk, as she had no intentions of walking three blocks down just to get to the crosswalk. She’d just have to fast-waddle.

“So… I didn’t ask, but… Did you want a cat? Or did you want a dog instead?” She really wanted a cat- but if Papyrus wanted a dog, she could deal with it. Though… She wasn’t sure if it was a good idea. Dogs liked to chew on bones, and they were living bones, basically.

"Cats sound nice." he purred gently as he clamored out of the driver’s seat. "Also... I have bad memories of dogs."

“You do?” She blinks at him as his head appears over the top of the car. She waits for him to walk around. “I actually really like dogs,” She admits, “but I don’t think dogs would be good to have while we have baby skeletons. Our kind of dogs- not dog monsters like Greater Dog, mind you- tend to like to chew on bones. That’s a bad thing for us.”

"There was an annoying little white dog that lived in the underground. He liked to steal my special attack!” he huffed, "And my femurs..."

“Your femurs too, huh?” She chuckled softly, and linked her arm with his once he made his way around. She tugged him carefully along, and made her way across the street and inside of the Humane Society. “Then we’ll stick with cats. At worst they might steal your toes.” She teases gently.

“Hello, how can we at the Ebott City Humane Society help yo-oooohh… uh… Hi.” The receptionist looked startled to see two skeletons. “Uh… Can I help you with… something?”
"Yes, we were hoping that we may have a look at your cats?" he asked with a smile.

“Our… cats. Uh… Okay… Follow me and I’ll show you to the cat-room.” The woman shook her head with a befuddled sigh, and stood. She motioned them to follow, and then guided them back through the back doors.

The back doors took them outside, where several dogs stopped barking to regard the skeletons with interest, before resuming their loud yapping.

Toki smiled slightly. They were lead down a long wall of kennels with dogs of all kinds in them, and then taken down another hall to a rather small door. Toki would have to duck- poor Papyrus would brain himself if he wasn’t careful.

“In here are the cats. You’re welcome to take some of them out of their cages- but keep the door closed, and no more than one cat per person out at a time.” The woman opened the door to usher them in. “There’s, ah, seating in there too so you can rest your legs. There’s a button on the inside of the door if you find a cat you want. We’ll bring paperwork and your proper starter package.”

Toki nodded and ducked to go inside the room. The room, thankfully, was plenty tall with several floor to ceiling play sets for the cats, and copious amounts of cat-fur covered beanbags to sit on. The main wall was a row of cages that were three high, and one adult cat per cage. Some of the kittens were in with their mothers or littermates depending on the age. There were so many colors and so many sizes- she had no idea where to start.

Aliquam looked around as he ducked down into the room with a small smile. "So, Tokiko, do you happen to know just what kind of cat you have in mind?" he asked gently.

“Not really.” She hums as the door closes behind them. She waddles for the cages and investigates them curiously. “I don’t think I want a kitten. Most people adopt kittens- but the adult cats aren’t chosen as often as kittens are.”

Most of the cats shied away from her sharp-toothed appearance, some of them fluffing up and glaring at her warily. A few curious ones gazed at both skeletons with interest, and rare few simply purred and rubbed against the bars of the crates, swatting playfully with the simple desire to be let out. There were many breeds- and a lot of black and white cats. Siamese too, now that she looked at them, but she wasn’t sure she wanted a Siamese. They were temperamental creatures, she knew, and she wasn’t certain how well they would do in a household where canine monsters frequently visited.

She padded along, and located a set of sibling cats. They were listed as mix breeds, but Toki would have pegged the female as a Russian Blue based on her gray color and green eyes, and the male for some sort of a Siamese. Toki smiled and wiggled her fingers into the bars, holding still to let them approach and sniff her if they so desired.

The first cat raised her head and her ears twitched gently, before she stood and came closer sniffing the fingers that poked through the bars.

Toki smiled softly, and gently tilted her finger to rub her chin. “Lets see… You’re… Gracie, I think. White collar means female according to the thing… Hey, Pap? Lets check out these two. Brother and sister- they think they’re around two years old.”

She purred loudly while the other, a male, walked up, looking up at them with a gentle purr.

Toki smiled softly. “Gracie and Gael,” she tests the names out on her tongue. Gracie’s name was definitely American, which was odd for being in Japan, while Gael’s was probably from some
language she wouldn’t recognize- but she liked them. Toki shifted and opened the cage carefully, so she could reach inside and collect the cats. Toki took Gracie to start, and found her arms full, so she gently rubbed the male’s ears while she glanced over to Papyrus. “They really are. Do you want to take him? She fills my arms pretty nicely, and he’s pretty big.” And the female’s fur reminded her of the exact shade of Thumper’s fur.

He nodded and reached out, gently picking up the male cat and smiling at him warmly. "What a handsome kitty~" he purred, while Gael blinked up at him slowly, already purring loudly.

Toki shifted Gracie up, draping her upper legs gently along her elbow. The same arm supporting her upper half came down to cradle her backside, leaving one of Toki’s arms free to pet the feline. Like a rag-doll, Gracie slumped and relaxed, her purrs picking up. Toki smiled warmly, and made her way over to the fur covered beanbags.

She got settled, sinking in and no doubt getting stuck, and then let the cat get more comfortable on her. Gracie folded over her belly, and began to knead at a rapid-fire pace. Toki giggled. “I think Gracie likes to knead.” Which was sort of relaxing, if a little ticklish over her ribs and middle. She curled her hand up, and took her ear in hand, scratching it gently as the feline practically melted against her, though Gracie continued to watch Toki with intense eyes. “And ear scratches.” She purrs softly.

Aliquam smiled at Gael and nuzzled him gently, before the Siamese point leaned his head back and began to rub his face against Quinn’s, purring up a storm.

Toki chuckled and relaxed, rubbing Gracie’s ear. Her hand slowly worked her way down the cat’s back, and, true to form, her rump angled sky high as her purring picked up volume. Toki chuckled softly, feeling her sockets begin to droop under the relaxing sound. “What do you think of Gael?” She inquired softly to her fiancé.

"He’s affectionate." He giggled happily, rubbing his head against the cats.

“So is she.” She smiled softly. Gracie loved on her for a time more, before she hopped down to go make use of the litter box. Letting the feline do what she wanted, Toki shifted, and made to get up. “Ah- Pap. Can I get a hand up please? The chair is eating my backside in a non-fun sort of way.”

"O-oh yes!” he slowly put Gael down, and then padded over and gently helped Toki back onto her feet.

She leaned up to kiss his cheek once she was upright, and gave him a soft smile. “Thanks, my love.” She purrs. Toki waves her fingers to Gael in greeting, before padding over to investigate the cat playground.

There was the sound of litter landing on the floor, before Gracie was bounding back over with a soft squeak, following diligently after the small skeleton. She paused only to rub along Aliquam’s ankles, before continuing over to Toki. She squeaked softly again.

“I can’t bend down to get you, Gracie.” Toki wiggled her fingers softly, motioning for the gray cat to climb up the structure enough for Toki to collect her. “C’mon, cutie pie. I’ll give you all the ear rubs and butt scratches you could possibly want.”

The wiggling of her fingers was basically a universal sign for ‘come here’. It didn’t take long for the gray cat to bolt up, and jamb her face into Toki’s hand for loves, before flopping over for a belly rub. It was usually a universal trap among cats- touch the belly and get the claws. Not so much for Gracie. The cat just purred and looped her paws around Toki’s wrist so she could groom her radius
diligently.

Aliquam watched with a bright smile, and giving Gael a last scratching, he slipped silently out the door and went back towards the front desk.

The lady at the front looked just as startled to see him again as she had been when he’d walked in. She fidgeted with her desk, nervously straightening things and collecting papers. “You recall there was a button to push so you didn’t have to walk all the way back here, right?” It had been right next to the door. “Either way… did you find what you wanted in a cat?”

"Oh well." He chuckled quietly. He had spaced it, yes- but it was much less lazy to just walk back to the front desk while Toki was distracted. "Yes, I think we've found a duo we will want to take home with us."

“Two? My, my, it’s not often we get a double adoption.” She tugs out two sets of paperwork, and glances up to him. “Which cats?"

"Gracie and Gael, please." 

“Gracie and Gael…” She carefully looked them up on her computer, and then began the process of filling out the paperwork. It didn’t take long, simply transferring numbers from the monitor down onto paper. “Alright… All you need to do is pay and sign, and they’ll be yours. First though- are you going to want the starter care pack? It comes with one bag of dry food per cat, a bowl for food and water, and a litter box with a bag of litter. It’s twenty five extra- not per cat, but on the total itself.”

"Of course!” He chirped. “That would be helpful!"

“Alright.” She nodded. She marked it down, and then carefully tallied up the price. “We have a special going on for cats who are older than a year- so that puts Gracie’s price at… Seventy five, and Gael at eighty.” Siamese were more expensive, no matter what place you went to. “Seventy five and twenty five is a hundred, and eighty makes a hundred and eighty total. Uh…” She glances at him. “I do believe that’s… sixty gold, if that’s your preferred method.”

"I have cash." He replied simply, setting down the four fifty-dollar bills. "Oh, how much are your pet carriers?” he then asked.

“The cats do come with a disposable cardboard carrier, but it’s not a long term thing. If you’ve got a long drive, they could break open.” She fiddles with something, and looks them up. “For the reusable ones that will last you, they’re on sale for fifteen dollars per carrier. Regular price is thirty per carrier.”

"Oh wow! I think I’ll take advantage of that! I’ll take two please.” He did the math in his head, and then put down a ten dollar bill alongside the four fifties that he had laid down prior.

“Two it is. They come in Red, black, and blue. What color would you like for them to be?” She inquired as she collected his cash. She rung him up, and gave him a receipt for it, before turning the piles of paperwork around and scooting them, and a pen, closer to him. “Sign please.”

"I think I would like one blue and one black, please." He replied, signing his name rather eloquently on the papers before he put down the pen, smiling patiently.

“Blue and black…” She muttered softly, taking the papers and imputing some data. She hummed softly, did a quick records check, and then handed his paperwork back to him. “Alright. This is yours to keep- and you’ll definitely want to keep it even after you’ve brought them home.” She stands again, and collects two colored carrying crates from a shelf behind her desk.
The woman plops them atop the desk for the skeleton to catch. “If you want to go get your cats gathered, I’ll get your starter kit collected, and have it waiting here for you when you get back.”

"Thank you so much!” he said happily, bringing the two cat carriers to the room, "Toki." he called gently as he entered.

Toki was not technically covered in cats, but she had the both of them draped over her belly while she was, once more, stuck in the beanbag chair. She looked too content though, with Gracie nuzzling up close to her and kneading at her gravid swell. Toki blinked over to Pap as he padded in, and waved her free hand. “Over here, Pap. Where’d you get the carrying crates?”

"If we're taking them home with us, I thought we'd want them to have some nice carriers." he told her in reply.

She visibly brightened. “Ah! Did you get the paperwork done?” She wiggled some, to which Gracie fuzzed and kneaded her more intensely. “Heh… I kinda got lured into an adorably furry trap while you were gone. Apparently I make a good cat bed.”

He nodded gently, and then he chuckled and opened the crates, putting them upright before he went to catch Gael. "Indeed, but they'll have to wait until we're home." he chuckled gently. "Then they can keep cuddling you."

Catching Gael wouldn’t be hard. He was fairly limp over her middle, a lump of purring putty. Toki hefted him up, and then squirmed, keeping Gracie in hand as she tried to get up again. The gray cat fuzzed, not wanting to be disturbed from her place. “Preferably home on a surface that I can get up from on my own.” She chuckled softly. At least she wasn’t human and having to pee every half an hour. Thank god for invisible skeleton organs.

He nodded and took Gracie first, putting her in the blue carrier, closing it and setting it back onto it’s base. He then went back for Gael.

The Siamese simply purred up at him as Toki handed him over. She took a moment to use Pap’s arm to haul herself upright, and then went to go snag Gracie’s carrier. The quiet gray cat was very, very loud about her dislike of the crate. Very loud.

He patted his head gently and went to put him in the black carrier, putting it on its base next. Gael looked a little unhappy, but he was quick to settle, purring quietly to himself as Aliquam picked his carrier up, helping Toki out to the main room before he looked at the clerk with a smile. "I’ll be back in a moment, just need to see my mate to the car." He told her.

The lady had everything on the counter for them, and simply nodded. “Alright. It’ll be here when you get back.” After all, it wasn’t like they were very busy.

Toki smiled slightly and bade her goodbye as she was urged gently out the door. She kept a firm hold on Gracie’s crate as they crossed the street again to the parking spot on the other side. She held out her hand for Gael’s crate, so Papyrus could fish out his keys and unlock the door.

He was able to get his keys easily enough without handing over the crate, unlocking her side first before he pulled the door open for her. "Go ahead and climb in. I can put the cats in the back seat."

“Okay.” She flashed him a smile, and unloaded her purse carefully. She handed over Gracie’s crate, and then carefully eased herself into her seat. Her back thanked her, as did her feet, and the skeleton gave her mate a warm and affectionate look. They had cats now- they were damn well on their way to becoming a family, albeit in a slightly backwards fashion.
More like ass-backwards at this point. But Pap didn't care.

He went and put both cats in the back seat, before he went and collected the kits, a smile on his face as he came back out, humming a tune to himself cheerfully.

When he returned, Toki was in much the same position, though her door was closed. She had adjusted her seat slightly, and had a leg up on her other one so she could rub her arches slightly. Toki smiled, and leaned over to press the button to open the back hatch for him to slide the food, litter, and other little things in the back with the baby stuff.

He had a warm smile on his face as he put the kits in the back of the Mercedes, before he climbed into his seat and started the car. "All right. Is that all that's left to do?"

“Well, we need paint for the twin’s room, and maybe a couple rugs to cover the tile, but we can do that later.” She was wearing out after having been in town for so long. It was slightly visible on her face- her stamina wasn’t as good as it used to be with most of her energy going towards growing the eager little jellybeans in her middle. “I’d like to get home and get the cats in the house. And all of the furniture and stuff too. Though, we might want to hold off on putting it together until we’ve finished painting.” Everything would get messy otherwise.

"Sounds good." He agreed, pulling out and starting onto the road that would take them home.

“You know what else sounds good…?” She smiles slightly. “Some of your spaghetti.”

He blinked once, and then he smiled brightly. "Starting to like the idea of it again?" he asked. "Alright, glad you said so. I can make a stop real fast to get what I’d need to cook it up."

She smiles shyly. “I am, yeah. It’s about time too. I really did enjoy your spaghetti. Our spawn, however, did not.” Toki idly leans a hand back to roll down the window in the back to give the cats some fresh air. It was horrendously hot after all, and using the AC just drained the gas tank. “I don’t mind. Would it bothered you if I stayed in the car?” Her fingers continued to rub at her arches, though she switched feet so she could soothe them both. What she wouldn’t give for a full body massage at this point- but bone massages just weren’t a thing someone could go out and request yet.

"Not at all." He replied, "But wouldn't you rather just turn on the AC?"

“Running the AC tends to drain the gas tank.” She chuckles. “Besides, I don’t want to have you leave the car running while you’re in the store.” She shifts, wishing she could prop her feet up on something, and then sighs as she stretches. Her hands fold over her middle, stroking the swell affectionately. “Thanks, by the way. My feet are killing me.”

He smiled gently and leaned over to kiss her head. "I love you."

“I love you too.” She smiled back to him with warm affection.

Getting to the store wasn’t hard, and by the time they got there, Aliquam had convinced her to turn on the AC to keep cooler in the summer heat. He’d left the car on and unlocked on his side, and gone into the store.

When he’d come back out, she reclined in her seat, sound asleep with her ankles crossed up on the dashboard. She’d even left her shoes off so she wouldn’t leave any prints in the leather. Her skirt had ridden up slightly, but it was long, and the angle her legs rested at kept everything but her bare shins from view.

He didn’t bother to wake her. Papyrus simply packed the groceries away, and got them started on the
road home with a simple, giddy smile on his face.
Chapter 63

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Heh. Sometimes you have to be a little naughty to lure the wild grandpa over. Also- baby skeletons are big enough to start developing and stockpiling their own magic now. :D

Silverwing Notes: Alrightie folks here’s something fun to take a gander at. Tenebris has decided to be a crabby little hermit (Get it?) so it’s up to Toki to fix the poor old bastard. Here’s how it goes XD
Enjoy!

Getting the cats adjusted wasn’t all that hard. Toki and Papyrus were supposed to keep them inside for at least a week or two until they learned that this was their home and that they weren’t supposed to leave. They stuck the litter box in the downstairs bathroom, and left the door open for them to go in and out of the room as they needed. Their food bowls were settled in the kitchen, so they could eat as they pleased.

Gael had taken a liking to Papyrus, and was usually found draped across the skeleton’s broad shoulders when he was home from work, or in the early mornings. When he wasn’t around, Gael was either off doing his own thing, or playing with Thumper.

Gracie had, likewise, taken a shining to Toki. The gray cat followed at her heels most of the time, shadowing her like an adorable little stalker and generally being a cute underfoot pest. Toki didn’t mind. Whenever the skeleton settled anywhere for longer than a couple minutes, Gracie would spread out on the floor like a rug and go to sleep until Toki wandered to a different room.

If Toki sat down, she would find her lap full of attention seeking feline. Gracie would do what the skeleton liked to call Turbo Kneading, where she would knead at a rapid fire pace with little use of her claws. It was oddly relaxing, if a little ticklish whenever her paws would stray to her side or ribs. Once kneading was out of the way, Gracie would usually go right to sleep, but stay spooned to her leg or side. Or draped across her, really. It depended on what Toki was doing, and where she was seated.

Thumper was enamored by the cats, and spent most of his days entertaining Gael. Gracie gave him affection too, but she was far fonder of the shorter skeleton than anything else.

Between the cats, Thumper spent some time at Tenebris’ house too. He was having more nightmares, and found solace in someone who understood what they were about. Toki was good to talk to, but she could only offer comforts- she didn’t know what he had heard or seen through the slit.

Tenebris was still a recluse- and Toki was figuring enough was enough. She actually wanted to talk to him, as she still had the sand that his teeth had turned into, but he wouldn’t even respond to phone calls.

She sent out Stripe- who absolutely fascinated Gracie- and had the bee sneak into his room while he wasn’t in there. She’d had the hornet take all of his mint, and leave a note that Toki had written.
So thus, Toki waited once Stripe returned. She had taken all of his available mint, and now Toki was in possession of it. It was carefully set on the living room table, next to where she had settled the sand, and then Toki took a seat on the couch and continued to crochet.

It would all be down to a waiting game, to see when Tenebris realized he had no more mint, and see if he found the cheeky ransom note that she’d had Stripe leave in it’s stead.

Tenebris wasn’t happy, to say the least. Soon there was a familiar set of knuckles rapping against her door. "Nara!" Was a growl from outside said door.

Well, the growl was slightly alarming, and she was glad no one besides the cat was there to see her flinch. “Come in!” She calls cheerily, reaching forth to gather the mint and tuck it under her mess of yarn. The sand is left where it was, and she hums softly as she continues to crochet, while Gracie kneads at her side.

He came in and closed the door behind him. "Tokiko." He definitely sounded unhappy, though he was once more wearing his mask and his mouth was hidden so his growing scowl was unseen. "Did you steal my spearmint?" he questioned sharply.

“Little old me?” She blinked up at him with an innocent smile. “You think I could sneak into your house without you knowing, get your spearmint and get out unseen?” Toki’s sockets glimmered with mirth. The only smell he likely caught in his room was the smell of Stripe. Stripe usually smelled like brimstone and smoke. “I mean, I could, but you’ve been stuck in your house for a week or so. When could I possibly have snuck in without you hearing?”

"I know you sent your bee to steal my mint, my drawer reeked of her.” He then held up the note. "And this is your handwriting."

“Oh, so it is.” She grinned. Toki patted the couch, and adjusted her yarn. “So you read the ransom then. You get your mint back… for a price.” Her eye lights twinkle at him merrily.

"What do you want, Nara?” He growled, not sitting down just yet.

“Quite simple.” She chirps softly, fingers reflexively tightening on her yarn at his growl. “I haven’t seen you, and both me and your grandbabies have missed you. So… maybe a little bit of your company?” She knew he was upset that Asgore had to leave, but sulking for so long in his room was not good for his health.

"..." His look changed when she mentioned the grandchildren, and he sighed in defeat, before he tucked his tail to one side as he sat down on the couch. He didn't look happy, but it looked like she had him at the mention of his grandchildren.

After he looked away for a moment to collect and calm himself. Once he was certain he wouldn’t lash out at her, he slowly looked back at her, "So... How are they doing?” He asked quietly, his previous mood untraceable in his voice.

“They’re active.” She says softly. “I get a lot of cramps and twinges sometimes, but I think that’s more related to how large they’re getting and how fast they’re growing. It gets worse the more active I am, so I’ve been trying to slow down.” She shifts, and removes the yarn. Her crochet project is abandoned on the table, and she tugs out his mint from her side, and offers it to him. He sat- and was providing company- so his mint was offered up, as per the ransom’s agreement.

Gracie glanced over at the new monster, and then padded over to knead on his thigh as she investigated him.
He took the mint and tucked it away before he blinked in surprise at the cat. He hesitated for a moment, then he looked back to Toki, "You got a cat."

"We got two cats, actually. This is Gracie. Gael is Pap’s cat, and he’s probably upstairs with Thumper right now." Toki shifted, and sucked in a soft breath when a hard kick nailed her ribs. "We got them when I had my mild freak out a few days back. I trust Thumper told you about it when he visited?"

Gracie blinked up at him and chirped softly, continuing to knead his thigh at a rapid-fire pace.

"With a child's innocence comes ignorance. He mentioned you were worrying about something, but he could not specify."

"Baby stuff mostly." She curls her fingers over her middle and rubs the swell with a soft sigh. The ecto skin was tight and itched slightly. “I’m heading into thirty three weeks here soon, and twins usually come early from what I understand. We didn’t have anything for them yet, and I ended up with some serious anxiety over it a couple days back. The nursery still isn’t put together. We need to get some paint to paint the walls, and then put the furniture together, but that’s likely going to be after the wedding. Anyways, I kinda panicked a bit and called Papyrus, and we went shopping.”

He looked at her with a sigh, before he set Gracie to the side, standing up. "Which room have you decided to give to the pups?" he asked.

Gracie gave him an offended look, and stretched out in the warm spot he left behind.

"I'll show you." She shifts and gains her feet with a grunt of effort. She scoops up the jar of black sandy stuff, and offers it out to him. "Before I forget, here are your teeth. They turned into sand."

"My Teeth?" he questioned, before he realized and he looked at the jar with interest, "Huh... Never thought the day would come where I could examine my own dust." he chuckled to himself.

"It's more like sand than dust, to be honest." She quirks a grin at him and starts for the stairs. Gracie isn't far behind, trailing at her heels, and then darting ahead when she realized where Toki was headed.

He rumbled lowly as he followed her up the stairs. "Mhm..."

She guided him upstairs, and then turned to the room she had once given Todd. She opened the door, displaying the unfinished room. They still needed to move the bed to storage, and un-box and put everything together. Not even her rocking chair was finished. "We decided to give them the room across from ours so we can listen to better cater to their needs." She hummed gently.

Tenebris nodded gently, "Wise." He agreed. "Also reduces the need for a baby monitor."

"Precisely." She smiled softly, resting her hand on her hip. "The walls are pretty thin up here, so we should be good to hear them if we leave the door open.” Which they had been doing, since the cats were noisy if they shut them out for too long at night. Gracie twined around her ankles, and Toki nearly tripped as she made to walk to her rocking chair box. "Gracie please, foot space is a thing sweetheart." She sighed. "Anyway, I kind of want to get my rocking chair built, but we were waiting until we got everything painted."

Toki heaves a soft breath, and rubs over her spine. "Ah... your grandbabies don't like my spine right now. And they have your family's strength, I think. At least it feels like it. They're excited because they can hear you."
The older monster chuckled gently and came over, kneeling down before her stomach to nuzzle it gently. "Hello my grandpups."

They squirmed as he pressed his masked mouth to her belly. Tiny limbs flailed, and happiness flitted over their soul link.

She was still a little leery over his mouth being so close, but it made the twins happy, and they ceased their kicking at her spine. "They are very happy." She smiled softly. Her hand gently patted Tenebris' head. "They've missed you. So have I, to be honest. I'm sorry Asgore left, but... he'll be back, Tenebris. Your car still works too, so you can visit."

"Yes... yes of course" he murmured, before he sighed and gently nuzzled the stomach again before he rose, "I missed you too..."

She gives him a gentle smile, and huffs a soft breath. "Mhm. So, what do you think?" She rubs the top of the rocking chairs box. "We ended up getting a grouping crib so they can sleep side by side."

"I think you're going to need it, if they're of my blood then they'll want to stay together."

"That's what I was thinking." She chuckled. She shifted and smiled softly. "Want to help me build the rocking chair?" She was going to leave the crib to Paps, but... she really wanted to be able to relax in the chair. The rocking motion would hopefully settle the fussing twins in her middle.

"Indeed." He agreed gently, coming to look at the rocking chair, "Hopefully we will not require the use of power tools, like I’ve seen in those commercials..." he muttered to himself as he used a claw to open the box

"I have them out in the shed if all else fails." She quirks another grin to him, and moves to assist him with opening it. "Really though, you can probably just drive the screws in with the tips of your claws. All power tools do is aid humans with applying force and rotation they can't do naturally." Toki paused, and then frowned slightly. "Huh... I just realized that I don't really consider myself human anymore."

He smiled at her gently, though it was hidden behind his mask. "While physically, you might no longer be a human, you'll always be one at heart if you so choose." he purred.

Toki chuckled softly. "I wasn't a born monster. Deep in my core, I'll always be human. Whatever I am, human, monster, or some weird amalgamation between the two... I'm still me." She smiled back at him, and balanced a foam brick from inside the box on the top of his head. "I'll always have a foot in both worlds, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

"Nor would those who happily call you family." He purred, looking up at his new hat and miraculously sitting still enough to let it balance.

That was just inspiring all sorts of mischief, but Toki didn’t add any more foam. Instead, she simply smiled and giggled at him. “I’m glad.” She purrs. She shifts, and peers inside the box. “That’s a lot of parts and pegs.” She hummed. Toki rummaged through down lower, using her thinner arms to her advantage, and then chuckled. “Looks like it’s screws. And- aha! It comes with a little screwdriver. No power tools needed if you think you’ve got the force to drill them in where they need to be.”

"Oh perfect." He rumbled softly, starting to pull out the parts of the rocking chair. "It will be like assembling a skeleton." Tenebris mused to himself with an amused sound.

"And you've done that often?" She blinks at him and gets out of his way as he starts bringing out parts. She shifts, looking for a spot she could get seated on the ground with him. She could probably
sit on the bed that was still in there, but she would rather sit with him. "... This isn't going to be like the Ikea incident, is it?"

One could see the metaphorical fur around him flare up in offence. "First of all, how dare you?" He huffed. "Second of all, I had my training when I was helping the boys when they were young."

Toki gave him an apologetic smile and made her way carefully onto the floor. Well. This was where she was going to be now until she could get a hand up. She scooted closer on her rump, and began looking at the instructions. "I didn't mean to offend you, but I recall the Ikea incident needing Papyrus to build it, I ended up with a loose tooth, and you ate my hand." She grins at him cheekily. "So what did the boys do that required reassembly?"

"They were clumsy." He replied simply, looking at the instructions for a moment and then able to start the rocking chair easily enough. Really, like the Ikea incident? That hardly counted as an incident.

"Really?" She blinks up at him and grins. "Got any adorably embarrassing children's stories to share?"

Tenebris snorted slightly, making his mask shift, and flicked his purple gaze up to her. "You want blackmail against my boys?"

"Not at all!" She smiles. "Just sharing family stories, kinda like when I told you about the skunk incident when my brothers and I were younger."

"Mmh... Aliquam was a bit more coordinated but he didn't have as much balance. Caeruleus bumped around a lot more." He explained.

"They sound adorable. Was Ali always the taller of the two?" She let him work, and leaned forward as best she could to rest her elbows on her knees. The twins didn't appreciate being squished, but she dealt with their kicks while she stretched her back some.

"No." He shook his head, humming softly as he sorted some parts. "There was a time where Caeruleus was taller as he was the first born, but while his maturity grew quickly, Aliquam's height grew swifter."

Toki chuckled. "I bet Papyrus was an adorable little beanpole. I was tall and gangly until I filled out with age. Sure made dragging my brothers out of trouble a pain in the butt." She shifts, and tilts her head softly as she leans back. Toki scoots closer to one of the other boxes, and crosses her ankles.

Gracie took that time to go flop right in the middle of what Tenebris was working on putting together. She squeaked, and rolled over for belly rubs.

"Oh come now, kitty." He scolded gently petting her head before gently scooping her up. "Go on now, little kitty..." He tutted softly, opening his hands for her to leave.

Gracie squeaked up at him balefully and went limp in his hands, purring pleasantly. As most cats are known to do, she went from a solid to a liquid almost immediately, and oozed all over his gloves for attention.

Toki giggled softly. "Gracie likes to be involved."

"I can tell this." He chuckled gently, setting the cat aside before he got back to what he was doing, "This isn't as hard as it let off, Toki."
Gracie sulked a bit, but remained where she was placed, shifting only so she could knead his leg as she purred.

Toki smiled slightly. "You are a scientist with an IQ that is definitely higher than mine. I am a beekeeper and an author- none of that requires building anything. My brother is the architect, not me." Kohaku was a construction worker, which wasn’t the same, but as far as she was concerned, it was close enough.

He snorted at that. "Carry on then, miss bee keeper." He teased, putting some parts together and setting them by her. "You can put the screws in."

She brightens as he hands her things. "I do have one thing you don’t, despite your IQ. And that is my sway with the bees." She buzzed at him teasingly as she collects the parts, and rests them in her lap. She slips the screws in where he needs them, and makes an attempt to screw them in further. It doesn't work, but hey, she wasn't known for her physical strength like they were.

"I suppose you have that." He chuckled lowly, continuing to assemble parts, screwing in screws with his tail blade when she was already occupied with another piece.

Bit by bit the rocking chair came together, and Tenebris rattled in pride at how well it turned out once he finished putting it together. "Well, would you look at that."

The wood was dark and strong, built with an arch to the back of it so that it cradled a back instead of forcing it into a particular shape. Toki smiled, and ran her fingers over the arms. It came with a pad that clipped onto it and gave the hard wood some support and comfort for whoever sat in it.

"It looks super comfortable." She looks pleased from her spot on the floor. "It doesn't look like we missed any parts either."

"Good." Tenebris stood and stretched, before he offered her a hand to help her up.

She reached up and took it, chuckling softly. "I hope you're strong enough to lift me. I'm getting heavier each day." She grins up at him cheekily.

"I am almost strong enough to lift his majesty." He arched a brow at her, and chuckled softly as he effortlessly hefted her up.

"I doubt his majesty has his own gravitational pull." Her feet skidded slightly on the tile, and she slid slightly into him as she was tugged upright. "I was teasing you, you goober." She grinned at him. "But on another note, I do feel heavier with them growing. Getting up and down sucks." And given that she was home alone a lot, she was slightly nervous about getting stuck at some point.

"Well then it's a good thing that you've got strong gentleman like my son and I to help you when you need a hand getting up, yes?" He chuckled.

"Only when you're here." She grinned to him. She shifted and stepped back, sighing softly and tugging her shirt down slightly. "Mind if I test out the chair?"

“Go right ahead, my dear.”

She smiled at him, and eased down into the chair. It slid slightly over the tile, and that had her sockets widening. She made it safely down though. "I think this thing needs some rubber stoppers on the bottom. It slides too easily on the tile."

"I can see about finding some rubber soles." he replied, "Or make them, worst case."
"You know how to make rubber?" She blinks up at him and rocks slightly. She makes a pleased noise as Gracie hops into her lap to join her.

"I can make do with my surroundings." He replied simply, "Whether reusing old rubber, or chemically creating some from scratch."

"That is fascinating." She blinked, and continued rocking. It felt nice, and the twins slowed their squirming as they began to be lulled into rest. "Mmm. Yes, they're finally resting again."

He rumbled happily and sat down by her legs. "Then, if I may be so lucky as to join them?" he requested, glancing down to her legs. As odd as it might have been, he’d come to love using her thigh to pillow his head. It was oddly comforting in the strangest of ways- and allowed him some time with his grandpups.

"So long as you keep your tail out from under the rockers, sure." She scoots Gracie up onto her belly proper, and opens up her lap for him to nestle his head in. For being a bag of bones, she was good for napping on. Toki gives him a gentle smile and rubs her cat's ear to keep her placid while he gets comfortable.

Keeping his tail out of harms way, he settled down and purred gently as he rested his head on Toki's lap. "Prrrr~"

“And the motorboat strikes again.” She murmurs softly, bemused. She settled a hand atop his head and rubbed gently.

Gracie stretched out and pressed her soft little toe beans to the bridge where his nose would be, before kneading his face happily.

He chuckled quietly and blew a puff of air on her palm.

Toki blinked as he blew air at her, and then chuckled softly. "That's about how it feels when you knead me." She teased softly. She resumed rocking carefully, and sighed as her sockets rested at half-mast. She relaxed with a soft, content sound.

He arched a brow up at her. Well, what he could see of her between her middle and the cat draped across the top of it. "At least I didn't knead your face."

"I think that would be awkward. My face is malleable, but isn't soft like my belly is."

"You're a snuggly skeleton, Toki." Thumper peeks into the room with Gael in his arms. He steps in hesitantly and wiggles his toe into the tile. "Do you have room for one more...?"

"Hello Thumper." Tenebris greeted happily, lifting his head to peer at the boy.

"Come on in, sweetheart." Toki smiled and motioned for him to come in. "There's always room for one more."

"Hi, Mister Tenebris." Thumper smiled to the bigger monster. "It's good to see you out and about again." He pads closer and peers at the chair, trying to figure out how to wiggle up with her without disturbing the two cats or Tenebris.

"It only took this little brat stealing my spearmint." The big monster chuffed softly.

Toki poked his masked cheek with a grin. "How else do you lure a bear out of the den?" She chuckled.
Thumper giggled softly and wandered closer to them both. He wiggled up into her unclaimed leg, depositing Gael onto Tenebris' shoulders as he snuggled into Toki's arms. "Well... you have been pretty sulky, Mister Tenebris."

He huffed slightly, and returned his head to one side of her lap. "Mhhh..." He huffed again in a slightly fussier manner. "So I'm in a funk, what's it matter..."

"It matters because we care, you silly old man." Toki smiled softly. "We don't expect you to snap out of it, but being a hermit in your room isn't going to fix anything. If you want to hermit, hermit here where we can all hermit together."

"Uuhh!" He nestled close, and then patted her belly. "How are the babies doing? Has Mister Tenebris done his doctor stuff and checked you out this week?"

He snorted at that and lifted his head to peer up at the gray rabbit child. "I'm afraid not, Thumper... I've been quite out of it recently, I haven't been able to do my job..."

"Maybe getting back into your work is what you need?" Thumper suggested gently. "It works in all the movies and books, so... maybe at least some aspect of it could be true?"

"You are a surprisingly large well of wisdom lately, Thumper." Toki gave him a smile and a kiss on the head.

The boy flushed. "I read a lot of stuff online..."

Tenebris chuckled and leaned up to give the young rabbit a peck on the head as well, before he sighed and moved to get up. "Well, then there's no use lingering here. I best go and get my kit."

Toki blinked. "Like, now? But we were so comfortable..."

Tenebris had a cat stretched across his shoulders as he stood up and Thumper began to giggle as he watched Gael stretch out contently.

He rumbled and chuckled gently, reaching up to pet the cat. "The sooner the better, you know?"

"Well, yeah..." Toki did have to admit that. "Going to teleport there and back?" She inquired lightly.

"That would be fastest." Thumper giggled softly. "Don't take Gael though!"

"Lazy kitty might want to stick around for the ride though." He chuckled, but did put the cat carefully down.

"That he might." Toki laughed. "So if you're doing doctors things, should I go downstairs where the lighting is better?"

"Not at all. Just stay wherever you are comfortable."

"Then I'm going to stay right here " she started rocking again, and sighed softly as Thumper nestled down with a happy sound. "Comfy?" She smiled.

"Uuhh!" He smiled. "I'll keep her here until you're back, okay?"

"Atta boy." He gave a hidden grin to Thumper, and then he turned and teleported from the home back to his own.

Toki chuckled as he left, and resumed rocking as her lap filled with fluffy adorable critters.
It didn’t take long before Tenebris appeared again with his appointment kit in hand. "Alright." He then rumbled warmly.

"Welcome back." Toki smiled softly. She was still covered in critters, but an insistent Gracie, who deemed her skull to be dirty, was grooming her intently. The soft rasp of a rough feline tongue over bone echoed her amused sounds.

He laughed gently at the sight. "Yes, thank you, Toki. But let’s get started, shall we?"

"Sure! Thumper, sweetheart, will you entertain the kitties?" She gave the boy a warm smile.

"Sure!" The boy gathered the cats, and carefully wiggled out of her lap. He went and flopped on the bed and began to love on the both of them.

That left Toki open for Tenebris to examine. "How do you need me?" She inquired up to him gently.

"I would answer that but I’ve a feeling my son would have my head." he replied without missing a beat, opening his bag and pulling what he’d need to give her a checkup.

"Which head?" She fired back automatically. Toki choked on air moments later as she realized what she said. "Oh my gods, Tenebris!" She laughed. "Oh my gods, we’re terrible. Heh." Still she tugged her shirt up over her belly, exposing the green ecto flesh to the air. It was warm in the heat of the house, and she adjusted her pants so he could investigate her middle without pause. Elsewhere didn’t need to be revealed, after all.

Tenebris laughed wholeheartedly at that almost perfect come back and he lowered to be more level with her, starting with her eyes in his examination.

She blinked at him obediently, and chirped softly to him. Her eye lights blinked off and on at him cheekily. "How do my eyes look, Doc?"

"Bright, that means you’re not deficient of magic." He replied.

"Pap hasn’t donated in a couple days, but I haven’t been as active either." Her earlier mentioned cramps had her staying home and trying not to be too active, therefore not spending as much energy. "Glad they're looking good. I didn't know eye brightness could indicate health."

"You’d be surprised." He chuckled, before he tapped her bones in a few spots with his pen, listening carefully before moving on to kneel and check on the young growing within her belly.

Her middle wasn’t as bright as it could be, but it was a healthy color, showing she wasn’t desperately hurting for a donation. Their souls were bright and healthy, and moving as they swirled and shifted inside of her belly. They fussed now that they weren’t being rocked, and one of them stretched, making Toki groan just softly.

She rubbed her fingers into a cramped spot along her pelvis and sighed. "And there's a cramp. You two are going to make me explode, I swear."

He sighed and smiled gently, before he set his hands on her midsection, humming gently as he gave some of his magic to her, while running his claws over the tense skin as to help relieve the cramps.

The magic was deep and dark like last time, and just as potent. It didn't take much before she was literally glowing again. "Ah, there's the 'I just ate glow sticks' look. Ah- Mmm..." she sighed softly as his claws rubbed over the tense skin. It was tight, and there were cramped parts of the ectoplasmic belly that could be felt by his fingers as he rubbed over them. "Mmm..."
"Tsk, my poor, poor dear..." He sighed. "This cant be that pleasant for you."

"It really isn't." She quirked a grin at him and sighed slightly. "But motherhood isn't always a beautiful trip. I love my little ones. Besides- the cramps have nothing on burning alive." She shifts in her seat, and grunts as they batter her ribs. Just like before, they were going absolutely bonkers with his magic. "They're going crazy from your magic. Apparently grandpa's magic is like jellybean coffee." She chortles softly. Her eye lights are tender and a soft, affectionate buzzing escapes her.

Yes, she suffered from serious cramps, but short of nightly massages, she didn't know how to get rid of them. She was still happy to have her kids- and that sort of mentality radiated from her being. Being a mother meant going through all the aches and pains- and she had those in spades for sure- in order to hold your little ones in your arms. As much as the coming months unnerved her, she was very, very eager to hold her babies and see them take their first breaths of air.

They would be the first monster children born on the surface- and Toki would never, ever let them be locked away underground.

"I suppose that'd be understandable, that's half of my liquid intake right there." Tenebris chuckled, before he sighed contentedly.

"Heh, hasn't it always been?" She shifted slightly, and pressed her fingers to the top of her middle to try and lure little feet away from her abused ribs. "Jellybeans, leave your mama's ribs alone please. Your Grandpapa’s fingers are right there- kick those." Toki sighed as they persisted. "You know, if I didn't have my insane defense, I would probably have some bruised ribs. They have their daddy’s strength."

He chuckled gently and began to tap a gentle rhythm onto her stomach.

The tapping drew one’s attention, and they stretched out to boot him in the fingers. Toki grunted softly as her middle shifted visibly, and eyed Tenebris with amusement. "So, I'd say they're healthy, if a little active. They definitely have Quinn’s energy levels."

"They will be very healthy at this rate." he chuckled, "I’m sure they’ll need only a small nap before they’re ready to run around."

"Papyrus mentioned they might grow fast." She gave him an amused look. "But you’re forgetting that they’re going to be half legitimate skeleton. They might not grow as fast as you think they’re going to. Though..." Her amused look fades slightly, and she sighs. "I am nervous about them coming." She admits. "My pelvis has been widening, so I think I know how they’re going to come, but... I’m admittedly nervous. They’re pretty big." She just hoped there were no complications. Even Grillby had mentioned that she was small for a skeleton, but she was still in a living human skeleton, not made of magic.

"I’m gonna go take the kitties downstairs." Thumper chirps from the bed. He collects them, gives them both a smile, and hops out of the room. That was not a conversation he wanted to stick around for. Nope, nope, having babies was gross and he had no desire to learn about how it worked.

Tenebris laughed gently as Thumper made a break for it, and he looked to Toki once the boy was gone from the room. "If it reassures you any, I was around for the birth of Prince Asriel, so I am aware of how to aid a birth."

"Asriel..." She blinks slowly. "That was Asgore’s son, right? That... does reassure me slightly, but also not at all. Monsters are all different, yeah? Asgore and Toriel are goat monsters. Or... something like them. I am a literal skeleton- and the only actual skeleton." At least purely skeleton. Papyrus was
a skeleton, but he wasn’t as much skeleton as she was. She was the only… Well, pure-blooded skeleton, so to put it. No other Skeleton HTM’s had popped up yet. “We really don’t know how it’s going to go.”

"True..." He rumbled gently, "Well, I at least have some experience, and there's always room for learning more."

"That is very true." She nods softly. "We'll need what experience we can get for when Cae has his little ball of sunshine." Sans had low HP, she knew, and there was no real margin for error with him. She at least had the HP to soak any damage that could come from delivery, if any did come from it.

"Your birth will help me know what to do for Caeruleus." He agreed.

“Very true indeed.” She nodded. “However there could be some differences. Sans and Pap are like you.” She tilts her chin at him thoughtfully, and sighs. She adjusts her hips in the chair, grimacing as the twins stretch out in a demand for more space. “There’s a chance that he could have an entirely different sort of delivery method. On the flipside, each birth is different from the last. Eight brothers later, and even I know that.” She’d helped her mother with her youngest brother’s deliveries- but had been too young for the older ones. “I do have some knowledge of births, but I’m no midwife.”

"Your aid is still important, though." He replied with a smile.

“I’ll try to be.” Toki flashed him a grin. “I dunno how much help I’ll be during my own delivery though. I’ll be a little distracted… Heh. Hey,” She grins wider, amusement tingling through her eyes. “Think Paps will faint like he did when we found out it was twins?”

"I am actually not sure about that yet." He replied with a brief chuckle.

"I sincerely hope he doesn't." She chuckled softly in turn. "It would suck if he concussed himself before they arrived."

"He's got a hard head, he'd be okay." He snorted.

“Well yes,” she chuckled, “but it tends to stress me when he faints. He’s fainted three times since I’ve met him. I worry, y’know? It’s pretty natural to worry about those you love.”

"It's understandable, Papyrus is an odd young man, but I suppose his hard-headedness, in more than one way-” he stopped for a moment to snort into his fist, "- Is the very reason we all love him so much.”

Toki smacked his arm as she descended into guffaws. “I can’t believe I’m joking about my sex life with my father-in-law.” She laughed. “I don’t even know how it happened, you know? We just sort of… clicked, you know?” She shifted and adjusted her legs, finding her cramps lessening
finally as his fingers worked over them. “I love him a lot, Tenebris. He’s my world.”

He nodded gently. "I know, my dear, I'd do nothing to part you two. You are happy together.”

“We are.” She smiles softly. “Very happy. We might be doing the steps backwards, but we’re getting married, having a family- we’re as happy as can be.” Even with the threat of HAM lingering above the compound, but that didn’t mean that they had to live in fear every day. “So- the knots are easing off for now. They’ll be back in a couple hours but thank you for now. The reprieve is nice. Anyways- how’s my bill of health look so far?” She inquired. “Pap has been taking peeks at me regularly, but he’s not as knowledgeable in this stuff as you are.”

"Healthy." he replied with a rumble, "As a pregnant horse."

“I feel more like a whale.” She puffed air at him gently and shifted. “Though they kick about as hard as a horse. I would probably have bruises all along my spine and in my ribs if I didn’t have such absurdly high defense.”

"While I agree with you about the comment of the fortunate that you have such high defense, I wouldn't go as far as to call you a whale, per say. You're too petite to be considered whale-like." He rumbled.

“Only among you monsters am I considered petite.” She shoots him a bemused look. Her abdomen shifts, and a small flash of an orange color shows faintly from inside her middle. She peers down at it with an arched brow. “That’s new.”

He chuckled, but upon seeing the flash of magic, he rumbled and leaned his head to one side in thought. "Well, well, well…” He rumbled. "It seems the pups are starting to develop their magic."

There was a splash of another color alongside the orange, and a bluer tinge crossed her middle. It was all muted by the green of her magic, but she could vaguely feel… Something. It was weird. “Huh… That’s what that means? It feels weird… It’s not going to hurt them, is it?”

"Not at all. If anything, it's part of their development.”

“M'kay.” She smiles and rubs over the orange colored blip of light. “Heh… Not so much orange as a soft peach… My little blueberry and my little peach. Oh! Did Pap and I ever tell you that we came up with names?”

"No, he didn't." He replied.

Toki smiled slightly. “You have to promise not to laugh. Sans promised, but he still laughed.” A pout crossed her mouth slightly, but it didn’t last as she watched the lightshow that was her middle. They were really flashing it up in there- though that was likely the shot of ‘coffee’ that Tenebris basically gave them.

"I promise. Let's hear them?” he purred.

“So… We chose four. Skylar, Eras, Verdana… and Honey.” She smiled slightly. “We might mishmash them though depending on what the twins turn out to be.”

"That's a wonderful set of names." he rumbled happily, "Absolutely perfect.”

“Mhm. We figured we could mishmash them as needed. Like… I dunno… Skylar Eras Gaster. Ah- I was going to take Pap’s name. It’s not traditional to the clan rights, but given that I’m clan head… I can sort of make the rules. Our ‘elders’ aren’t going to fuss that badly.” Her Dad would fuss more
than her mother, but her mother could keep him in line well enough. “Hm… I kinda like that. Skylar Eras Gaster… Which would leave… Honey Verdana Gaster? Yes, I like them.” She smiles slightly and rubs the top of her belly.

"Those are beautiful names." He nodded in agreement.

“I think so too.” She smiles. “I’m also pretty sure I’m having at least one girl, so Honey fits. Skylar is pretty unisex.”

"Indeed, that sounds perfect," He rumbled with a bright smile.

“It does.” Toki smiles warmly up to him. “So… You feeling any better? Still upset with me for luring you out?”

"I'll forgive you this time." He snickered at her as he rolled his eyes.

“Good.” She gently pokes his knee with one of her toes. “Because if I have to do it again to lure you out, the price might go up.” She winks.

He smirked and nipped her cheekbone. "Excuse you."

She squeaks, flinching just slightly as his masked mouth comes near her face, and tickles her fingers along his sides in vengeance. “Hey now, it’s a long walk to your house, and I can’t teleport like you Gaster’s can. How else am I to get your attention but to send my minions out to do my bidding? Also, really Gaster. Biting is bad. I will get a squirt bottle one of these days, I swear.”

"You haven't called me Gaster in months.” He blinked. “And get a spray bottle to use against me and you will pay for it, Nara.”

“I won’t be Nara for long.” She sticks her tongue out at him. “You haven’t misbehaved in months either.” She wasn’t going to say ‘you haven’t bitten me in months’ because they both knew that was very, very much a lie. “And what will you do to me, hm?” Her eye lights twinkle merrily at him. “Flop on me for another nap and trap me for a couple hours?”

"Yes." he then got up slightly before he leaned on her to weigh her down, "Down we go.”

“Oh goodness,” she laughed. The rocking chair creaked as his weight went down onto it, and she gave it a slightly worried look. He was a hefty monster, and she wasn’t a lightweight anymore either. “If you’re going to trap me, at least be a dear and teleport us to the couch downstairs. If I fall asleep like this, I’m going to wake up with cramps you wouldn’t believe.”

He chuckled and got up, holding a hand to her to help her up. "Alright, come on."

She took his hand and clamored up out of her chair. Toki sighed softly, and then gently poked his chest. “Alright. I’d say race you down, but a snail could beat me to the couch.” She grins. “So, join me? If you’re done with your examination, that is?”

Tenebris nodded and offered her his hand. "Come, I know a shortcut.” He chuckled.

“Shortcut, huh?” She chuckles. She accepts his hand though, her dainty bones coming to rest in his broad, gloved palm.

He smiled at her and chuckled, before he effortlessly teleported downstairs.

They landed in the living room, and in what was the middle of a cloud of animal hair. Thumper was
laughing, and in the middle of brushing Gracie, who’s backside was to the sky as her under fur was fluffed literally everywhere.

“She sheds more than I do!” Thumper grins at them happily.

“That she d-d-” Oh no. Sneezing fire plus cat hair was going to be a very, very bad experience. Toki did her best to cover her face so her teeth didn’t spark, and she stepped away from them as best she could. “AHCH-”

And in a blip of magic that was definitely not hers, she was gone mid sneeze.

Her backside hit the roof with a thump, and she clung to the tile with a startled sound. “What the hell!?”

Tenebris looked around, startled the moment that she had disappeared. "TOKIKO?" he then turned and ran outside, "TOKIKO?" he called again.

“I’m on the roof!” She called back, twisting slightly to grab onto the chimney. Her bare feet slid slightly on the tile, and she let out a startled shout. Her claws sunk into the brick of the chimney, and she tried to keep herself as still as possible. That was a long, long fall down to the ground, with each of her floors being a bit over twelve feet tall, alongside the attic space.

He turned then teleported to the roof of the house, his tail and claws dug into the roofing as he came closer, rattling loudly. He smiled soothingly at her. "Just hang on, i'm coming"

She spooked when he appeared, but didn’t lose her grip, even as his loud rattling made her buzz nervously. She couldn’t see his smile behind his mask, and she was too focused on not falling to bother staring at his eyes. Toki sniffed, and scrubbed her nasal hole on her sleeve. “I don’t understand why I’m up here. I can’t teleport, and it wasn’t my magic that brought me up here.” She looked utterly spooked, sockets wide and dark as she peers up at him.

“Toki?” Wolfen is down below, looking utterly bamboozled. He had heard her shout, and could see them clearly from the gate. “Doctor Gaster? What on earth are you two doing up there? Do I need to call Papyrus?”

"No need, Wolfen!" he called back, "Just a teleportation mishap!" he called.

“Alright! Just be careful up there!” The wolf nodded, and resumed his post.

Toki squeaked as she slid slightly. “Tenebris, get me down, please! Heights don’t bother me, but skeletons don’t belong on the roof!”

He smiled and wrapped his arms around her once he reached her, teleporting quickly back to the soft grass below.

Once she was on the grass below, she shuddered and straightened, bones rattling loudly. “What the hell?” She exclaimed, bewildered. “I can’t teleport! I sneeze fire, not teleport!”

"The children can teleport." he rumbled.

“… What.” She stared at him. “What. That’s…Fuck, please tell me you’re joking.” If they could teleport, and ended up teleporting Toki… There was no telling where she could end up.

"I'm afraid that's the only logical theory." he replied simply.
“That’s… Okay.” She takes a deep breath, and kneads a hand into her side as the twins fuss. “Stress is bad. Okay. That’s… Okay. We’ll figure it out. I need to keep my phone on me at all times, and we need to tell Papyrus.”

“Is she okay?” Thumper leaned out the window to look down at them both.

"Yes, she's alright, Thumper." Tenebris called to him in reply.

“Good. I was gonna call Papyrus if she wasn’t.” The bunny hums. “The cat hair is settling, Toki!”

“Thank you, Thumper!” She calls back. She scrubs her nose, and huffs softly. “Well… alright then. I’m just going to avoid sneezing from now on, if that’s all the same to you.”

"Fair enough." Tenebris rumbled lightly as he reached out to pat her shoulder. "I'll stay out here to have a pipe since we're here, so I'll see you if I come back in."

“Alright.” She sighed softly. “Don’t go hide away again, Tenebris. I was serious when I said I’d steal it again. Maybe make you hunt for it next time. Anyways, I’m going to go inside. I have to give Lana a call anyways.”

"Alright, alright, go on." he chuckled.

She gave him a smile, though it faded as she turned her back on him to go inside. Teleporting via sneezing was not something she wanted to do. Not ever again- what if she got stuck in a wall? What if the twins got hurt? There were too many thoughts and variables about it to make her stress less.

At least she would have Papyrus to keep an eye on her. She heaved a soft sigh.

She did need to call Lana though and make arrangements for her clothing for the wedding.
Chapter 64

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: *Makes wedding noises* Also you guys have been pretty patient with us. Updates might end up slowing down- we've run into a bit of issue with Silver's muse, so our rp has slowed down. We've reached a point where we don't have many saved up chapters- so eventually it might end up going to go back to 'update as we finish them' sort of situations.

Also, keep in touch with us through the blog. :) It's a good way to keep up-to-date on what's happening, and if there will be delays or not. You can find us here at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

oh! I designed their wedding outfits. There's a picture of it on the tumblr page- you'll definitely want to check it out. :)

Silverwing Notes: *Wedding bell sounds*

The wedding hit them before they knew it. August third rolled around, and they decided that the third was perfect for it. The third found the clan compound filled with monsters and humans alike as Toki’s main family, and a few branch cousins, flooded it in time for the wedding.

Toki and Papyrus had everything planned out- and a large buffet with things that everyone had brought set off to the side for after. The only thing they had provided was the massive cake that Muffet had made upon request. Four tiers of cake was more than enough for all of the monsters that came. It was supposed to be a small wedding- but who could say no when half the village wanted to attend?

There were a lot of people, and most of the guards were on duty, making sure that HAM wouldn’t be causing problems.

Toki watched the crowd of people from her bedroom window, wincing as her mother tightened the laces on her heeled boots. “Lana?” Toki glanced back at her. “Are you sure this color is going to look okay on me?” The dress, as far as she could see, was going to be emerald. It had a gold trim on it, but she hadn’t been allowed to see more than that as the fabric swirled around her rapidly.

“The color looks lovely with your bones, Toki.” Yumei smiled up at her. Her tiny, petite mother hefted on the strings of her boots like a woman twice her size, making sure they were tight and wouldn’t flop or be too loose. “Miss Vestimoves, how is Toki’s clan sigil coming?”

"You look lovely, Tokiko!” Lana replied happily, "You couldn't look better. Green is VERY much your color!” she reassured her, before humming quietly, "And the seal is almost done." she then answered, humming a gentle tune as she worked.

“Thank you, Lana.” Toki heaved a soft sigh, and worried at the gloves covering her fingers. They were a similar shade as her dress, and arched up into a gold-trimmed point at the end.
“Good.” Yumei gave the sheep woman a pleased look, and then finished her daughter’s laces. Once her gold-trimmed boots were laced up, she leaned up and pressed a kiss to her daughter’s belly. “How are my grandbabies doing?”

“They’re fussy,” Toki responded. “They don’t like when I’m nervous, and I am both nervous and excited.”

“You and Papyrus have been living together since not long after you were pregnant.” Yumei blinked up at her. “What is there to be nervous about?”

“Weren’t you nervous when you married my dad?”

“Oh yes. I nearly fainted at the alter, never mind we had been together for a long time.” Yumei hummed. “I was the same for both of your dads. I think that is simply love, my sweet little girl. Hm… That does make sense. Your Papyrus is likely very much the same.”

Lana hummed quietly as she came around, having quickly finished the sigil on the back. The pink sheep woman smiled up at Toki. “May I feel them?” She asked.

“Of course, Lana.” Toki smiled at her warmly. Yumei moved off to fiddle with something out of Toki’s range of vision. Toki planted her hands on her lower back, trying to keep them out of the way of Lana’s magic fabrics. “They’re feisty today. Though, they’re usually feisty every day. They have Pap’s energy. Ah- Pap and I have been meaning to ask you if you’d maybe make some baby blankets for the twins?”

Lana knelt down and cooed as she rubbed her stomach gently, before she smiled up at her again. "Consider them done!" she giggled happily.

“Thank you.” Toki grinned happily, the twins kicking fussily at Lana as they put on a lightshow under her dress.

There was a knock at the door, and then Kon stepped in. He waved to his mother. “Hey, Ma. Think you can go give Sarah a hand? All of the kids are eyeballing the clan tree.”

“Again? If Dom ruins his tux, I will be very upset with him.” She huffs. She pats her son on the head, and then leaves to do handle her grandson and all of the other monster kids.

Toki snorts softly, and then eyes her brother. “Not helping Papyrus?”

“Nah, Ryushi’s got that in the bag.” Her brother padded closer, and peered at her dress critically. He flipped his hair, which was sporting a neon blue color to match his bright blue tuxedo, and reached out to thumb over the clan sigil. It was customized per clan head- and Toki’s sigil had a bee circled in gold, with golden deer antlers sprouting from it. The deer antlers were what marked the Nara- anything else was custom to the leaders. “Wow. I know you didn’t do this- your sewing is horrendous. Who managed this masterpiece? The antlers look amazing, and the embroidery is damn near orgasmic to look at.”

There was a quiet giggle from the sheep who peeked around Toki, and then moved to stand at her side. "Oh, I'm sure she's not that baaaad~" she giggled gently.

“Oh- Ohhhh. Well, hello.” He fluttered his lashes at her, and gave her a suave bow. “Who is this beautiful lamb I see before me?” He purred.

“This is Lana Vestimoves.” Toki chuckled softly. “And yes, Lana. I am absolutely terrible at sewing. Kon must have gotten all of my talent there instead of in social graces like he could have.”
“Lana Vestimoves,” he purred. “Beautiful name for a beautiful lady. Tell me, Miss Lana… Do you have a flock for this wedding? If not, I wouldn’t mind being your shepherd for the evening.” He winked.

She bleated a soft giggle and offered him a hand. "Hello there, it's nice to meet you. Though, no, I have a flock, they're just at home/" she told him, "Though I don't think I'd need a shepherd." she then giggled again sweetly.

He took her hand and brought it up to his lips, pressing a soft kiss to it as he gave her a roguish grin. “I’m Kon Nara. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance- and if you’d let me, I’d make sure it was definitely more than just a pleasure-”

“Konpaku Nara, don’t you be making raunchy pick-up lines at my wedding.” Toki ruffled his hair with a huff.

“Hey! You know I hate being called that. It’s a stupid name, Toki!” He looks at her with a scolding frown as he patted down his ruffled hair. “But that’s besides the point. I’m trying to score with your hot sheep friend. Please, at least behave for your wedding day.”

She blinked once, then smiled gently, "I think that name is rather darling." she cooed.

He flushed slightly, a little off kilter, and rubbed his cheek. “Ah… Thanks…?”

Toki grinned. “Well I'll be damned. You’re flustered. That’s a first.”

“Oh shush, Toki.” He huffed up at her. He reached out a hand to pat her bump affectionately, and then turned a flirty smile back to the seamstress. “So,” he purred, “do you take clothes apart as well as you put them together? Because baaaaaby, I could totally dig a little seam ripping between us, if you know what I mean.”

Toki hides a snort. Good gods, he really was flustered if that was all he could come up with.

"If you have something that's losing a seam I can easily fix it for you!" she replied, before she bleated in panic, "O-Oh dear, unless you mean something on your coat!" she began to look on the seams, "Oh dear, I hope I didn't leave anything to tear...!"

“Lana, Lana,” Toki took the panicked sheep’s hands in her own, and gave her a soothing smile. “Deep breaths, okay? Kon doesn’t have any tearing seams.” She says softly. “He was… Well, attempting to flirt with you. Kon’s flirts are a hit or a miss.”

His face flushed a brighter color, and he stuffed his hands in his pockets. “I mean, if you want to check my seams, there’s another room just over that I wouldn’t mind stripping for you in.” He purred.

She bleated quietly, and then she tilted her head, "Flirting?" she asked, before she looked at him, smiling gently, "O-Oh... You don’t need to strip, Mister Konpaaaaaku." she bleated gently.

“What if I waaaaanted to strip for you?” He bleated back flirtatiously, his cheeks reddening more at the bleating sound of his name. “And please, beautiful, you can call me Kon if you like. No mister needed.” He winked.

She fluffed up and bleated again softly to herself. "O-Oh... ah... Well I mean... I..."

“So how about… You and I go get something to eat this Saturday?” Kon grinned.
"Oh, Lunch?" she straightened, and then she smiled gently, her expression almost too innocent. "I would like that, thank you!"

"Then it’s a date," he purred. "Where do I go to pick you up?"

"Uh... I'm staying with my distant cousin Bo."

"I didn’t know you were staying with Bo." Toki blinked. "Bo and Wolfen are awesome." She smiled. "I’ve actually been meaning to talk to you some. There has been a couple families that have moved out, and I was wondering if you wanted to... well, move topside and start up your business here?"

Kon blinked. "Bo... Bo and Wolfen... I know the house. Dom likes to play with Howl." Her nephew was some weird wolf-sheep hybrid thing, and Luna was enamored with his fluffiness, while Dominic liked to play with his friend.

"Oh, I'd love to!" she replied happily. "You see so many new people every day! My business would explode!" She threw her hands in the air as she gave a small hop, but as she did, her tail came free of her seamstress' apron, waving happily as she giggled.

"Your business would be most welcome. Human stores just don’t sell stuff that is monster friendly—you would have a lot of business." Toki grins.

The tail caught Kon’s eye, and, like the little kid he was at heart... he couldn’t help but reach out to touch it. "It’s so fluffy," He murmurs, slightly awe as he fluffs it lightly.

She giggled happily but it was cut short as she let out a panicked sound between a bleat and a squeal. Toki thumps her brother soundly on the back of the head. "Kon!" She scolds. "Grabbing monster’s tails is rude!"

“But it’s so fluffy!"

"I don’t know if I should feel overdressed now or not." Aliquam laughed to Ryushi, though he wasn't wearing anything too flashy. At least, he hoped not.

He wore his royal guard armor, allowed a little more decoration than usual. His armor was a bright silver color, shined to perfection, while the gold trim around the plates gleamed brightly, as if polished for a regal event, though he could suppose it was close enough.

He wore the delta rune on his arm, the brand gleaming his loyalty to his king. On his back he would wear a bright red cape, a little something he was able to add to his uniform that reminded him greatly of his favorite scarf.

He wore comfortable clothing under his armor, something to pad his bones from bouncing around inside the armor.

Aliquam took a deep breath as he stared at the mirror in his changing room, adjusting the last few straps on the underside before he looked at himself, taking a deep breath. "I... I look amazing... heh... don’t I..."
Ryushi stood just behind his soon to be brother in law, smiling widely as he took care to buff out some marks on his armor that were obviously from wear and tear. “You do.” He nodded. He had to put elbow grease into his forearms to make it sparkle. “You’re totally going to steal Toki’s breath away. You sure you’re going to be all right in this armor? I’m sure we can get Miss Vestimoves to make you a tux real quick. It’s really, really hot out there today.”

"Hot and cold do not bother me like they do humans, Ryushi. I'll be alright." he replied with a smile. "Thank you anyhow."

“Alright. I thought I’d ask since heat seems to be bothering Toki as of late.” He hummed. He continued to buff and shine, and then chuckled. “So what do you think Toki’s going to be wearing? Think it’ll go with this big ass cape?” He hefts it up, and buffs the metal clips that pin it in place to Papyrus’ under shirt.

"I just hope she likes it. And knowing Miss Vestimoves... She'll make sure she loves it." He chuckled quietly.

“Good. I want her to be happy. I want you to be happy too. So…” Ryushi grins. “You nervous at all?” The shorter man has to get onto a stool to shine up the big monster’s shoulders and shoulder guards, and he’s barely visible over the top of his armor as he polishes it to perfection. “You’re getting hitched, dude. I was so nervous when I married Sarah that I nearly got cold feet and ran. Heh… Toki and Han had to smack some sense into me. I’m glad they did.”

"I'm... I'll be honest... I'm terrified." He admitted with a soft laugh. "I'm marrying a woman who we owe so much to... a-and... She’s going to have my children soon... I... I can't believe it..."

“Toki is just a woman, dude.” He smiles slightly. “You guys did it totally backwards too. Heh. Usually you find out you’re having kids after the honeymoon. Speaking of, I expect lots of nieces and nephews from you two. Lots and lots. I want to spoil them all, since Sarah is limiting me to two.” He pats him lightly on the shoulder, and then removes the smudge marks his fingers make. Damn his squishy human hands. “I know Toki- and Toki doesn’t see herself as the woman that ‘everyone owes so much to’. She just sees herself as Toki. Just calm your non-existent tits, bro. You and her have made it through so much together already. You’re going to do great.”

He laughed gently at that, before he reached up to pat Ryushi’s shoulder. "Thank you for this pep talk, Ryushi."

“This is hardly a pep-talk.” He chuckled. “I wasn’t ever good at them. I just don’t want you getting cold feet and bolting. I’d hate to have to hunt you down for breaking my sister’s heart.” He gives him a cheery smile in the mirror, pats the top of his skull, and then hops from the stool to go shine up the pointy parts of his boots. “Dude, you could totally kick and stab someone with these. These are now dubbed your stabby shoes.”

He laughed at that gently, and then he took a breath and cleared his throat. "With this hand... I will lift your sorrows…” he murmured, "Your cup will never empty... For I will be your wine." He was practicing his vows.

Ryushi’s eyes lit up, and he nearly nicked himself on the sharp point of his boot as he hid an excited wiggle. “If those are your vows, those are the damn cutest things ever. I wholeheartedly approve.”

Aliquam cleared his throat lightly, "I... remember reading them from a book."

“Which book?” He inquires curiously. He finishes up on his boots, and then checks him over for any missed spots. He looked clean enough to probably serve food off of. Hmm… With the sunlight, he
was probably going to be hot enough to fry and egg on. “Hm… Well, you’re damn near shiny enough to eat off of now. Though I wouldn’t suggest it. Polish ruins the taste of anything it touches.”

"I... can't remember." He murmured, before he smiled at him. "Thank you, again."

“Hmm... M’kay.” He grins. He gives him a cheery smile. “Of course! I don’t mind helping my brother in law. Alright, so… I’ve heard about your fainting spells. You’re not going to faint going down the isle, are you?”

"... No." He replied quickly, though he sure as hell wasn't sure.

He laughed. “If you faint, I’m taking pictures. You’ll never live it down, dude.” He claps him on the shoulder cheerily. ‘Good luck! I’m going to head down and get to my seat. It sounds like the girls upstairs are almost done- I bet you can’t wait to see your bride.”

He shot him a look, and then he took a breath, and cleared his throat. "Right. See you there."

“If you can see anything beyond my sister, that is.” Ryushi gave him a knowing grin, and headed out of the room.

"FIRST OF ALL HOW DARE YOU!" he yelled out at him.

“Not what I meant!” He cackled. “But I know where your mind leapt first off!” He called right back into the room.

"YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS."

“I’m not the one who’s first thoughts were that Toki was large~” He sang tauntingly back. “I meant that she’d be too beautiful for you to take your eyes off of. I’m not going to be paying for anything.”

He hissed at him as he retreated, and then he took a deep breath and sighed. *He was right though...*

"Nyeh... Okay... Come on... You can do this Papyrus..."

“Howdy!” There was a sound of some very nice tile being ruined, and then there was a disgruntled flower hefting himself out of some shattered rubble. “Golly, it sure was hard to get to you here. I heard you were getting hitched!”

He straightened at that, and then he turned and blinked. "F-Flowey? I-It's been a long time!!" He then smiled happily.

“I’ve been busy, here and there with Frisk, y’know.” The flower grinned, bouncing innocently in place. “But I just had to find the time to come and visit you. I heard you’re marrying some guardian lady- Tiki or whatever her name was. You look good though, friend.”

"Toki, and thank you!” he reached and offered him a hand. "You're doing well! It's good to see you again."

His roots stepped daintily up into the bigger monster’s gauntlets, and he took care not to get them pinched. He curled his leaves around a large thumb to keep himself balanced. “It is good to see you again. I had a free moment that I could escape from Frisk, and thought ‘golly, I should see Papyrus on his wedding day’. I wish you luck. I heard you’re gonna be a dad now? Are you excited?”

He smiled and lifted him up with a nod. "Yes! Twins actually. I'm rather nervous but... heh... you know! I'm the great Papyrus! There’s nothing I can’t do!"
“That’s the spirit!” He grins at him. “You’ll totally have to call Frisk and let them know when they get here. I definitely want to stop by and see the Mini Great Papyrus’s.” He chirred. His petals rustled slightly, and he hummed. “Is this Toki lady worthy of the Great Papyrus?”

"She's wonderful, Flowey, absolutely perfect.” He replied with a warm voice. "She's beautiful, kind... this land we're on right now was her family's, and she gave it to monster kind to thrive on..."

“Oh-ho, she did, did she? Well, golly, that’s definitely good indeed. I’ll have to meet her sometime, see that she really is worthy of the Great Papyrus.” The flower gave a jolly bounce, and hummed softly. “Are you happy up here with her, Papyrus?”

"Yes, absolutely... She's pregnant with my children, and I love her so, so very much. How could I not be happy?” He answered happily.

“Then that’s all that matters.” He purrs.

"Nyeh heh heh heh!"

"Hey Pap! I came to make sure you're ready for this." There was suddenly a call from the doorway as Caeruleus appeared, but as he turned, the elder brother tensed up, before his eyes slowly lowered to the monster in his palm. "Flowey."

Flowey tensed, and offered a fang-toothed grin to Sans. “Smiley Trash Bag. Or should I say, Pregnant Trash Bag now?” He eyes him slightly, a once over up and down. “Though I can’t say I see the difference in the before and after.”

His grin widened a little, "Heh... I missed you too, ya dumb weed."

"Sans, be nice." Papyrus scolded, before he looked to Flowey, "You be nice too."

Flowey gave Papyrus an innocent smile. “I think I’ve probably over-stayed my welcome, friend. Besides, you need to get out there to your bride to be! I need to get home before Frisk notices I’m gone, or before Pregnant Trash Bag gets a craving and tries to eat me. Go enjoy your wedding, yeah?"

He smiled gently and knelt down, holding him to the hole he made. "Be nice, Flowey. But of course, it was nice seeing you."

“It was nice seeing you too.” The flower nodded. He tucked down into his hole, waved once, and then disappeared with a slight grumble, and the displacement of a few more tiles.

Oops. Someone would have to fix Toki’s floor later.

"You know someone's going to end up hitting him with weed killer.”

"Yes, but the least I can make sure is that it's not you, Sans." Pap went to his brother and clacked his head, smiling as the shorter but older skeleton hugged him tightly.

"You know... I’m real fuckin’ proud of you, right?"

"Yes I do, Sans. And don’t curse."

"Heh... sorry bro..."
Toki was nervous as fuck as she reached the top of the stairs. She’d been given a couple minutes to herself to help relax her, but it hadn’t helped at all. She wasn’t sure if the knots in her stomach were nerves at this point, or the twins kicking up a mess.

Either way, her Mom called up to her that it was time to start, so she’d gotten herself up and out of her room.

Descending the stairs took a lot of skill, and she had to keep her eyes on them until she reached the bottom. Her boots were brown, and had a slight heel to them that made it just slightly trickier to walk down the stairs, since she couldn’t actually see the stairs with the large emerald boulder hanging from her middle.

Her dress was primarily emerald, but shimmered to different shades in some places. It looked a lot like her soul color, actually. It had a long train in the back, with her clan sigil sewn into the material. The clan sigil itself was golden antlers- but the antlers went with the person’s personal seal. Toki’s personal seal was a honeybee in a circle- so thus; it was a gold pair of antlers surrounding a gold honeybee. It trailed the end of her dress.

Her dress itself was trimmed in gold, and the top had a sewn in second layer. It draped down, a slightly darker green with the gold trim as well, and ended just above the massive bulge of her belly. She had gloves on, which were the same shade as the second, slightly pointed layer above the main part of the dress.

They glimmered slightly as she descended slowly, her legs easing through the raised front of the dress. It was shorter in the front than it was in the back- but it was lovely, and she enjoyed it greatly.

Once she reached the bottom, she took a deep breath, and carefully made sure that none of her dress had gotten caught on any loose nails on the way down.

As Toki came down the stairs Aliquam looked up at her, before his eyes widened and his mouth slowly fell open, "O-Oh my stars..." he murmured. She was beautiful...!

"O-Oh... Tokiko..." he spoke weakly, his breath taken away by the beauty of his soon-to-be wife. "You look... amazing...!"

Her eye lights caught him as she straightened, and they danced over his armor. "Oh…” She breathed, straightening the train of her dress. “Oh wow… You look so handsome, Papyrus… Wow.” She felt a little under-dressed, with how nice his armor looked. It was shined to perfection, the cape a new addition, and she felt… Well, a little lacking almost. She knew she looked good- but he looked amazing, and wasn’t bloated with children. Toki was, admittedly, self conscious as hell. But the look in his eyes… She could see that he didn’t see any of her flaws.

She smiled to her husband to be, and reached out a gloved hand for him to take. “Do you… like the dress? I wasn’t planning something so fancy, but… maybe I should have gone a little fancier to fit with your armor? You look so, so handsome, Pap…” She really didn’t compare. He looked amazing, gold and gray armor shined to perfection.

He came closer and cupped her cheeks, cradling her skull so he could rest his head on hers first thing. Smiling at her lovingly, his eye lights danced warmly at her. "You look divine, Toki." he purred gently, before he let one of her cheeks go to reach out and take her hand instead.

She leaned into his remaining palm, and smiled at him warmly. “So do you.” She purred softly. She
stepped closer, and leaned up to nuzzle his face gently. “Are you ready?” Toki thrummed softly. She couldn’t rub his fingers, but she could lace her gloved ones through his gauntlet covered ones.

"No." He murmured. "Are you?"

“I feel like I’m simultaneously going to explode and faint- so no.” She chuckled. Her free hand slipped up to cradle his cheek, and silky material brushed over his bones. It was softer than her bare bones could ever hope to be. “But I’m with you- and I want to be with you for the rest of our lives… So I know I’ll be okay with you beside me.”

"I’d kiss you… but it’s about to mean so much more to us… so… I’ll do this instead." Though it would have looked hard in full armor, Papyrus effortlessly knelt down to lean in and kissed her swell gently instead. "I love you all so much.” he purred gently, "I don’t need to be ready if I have you next to me."

She smiled, and stroked his skull gently. The twins, who had been fussing, settled at his touch and rested a bit lower in her abdomen as they relaxed. “We love you too,” She purred. “Together we can handle anything. Even nerves from our own wedding.”

He chuckled and slowly straightened up once more to hug her, before he offered her his hand. "Come on..."

She laced her fingers gently with his, and smiled at him warmly. Music kicked up outside as one of her younger brothers peeked in at them, and she leaned slightly into Pap’s arms. “Alright. I’m in heels, and I can’t see my feet- so don’t let me fall, please.”

"I’ve got you.” He purred gently, "Don’t worry, I’ve got you."

“Thank you.” She smiled up at him warmly.

They made their way to the back door, and stepped out side by side from the wide entrance. The courtyard was full, everyone standing for the lack of room for proper chairs. All the chairs were at the side to be brought out later. Through the crowd, there was a distinctive path, littered with cherry blossom petals. The path moved up to the base of the huge clan tree, where Asgore stood in his full royal regalia, with little Luna finishing happily flinging the blossoms over the ground to cover the area where they would be standing.

Dominic and Thumper stood on either side of him, holding two pillows with rings on them.

On the brides side, Yumei stood, along with Sarah, Lana, and Bo.

The music kicked up another notch, and Toki’s fingers tightened slightly over his gauntlets. There was no telling if he noticed her nervous touch. She couldn’t stop to look. Slowly, they stepped out, making their way out onto the petal-covered path.

Tenebris stood on the side of the groom’s, his head high as he had a proud smile on his face. Caeruleus was behind him, holding back tears.

’I wonder if it's normal to make your father and your brother your best man.’ Aliquam thought to himself as he walked up the aisle. He did feel her touch and as a result he occasionally tightened his grip on her hands.

He looked to have a reminder of what it would look like for them. On the table were a few items. Three candles, two unlit, two small goblets, and a deep red bottle of an unknown liquid. He grew nervous and looked to Cae and Tenebris. The father gave a small nod while Cae gave him a thumbs
up, they had this taken care of. Good.

He soon came to a stop a few steps away from the table, and he looked to the king as the music finally came to grow quiet, Asgore's cue to speak.

The king stepped up, and spread his great arms. As the crowd fell silent along with the music, he cleared his throat, smiled, and began to speak. “We are gathered here today, on this happy and joyous occasion, to join these two much beloved souls in holy matrimony.”

His gaze is soft as he looks down at the couple. “Marriage is a solemn institution to be held in honor by all. It is the cornerstone of the family and of the community. It requires of those who undertake it a complete and unreserved giving of one's self. It is not to be entered into lightly, as marriage is a sincere and mutual commitment to love one another. This commitment symbolizes the intimate sharing of two lives and still enhances the individuality of each of you.”

“Papyrus Aliquam Gaster. Do you take Tokiko Nara to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health, remaining faithful to her as long as you both shall live?”

"I do." he replied, taking her hands and holding them tight as he smiled down at her.

Asgore smiled. “Tokiko Nara,” he rumbled warmly, “Do you take Papyrus Aliquam Gaster to be your lawfully wedded husband? Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health, remaining faithful to him as long as you both shall live?”

“I do.” Her fingers curled tighter over Pap’s, and her eyes glowed a bright, mint green. Nothing but love lingered in her eyes.

Asgore nodded. “You may now say your vows.”

He smiled, and then he looked to Toki. "Face the table, take three small steps, start on the left.” he whispered, turning to hold her hand, before he slowly extended his right foot to the length of step he meant.

His step was a lot different than hers, but she stretched her legs to match his, careful not to go too far with her lack of ability to see past her middle. Her fingers tightened carefully over his, and she stepped closer. One, two… and three. Soon she was near the table, and waiting for the next step.

He nodded gently and turned to face her, he released her hand to raise his right.

"With this hand, I will lift your sorrows.” He started, speaking slowly as to teach her.

She smiled warmly, her eyes meeting his as she watched his motions. She would need to remember them so she could do them too.

He then reached out and picked up the wine bottle and uncorked it, allowing the carbonation to escape. With the other hand, he gently picked up one of the goblets.

"Your cup will never empty, for I will be your wine.” he then slowly filled the goblet.

Oh no. Alcohol and pregnancy didn’t mix, even if people said a little wine during pregnancy wouldn’t hurt. Nervousness flooded her eye lights- what if she couldn’t do this part of the ceremony?

He leaned in to her, whispering, as he tilted the goblet up for her to sip from. "Don't worry, it's just sparkling cider." he assured her, pulling back again.
His assurance eased her. Sparkling cider she could handle— and really, she shouldn’t have doubted him at all. Of course he’d have come up with an alternative. Her soon-to-be-husband was resourceful, and she loved him all the more for it. Toki nodded, and leaned in to take a sip from the cider. It bubbled harshly inside of her mouth, the carbonation fresh and potent, and she nearly coughed on it.

He loosely re-corked the bottle after he set the mostly full goblet on her side of the table, and set the wine bottle back on the table, before he reached out and took one of the unlit candles.

"With this candle-" he spoke, leaning the candle to one side to allow it to light on the one that was lit in the middle. Once the flame caught, he held it up to be seen. "I will light your way into darkness."

Toki’s eye lights brightened, and she looked on warmly. The candles no longer bothered her in the slightest, and she was proud to say that she looked on them fondly now.

He then slowly put it down, and looked to Thumper, who stood at his hip, to extend his hand for the ring.

Thumper handed the ring over, displaying the pillow for all to see the larger monster collect the small ring of metal.

He reached out and gently took it, before he reached out and took her left hand gently in his. He slid her glove off, and draped it gently on the table. "With this ring." He lifted it up for her to see, "I ask you…"

Her eye lights lit up. This was it…

He then leaned in, and slipped the ring onto her finger. "To be mine."

Toki’s eyes watered slightly, and she gave him the most adoring smile ever. She had to take a moment to compose herself, the metal warm and well fitting to the bone of her ring finger, where it sat right next to her engagement ring, before she brightened.

She slowly stepped back, resuming her position as she was supposed to, before she lifted her right hand. "With this hand, I will lift your sorrows." She smiled.

Toki slowly stepped closer to the table, and popped the loose cork on the bottle. “Your cup will never be empty, for I will be your wine.” She filled his goblet, lifting it carefully and offering it out for him to take a drink. The cider inside bubbled and fizzed.

He lowered himself and took a gentle sip of the drink, covering a cough with a gentle chuckle as he rose again. He gave her a gentle nod of approval— she was doing perfectly.

She carefully set his goblet on his side of the table, and re-corked the wine bottle so it didn’t accidentally get spilled. She stepped to the table this time, having to turn slightly to the side so her middle didn’t bump it— ah the joys of being heavily pregnant— and then carefully grasped the unlit candle.

“With this candle,” She said, leaning it out to carefully catch it ablaze. Once it caught, she hefted it up for everyone to see. “I will light your way into darkness.”

The candle was carefully placed back into its spot, the trio now glowing softly in the sunshine of the day. Toki stepped back, and found Dominic at her side. “With this ring,” she purred softly as it was handed over. She held it up for everyone to see, and then braced it carefully between her fingers so she didn’t drop it.
Her hands came up and took his left, cradling it gently. “I ask you,” She continued softly as she worked his gauntlet off. The freshly oiled clasps gave way easier than she expected, and she was relieved that she didn’t have to fumble with it like usual. His gauntlet was carefully settled on the table next to her glove.

She smiled up at him lovingly, and slid his ring home onto his ring finger. “To be mine.”

He smiled, and then he nodded in approval, and looked to Asgore as he gave a nod to match.

"I now pronounce you Husband and Wife. You may now kiss the bride." the king rumbled gently.

Aliquam knelt down, and he looked to Toki, smiling as he leaned in slightly, his eyes closing slowly.

Toki met his kiss half way, her fingers gently holding his as her sockets drifted closed. They had kissed before, many, many a time… But there was something special about their first kiss as husband and wife. Tension bled out of her, leaving her damn near weak at the knees, and she leaned slightly into him with a happy sound.

He wrapped his arms around her as those who watched on roared with applause.

The applause was damn near deafening, and Toki laughed as she kissed him again, curling her arms around him in a firm hug. His armor was hard, but it made her feel safe and protected. “We did it,” She whispered to him softly, eyes twinkling merrily.

"We did it." he repeated before he smiled, "I'm so proud of you, Tokiko Gaster." he purred.

“That’s right,” She purred. “I’m a Gaster now.” She practically beamed at him. Her magic practically radiated from her in joyful waves, bright and lively and peaceful.

“Pictures!” Her mother chirped, pulling a camera from her purse. “Glove up, you two! Lets get your wedding photo done before you’re dragged off for cake!”

His eyes glowed brightly as he then turned and re-donned his gauntlet, before helping her get her glove on. "Then let's pose nicely for the camera." he told Toki, turning to face the camera as he gave a joyful smile.

Toki sidled up next to him as Asgore ducked out of the way. In front of the clan tree was as good as any place to take it. She eased close, tucking one hand on the small of her back as he rested his hand carefully along her ribs. Her skull tilted towards the camera with a warm look, eyes minty and happy.

As everyone cleared out of the way for the shot, Yumei got herself positioned. Once the two skeletons were ready, she took the photo- and several others- before calling it good. “I’ll get these developed for you and mailed over by next week.” She promised her daughter and son-in-law with a happy grin.

"Thank you, Miss Yumei." Aliquam chirped happily.

"Just call me Mother, dear." Yumei gave him a warm smile and tucked the camera away. She reached up a dainty hand, so much smaller than even her daughters, and patted his gauntlet gently. "Welcome to the family, Papyrus." Her gaze flicks over to Tenebris and Caeruleus as well, and she smiles wider. “Welcome to all of you.”

"Ah, thank you then, Mother." Aliquam chirped.

Tenebris chuckled quietly. "Welcome to the Gaster family as well, Toki." he purred softly.
“It’s good to be apart of it.” She smiled. “Legally, anyways.” She chuckled softly. Toki smiled at all of them, and then peered up at her husband. Heh- she could call him her husband now. “So… Shall we see about getting the cake served up?”

“Before the icing melts in the sunshine.” Thumper chirps cheerily. He shifts on his toes, and plops the pillow onto the table with the rest of the ceremonial stuff. “Though… I wanna tell you guys somethin’ first. You too, Mister Tenebris.”

"Of course, Thumper." Aliquam spoke.

"What's going on?" Cae then asked as he walked closer, Tenebris following as well while he lit his pipe.

“Well… You guys said it was my choice as to who I live with, right…?" He shuffles awkwardly, playing with the tie on his suit.

“We did, yes.” Toki nodded with a patient and encouraging smile. “Did you make your choice, sweetheart?”

“I did.” He shuffles slightly, and then glances to Tenebris. “If… If it’s okay with you, I’d like to go stay with you. Since Papyrus is living with Toki, and Sans is with Mister Grillby most of the day… You don’t really have anyone living with you, and… I don’t really either. If you don’t want me to, I- I would understand.” He was just a bunny- he wasn’t a particularly strong monster, and he never would be. Rabbits were, at the height of their power, used for couriers and fast message delivery. They weren’t strong like the skeletons were- and Tenebris, he knew, valued strength quite a bit, at least instinctually.

Tenebris blinked once in surprise, and he slowly lowered his pipe. "... Do... Do you really mean it? You actually want to stay with..." he slowly quieted, before he smiled, and knelt down, opening his arms to Thumper. "Oh Thumper... I'd love to have your company..."

Thumper stepped into his grasp and nuzzled his fuzzy cheeks into the massive monster’s neck. Happy tears pricked in his eyes- he was wanted. “Really? Thank you.” He whispered. “Thank you.”

Toki smiled warmly, and leaned slightly into her husband. “Well,” she mused, “It looks like you’ve got a little brother.” She wiggled her brows gently up at her husband. Hell, she loved that word. He was her husband. Heh. It made her horribly giddy.

Keeping his pipe in his hand, Tenebris embraced Thumper firmly, purring loudly before he scooped the bunny up, a bright grin on his face.

"At least I’m not the youngest brother anymore." Aliquam giggled gently, leaning down to peck his wife on the head.

Thumper let out a happy sound and tightened his hold. His legs came around the larger monsters side so he could hold onto him and keep himself supported. "What... what would you want me to call you, Mister Tenebris?"

Toki giggled and smiled up at her husband. "How does it feel to join the big sibling club?" She leaned slightly into him, eyes twinkling warmly. "Hm... we should probably go cut the cake before the frosting melts." It was ungodly hot outside after all. She was hot even in her short-sleeved dress.

"It's nice, but rather simple. Not what I thought initially" Aliquam admitted, nuzzling her before he nodded. "Yes of course, let's go cut that cake!"
Wrapping an arm around Thumper's back, he smiled at him, "You can call me what you wish, pup. Just don’t call me late for dinner." Was that a dad joke? Yes it was.

"Cake ahoy!" She smiled up at him, and waddled for the massive thing. Made by monsters for monsters- it was huge, decorated in shades of white, silver, and gold. "We might want to remove our gloves for this," she giggled, "or we're going to make a huge mess of them. Getting frosting out of your gauntlet would be a mess."

He groaned in good humor and nuzzled fuzzy whiskers to Tenebris' cheek. "You're already starting the dad jokes, dad."

He nodded in agreement and helped her remove her gloves first, humming a quiet tune as he did, "I love you so much."

Tenebris rattled happily and nuzzled Thumper again. "I cannot help it..." He chuckled.

Once her hands were free, she helped him remove his gauntlets, setting them to the side with her gloves. "I love you too." She smiled. "That's why we're married, no?" She teased gently. Her fingers fished out a couple plates, and she snagged the cake cutter as well. "You remember the cake tradition we talked about doing?" She smiled up to him.

"That's okay, dad." He giggled softly, his whiskers twitching happily. "So does this make Miss Toki my sister in law?"

"As if you just told me." Quinn replied with a grin.

"Yes, yes it does." Tenebris replied, walking with the bunny in his arms to follow Toki and Papyrus, with Cae lazily strolling behind him.

"Good." She laughed gently, and took his hand with hers. She looped their fingers together, and guided them together to cut a couple slices of cake, guiding them out and onto their plates. Once they were there, she eased the knife down and winked up at him. She collected her plate, pinching the slice between her fingers, and then offered it up to him. "Open up, love."

Thumper giggled, watching the two hold up cake for each other. Smash it, smash it, smash it! "I always wanted siblings."

Papyrus picked up a small slice as well, smiling as he leaned down to be better in her reach. "You open up too~" he purred.

"Well now you have siblings, and you're gonna be an uncle soon." Tenebris was rumbling loudly as he reached a decent distance to wait with the rest of the crowd around the cake.

She smiled and parted her teeth, opening wide for him to slide the cake into. She brought the cake up to his teeth and winked at him.

"Twice over even!" He grinned. His ears flopped slightly and he wiggles his fingers at Sans. "Big brother Sans! Do I get to baby-sit for you when you have your baby bones?"

He winked back, and then let out a "NYEH!" as he pushed it into her face.

Sans hesitated, and then he looked at Thumper. "Maybe when you're older, kiddo." He burst into laughter as he watched Papyrus mash cake into Toki's face. “Looks like that’s a cake-tastrophie.”

She hadn't intended to squish it into his- but, well... when you can't beat them, join them! She
squeaked with a laugh, and then mashed his into his face. "Mmm, vanilla." It was very sweet but very good, and she flicked her tongue out to lick some of it off her teeth. Well, she was a mess now.

He waited a moment, laughing at Toki and Papyrus, and then grinned down to Cae. "I'm older now." He points out with cheeky amusement. "Heheh. Are you gonna baby-sit the twins?" He asked curiously. "Though... does it require experience to baby-sit? If so how do you get the babysitting experience to do the babysitting?"

"Nyeh heh heh heh!" he laughed happily as he leaned back, before he managed to get hold of a couple napkins, bringing them over and offering one to her. "Here."

"Worst case, we'll make pops baby-sit."

And with that Tenebris sputtered, "WHAT?!"

She giggled softly and carefully reached up to clean his face for him. "Heh, how did I manage to get frosting this high on your face?"

Thumper grinned wider. "Don't worry. Dad. So long as I'm not in school, I can help you!" His little bunny tail flicked happily and a mischievous smile slid over his face.

"You smooshed it." Pap chuckled gently, and took a napkin to do the same to her face. Sharp teeth made it harder, but he was getting better at handling her fangs.

"Oooh no you don't mister. You're going to school." Tenebris hummed.

She laughed. Once they were both cleaned up, she then stepped back to motion everyone else to come get cake. She would have stayed to cut and serve it, but her heels were starting to murder her feet more and more.

Thumper made a face. "At least there are a couple more weeks to summer..."

Aliquam stayed upright for a bit to help serve the cake, a warm smile on his face as he did, though it was soon clear he did as to bring two plates with a slightly larger slice of cage over to where his wife sat.

"Enjoy it while it lasts, pup." Tenebris snorted, putting Thumper on his shoulders before picking up two slices of cake, "Here we go."

Toki had chosen a seat in the shade, and she waited for him patiently as he handed out cake. As he joined her, she smiled and patted the chair next to her. "Here, Pap. You're lucky that the heat doesn't bother you as much. Your armor is steaming."

Thumper grinned and took his cake as it was handed up. He looped his legs around Tenebris' neck, using his head as a sort of table. Big monsters were useful for many things... "Mmm! It looks yummy."

"I best take it off soon then, eh?" Aliquam chuckled gently. "I want to be able to hug you soon."

"Save eating for when we're seated." Tenebris grumbled as he walked towards some tables.

"Want me to help you get it off before we eat our cake?" She inquired gently. She shifted and used the arms of the chair to boost herself upright. It was getting harder and harder to do that as her center of gravity was shifting.
"But I am seated!" Thumper chirped cheerily, but didn't kick up a fuss about it. He waited patiently for Tenebris to find a seat and get comfortable.

"Alright." he nodded once, setting the plates down and stepping out of the way before he started to undo the armor, "Thankfully the underclothes are decent enough to be worn alone." he commented.

Tenebris walked to a nice shady seat and put the bunny down in a seat, "Here you go, enjoy."

Her fingers joined his, and she carefully helped ease his armor off of him. "You look good in it." She smiled. His underclothes consisted of a red turtleneck, and black slacks. Once he was free of his armor, which was set into the shade to cool off, she opened her arms and gave him a grin. "You look good in your armor too. I love a man in uniform. But I love a man I can hug."

"I will!" He grinned. Frosting made a mess on his whiskers as he eagerly dug in.

"Nyeh heh heh~ I would have just gone wearing this. But for Stars sake I would be no better than Sans." he chuckled, hugging her tightly.

Chuckling, Tenebris leaned back and started into his slice of cake quietly.

She leaned into his grasp with a warm look, and leaned up to kiss him gently. She ignored some wolf whistles they got, and then smiled up to him. "You would only be like Sans if you wore slippers and shorts with a hoodie." She giggled. "I'd have married you even if you came in a big fluffy chicken suit, though."

He leaned into her kiss first, and then leaned back to wink at her. Papyrus leaned in for another kiss- this time to the top of her head- about the same time that he let out a sound not unlike a chicken clucking.

She broke into a peal of laughter, falling against his chest as his sounds registered to her ears. Oh gods, she had married the biggest goober- and she was absolutely giddy about it.
They got a week to themselves, wherein they helped Thumper get everything moved over to Tenebris’ home. Thumper took over Papyrus’ old room.

Toki did miss having him around— but he was happy, and it wasn’t like she didn’t see him from time to time. The boy tended to drag Tenebris over at least once a day to visit and say hello.

Her house was empty for several days though, besides her and Papyrus. It was almost lonely— except for the cats that romped through the house. However, the quiet didn’t last long. Her brothers weren’t able to visit, all of them having to return to either their school studies or back to work, but she got a slew of gifts delivered to her house. They were labeled for a baby shower— for her and Caeruleus too. She was befuddled. She hadn’t planned a baby shower of any kind— so what on earth were the mess of gifts for?

Mettaton was also scheduled to arrive that day— so her day was no doubt about to get much, much busier. Oh boy. At least she had the energy today.

“Papyrus?” She called as she hauled in yet another box full of wrapped gifts. She set it on one of the side tables, and groaned to herself. Gods above, they were running out of space! She was glad he was off work today— getting up and down to keep getting things from the door was exhausting on her back. “Do you have any idea why so many things are being shipped here?”

"I’m afraid not." Papyrus replied where he was cleaning the front room, humming a soft tune to himself.

"Hmm. Well, some of these are addressed for Sans. We can run them down to Grillby's later." She heaved a sigh, and then padded into the front room. She eyed him and his cleaning, and then went to go fetch the broom so she could sweep.

Of course, Gracie flopped at her feet and refused to move, so she had to sweep around her.

"Sound good." he agreed, before he hummed another soft tune. "Oh, by the way, Father called. He wanted to know if you’d like to join him for tea." He told her.

"Oh? Uh... Sure. Did he say when he wanted me to visit?" She needed several minutes to make the waddle to his house. Going fast was asking for pained cramps. Toki tuts gently and huffs as she
scoots Gracie out of the way with her foot—until she wrapped around her foot and chomped on her toes. "Ack- Gracie, nooo leave my feet alone you adorable rascal."

"As soon as you could make it without hurting yourself." he replied, clicking his tongue against his teeth to get Gracie's attention.

The cat looked at him with wild eyes, and fluffed up as she let go of Toki. She arched her back playfully at him, and bounced at him cheekily.

Toki laughed. Cats were always interesting. She shifted to set the broom along the wall. "Well, now that I'm not besieged by my cat... I could go now, or whenever I find my shoes, of you don't need help with cleaning?"

He chuckled softly and wagged his toes at her before he looking to Toki, "No, no, I'll be alright!"

His toes were fair game. Gracie lunged and chomped onto his pinkie toe. She gave a playful growl, kicked her feet against his- and then stole his toe and scrambled away with her prize.

Toki giggled. "Good luck getting your toe. She hides them under the couch. I'll see you when I can make it back." She waddled for the front door, slipped her sneakers on, and took a moment to adjust her shirt over her massive swell.

"At least she's long since learned not to swallow them!" He called after her.

"Isn't that the truth." She laughed. That had been traumatic when Gracie had tried to swallow one of Pap’s toes, and ended up getting sick all over the carpet. Yes- she totally preferred magical skeleton vomit to cat puke. Yuck.

Once she wasn’t flashing her ectoplasm to the world, she gave him a wave and then headed out the door. It was ungodly hot, but she couldn't rush her waddling.

When she reached Tenebris' house, having passed Thumper as he and the rest of the kids played tag in the park, she was rather exhausted. She had a nasty cramp in the side of her belly. It was too hot to be waddling about. Still, she knocked on the door and waited patiently for him to answer.

Tenebris opened the door and smiled. "Toki, come on in." he rumbled, stepping aside, "I'm glad you decided to take up my offer."

"It might be really hot, but I enjoy your company." She stepped inside, where it was easily twenty degrees cooler. She heaved a sigh of relief. "Oh thank the gods you have air-conditioning. Next time I have kids, make sure to remind me to time it so I'm not this big at the end of summer."

"Duly noted. Iced tea it is then." he chuckled gently, closing the door before he moved to the kitchen.

She waddled after him with a soft sigh and smiled. "Iced tea sounds amazing. You have some made up?" She grinned. "Color me surprised if you do. I thought you lived off of hot tea and hot coffee alone."

"Excuse you, I have a sense of variety." he snorted softly, shaking his head lightly, "Sit down, I wont be long."

She made an amused noise at him and turned to instead go to the couch. "Sense of variety," she quotes teasingly, "says the monster that has tea every morning without fail." She takes a seat on one end of the couch and relaxes- as best as she could with what felt like forty pounds of belly weighing
her down.

He snorted and thumped a foot as he passed into the kitchen. "Excuse you."

"There is no excuse for me." She grins cheekily. She stretches out, kicks off her shoes, and then grumbles as she notices the laces are loose. She’d need to tie them again before she went anywhere else. She reaches for them and is completely unable to grab them. "Agh- can't reach my shoes..."

He chuckled at that. "Don’t worry about your shoes, Toki." He told her.

"My laces are loose, Papa." She chuffed. "I will trip over them if I walk around with them unlaced." And she couldn't tie them while wearing them. If she tied them loose enough she could slip them on and off like house shoes.

"Then let me take care of it once I'm back out there."

That was a thought. "... Can you even tie shoes as small as mine with your claws?" She could probably fit her sneaker in the holes in his palms.

"I am a doctor, Tokiko. With surgical precision in my coordination, I’m sure I can tie a bloody pair of shoes."

"Ten bucks says it takes you two tries." She grins cheekily to herself as she calls to him in the kitchen.

"One try for each foot, smart-ass." He snarked as he came out of the kitchen with the tea balanced on a tray.

"Nuh-uh. Two tries for the first shoe. You'll have it down by the time you get to the second shoe." She grins. She shifts her feet so he can settle on the couch with her, and then relaxes back into the armrest and backrest. "Technically I don't have an ass anymore."

"Your Coccyx then!" he huffed, before he came and knelt before her. "Foot please."

"If you tie them loosely enough I can slip them on and off without having to tie them every time." She offers up her foot anyways, sore bones wiggling at him cheerily.

"Duly noted." he said calmly. He tightened the shoes a little bit as to make the shoe laces a little more equal, then he tied the shoe, muttering to himself about how he could very damn well tie a bloody shoe, letting it go, now tied, on the first try. He then moved to the other foot and did the same before he held out a hand. "Ten dollars please."

She chuckled. She hiked up a hip and fished around in her back pocket. It took her a moment, but she soon tugged out a ten and plopped it in his palm. "Fine, fine. You have proven your superior shoe tying skills, oh shoe-master." She giggles. "So... Tea, Papa? Iced for me and... Hot for you?"

He grinned and closed his hand around the bill, tucking it into his pocket as he stood, "Nah, I might be wearing my sweater but I’m not that crazy." he snorted, "Iced for me as well." he then spoke, "How do you like yours?"

"I'm in a turtleneck too, but I've outgrown all of mine and Papyrus's tank tops finally. So alas, unless I go nude, it's all I can wear." She chuckled softly. "I like my iced tea cold and sweet."

"How does three sugar sound?" He offered.
"Hm..." Toki pats her belly thoughtfully. "Babies say four sugars. Four sugars sounds good." She chirps.

"Four it is, little hummingbirds." he chuckled, making her drink for her before holding it out to her, able to serve it in a tall glass instead of a teacup, complete with a straw.

The straw was a bit of an amusing thing since her teeth were ridiculously sharp and tightly locked, but she accepted it easily. "Hummingbirds?" She queried gently, trying not to bite through the straw as she took a sip. Mmm, hella good. "Also, how are your teeth doing? Do you still have to use your dentures?"

"Hummingbirds are attracted to nectar, and in the same, sugar water." he replied, before he shook his head, "Goodness no. I appreciate what you were doing but I absolutely abhorred those things, I couldn't use them for long; though thankfully I don't need them as much anymore." He lifted his mask and curled back his lips, showing his teeth were actually coming back in rather well, "Wont be long now before I have my perfect grin back." he chuckled, before he lifted his glass and wrapped his lips around the end of a-

Was that-

It was a silly straw.

Toki neatly snorted the tea and choked as it redirected out of her nasal cavity. Her laugher kept her from being nervous over seeing his sharp teeth coming back. "Oh my god, you can't say perfect grin and then drink out of a silly straw. That is literally unfair." She guffawed, dabbing her nasal cavity with her sleeve. "But, uh hummingbirds is an apt description of your grandkids. They flutter around with the energy of a hummingbird."

He chuckled softly and leaned back, purring softly as he enjoyed his drink through the straw. "I'm a grown male I can do what I want." he chortled, before he smiled gently, "I cannot wait to see them born, they've come so far."

She giggled softly, and plopped her shoe covered feet into his lap. "Grown or not, I'm totally telling Papyrus you drink out of a silly straw. That is so cute. Heh..." she curls her fingers over her belly, and sighs as they squirm. "You and me both. I'm so ready for them to get here. I feel so huge already," Grillby had said she was horribly small for a skeleton. "Any more and I might explode. I'm thinking they're following human methods, so... like, maybe four to six more weeks until we can hold them. Speaking of... the hospital's might be preparing to handle monster stuff, but... I'd like to have them at home."

"And with me and Grillby here, that is completely possible," he replied gently, "Not only that, but Todd is here too, he can help us too since you may birth them the human way."

"That is possible. My pelvis has been widening quite a bit, so that might very well be the case." She sighed softly and chuckled. "Good. I feel safer at home, to be honest. I wonder though, which method would be easier? Have you Googled the different types of deliveries yet?" She hummed softly to him. "Papyrus and I need to discuss methods so he isn't too overwhelmed by the delivery."

"I have been learning. So I will be able to teach Aliquam soon enough."

"Good." She nods. She pauses, and then giggled into her tea. "Oh gods, I just envisioned you teaching a Lamaze class."

It was his turn to choke, only it was less pleasant as he didn't have a nose to expel the tea from.
She guffawed, and leaned over as best she could to pat between his shoulders. "B-breathe, Papa," she grinned mischievously. "Hee-hee-hoo." She was the biggest little shit sometimes.

He coughed, and shot her a particularly sour and scolding look as he thumped his chest to clear his airways.

"Oh c'mon, you'd be good at teaching Lamaze." She grins at him. "Heh... Either way, Papyrus would probably benefit from some of your knowledge. He's been pretty attentive so far, but I don't think he's looked up anything birth related."

"You, Tokiko Gaster, are a twerp." he huffed, reaching up to pinch one of her horns.

"Heh! Jokes on you, only the bases of my horns feel anything." She grinned. "And of course! I am the biggest twerp. I've been a big twerp since I became a big sister. Heh... I still need to get used to the fact my last name is now Gaster."

He snorted gently, then he pat her head, "That's right, you're part of my clan now." He chuckled, "Though if you continue to be a little shit I will call you by your maiden name, Nara."

"And I can call you by your last name too, Gaster." She chuckled back. "I still technically lead my clan, so its more like the merging of two clans. Though traditional merging usually means the heads marrying, or the firstborn being married. Hm... Anyways, I am forever going to be a little shit. Who else is going to give you your daily dose of sass?"

"Well before you I had Caeruleus, though I scarcely see him anymore."

"He's spending a lot of time with Grillby. To be fair, Papyrus spent a lot of time with me until he moved in." She poked his leg gently with her toes- and sipped from her straw again. "Heh. I am a literal homebody, so other than writing and tending to my hives, I have more time to visit. Speaking of, I need to clean my hives soon. One of them has a leaky spot and has the weirdest moss growing in it."

"That must not be pleasant. I can offer you my help if you'd like."

"They've been really testy as of late." She shakes her head. "They got really agitated when Pap helped me collect honey last week. I think they're just guarding me because of how far along I am, since bees can scent hormones and stuff, but... well, you have meaty bits and can get stung." She lightly pinches his muscular bicep. "And I'd rather not have half of my hives dying because they broke their stingers off in your skin."

"Well there's no way you can do that by yourself." He insisted.

"I've been cleaning my hives all alone for going on... gosh... sixteen years? My family stopped helping after I turned eighteen. They got tired of wearing the bee suits and Toki was fine with that. They just stressed her hives anyways. "Pregnant or not, it's honestly relaxing to tend to my hives."

He blinked once, and then he leaned back and sipped his tea. "Fair enough."

"Mmm, did you need another jar of honey by the way? I have some extra bottles left over from my last shipment. Family gets free honey." She chirps warmly, and finished her tea.

"Heh... sure, why not." he rumbled, "By the way, Asgore has been bringing up flora from the underground, the taste of your honey might change as the plant life grows."

"So long as he doesn't bring up anything toxic, I don't have a problem with it. What the bees take in
can affect the quality. Toxic plants aren't good for honey production." She hums softly.

"Nothing toxic," he repeated, shaking his head, "He did mention he knows about your precious bees." he rumbled.

"Not just for my bees." She laughed. "Depending on the pollen they take, it could make my honey itself toxic. They won't know to avoid monster-toxic plants."

He took note of that, blinking widely at her.

"Mhm..." she sighed contentedly and relaxed more. Idly she waved as a passing monster waved in at them through the front window. "Anyways, if you see Sans today, will you tell him and Grillby to stop at the house? For some reason we have packages for him. Me too, oddly enough."

"Alright, I can do that." He chuckled.

"Thanks, Papa." She gently bumped him with her foot and grinned. "So, you think Asgore will ever move down here with you? He visits often enough."

"Up here, doofus," he corrected as he flicked her forehead, "and perhaps. It would be nice to have him, but I know he would be very busy, being the king and all..."

"Technically down here. Since he lives at the Castle which damn near on the outside of the mountain." She chuckled. "And the mountain is far, far higher than Nara Village. Hm... well, once things calm down from all the bills being passed, he probably can. There's no rule that he can't have a home here and work from home. Hell, I did paperwork for a thousand plus monsters all from my dining room table."

"Though now he won't need them really" he agreed, "It would be nice to have someone to keep me warm at night." he rumbled, getting a near-blissful look on his face from imagining it.

"Tenny," she made a face, "That's so gross. I don't need to think about you and Asgore spooning. Yuuuck. How would you like it if I told you about what shenanigans Papyrus and I get up to in the bedroom?" Which admittedly wasn't much anymore. Sex while this big was awkward, even if she was really missing his touch. She looked just a little saddened by that too.

He smiled at her cheekily. "You do realize if you started bragging, I'd hunt him down, thump his shoulder and go 'that's my boy'?"

She snorts softly and gives him a mock-frustrated face. It does well to hide the slightly sad look that had invaded. "Ughhh men. Monster, human, all the same with you guys."

"Only when antagonizing my daughter-in-law." he chuckled gently, before he hugged her, "There, there, my dear."

She leaned into his hug with a soft sigh, even as he basically drapes over her with their position. "I guess that's payback for me being a little shit to you... Heh. You should still totally teach Lamaze."

"Yeah well don't expect a miracle." He huffed, pecking her head.

She nuzzled into him with a soft sound. "But you're full of them." She teased gently.

"Oh? How so?" he snorted, pecking her head.

"Mmm... You just are." She smiles secretively and boops the ridge where his nose would be.
He chuckled and sighed. "I don’t think my son could have picked a better woman to marry."

"Oh yeah?" She blinked up at him slowly, a smile on her face.

"For sure." he rumbled.

"How do you figure? I know there are plenty of other monsters who are good people. Probably would have given you much less complicated lives." She smiles up at him merrily. HAM brought a lot of drama to their lives.

"The pros outweigh the cons with you." He told her firmly, hugging her tight.

Grandpa hugs were best hugs.

"Mhmm~ and it has nothing to do with my balls of steel when it comes to sassing you, does it?" None of the other monsters sassed him like she did. She leaned into his hug. Grandpa hugs were the best hugs. "Ah- heh. The twins enjoyed your hug too. Heh. I swear they got your legs somehow with how hard they kick." She guided his fingers to a spot on her middle, nearer her pelvis, and laughed. "They have Paps feet though. Feel how big that foot is! They're going to get so big when they grow up. I'm going to know how my mom felt when I shot over her height." She chuckled.

He chuckled and shook his head gently, then he leaned back and grinned at her, "I bet you wouldn't believe me if I told you that of the three that are myself and my sons, i by far have the smallest sized feet?"

"I would have to call bullshit on that, Papa." She chuckled. Her eyes danced mischievously. "Do you have tiny little pixi feet?" She teased.

"No." he deadpanned her and lifted one of his feet, revealing that while yes it was nowhere near as long as the boys' feet, they were definitely wider.

"You might have shorter feet, but dude. You have paws. Your feet are wide as fuck." She gives him an amused look. "You are such a dork. Your wideness makes up for lack of length. Pap has the widest feet ever, and he's still only a size eleven. I'm pretty rusty on my mathematics, but I'm very certain that you have more surface coverage than both of the boys do. Ergo- your feet are bigger."

He huffed gently and rattled quietly at her. "I suppose you're right."

She gave him an amused look. "Eh, it's just feet. All I know is that all of you have big feet, and the twins have inherited this. Speaking of the twins, I need to shift. They're making my legs tingle." When they weighed heavy on her spine, she tended to get a tingly feeling in her legs. It didn't hurt. But it wasn't pleasant either. She shifted awkwardly adjusting herself until she was comfortable again.

He chuckled gently and helped her adjust, before he nuzzled her and purred softly.

She smiled gently, and settled down to relax with him. "So how has it been having a kid in the house again?"

"It's definitely interesting, I’ll give you that" he murmured, stroking her head gently, before he perked as he heard a soft jingle rise from his phone. "Hm?" he pulled his phone from his pocket, and then he smiled widely under his mask. "Ah. Of course, I’ll let her know."

"Let me know what?" She blinked up at him slowly. She stretched again, one of her hips popping painfully. They kept doing that, popping out of place and just generally being a pain. All it did was
deepen her waddles. Supposedly it was part of her pelvis widening to prepare for kids. Though really, she already had 'childbearing hips' anyways. Eh. Hopefully Papyrus enjoyed her new shape after the twins arrived. "Was that Papyrus?"

"Indeed." The bigger monster nodded. "He said that there was something very important at your home that needed to be seen to immediately."

"Oh." She blinks, brow furrowing. "Shit. Alright." She shifted, managing to set the iced tea glass on the table, and made to get up. She had little luck though, even with the armrest to boost herself up. She couldn't get up. "Uh... I'm... stuck. Can you boost me?"

He chuckled gently and boosted her up without an issue. "Up we go."

"I have officially reached the stage where I am too fat to get up without help. Damn." She heaved a soft sigh as she gained her feet. She shifted her toes within her shoes, and then glanced up at Tenebris. "I had hoped to not need to rush home so soon, but I did enjoy tea and spending some time with you. Will you be alright cleaning up the glasses on your own?" Pap wouldn't call unless it was an emergency after all.

"I'll take care of it in a little bit." He hummed. "I'd rather see what all the hullabaloo is about."

"Alright." She nods. "Join me then?" She offers her arm to him cheerily. "It's a long waddle back. Unless you want to teleport...?"

"Teleporting works." He stood, and took her hand with a smile.

She laughs, and steps closer so she doesn’t risk losing her grip on him while he teleported them. "You know, the sneeze-teleport thing is annoying as hell. It would be cooler if I could direct it."

"Indeed so." he chuckled gently.

Once they teleported, Toki let go of his hand and let her body catch up with her. "Teleporting is always so disorienting." She chuckled softly. She shifted, and slowly made her way up the front steps. Toki padded to the front door, and opened it, motioning for the big monster to join her.

He smiled and followed her, but let her go first in opening the door.

She stepped inside, leaving him to follow, and slipped her shoes off at the entrance as usual. Propping her hand on her hip, Toki padded further in. "Pap? What was the thing you called Tenebris about?"

The house was dark, at least for a few seconds, before a light was switched and confetti was thrown into the air.

"SURPRISE!"

Waiting for her was a baby shower.

And in the middle of her living room sat a box that moved around on a single wheel. "Congratulations on twins, Toki darling!" It spoke up happily.

She bumped into Tenebris as she jerked back, a squeak escaping her as she startled. That was a talking calculator. A massive one. Alright then. "Thank you?"

Around the talking box were presents in general. They were separated into two piles, each one
distinct as to who it went to. The living room had several monsters all waiting and grinning at her. Across the top of the room was a large ‘congratulations’ banner, addressed to both her and Caeruleus.

“Oh wow…” She blinked slowly. “You guys did all this…?”

"Indeed, Darling" The robot spoke happily, one hand over it's 'chest' as the other was aimed upward, "How else are we supposed to celebrate not one, but TWO Pregnancies at once?! Oh ho ho ho!"

"I never thought I’d see you again, Mettaton."

"Oh my goodness me! Tenebris Gaster it's good to see you again!” The box wheeled over to the duo and he smiled gently.

"Pleasure is mine. Ah, Toki, this is Mettaton," He then spoke next, "The star of the underground."

"Thaaaaat's me, darling!" The box did a spin and another happy sounding 'oh ho ho ho!' laugh.

Oh stars, this was Mettaton? He was so… square. Toki gave him a warm smile nonetheless, and propped a hand on her hip. “Well, It’s nice to meet you, Mettaton. I’m Tokiko Gaster, but you can call me Toki.” She hummed softly. “I honestly didn’t expect… well, this. Who’s idea was it to throw a baby shower?” She inquired curiously. Everyone got big grins, including Grillby where he was carefully checking the holes in the side of one of the boxes, and her eye-lights trailed across the room to locate her husband.

Aliquam was standing tall with a happy smile. "Nyeh heh heh heh~"

She gave him a slight grin. “Was it you, Pap? I now see why Tenebris called out of the blue for me to visit.” She shot the elder monster an amused look.

Tenebris had an innocent smile as he walked by her to join the others. "Better come in quickly. Cae got called too, he’ll be here shortly."

“Sweet.” Toki grinned. She shifted and padded to the couch, so she could go take a seat on it. “I’ll just take a seat then.” The couch looked good- and it got her mostly out of the way. Toki took a seat, and relaxed as she stretched out in front of her pile of gifts. She crossed her sore ankles, and nestled down, brushing a small pile of confetti off of the couch so it could cover the floor in more of it.

She would need to sweep or vacuum during the night once everyone went home.

It wasn't before the door once more and Cae entered, only to be surprised when everyone shouted out 'Surprise!' once more.

Safe to say it took him a little longer to realize what was going on, but when he did he smiled happily and went to Grillby, hugging him tightly.

Grillby placed a warm kiss along the skeleton’s temple, and smiled happily. “That would be why I had you watch the bar while I ran ‘errands’ today, Sans.” He purred.

Toki giggled softly and leaned into the arm of the couch. “They surprised me too, Cae. I wasn’t expecting a baby shower… But,” She glanced up to Papyrus, made eye contact, and then flicked her gaze to a large, large box that was from them to Sans, “It looks like we have your gift all prepared.” They’d decided long ago to give him the old family crib, since it was too small for twins, and they didn’t make them in the same style anymore. Her eye lights then flick to the square monster rolling around her living room. “I am surprised to see you here though, Mettaton. You’ve been so busy
making movies, I didn’t expect to see you out and about this direction.” Not for something as simple as a baby shower. Though… he did look different from in the movies.

"Oh well you know, Darling, there's nothing that I wouldn't do for my darling Papyrus~"

"Nyeh heh heh, Mettaton please" Aliquam rubbed his head shyly.

"P'shaw, Darling! There's no business like show business but even then a celebrity like myself must have a heart!"

Toki arched her brows. “Darling Papyrus, hmm?” She gave him a curious look, and grinned. “That’s cute~ I’m glad you visited though, Mettaton. It’s nice to finally get to meet you. I know you’ve been busy with the other celebrities.”

"The pleasure is mine, my dear Tokiko, but little do you know this party is just getting started! Oh Tenebris, darling, would you mind?"

"Not at all." Tenebris moved over to behind Mettaton and there was a click before the robot began to do his ‘Oh ho ho ho!’ laugh once more.

"But just you wait Darling!" Without warning, the panels of the box began to shift and open. "This party is just getting started! And I’m going to make sure it's-" the robot transformed into a bipedal robot with an hourglass figure and hair that looks like it would have taken hours to do, a bright pink heart on his waist pulsing brightly. "- Absolutely BEAUTIFUL!"

Toki admittedly stared. That was… absolutely cool. She was admittedly a little jealous. She missed her hair quite a bit, and he had absolutely fabulous locks for being a giant metal being. But, alas, a skeleton with hair would be weird indeed. “Well… I know one thing that is absolutely beautiful.” She blinks at him. “Goodness me, I absolutely love your hair.”

Grillby just chuckled softly, and nuzzled Sans. “Go sit down, dear.” He purred. “This party is for you both.”

"Why thank you Darling, I ALWAYS make sure to look my best for my fans~" The robotic performer boasted proudly.

"Whatever you say, Grillbz.” Caeruleus rumbled gently, going to sit down and relax while Aliquam slid in to take a seat next to his wife.

Thankfully the couch was large enough for all three skeletons to sit on- though Grillby’s much larger frame might have some trouble squeezing in too. Toki chuckled softly, and leaned into her husband, lacing her fingers gently with his as she smiled happily. “I will admit, I am a little jealous of your hair. How do you keep it so shiny?” She wondered if it was made out of actual hair, or a type of metal filaments or something. He was a large monster- it would take a LOT of hair to make a wig for him.

Grillby smiled happily, and stepped up next to the pile of gifts. “I do not know the protocols for a baby shower, but… I think gifts are opened before cake is had…?” He looks uncertain, and glances to Papyrus for confirmation. The skeleton was better at keeping up with all of everything event related.

"Only the best MTT brand hair gel." he replied, before he smiled, "Oh yes, Darling, you simply must get to your presents, there's not another moment to lose!"

“I don’t think I’ve ever gotten anything that’s MTT brand.” She blinks slowly. “Well, I don’t have
hair, so that might be why.” And she didn’t use polish or wax or whatever on her bones.

Grillby smiled slightly, and shifted down to collect his gift to Sans. “If I may go first?” He tilted his head down to Toki, requesting her permission, rather than assuming.

“Of course!” She chirps softly, giving him a smile as the box in his hand wiggles and makes a noise.

“Thank you, Sans,” Grillby purred, “This is for you.” He crouched down, and held out the large box. It had holes in the side, and something could be heard whining from within.

To say the least, Sans was now very curious as to what was put down in front of him, and he slowly reached out, untying the bow from the top before he pulled off the top of the box.

From the top of the box popped out the fluffiest puppy that Toki had ever seen. It was fairly big, hence the big box, and she identified it as a Samoyed puppy. Big dark eyes blinked up at Sans, and it yipped, before tumbling out of the box and into his lap. The curly tail started thumping happily against his lap, and it- a little male, Toki noticed- rolled over in his lap eagerly for attention. A bright blue bow was tied about his neck in the form of a collar.

Grillby smiled, and pulled the box back once the puppy was out of it.

Sans eyes widened, and he gave a quiet coo before he hugged the puppy. "Oh my god~"

“Do you like him?” Grillby asked quietly. He reached out to rub the puppy’s ears. “He needs a name, if you like him.”

The puppy was all too eager to lick San’s fingers and face and wiggle with absolute excitement in his arms.

Toki rubs Pap’s arm, and nuzzles him with an amused look. “I’ll protect you from the dog, love.” She teases him quietly.

"I love him~" Cae replied with a pleased rumble. "Can we call him Serif?" he asked Grillby.

Pap on the other hand shot Toki a look.

Toki gave him an innocent smile, and leaned further into him. “It’s just a puppy, love. He probably couldn’t lift one of your bones, let alone steal them.” Maybe his fingers- but she’d keep that quiet.

“We can name him whatever you like.” The fire elemental looks pleased. “Serif is a good name. I had been informed that pets are good for children, and I had hoped you might like a dog. I know you are more partial to them than cats.”

Serif yipped noisily, and slathered a slobbery kiss over Sans teeth.

Ali gave a soft huff. "I can defend myself well enough." he murmured, though he smiled, "Ah... Cae looks happy though."

"Heh heh heh... I love him, Grillbz~ He's so cute." Sans chuckled, hugging the Samoyed tightly.

“Oh that he does.” She smiled. She gently smooshed his shoulder. “Oh hush, Pap. I defend you, you defend me. That’s how marriage works.” She leans up to smoosh his cheek. “Which means you get to handle the things that scare me- and I’ll protect you from a precious puddle of fluffy puppy-dog.”

The puppy’s tail wagged even faster, burring into a fluffy mop of white as he squished closer to Cae.
Grillby grinned wider. “I’m glad.” He purred. “He was the best temperament of the litter that I got to see.” The dog had cost a pretty penny too- but Grillby made enough from the bar in order to get him the dog.

Aliquam huffed and nibbled her cheek lightly, smiling at her. "I love you~" he purred.

"Thank you so much, Grillby." Sans snuggled the dog gently, his grin wide.

Toki giggled softly at the nibble. “I love you too, Pap.”

Grillby hummed softly. “Serif is a good name. We’ll get a collar and a leash made for him soon.” He purred.

“That it is.” Toki smiled. “I vote we do gifts one person at a time. So... Grillby? Think you can slide Sans the big one next to the table? Yes that one- ah, careful! It's really, really heavy. It's addressed to you both though.”

Grillby noticed that it was also from Papyrus and Toki. He eased it over closer to Sans, and opened his arms. “May I hold Serif while you open gifts? Unless... Papyrus would like to hold him?” The fire elemental shot Papyrus an amused look. Yes, the tall skeleton’s troubles with Annoying Dog had been shared across the land- even to his bar.

Sans looked to Papyrus, who held Toki close as if to ward off the fluffy white dog. "I already have something to hold, thank you."

"Heh... Here you go, Grillbz." Sans spoke, holding Serif out.

Grillby took the fluffy pooch with an amused smile, and rubbed his ears. Serif settled, panting happily in his grasp.

Toki giggled as she was practically squished to Papyrus, and simply scooted to sit in his lap. “There. Now you’re holding ‘something’. ” She winked up at him, and curled her legs closer to him. She looked on excitedly. “Open it, Cae. It’s from Pap and I.”

Sans winked cheerily at her, and then set into opening the gift with gusto.

The present unwrapped to form a large box. The box was old and slightly tattered, but the picture, along with various children’s names, were visible along the front. The names were listed in order of birth, starting with Toki and ending with Souta, her youngest brother.

“It’s the family crib. My mom got it when I was born- and it’s been used ever since.” Toki said softly. “It’s too small to fit twins, but... We figured you might like it? It’s a solid frame, so it should hold little Sunshine there even as they grow bigger and bigger.” Which, with Grillby for a father, who was even larger than Papyrus, she was expecting it would probably grow pretty fast. “And... Well, you’re family too. It stays with family.” She smiles.

He smiled gently, "Heh... I love it... Thanks Tokes..."

“I’m glad.” She smiled warmly. She shifted closer to Papyrus, and nestled better into his side. “I’m sure you and Grillby can get it together. It won’t be like the Ikea Incident, I promise.” Her eye lights twinkled in merry amusement.

Caeruleus chuckled at that, and then looked up at Grillby, "That takes care of that, eh Grillbz?"

“Indeed.” The older monster chuckled gently. He scooted closer, and took a look at the box. “I am
certain we can manage to put this together.”

“I’m sure you can.” Toki smiled. “Well! There’s lots of other gifts too. I think I see a very… sparkly… one from Mettaton for you, Sans?”

With the ever so quiet "oh ho ho ho" from Mettaton, Sans pulled over the glittry present and opened it up.

Sans was a little confused with what he pulled out, lifting up a can of ‘MTT Brand Fire Retardant’, while around fourteen more cans sat in the box. "Well… i cant say this wont be useful..." he chuckled softly, before he smiled, "Thanks, Mettaton."

"Oh my pleasure darling, but that's not all!"

Inside, and just under the large quantity of cans, was a delicately made quilt- that was quilted in a pattern that depicted Mettaton’s body. His square form was on one side, and his rather voluptuous other form was on the other side.

Toki blinked as it was pulled out. “Wow. He even detailed his boots…”

Sans smiled as he held it up, then he looked at Mettaton, "This is nice, Thank you~"

"My pleasure Darling~!"

Toki giggled softly.

Boxes were handed to Sans- and many of them had baby clothes of many sizes, toys for all different ages, and blankets galore. With baby monsters that could have claws and sharp teeth, things could get ruined quite quickly.

Toki blinked. “Hm… Goodness… That’s… a lot of blankets.”

Sans’ grin never faded throughout the whole thing, and by the end of it he was murmuring ‘thank you’s to everyone through the fabric on Grillby's chest, having needed his warm-bodied mate to come give him a hug.

The big monster had leaned onto the couch and gently rubbed his mate’s shoulders. The poor skeleton was a little overwhelmed, understandably, but Grillby handled it well enough. He crooned gently to him. “Are you happy?” He purred softly to him.

Sans did not respond vocally. He simply nodded quickly.

Toki smiled, and poked Papyrus gently. “If you can reach the boxes with me on your lap, I could open mine.” She hummed.

Grillby chuckled gently. “I would hand them to you, but I must tend to Sans.” He crooned gently to him again, and massaged between his shoulders.

“Pregnancy emotions can be overwhelming.” Toki nods sympathetically. “I would say it gets better, but it really doesn’t. I cry at the pillow-pets commercial still.”

"Allow me, Darling." Mettaton started with one of the presents, passing it to her gently.

“Thanks, Mettaton.” She smiled gently. Toki carefully hooked her fingers in the edge of the wrapping on the box after looking at the tag, and then carefully unwrapped it. She balanced the box on her belly as she set the wrapping to the side, and then carefully tugged it open. “This one is from
Lana,” She hummed. She perked as she peeked inside, and tugged out identical baby blankets. “Awww!” They were done in orange and green, matching Toki and Pap’s magic colors. “Look, Pap! Matching blankets! And they’re big enough that they can use them even into toddling years. Awww~”

"Typical of Lana, she makes sure her products last for a long time.” Papyrus chuckled gently. "So cute." he agreed, squeezing her gently.

She smiled, though squeaked at his gentle squeeze. “That she does. Though they might not last so long if our little ones get my teeth or horns.”

“Careful now, Papyrus. Your mate might pop.” Grillby gave them both an amused look.

"She might be full, but she's not that full.” He playfully stuck his tongue out at Grillby before he leaned and nuzzled his face into Toki's neck. "Mmh. Well, I think you talked Lana into moving into the village, so that won't be a problem.”

“Considering how little we know of skeleton births, she might be ‘ripe’ as the saying goes.” The fire Monster squinted slightly, before sticking a flaming tongue out at Papyrus. He was going to have to relearn childish things- it had been a long time since Fuku was little, and a long time since he had needed to entertain her with silly faces.

“True that.” Toki giggled softly. “With as many cramps and odd sensations as I get, I certainly feel ready to pop. Of course size has something to do with that too. Heh… Once Lana’s all moved in, I might need to commission some shirts from her again. I no longer fit in your tank tops, Pap. Not without showing off an indecent amount of skin.” Which she didn’t mind when it was just her and him, but if she was out and about… Well, Toki was self-conscious of her size, so flaunting it wasn’t on her list of things she really wanted to do. She flicked her gaze to Mettaton as she set the first package to the side, and waited patiently.

"This is odd." Mettaton piped up, holding up a dark gray envelope that had 'Tokiko' on the front. "There's no present attached to it."

Wariness flitted across her expression briefly, but she hid it away. There was no way Cruelty would send her something- he was probably still seething over his failed attempt at showing her ‘betrayal’ with Tenebris. She held out her hand, and offered Mettaton a smile. “Well, sometimes physical gifts aren’t needed. Cards are a good expression of well-wishes too.” She hummed softly. “May I?”

He nodded and handed it over with a brilliant smile.

Toki took it carefully in hand, and investigated it thoughtfully. It felt solid, so she didn’t think it could be anything bad, but who knows. She slid her finger under the edge of the envelope’s lip, and pried it open, using heat to loosen the glue that held it closed. Once it was open, she carefully extracted it’s contents, and took a good look at it.

Inside, was a card, it's outside blank. Upon pulling it out would reveal another two small items in the envelope

Paint sample cards.

The text in the card started with a bunch of symbols, but stopped early on, and instead, written underneath in eloquent handwriting, was the rest of the script.
My Dear Tokiko.

_I had noticed these paint cards on your kitchen counter, and I hoped to make things a little bit easier for you and Papyrus._

_Go upstairs and have a peek in the Children’s bedroom._

_Your loving Papa, Tenebris._

_P.S. I apologize about the wing-dings at the top, it has been a while since I’ve written else on paper._

Toki blinked at the items, and re-read the card again. Her teeth quirked up into a half-grin. “Oh goodness. Hey, Pap. Gimme a boost up- we’re taking a quick trip up to the nursery.” Her eye lights flicked over to Tenebris, and brightened considerably.

Tenebris was only smiling as he looked back at her, watching as Papyrus carefully helped her to her feet, Cae requesting Grillby to do the same.

Grillby helped Caeruleus to his feet easily, dusting him off and handing over the wiggly puppy once he was stable.

Toki settled heavily on her feet, her back throbbing as the weight of her middle tugged roughly on her spine. She kept the card and contents tucked in her fingers, and then waddled slowly for the stairs. Going up was easier than going down, so she made decent enough time going up- but really, the slowest shouldn’t be leading the way.

Still, once the train of followers was at the top of the stairs, Toki padded for the baby’s room, and then opened the door, curiosity flitting through her gaze.

Waiting for her inside was a painted room, two of the walls a gentle sky blue color, the other two a vibrant but non-eye-burning orange color. There were deep red curtains installed over the windows, and even the rocking chair looked painted over, before given a sealing layer to protect it.

Toki padded in, eyes brightening as she slowly waddled for the center of the room. Her eye lights trailed over the walls, taking in the colors that matched those that flashed in her belly from time to time. Her fingers came up, pressing to her cheekbones as she took it all in. The red curtains, the darker rocking chair, it all looked so… so…

Perfect.

Her eyes welled with happy tears, and she turned to peer back at the door where everyone was peeking in. “It’s perfect.” She whispers. “It’s perfect.”

Tenebris was standing in the back of the crowd, a gentle smile on his face as he watched her have her happiness.

Toki sniffled slightly and motioned Tenebris to come closer. Once he did, she slumped into him and hugged him as best she could. “Thank you.” She murmurs softly. “Thank you…”
He wrapped his arms around her and nuzzled her, not responding vocally while purring loudly to her.

Toki sniffled, and clung tightly to him. It was her turn to be overrun with emotions- but it wasn’t without cause.

Getting the painting done was a huge chunk of her nerves gone for her- now she and Papyrus could take a day eventually and get everything put together and the room all ready. Once it was ready, she could relax finally.

It might have been a small thing to someone else- but to the expectant mother, it was huge.

So he got to wear her happy tears as she stained the front of his turtleneck with them, while trying to calm down so she could open the rest of her gifts.
Toki walked away from the baby-shower fully stocked with clothes, blankets, and toys for the twins, just as Caeruleus did. She even got a couple new turtlenecks for later, since cold weather was supposed to start to set in.

Which was utter bullshit, she was certain. Instead of the cold spell, which would have been a damn reprieve, they got the exact opposite.

The heat kicked up again. The third week of August was turning out to be the hottest on record, with temperatures reaching upwards of a hundred and ten degrees. Everything was hot and miserable, and those on guard duty were stuck going in their lightest under-armor, lest the wolves with their fur roast alive.

Toki handled the heat well enough, but she couldn’t hide inside with the air-conditioning forever. She had things to do- and her hives sorely needed cleaning. Unfortunately, all of the tank tops no longer fit, and she had no desire to mutilate any of her nice turtlenecks just to make something that would keep her arms cooler.

On the plus side, at thirty-five weeks along, Toki was finally big enough to wear the Honey Pot shirt she got from the Maternity store so many months ago. She might have gotten it a little bit too big- but it fit now, and was loose enough that the thick, black material didn’t cling to her like a second skin.

And, if she had to say so herself, she looked damn adorable in it.

After Papyrus headed out for early morning work, Toki gave herself a couple hours to bask in the cool air in front of the straining air conditioner, before she gathered up her cleaning supplies and set out for the hives.

Wolfen came across her path as she was making the slow waddle out to the hives.

“Should you be out here in this heat?” He inquired lightly, tongue lolling out the side of his mouth. He was soaking wet, smelled horribly like wet-dog, but seemed to be in a better mood since his apparent dip in the river that ran around the edge of the village.

“Work is work,” She chuckled softly. “Just because it’s hot doesn’t mean my bees deserve to wallow in gross moss. Besides, cleaning my hives is literally the most relaxing thing.” Even if the sun was hot as hell on her shoulders, and the grass was dry enough that it crackled under her bare feet bones,
she still had things to do.

“Work is work, amen to that.” He chuckled. “But work is work when you’re not massively pregnant. You’re supposed to stay relaxed at this point, Miss Toki.”

“That might be true, but you know me.” She beamed at him. “I’ll probably still be up and about doing things until the day I have these two. Besides that, skeletons are immune to the extreme temperatures.” She bluffs. That wasn’t entirely true. She could feel the cold particularly well when she was severely low on magic- but Papyrus had donated a little bit the night prior, so she wasn’t anywhere close to deficient. In fact, she felt great! The hot breeze swirled her skirt just enough to help provide some airflow to her legs, and her shirt was cute enough that she felt like damn near flaunting her belly- she was in a fabulous mood.

“Mmm, that is true. I’ve seen Papyrus out in the freezing cold and in the scorching heat- Hell, he’s in his chain mail right now, and no one else has even dared to touch anything metal.” The wolf shakes his head. “Your husband is quite the guardsmen.”

“That he is.” She nods with a proud smile.

“Mhm… Alright, well, you be careful, okay? You and those babies are precious, Miss Toki. You really ought to be looking into bed-rest at this point. You’re not nearly so large as the rest of us monsters.” Wolfen gave her an affectionate pat on the head, careful not to poke his paws on her horns.

“Bed-rest schmed-rest.” She makes a face at him and snorts. “I run the house while Pap runs guard patrols- Most of my ‘jobs’ aren’t nearly so taxing. Bed rest isn’t something I can really do though, without someone there to haul me out of bed when I need to get up.” A laugh escapes Toki. “Anyways, I need to get this done before my back starts to ache.”

“Back aches are a pregnant woman’s worst foe.” He nods. “Do you need any help with the bees?”

“Help would be fantastic, but no.” She shakes her head. “Something has had them distressed and spooked, and I don’t want anyone getting stung. They even got aggressive with Papyrus when he helped me get the honey.”

They kept swarming near the trees, and were forcing the guards to take a longer detour around their usual patrol areas because they kept chasing them in large swarms. Whatever was wandering around in the trees had them hugely upset, and until Toki could figure out what had them so upset, she didn’t want to risk anyone getting hurt. They tended to swarm over her and guard her when she was out there, so it wasn’t like she needed someone to protect her either.

Wolfen grimaces and rubs his arm. “Oh yeah, I know that. I got stung yesterday. I wandered too close to the swarming spots and paid for it.”

“Oh no- were you alright?” Worry and guilt tilted her mouth down.

“I was fine, yeah. Stings don’t bother me any.” He gives her a soothing smile. “Alright- you go tend to your bees. I’m on patrol near the house, so give me a holler when you go inside, and I’ll let Papyrus know you’re safe, okay?”

“Okay.” She nods. Toki gives him a smile, and wanders on to handle her hives.

The bees were, as she suspected, swarming widely over her apiary field. They parted like the sea for her to enter their folds, and then converged on her like a possessive dragon over its hoard. She smiled softly as they flooded her body, clinging to her skirt and clamoring over her belly.
They crowned her skull like they usually did, and she pried the lid off the first one as she set to cleaning them. Only one had the nasty moss, but the rest of them were overdue for a cleaning. Her pregnancy was cumbersome and it limited her energy sometimes- and the days where she had no energy were usually her days where she was supposed to be doing thing with the hive.

Toki giggled softly as the bees buzzed around her, and let them possessively check her over and keep an eye on her while she cleaned and tended to them.

Hours later, however, found Toki woozy and exhausted. Heat might never have bothered her largely before, but with the bundle of warmth in her middle, she found herself more receptive to the large quantities of heat that were being beamed down on them from the sun above.

The heat wore on her and wore on her, drawn in by the dark turtleneck she was wearing. Her pale skirt tried to keep her cool, but it wasn’t enough to keep her well enough. With all of her movements, bustling to and fro from the hives and scooping an cleaning gunk, her body was generating more and more heat. She was practically an oven.

Toki persevered, however, and managed to finish all of the hives. However, when she tried to head back to the house, she found herself staggering, head swirling as her vision wavered. The twins had long fallen still, the heat even too much for them. Nausea and disorientation flooded her.

Fuck. She should have had someone at least watch out for her.

Heat rolled off of her in waves, and she just managed to catch herself with her hands as she tripped. She braced herself, but dropped, barely managing to shift her landing so it was on her side in the grass instead of face down. She was not far from her hives. The bees swarmed in alarm, and a cloud of them descended on her as her mind faded from consciousness.

Papyrus had been on patrol with a fellow guard at this time, allowed to wear his chain mail rather than his armor as a whole. At first it seemed all was well and there was naught to worry about, but it quickly changed as he caught wind of what sounded like... Frantic buzzing...Oh no...

Toki.

With a newfound speed in his step, Papyrus quickly started for the beehives.

The apiary was abuzz with life; the air thick and cloying with distressed and aggravated drones. They swarmed around the air, though none of them went to touch the fallen lump at the center of the swarm.

Toki was visible between the swarm, the bees worked into an almost rabid frenzy with their caretaker indisposed. She looked to be napping in the grass- but she wasn’t moving at all, and her basket of tools was spilled across the dry grass next to her. The air around her seemed to waver, distorting with the heat that was collected around her.

The bees buzzing grew more agitated as Papyrus drew near, and they battered his armor and face aggressively.

The increase in noise did not even stir her, nor did the clank of his chain mail. She was still- horribly, horribly still.
"Oh stars... Toki!" he gently shooed away the bees and lifted Toki's form up, tensing as he detected the heat coming off of her. Oh no...

Toki groaned gently as she was lifted. Her bones were hot to the touch, almost fevered. She stirred, eyes opening just faintly before closing again. “Mm... Pap...? S’... S’ hot...” She groaned again, and her mouth fell open as she began to pant.

The bees buzzed angrily, and their cloud thickened again. They jabbed harmlessly at his armor and bones.

He slowly knelt once more and began to peel her clothes off gently. "Toki, you overheated..." he told her gently, stripping her bare before he picked her up again and began for the river.

She wasn’t quite unaware enough for her nakedness not to bother her, and she tucked her face into his chest with a distressed buzz that sent the swarm into another brief frenzy. “Noooo,” Toki groaned. “No naked...”

"Toki you need to cool down." he told her sternly, "Just trust me, okay?"

“I trust you…” And she did. But that didn’t mean her cheeks didn’t burn with an entirely different sort of flush, and she refused to meet his gaze. She knew she was overheated, her bones practically scalding and the twins still within her. Her arms folded over her chest, and she curled up shakily in his arms.

As he exited the Apiary, the swarm didn’t follow. They buzzed angrily, but remained within their designated zone. The river wasn’t far from the edge of the Apiary, and the guards hovering nearby looked on worriedly.

“Is she alright, Sir?” One of them asked gently.

"She collapsed from a heat stroke." he told them, walking to the edge of the water and slowly walking into it, kneeling down as to submerge her.

She groaned as the water washed over her, and shivered violently at the drastic change in temperature. Steam rolled off of her as she twitched, sockets opening. Cooling her externally was a rapid process against the cold water, even if it hissed and spat angrily.

“Dousing her in cold water is good fast term, Sir, but she needs to get inside and rest.” One of them approached, and stood at the edge of the water. They awkwardly swallowed. “So, uh… I can… take over your work shift for you, sir…?”

“Noo…” Toki groaned softly, water making her voice gurgle and be barely audible. “I make you miss too much work…”

He nodded gently. "I appreciate this, thank you." he told them with a faint smile.

Toki squirmed in his arms, and forced her way to the surface. She sputtered, shivering roughly, and crossed her arms over her middle. “Nn-n-n-n-nn…."

“Get your wife inside and relax.” The monster nods gently. “Maybe take a hot bath or give each other massages… Whatever the hell married people do.” They shrugged, and then stepped away. “Maybe get your dad over to check on her. Heat stroke while pregnant probably isn’t good.”

"A wise idea." he agreed, lifting her up gently out of the water. "Can one of you go let him know?"
“Sure, sir.” One of the wolves nodded, and began a slow jog around the walls to head for the doctor’s house.

Toki was marginally more aware once she was lifted from the water, and her fingers curled into his heated chain mail. She squinted up at her husband. “Papyrus,” She murmured, bare bones uncomfortably displayed for all to see, “You don’t have to take time off work. Just… get me inside and I’ll be fine.” At this point she just needed rest, she hoped. If she were human, she would need lots of fluids, but… A skeleton with heat stroke is another thing.

"Out of the question." He told her sternly, "I am staying with you to ensure you recover."

“You miss a lot of work because of me as it is.” Toki huffs right back at him, sockets closing as the heat of the sun works to dry her bones alongside her magic. The air is hot, and it makes her head fuzzy feeling. She tucks her shoulders, and tries to practically disappear in his arms as she notices a few of the guards glancing at her.

Of all the times to be naked and self-conscious, it had to be now.

"You're going to miss more when the twins are here…” She wasn’t sure if he had limited days off or not, but surely he would be approaching his limit by now if he did.

"At least I would still be here for you at a moment's notice." He scolded lightly, "I might be a guard, but I'm your husband too."

“I know you are.” Toki huffed softly against his chest, but stopped her fussing. His worry was justified, really, and she didn’t feel like starting an argument over it when she felt faint. Things might have ended up a little fuzzy on her end, but she focused again when they were back at the house.

“Whoah… When did we get home…?”

He didn't answer, just cradled her as he hefted her inside, and got her into a cool shower to keep her from reheating too fast.

The cold water was not welcome at all, and she twisted slightly in his arms. “Papyrus,” she huffed, “That’s cold… I just need to rest, not be dunked in cold water.” Dousing her in more cold water wasn’t what she thought she needed.

The twins shifted faintly though, as the cold water made her belly shiver, and she dropped her fingers to touch the fevered flesh. They had been so still… Toki’s sockets drooped slightly, and she shuddered again. An ache traveled across her bones, the sort of ache that happened to someone who wasn’t feeling well. She shudders and sighs softly.

He slowly rubbed her stomach, cooing worriedly as he rested his head on her shoulder, "I'm sorry, Toki..."

The twins shifted just slightly again under his hands before falling still again.

Toki swallowed slightly, and nuzzled her skull to his as he cradled her in the shower. “It’s okay, Pap… The only thing I’m moderately upset about is having been stripped naked. I’m sorry I made you worry… I didn’t mean to get this bad. I was heading back to the house to rest when I got really dizzy and fell.”

"Your clothes felt like they had come right out of the dryer, I didn’t know what else to do..." he murmured.

“Tossing me in clothes and all might have been a start.” She murmured softly. She sighed. “It’s
alright, Pap. You were worried. Just… Don’t strip me naked in public again, okay? Some days I’m not as conscious, but lately…” Lately she had been. She’d been feeling her size more and more, and while she loved her twins, she was… well… Her body wasn’t the same as it used to be, most certainly, and she was aware that there were some aspects that wouldn’t be attractive.

"It didn’t come to me. I’m sorry." he murmured, holding her close while gently rubbing her stomach, letting his magic seep into her sides.

“No more apologies,” she said softly. “You reacted instinctively, and I know this. It’s okay, Pap… Really, it is.” She nuzzled him gently, and let him tend to her. It soothed her, and him no doubt, while she reclined in his grasp.

The twins didn’t stir, even for his magic, and she sighed softly. Her middle was hot to the touch, so it was considerable that they were less active when they were hot too. Warmth was good up until a certain point, and they had passed that point a while ago.

“You’re going to rust.” She murmured softly, hooking her finger lightly in his chain mail. She tugged softly on the chain mail, and sighed up to him. “I’m cooler now, Pap. I need to cool off the rest of the way much slower though. Lets go dry off, okay? Your dad will probably be here soon, and I really am not interested in being nude around anyone but you right now.”

"Heh... alright, hang on." he kissed her head and laid her down in the tub as he went to change.

Toki didn’t stay stationary. Settled in the tub or no, she wanted out. Though… She was a bit stuck. Her middle kept her weighed down, like a turtle stuck on it’s back, but it didn’t limit her legs from turning off the shower that he had left on.

Toki grasped the sides of the tub and shakily tried to lift herself upright, at least so she could sit. Her arms shook slightly, trembling from her earlier fainting spell, and she toughed it out enough so she could sit up.

He came out again after a while, just wearing a pair of shorts over a pair of boxers as he came over with a towel. "Toki... Hey...”

“Hm?” She glanced up at him, eye lights dim. Sitting up made her a bit dizzy, but she was fine enough. “Ah, towel. Help me up so I can dry off?”

He nodded and slowly helped her up and out of the tub. “Careful,” He murmured softly.

Toki eased out onto the bathroom mat, her legs shaky but stable enough. “I will be,” She assured him gently. She still felt hot and flushed, like she had been far too active, but the cold water had done a lot to cool her off externally. The insides of her bones, and the mass of heat bulging out from between her ribs and pelvis, were not quite as cooled. Toki cycled air through her nasal cavity, and then carefully began to dry herself off.

She kept one hand on his arm to keep her balance, but was swift enough in drying her body off. Once she was dry, she tucked the towel on the towel rack so it could dry, and turned to him. “Alright… Well, I need something to wear… I don’t have any thin turtlenecks.” She muttered. And all of the tank tops were now basically too small to fit over her belly. “So maybe… I dunno...” One hand came to cradle her skull, and she buzzed softly. “It’s a bit hard to think.” She was still dizzy.

He smiled and offered her a pair of shorts. "I got something from Cae's recent load of fresh laundry. His hips are wider than mine, so these should fit.”

“Mmmkay…” Her shorts were tight across the middle on the best of days. She took the offered pair
of shorts, and leaned against the wall so she could slip them on without losing her balance. Cae’s shorts fit damn near perfectly, sitting half way up her middle as she adjusted the elastic waistband. “Well, they fit.” She mused slightly, and crossed her arms over her bare ribs and upper part of her stomach. Toki remained leaning on the wall, and closed her sockets for a moment to let her dizziness calm down.

He chuckled, took a moment to collect the damp towel, and then shook it out before he draped it over her shoulders. "Here, does this work for now?"

She looked like some very overweight skeleton from a locker room commercial. Toki offered him a tired smile and adjusted the towel over her shoulders. It didn’t really leave her comfortable, but she didn’t have access to a shirt that wasn’t either too small to fit over her belly, or too thick for her to cool down. Being fussy didn’t get anything done- it was easier just to roll with it. “I guess, yeah. Lets head down stairs… though you might want to keep a hand on me. I’m still really dizzy.” Dizzy plus stairs was a bad combination.

He nodded gently. "I’ll get you some ice packs to keep cooling you down.” he told her.

“Just put me on the couch and I should be fine.” The air conditioning blew almost directly onto it, so it would help her cool off rather quickly. Toki shifted, heaved a soft sigh, and then half walked, half staggered out of the bedroom. “I feel very dehydrated, but skeletons don’t have set amounts of water they have to take in.” She mutters. “… Mmm… Maybe a glass of water with those ice packs…” They needed to get down the stairs first, and they kept… moving… Or at least looked like it to her. She wasn’t thrilled with the prospect of trying to go down them.

"Of course." he answered.

He had to aid her in going down the stairs. Not only could she not see where she was stepping, but looking down made vertigo swish through her. Papyrus ended up going first, and letting her rest her hands on his arm as he guided her down.

“You really do need rest, Toki.” Papyrus murmured gently to her.

“I know, Pap. I know. I’ll rest when I get down, okay? But we do need to go get my cleaning supplies out of the apiary tonight when it’s cooler.” She sighed softly.

They made it down the stairs just barely before the front door open and Tenebris appeared in the main room. "Toki!"

She hadn’t even gotten to the living room, she lamented as she took the last step off the stairs, and she was going to get fussed over even more. “I’m here, Tenebris.” She tucks the towel a bit better over her shoulders, and covers up as best she can. Toki is, to her credit, on her own feet, even if she’s bracing against Papyrus every so often.

"Tokiko Nara-Gaster…” Tenebris rattled at her in a scolding manner as he came over, gently taking her from Papyrus. He guided her with quick but careful steps over to the couch, and got her seated. Getting her settled wasn’t hard, and she sighed as she was promptly seated while her husband headed off to the kitchen to no doubt get her water and as many ice packs as he could fit between her bones. Being moved so quickly didn’t do well for her dizziness, but she did get to bask in the cool air from the air conditioning unit much quicker. “Mmm… I’m sorry I worried you, Papa.” She said the term of endearment in the hopes of his lecture not being so fierce. “I’m okay though, really, I’m just a bit dizzy.”
"Didn’t I tell you not to do your aviary duties without someone watching you?!” He insisted.

“Technically you said I couldn’t do them alone… I think… Nothing about someone having to watch me.” She tucked her chin with a sigh. “I would have been okay,” She insists gently, “if it wasn’t so hot… And if I hadn’t have been in a black turtleneck…” Toki grunts softly, and keeps her hands tucked along the edges of the towel to keep it in place.

He sighed gently, "Toki." He scolded gently, "Think about the children."

“I didn’t think the heat would get to me that much, Tenebris. Skeletons are supposed to be unaffected by the extremes, right?” Thinking about the risk to her children, the fact she nearly fell on them, and how still they were in her belly, made her hands tremble. Her sockets pinched tight, tearing up slightly, and she refused to meet his gaze. “I was heading inside to rest and cool off…” She had finished her task, and she’d been ready to call it a day- but apparently hadn’t called it soon enough. “I just… wasn’t quick enough.” She whispered softly. “I can’t change what happened. You don’t need to make me feel worse about it- trust me, I already feel terrible about it. I never… I didn’t intend to put them at risk. I would never, ever put them at risk. I guess… I just didn’t think that this was a possibility. Cleaning the hives hasn’t ever been too much of a task before."

Cleaning and tending to her hives had always been a relaxing pastime for her- but with the heat and her pregnancy, it likely wasn’t going to be anymore.

“Maybe… Maybe I shouldn’t be out there alone anymore though…” She muttered softly.

He reached up and cupped her cheekbones gently. "Toki..." he hushed gently, before he rested his head on hers. His chest expanded and contracted in a long, drawn out sigh, and Tenebris closed his eyes momentarily. "With everything that has happened... Will you promise to be careful?" he asked.

“I can’t be more careful if I tried to be.” She says softly, her teeth tilting down in a sad frown. She was careful- she was taking more and more breaks, finding herself slipping into impromptu naps… The only thing she could think of would be essentially bed rest, or house arrest of some kind. But Tenebris surely wouldn’t try to tell her to do that… would he? “I’ve been resting more and more, and trying to stay away from stress… But I’ve neglected my hives for too long, and it wasn’t fair to them…” She whispered softly.

He smiled at her gently. "I have an idea." he told her, slowly taking a step back before he focused his magic. A skull slowly appeared nearby and opened blue-purple eyes that blinked, before lifting itself and looking around. Tenebris touched his snout, settling the beast easily. "How about this..." he started, "This is Garrus. He can stay with you and keep you company."

“Uh…” She leaned back slightly and stared at the decent sized skull with a growing level of concern. There were a lot of things in her house that it could knock over, and she wouldn’t be able to bend over and pick the fallen item up. She didn’t even summon her critters here, besides Stripe. Sugar would have to see everything, and the wingless Hell Hornet would probably knock everything over. Her brother’s ashes were up on the fireplace mantle, and she didn’t want to risk those breaking. “Keep me company?”

"Indeed. If you want to go out again, take Garrus with you." he told her, "He will stay close by, make sure nothing happens."

“… So basically a babysitter…?” She queried lightly, looking over the large bestial skull quietly. So far, she’d seen that each summoned critter had a different personality. She’d never really interacted with Tenebri’s blasters, but Toki was fairly familiar with her own, and with Papyrus’ blasters. Toki’s brow furrowed slightly. Well, it wasn’t bed rest or house arrest. But being babysat by a large,
sentient laser-skull was slightly humiliating in a surprisingly odd way. Huh. Perhaps that’s what kids felt like, having a babysitter when they were older. “He’ll have to be careful in the house,” she warns. “I can’t bend over anymore to pick up something if it gets dropped or broken.”

And if Han’s ashes got scattered because his urn got broken… Well, she would be rightfully upset.

"He wouldn’t come inside. You're safe inside." he told her, tapping her nose gently as he chuckled.

She pursed her teeth at him and fluttered one of her hands at his fingers so he didn’t make her sneeze. Teleporting at a sneeze was a serious problem. So was fluttering her fingers, because it made her dizzy, and she had to stop and close her sockets so it would pass. “It’s hot outside,” She says, “and you want to leave him outside? That’s just not fair to him to sit outside, waiting for me to do something. Really- it’s a nice idea, but the blasters are sentient too.” A bored blaster was asking for trouble, surely.

The creature rattled gently and rested itself on the floor. "Rrrr."

"He would not be summoned all the time, silly." Tenebris chuckled. "But if you'd rather he not be your babysitter, you could always summon Sugar."

Toki’s eye lights flickered over to Garrus as he made a noise and basically flopped on her floor. Oh no. He was cute.

“Summoning Sugar would be a terrible idea. She’s basically a puppy. A very large, very, very warm puppy that thinks she is a lap dog. Things would be broken, or the guards would get pounced for attention.” The only time she wasn’t basically a Labrador in a giant bee suit was when she was on the aggressive. “Can I just… Not have a babysitter? I’m thirty-two. I am really, really past the age where I need a babysitter.”

"You're large enough to look as if you're having a litter of at least four, Tokiko Gaster." he told her sternly, "Until this heat fades, I don’t want you alone."

“But I’m never technically alone. I have two cats.” That might have come out a bit saucy. She took a deep breath, sighed, and scrubbed a hand down her face. It came to rest on her middle, which was still not active. “Sorry- I didn’t mean to be sharp. Just… Look, I know I’m big. I can’t even get off the couch without help. But I’m not going to be doing anything strenuous for a long while, I promise. Other than feeding the bees and harvesting honey, I don’t have to handle my hives until it’s time to put them up for the winter.” Toki murmured softly. “Feeding the bees is a one person job- but I usually have Papyrus to help me harvest honey. Isn’t that right, Pap?” Her husband was taking a while in the kitchen, so there was no telling what he was making. All she needed was a glass of water- but when he fussed… Well, he fussed.

"Yes, dear." Was called from the kitchen.

Tenebris sighed gently, "Toki, Just be careful… you're my daughter and I love you very much. I just want to make sure you're safe… but I think there's a point where looming to watch over you might reach a creepy point." he joked lightheartedly.

“Well, if I see you watching through the window like a creeper, I might set Clover on you, even if I love you very much too.” She joked back gently. Toki sighed softly, and rubbed her middle. “I'll be careful, okay? With the exception of feeding the bees, I’ll stick to doing apiary work when Papyrus has a day off. Gives me time to work on my next novel anyways."

He chuckled at that, giving her a bemused look, and then looked up to see Papyrus walking back.
The tall skeleton had a small smile on his face, and his arms full of things. "Toki, sorry I took so long, but I decided to cut you some fruit to eat." he told her, sitting by her and offering the plate to her.

Toki took the plate and the ice packs he had brought. The icepacks were nestled along her sides so she could cool the twins off faster, and she gave him a warm smile. "Thanks, Pap. The fruit was a sweet thought." She murmured gently. The towel was shifted and draped across her front, because fruits were ungodly messy when you had teeth like a crocodile. Toki balances the plate on her belly, only to have to catch it as a hard thump from inside nearly spills it.

Relief floods her. The twins were moving again, and letting her know just how much they appreciated the blast of heat to their home. "Heh… There you two are. I was starting to worry."

Tenebris had knelt before Toki to check her over, but smiled gently when the twins kicked. "They weren't happy." He decreed with a joking tone, smiling up at her.

She smiled back at him, tension slowly bleeding from her. Exhaustion crept over her features, and Toki hummed softly. "They got overheated too. Now that they’re cooling off, they’re going to let me know just how upset they are.” Over the soul links, she could feel just how actually upset they were. And they were very, very upset and slightly scared. She hummed softly, and nibbled a piece of fruit. The cool juices were quenching, and she sighed at the sweet taste. “At least we know they’re okay now. Definitely no desire to go back out in the heat again any time soon… So Garrus won’t be needed…”

Tenebris smiled and rested his head on her stomach, letting his throat vibrate the ecto-flesh under her.

Toki gave him a bemused look, and sighed softly. The vibration tickled, but all it did was stir up the twins. They squirmed and fussed grumpily, and Toki took the time to kick her legs up and rest them in Pap’s lap. She nibbled her fruit until she was sated, sharing pieces with Papyrus and Tenebris as they worked to finish the plate.

Tenebris had taken his slices with thankful purrs and light chirps as he relaxed with the duo.

The longer she sat there, covered in ice and in direct line of the air conditioner’s air flow, the cooler she got. As each degree dropped from her bones and ecto flesh, Toki got more tired. Heat stroke was an exhausting venture, and eventually even the twins stopped their angry fussing and instead settled heavily in her middle to rest and recover their energies.

“Mmm… The dizziness is going away.” She informs the both of them softly, and offers the last couple slices of apple to Papyrus and Tenebris. She was full, and had no desire to finish it off.

"Thank you for coming, Father." Papyrus murmured softly.

"Oh no problem, Papyrus.” The elder responded softly. “None at all..."

“I hope we didn’t interrupt whatever you were up to.” Her eye lights flicked over to Tenebris, as she discarded the sticky towel. Topless she would have to go for now, it seemed. She wasn’t going to wear it while it was sticky.

Toki’s arms crossed over her bare rib bones, and the green glow of her belly escaped the confines of Caeruleus’ borrowed shorts. The glow was bright and healthy, letting the world know that despite the issue with the heat, she was still doing quite well. “Hey, Papyrus? We might need to put a call into Lana for some tank-tops, or lighter turtlenecks.” She liked the turtlenecks because it kept a lot of her bones covered. Things bumping against her bones felt weird, and with the clothes, there was the
buffer space that her magic tended to fill out that kept things from actively bumping into them. “I’m really hoping they come soon. I’m outgrowing everything again.”

"I sent her a text, she’ll be here soon enough.” he replied.

“I didn’t mean today. Good gods- it’s too hot to be making a sheep monster go out in that.” Lana was covered in wool- the poor woman was probably sweltering in the heat. Toki chuckled softly, and stretched her toes. She rubbed them lightly against his thigh, and glanced over to Tenebris. “Likewise to you. I know you get cold easy, but isn’t it too hot for you to be in a turtleneck? You do have fleshy bits to you.”

"Well yes..." he leaned back, "I suppose snuggling with your stomach cooled me down in the long run, though..." he then moved back and straightened enough to free his wrists from his turtleneck, before he disappeared in his turtleneck, coming out the bottom as he shed the sweater.

He leaned his head back and sighed as the pent-up heat escaped from the clothing, "Hah..."

Toki shook her head with a bemused sigh. She did ogle him a little bit- it wasn’t often he stripped out of his turtleneck. He had on his usual undershirt tank top, but it was fairly tightly fit over his shield and body type. Her father-in-law was built. “The house is cold compared to usual,” She warns, “So if you get cold, I can warm your shirt for you before you put it back on.” For now though, she slowly slid down on the couch, her legs slowly encroaching more and more into her husband’s lap. Toki let off a tired sounding sigh, eye lights drifting over the both of them quietly. “Mm...

Aliquam had a settled smile as Tenebris sat down at her other side, rumbling gently as he folded his turtleneck and kept it on his lap. "Duly noted, my dear."

“Mhm...” Toki hummed softly. She wiggled some, and then wiggled her fingers at her husband. She brushed them softly over his ribs to draw his attention, and then smiled softly at him. “Think I can sit in your lap?” That was one thing she enjoyed about being smaller than Aliquam- she tended to be able to be tucked right into his chest. He was amazing to snuggle with, even without his shirt creating magical muscles to relax on. Aliquam had the nicest ribs ever.

"Oh of course!” Aliquam gently scooped her up and pulled her close, nuzzling her with a 'Nyeh~'

Toki snuggled up close to him and relaxed, her bare bones against his. She threaded her fingers gently in his ribs, clinging to him contently as she nestled close. The twins kicked at him as her middle brushed his bones, but she figured he wouldn’t be as bothered. It wasn’t the insides of his ribs this time. Toki’s eyes flicked over to Tenebris, and she gave him a soft smile, before nestling her face into Papyrus’ side. “Thanks, Pap. I might nap on you, by the way.” He was comfortable and safe- and he made her relax just by holding her. She ached some still, but it was less of an ache with her wrapped in his arms.

"The more comfortable you are, the better." he purred to her, cradling her in his arms effortlessly.

Toki nodded and chuckled softly. She nuzzled close, and settled down to wait for Lana.
Chapter 67

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This is a NSFW chapter. One that’s long overdue, I think. Pap and Toki could use some loves, really. Also this next chapter might come a bit late- Silver managed to cut herself pretty nicely with a new knife, so writing isn't easy for her right now.

Silverwing Notes: well, there's one way to take care of your wife, and there's another way.

Pap's proceeding to do both in this chapter, hehe XD

Doing the laundry was a daunting task sometimes. Not only were there usually mountains of clothes, but there were often bed sheets, quilts, and comforters to do as well. Toki, who was pretty much monitored by everyone, hadn’t been able to get the laundry done during the intense heat wave because she was supposed to be resting.

Between all of Pap’s clothes, and the new ones that Lana had made for her, and the fact that the bed sheets needed their weekly change, Toki’s washing machine was working overtime.

Usually, she spent his day off with him. They would read, cuddle, watch shows, or go for walks. Whatever really tickled their fancy- but it was his day off, which meant he was in the house in case she needed him. So, Toki could actually get house chores done, while Papyrus swept the house and removed any cobwebs from the ceilings.

She really was not fond of basically vegetating on the couch.

On the opposite side, she got six chapters written on her novel, so that would make her editors happy.

Toki still had a lot of laundry left to do, though. She’d gotten fresh sheets on their bed up stairs, so there was a pile of sheets set between the wall and the washing machine. Those would be done once she finished clothes.

Unfortunately, being large and doing laundry made everything an interesting task. She turned too swiftly, and knocked the clean clothesbasket right off the top of the washer, where she had just finished drying them with her magic and getting them folded.

“I just finished folding those.” She sighed sadly. They were now all over the floor- which was thankfully clean- and needed to be put away.

Getting them put back was a task and a half, and she ended up summoning Stripe. The bee could hand her smaller things, like socks, under garments, and lighter weight shirts. Stripe was useful like that- but the bee was also developing a mischievous side the more that she got to be out and about in the human world.
Toki would reach for a garment, and it would be flung at her, accompanied by an amused feeling over the link between their minds.

Toki retaliated, of course, by dropping washcloths on the large insect, and letting her find her way out. Making laundry fun was something that didn’t happen often, after all- and who could say that they spent their laundry day playing around with a guinea pig sized green fire bee?

All was well until the damned sock slid under her bare feet.

Tile was, she lamented, probably a poor choice to have for a floor when one was made entirely of bone. She’d only chosen it because tile didn’t burn like wood floors or carpet tended to, and under the tile was solid cement. Toki had designed her house to be damn near fire resistant, since it was made out of brick and cement, both of which did not burn easily.

But, alas, it was not good for bare bones, along with a freshly cleaned and soft sock.

Her foot slid out from under her, and she tumbled back with a startled squeak.

Toki landed right between the wall and the washing machine, and wedged in tight. Her saving grace was the mound of sheets and old blankets that needed to be washed, but she still bumped her head to the wall with a soft thump.

And then, to her horror, she found she was quite thoroughly stuck.

Stripe buzzed with laughter at her expense.

“Oh fuck off, Stripe.” Toki squirmed, but was unable to get enough of a grip to try and hoist her body up. The weight in her middle kept her pinned, and a slightly frustrated look flitted through her soul. She didn’t like to be so dependant on others- and damn it, she should be able to do laundry on her own!

The bee buzzed at her again, amused, and then went to go presumably fetch Papyrus, while Toki’s frustration grew.

Papyrus was curious when Stripe came to him, piping away in her laughter, but it was soon discovered as to why she was enjoying herself so much. "T-Toki?!!"

Toki looked up at her husband with frustration clear on her face. “Papyrus.” She responds to his bewildered exclamation of her name. “I’m… I’m stuck.” She admits finally, glaring at the bee that was piping with amusement. A swish of her hands, and Stripe disappeared back into her hell verse.

Her laughter echoed back to Toki even from there.

“I’m really getting tired of getting stuck…” She murmured softly.

"Oh my stars, Toki.” Papyrus couldn’t stop the chuckle that escaped him as he leaned over and gingerly tugged her to her feet.

Toki wore a look of mounting upset as she was set upright. She straightened her tank top and huffed, tugging up her pants. The sock that had made her slip was abandoned to the pile of fallen things. “Sorry I interrupted your house cleaning.” She spoke softly, evenly, and it did well to hide her upset.

She understood that she was huge, and only growing bigger with each day, but it was ridiculous. She couldn’t even do laundry anymore without someone watching, or she could slip and get stuck for hours. Toki didn’t have her phone on her while in the house most times.
Toki could feel the onslaught of a mood swing hitting her again, and she found herself sniffing. It was utter bullshit. “I think I’m going to take a break on laundry and just… go take a nap or something.”

He cooed and cupped her cheeks, gently stroking them with his warm finger bones. "Oh Toki…” he murmured, "Come on. We're going to take a break." He told her gently.

"You don't have to stop what you were doing, Pap." She sighs softly into the kiss, and leans her face into his palms. "You always get derailed from what you're doing."

"I don't care.” He gave her an affectionately stern look. "You're coming with me, and we are going to cuddle."

"I'm not going to say no to cuddles.” She sighs softly, and adjusts the hem of her tank top. "I need to rest anyways. The twins are fussy today." They were starting to wake her up at night sometimes—though she hadn’t told Papyrus. He needed sleep after all, and given his job... Well, a good night's rest went a long way. Toki shifted, and offered her hand to him. "I could use some cuddles..." She was feeling big, awkward, and remarkably like a whale. A little tender time with her husband was needed.

"Well cuddles are what you're going to get, Toki." Papyrus hummed. He took her hand gently and walked with her to the sofa. Sitting down and getting comfortable, it wasn’t long before he extended his arms to her with a warm look. “C’mere you.” He purred.

The sofa wasn't what she had in mind, for her back did ache something nasty and the softness of the bed was a hard lure to ignore, but it would work to cuddle with Aliquam.

She joined him carefully, grabbing a pillow to tuck between her legs so she could lean into him comfortably. Toki settled into his hold, and nestled into his side with a soft sigh. Nuzzling her face into his chest, she peered up at him quietly. She used to fit better in his arms, but her current size limited her. "Thank you."

“Of course,” He purred gently, “I love you.”

"I love you too.” She sighed softly. She shifts, struggling to find a comfortable position after a short while. She grumbles suddenly. "This is ridiculously stupid." She should be able to enjoy cuddling with him, damn it.

He looked at her, and then smiled and hugged her tighter, before slowly rolling onto his side. Shifting his legs, he opened his midsection to her a bit more, smiling as he moved to slip her swollen stomach into the empty space of his midsection.

She was gently sprawled against him, and she settled easily enough. The position wasn't one that they did often, because the twins kicking the insides of his ribs or his spine usually disturbed him. She still enjoyed it nonetheless, and she relaxed a little bit as she sprawled over his chest. The twins in her belly squirmed against his bones, but not as bad. They were targeting her spine mostly. "This is good." She hummed gently. "Thanks... I'm sorry I’ve been so..." Fussy, self-conscious, moody, huge, all the words came to mind but she wasn't sure which one to voice.

“Psh…” He let off a soft noise of dismissal, and peppered her cheeks with warm kisses from his teeth.

His dismissal bothered her just slightly, for he tended to do that a lot. Toki hummed softly as he peppered her cheeks with kisses. "I'm still sorry. I'm just... Well... Feeling off. Big and awkward
and... Ugh..." She mutters the last bit mostly to herself, and has to pause as one of her teeth hooks on his shirt.

“Oooooooooh.” He hushed her gently, and pressed more soothing kisses to her skull.

She didn't want to be hushed, or for it to be brushed off. It was weighing on her, her size, how she looked... And she honestly, for the first time in a long, long time, was feeling unattractive. Still, she bit her metaphorical tongue, and let him kiss her. She fell silent and simply sighed, glancing down at his shirt and just trying to relax.

Papyrus tugged her a little closer, adjusting her so she was as flush as flush could be considering her middle, and then rumbled a soft, loving purr to her. “I still think you’re beautiful, Toki.”

"I don't feel beautiful." She admits quietly, tucking her face against his chest. "I feel big and awkward and everything always aches. None of that is hardly attractive." They hadn't even been... Well, intimate. Not even after their wedding.

Aliquam looked at her for a long time, contemplating his actions, and then he rolled them again so he now sat over her. He was propped up by one of his arms. "Tokiko Gaster," He growled softly as he pressed his face into her neck bones. "You are beautiful. Your eyes, your smooth bones, your life... Their lives." He stroked her stomach gently, feeling as his children squirmed and fussed within her. "You are so magnificent."

Being suddenly rolled on the couch was an interesting experience. Toki was thoroughly pinned under him, and not just because he was heavy above her. Once on her back, she was like a turtle. His growl sent trembling shivers through her bones, and she rattler softly as he pressed his face to her neck.

His words made her soul warm, and it glowed softly in her chest in response. "They are magnificent," she agreed, humming as they angrily squirmed in her middle. Her breathing hitched slightly, and she sighed, bringing a hand up to cradle the back of his skull. Her fingers stroked over his neck gently. "I know you think so... And normally I wouldn't really care what I look like, but... I don't know. I just... Don't feel beautiful. Even my teeth are bothering me, and I accepted those months ago."

He licked her neck and hissed softly, "Shush." he told her sternly, "You're beautiful." He would tell her a thousand times over and over again if he had to.

The lick to her neck made her squeak, legs twitching against his. Her fingers came up, brushing his ribs slightly through his shirt. "So says you." She flicked her tongue out and ran it lightly over his skull in response, also rubbing the base of his skull as she did so.

"Beautiful, amazing, wonderful, kind; all of those describe you perfectly." He murmured into her neck bones, "I love you so much, Tokiko."

"I love you too, Papyrus." She heaved a soft sigh under him and nuzzled her teeth into the top of his skull. "You are a truly wonderful husband, you know that? I don't think I could ever ask for a better one." Though she'd never dream of it. Aliquam was hers to have and to hold, to love and protect. She loved him with all of her soul.

"You're more than I could ever ask for in a wife, and yet nothing will make me give you up." He purred as he kissed her head gently. "I love you so much..."

She shifted his kiss, and kissed him soundly back in return. “I love you too.” She smiles softly, and
strokes his cheek warmly. Her bones glided smoothly over the strong points of his cheekbones, and she leaned up to kiss him again.

He smiled and met her midway, leaning into the kiss as he pulled her close. "You're beautiful... wonderful~"

She flushed a little bit, green highlighting her cheekbones as her magic made her practically glow under his body, and buzzed warmly up to him. Her fingers slid back to his neck, and she stroked them gently along the vertebrae near the base of his skull. Toki’s free hand slid down and stroked over his ribs, trailing them lightly through the shirt he wore. It was tugged up, yes, to fit her abdomen inside of his abdominal cavity, but she couldn’t quite access his ribs through the bottom. So, simply stroking them through his shirt would work. Besides- there was no guarantee anything more than the kissing would happen. “And you're sweet,” she purrs softly in return.

He laughed softly, and let his free hand wander down her side, exploring her changing body with open affection. "It's been so long... How have you been holding up since I’ve last touched you?” he asked.

“I’ve missed your touch,” she admits softly. “I’ve missed it a lot.” She shivers as his hand explores down her body, and her fingers grow bolder as they explore his ribs through his shirt. Toki’s legs shifted, and she stroked her toes up the backs of his legs, offering him a growing smile as she does so. “I ache for you.”

"May I touch you?” he murmured gently, "I want to heal your ache." he purred, "And bring you satisfaction.”

“Only if I may touch you too,” She purred softly in response. “Though... I think the couch might not truly work for this.” It was narrow- and she could no longer be bent over the cushions to make it work. Her middle was too big to just wedge in anymore. Her fingers stroked along his neck, and she kisses him soundly again. Toki’s soul thrums warmly in her chest, its glow calling out to its mate.

"Then lets go somewhere more proper, yes?” Pap gave her another kiss, and then carefully extracted himself from her grasp. Instead of helping her up, he simply scooped her up into his arms.

Toki squeaked as she was lifted, and giggled softly as she looped an arm carefully over his neck. "Don’t strain your back lifting me, Pap. Though, that sounds good to me- bedroom?” She purred.

"Bedroom.” he chuckled, before he kissed her and shortcut to the bedroom.

They appeared, the shortcut making Toki briefly dizzy, roundabouts the center of their room. He didn’t shortcut often, but it was an interesting experience each time.

However, their sudden appearance startled Gracie, who had been lounging on the bed. Her plush fur fluffed, and she turned into a gray hairball as she peered at them in spooked bewilderment.

Toki giggled softly at her cat’s reaction, and barely covered a snort. “We might want to shut the door, unless we want the cats observing us.”

He laughed at that, and slowly lay her down, "Alright, allow me.” He pecked her head then went to shoo away their cats.

Toki managed to sit up to watch him try to herd the cats.

Gael at least seemed to understand his desires, and scooted from the room swiftly. Gracie, meanwhile, flopped at his feet and proceeded to groom her fur back down into position.
“Herding cat’s isn’t just a saying,” she mused with great amusement.

He chuckled at that. "Oh yeah, definitely." Aliquam then reached out and scooped up Gracie, humming softly as he hefted her up. “Come on, you.”

Gracie squeaked at him, but didn’t fight his grasp. She simply purred at him, pleased at the attention.

Toki giggled softly, and waited for him to get the room closed up so they would be alone. Toki loved Papyrus, really, but she had no desire to be observed by cats while they made love.

He went and put Gracie outside their room and made sure Gael was out as well, before he came back, chuckling as he slowly stripped on the way over.

“Oooh, a strip tease,” she teased lightly, “I definitely enjoy the view.” She was a little bit more limited, but she managed to slip her shirt off. Her tank top was tossed to the side of the bed, baring the gentle glow of her belly, and the flesh that clung tightly to most of her ribs now. Briefly, she wondered what her ecto-breasts would look like if she summoned them again, but she wouldn’t bother with it unless he wanted to see them.

“I, uh… need to help with my pants.” She flushed. Toki couldn’t quite get her hips off the bed- and getting up without help wasn’t doable anymore.

"Nyeh heh heh heh!" He came over and gently hooked his fingers on her pants, pulling them down slowly. "Such a beautiful woman..." he purred, getting her legs free of her pants before he leaned in and kissed her leg bones.

She was bare before him once he tugged her pants off, having gone commando for the day. Toki let out a soft, pleased sound as his teeth pressed gently against her femur, and she parted her legs for him with a soft thrum. Toki mused that they would likely need to be creative in order to make this work. But they would make it work. “Such a handsome man,” she purrs softly to him.

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" he slipped himself between her legs, before he leaned in and kissed her, her swell easily fitting in his midsection space as to allow him to reach her. "Prr~"

Ah yes, it was nice to be married to a skeleton. It allowed them to do things that fleshy people couldn’t- such as face-to-face sex while she was very round. Toki kissed him back gently, using one arm to brace herself upright, and then let the other rove over his ribs. She dipped her fingers in and stroked the insides, a pleased piping noise escaping her. “Prr~"

Toki hadn’t made that particular noise in a long while.

"You're wonderful, my dear Toki." He purred gently, leaning his head down to her neck as to kiss along her vertebrae. "I love you so much." He rumbled softly.

"You are my world," She groans softly, tilting her head back so he could have at her neck. She leans back slightly, pausing only so she could tug one of the pillows behind her back so she didn’t have to support herself, and then uses both hands along his ribs. Fingers dance softly over his bones, trailing along his ribs, his sternum, and traveling around to rub over the broad plates of his shoulder blades. “You’re so strong, so broad, so tall- I love every inch if you.” She loved Papyrus, and how sturdy and stable he was. She trailed her fingers to his spine, and gave it a firm stroke.

He jolted and gasped when her hand came to his spine, before he shivered and reached up, rubbing her ribs gently, "Every last centimeter of you." He moaned gently in agreement.

His touch was soft, and it felt nice over her ribs. A devious smile slid over her face as a soft moan
was tugged from her throat, and she kissed him again. This time she mouthed down to his neck, gently nibbling her teeth over his vertebrae and scraping them tenderly against the bone. Her touch was feather light, so as not to hurt him with the daggers that made up her mouth, and she stroked his spine again as she purred for him.

"Mmmh~" He kissed her a few more times before he turned his focus to her hips, stroking and rubbing them before he ground against them lightly.

Her pelvis rocked gently against his own, her bones warm and darn near glowing under his touch. Toki piped again, and nipped his neck as her legs shifted to drape over his hips and tug him close. She didn’t have full range of motion to roll teasingly against his pelvic bone, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t rock and gently grind against him. “Ah~”

"You're getting eager." he purred gently, "Want to summon something for me~?"

“Pardon my eagerness,” she purred, “but I have an addiction to you and haven’t had my fix in a long time.” She rocked against him gently, stroked his spine, and then let her magic form her lower parts. She shifted to brush feather-soft lower lips against his pelvic bone, green magic slicking up his bones as she did so. Toki’s eye lights glowed an aroused green color, and she leaned back to peer up at him with a sultry purr.

Papyrus chuckled gently and kissed her, leaning back far enough so he could slide two fingers into her depths. He didn’t want to risk hurting anyone by taking her, and a little preparation never hurt.

Toki purred softly, patient while he stretched her to make sure she was ready. It wasn’t really necessary since her magic had farther limits than human flesh, but it was better to be safe than to be sorry. She was farther along, after all, and having sex this late could come with it’s own risks. Still, his digits weren’t what she was craving, and she nibbled along his bones with a soft sound. “Mmm, love your touch,” she purred. “I’ve missed it.”

"Good, I have missed your warmth around me." he chuckled gently, "I just have to be sure that the twins are not in harms way."

“This position has them resting further down in my pelvis, so they might be in the way.” She hummed softly to him, her walls fluttering against his fingers. Toki’s sockets closed for a moment, contemplating, and then she squirmed. “ Might be easier if I’m on my hands and knees.” It was a pretty common position, so she’d read, for later in pregnancy. Put less pressure on the pelvis.

"Oh that's dirty." he chuckled, "Alright then." he pulled back and gave her a small twirl of his fingers, "Go on then~?"

She giggled softly, and made to shift. Rolling over was a hell of a task, but Toki managed it all on her own. The pillow that had been being used behind her back was tucked against her chest. She leaned on it, keeping her hips up so her belly dangled under her. It wasn't as romantic as making love face to face could be, but they could cuddle after.

Settled and ready, she peered back over her shoulder at him and offered him a saucy look. "I am dirty only for you," she purred.

"Nyeh heh heh heh." He kissed her head gently as he bent over her. "Mmm, I’m not complaining. This is hot." he chuckled quietly. Stroking her body gently he pressed against her and lay his head down on her back as he ground against her backside. "Mmmh… Does this work for you, Toki?"

His bare pelvis against her backside felt nice, and she shivered pleasantly. A rumbling purr bubbled
out of her chest, and she nestled down, resting herself lightly on the pillow. “I think I could make anything really work- I just want you. In me, around me, over me- I want all of your touch.” She purrs. She’s careful not to jerk her head back and jab him with her horns, but she does arch her back into him with a pleasant sound. This position took the weight off of her lower back, and it felt good as it stretched her too. Yes, she was quite pleased with this. “I’m all yours, Quinn. Now the real question is- what will you do with me~?”

"N-Nyeh..." She was... so good at dirty talk... Nuzzling Toki again, Aliquam ground against her before he shivered and groaned as he summoned forth his own anatomy. He ground against her a little longer before he brought his hips back, angled himself, and began to push in. "N-Nyeeehh~"

It wasn’t even honestly dirty talk- it was just… Toki talk. Toki’s back arched like a pleased cat, and she groaned not so quietly as his girth stretched her. It had been a long time, and gods, she had missed his member. She rocked softly, but let him set the pace as he eased into her depths. “Ahh~ yesss, Pap,” she purred. “Mmm… More~” She was tight around him, tighter than usual thanks to lack of use, and her growing pregnancy. Toki pulsed around him, hot and soft, already slick for him.

"As you wish." he murmured, pushing into her and giving a quiet moan before he began to rock his hips.

She groaned softly, and rocked back into him as well. Her pelvis rolled softly against his, and Toki spread her legs, letting him settle closer to her. One of her hands came up, locating his, and she laced her fingers gently with his. “Mmmm~”

He folded his hand with her and moaned lightly into her back. “I love you.” He groaned, "So much... so fucking much..." he hissed as he slowly began to thrust.

“I love you too,” she groaned back softly. Her breaths came out in soft pants as his thrusts picked up, and her eye lights flickered. Everything was sensitive from lack of use and her pregnancy in general, and Toki clenched and fluttered around him. She pulsed and fluttered erratically, matching the fluttering beat of her soul. “Oh gods, yessssss, Pap~ Ah~”

"Oh Toki…” he moaned into her spine. "Aah... I love you." he purred gently.

“I l-love you too,” she purred back. Her free hand kneaded the pillow, and a soft tremble trailed down her back. It felt good, so, so good. “W-we could h-have been doing this m-mooooooooonthssss agooo,” her words faded off into a pleased purr, and her fingers clenched tighter over his, kneading his hand gently as they flexed.

"I'm sorry I didn't do this sooner, my love." he cooed gently, keeping his hips at a constant pace as to make sure she never lost any of the pleasurable buzz from his movements.

Pleasurable buzz indeed. Toki’s bones buzzed, a loud, pleased piping coming from her as she backed in his movements and attention. Her hips rolled against his, and she was a mewling, quivering mess below him. It didn’t take overly long before she shuddered hard, clamping around him like a soft and warm vice grip. Pleased feelings rolled over her, and she felt them wash away insecurities, overriding her prior irritations for the day as she let herself be damn near swept away by his touch. “Ahhh~” She purred. It took her a while to be able to respond, but once she did, she tilted her head back to peer at him. Her eye lights took the form of little green hearts. “Mmm, we can make up for lost time~”

"As many times as you beg for it.” he purred to her, hugging her hips with one arm as he picked up his pace, "I... aahhh... Oh god.” he moaned gently.
“Mmm yesss~” She crooned. Her breathing came out in hot pants as he picked up his pace, and her bones rattled warmly. The air of the bedroom was warming up as her magic escaped her control, heating the air around them in response to their pleasure. Her eye sockets shut, and she felt herself fall off the edge. Toki came hard, clamping tight around him as she moaned into the pillow. His name escaped her teeth, and she shuddered, lost to pleasure as his thrusting drew her overly sensitive flesh deeper into the abyss of bliss.

Her climax was a flare of heat that infected the air around them, as well as the warmth around Aliquam's cock. A surge of excitement shot through him and he let out a choked yell as his grip tightened around her, "F-FUCK!” he bit down where he could and after a matter of thrusts, he let out a muffled shout as he filled her body with his release. “G-Ghhlnn!”

His teeth bit solidly into her shoulder, larger mouth easily taking a good portion of the bone into his grasp. His fangs poked small, slightly painful holes in her scapula, but she was too lost in her release to feel it much. She shuddered as he flooded her, her middle changing colors rapidly as the magic from his release was absorbed and drawn in to nourish the young growing within her. Toki trembled under him, spent and satisfied. “Mmmm~” She purred, warmth rolling off of her in waves.

Moaning tiredly, Aliquam hugged her firmly, smiling into where he had bitten seconds before, "Nnh... Toki..." he breathed out.

“Mmm, Pap~” She purred softly. Toki shifted slightly under him, her shoulder twanging just slightly. A little bit of green colored magical ooze beaded on her shoulder against his teeth, but the ache was more pleasant than it was painful. “Mm… Shift to the side- we can lay down.” She purrs to her husband. She’d rather settle on her side before he collapsed over her, because she was not strong enough to hold him upright.

He murmured something softly but nodded and slowly leaned to one side, sighing quietly as he slowly moved to lay down, "mmmmh…"

She nestled against him as he lay down, and snuggled back against him. Toki didn’t even bother pulling off of his member- it, and hers, would disappear shortly anyways. Toki sighed gently, and then tilted her head back to peer at him as she laced her fingers through his and draped their joined hands over the odd colored mound of her middle. “What did you say?” She hummed contently, warm and flushed bones buzzing happily.

"How did I end up so lucky to marry someone like you?" He whispered.

“I dunno,” she giggled gently. “Might have had something to do with you bursting into my backyard like a dork and bringing me headlong into the world of monsters.” Toki beams at him contently. “You were so adorable. How could I not fall in love with you?”

"Nyeh heh heh heh!” he kissed her head and neck a few times, "I love you so much~"

“I love you too.” Toki shifted as her parts vanished, and gently turned to face him. Her shoulder throbbed slightly, and she lifted her fingers to it thoughtfully. They pulled back from the small holes with flecks of green, and she laughed softly. “Well, I suppose that’s payback for the first time I bit you, hm?” Amusement coated her tone, and she tucked her belly into his abdominal cavity, the orange and green mass flashing with hues of blue to let them know the twins were awake and stretching their magical muscles, so to speak.

"Nyeh heh heh heh." he giggled his trademark once more, before he nuzzled into her unbitten shoulder. "Mmh~ C’n we just cuddle now?" he asked.
“That’s the plan,” she purrs. “My stamina isn’t what it used to be.” That one round had wore her out, even if she hadn’t done hardly any work. Toki tangled her legs with his, and nuzzled close. The twins squirmed in her middle, and she sighed softly. “I also think we woke them up. This is the first time you’ve gotten to see the lightshow, isn’t it?” Her middle was a mottle of colors. His orange was closer to the base, where her body had sucked it up, but there was a brighter orange, something between red and orange, nearer the top. Between the two colors was a bright blue, the color pulsing brightly. “So long as I don’t sneeze while the colors are lit up, I won’t teleport.” She’d figured that out the other day.

He chuckled lightly at that. "How nice." he purred, stroking her stomach gently, "Very vibrant, yes?"

“Very vibrant.” She agreed warmly. Her stomach was warm to the touch, slightly more so since her magic had stirred through her bones, and was active as they twisted and moved inside. A small tightness rolled over her middle, making the flesh slightly harder under his fingers for a few seconds, and she paused to let it pass. Braxton hicks were supposed to happen eventually- but she’d been so keyed up as of late… well, she supposed she hadn’t really paid them any mind. Thirty-six weeks sounded about right- that’s about when her mother started to notice hers.

"Mmm, how do you feel?" he then asked, hands crawling up to her back slowly.

Toki shivered as his bones slid up the soft flesh of her back, up to where the flesh stopped along her ribs. “Tired. Content. A little uncomfortable and tight, but that’s a braxton hicks contraction’s fault.” She hummed softly, sighing as his hands continued to touch her. She draped her arm over his ribs and snuggled close, a happy buzz escaping her. "How about you? How do you feel?"

"As a father would. Happy, proud, and also a little bit tired from worrying so much about his beautiful wife." he purred gently.

She laughed gently. “Your beautiful wife is tired in general.” She gives him a tender look, sharp teeth quirking up in a loving grin. “We’re nearly there. A couple more weeks at most, and we should have little ones in our arms. Braxton hicks means we’re in the final count down, Pap.” Excitement and nerves glimmered in equal parts in the bright lights of her eyes. “We need to finish setting up the nursery.” She chuckles gently. Everything needed to be put together and organized- but putting things together was Aliquam’s specialty.

She was so right… so accurate he was almost scared at how right she was… it wouldn't be long until he hung up his armor and instead…

Oh good lord would he start dressing like his father? The yoga pants and turtleneck were nice but he was more active, Tenebris had a big talk to him but it was clear to everyone that he was more than happy to stay home, mellowed out on his recliner. Aliquam was more active, so he made himself promise not to end up like that until he was damn ready to retire...

Though as she continued to talk, he listened, and gave a nod, "Oh, of course!" he agreed at her suggestion, "The sooner it's ready, the better, yes?"

Aliquam most certainly wouldn’t have to retire. Maybe for a few weeks as they adjusted to life with children, but it would be doable for him to continue to work afterwards. No yoga pants needed- though his ass would look mighty fine in them and his wife would surely ogle him even more.

Toki nodded and nuzzled him. "The sooner indeed. Braxton Hicks means we could have between a couple of days to a couple weeks before it's go-time. Ah, did your dad tell you I wanted to have them here?" The castle would have worked too, but home... Home was safe feeling, even if it wasn't super
"He mentioned it, yes." he replied, helping her sit up before moving to his feet, "And I don’t intend to force you to anything else."

"Good." She nods with a slight grin. As she sits upright, she notes the sore feeling between her legs. "Mmm..." After not having sex for so long, she was feeling well used and slightly sore. As was to be expected with the pounding she had just gotten. "Didn't you want to rest some?" She inquired lightly. Had her talk about the lack of time they had spurred him into motion?

"Nyeh... I mean... maybe..." He shrugged slightly. "Do you?"

"I'm a bit sore," she admits, "but not overly tired. I could nap, as all Nara can, but if you'd rather get up and do some stuff... Well, we can. I don't care either way."

"How about this…" He leaned over to kiss her cheek, and then gave her shoulders a gentle prod backwards. "You rest. I'll burn off some more energy by working and join you then, okay?" he suggested, a knowing smile on his face.

She's not all that hard to move. Toki is eased back against the top sheets of their bed, and she sighed softly as she shifts to lay on her left side. Toki eyes that little smile he gives her and chuckles softly. "... You're off to put the nursery together, aren't you?"

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" he gave her a gentle wink, "Well I suppose I never specified just how I would burn off my energy."

She winked back and laughed softly. "Feel free to build everything, but we'll decide on placements together." She purred. Toki shifted, easing herself under the first layer of blankets, and then tucked one of the extra pillows between her thighs. She would clean the stain later. Another pillow tucked behind her back, and she was finally comfortable enough to rest. "You may also want to put at least a pair of shorts on. You know Gracie likes to swat at your little tailbone when it wiggles, even though I love the view. You look good stained green and orange." Toki gave him a sleepy and sultry wink that only a Nara could ever manage. She might be a Gaster in name, but the Nara wouldn't ever leave her soul.

"I can at least do that to let you get a word in." he chuckled gently, before he huffed, "Silly cat. Tailbones are not for snatching up, and it's not gonna come off like my toes do." At that, he went and collected a pair of boxer shorts and put them on after a quick clean up "Alrightie, go ahead and get relaxed, and I’ll join you in a little bit."

She chuckles. "Neither of us are tall enough on our own to put the stars up, so it'll eventually need to be a team effort." Toki nestled down and nodded, a yawn tugging her teeth apart. Their bed was hellishly comfortable, and Toki could sleep at the drop of a hat if she so desired to. "Try not to let her steal your toes again either. She likes to try and help when we do things." Though, when the door opens for him to go out, a streak of gray bolts in and rushes to the bed.

Gracie, and all of her adorable fluffiness, stretched across Toki's belly and began to purr loudly and knead happily. Papyrus would be safe for a while yet, because the cat was demanding loves.

He chuckled at that and pecked her cheek gently, before he went to get the head start on taking care of the nursery, humming a gentle tune to himself as he did.
Toki only ended up taking a two-hour nap, before an irritating tight feeling along her middle woke her up. Ah. Braxton Hicks were going to be pesky until she got used to noticing them. She recalled her mother struggling with sleep through them- predominantly with her younger brothers. They were surprisingly big babies for being such tiny men.

Toki shifted, nestling back to feel for her usual bedmate, and rubbed her fingers lightly over her middle to soothe the ache. The twins fussed, feeding feelings of discomfort to her as they kicked in upset, not at all disturbing the gray cat that had draped over her belly like a rug.

She shifted and heaved a soft sigh, realizing that in her sleep she had gotten too comfortable, and had sunk into the mattress. She was going to be stuck until she could get free- which meant between the pillows and the bed, she couldn’t even roll over to shift positions. Blegh. Pregnancy had its ups and downs, and she was missing her mobility something fierce.

“Mmm, Pap? You there?” She couldn’t turn around to look.

There was no reply. Instead sounds of soft singing floated from the other room into theirs, where Papyrus was hard at work.

She could hear the sounds of things being assembled alongside his singing, and a warm smile tugged at her teeth. How sweet… She didn’t want to interrupt, so she took a moment to carefully unpack herself from the pillows. She had to shoo Gracie off, much to her displeasure- and then Toki made to try and get up.

She was, however, stuck like a turtle on its back. She huffed and puffed, and managed to swing her legs to the side of the bed. From there, she had to shove herself upright, which took a bit of work given her center of gravity. Toki heaved a deep sigh, and used the bedposts to haul herself upright. Thankfully, once she was sitting, her bed was tall enough that she could stand without needing someone’s help to get upright.

Once she was up, Toki padded into their bathroom and took a bit of time to clean off. Her middle was still several shades of colors, but it was meshing together and being processed by her magic finally. It took her a little bit to clean her pelvis and legs, since she couldn’t see through the green of her middle, but soon she was back into their room and simply tugging on a pair of panties and shorts. She wasn’t going downstairs for a while, and she didn’t often go shirtless.

She waddled out of their room, taking note that the twins were sitting heavy in her pelvis after her nap, and padded into the nursery. Toki adjusted the band of her pants and took stock of all that Papyrus had gotten built.

Aliquam seemed to be enjoying his time as he worked, having set up half of the furniture with effortless ease. The rest was all waiting for him, as if in a line.

Toki smiled slightly to herself and crept into the room. She moved to the side, where the rocking chair had been slid out of the way, and joined his singing with soft humming. Toki didn’t try to disturb him, and let him build at his pace, while she eyed the dresser that he had gotten put together. They had the baby clothes and blankets piled up in the rocking chair, and… well, now she had a place to put them, finally.

Toki continued to hum with him, wordlessly contributing to his song as she folded clothes, and went to organize them by size, color, and type within the baby dresser.
He perked up slightly and turned to her, a smile on his face. She hadn’t sung or hummed often since Han had died. It was good to hear her do it again. "Ah, hello my dear. Did you enjoy your nap?" he asked gently.

Toki nodded and gave him a smile. “I did. A little too much- I almost got stuck.” She chuckled. Toki folded another shirt, and tucked it carefully into one of the drawers. Baby clothes were lightweight, thankfully; so moving the dresser with clothes in it wouldn’t be an issue. “It looks like you’ve gotten a lot of the furniture put together.” Toki resumed humming softly as she tucked extra blankets into the bottom drawer.

"Indeed I did. It's quite easy once you get the hang of it." Papyrus replied warmly.

“Putting things together was never my forte. My brother actually helped me assemble my hives outside when I first got them. Kohaku is very, very good at construction.” Hence why he was a construction worker. He was busy a lot, but he did good to support her nephew. “I’m glad you like building things though. Maybe the twins will take after you with your love of puzzles, hm?” Her eyes twinkled merrily at the prospect. She could see them, years from now, hunched over the dining room table with one of those insane one thousand plus puzzle piece puzzles. A grin tugs at her teeth. “You know, there’s actually a hobby where people put together pieces of a puzzle, put cardboard on the back with some glue, and then hang it on the wall. Our walls are pretty empty, if you’d like to do that in the years to come.”

"Nyeh heh heh, that does sound like an idea.” he agreed with a soft laugh. "Well, if you've an idea for how you'd like to sort things, I say by all means go ahead, the drawers are all yours."

Toki smiled wider and giggled softly. She shifted, and glanced to him as she finished putting all of the clothes away. Once the drawers were in, she hummed and grabbed the edges. “I’m thinking near the window along the orange wall.” They hadn’t skimped out on the baby furniture though, and the dresser, like all of the rest of it, was solid and sturdy. She managed to waddle it back and forth over to the wall, and was thankful it wasn’t full of heavier stuff. The blankets, she mused, weighed the most.

Toki tucked it carefully in the corner, leaving a spot open for the ‘changing table’ of sorts. They had one, but it was going to be used for actually dressing their children instead of diapers. Multipurpose tool- it also could be used as a table for stacking laundry if need be.

“Do you have the changing table put together yet?” She inquired, stepping back and folding her arms across her topless front. The sunlight, particularly strong through the middle, caught the side of her belly and lit it up.

Vaguely, inside of her belly, the outlines of two small skeletons were visible to Papyrus. The details were fuzzy from the indirect light, but there were arms and legs clearly visible.

"Just about to finish.” he replied, standing up and brushing off his hands to come over and hug her, though after a kiss he lowered and smiled, "Heh... Do you see it?" he asked.

The hug and kiss had been nice, but her attention was vastly distracted. Toki’s mind was set on baby decorations. Her attention slid to him as he lowered down next to her side, and she arched a bony brow ridge at him. “Pap, if it’s something on the floor, I haven’t seen my feet in months.”

Inside, one of the twins stretched, long limbs unfurling and pressing outwards on her middle. To him, it was visible. To her, she couldn’t see it from the top. She only felt it.

"The twins." he purred gently, "You can see the twins."
“… No way.” She tried to crane her head to the side to see, but was unable. As she shifted, the beam of light lit up a different spot. When Toki straightened, visibility returned, limited as it was. “Awww.” She pouts. “I can’t see them. What do they look like?”

Only one of the skulls was visible, and it slid into view as the little one kicked their sibling. Tiny pointy fingers came up to be tucked against the silhouette of a cheekbone- and the skull was smooth, and shaped just like his.

He smiled and stroked her stomach. "They're little skeletons. I love them” he purred softly, "There's a smooth little skull that I saw."

She perked. “There is?" Her fingers traced along the top of her middle, and laced with his digits. “I wish I could see… How clearly can you see them?” Tenebris might like to know this was a thing- it could be a way to give skeleton monsters an ‘ultrasound’ so to speak. They could watch the development- or could have, if they’d have known sooner.

"It's a little translucent, but there's a little skull here." he murmured, touching her stomach, "With a little pointed hand by it." he purred gently.

“Awww.” She smiles softly. “That’s adorable. Hm… Oh goodness, Pap!” Excitement bolted down her spine. “Your phone- think you could take a picture so I could see? Would it even show up, I wonder?” His phone was likely still in his pants that had been discarded in his room.

"Hm...." he got an idea, "Of course, let's do this." he got up and moved out of the room quickly. It took him a few moments before he was coming back with a flashlight, holding it to her. "Just pick your lighting angle, eh?"

Toki smiled and nodded. She took the flashlight from him and clicked it on. She set it alongside the side of her abdomen, and then hummed as the brightness made the twins kick fussily. It lit them up great, though only one of the skulls could be seen. The other had it’s head tucked in her pelvis, well out of view, as they pressed their little feet against the top of her belly. “Can you see better? Though- you forgot your phone, Pap. We could put the pictures on the fridge.” She knew he knew what ultrasound pictures were, after all of the googling and research him and Tenebris had been doing.

"There they are." he purred gently, before he smiled and pulled his phone from his pocket. "No, I have it." he replied, before he reached to her hand with his free hand. "May I?"

Toki smiled and nodded. “Of course!” She chirped.

Taking the flashlight, he slowly moved it over her stomach until he was able to get the picture he wanted from his phone. "Alright, hold the light right there, please." he requested, knowing that she'd be able to reach the light where it was now on her lower stomach. "It'll work right there."

Her arm had to crane some, but she managed to keep the flashlight firmly in place. She beamed at him brightly. “Alright. Snap a couple good ones- we can bombard your dad with them later by text.” Tenebris was going to be fascinated, she knew.

The twin with the skull like their father’s shifted, and fussily kicked at the bright light invading their home. They stretched irritably, little fingers latching onto their sibling firmly, and rotated slightly in the murky green of her middle.

"Oh he'll like that." he chuckled, taking a few pictures of them.

Toki adjusted the light just slightly so they would have a few directions to take pictures of. Once he had taken several, she shifted her stance, and let out a soft breath. “I’m sure he will. Heh- can you get
a clear shot of both?"

The one twin refused to show their face, and instead nestled closely in Toki’s pelvis, their sibling was facing the opposite direction. The one with Pap’s skull was photogenic though, and turned this way and that fussily as it tried to make the light go away.

"Indeed." he leaned in and pressed a long kiss to her stomach, before he got a perfect shot of the one at least, giving a determined and soon pleased sound. "Nyeh!"

“That’s good.” She purred happily. They both shifted inside of her, and she could feel them squirming at his kisses, beating fussy feet against his teeth. “Heh- I think the light is bugging them. Got all the photos you want to get, love?”

"I'm happy, yes." he replied, letting her move the light away from her swell.

The light was turned off and set atop the dresser, before she beamed and stole his phone. She lightly flicked through until she found the camera, and then took a look at the pictures.

“Awwwww~” Her heart practically melted. “That one looks just like you,” she beamed happily, her soul glowing brightly through her bared ribs. “Mmm… Can’t get a good angle on their pelvises to tell what they are.” She knew rounder and wider meant female, and narrower and smaller meant male. “Heh, either way our names will work. Heh…” She fiddled with his phone for a moment, and then handed it back. “I texted a couple to your dad. Wonder how long it’ll take before he’s busting down our door.”

"Knowing him, he wont need to." Aliquam joked gently, "He teleports, remember?"

“It’s a figure of speech.” She chuckles. “I should probably put on a shirt though, before he pops in. I am well aware he’s seen it all before, but being half naked around you is one thing, while being half naked around someone else is an entirely different one.” Toki couldn’t lean down very well, but she managed to do it enough to kiss the top of his head. “Heh- he has no way of knowing what room we are in though.” In the pictures it only showed the window and the light bleached the color out of the walls.

"Knowing him he'll be able to sniff us out as soon as he's upstairs." he cackled quietly.

“That could be good or bad though, given what he’d smell coming from our room.” She arches her brow ridges at her husband and quirks a sly grin at him. She and Tenebris fired dirty jokes at each other- but she wasn’t sure if Pap knew or not.

"So I have about ten seconds to go to the other room and open a window?"

"Nice try, son." Tenebris poked his head in, a half-smug look on his face.

Toki shared an amused look with Tenebris, and then discretely folded her arms over her chest. “At least he didn’t break down the door.” She mused lightly, arching a brow at her father in law. “I see you got the text, Papa.”

"I can teleport you know." he snorted, coming over and pecking her head softly before he knelt down and began to chatter happily. "Look at them, oh aren't they just beautiful?"

"Careful Father, you're starting to steal my spot." Aliquam joked.

"Can it be helped?"
"I suppose not." coming over, Aliquam hugged his father around the neck and smiled as the older turned his attention to rub his head against his son's, purring gently, "I spoil you. Why can't you go smoother my brother for attention?"

"Grillby would kill me if I tried to steal his spot."

"Can't argue there."

Toki laughed softly, and reached over for the flashlight again. She set it along the bottom of her belly, and turned it on. "There- you can see them better this way than with just the sunlight." She also gave them both an amused grin. "For the record, the first grandbaby is always special. I was special to my grandparents, and Dominic is basically my Mom’s favorite grandbaby, though she will forever deny taking favorites. Though… Yes, Grillby would probably roast you if you tried to steal his spot. That's fine though. There’s plenty of me to go around, isn’t there?" She gave Papyrus an unrepentant grin.

Her husband groaned at her.

Tenebris' tail began to wag fast behind him as he was able to see the twins again a lot easier, "Ooooh, how fascinating~" he cooed

The one that looked like Papyrus was still visible, their sibling having shifted to flash the vague outline of their pelvis along the edge of her belly. Feet pressed to the top, and Tenebris would be able to make out the motion outside her belly and connect it to the movement inside.

Toki grins faintly. "Do I need to get you a tissue?" She teases warmly.

"To blow what nose?" he chuffed, letting Aliquam take his place after long enough, "I'm sorry, carry on."

“I meant for your eyes, you dork.” She gently flicked above his mask, between his eyes. “You cry black- which is equal parts strange as it is cool- and black stains. You would sulk at me if you got it all over your turtleneck until I got the stain out for you again.” A sulking Tenebris was equal parts adorable and intimidating. Her fingers found Aliquam’s skull, and she rubbed softly, smiling with a warm, fang-toothed grin.

He winced, then huffed and looked up at her. "Makes me think I should invest in a favorite 'black' turtleneck, eh?"

“Black turtleneck to match the black body fluids.” She idly wondered if all of it was black. If it all was, that would explain the odd look Asgore had given her when Tenebris had all but sobbed into her middle.

She made a strange face.

She really, really did not want to think of what he thought it could have been.

Gross.

Super, super gross.

He had visibly stiffened, his face tainting a darker color, "A-And just what is that supposed to mean!?"

Well shit. She had to roll with it. No regrets- you only lived once.
Toki winked at him. “I suppose you’d throw away less laundry after your visits with the king, eh?”

“Oh my god.” Aliquam face palmed.

Tenebris sputtered at her. “TOKI!”

She cackled.
Chapter 68

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Haven’t had a Sansby interlude in a long while, no? Also it’s a slightly shorter chapter, but a chapter none the less. Thanks for being patient with us, guys :)

Silverwing Notes: So, in the time this chapter was being made, i went and hurt myself by accident. Being a five-finger typer, this definitely slowed me down a bit, but we'll keep doing our best to bring chapters to everyone

The weather thankfully cooled off, and for that, Grillby was thankful. He’d kept the air conditioning on in the bar, and had kept it cold enough that even he had felt uncomfortable. His patrons, and mate, however, had vastly enjoyed the cooler temperatures, and he’d found his business booming as everyone ordered milkshakes, and iced beers and the like.

However, the following week when the weather cooled off into the first week of September, Grillby found himself slightly under the weather, so to speak.

He would consider it a ‘common cold’ of sorts, for fire elementals. Sudden changes in temperature can mess with their flames, and even as old as he was, he was no different. It left him fuzzy headed, tired, his flames a dimmer color than usual, and with his magic depleted from recently donating to Sans, he fell victim to the nameless plague that was a monster cold.

After accidentally dumping a glass of water on himself, Grillby had to finally call it quits for the day. He needed rest, loathe as he was to close down the bar. So, when the lunch rush faded, the big monster locked up and turned the sign to closed, before blearily cleaning up the messes he’d made all day.

Burgers had come out slightly over cooked, same with the fries, and his milkshakes had been far too milky to be considered a shake. He wouldn’t even get started on his failures at making drinks.

Once the messes had been cleaned, he locked up his till and headed upstairs. He needed some rest—though what rest he would find, he never knew. Sometimes Sans came home in a randy mood, sometimes he came home in a snuggly mood, and Grillby was not one to deny him anything. Him, or their little one.

Grillby made sure their little one had an ample supply of fire magic to grow off of.

He headed into his living room, nearly tripping over one of Caeruleus’ socks as he slid inside his home. Grillby huffed and padded into the kitchen, intent on getting himself a bite to eat— and ended up spilling a glass of water all over his hand.

“Fuck,” he hissed softly, shaking it off as it darkened the flesh of his hand. It cracked and splintered, and he scrambled for a towel to dry off the dried, magmatic flesh that was usually made of flame. He patted it off with a towel, and pushed magic in to relight it.

"Grillby..." Caeruleus’ voice came from behind him and soon his arms looped around his back. He
hugged him gently, nuzzling him as he did so. "You okay?" he murmured, "You're letting off more heat than you usually do... and you're not... angry."

"The change in temperature has me feeling off," he hums in response to his mate. He rubs the cloth over his hand again, and pulls back some black residue from his ‘burn’ of sorts. “It is a simple ‘cold’, as the humans call it, Sans. I’ll be all right. I closed up early so I could rest. How are you feeling?" He turned, so he could face the shorter monster, and tossed the black-coated cloth onto the counter for later disposal. His hand felt raw, but that always happened with water burns.

"Pregnant." he huffed, hugging him firmly before he pulled back to gently take the other's hand, running his phalanges over the flesh with a worried look on his face.

Grillby withstood his chosen mate’s worried fingers, though it stung something nasty. “Pregnant is very descriptive.” He rumbled softly with amusement. He let his hand be investigated, while he dropped the other to caress the pudgy middle that housed his little one. He hummed softly, and gave a pulse of magic just to top up on San’s stores. With his HP, there was no margin for error, and Grillby, sick or not, would take no risks. “It’s just water burn, Sans. I am all right.”

He sighed as he let the warm-bodied elemental touch his growing swell, though most of it was still that of his own, their child not yet large enough to create a bulge. "I've been worrying a bit more lately, you know that..." he murmured.

“Your worry is justified.” Flame elementals, for as strong and fearsome as they were, could be horribly fragile. Wind elementals could be killed by an absence of air, water by too much heat, fire could be extinguished by lack of air or too much water- Earth elementals were the sturdiest, by far. Grillby leaned down to kiss the top of Sans’ skull, and let his molten eyes drift shut behind his glasses. “How about we sit and relax? Maybe talk about some of the stuff you’ve been worrying about?” Communication could help ease worries, he knew.

"Either that or we just cuddle, and I listen to you crackle." he murmured.

“Talking about your insecurities is something you’ll need to get used to doing, Sans.” Grillby hummed softly. He kissed the top of his skull, and then guided him slowly away from the kitchen and off towards the couch. “My crackles aren’t very loud today, I’m afraid.” His fire might be warmer, but it was dimmer, and his crackles were softer, more muted.

The big fire monster settled heavily onto his usual side of the couch, and offered his lap to the smaller skeleton, while he idly flicked on the television. It settled onto the music channel, playing some soft classical music to help relax him.

Sitting on the couch, it wasn't long before Cae rolled over to nuzzle his stomach regardless, his eye lights dimming, "That's okay, it's still nice to listen to." he murmured, before looking up at him. "Grillby, do you want me to run the bar for you? I know how you do things after watching you enough. If you're getting sick, then you should rest." he told him.

“I closed up the bar for today.” A large, warm palm curled over Sans skull, and he began to idly massage the bone. “I’ll rest up here with you.” He hummed softly. “I find solace in your company-running the bar can wait. I’m ahead on profits for last month- I think I can allow myself one day off.” He had steady enough business to probably hire someone to work in his stead- but he loved his work. It kept him busy, since he was no longer a part of the King’s Army.

Grillby gently let his other hand rest along Sans stomach, and he rubbed his thumb over the plush ectoplasm, massaging gently there as well.
"Mmmm..." The hand on his stomach was nice, and Caeruleus found himself rolling over to further permit the touch. "You look like you're starting to get sick, though... You don't just get better in one day..." As much as he knew his mate loved his work, he couldn't disregard how it was doing on his health...

He was interrupted in his thoughts as Serif came and put his furry head on his femur, and reached down to pet his head as he continued speaking. "You're going to have to close the bar for a few days if you get any worse." he insisted.

Grillby crackled warmly at the concern Sans was showing. It had been a long time since he had had an insistent mate demanding he take better care of himself. “If I get any worse, I will close the bar until I’m better, I promise.” He purred soothingly. “We’ll see how I feel tomorrow. For now, I am yours for the day. Well, yours and Serif’s.” He made a warm sound at the fluffy puppy, who was steadily growing larger and larger.

He paused in his rubbing only long enough to give the puppy an acknowledging head rub, before returning his hand back to Sans. He eased it up under his shirt, and rubbed the warmth of his palm along the bare ectoplasm under it. Fire elementals had their uses- and heated massages were one of them.

"I'll decide what's healthy enough to work or not, you hear me Grillby?" he puffed, nuzzling him before he purred loudly. "Mmm, you're warm."

"If I was cold, you would have a real reason to worry." Grillby chuckles in good humor. He kicks up his feet on the coffee table, sighing as he stretches out as best he can in his slacks. “I hear you, Sans. If you think I’m unwell, I’ll keep the bar closed for another day. I doubt I’ll need more than a day to recover enough to work, though.”

"Promise?" he murmured into his shirt.

“I promise.” Grillby hummed gently in response. The flame elemental shifted, and leaned his head back with a soft sigh. His digits didn’t stop rubbing over the warm ectoplasm under his hand, and Grillby adjusted himself slightly, a soft sigh letting smoke curl into the ceiling. “Now,” he murmured, “What’s been wearing on your mind, Sans? You’ve been anxious as of late. Something has been bothering you.” He knew him well enough by now to know when something was gnawing at the shorter skeleton. His pregnancy made him more open to read as well, something he knew endlessly frustrated the shorter male.

"Mmmh...." he sighed and looked up at him, "I can’t stop thinking about everything that those humans have done... after so long in that lapsing nightmare... I never lost you, I was so thankful, but... I lost my baby brother, my dad never came back, my friends... I don’t want it to happen again."

He stroked his skull and listened, nodding softly as he lent his metaphorical ear. “We’ve made it this far,” he hummed, “and I heard about miss Toki making Frisk swear to load, not reset. I don’t think it will happen again, Sans.” The fire elemental hums. “But, if it does, it doesn’t mean that everything is bad. It means we start again- and you,” he nudges his cheek, “would know how I feel earlier, so we could have more time together.”

He hesitated, then he chuckled weakly and rolled over, hugging him tightly, "God damn it, Grillby..."

“Emotional again?” He inquired, and welcomed him closer. He hugged his shoulders as the skeleton curled around his middle.
“Yes.” He sniffled slightly.

Grillby hummed softly and rubbed his shoulders softly. His eyes closed, glasses sliding down his face, as he crackled gently to let the skeleton calm himself.

Caeruleus was fussy for a little while, but long enough nuzzled into Grillby's chest, the warmth of his touch on the swell, settled the skeleton

"Mmmh... Thank you...”

“Anything for you.” Grillby said earnestly. He would go to war for the silly skeleton- and he knew that Sans knew that. The fire elemental was rusty- he was thinking he really should brush up on fighting- but he would do anything for Sans. “Anything.”

As luck would have it, they ended up napping. Grillby woke up some hours later with the worst kink in his neck that he had had in a long time. Unfortunately, he was an older monster, so sleeping in certain positions weren’t good for him. This was one of those.

He didn’t quite feel any better when his eyes slid open again, his ‘cold’ of sorts still plaguing him. His glasses had fallen down, and were tangled in the flames that made up his teeth of sorts- and he realized that with his mouth open, Grillby had probably been snoring like a freight train.

Grillby could feel Sans still curled in his lap, though there was another weight as well. Serif had wiggled up on the couch, and was nestled between Sans and the couch, curled with his fluffy white butt against Grillby’s side. The dog was snoring softly.

Sans seemed content as he slept, hugging Serif gently as he snored into his fur.

Grillby needed to get up and move- and get something to eat. He’d gotten distracted by Sans, and his fire needed fuel. He shifted, and gingerly slid himself out from under Sans to let the smaller monster continue to sleep.

“Mmm…” He grumbled and yawned, but didn’t wake as he continued to snuggle Serif.

The puppy, however, stirred as the fire elemental got up, and wiggled slightly against Sans. He rolled over, shoving a cold nose under his chin, before settling back down again. Well, ish. He settled in to lick the bones of his master, excited and happy to be cuddled.

Grillby smiled and quietly padded for the kitchen. However, he wasn’t nearly so quiet in tugging out pots and pans, and setting up for cooking in his kitchen. It was about dinner time, so he decided to put together the bases for a good, filling meal. He needed the protein to help bolster his flames, and Sans needed a good meal to help fuel the baby growing in his belly.

Sans didn't wake up until he caught the scent of a wonderful meal being made, rolling onto his back before he took a deep breath, "Fooooood...?" he murmured, before he yawned widely.

Grillby figured that Sans would wake to the smell of food, and hummed quietly as he continued to work. He monitored the meat, preparing it how both he and Sans usually consumed it. Beef was a strange meat, and Grillby enjoyed it vastly. Potatoes had been chopped and we're grilling away in a separate pan, while he prepared some mango for a side treat.

"I'm making dinner," Grillby said by way of answer to Cae's sleepy inquiry. "Any special seasoning
you want on your steak?"

"Mmmhh.... pinch of garlic salt and that Montreal steak seasoning." The shorter skeleton replied, coming into the kitchen with a yawn.

Grillby added it as Sans requested, carefully spreading a thin layer on with his fingers, flipping the meat, and doing the same to the other side. The fire elemental canted his head to the side and hummed softly. "Did you sleep well, Sans?"

"As well as I can with extra weight." he chuckled, coming to the table and sitting down, rubbing his eyes before he yawned widely.

"You're not that big yet, my dear." Grillby chuckled. "Though Serif is getting big, if that's what you meant." The fluffy dog had all but doubled in size already.

He snorted at that and stretched with a wide yawn. "Whatever."

"You don't sound quite awake." He laughed gently. Grillby shifted and nudged the bowl of fruit closer to himself so he could fiddle with adding some cream to the fruit. Made the sweetness a little more bearable.

"Nnnnnnnope," He murmured sleepily.

"Apparently not." The fire monster chuckled softly. "Why don't you get down two plates?"

Sans couldn’t help but whine. “You want me to get up?”

"You have gravity magic. It shouldn't over tax you to bring down a couple plates." The fire monster chuckled tiredly.

He pouted, and his eye lit up as he waved a finger around, pulling two plates from the cabinet.

Grillby took the plates once Sans had gotten them within his reach, and then carefully loaded the steaks onto them. Fried potatoes and fruit were loaded up too, and he snagged two sets of silverware and then headed for the table. He set his mate's plate down, and then sat across from him with a weary sound. He was still tired and not feeling completely well, but he was functioning well enough in the kitchen. He would be fine to work tomorrow. Well... Perhaps.

"Grillby, that looks so fucking good...” he commented at he looked at the food now on his plate.

"Well, I should hope it tastes as well as it looks." The elemental rumbled in amusement. He slid his silverware over to him, and then opened his own bundle so he could begin his meal as well.

The skeleton grinned at him. "You run a bar, Grillbz, I know it's gonna taste the fuckin’ best!"

“Not necessarily. You didn’t see some of the stuff I struggled with today.” He moderated temperatures with his magic- and when he was sick, his control was not perfect. There had been several burnt burgers he’d had to remake. Grillby hummed and started in on his meal, making a soft, tired sound. “So… Have you been thinking about names?” He inquired lightly.

"Yeah, a few names have come to mind." he replied, "Heh... Toki inspired me with sun-related names. Ray, Sol... You know?"

“Hm… I like them.” He smiled softly. “Sol… Like Solstice?” That would be an adorable name, and was gender neutral as far as he understood.
"See, you're good at that." He chuckled as he set into his meal.

"Mhm." Grillby took a bite of fruit, and enjoyed the muted sweetness on his tongue. Cream tasted oddly good with most fruits. "I like Solstice. Doesn’t Toki call our child Sunshine? That could be a possibility too. I’m trying to keep gender neutral names in mind."

He nodded gently, "That works." he replied, "Neutral names are a lot easier than thinking of names for either gender, heh..."

"Indeed." Grillby shifted and stretched out his leg. He brushed his toes against Sans shin, innocently pretending he wasn’t doing anything. “Solstice is a good name though. Our little Sol. It has a nice ring to it, doesn’t it? Solstice Gaster.”

"Yeah. That's a perfect name." he chuckled gently, nudging him softly back with his own food.

"Mhm. I don’t have a last name,” he chuckled, “So we’ll go with yours. Solstice Gaster... I like it. Should we go with that?"

"I was curious about that, actually.” Sans finished his steak, and glanced over to him. “I was gonna ask. Do you really not have a last name?"

“Well... I do, but I’m not particularly fond of it.” Grillby shrugs. “It doesn’t fit well with my name. I am technically Grillbert Fyrus the Third. I much prefer simply being Grillby.”

Sans seemed slightly taken aback, but he soon leaned back in his chair and laughed. "Grillby oh my god, that's an adorable name! I love it!"

Grillby felt his face burn hot, and he hid his face in his palm. It didn’t hide the blue flush that slid up to the flames that made up his ‘hair’ of sorts. “It’s not adorable, Sans.” He murmured in embarrassment. “It’s a silly sounding name.” His first mate had thought it was adorable too, and that sent a pang of longing through his soul. Gods, he missed her.

"I think it's a wonderful name, Grillbz, don’t think it's not, got it?” He purred. He slid out of his seat to go and give the embarrassed fire monster a hug.

"It hasn’t been wonderful since I was a child.” Monster kids could be mean sometimes, particularly to a scrawny, gangly fire elemental. “Grillburp Fyrebutt is what the kids in school used to call me. It might sound silly now, but words sting when you’re younger. It is simply easier to go by Grillby.”

Still, Grillby doesn’t begrudge Sans a hug, and nuzzles his smaller mate with a soft sigh. “Go finish your dinner, Sans. I’m alright.”

"Mph." he huffed, before he smiled and nuzzled him, "Love you, Grillbz~"

His flames cooled off slightly, though still ran hot in part to his cold. Grillby sighed, and nuzzled him again. “I love you too, Sans. Now go finish your food before it gets cold- I might burn it by accident if I try to reheat it.”

The skeleton chuckled and turned back to his seat. “Sure thing.”
The twelfth of September rolled around before they knew it, and everyone found himself or herself out in the village park, enjoying the cooler weather as the season began to shift. It was a lovely Saturday evening, the stars just starting to come out after their long day of play.

Toki was seated in a lawn chair with a pillow settled behind her back to offer the support she needed. Her arms were folded over her belly, rubbing relaxing circles on the mass of swollen, green magical flesh with one hand. The oblong sphere was tight and tense. The other hand had one of Thumper’s birthday gifts clutched in it.

Her eye lights roved over everyone else. Papyrus and Undyne were, hilariously enough, attempting to barbeque, grilling up a dinner of hotdogs and hamburgers. That was a spectacle in itself, and she was glad that the enthusiastic fish woman hadn’t set the grill too close to the trees. They alternated, Papyrus doing most of the cooking, with Undyne taking over with zeal so he could come check on his wife.

There was a growing pile of cooked meat being added to the table where the remains of the birthday cake were settled.

Sans and Grillby were spread out on a blanket just on the other side of Toki, the two cuddling and enjoying each other’s company while watching the spectacle before them.

As dusk had settled down, Thumper had broken out one of his gifts. He’d gotten a huge set of laser-tag gear, among other things, and the boy had been all but bouncing with excitement at the prospect of getting to try it.

There were two teams, as far as she was aware. One team had Thumper, Twitch, Howl, Rosie, Felix, and a small oodle of other children decked out in purple gear. On the second team, Tenebris was surrounded by the parents of each of the kids. Bo had opted to sit out, claiming she was tired from the days work, but Wolfen was there, along with Twitch’s parents, and a large collection of other monsters. Team Parents, as she was going to dub them, were decked out in red.
Todd fit in quite well, given the color of his fluffy fur.

Toki was technically acting as referee, which amused the turtle-neck covered skeleton to no end. She couldn’t exactly move to keep up with them and keep everything ‘fair’, but she did have the laser light, so she had the ‘power’ so to speak.

And her ‘power’ was totally abused, so the birthday boy had a better chance of winning.

Tenebris had a quirk. And Toki- well, Toki couldn’t help but take advantage of it.

As the next round began, with the children scattering like fleas as they took cover on the play-set, Toki aimed the light and glinted the bright green laser over the metal slide to distract Tenebris.

“You know that is cheating, Toki.” Grillby hummed from the blanket next to her chair.

“Ohhh yeah,” she grins, “But that’s what makes it fun.”

Tenebris had immediately moved to begin his hunt, with his laser gun in hand, but he saw the small dot darting around and his pupils widened. His tail was rattling as he tried hard to resist the little dot.

"I am so recording this.” Caeruleus chuckled, tugging his phone from his pocket and clicking it on so he could begin recording.

Toki grinned. “Good. You’ve got to post it on facebook.”

Meanwhile, she flicked the laser slowly up and down the slide, in a motion that was basically prey mocking the predator.

Rosie grinned, and lined up a shot. Tenebris vest made a noise- it took four shots to knock someone ‘out’ and Rosie had just gotten the first shot while Tenebris was distracted. “Woo! Got one on the enemy captain, Captain Thumper!”

“Good job, first officer Rosie,” The bunny beamed at her, and ducked a shot from Wolfen. “Neener, neener, neener!” He stuck his thumb against his nose, and blew a raspberry at the laughing wolf monster.

Tenebris jolted as his jacket went off and he bristled at Toki, trying to focus on hunting the children with his laser gun this time around.

Toki simply grinned, and turned the light off for the time being. She’d get him again when he least expected it.

Thumper, meanwhile, grinned over at Felix. “Third officer Felix, circle around the twisty slide and flank your dad- Second officer Howl and fourth officer Twitch, give him cover fire.” The birthday boy wasn’t a bad tactician, truly. A second way to ‘win’, other than tag everyone as out, would be to take the captains ‘captive’, of sorts, or take them out first. Thumper had full intentions of holding the ‘fort’ as it was.

Howl gave him a cheeky salute, mirrored by Twitch, and they took positions. Howl took a high point on one of the play structures, firing down on the adults who scattered and dodged good-naturedly.

Twitch, meanwhile, went kamikaze and bolted from the structure, laughing manically as she rolled and jumped, drawing fire her way while dodging with the same dexterity as she had on ice.
Tenebris was quick to react to Twitch’s act and laughed as he took cover, before he shot at her with his laser gun.

Twitch dodged Todd’s first shot deftly, but tripped in the tall grass, and ended up taking Tenebris’ shot before falling out of sight. The grass, however, moved to show she was sneaking around within it.

Thumper leaned up to shoot at his adopted father, missing completely as the bigger monster was behind cover, a grin making his teeth show. His vest went off, and he ducked a second shot from Howl’s dad, tucking in behind a post and trying to guard himself a bit.

Above Tenebris’ head, the green light appeared again, mockingly bouncing against the bark of the tree he’d taken shelter behind.

Tenebris saw the light and his eyes widened slightly, his pupils growing larger as he lost his focus on the hunt, reaching up to bat at the light.

Toki sent the light racing off across the grass, and laughed heartily at the larger monster. He was just like a very large cat.

Thumper took advantage of his father’s distraction, and Tenebris’ vest went off again as the rabbit got in another shot with his laser gun.

At the buzzing of his vest, Tenebris snarled, "TOKIKO GASTER YOU KNOCK THAT OFF!" he snarled, before he turned and disappeared into the greenery.

Toki all but howled with laughter. Oh yes, she was the biggest little shit ever.

Howl yelped, one of the adults shimmying up into his ‘roost’ of sorts. There was the sound of laser fire, before he was toted out of the roost over Twitch’s dad’s shoulder. “I’m out,” He calls.

“Both of us are,” the big rabbit laughed. “Good shot, kid.”

“You too,” The horned wolf pup laughed cheerily.

As soon as they were out of the line of fire, the game resumed, though much more ‘viciously’. Thumper fled from his roost, making use of his speed to bolt off into the grass with Rosie and Felix at his heels.

Thumper mused that they really needed to mow the lawn again, and tucked down low into the grass. Rosie and Felix moved on ahead of him at his signal, and reengaged the fight with the adults, providing cover.

Twitch bolted out with them, her soft pink fur covered in grass stains as she dodged and rolled, nailing Todd and taking her second hit as well.

Thumper remained low, creeping through the grass as he hunted for where Tenebris had gotten.

Tenebris chuckled as he continued to stalk the grass, his tail twitching behind him as he watched the children through the grass. His eyes widened slightly, while his pupils began to turn to slits, "Rrrrr...."

Thumper’s bare feet spread their toes, the paw pads on the bottom sifting down to touch close to the dirt. His fluffy gray ears flicked upwards, and he listened and felt, just like his mom had used to try to teach him. He wasn’t sure what he was supposed to be feeling, but he figured he would know when
he felt it. He kept low and hidden, looking for his dad.

Twitch, meanwhile, bolted out of the grass, tumbling as she tripped on the long fronds. She landed in a neat roll, took her third shot, and bolted off on all fours, aiming to take cover under the slide.

“Twitch, here!” Rosie waved at her, and stepped out to give cover fire. Over her head, Felix was visible, and he took cheap shots, giving his little sister cover as their dad and Wolfen advanced towards them and the pink bunny bolting for them.

Tenebris twitched and he lunged with a cackle, firing at the vests the children were wearing.

Twitch took her fourth and final hit, and tumbled into the grass with a breathless laugh.

Todd bum-rushed his children, taking two hits, but scooped them up into his arms with a happy fox-laugh. “I got you!” He grinned. “You’re mine now,” he grins. “Which leaves Captain to hunt down your captain.”

“Daddy, no fair!” Rosie fussed at him slightly, but dropped into giggles as he nuzzled his nose against her ear. “Daddy, no! That tickles! You’re too fluffy!”

Thumper, meanwhile, bolted from cover, and took a shot at Tenebris’ back, before bolting back into cover again. That made three shots, as Tenebris’ took his third hit. He had one more- but one more could be enough. Just enough… But first he had to hide again before the bigger monster hunted him down.

Tenebris grunted as he took the hit but it allowed him to zoom in on where his little bunny was hiding. ”Thumper Phineas Gaster, I’m coming for yooou~” he chuckled in a sing-song voice.

Thumper poked his head out of the grass, stuck his finger on his little nose, yanked it up, and made a rude noise. “Only if you can catch me!” He kept his chest low and out of sight, keeping the vest well out of range. He ducked under the grass again, and thumped his foot mockingly at his adopted dad. He’d taken his last name- so he was a Gaster now, not a Hopperton.

He chuckled at that and continued to stalk closer, before he grinned and brought one of his feet around, giving quiet, but swift thumps of his feet, a little trick he learned to get the edge.

The trick worked indeed- and Thumper was flushed out as his hiding place was found. He bolted from cover, shooting between Tenebris’ legs, and then was off and running, quickly. “Neener-neener-neener! You can’t catch me!”

"Oh that's playing dirty you little brat!" he cackled before he aimed and fired after him. "You're mine!" he cackled.

Thumper took a hit, and laughed back at him cheerily. He ducked and dodged, and then began weaving back for him, firing as he went. “I learned to play dirty from the best!” AKA, his favorite babysitter.

And, to aid Thumper, said favorite babysitter brought out the bright light, shining it on the edge of Tenebris’ gun and wiggling it mockingly.

He chuckled and aimed before the light appeared and he stiffened, before he snarled. "TOKI!"

“Yeeeeess Tenny dear?” She grinned unrepentantly. “Do you have a problem?”

"YOU CHEATING LITTLE BRAT!" he snarled, before he turned to shoot the laser-gun at the
He would find that in his distraction, Thumper had disappeared again. However, the bunny appeared just under his shadow, gave his dad a grin, and then shot him point blank.

“Anything to help my little bro in law,” Toki grinned as Tenebris’ vest gave a mocking buzz, announcing his loss for all to hear.

“Good game, Dad.” The bunny beamed up at him cheerily, all happiness and excitement at winning on his birthday.

Tenebris bristled, then grinned and scooped the bunny up, "Hahaha!" he cackled gently before hugging him tightly, "Happy birthday, pup."

Thumper laughed heartily and wrapped his arms around his dad’s neck, hugging him tightly.

“Thanks Dad!”

“Yo, punks! Food’s finished! Come get your grub!” The aggressive fish had a plate full of hamburger patties hoisted in the air to beckon everyone closer.

It took a little bit for everyone to get their meals, but shortly, everyone had plates loaded with food. Some of the kids had a few of the last slices of cake, but for the most part, the adults took their turn to get in on the sugary treats.

Toki was still in her chair, having never been ‘let up’ as it were. The ‘fathers to be’ were conspiring together to keep her and Sans as relaxed as possible. For her, that meant leaving her some place she couldn’t scurry off to do something she ‘shouldn’t. At this moment, it was her chair.

But that was fine- she was seated next to her husband, and both of them were enjoying the last bits of their food. Hamburgers had hit the spot, and she settled down to ‘digest’ as it were, and nibble on a small slice of cake while Papyrus finished off his food. He’d brought her plate first, since she was supposed to stay relaxed, and getting bumped and jostled by the laughing monsters at the ‘buffet’ of sorts was not relaxing.

Though, she mused, it would probably put her into labor. She was two weeks from her due date- and gods above, she felt like they should be here now.

She shifted slightly in her seat, and sampled frosting off of her spoon as she looked across to Tenebris. Thumper was over with the kids, in their little hoard at the tree across the grass, and was animatedly discussing something with the other children. She had no idea what, but from the energetic waving of his fork, it was probably good.

Tenebris, the silly old carnivore he was, was more than happy to simply consume the hamburgers bare, though for the sake of variety he did enjoy one accompanied by the necessities. Lettuce, Pickles, condiments, and the like. Afterward, he simply took to resting under a nearby tree to relax while he processed the magic gained from his large meal.

A Braxton Hicks briefly stole her breath away, and she bit down on the spoon as one of the twins kicked in the middle. The Braxton Hicks were uncomfortable, but they only bordered on painful when the twins squirmed during them.

When it faded a few seconds later, she pulled the plastic spoon out to realize she’d cracked it in her

Grillby had finished his cake first, having had a desire to something sweet and sugary, and had no problem nudging Papyrus’ arm so he could hand the spoon over to his wife for the fire monster. Grillby certainly couldn’t reach her. “Here, you can have mine, Toki.”

Though something had caught Tenebris’ eye and he now played with what looked to be strands of a black essence, much like a smoke, but with enough solidity to be manipulated.

Papyrus had passed the offered spoon to his mate when he and Sans both saw what he was up to.

"When was the last time he did that?" Sans murmured to his brother.

Aliquam shrugged in reply. "Father almost never uses his magic nowadays... I wonder why he simply toys with it..."

With the borrowed spoon, Toki set to finishing her cake. “He’s kind of like a cat. Chases laser lights, plays with magical strings- hell, his purring alone is indicative of that alone.” His paw pads were also more feline in design than canine. “Cats are strange creatures. We have two of them, Pap- I’m surprised you haven’t connected the dots yet.” Toki tugged out Thumper’s laser light, and winked at her husband.

The dot returned with a vengeance, and danced lightly over the tendril he was playing with. The high-powered beam was easily visible in the dark with the grass as short as it was.

Tenebris tensed up as he saw the light again and you could see him struggling to not go swiping at the little dot, "You mock me, Tokiko." he growled.

“Mock? Surely not.” She guided it lightly over his tendrils, and then set the dot on the top of his hand. She swirled it tauntingly around the hole in his palm. “Tease you? Most definitely yes. There’s no shame in chasing the light, Tenny.” She giggles.

“You really shouldn’t tease him so much.” Grillby hums, watching idly. “Older monsters don’t have the energy for such play.” He comments with mild amusement. His energy went to better tasks, such as tending to his mate. Wandering fingers found Sans’ hip, and rubbed it soothingly.

Sans let out a pleased sound at the touch to his hip, and leaned further into Grillby. A happy groan escaped him as he rubbed softly over a tender spot.

Aliquam took the example and quickly did the same with his wife, though his hand settled more on her thigh than her hip. The chair got in the way some. He kissed her temple gently, and laughed softly.

Toki smiled and shifted in her seat, leaning into the kiss he had bestowed. His hand felt nice on her thigh, rubbing over the warm femur. “Thanks, Pap. That feels nice.” She hummed. She tucked the laser light away again, and leaned into his arm with a soft sigh. The cake was finished, and plate set off to the side where they could get it later.

It took the bigger monster several moments to realize just what was said and who had said it, and a snarl left him. "Who are you calling old?!" he bristled at Grillby.

Toki’s relaxation ended as Tenebris growled and bristled, and her chin tucked reflexively. It had been a while since he’d snarled like that- and it still set her teeth on edge and made her nervous. It was ridiculous.
“I was simply stating a fact.” Grillby hummed. “I know I have more magic than I know what to do with, given my age, but I would hardly have the energy to chase things after playing laser tag with the children.” The fire elemental shot him a bemused look. “Using your magic might tire you out too much. You should be careful.” There might have been some teasing there.

Tenebris growled and swiftly stood, tail swishing behind him. "That does it." He huffed loudly. "I'll show you." The big monster stormed across the way and towards his home, garnering the gazes of several curious others, along with the kids.

For a moment, Aiquam was worried that perhaps Grillby had gone too far and insulted his father's pride. But he was delightfully surprised when he could see Tenebris approaching the open park space once more. Draped over his shoulders, and surprisingly loosely fitting over his body, was his deep black coat. The cloak went to his feet, and on the ground it let out deep black smoke.

He never truly disclosed anyone as to where he came to possess this unique, magic-amplifying coat. He'd often simply say it's his old lab coat, and left everyone to their imagination.

"Father, you're not actually upset, are you?" Aliquam asked quickly, concern making his brow draw together.

"Angry? Oh no... No, no, no, not at all." Tenebris chuckled. "In fact, I have been feeling a little pent up," he purred, popping his knuckles as his eyes began to glow. "What say you, Grillby? A spar, for old times sake?" he offered.

Toki's brows furrowed with mild worry, wondering if this spar was going to completely annihilate the nice park they were settled in.

Grillby glanced down at Sans, and then sighed. “Well, I walked into that one. Sure, Tenebris. It’s been a while since I’ve sparred.” The last time he’d fought, he’d been in his armor and trying to keep Tenebris from slaughtering the guards of the compound. The big fire monster got to his feet, and rolled his cufflinks up to his elbows before clipping them in place.

The fire elemental padded out across the grass, adjusting his vest, before curling his arms into his ‘I’m the bouncer for my own bar’ pose. “Ready when you are, Tenebris.”

He snorted at the pose and he reached up, closing his coat over his body. Immediately it's unique magic took hold. The cloak darkened and extended. Tenebris' turtleneck collar was lifted up to press directly under his jaw, and as he pressed his fingertips together, his eyes closed, before opening again, his purple irises now much darker as his grin widened, fangs disappearing behind his lips.

he spoke, before his shadows flared, and seemed to ignite into black flames. The flames coiled around Tenebris, before he leaned forward. Immediately in front of Grillby, the grinning face and wide eyes seeming to bear into his friend's soul.

Grillby took the change in stride, gave a bark of laughter that sent flames from his mouth, and stepped forwards to initiate battle. Grillby was up close and personal, since actually using flames to fight would be a bad idea in the dry grass crinkling under their feet. He had no desire to set the city on fire just so he’d have an edge in a friendly spar.

His arm cocked backwards, and he lunged, aiming a flaming fist towards the monster’s middle. A legitimate confrontation required magic from both sides- so a physical spar would be just as good.
Probably more relevant, given their recent set of foes.

Too many humans to do a confrontation with them all, after all.

“Let me know if the heat gets too much for you, old friend.” The fire monster chuckles sharply.

The laughter that came from Tenebris was a glitch-toned cackle at the light-hearted counter threat and for a moment Grillby thought out his plan of attack. Tenebris himself was easy, but this was definitely new.

He would stick to physical, giving that would be the best edge against hostile humans, however he began to think that this would be a fight against Magic. "Tenebris, will you want to use your magic for this spar?" he questioned.

Tenebris nodded in reply.

"Very well."

Toki watched the spar with a worried look, before signing. "If you break the trees, you have to replant them!" She calls out in warning so they don't forget that they do have an audience, and that it was possible for them to get carried away.

"Kick mister Grillby's butt, Dad!" Thumper cheered from the gaggle of children clustered on the other side of the spar.

The monsters clashed with a shower of sparks and dark magic.

It had been so long since they had felt the magic of the master's. The master's were long since dead, and those of their line did not possess the magic. They had the blood, they had the potential for power, but the magic was gone from the world. It had used to be thick enough to taste, and taste they had. It had fueled them, powered them, when their masters had gone.

But it hadn't lasted. It never did. They devoured it, ate it, and when it was gone, they hungered. When those of the blood came to the forest they had been left to guard, they devoured them too. The soul, it lacked the magic needed to make a bond and power them, but they could devour that soul and gain some nourishment.

It sickened them, because they were made to protect those of the blood. But the hunger... The hunger was grievously overpowering. They hunted and hungered, and it was only when a small half blood escaped that they came free of their fury. The loss of prey woke them, and the souls of the blooded that had birthed them burned their scorn at the hubris they had committed.

And for nearly twenty five and then some years they refused to hunt. They touched nothing, ate nothing, and did nothing. They waited, seeking death- and then the magic came back in one fell swoop. Their hunger lingered, and they found themselves unable to devour the magic. It made them sick- it was not the magic that they remembered.

So they waited. Death would come, or they would wait an eternity until a master came.

And one came. Just a year hence, a master came. And, they realized, it was the little half blood. The
half blood was no longer flesh though. They bore the form of a walking skeleton, and we're accompanied by others of similar non-human kinds. The half blood was ripe, bearing the next generation of masters.

Their form confused them, and it took them time before they would approach. But, when they did, the half blood was already leaving.

So they had followed. It took time to break the fetid spell that bound them there to that long abandoned lake, and even longer for them to gather the strength to return where their memories recalled as home.

The clan compound was similar, but there was now a village around it. They were confused. The clan had never been composed of monsters before, and now there were beasts of all kinds. They watched, for weeks they watched, their corruption disturbing the hives of buzzing stingers that the master tended to.

They did not know how to approach. But... There was a magic loose now, at the heart of the village, where they could sense the master's presence. Where she was bright and pure and hot, this magic was cold and dark, slick and oily. It made their fur bristle and flare, because this magic was not good magic.

The magic faced off against one nearly as bright as the master, and had them on the defensive. It was disturbing the to feel, as the master's magic flinched any time the dark one's magic got too strong.

The flinching meant fear. Fear meant a threat. A threat meant that they needed to defend the master, before the master could die, and they would be left so, so alone again. The hunger would surely consume them, for they were too twisted, too corrupt, to partake in the magic of the world again.

As darkness fell, their bones twisted and cracked, and their pale form rose up onto their hind hooves.

They opened their mouth, a garbled beastly noise escaping them, and they charged the wall. Good guards were not hurt, simply tossed asside as the massive being moved, crawling up and over the walls and houses that separated them. Guards were flung and ignored, their magic jabbing at the beastly thing as they tried to fend it off.

They would not be so easily dispatched.

They clamored up and over, until they came to the open space where the master was. There she sat, in a strange contraption, her magic growing more and more distressed as they grew closer.

They landed across from the dark one, mouth opening in a warning cry, human like hands reaching out to swipe the fire man away from the dark one. Their mouth opened, ghastly teeth unbefitting a stags mouth glinting darkly as sticky, sickly saliva clung to them.

They had to get to the master. They had to get to the master. The tall bone man would not stop them, the short one would not, nor the dark one or the fire one. The fox, wolves, sheep, bunnies, none of them would stop them. None.

Tenebris' shadows flared as he was now facing the monstrous creature, and he screeched loudly, raising his shoulders as he swung his tail in view of the stag to draw it’s gaze towards him.

Aliquam stood up as well and summoned a bone, his eye sockets widening slightly in shock at the monstrous creature's sudden appearance. It was sick and twisted looking. The horns were black and
covered in something disgusting looking; it’s white fur more of an off white, as if covered in a layer of filth. It was thin and sickly looking with its ribs showing through the thin fur over its thick skin. The hooves were black as well, but cracked and unhealthy.

The breathing was ragged and shaky, coming out through a tightly locked mouth. The teeth were reminiscent of Toki’s, tightly locked like a crocodile, though no lips whatsoever were there to cover it. It looked like they had been chewed off, or worn off, in fact.

Eyes blacker than the magic of the dark one glimmered at them with a sickly, twisted sheen. As monsters flocked to get their children to safety, they ignored them and took a step towards the master.

Grillby recovered from being tossed, and he skirted around the fight to nab Sans, taking him away from the beast as swiftly as he could.

Toki had blanched, her eye lights disappearing from view. Panic had her mouth opening, and she stiffened in her seat, fingers clenching over the arms. "The Nara Beast," she whispered, horrified.

The beast screamed a defensive threat aimed at Papyrus, who was closest to Toki. It was a sound so horrible and shrill that the wolf monsters yelped and hit the ground, clutching their paws over their ears to try and stifle the sound.

They advanced, taking steady steps to drive the orange magic weapon away from the master. They couldn't let the master die. The master could fix everything.

The orange one was the more immediate threat to the master. They disregarded the dark one temporarily. They could handle him after the master was secured.

Aliquam let out a gasp and braced his weapon in his hands to counteract the monster while Tenebris snarled and lunged.

He landed on the creature's back and grabbed hold of it tightly with his claws, roaring angrily while biting into its antler and throwing his head back to try and get it's attention away from his son.

The antler was hard and sharp, and covered in rotten antler velvet. His weight staggered the beast, and it's shoulders popped out with a sickening squelch, arms turning around loosely in their sockets so they could grab at the dark one. Sharp human like fingers tore at his legs and tried to fling him away.

Tenebris back claws had sunk into white fur, and popped through the thick flesh. Vile, black liquid oozed out, the stink washing over everyone present. The pain and the body trying to distract them did not stall it though, and they continued to walk, albeit labored, towards the master.

Howl retched, nearly hurling on Thumper as the stink stung his nose.

The taste was beyond description, just like the stink, and Tenebris was thankful he did not have a stomach at this point as he released it's antler with a heavy dry heave, before he snarled and grabbed it's antlers with his claws, pulling again. "Get away from them!" He snarled.

Aliquam cringed at the smell before he abandoned his weapon to pick up Toki. He plucked her neatly out of her chair. "We need to go. We need to go. We need to go RIGHT NOW" he insisted.

Toki clung to him with a frantic nod, terror sparking over her bones. "Go, go, go, go!" She was no brave soul, and she wasn't going to stand up to the towering corrupted white stag.

They screamed again, and jerked their neck against his pull. It snapped with a sickly sound, but the
beast was not stopped. The blood magic swirled within it, and its head swiveled around on its newly made hinge with a sickening crunch, snapping sharp teeth at Tenebris throat. Black, soulless eyes stared up at Tenebris.

At that point, Tenebris stiffened before he made to leap off, landing on all fours before he turned and hissed loudly at the buck, arching his back while his shadows bristled. What unnatural magic sustained this beast, he did not want to know. A broken neck should have done it.

But it didn’t.

The buck stared at him for a few seconds, before their neck righted itself, and they lowered their head. Their cloven hooves tore holes in the dry grass, kicking up clods of it, and they charged antlers first at the skeleton stealing their master.

Toki's sockets widened, witnessing the charge over her husband's shoulder.

Tenebris tensed and immediately flew after it, hissing to himself about the damned cloak around him and abandoning it partway to properly sprint after the charging creature.

Aliquam was still running but in panic, gave Toki a squeeze and teleported to the roof of their home as he picked up the sounds of it giving chase.

Teleporting brought on a nauseated feeling for Toki, and she clutched him tightly, screwing her sockets shut as she trembled. "It's not supposed to leave the lake..." She whispers nervously.

The beast shrieked angrily as the tall skeleton and their master disappeared. "Maaaaaasterrrrr," the word was hissed out, sounding nothing sort of horrendous between such sickened vocal chords. Words were hard. They turned on their heels, locating Toki's magic again, and made a beeline for the brick house at the center of the clan compound.

He stroked her head gently and he set her down on her rear right next to the chimney, "S-Stay here... Keep hidden if you must. I'll t-take care of this" he murmured, trying hard to hide his fear before he ran and leaped from the roof, landing on the ground before he summoned forth a bone spear, "That's far enough, Monster!" he snarled.

The beast greeted him, having torn up the wall just slightly as it scrambled over with the dark one hot in pursuit. They stared at the orange skeleton, and opened their mouth in a ghastly snarl, before lunging at the tall skeleton with fangs bared and hands ready to grab at his frame.

He twisted the Bone and began to spin it fast in one hand, striking it's snout and hands before he summoned another, thicker one and swung it at the beast's face, before Tenebris slammed into it and aimed to try and at least break the thing enough that it couldn't get up.

The spear split the skin of its snout and tore bloody furrows in its hands. As the dark one slammed into it, it turned and spat in his face. It's thick, sticky saliva mixed with the foul odor and taste of its blood, and splattered over Tenebris' face and mouth.

Their hands reached out to Papyrus, and took hold of his spear arm and aimed to break it. The spear couldn't be wielded if the arm was too broken to use it.

Immediately Tenebris was out of the fight, scrambling backwards blindly as he tried to wipe the thick substance out of his eyes, his tongue sticking slightly out of his mouth as he spat as well, having had his mouth open when the creature spat.

Papyrus tensed and yelled out in pain as the creature began to bend his arm painfully, before he
summoned more bones to impale it, trying hard to get it to let go as he swung the thick bone again to hit it in the face.

It's jaws snapped shut over the bone as more shards of summoned bones stabbed into it. Black blood oozed with rancid odor, and the beast bit through the thick weapon.

They lunged to take the tall skeleton's skull into its mouth, when they were hit with a projectile from above.

Toki was carefully balanced at the edge of the roof, and panicked when it spotted her. As she scrambled backwards, the beast tossed her husband like a rag doll and proceeded to climb the side of the wall with surprising efficiency.

Papyrus hit the ground hard, screeching in pain as he landed on his damaged arm, which shattered under his weight and the force behind the throw. "TOKI!" He cried out in his pain, alarm and terror for his wife and children making his voice shrill.

"Pap!" She shrieked back. She was literally stuck on the roof, and she could only cling to the chimney and hope the beast couldn't climb well enough to get her.

They reached the top of the roof rather rapidly, and then wobbled across to her. Or tried to. Hooves on a sloped roof proved perilous- and the beast lost footing. It grabbed her arm as they fell.

The beast rotated on the way down, and clutched their master to them as they brought their hooves down to brace for landing.

Their legs shattered under their weight and inability to roll with the landing, and they dropped on the front lawn, dropping Toki gently as they let out a cry of pain.

Their arms caged Toki, but the beast didn't move to hurt her as it made pained noises.

"T-TOKI!" He shakily got to his feet, his skull ringing from the impact with the ground, and he summoned another spear in his still good arm, leaving behind what remained of his right radius, Ulna, and right hand as he came closer, his eye lighting up as he brought the spear back, aiming for the monster's head. "L-LET GO OF MY WIFE!" he roared.

The beast shifted and turned to put their body between their master and the spear. They couldn't move with their legs broken, so all they could do was put a barrier between her and the weapon and keen softly. They could not get the master away from the threat, so they would act as the master's shield.

Toki hesitated as its eyes screwed up in what was likely resignation and pain. She couldn't scramble back- the thing was partially pinning her leg. But... "A... Are you... Trying to protect me?" She whispered, voice shaky. It was hurt and in pain but it had protected her from the fall.

"Maaaaaasterrrrr." They manage to murmur.

The sudden change in behavior confused Aliquam, and slowly he let the spear fall to the ground, and he slowly moved around the beast to see his wife. "Toki?"

"I'm okay," she responded shakily. "It... Kept me from getting hurt in the fall. I... Don't think it wants to hurt me."

Its head jerked up and black eyes watched Aliquam warily, teeth bared in a defensive growl. It curled its arms tighter around Toki, ears flicking back and forth rapidly.
She hesitated, nasals momentarily reeling at the stench that was practically in her face, and then gently reached up to touch it's cheek. They stopped growling, and leaned into her palm with an almost relieved sound.

He looked at the creature for a moment, then he slowly knelt, warily watching it as it watched him. "Toki... Isn't this the creature from the camp fire story?" he asked hesitantly.

Black eyes watched him warily, waiting for another weapon to be summoned.

"It is, yeah." She rubbed the stag’s cheek slightly. "You remember it?"

"Yes... but... its condition is far worse than you let on." He murmured.

"It's been just a legend for a long time." She swallowed. "$I was also a kid the last time I saw it. But... Blood magic isn't good magic, Pap, and this thing is basically all blood magic... I might not know much about it," or anything about it, actually, “but I know blood magic isn’t good magic in any form of the sense.”

He looked at the stag with a small frown. "I... I'm sorry, Toki..."

"It’s okay, Pap... Are you okay? Your arm..." She couldn't believe her ancestors had done such a thing. This poor beast... It was probably longing for a mage of some kind. She gently pulsed some magic into it, to try and soothe the whimpering sounds it was making.

The stag latched onto the magic, and leaned into her hand heavily. The white of its fur seemed to bleach brighter, and it sucked out her magic greedily, making her gasp.

It burst into green flames, making the skeleton under it flinch heavily. From the fire that shrouded her and the stag, it rose upright once more.

Their black eyes had bled to a luminescent green, and golden swirls blossomed around its eyes. The fetid wounds and sickly stature healed as it devoured her magic and connected to her to purge out the blood magic that had birthed it's corrupt being.

Black antlers had burned painlessly away to gold, and it had actual lips to cover its crocodile like fangs. It rose up nobly, fur glowing almost like the moon, and then reached down to lift her to her feet with an almost tender touch.

She staggered, magic severely depleted under what it had taken from her.

He didn't answer about his arm, rather used his good one to hold her up, nuzzling her gently as he caught her. "I've got you." he whispered, nuzzling her before looking up at the stag.

The stag stared back at him, towering massively tall. It's rack even exceeded the kings own. They stared at the skeleton, and then looked at their staggered master. "Peace," they murmured in a low voice, a new voice with chords as pure as freshly fallen snow. "Master has brought peace."

Toki tucked into Paps side, clinging to him wearily. "You were born to fight and kill and defend, but no one gave you another purpose, did they?" She murmured softly.

They shook their head, and took a deep breath with lungs uncorrupted by decay and bad magic.

He looked at him with a surprised look on his face, but tensed as he heard groans and gagging sounds from Tenebris, "Father...!" He carefully tried to coax Toki to sit, so he could trust she wouldn’t fall while he tended to his dad. "I have to check on him..."
"Not with your arm," she stubbornly remained on her feet, and tucked herself under his shoulder. She looked up at the beast. "Protect. That is your task. Those who have bad intentions in their soul will be your target. No other shall be harmed."

The stag dipped their head. "As master wishes." The stag gave a tug of magic, and then there was an impossibly small deer standing before them, antlers and hooves golden and glimmering. Green eyes peered at them, before it bound off, out of the entrance and into the woods across the street.

Once it was gone, Toki shuddered and staggered as she aided Papyrus in returning to where they could hear Tenebris.

Tenebris was still rubbing at his face, Aliquam knelt beside him, speaking his name to let him know he wasn't a threat, before he helped him to the water, helping him wash his eyes out, before getting the god-awful taste out of his mouth.

Toki helped as best she could, tugging off her turtleneck to sink it into the water. She then scrubbed it gently over his face when just water proved to be impossible to get the sticky black ichors off of him.

"This is harder to get out than your saliva is," she mutters tartly.

"At least," he coughed, "my saliva doesn't smell or t-" he retched, tail rattling as he tried to keep from expelling magic, "Taste this bad!" he hissed.

"That coffee breath of yours can get pretty rank," she teased gently. Since water wasn't cutting it... She shoved a clean side of the cloth into his mouth and scrubbed, ignoring the part of her that screamed for her to get away from the sharp, sharp teeth settled inside. "Bite me, and I won't get the blood stains out of your favorite turtleneck." She covers her lingering nerves and shakiness with banter.

He bristled at the threat that accompanied the cloth in his mouth, but he played along, opening his mouth further and sticking out his tongue, hiding his bottom teeth.

She grabbed his tongue with one hand, and scrubbed it. Probably roughly, but soon it was spotless, as was the inside of his mouth. She hesitated with the teeth, and she knew he probably saw a flash of fear cross her face before she powered through and scrubbed those too. Once his mouth was spotless, she stepped back, staggering slightly and leaned against the house to calm her shakes. "I'll wash those since you were good and didn't bite. Fix my husband first please."

He gargled a few mouthfuls of water but afterwards, did as asked and as soon as his sight was solid enough he was led to where the remains of Aliquam's arm bones rested.

Toki staggered stubbornly after them, but ended up having to sit on the front steps as her energy levels plummeted. She kept her ruined top in hand, and mused that she would need help getting everything into the laundry.

The stag appeared again as Tenebris and Aliquam were piecing together his arm, and the stag peered at them through green eyes as it bounced back into the compound.

Toki eyed it. "Our forest is in the back of the house, not across the road."

The stag seemed bashful, or as bashful as a deer can be, and bounced towards the side of the house where the two Gaster's were.

Aliquam was quiet as Tenebris carefully reconstructed his arm, focusing to fix each piece perfectly
before putting the pieces together like a puzzle.

He had just finished with reconnecting the radius and ulna to each other when he saw the stag and he tensed up, his tail rattling loudly.

The stag puffed his chest up and made a strange bleating sound, nothing like the screech from before. Then, they turned, fluffy tail flicking into the air, and bound off into the darkness behind the house.

Toki waved at Tenebris to calm him. "Stag is cool, I fixed it so it's not all corrupted anymore."

"Forgive me if I keep my edge." He responded.

"Probably for the best." She shifted, and was unable to stand. Not only did her legs tremble, but she was too heavy to haul herself upright. "Pretty sure the stag doesn't like you. Not sure why. You're a nice person when you're not being a dick." Which, from time to time, he could be. "How is Pap's arm?"

"I snapped its neck." He grunted, before he looked back to his work, "It's doing well, all the bone splinters are here."

"Well, that would do it. I’d be angry if you snapped my neck." She mused. "To be fair, I think it thought you guys were going to hurt me. It tried to protect me from Pap's spear." She watched him lightly and nodded. "I would summon a bee so you could see better with some light, but the stag drained me dry to purify the corrupted magic making it sick."

"Don't bother using any of your own magic, don’t want you drained."

She already was drained. But she gave a sarcastic salute, and then slumped against the railing. "Yes, Papa. When you fix Pap, you might want to let everyone know we're okay... Though I'll take your shirt first." His pants looked fine, though his feet needed a good washing for sure.

He nodded gently, and once the bone was fixed, he shed his shirt and helped Aliquam to the steps, sitting him down before going to assure his friends and family that he and the others were unharmed. Well, to a degree.

When Tenebris was gone, Toki shifted and leaned gently into Papyrus. "When we get inside, we are piling you in pillows and you are not getting out of bed." She informs him firmly. "And I'll be joining you once I get all of our clothes in the laundry, because this stench is worse than skunk."

"We are taking a bubble bath with that nice smelling soap." he insisted sternly, "THEN we'll get into bed."

"That's acceptable." She nods. "Try not to touch anything or it's going to have e to be cleaned too." She was gross. Toki paused, and then nudged his leg gently. "You know what, your dad doesn't need us waiting for him. Help me up. This stink is starting to make me nauseated, and I don't like sitting out here topless."

He nodded and carefully helped her up with his good arm, "I'll have to heal some more while we're relaxing."

"Yes." She nods, once she's upright, and then wobbles up the stairs. "You know... We kinda owe the stag. We fell off the roof, and I didn't feel anything when we landed." Though his legs had shattered. She opens the door for Pap since her hands are less gross, and motions him in. "That's a long fall for a pregnant skeleton."
She knows he's likely recalling the last time she took heavy damage. She'd gotten knocked into a super early labor. This time, other than angry kicks and Braxton Hicks, she was perfectly fine.

Papyrus gave a sobering shake of his head, and nuzzled her gently as he passes her. “We owe the stag indeed.” He murmurs softly.

“Mhm… Alright,” She closed the door behind them, and gave him a firm look. “No more thinking of what could have happened. So… Strip- I’ll get all this in the laundry, and we can go wash off before our stink makes me sick.”

“Or me.” He grimaces. “It is quite foul.”

“Very.”
The end of September came quickly. The following week was spent taking care of her husband and making sure his arm had healed up properly. Other than some fading scars, the bones had knit back together perfectly, and he was fully functional.

Which was both good and bad.

Good, because he was back at work and had been able to help put the bee hives away for the season. It was supposed to snow soon, so that was definitely a must.

Bad, because that meant that now he was healed, he was well within range to fuss at her.

Her due date was here- on the literal day- and she’d woken up with him up and about preparing the delivery of the twins.

But, she hadn’t been in labor, and Toki wasn’t sure she would be. The chances of babies being born on their due date was low- but with twins, really, she should be having them shortly. The only thing she had that she didn’t before was a set of parts that wouldn’t de-summon.

She stood in the kitchen in a turtleneck and a skirt, and a pair of panties that were totally necessary now given the glowing bits below that were actually there now, and kneaded one of her fists into her lower back.

The stuff for making cookies was spread out on the counter, but she’d gotten a cramp from being active, and was slowly trying to breathe through it. “Mmm…”

"How are you feeling, my love?" Aliquam murmured, wrapping his arms around her, as he pressed closer to her from behind.

"I gave myself a back cramp, but nothing yet. I was trying to make it go away so I could finish cookies." She glanced back over her shoulder careful of her horns, and nuzzled his chin. "Ah-hoooo. Okay, cramp is gone." But a Braxton Hicks had taken its place. They were sporadic at best, varying between ten minutes to six hours apart. They were all over the place, really. It was pesky.

He slowly ran his hands over her swell with a soft hum, but he stopped at feeling the tightness that
had settled over her belly. "Toki...?"

"Hm?" His hands felt nice, large and warm over the taut magical flesh. She reached out for the Vanilla, and began measuring it out.

"Are you having a contraction?" He asked, running his phalanges over the tightness of her middle. His fingers trembled slightly, but rubbed soothingly with some effort.

The flesh relaxed slowly under his hands, and soon it was the same texture it usually was. "It's still irregular like it has been for the past couple weeks, Pap. But yeah, technically I am having a contraction." Braxton Hicks were technically contractions of a sort, but they were more or less preparing the body for labor.

Papyrus startled. Loudly. He also might have panicked a bit. "Are you having the twins now!?"

His exclaimed shout was practically in her non-existent ear, and she leaned slightly to the side to shoot him a dirty look. "Keep shouting like that and you might scare them out." She rolled her eyes good-naturedly, and started to mix the dough together. "I don't know, Pap. Time the time between the Braxton Hicks, and we'll see. This one just ended."

"Nyeeeh..." He made a fussy sound, and hugged her gently, "I'm sorry, Toki..."

"It's alright, Pap." She nuzzled him gently again and hummed. She was quiet in his embrace for a time, quietly mixing the dough and getting it sectioned out onto the cookie sheets. "You can make it up to me by helping me get the cookies in and out of the oven, yeah?" Not that he didn't anyways, because bending down for her wasn't usually a good thing as big as she was, but it was polite to ask sometimes rather than just assume that he would.

"Of course I could...!" He replied quickly, just a little desperate to do something to make himself useful. "Just lemme know when it's ready to go in."

Toki nodded and scooted the first tray over. "This one is ready." She chirped to him as she started in on setting up the second for monster-sized cookies. They were too big for her technically, but who was going to tell her she couldn't eat a cookie the size of a small plate? Not someone who didn't want a grumpy pregnant skeleton, that was for sure. "It looks like we'll have a couple spoons of dough left to enjoy after I get this tray done."

She glanced up and spotted the stag I'm her back yard. They shared a look, as they often did, and then they disappeared back out of the back of the compound, where Toki knew her hives were at. "You know, I think the stag was causing the aggressive behavior in the bees before. They calmed down almost immediately after the stag was purified." She comments softly.

"That's good to know." He sighed. "I was worried for a while there." He mentioned, putting the cookies in the oven.

"Bees are sensitive," She nods. She shifts, and finishes the second tray shortly. The rest of the dough is put onto a spoon and offered to her husband. She didn't really want to eat dough- her appetite had been coming and going all day and most of that was because she was nervous about what was to come. "Stag still doesn't like your dad. I heard they made a mess on his lawn yesterday."

He opened his mouth and took the spoon into his mouth and hummed happily in thanks, before he backed up and looked at her. "Well to be fair, it's a prey animal sassing a predator if anything."

"I'm not sure Stag counts as a prey animal. Have you seen those teeth?" They were like hers, and she did not have the teeth of a prey animal. She chuckles quietly, and shoves her knuckles into her lower
back. "So, we've got thirty minutes for these cookies to bake. Want to go see what's on the television? Oh! Did the mail come yet? I'm expecting a package. You're not allowed to peek at it either."

He shot her a look, but nodded gently, "Sure, let's go see what's on. And no, I don’t know if they’ve been here. I’m sure they’ll be here soon though."

"M’kay. I'll keep an ear out." She hums, and waddles out of the kitchen. The main room is warm and she angles for the living room with a pleased sound.

Right up until her middle tightens and she pauses with an audible grunt. The Braxton Hicks rolls over her, and the twins stretch angrily in response, making her ache. "Mnnn..."

“Toki?” He was at her side in seconds, worrying over her once more as his nervousness escalated.

She briefly tuned out his worrying, and waits the short time until it fades. When it does, she exhales and sighs. "That was unpleasant. Now what are you saying?" Her attention flicks over to him and his fussing, trying to catch up with what he had babbled.

“Nyeh! I worry about you!” He fussed again.

"I'm alright, Pap. It was just a Braxton Hicks. Though... They're not usually as close together." She murmurs the last bit mostly to herself, though he could hear her clearly.

"Nyeeeh, Toki you're worrying me!" His voice raised a few octaves.

"Take a deeeeep breath." She glanced up at him and pantomimed a deep breath of air. "Calm down. It's not the end of the world, Pap. Agh. Back cramp. Shit that stings." She kneads along her back. "Ugh, right next to my spine. Seriously though, it'll be okay Pap. You and Tenebris know what to expect, yeah?"

“No! I don’t know!” Any knowledge he might have had practically flew right out of his head, and he was left being a shaky shell of ‘dear gods why’.

"You do," she cooed soothing to her obviously panicking husband. "You do. You're panicky though, and that's blocking some of your thought process." She took hold of his fingers and gently coaxed him into the living room and to the couch. "Sit." She orders gently. "Get comfortable, and I'll sit with you."

He took a deep breath as instructed, but it didn’t do much to settle his nerves. “I… I guess I believe you.” He muttered as he settled down carefully on the couch.

Once he was seated, she settled in right next to him, making sure to keep an ear out for the timer going off. "Good. Sometimes your wife knows best." She shifted and settled slightly on her side, sighing quietly. "Mm... Would you mind rubbing my lower back please? It really hurts right along my spine."

"Oh of course!" Papyrus was glad for something to do that was helpful. He set his palms over the curves of her hips, and then pressed his thumbs into her lower back. He located the knots along her spine, and began to rub in circular motions that both soothed her, and soothed himself.

Toki groans. "Mmm... Ever heard the saying 'it hurts so good'? That saying is totally applicable right now. That hurts something fierce, but it feels good too." She exhaled softly, and glanced back to keep an eye on him and see if he was calming, or if his internal panic was escalating.
Aliquam was starting to settle down as he massaged her back, leaning over to press soft kisses to her head and shoulders as he did so.

"Feeling better?" She queried gently to him, smiling at the kisses he pressed to her skull. She gave a tiny groan, her back tightening as her middle did for the third time in rapid succession.

He nodded slowly and gave a little more pressure to counteract the tightening of her muscles.

“Mmm… that makes three…” She exhaled softly, and groaned again. More pressure on the knots hurt something bad, but she knew it was something that needed to happen. She buzzed at him lightly, her breath hitching as her middle loosened again. “Mmm… I’m glad you’re calming down. Panicking isn’t going to do anyone any good, but I know how hard it is to stop panicking once you’ve started.”

"Nyeh...” Aliquam peppered her with more kisses, and nuzzled her shoulder lightly.

“We’ll be okay, Pap.” She smiled softly. “They have to come out sometime, don’t they?” She winks.

"Yes indeed... soon..." he agreed, pecking her head gently.

"Think of it this way- the sooner contractions come, the sooner we get to hold them." She gave him a loving smile, and shifted slightly on the couch. The magic flesh of her back was finally starting to relax, and Toki could heave a sigh of relief. "Mm..."

"Why does everything humans do have to hurt?" he then asked, "I mean... You wouldn't carry like this if you were a skeleton! Would you?"

"We don't actually know. I'm technically the only actual skeleton in existence, since you're not full skeleton yourself, and we don't know how actual skeletons reproduce since your dad never really studied skeletons. Probably didn't have time with the war. It also could be an influence from my human bones, or influence from your dad's influence on you." She props herself up a little bit and hums. "As for humans, they're organic based. Labor is basically the muscles contracting- but you know that thanks to the videos you and Tenebris have been watching. It's sort of like when Undyne hugs you around the ribs and squeezes harder and harder. Hurting is part of life." Toki tilted her head thoughtfully. "I'm a bit of a science experiment at this point, Pap. Humans are all squishy things and biology. I am pretty sure I still have my human bones." Given how much slower hers had re-grown and how long it took for them to heal compared to Pap's arm… It was entirely possible. She also still had a marrow like substance, and it tended to ooze with her magic when her bones got cut and fractured. "I'm sort of a weird hybrid of skeleton and human; Magic and biology if you will. Todd can still bleed and has some of his human functions. HTM’s are… strange.”

"Very strange... but I still love you, and I know I wouldn't have it... have you, any other way." He spoke quietly, reaching out and wrapping an arm around her gently as she sat upright once more. "I love you so, so much." He murmured.

“I love you too, Pap.” She nestled into his side with a soft sigh, and rubbed her fingers gently over her middle. The twins shifted inside, making the flesh twitch below her shirt, and Toki settled in to wait for the next contraction. “You sure?” Her eye lights glimmered up at him in teasing amusement. “You’d probably have a much simpler and less deadly relationship,” she meant HAM here, “if you had married one of the lovely bunnies in the village.”

"I'm willing to take whatever life throws at us. I mean… Heh...” He shook his head slightly. “At this point, is it really an option? I married you, damn it.”

“I was teasing you, love.” She patted his cheekbone gently and chuckled up at him. “But no, you’re
stuck with me until the day I die.” She grins up at him cheerily. There was really no knowing when that would be either. They’d have to wait and see if he had her for sixty years, or six hundred years. “Though- ahh, there’s another one. That one is unpleasant. Ow.”

There was a distant beep off in the kitchen as well.

“Shit, the cookies need changed out.”

"Stay here. Stay right here. I'll get it." He told her, getting up to go take care of the cookies.

“Make sure to put the other ones in too!” She calls. Toki pauses though, and glances at her own position. “Also, literally, Pap, I can’t get up without you giving me a hand.” She was quite literally stuck, Braxton Hicks aside.

While Papyrus was gone, there was a demanding squeak, and then Toki found a gray kitty draped over her belly, and pushing her face into her chin, demanding attention. “Ack, Gracie, really?” Toki had no idea where Gael was, but she was sure he wasn’t far behind.

"Can do!" he called behind him, pulling the first batch of cookies out of the oven. He set them aside then moved to collect the next tray, perking up slightly at hearing the phone ring. Once he put the tray in the oven, he picked up the phone. "Hello?"

"Pap! Papyrus! Listen buddy is my sister there?" The voice of Kon rang through, insistent and slightly frenzied.

Whatever could have him sounding so... panicked? Papyrus had to definitely wonder. "Yes she is."

"I need to talk to her, RIGHT NOW."

"Of course, hang on." Pap left the kitchen to bring Toki the phone. "It is your brother."

“Which one?” She queried back from her position buried in cats. Gael had joined her, and had taken post on her lap. Or what was left of her lap. Her belly and Gracie took up most of it. The phone was taken nonetheless, and cradled to her non-existent ear. “Kind of awkward timing, but what’s up, little bro?” Considering she was the oldest, it was literally the easiest way to address her younger brothers. No matter which brother she was talking to.

"Sis! Tokiko, look, I need your advice. How do you ask someone on a date? I mean like... if they don’t eat meat or anything."

Kon’s voice rang through her ear, and she lifted the phone away slightly, so he didn’t deafen her. “Kon?” She blinks. “Uh... Well... you just go to them and say ‘would you like to go out to eat sometime?’ That’s pretty universal for most folks and vegetarians. I think.” She heaves a soft groan as her middle relaxes again. “You trying to muster up the guts to ask Lana out again? Oh! I’ve been meaning to ask. How did that first date go? I tried asking Lana, but she was too sheepish to answer me properly.”

And one could practically hear Papyrus' soul shattering as he groaned loudly from the kitchen. "Tokiii, WHY!?"

After a snort of laughter, Kon spoke again. "Well, I mean, isn't that like... cliché or something, or ask like that?"

“Because I love you and you need something to ruffle your feathers today.” She smiles slightly. The pun would ruffle his feathers and give him something to be huffy over rather than worry. "I could
give you some Undyne advice and tell you to suplex her if you don’t want to be cliché.” Toki grinned. “But I don’t think your noodly arms can lift her, bro. Hm… Oh my gosh. Isn’t this like the first time you’ve ever taken a woman out on a second date? Oh my GOSH Kon!” Her voice made Gracie pin her ears at her, but Toki honestly didn’t care. “Oh my gosh, my little brother’s growing up. I’m so proud. I might even shed a tear, oh goodness.”

"Toki shut UP!” he was bristling so loudly one could hear it through the phone, "I just like her, okay!?"

“I’m not teasing you about liking her,” she laughed, unbothered by her brother’s bristling, “I’m teasing because this is the first time it hasn’t been ‘one and done’. Flirting with my father-in-law notwithstanding.” She shifts softly, kneads a fist into her side, and rides out a cramp with a few quick breaths. “Alright. So, you like her. Do you really, really like her?”

"Toki I swear to-" he stopped and took a breath, before he replied. "Yes."

As Aliquam sat down beside her, he scooped her gently into his lap and cradled her warmly in his arms. This dislodged the cats, and the both of them hopped down with grumpy sounds.

Toki leaned into him and inhaled contently. “You smell like cookies.” She informs him happily, sounding quite pleased with this. To her little brother, Toki chuckles. “Then you’ve got to show a little tenderness. Most women love romance. But be straight with her- you remember how your attempt at flirting with her during the wedding went, yeah?”

"Too well.” Kon murmured, before he cleared his throat. "Uh- yeah!"

Aliquam smiled at her words to him before he nuzzled her gently, rubbing her stomach.

Her stomach was warm and relaxed under his touch, but the magic made muscles twitched and flexed slightly under his fingers, a simple warning for what was to come.

Toki giggled, and rested her head against his chest, pressing the fronts of her horns affectionately against his jaw line. “Be honest with her. Maybe take her on a simple date to start. Go shopping with her, or take her to Ryushi’s. His restaurant has amazing food, and you know he serves a vegetarian line of meals as well, and they have private booths. Talk to her, spend time with her- it doesn’t even have to be a date if you really, really like her. If she really likes you too, she’ll jump at the chance to hang out and spend time with you.”

"I... Yeah... I'll try that out... Thanks a lot, sis..." Kon said gently.

“That’s what I’m here for, even when I’m possibly starting labor.” She teases gently. “Just enjoy time with her. And remember- if you want to start a legitimate relationship, don’t enter it with the end of it in mind.” She warns. If all went well, they would have a literal sheep in the family.

"I hope your husband is with you!” Kon snapped.

"I'm right here, little brother." Papyrus chuckled.

“He is. He’s been close at hand all day- and has finally calmed down it looks like.” She leans into him a bit more, and grunts. “Mmn… Back cramps and contractions are the worst thing ever. I think Mom dealt with the same thing with you, Kon. Though you were a little shit and made us wait eighteen hours before your little fanny decided to come out.”

"You know you love me, big sis!” He cackled.
“I do indeed.” She chuckled. “Now, remember, you should be safe to have sex with Lana so long as you don’t bump souls. Bumping souls means I’ll get a niece or nephew. In which such case, I shall spoil them rotten, but you had better not corrupt them, or I’ll shave you bald. Unfortunately, they don’t make a soul condom yet.” She eyes her husband. “We should get your dad to research that.” She had enjoyed touching souls with Papyrus- but getting pregnant had not been planned, and HTM’s didn’t get the leisure of choosing to have a kid or not.

Though the ‘soul condom’ comment made him laugh, Kon sounded much less frantic than he had earlier. "I promise I wont go down that hard on her when I do, Sis," he cackled, "Thanks a lot for that, Sis. Love you."

“That’s what I’m here for.” Mostly to tell him stuff he already knew but needed affirmed- but that’s what big siblings are for. “I love you too. Now, go make your plans, alright?”

"Yes! I just gotta… Gotta... Oh boy...” He drawled off as the phone left the side of his head as he hung up.

After a moment, Aliquam snorted loudly and began to laugh hard with an amused "NYEH HEH HEH HEH!"

Toki laughed lightly, and tossed the phone onto the table. “Laugh it up now, but you get to do that when Thumper starts dating. Bonus points to you, you married the first woman you dated.” She winked up at him teasingly. It ended shortly though as her middle clenched again, and one of the twins stretched against his hands in protest at both the motion and the loud noise so close to their enclosure. “Nng, ow, ow, ow, I do not like contractions. I feel like I am going to literally explode. At least when we have more kids, it’ll only be one. The chances of twins again is like, astronomically low.”

"You're right... But just let me know when you think you're gonna go into labor, I'll be right here for you." he murmured.

Toki stared up at him in slightly tight amusement. "Papyrus, contractions are a part of labor. I am very likely in the early stages." She said slowly. "Like right now."

"I know they're part of it but I still worry about you, you know!"

“Mhmm…” She sighed softly, and rubbed her digits over her middle. “Heh… Did I tell you what I told your dad?” As it fades off, she squirms in his lap. “I want to stretch. The cramps in my back are, well, back, and sitting is making them hurt.” She wanted to lay on her front to stretch them out, but the chances of that being comfortable for long were slim.

"Such a simple request, who am I to refuse?" He murmured, moving himself as to offer Toki a warm mate to lay on.

She eyes him lightly as he stretches out over the couch, and tilts her head as he pretty much presents himself. “Are you sure?” She questions. “I’m big enough there’s no way I can lay without my middle touching your spine. Are you going to be okay with that if the twins move?”

Considering he likely wouldn’t feel them move for much longer...

"I'll be okay, of course." He purred gently. "I will savor the feeling and I wouldn't have it any other way."

She quirks a grin at him. “You say that until they nail you in a squabble for space.” Still, she’s not going to turn it down. Toki shifts and wedges in gently, shifting her shirt as it rides up. She exhaled
softly, spreading her skirt out over his legs so she didn’t get tangled. She stretches out on him and gets comfortable. “You know, we’re going to have to move in like… ten minutes. Cookies should be done by then…” She just hoped she didn’t fall asleep. Sprawled on his chest, she was super comfortable and relaxed, eye lights soft and warm as she peered up at him contently.

"Sounds good." He sighed gently, stroking her head slowly before he leaned in and kissed her head. "I love you so much."

She leaned into his touch with a soft thrumming buzz. “I love you too.” She thrummed softly, angling her skull so he could rub the base of one of her horns. “Mm… I love your touch. It feels nice. Very relaxing. Safe."

"A mate's touch must be, to comfort their wife and children alike.” He murmured warmly, and massaged his fingers along the base of her horns.

Toki relaxed rapidly, her eye sockets drooping as she hit a slump in her energy levels. She exhaled softly over his chest, nuzzled her chin into his chest, and then struggled to keep her eyes open. “Mmm… You are very, very good at it,” she praises sluggishly, a pleased buzzing sound escaping her.

"I love you. I love you so very... very much." Papyrus hummed softly.

“Mm… love you most,” she croons sleepily, shifting faintly as the twins stir and fuss in her belly. “Goodness, I’m going to fall asleep at this rate.” She could probably use it, as rest at this point was necessary.

He chuckled and slowly rolled the two of them so they could lay together, cradling her in his body’s curve.

She settled against him contently, curling an arm around his ribs to hold him close. “Mm…” With her back to the couch, he could get up and she wouldn’t roll off. Toki gave him a lopsided smile. “Well, this works… If I fall asleep, you won’t be stuck.”

"I love you. More than you'll... you'll ever know." She smiled slightly, and tapped a finger against his sternum, above where his soul was. “I’ve felt your soul,” She says softly. “I’ve felt your soul in mine- and I know you’ve felt mine in yours.”

That’s how the twins were made, after all. “So I know your love- I’ve felt it for myself. It’s been a long time- but I remember the feel of it. Warm and bright- it filled me to the brim and I knew happiness. Do you remember how it felt?”

He chuckled at that gently. "Yes, indeed..." he purred. "I remember it so well..."

“It’s a shame human souls don’t work like monster ones. I can’t give you the connection you deserve...” Not without constantly reproducing. They hadn’t even done anything with souls with her pregnant- there was no telling the effect it could have on the soullings that were nurturing themselves off of her soul.

"I don’t care...” He nuzzled her. “I’m happy with you like this anyhow."

“I know you are.” She nuzzled him softly in turn. “I’m gonna nap now, okay…?”

"Of course, my dear.” He purred, kissing her gently.

Toki nuzzled him gently and smooched him back as well, before nestling up to his chest, and
"She woke up to hushed voices that weren’t actually all that hushed. They came from next to her, where a pillow that had been gingerly tucked between her arms to cradle her front and pillow her skull had replaced her husband’s frame.

Bless his soul, Papyrus had even carefully wedged a pillow between her thighs to provide the support her aching hips needed, even if it was awkward as hell thanks to her skirt.

Aching hips or not, Toki hadn’t expected to be woken from sleep by hushed voices- or the cramp that stabbed agony through her spine for remaining in one position for too long. A slightly pained noise left her, and she shifted an arm back without opening her eyes so she could rub at the painful knot in her lower spine.

Suspecting it was an unconscious action, a hand reached over and smooth, warm knuckles gently rubbed into the knot, while a second, smaller hand reached up to stroke her skull.

Papyrus’ voice was soft, so as not to stir her. "She's been like this all day.” He sighed softly. “She's so close to having them, a-and yet... would it normally take this long?"

Tenebris sighed softly as well. "Aliquam, I’m afraid I simply do not know enough about this to tell you what you want to know. I can, however, assure you that this delayed labor is not abnormal in human women. It must be the same with Tokiko."

She eased with a soft sigh, though the knot didn’t disappear fully. She’d need to move and stretch to make it fully go away- but the large hand, one she recognized as Tenebris, felt nice against her magical flesh.

One of her sockets peeked open, but she did not yet speak, simply listening to Papyrus vent his worries to Tenebris.

"Father, do you think you could stick around more often until she has them? I mean... I have work... and they said I can take all the time I need, but I cannot risk the danger that might come with my neglect of my duty." His hand tightened slightly on her skull, but he smoothed his fingers over it again to soothe the feeling away. He didn’t want to make the cracked scar on her skull worse. "HAM is still out there, and Toki has never been more vulnerable than right now. We know they’re watching us- but we just… don’t know how. If they see any lapse in our usual schedule…”

"Then they could choose to attack.” Tenebris rumbled softly, and exhaled a quiet sound. “Of course, my son. I will watch over my daughter-in-law and not let anything happen to her." The older monster purred gently. “Or my grandchildren.”

"Thank you, Father.”

The relief in Pap’s voice made her sigh softly. She knew he was torn between duty to his job and duty to his heart. By doing his job, he was keeping her safe- but he couldn’t keep her safe and be with her all of the time in her time of need.

“You’re only a phone call away, Pap, if I need you.” She whispers gently to them both. “But having
Tenebris around would be good.” A tired sound leaves her. “My energy levels keep fluctuating, so the extra hands would be helpful while you work.” She knew he had today off- but since the twins hadn’t arrived…

Well, he would have to go back to work until they did. He and Undyne were technically the captains of the guard for the village- and one half of the captains did not make for a fully balanced team. She knew and accepted that- and let him know that she was okay if he had to go back to work concerning it.

Besides- work kept him busy, and she loved him dearly, but she could only take so much of his fretting before it would wear on her. She needed her strength- not to be too stressed out by trying to keep him from stressing.

"Toki... I hope we didn't wake you... But... Alright. I'll give you some magic to help you out while I’m gone." Aliquam came and kissed her gently as he caressed her stomach, giving her what essence she'd need.

“The cramp did, mostly.” The magic felt good, but she waved him away after a short time. “I’m fairly topped up, Pap. Thank you, though. Did you get the cookies out of the oven?” Toki questioned lightly as she shifted in place. She made to try and sit up.

"Yes.” He nods. “I got them all out while you slept.”

“Good.” Toki nods softly. Once she’s upright, she groans quietly and leans forwards as best she can. “Alright. I need to stand up- can someone give me a hand, please? My back is killing me.” She could really use a good hot soak in the bathtub, take some of the weight off of her spine.

"Of course.” Tenebris boosted her gently upwards, and glanced to his son once Toki was stabilized. “Aliquam, you can go ahead and go see to your duty. I'll take good care of Toki.”

"Alright, Father... Thank you.” Papyrus kissed her head tenderly, and her belly once she was stable, and then went to go put his armor on.

Once they were alone, with her husband heading out the door, Toki heaved a soft breath and kneaded her knuckles into her lower back. “At least he’s staying busy.” She sighs. “Mmmg. He hates to see me so uncomfortable. It’s probably better if he’s out and about keeping his mind clear rather than sitting and fretting.” Papyrus didn’t do well with stewing on his worries.

Still, green eye lights turn to her father in law, and she gives him a wry smile. “Pretty sure the twins are going to be little troublemakers. Don’t know if Pap told you, but I had steady contractions earlier. They faded off before I took a nap though, and all I have now are back-cramps from hell. Speaking of- I’m wondering if a soak in the tub would help at this point.” The tub did have jets… And jets would feel amazing on her back.

"Once he starts on his work, he'll stop thinking so hard about it, especially since I’m here with you right now." he assured her gently, before he nodded gently in understanding. "Then we best follow through with a nice soak for you.”

“Good. I am, uh, going to need your help. I can’t bend over to get the faucets.” A flush tints her bones, and she sighs, before offering him a hand so he could stand upright again. She’d probably need help getting out too. Once he was upright, Toki waddled for the stairs, dodging Gracie as the feline swatted at her feet from behind the doorframe.

"Without saying. Right behind you.” The big pale monster stayed behind her, keeping an eye on her.
as she headed up the stairs. The last thing that she needed was to fall- sure, she was, as far as he knew, to term, but falling didn’t mean a healthy labor.

Toki smiled slightly, and opened the door to her bedroom with a sigh. She shifts, stripping off her shirt as she steps inside. She was having one of her rare moments where she really didn’t care if he saw her naked- and it wasn’t like he wasn’t going so see everything soon anyways, when she had to deliver. “Totally looking forwards to being able to bend down and move again.” She hooks a finger into her skirt, motioning for Tenebris to head into the bathroom ahead of her, and slowly works it and her undergarments down.

Tenebris lifted his hand to shield his gaze as he walked by her, going into the bathroom to get the bath started.

Toki chuckled as he slid around her, and got herself fully undressed. She used her skirt as a cover, and padded in after him, leaning her backside against the counter. Her bones clacked coolly against the porcelain, and she chuckled gingerly. “Don’t mind me, Tenebris. You’re eventually going to see it all anyways when the twins decide to get their butts into gear and come see the world.” She was too uncomfortable to fuss over being properly dressed.

He chuckled at that. "If you're sure." he rumbled, before lowering his hand.

“I’m sure. Thank you for respecting my usual boundaries however.” She smiled at him warmly. Once the tub was half way full, she dropped her skirt, and waddled to the side. She sighed, and carefully stepped inside, more than aware of the summoned parts below that refused to go away. “So this is something you should note for later with Sans. My, ah, parts, appeared this morning and haven’t gone away.”

"Of course." he murmured softly, before he nodded gently. “Of course, I have been warned of this by Aliquam. I'm sure it's simply a sign of your nearing the time to birth your children."

“That’s what we figured too. It sure makes things awkward though.” She eased down into the tub, grimacing as her back ached, and then sank up to her pelvis in the hot water. “Mmm…” She sighs contently. “Gotta enjoy this while I can. We’re supposed to have a snow storm blow in soon, and they’re expecting it to be a bad one.” She hummed. “Water lines might freeze. If it does end up a bad one, you and Thumper are welcome to stay here where it’ll be warmer.”

"Blasted cold." he mumbled, before he smiled and gave a nod. "If it so ends up, we shall join you."

She nods and quirks a grin at him. As the water rises, she reaches over and turns on the lower jets. A slightly pained sound leaves her, and she leans her back into the harsh streams of water as they pound at the knots in her ectoplasmic flesh. “Make sure to keep an eye on Thumper. I’m sure you remember the incident from last winter. I’d rather not have to try and thaw him if a branch cracks and he bolts again.” She sighs softly, sockets closing, and then drums her fingers against her belly as the twins move and fuss. “You too. I recall you coming in half frozen. At least this time I’m not depleted from coming right out of a heat, though.” She wouldn’t have a problem keeping the house warm so long as she ate plenty and rested often. “… You know,” Toki suddenly laughs, “it would not surprise me if the twins waited until the blizzard hits to decide to come.”

"He knows better this time, he's insisted that he wants to stay in the burrow if we ever go out." he rumbled gently, "He finds himself most comfortable there, so I let him have that." before he snorted and laughed gently, "They truly would be little devils, wouldn't they, choosing of all weathers to come out during."

“Burrow?” She asks curiously- that wasn’t something she had known about. Toki relaxes down in
the water, and once it reaches a good height, she turns it off with her foot. “It honestly wouldn’t surprise me. I haven’t had any more contractions since just before my nap.” Toki quietly chuckled. “Speaking of… I probably need to decide how I’m going to have them.”

"Ah, it's funny actually, I’ll explain later though. We can discuss the birthing method right now if you'd like," he offered.

“That would work.” She nods. “But I definitely want to hear about burrows later though. So, what methods have you and Papyrus been looking up?” Toki questioned, and teasingly flicked water at him with her fingers.

He flicks water back at her naturally, and takes a seat next to the tub. He props his chin on his palm, and looked at her softly. "So far there seems to be only two methods akin to human capability. However only one is natural.”

“And?” She presses lightly, grinning at him encouragingly. “I’d like to hear all of my options.”

"There may be more monster-in-origin possibilities, but now they are only theories.”

She pursed her teeth thoughtfully and tilted her skull at him. “That doesn’t really answer my questions.” She admits with a sigh. Toki adjusted in the tub, watching him intently, and rubbed her middle quietly. “In all honesty, I’d rather go as natural as possible, so long as it’s safe for the twins. Be it in the tub, downstairs, wherever, so long as it’s safe…” Personally, she wasn’t certain what she wanted to do. The tub would provide warmth and keep her more relaxed, but she didn’t really think it would be comfortable long term.

"If you want the birth to be natural, then I will make sure it goes perfectly." he told her, smiling gently.

Toki gave him a faint smile in return. “There’s no guarantee of it going perfectly.” She says honestly. “Anything can happen. We need to be prepared with a plan in case natural doesn’t work out… In which such case, cesarean would probably be easier on me than on a human.” She poked her belly, and got jabbed in return. “No organs besides the one that houses them. And if that happens- well, I’ve got the HP to tank it. Hm… I wonder how my cracks are doing.” She muttered idly. She hadn’t really paid them much mind in… goodness, forever?

“I’d bet by now they have long since healed, my dear.” He rumbled gently.

“Mhm.” She glanced at him, and then tucked her soul into her hands. It was cradled gently in her palms, and Toki turned it gently. She smiled at the stats. “Well, my HP is a lot higher. Fifteen hundred. I don’t see anymore red marks either.” She touched over the lighter green spots, marking where the red cracks had once marred its surface. She didn’t feel anything, other than slightly warm from touching it. “The healed cracks don’t hurt anymore either. Little more than a year, but my soul is back in good condition.” She quirked a happy smile up at him.

"You are a powerful young woman, Tokiko Nara." He purred gently, "And I’m proud of you for making it this far." He rumbled gently.

“I’m not just a Nara anymore.” She reminds him gently. “But, I wouldn’t be where I am without all of you.” She smiles and tucks her soul away. Toki shifts, grunting slightly as she tries to straighten up a little bit in the tub. No place is comfortable for long, sadly. The soaking feels nice though.

He rumbles and he leaned his back against the wall, leaning his head to one side before he rumbled, softly exhaling.
Toki lifted a finger from the water and gently flicked flecks of it at him, mischief glinting in her sockets. “So, burrow?”

He leaned over to flick water back at her with a soft snort. "My abdominal cavity has earned that title after he's found himself safest there."

“Oh my god.” She giggled. “That is adorable. Oh my goodness.” She laughed softly. A soft sound left her as her middle tightened, and she tensed up. “Ahah, that’s the first one since before I took a nap. Back to being irregular.”

He chuckled though seeing her tense up definitely made him do so as well. He rumbled softly, looking at her with great concern.

Toki eyed him lightly. “It’s just a contraction.” She soothed slightly, exhaling softly once it faded. “They’re uncomfortable, not painful, so long as my back isn’t knotted to high hell. Goodness, are you going to be as jumpy as Pap is?”

"Might end up more so.” He murmured, rubbing his head. "I can detect things much like a companion beast can." he explained, "Changes in scent and such."

“That’s… actually interesting but also weird.” Toki shifts, crosses her ankles, and then relaxes. “I wonder what I smell like to you… Anyways.” Her skull shifted into a more serious look. “Are you going to be able to do this?” She questioned him seriously. “Because if you can’t, I need to know. Come the time for the ‘show’ to start, I’m going to probably be too distracted and busy to focus on keeping both you and Papyrus calm.”

"I will, yes.” He nods. “I may want to record it for the sake of science, but I assure you, I will do this.”

“I trust you, Tenebris,” Toki nods slowly. She makes a face at him however. “If it wasn’t for the fact that the birth would definitely be useful for future science, I would tell you to shove your camera where the sun doesn’t shine.” She was not at all comfortable with having a camera on her while she delivered. But, Toki understood the necessity. If ever more skeleton HTM’s popped up, it would be good knowledge to have. As she had once said, she was a bit of a science experiment. “Just keep it out of sight, and I’ll be fine.”

In fact, Tenebris would likely have better luck if he had a go-pro or a small, micro camera that he could just stick to his shirt or something, rather than something that immediately drew attention.

"But isn't that what I would be doing initially?" he teased.

That brought a snort to her, and she laughed, churning up water as it bubbled up from under her jaw and out her nasal cavity. “Oh good gods, Tenebris, really? That’s terrible. True, but terrible.” She laughed.

He chuckled at that. "You have to give me that one, eh?"

“Oh yeah.” She giggled.
Chapter 71

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: LOL. We really had you goin’ didn’t we? HEH. No labor yet for Toki. Could be any time though. Any time between this chapter and the last chapter of book 1 of TOTU~

Silverwing Notes: Well we all remember how bad last year's snow day was, thankfully I think this one is a lot less painful heheheh

Enjoy the chapter!

The snowstorm hit two days later, sweeping Ebott County in a wall of white. It rattled the shutters and the walls for nearly two more days- however, mid-day on the fourth day since her due date had come and past, the snow faded away.

It left behind nearly five feet of snow and ice.

Alongside that, the temperature plummeted, dropping down nearly to zero, and being scheduled to drop even lower come nightfall. It was woefully, woefully cold.

The power was still on, however, so that was one small saving grace for the monsters of the village. Power meant food could be cooked, and heat could keep the houses functional.

However, with the layers and layers of snow and ice, another problem came to be. The doors were all blocked, and everyone was stuck inside. So, that lead to many monsters having to clamor out of windows and the like so they could all begin digging.

Massively pregnant and dealing with random bursts of Braxton Hicks or not, Toki was going to help. Even if helping was relegated to serving fire magic infused hot cocoa in large quantities to half frozen monsters, it was definitely something she wanted to do, rather than hunker inside while literally everyone else froze their asses off.

She was seated on a stool from Grillby’s bar, and had a high table in front of her. Toki’s little cocoa stand was dead center of the park, where the large fire monster whose barstool she had been temporarily given had melted a large circular clearing of snow away. A large pot was settled at one hand, and she was keeping the cocoa flowing as it were, while dishing out large mugs of it as monsters stopped by in droves. Grillby assisted her as best he could, but to keep up with supply and demand, he was also manning his own pot.

Keeping the pots warm in the nearly zero degree weather was easy with magic. The magic also infused the cocoa, and made for an easy time warming up the non-fire based monsters from the inside. Fire magic was just good like that.

Keeping the pots warm required keeping her hand on the pot for periods of time, and the only time she wasn’t touching them was when she was dishing up another mug for a chilled monster, or adding more cocoa, cinnamon, milk and vanilla to the pot to extend her supplies. It wasn’t, thankfully, too
taxing on magic. It only took just a little bit of magic to give the cocoa the warming boost that it needed, and keeping the pot steaming was easier than keeping it boiling.

So, Toki was good to go for several more hours at least, until she too got chilled. Fire magic was good for warming, but using it externally would let her temperature drop. Not that she minded—Papyrus had literally layered her in as many turtlenecks and sweat-pants as he could, since she no longer fit inside of her jacket. She had on at least three shirts, and four pairs of pants. Other than her hands and skull, Toki wasn’t cold at all.

Likewise, Grillby had on several layers of clothes, but those were mostly to protect him from any water from melting snow, or any snow that got kicked up by the wind. It melted when coming into contact with him on the norm, so it was a safety precaution mostly.

“Here you go,” She smiled, handing over another mug of steaming cocoa to the shivering monster in front of her. The wolf monster took the mug silently, nodded to her, and then padded off to go huddle with the other monsters seeking warmth with each other in greater numbers.

Toki watched them go and sighed softly, before glancing to Grillby. “So… how angry do you think Papyrus would be if I summoned Clover and Sugar so they could act as living heaters?” Summoning them took a decent chunk of magic, but it wasn’t like she was short. Stag’s consumption had lowered as they devoured more and more of the magic that existed in the air, so other than what the twins needed, which had lowered considerably at tail end of her gestation, she was simply stockpiling it up day by day.

“If for the sake of keeping you warm, I don’t think he would care one bit.” Caeruleus replied, helping distribute blankets to those who show up.

Tenebris was outside of the area of the park, helping with plowing snow for making paths for everyone.

“I wasn’t thinking for me,” She comments idly. She eyes the half frozen monsters, and makes her choice. A quick tug of her magic, and Clover comes flying out of the rip in the hell void with Sugar clutched in her feet.

A quick order, and soon the massive hornets are buzzing down to provide an area of effect sort of warmth for the monsters huddled near the tree.

“There.” Toki looks pleased as the wolves and other various monsters press close to the hell hornets. Sugar is pleased with the attention, while Clover looks quite like she could care less. The skeleton leans back slightly in her chair and shifts in her seat, a soft, uncomfortable exhale leaving her as she spooned up more cocoa into a mug. “What about you, Cae? You need some cocoa?”

"Nah, the kid's keeping me warm enough.” he replied, rubbing his stomach and giving it a small pat as he replied, "You'd be surprised how warm I am right now."

"I was rather spooked when I detected his high body temperature, but upon realizing it was Solstice's doing, all I insisted was he wear his thicker clothing upon going out today.” Grillby chuckled. At Sans insistence, he paused in making cocoa so he could warm some blankets, and hand them out to help fight off the cold.

“I feel about the same way. Warmest spot on me is my middle.” She chuckles. “At least your lucky ass wasn’t this big over summer. Still, if you get cold at all, lemme know and you’ll have some cocoa to enjoy.” The skeleton glances over as she watches some fleet-footed rabbit monsters book it across the top of the snow. “Y’know, I sometimes wonder what life would have been like if I’d have ended
ed as a different kind of monster.” She comments idly, and smooths a hand over her belly.

"You couldn't be more right about the seasons thing. But do tell, what kinda monster did you have in mind?” The taller skeleton hummed softly.

“No idea,” she laughed. “It was just a passing thought. Given the broad number of monster species, I’m just surprised I ended up a skeleton.” Another mug of cocoa went out, and Toki watched Todd skirt away across the top of the snow like the rabbits had. “As much as I miss my hair, I’d rather not have ended up with hair everywhere. I honestly don’t know how Todd manages.” The rabbits, at least, had shorter hair that rarely knotted or clumped, and only required minimal grooming. Todd’s fur got tangled in everything. “Eh, it was just a passing thought. My skull is full of weird thoughts. You’ve got that to look forwards to as you get further along.”

He chuckled at that. "Well, thankfully I haven’t had any thoughts like that just yet."

Toki waggled her finger teasingly at him. “Just you wait,” She grinned, “you’ll get them eventually, and I’ll get to be bemused by some of the stuff you come up with.”

A snowball sailed between her horns, and she startled.

“Score!” Rosie laughed, knee deep in the loose snow that hadn’t yet packed down into hard ice.

That had Caeruleus chuckling while Grillby gently wagged a finger at Rosie. "Now, now, imagine what could have happened if you aimed too low and hit her right in the face, eh?” he chuckled.

Rosie stuck out her tongue and made a noise at him. “I have impeccable aim, if you must know.”

Felix, who had several lumps of snow stuck to him in the shape of what was a smiley-face in the works, squished a snowball into his sister’s hair. “She really does. She doesn’t miss unless she intends to.”

Toki snorted good-naturedly, and tossed a loose handful of snow back. The wind carried it over, and coated the children in a light dusting of fluffy snow, much to their amusement.

That had Grillby and Caeruleus laughing, "Good aim, Toki!"

“The wind did all the work!” Rosie cried with indignant amusement.

“That it did, but I still got you both!” She chuckled. “Why don’t you and the other kids go work on digging out Twitch’s house?”

“But that’s woooooork,” Rosie whined.

“Work is good for building character,” Toki chirps.

"Tenebris is working with Wolfen to dig out his home. Why don’t you go help him?"

“We’ll get everyone together to go help.” Felix nodded, cutting off his little sister before she could fuss more.

The two children ran off to go find the monster kids- and likely more shovels.

Toki quirks a soft grin and sighs, leaning back slightly in her chair. Sitting so straight for so long sucked- but bar stools weren’t meant for long-term comfort. “Kids. Heh. You know, our kids are going to grow up getting into all sorts of shenanigans together, right?”
"Oh that goes without saying." Cae snorted, "Our poor weary father will have a hell of a time babysitting."

She laughed softly. “I’m pretty sure he’ll be fine. He seems pretty excited about having grandkids—and I’m pretty sure we can plop them in his lap and he’ll just sit there happily. Heh…” Toki snorts, and nearly spills a mug of cocoa as she hands it over. “They’re going to have him wrapped around their little fingers. He’s a big softie.”

"With a grandfather like Tenebris, there is little to no doubt that they would end up spoiled rotten.” Grillby chuckled gently.

“Don’t I know it.” She snickers softly. Toki shifts, sighs, and adds more milk and cocoa powder to her mixture. The smell wafted up, and she felt her mouth watering slightly. “Mmm, I love cocoa.” She sighs softly.

Her next customer of sorts is Wolfen, whose fur is matted with ice. He shivers, teeth chattering, and gives her a miserable look. “It’s too damn cold for anyone to be out and about. We’ve got most of the houses dug out though. Your dad,” his gaze flicks to Sans, “is half frozen, but stubbornly digging out the last of the pathways to give everyone some semblance of access. You may want to drag his ass here before his tail falls off.”

"I probably should go get him, yeah." he sighed, then he smiled at Wolfen, "Here, take a load off, pal." he told him as he got up, offering his seat before going to find Tenebris.

The wolf monster nodded his thanks and took his seat, snagging one of the blankets and curling it around himself. He sipped at the mug of cocoa that Toki had given him, and tried to warm up.

Toki sighed gently and shook her head. “Everyone’s been at it for a couple hours.” She hums. “We could probably call this good. It’s supposed to snow again soon anyways, and the temperature is going to start dropping. Any colder, and it’ll probably even start to bother us.” She glanced to Grillby.

"Agreed. I shall pack everything up and begin for the bar. I can continue serving people there if needed." Grillby spoke up.

“I’ll help.” She nods. Toki slips off of the bar stool, sighing softly, and carefully finishes handing out mugs of cocoa. Once her line was gone, she packed up the pot and remaining mugs, hefting them into her arms, and stared at her table and chair with a frown. “I can’t get the table and your stool. I can carry the pots and the mugs if you want to get everything else?”

“I can get the tables and stools, Toki.” Wolfen hummed. He knotted the blanket around his neck, swallowed down the last of his cocoa in one gulp—giving himself a cocoa mustache in the fur around his muzzle as he did so— and then moved to collect the tables for the fire elemental and gravid skeleton.

She smiled at him. “Thanks, Wolfen. Well, after you two, I suppose.” She’d have an easier time making it through the snow if she could step where they had. Toki was interrupted however as she squeaked, and suddenly found herself astride a wingless hornet.

Sugar bounced eagerly under her, while the shadow of Clover appeared above them, slowly herding half frozen monsters towards the direction of the bar.

With Grillby serving as the beacon at the front of the crowd, the group was steadily led to the bar, but Grillby stopped as he saw what turned out to be Tenebris digging into the snow by the door of
said bar. Though just as he had finished, he lifted his head and smiled over at Grillby, "There you are, old friend!"

Toki waved at him from atop Sugar. "Sans is looking for you!" She calls, eying him firmly to see if he had any frost damage. "Wolfen tattled about you being cold. We're calling it good for the day. The temperature is starting to drop again." And any colder, and even the skeletons wouldn't be able to handle it, let alone those with actual flesh and squishy bits to freeze.

Grillby shook his head slightly and smiled. "Thank you for digging out my bar." The fire elemental hummed.

He chuckled at that, and he lifted himself. It looked like he had ended up needing to wrap his feet, but looked that he was still able to stand on them, meaning it wasn't actual damage affecting them, just the cold.

"My pleasure, Grillby. I'll go ahead and find Sans, and I'll bring him to the bar once I do. The cold is having its effect, but I'm not down yet."

Toki rolled her eye lights in her skull with a soft hum. "Keep in mind, if you freeze too badly, it'll be a bitch and a half to thaw you out." She shifted, twining her fingers into flaming mane of Sugar, and grimaced as the bee gave a nervous shift, refusing to come too close to the door with the big pale monster there.

Wolfen spotted the issue, and helped her unload her supplies onto the top of the table he was carrying. He then balanced it and gently brought it inside of the bar.

Grillby ushered people into his bar, his magic expanding to warm up the inside as he usually did. "Sans will return if he can't find you." Grillby hums. "I would rather you go get warm, old friend. See to it that Thumper gets warm, you stay warm, and Papyrus keeps the ice out of his joints."

He nodded once. "Then I will join you and the others inside shortly. I've just a few more things I have left to take care of."

"Alright." Grillby nods. "If you spot Sans, send him to the bar, please. Miss Toki," his gaze turns to her, "Go find your husband and go warm up your home. You've done enough for today- go relax, warm up, and get something to eat. You need your magic stored up for when the twins decide to come."

"Whenever that happens." She agrees dryly. Toki shifts and hops off of Sugar as Clover sets down. The wingless hornet skitters back into the hell verse after lifting Toki up onto Clover's back. She straddles the bigger hornet, sinking her fingers tightly into the mane of fire. "I'll go get Pap. Tenebris- you go find Thumper, and whenever you're done, you come on over to the house if you want to. If the power goes out, you'd better come over, so we can keep you and Thumper from freezing." If the power went out, the houses would become far, far too cold too quickly. The fireplace would help, yes, but there was warmth in numbers.

The beast nodded and turned, following the path he and the others had carved into the snow to return home.

Once everyone was inside or gone, Toki and Clover took to the sky. The big hornet was quick in locating Papyrus, and once they located the tall skeleton, they headed in his direction.

Flying was terrifying- but also horribly exciting. Had she done this before? Not at all. Should she have been up her with as pregnant as she was? Well, she trusted Clover, and Clover wouldn't let her
fall. Was it fun and something she intended to do more once she could sit properly? Hell yes.

Clover came down to hover near Papyrus, and Toki grinned down at her husband from the flying hornet’s back.

“Heyyy there good-lookin’. We’re calling it for today,” She calls playfully. “Wanna hitch a ride and go home?”

Papyrus was, to say the least, happy to see his mate approaching with the offer of a ride to warmth. He was, however, a little bit hesitant about her being so pregnant but so high in the air. He kept his fussing to himself, however, knowing that summons would do everything to protect the one who summoned them.

"Nyeh heh heh! Well since you’re offering, I don’t think I could decline." he replied to her, speaking a little louder as to be heard over Clover's wings.

A quick command, and Clover landed. She crouched, offering a seat behind Toki for Papyrus to join her.

Toki grinned at him and held out her hand. “I’d have to tease you for being afraid of heights if you did,” She beams at him. “Lets go home and get warm. Even I’m starting to get chilly under all of these layers.” They were going to have to peel her out of them, like a rotund onion.

He nodded as he climbed on before he wrapped his arms around her, nuzzling her with a happy sound. “Nyeh!”

Toki laughed as his arms snaked around her chest, and leaned forwards to guide him into a slightly hunched position. Clover struggled a little bit to get upright, not used to flying with two unsecured loads on her back, but managed to get herself into the air.

Being up in the air was sort of feeing in an odd way. Toki had to keep a firm grasp on the mane of oddly solid fire, with Papyrus holding her tightly. Thankfully, Clover was very steady in flying, despite how hard and fast her wings had to beat in order to keep in the air against the freezing wind.

Still, it didn’t keep Toki from whooping happily, her laughter ringing out over the snow and rooftops as Clover brought them home.

Clover was simply amused at her mistress, and endeavored to make the flight as nice and smooth as she could. After all, her mistress was heavy with young, and though Clover did not have much of a concept of her mistress’ worries about something called a ‘due date’, she had to endeavor to make sure that her mistress and her young were safely delivered home.

Home and out of this horribly freezing air. Clover envied Sugar. Sugar was back, enveloped in the warm delightful flames of their home realm, while she was still out in what she decided was white, freezing gross fluff.

A short and absolutely freezing flight back to the house had Clover dropping them off right outside the door. Toki let Papyrus get off first, and then gave him a slight grin. “I need some help getting down.”

"Thank you, Clover." He thanked the hell beast, before reaching up and helping Toki down, nuzzling her gently. "Though next time, I’ll have you a saddle made to ride her properly," he told Toki before nuzzling her again.

“It was kind of spur of the moment,” she giggled softly, leaning into his nuzzle with a soft and happy
buzzing sound. “Lets go get warmed up, okay?” She shifted and patted her summons, before letting her go back to the hell verse. Toki smiled as Clover disappeared, and then waddled for the stairs. “Maybe get the fire place going. I get the feeling we’ll end up losing power sooner or later, so we might want to dig the candles out too.”

He nodded gently and followed her into the house. "How is everyone else doing?” he asked, knowing she had made that effort to help out the rest of the villagers.

Once she was inside, she began the effort of stripping out of her many layers. The house was a lot warmer inside than the outside air was. “Cold,” she answers. “Grillby and I kept the cocoa flowing, but cocoa and warm blankets can only do so much against such cold temperatures. Even the wolves were cold.” She shakes her head with a sigh. “I don’t think everything got done, but at this point, any colder and they’d have started losing limbs. Besides- if it snows again, it’s going to be pointless.”

Nodding in agreement, he sighed, and then went upstairs to get some warmer clothes, as well as to make sure the heater was on for later.

Toki stripped down to her base layer, freeing herself from several shirts and pants. The damp layers were tossed into the dirty clothes, and Toki went into the living room. A bit of fire magic, and the fireplace was roaring, warmth flooding the room.

She went to go fetch candles, but had to pause for a moment as her middle tightened. Toki leaned against the doorframe with a soft huff, and massaged her back as she waited for it to pass. Contractions, she had decided, were utter bullshit. Particularly when they refused to be regular. “Hey, Pap? Grab the candles while you’re up there.”

"Can do!” Was his call from the second floor. He came down after a little while, carrying a bundle of warm clothing as well as a bunch of candles for them to light.

Thankfully Toki had straightened before he had come downstairs. She met him half way down, and collected the candles from him. Given that the power was still on, they didn't need to be lit yet, but she had intentions of putting them where they could easily get to them.

She gave her husband a warm smile and went to tuck the candles into the living room. "What would you like for dinner tonight?” She questioned gently. Fire magic meant that with or without power, she could cook dinner for them.

"I'm not sure.” He hummed. “What do we have available?”

"Well, we have soup, I think. I think we still have some potatoes, but I don't know if I'm feeling potatoes tonight. Hm... We have a couple bags of chicken, and some garlic... I could make garlic chicken and rice?” Once the candles were set down, Toki waddled for the kitchen, sighing softly as she went. "Go ahead and toss your wet clothes into the laundry basket, and go warm up by the fire.”

"Garlic chicken and rice sounds good, dear.” He gave her a smile, before laughing. “You don’t need to tell me twice.” While she went for the kitchen, he went to do as ordered, tossing wet clothes into the laundry basket before scooting into the living room to warm up by the fire.

Toki laugheded good-naturedly, and headed into the kitchen. She set out chicken to thaw, and then padded back to the living room. Scooping up an armload of pillows and blankets, she grinned at him cheekily and began to carefully scoot the coffee table out of the way. "Weather like this calls for a blanket nest. You game?”

“Beyond game.” He chuckled cheerily. “A blanket nest sounds perfect.”
"Good! Why don't you slide the cushions off the couch? We can sit on them instead of tile, and build our nest around those and some pillows." She chirped softly. Moving the coffee table was a chore, but eventually it was out of the way for nest building. "We might need more pillows though... Hm..." Considering how many it took for her to be comfortable... It probably wouldn't go amiss to have a couple of extra pillows between them and the floor.

"Alright, let's start with these." He murmured, pulling the couch cushions off, setting them on the floor before she got up, "Alright, go ahead and get started, I'll go get more pillows."

"Alright!" Once the cushions were down, Toki eased herself down. Getting down on the floor wasn't hard, however getting up again without help was impossible. Once she was down, she placed the couch pillows on the floor, draped a blanket over the whole mass to make a solid base for the nest, and then began to build up the walls. The front of the couch made up the backing, but the sides of the nest could be built up more. Particularly since the cats would be joining them, and Gracie had a tendency to roll in her sleep and fall off things.

All the motion brought a cramp, and she groaned, resting face down on the nest floor with her fingers in her lower back. Her knees kept her lower half up as she stretched and tried to ride out the initial cramping sensation next to her spine.

"I hope you're okay down there!" Aliquam piped up as he came downstairs with more pillows.

"Just a cramp!" She calls back. "I've been pretty active today. Not that it did anything to help kick start labor," she mutters the last part, well within range of him hearing her words. She was admittedly a little sour about it- as much as she didn't mind being pregnant, she was also quite thoroughly done being pregnant. Toki was quite ready to have the twins already. Alas, they were not ready to join the world yet.

"Alright, then I say you take a break!" He insisted, dropping the pillows where she could reach them.

"I'm going to be taking a break here in a minute, you goober." She took the pillows and set to work with what she had. Soon, there was a vast and fluffy nest, and she settled gently onto her side, leaving space behind her and in front of her, in case Papyrus wanted to lie between her and the fire. "There." She hums. "Now I'll rest. Join me?"

"I shall join you!" he announced, climbing into the nest with her happily. "Nyeh heh heh heh~"

The nest was warmed with her magic, but she still flinched slightly as he came to touch her. "Good lord, Pap, your bones are freezing. Get over here and lemme warm you up, you papsicle." She opened her arms and motioned for him to cozy up.

He happily scooted over on his hands and knees and pressed himself flush to her. His arms looped around her, and he groaned happily. "Nyeh~ my god you're so warm~" He cooed contently.

She looped her arms around him and snuggled him close. "Nyeh~ my god you're so warm~" He snorted.

"I doubt it." She chuckled softly and nestled closer. "You have this... Safe sort of feeling about you."
remember when I was little being held by my dad- it's the safest feeling in the world. They're going to love snuggling with you." She gives him a smile, and kisses him softly.

"Nyeh heh heh!" He nuzzled her gently and kissed her head, before he sighed and closed his eye sockets. "Well, I’m perfectly content staying right here." He murmured.

"Same. At least until dinner time, yeah?" She shifted, and rubbed her fingers gently along his spine to help him warm up a bit. She massaged and kneaded gently to help him relax a bit, and began to him a soft tune for them both.

The cats squished in too, and settled behind Pap's back to leech off the warmth that they were producing.

"Nyeh heh heh~" He purred and kissed her gently, body relaxing as she massaged and warmed him all the same. "I love you so much~"

She kissed him back softly and nuzzled her face to his. "I love you too. You're my world." She beams at him. "Thanks for putting up with my pregnancy grumps and aches, Pap. You are the world's best husband."

"You're the best wife I could ever ask for." He purred in reply, kissing her gently on the head before he shimmied down in the nest. Curling around her belly, Papyrus pressed several kisses to the surface, and massaged the sides of the globe affectionately.

She laughed as he burrowed down onto the blankets, and shifted as chilled teeth pressed to her middle. "Get your full of the belly while you can. It won't be here forever." She chuckled softly.

The twins shifted lazily in her belly, sleepy and content with her position to be calm and relaxed and not fussy.

“I love you so much,” He cooed, to both his wife and his unborn children. Aliquam pressed several more kisses to the soft surface, tracing the forms of the children inside with a tender touch. She was large and round, but she was still the most beautiful thing to him.

"I love you too." She smiled softly. Her middle shifted slightly under his kisses, and she laughed softly.

There was a flicker and a buzzing sound, before the lights and the heater cut out.

She chuckled suddenly, rubbing her hand over his skull as he nuzzles to her belly. "Power is out."

"We can easily light up the fireplace, if not we can go to Grillbys, he has his own generator."

"I think you meant the candles." She chuckled, glancing over the nest wall to the fire roaring not far from them. "I'd rather stay here if it's okay with you. I feel more comfortable being in our own home, rather than other ones right now." She hums softly. A lot of that was her anxieties about pregnancy and birth. Being at home made her feel safer- though it was also a little bit stifling. "Besides we can probably expect to see your Dad and little bro here eventually. Grillby's top floor home is a bit small for him, Sans, and four other monsters."

"Fair enough. My bad" he snorted at that, before he nuzzled her, and sighed, "Alright... let's rest for a little then, yes?"

"Mhm. Rest sounds good." She nuzzles him gently, and scoots so she can nestle under his chin. She exhales warm air over his neck. "If they knock at the door though, you'll have to get it. I'm stuck here
until I have to get up to do dinner."

He nodded gently. "Fair enough." he then sighed and laid down, stretching at her side.

As he stretched out, she joined him as well. She let her mind wander, and nestled closely to him. A soft sigh, and she was drifting off into a content and relaxed nap.

The duo were happy and asleep for the while that they were unbothered, only being informed of another's presence when Tenebris and Caeruleus entered the home to recover from the cold

The door opening and closing woke Toki, and she opened her sockets slightly as a cool draft permeated the house from the sudden opening of the door. "Mmmm... Tenebris?" She called softly. "We're in the living room if that's you that just came through the door."

"Yes, its us." he murmured, "I hope we did not wake you."

"Mmm, you did, but it's fine. I probably need to do dinner here soon... But you must be cold. Come-let's warm you first. One of you can wedge behind me, and the other can fit behind Papyrus." She gave a soft yawn.

They would find her and Papyrus in a neat that had more than enough room for the skeleton and the void beast to fit as well. Toki had been expecting visitors after all.

Tenebris chuckled lightly as Caeruleus murmured his 'dibs' on snuggling with his brother, though Tenebris didn't mind one bit to curl up around the set of them.

Toki squirmed a little closer to Papyrus and motioned for Tenebris to join her. "C'mon, Papa, snuggle up. Where's Thumper?"

"In here." A fuzzy paw wiggled out from under Tenebris' shirt to wave at her, before tucking back into his chest cavity where it was warmer.

Tenebris chuckled and tucked in his turtleneck, "Let me know when you need some air, Thumper." he murmured before he yawned and slowly slunk into the den, curling up around the other three with a purr.

Thumper tapped at his middle with a foot, and then wiggled it down to make a small imperfection in his tuck job. "Now I won't need to let you know when I need air!" He chirps helpfully.

Toki giggled, and wiggled slightly so her back pressed to Tenebris' chest. She sighed contently, stroked Pap's cheek, and then grunted as another Braxton Hicks contraction rolled over her. "You are an ice cube." She comments sleepily. "Both of you are."

Tenebris chuckled lightly and sighed, before he wrapped his arms around Toki, "Good god you are warm." he purred with a heavy sigh. His fingers curled over the tightness of her middle, and rubbed soothing circles with his thumbs.

"Fire magic," she chuckles gently. "Fire magic and pregnancy make for one very warm skeleton." She nestled down between her mate and father in law, and hummed a soft, content sound as she closed her sockets again. His arms around her middle were cool against the tense muscles, and soon the flesh softened and relented in its tightness under the soothing circles his fingers were massaging. As it passed, she exhaled a soft relieved breath.
Tenebris soon dozed off, his breathing slowing into a quiet rumble, "Mmmhhrrrr..."

Cae was quiet, nuzzled into his brother's chest as he snored quietly. Aliquam had his arms wrapped around his big brother, a small smile on his face as he relaxed with his back pressed to Toki’s front.

Toki couldn't quite settle down immediately again, but she tried. She turned slightly, and shifted this way and that in an attempt at getting comfortable again.

Tenebris shifted and yawned quietly. "Rrrr..."

She unintentionally elbowed him as she tried to shift into her other side so she was facing him, failing with a soft huff, and just slumping down while facing her husband.

Tenebris grunted at the elbow and he chuffed quietly at her.

"Sorry," she whispered. "I was trying to roll over."

"Bah... all is well." The bigger monster grumbles.

"You say that as you grumble at me." She chuckles softly. Toki shifts and steals one of his hands to investigate. She sighs, and gently massages his palm to try and get him to fall back to sleep. Even if she didn't sleep immediately, everyone else had a long day of shoveling ice and snow. They needed it.

His hand twitched lightly upon the first press but he sighed heavily behind her and his hand loosened and relaxed under her touch.

Toki massaged gently as he sighed behind her, his breath making her shiver. She hummed a soft, soothing tune to get him to settle. "Go back to sleep, Tenebris."

He purred quietly and pecked her head gently before he closed his eyes and got comfy once more, "Mmhh..."

She continued humming softly, even as he pressed a kiss to her skull, and let her sockets slide closed again. The rhythm of the breathing going on around her was soothing, as was the purring of the cats slowly wiggling their way into the monster snuggle pile.

Even if she didn’t sleep, the snuggle pile was warm, safe, and comfortable.

And if she noticed the door opening and closing, and a small freezing white deer draping themselves over everyone’s legs, well, she wasn’t going to complain.
Toki was officially one week overdue. Seven whole days had passed- and shit, she had no idea when the hell the twins were going to come. She’d had three different false starts, and she was damn tired of getting her hopes up, only for them to be dashed.

They’d tried different things to jumpstart it too. Walking- lots of walking, to be honest. Papyrus had used his blasters to clear the pathways in her back yard, so they spent hours walking them. No dice. They’d tried sex- and had gotten a false start as a result, but again, no dice. They’d tried spicy food, but that simply turned to magic and made her fire magic a bit more potent. They tried everything short of a bumpy car ride- mostly because the roads were smooth, and there was still too much ice for them to actually drive safely.

It had snowed a bit more, but not much. Now they just had to wait for it to thaw- which was a long process. On the plus side, Ebott City had sent out a plow, and it had plowed the main road. The monsters cleared the streets inside of Nara Village, so there was access to the road. But, sadly, the road was covered in a thin layer of ice.

Everyone recalled the incident with Tenebris and the delivery truck the year prior, and no one had any desire to get anywhere near the road until the ice was gone. That was one way to traumatize monsters into being ultra careful driving on the ice, she supposed.

Regardless of the ice, it didn’t matter how many times Toki and Papyrus had sex- labor refused to start. It would seem she would just have to wait for it to start when the twins decided they were ready. Pretty much the whole town was waiting with baited breath for the twins to arrive. Everyone was well meaning, but Toki was pretty sure she would explode if someone asked ‘how are you feeling?’ one more time.

In the meantime, Undyne had called her up the night prior with a request. She wanted to be introduced to human horror movies in honor of the coming Halloween holiday that she would get the chance to participate in this year- but Alphys was too scared to watch them with her. Todd had refused her promptly, so the big fish woman had called the only other human- or someone who had been human- that she associated with regularly. Well, that wasn’t a child and limited by their parent’s willingness to participate.
So, Toki had agreed. Yes, Toki was the biggest chicken when it came to scary stories, but she didn’t want to let Undyne down. The blue fish woman could do an amazing guilt trip when she wanted to—and she had tugged on the fact that she and Papyrus hadn’t gotten to hang out in forever outside of work.

How was Toki supposed to say no to that?

Besides, better now than after the twins arrived. They’d find little time for a lot of socializing with two infants to care for. So, it fit in with some of the last minute stuff that they were squeezing in before it was go-time.

Thusly, Toki found herself in the kitchen preparing a late dinner, while waiting for Undyne to come over. They’d decided to do it late at night, for better ‘scary movie immersion’.

Toki leaned against the counter with a sharp exhale, and stretching her back as best she could, and then reached up to get the strainer out of the cupboards. Toki was making ‘spooky spaghetti’ which involved noodles that were shaped like bones. She left the sauce to Papyrus though—he was good at the sauce. Toki could handle the noodles, and the side for it, but he was the true sauce master.

Toki bumped the handle for the pot, and her spoon clattered to the floor noisily.

She stared at it for a moment, and almost visibly steamed. “Fucking- god damn it spoon.” She mutters sourly. She was in a bit of irate mood. Her back pain was getting worse and worse, and nothing was making it stop. Not hot baths, not rubs, and certainly not bending down to get the god damned spoon that her belly had knocked to the floor. Compile the usual emotional instability of pregnancy with the number of aches and frustrations she had, Toki was in a very poor mood.

There was a knock at the back door that kept her from struggling to bend down for the spoon.

Toki heaved a deep sigh, glanced to Papyrus, and then left him to man the stove while she stepped to the side to open the back door.

Cold air swirled into the kitchen, and with it came a massive fish monster who was shivering as she huddled into the warmth of the house. “Oh thank fuck, it’s cold as a witches tit out there.”

“Well yes- why on earth are you in a tank-top and shorts?” Her irritation faded to befuddlement as she took in just what Undyne was wearing. Toki was in a turtleneck and a skirt, her usual wear for this point in her life. It kept her plenty warm.

Undyne, however, was bedecked in a tank top and what could only be described as booty shorts. She had a backpack on that clattered noisily—no doubt full of horror movies. The fish grinned down at her with jagged teeth. “Because you guys keep your house horribly warm, and if I wore anything more, I’d probably be dying of heat.” Undyne tossed her mane of red hair, and then surveyed the kitchen. “Spaghetti?” she inquired cheerily.

“Spaghetti.” Toki shakes her head in amusement, and then steps back to welcome her in further. She withstands the jovial pat to her belly, closes the door, and then summons a bee to fetch her spoon for her. Once she rinsed it off, she checked the noodles again.

“So,” Undyne grinned, “How are you-”

“Finish asking me that question and I will shank you with this spoon.” It was a silicon spoon— and she had no idea how she’d do it. But Toki would damn well try.

“Oooookay,” Undyne turned her gaze to the tallest skeleton instead, knowing he was less likely to
try and metaphorically bite her head off. Or shank her with a rubber spoon. “So, how are you both doing, Papyrus?” She grinned cheekily. Technically she hadn’t asked Toki how she was doing—she’d asked Papyrus how Toki was doing. There were ways around every rule.

"I'm doing alright. It's good to see you." Papyrus replied with a smile as he stirred the spaghetti sauce. "Hanging on and surviving at Toki's side."

"Sounds like it's more surviving than anything else at this point." Undyne gave him an amused grin. "Guppies sure are taking their sweet time. Have you tried anything yet?"

"Short of a bumpy car ride, we've tried everything that is safe." Toki hums, and flicks a noodle at the fish woman.

Undyne snapped it up like a shark and grinned. "Bone shaped pasta. Is that considered cannibalism?"

"Only if you eat it raw and it crunches." Cae joked.

"OH MY GOD, SANS." Aliquam groaned loudly.

Toki startled at hearing Sans voice, and whipped her head around to find him loitering in the kitchen behind her. "Where the heck did you come from?" She wasn't aware he was going to be joining them. Not that she had an issue with it, but a little knowledge helped keep one from being jumpy.

Undyne positively cackled. "Oh stars, that was a good one Sans. Oh stars! HA!"

"Sorry about the spook, Sis." Cae chuckled, patting her shoulder apologetically. "But come on. I'm like Superman. I know where I'm needed."

"Isn't Superman attracted to the sounds of screaming in distress?" Toki asked wryly, and flicked a noodle at him as well. The noodles were thankfully done now, and she poured them into the strainer. As steam wafted up and temporarily blinded her, Toki sighed.

Undyne grinned wider. "Don't apologize, Sans. If anything, maybe scaring her will make the guppies come out?"

He caught the weaponized noodle and popped it into his mouth before he grinned innocently, "I don't know, Undyne. I mean I could, but with Pap right there?"

His younger brother waved his sauce ladle in a mock threat.

"Hey!" The big fish monster laughed. "You're safer than me! You've got a guppy in your fishbowl too. He's not going to thump you for scaring his wife. You've gotta take advantage of your pregnancy dude."

"Undyne come on." He shook his head with a laugh. "I might be pregnant, but I'm not an asshole. Besides, Pops said they'll come out when they damn well feel like it"

"NGGYEAAHHH." The blue fish woman was admittedly whining a little bit. "But the rest of us aren't nearly so patient. I wanna see the guppies nowww. Well, hold them. We can already sort of see them if you've got a flashlight."

Toki snorted lightly, though the loud noise from the blue woman had startled her. She made scary noises when she wanted to, and Undyne still intimidated Toki quite a bit. "Undyne, patience never was your virtue. I would really like to hold them too, but they're making me wait just like they are
everyone else."

"Yeahhh, but waiting sucks! I can't even go suplex something in my frustration with all of that ice and bullshit out there!"

"Did you ever consider suplexing the ice chunks?" Sans inquired lightly.

"The cold is almost as bad as the heat is. Unlike you, I've got fun fleshy bits that the cold and heat actually bother." She sneers cheerily at Sans. "Or I would. But that shit out there is colder than Snowdin was." She huffed.

“She’s right about that.” Toki hums. “From the times I’ve been in Snowdin, it wasn’t nearly so cold there as it is here. Here has some pretty severe weather. Which one should not be in a tank-top and booty shorts and running around in it.” She eyed Undyne pointedly.

“I heard your skepticism about my clothes the first time, *Mom.*” The sass was real in her voice. “Good gracious. So. You guys ready for some scary movies tonight?” She grins. “I’ve got ‘Dog Soldiers’, something called ‘Resident Evil’, and all of the sequels for it, and… well, a whole lot more. Lots of ‘monster’ movies.” She arched her visible brow lightly at Toki.

“To be fair, Monsters didn’t exist back when that genre of movies was named.” She points out. “I’ve seen all of the Resident Evil movies, but Dog Soldiers is new to me. I’m guessing werewolves?”

"Oh boy… Nyeh heh heh heh." Papyrus gave a quiet laugh. "I'm not sure how that'll turn out, though."

Undyne fished around in her bag and tugged it out. “Yep! It’s werewolves. Kinda look like less friendly versions of the wolf guards.”

“Werewolves are basically like the wolf guards, but not as… fluffy or sweet. If you toss a stick, they’re going to eat your hand instead of chasing the stick.” Toki hums. She dumps the noodles back into the pot, before beginning to dish up plates of them for everyone. “Why don’t you go put on Resident Evil first? I’d rather not get a jumps care while trying to eat, and end up with spaghetti all over myself.”

“I can do that.” Undyne nods and grins. “So these ‘Zombies’ aren’t as scary as werewolves?”

“Not the first one. Well, not since I know the movies. I don’t watch a lot of werewolf movies because they take place out in the middle of nowhere. And where did I live before I had thousands of fluffy wolf-like neighbors? Out in the middle of nowhere.” Toki chuckles. “I’m a huge chicken, mind you. Scary movie nights were usually done with all the lights on in the house.” She shakes her head, and then sets the finished plates on the counter. “Noodles are done, Pap. If you’re done with your sauce, we can have dinner and get movie night going. You alright with spaghetti, Sans?” She wasn’t sure if he had trigger foods or not- after all, she couldn’t eat it through a good chunk of her pregnancy.

"Zombies." Aliquam repeated, blinking once before he looked at her with a smile. "I'm on it." He quietly finished his sauce, and began spooning it generously over the bone themed noodles.

Sans shrugged. "Pap’s been sharing, but I think I’m okay with it, yeah."

“I meant, if it was a nausea trigger, I would make you something else if you wanted.” She gave him a quirked grin, and added some parmesan cheese over the finished plates of spaghetti. Tossing in forks, Toki handed one to Undyne, and then handed another out to Sans. “I know you didn’t deal with nausea so much as you did emotional fluxes and cravings, but I know how bad trigger foods
Undyne grinned as she shifted her plate on her fingers. “Hot, but it smells good. I’ll go get the movie popped in while you three waddle your way to the living room.”

Toki made a face at the fish’s back when she left, and sighed softly in amusement.

"Heh." Sans took his plate and shrugged, "I haven’t been feeling up for ketchup lately, so thankfully I’ve found myself a different way to have my tomatoes." He chuckled, gesturing to the sauce.

Toki laughed, waddling for the living room and leaving Papyrus and Sans to follow. “I’ve felt your pain. I couldn’t have cocoa for months. Thankfully, it goes away. Eventually.”

Getting to the couch, Toki took a seat near the middle, leaving the arm for Papyrus, and then a spot next to her for whoever wanted to sit next to her.

The spot was rapidly claimed by Undyne as the fish woman squished in next to her, leaving space for Sans. Idly, Toki was thankful she’d gotten the biggest couch that she possibly could. It fit the four of them seated just fine. “Fuck YES!” The bigger woman all but shouted. “I wanna see what humans think is scary!”

Sans took his spot and kicked back as he started into his meal. "Can't wait to see how that goes." Sans snorted.

Toki simply smiles and says absolutely nothing about what was to come.

The movie started up, following with the AI murdering all of the humans in the underground facility after someone let loose a virus. After the elevator presumably beheaded the screaming woman, the scene cut to the movie’s main protagonist. Alice woke up in the shower, and was soon captured by a recon squad.

“Alice is a bad ass.” Toki chimes to the enraptured fish woman next to her. She kept her eyes off of her though. Undyne had little table manners when she was busy watching something, and spaghetti plus shark teeth meant that her mouth looked like a crime scene.

“In that dress with those muscles? PFT. I doubt she can do more than shriek and run away. That’s what all human females seem able to do. Uh… No offense.”

“Considering that’s about what I did when we trained that one time, none is taken.” Toki chuckles. “Just watch.”

Toki finished her plate by the time that the movie had reached the lasers. No undead had been seen yet, but several members of the recon squad that had captured Alice had just, literally, been reduced to little more than piles of human spaghetti sauce. Nonchalantly, Toki nestled in against Papyrus and waited for their reactions.

Undyne made a disgusted face. “What the fuck? That’s sick!”

"I really hope no one makes the mistake of thinking that's edible..." Papyrus murmured, looking a little green about the gills, so the saying went.

Undyne wasn’t much better.

Toki simply smiled and collected plates that were done, tucking them onto the coffee table until the movie was over. “Well, these people wont. Human spaghetti is not on the menu for them.” For the
rest of the people in the compound though…? Well, that was basically the main course. But she kept quiet about it.

The movie itself cut to a scene where it vaguely hinted at the final beast they would face. Alice looked in on tubes of some gross liquid flowing into… something that looked meaty and skin-less. She was distracted as one of the men called to her.

Then, what they thought was a survivor was found. Except the woman wasn’t a survivor, and she proceeded to bite the female officer with them. The woman took a spray of bullets, fell into the tubes, and then disappeared before the camera came back around to the pile.

Then came the zombies. The room was full of them. They came creeping from the shadows, several of them missing chunks from them. One of them was missing half of his face, his teeth bared between lips that had been chewed off. They ambled slowly, but in a large, growing mob as they were attracted to the sounds of the living.

To the sounds of food.

“However, these guys might like human spaghetti.” Toki chuckles.

Sans had an uneasy look on his face, while Aliquam tightened his grip on Toki, unable to really peel his gaze from the screen.

Screaming commenced. The living shot and shot, but none of them seemed to be able to drop the dead. One got a lucky shot- right in the skull. Blew the head right apart- and then the body dropped, lifeless.

“Shoot them in the head!” Became the mantra from the living.

There was a mad scramble as one of the recon group backed to the door, trying to get it open. There was chaos, as the dead kept coming. Soldiers were overtaken, their screams as they were devoured alive off camera joining the moaning overtone of the dead.

The one opening the door got it open finally- only for more undead to reach out from behind it, and pull him into his grasp.

“JT!” The woman who had been bitten managed to snag his hand, trying to pull him out of the grasping hands. She was bitten again and again, and so was he. There was a grisly moment where a woman reached out and bit off his cheek, devouring it noisily.

Ultimately, she failed- and he was devoured before her eyes.

The video cut to a different scene, with a small collection of the original recon group, plus Alice, resting on top of sewer bars with innumerous zombies reaching up towards them. The bitten woman was dribbling blood down on them with a sneer. “You like the taste of that, don’t you? Just like you liked the taste of JT.”


“Zombies are gross.” Toki agreed lightly, rubbing Papyrus’ knuckles soothingly.

Sans was starting to look a little sick, his gaze averting from the television. Papyrus looked sickly as well, the offer to turn it off sounding really good right about now...

“Do you want to turn it off?” Toki inquired gently to them, bemused and also slightly concerned that
the spaghetti might make a second reappearance all over her floors.

“I… kinda would like that, yeah.” Undyne whispered, positively disgusted as the movie progressed. She flinched as the female soldier turned around and came face to face with the one they remembered getting his cheek bit off.

“JT…?” The soldier managed to murmur, before he bit onto her neck and it was a fight to get him off.

“I’m alright trying a different movie if you guys want to. Werewolf movies aren’t usually this gory?” Toki suggests gently.

Papyrus only nodded slowly, hiding his eye sockets behind his hands.

The ripping and crunching and moaning and groaning faded as Undyne turned off the television. The fish monster eyed the remnants of the spaghetti on the plates, blanched, and then got up. She changed out the movie, and then collected the plates. “I’m going to take these to the kitchen…”

Toki was not nearly as bothered as they were by the guts and gross things. Likely because she knew it was all quite fake, and had experienced it before when it had first came out. It was also likely that she- who had brothers who were horror-movie enthusiasts- was conditioned to not be as bothered by gore in movies. Jump scares, however, were her weakness.

Still, gently she leaned up to kiss Pap’s skull and rub his cheek soothingly. “Thanks, Undyne. I’ll get the movie started while you take as bit to calm down. How are you holding up, Sans?” She glanced to him gingerly, and opened one of her arms, offering him a snuggle if he needed the comfort.

When he didn’t respond, she glanced over to look at him.

Sans wasn’t even where he was sitting anymore, though she could hear gagging from the downstairs bathroom.

Toki sighed, and gently had Papyrus push her upright. Once she was up, she got a glass of water from the kitchen and then made for the bathroom. Gently pushing inside, she went to her brother in law and gently rubbed between his shoulders.

“It’s best to get it all up, Sans.” She soothed gently.

Caeruleus bristled slightly, but gave another hard cough, retching another mouthful of magic into the toilet. He groaned, before he reached for the glass of water.

She very gently pressed it into his hand, and then collected a washcloth so she could remove the magical bile from his mouth. “We won’t watch the rest of the zombie movies, okay?” Toki smiled at him gently. “We’ll watch the werewolf one. The werewolf ones aren’t usually so… gross. However people will still die in it. Are you going to be okay with that?”

"Eugh... I think I’m gonna head to Grillby's..." he murmured.

“Alright.” She gently patted his head and leaned against the counter. “Go warm up with your lover. Maybe nap, and eat something when you’re not nauseated.” She advised gently. “I’m going to go back out with Papyrus and Undyne, okay? You feel better soon. Next movie night, we’ll do comedies. Sound good?”

“O’ course.” He nodded, and nuzzled his skull gently against her hand.
Toki gave his head an affectionate rub. Once he was gone, she cleaned off the seat and flushed away
the mess, before taking the glass back to the kitchen. She couldn’t see Undyne anywhere, and
thought perhaps the fish woman had gotten sick outside. Well, she’d be back when she felt better.

Toki returned to the living room and eased down next to Papyrus, giving a slightly sore sound as her
middle tightened. Too much up and down in too short of a time. “Mmm... Ow... Alright. Sans went
back to Grillby’s. He’s pretty nauseated. How are you holding up, Pap?”

"I don't wanna see that ever again." he whined quietly.

Toki snuggled gently into his side, and nuzzled his shoulder. “I don’t think Undyne or Sans do
either. Human horror movies are... Pretty gross. It’s okay, though, Papyrus. We don’t have to watch
zombie movies anymore. Are you still up for a werewolf one? If not, it's okay. We can turn on a
comedy and cuddle until you feel better. Undyne I think got sick too, so she's not around to be upset
of we switch films." Toki hums soothingly and massages his knee gently with her hand.

“Comedy please...?” He groaned quietly.

"A comedy it is then." She had to get help getting up, but once she was up she switched movies and
put in Kung Fu Panda. Jack Black was hilarious. Once the movie was in, Toki easied back down
with a slightly uncomfortable grunt, and rubbed her belly as she nestled into her husband. “There.
Jack Black can overwrite the bad things.” She shifted, scooted away, and then patted her middle in
an offer for him to use it as a pillow. Undyne wasn't here- she had no idea where the fish woman had
gone- so there was no reason for him not to be able to cuddle to her and their children and take
comfort in snuggles and the amusing shenanigans of the pudgy panda.

Aliquam smiled gently and had slowly settled down beside her, hugging her gently as he purred and
gave a gentle and affectionate nuzzle to her middle. “Nyeh~”

“Nyeh indeed.” She chuckled gently. She rested her hand gently on his skull as he used her belly for
a pillow, and then settled in to watch the movie.

It was a decent film, with lots of hidden meanings in it. She enjoyed the silly humor in it vastly more
than she did the gore and gross deaths in the zombie movie. She found some parts of the movie that
she resonated with- and her laughter fell forth as she watched Po try to get up, stuck on his back like
a turtle from his own weight.

“Po is my spirit animal there.” She hums to her husband. “If I lay flat, I’m pretty sure only a crane
could lift me upright again.”

He chuckled softly into her middle. "Of course, I could always do that too. You're not that heavy."

“That’s not what you said when you nearly dropped me on the stairs that one time.” She teased him
gently, referencing back to when he’d gotten Magi-drain and had nearly dropped her after picking
her up. Of course, she’d had pretty nastily broken legs that had been hastily put back together, or she
could have walked on her own. Toki was glad that he was distracted though.

"That was Magi-drain." he huffed, nuzzling her belly gently.

She chuckled softly. “That might be true, but it still stands.” She gently pinched one of his
cheekbones and wiggled it. “You adorable dork. To be fair though, I have gained weight with the
twins. Probably at least... I dunno, twenty pounds?” If not more than that, she silently mused.
Ectoplasmic flesh weighed more when it was summoned instead of just not there. Without the twins,
she was only the weight of her bones and clothes.
"But that's them, not you." He told her, tapping her gently on the face. "You're still lovely and lean as you always are."

She gently took his finger in her mouth and teasingly gnawed on it. Her magic kept her teeth from actually touching his finger, but it gave that playful chewing sensation nonetheless. “They probably only weigh a small portion of that. The rest of that is whatever they’re swimming in, and the actual ecto flesh, which is part of me. Though I wouldn’t say I’m sleek. My pelvis is definitely not the same shape it used to be.” It had widened considerably during her pregnancy—probably her skeletal side of her adapting so she could better bear her larger mate’s offspring. Skeletons were supposed to be the most adaptive.

Though, she wouldn’t be surprised if she ended up with some sort of ghostly ‘after baby’ body. The television briefly caught her attention as Po shot himself up into the air with fireworks, and she snorted with amusement as he landed inside of the wall that had previously kept him out.

“I don’t mind though.” She hums softly. “It all marks the trials we’ve gone through. Part of parenthood, y’know?”

"What we go through with eagerness in our hearts." he purred, "I'm honestly just starting to grow fidgety in antici..." he then hesitated, a gleam flickering over his eye lights real quickly.

“-pation?” She finished his word, shifting as her middle twitched under his skull. “You and me both, Pap. You and me both.” Something caught her eye, a reflection of something tall in the television. “Hey, what’s tha-"

Hands closed over Toki’s skull, and she squealed, startled, at the cold plastic feel and oddly soft claws that painfully poked into her eye sockets. The hands tugged, and she made a panicked, alarmed sound as her skull stretched upwards. “HNN!?"

Papyrus had gone to laugh at the fact she picked up his joke, but it cut off as he didn't expect the sudden assault. Immediately moving to defend her by swinging an arm upwards and summoning a bone, he shifted to sit upright rather rapidly.

The bone thwacked into a solid arm, and the hands released Toki as the form stumbled back with an audible curse. “Agh-fuck, ow, Pap! It was just a joke- hey! You’re not watching the werewolf movie! This was supposed to be the scene where the werewolf jumps out of the bush!”

Toki’s hands came up to scrub her eyes, and she buzzed shakily. Holy shit that stung like a mother fucker. That was worse than an eyelash in an eyeball. “Your fingers went IN my sockets! The fuck, Undyne?”

"I was trying to scare you both! Well, more you than Papyrus, but...”

The bone lowered, but the look in Pap's eye sockets was dangerous. He let the bone disappear as he hopped over the couch, standing over Undyne with his arms folded.

Undyne rubbed her arm and gave him a sheepish grin and wave with huge, floppy werewolf-gloves wiggling on her hands. “I didn’t mean any harm by it?”

“I get that you’re impatient, but c’mon, Undyne. That wasn’t cool. God damn, my eyes, holy fuck that stings.” The pregnant skeleton on the couch didn’t get up—couldn’t, rather— but she did turn around to peer at her over the back. “Didn’t Papyrus say not to try and scare me?”

“But that was like, months ago after the incident.” The incident with Vikki, if the fish woman recalled. “This was a well-intended scaring!”
Papyrus didn't say anything, he just reached out and turned Undyne around with his hands on her shoulders, he then brought them down, and wrapped his arms around her body.

“Uh, Papyrus…?” The fish was confused.

He proceeded to suplex her right into a side table- and both the fish and the table went squish onto the hardwood floors.

Toki just stared. “Well… I did not know you were that flexible, Papyrus. Also, Undyne? Table’s on you.”

“Ghghhhg.”

He stood up again, and then popped his neck and knuckles. "That's for scaring the fuck out of my wife, and for hooking your fingers in her eye socket. That shit hurts." he growled, glaring down at her. "Do it again, and you're fish sticks."

Undyne gurgled at him and gave him a thumbs up.

“I think she gets the message.” Toki gave him a grin, scrubbing her sockets again. The sting was fading, but that was an unpleasant experience she never wanted to have again. “You’re hot when you’re all growly, you know that?”

He came around and he cupped her cheeks, leaning in and ever so gently kissing the rim of her eye socket. "Well, she wasn't about to get away with it." He purred.

She let him pepper her faces with a few kisses, and nuzzled into his touch with a soft sound. “You did warn her, after all. You’re a skeleton of your word.” She purred.

“Ugh, gross. Get a room for your cute snuggling, you two.” Undyne managed to haul herself onto her feet again, and was noisily gathering the broken side table into her hands. She’d get it fixed- it couldn’t possibly be that hard to put together a bunch of wood. “Gonna have to punch a wall to feel tough again. Knocked on my ass by my own signature move- what a laugh I am.” She snorted good-naturedly.

"Heh heh... Were we actually indulging in that horror movie, that would have been funny."

“I will admit, I probably would have screamed if she did that during the werewolf movie.” Toki chuckled gently. She eyed Undyne. “And you’d have found your ass filled with bees.”

“Filled with bees?” The fish looked uncertain.

“Well, filled with bees, filled with stingers- same difference, isn’t it?”

Undyne made a face. “Ugh, no, neither of them are pleasant. I’m just… Gonna go. I’ll come get my movies later.”

Toki nods. “You can have your movies back when you fix my table. It’s a fair trade.”

“I guess so.”
Chapter 73

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: You’re all getting impatient with us, aren’t you? No worries~ pretty sure Toki is too~ ;)

Silverwing Notes: Well... another weird dream... kinda adds to the list that Strider and i had this morning XD Enjoy the chapter, guys!

_Toki was there again. Except… this wasn’t like the dream from before. There was no darkness, no fear, no nerves… just this soul crushing tiredness that flooded her. She was old, so, so old- her body might have been thirty-two, but Toki was so much older than that._

_She’d been more than just Toki too. She had been Tim, Tim had been Frank, Frank had been Loui, Loui had been Shikaku, Shikaku had been Aleric, Aleric had been Judas- so many names that it was almost impossible to count. She didn’t remember nearly half of them anymore- and more of the names would fade as new lives overrode the old ones._

_Before everything, they had been one. Kindness and Cruelty- they had been… someone. She couldn’t… recall who they had been… But now, she was Cruelty, and Cruelty was cursed to- _

_No. No wait- this wasn’t right. Toki was Kindness, not Cruelty. They didn’t know who Cruelty was- what- why was- _

_Oh god it was another one of those dreams._

_Toki felt herself sighing as she drifted along her thoughts. She had long since lost hope. After the monsters had condemned her, and she had committed the greatest sin in retribution- well, she’d spent countless lifetimes raging against what happened. Once her rage wore off, however, she spent countless lives lost in limbo._

_Hope was lost._

_Family after family, times were hard, food was scarce, and she was never, ever loved the way she- or he, depending on what body they were born with- wished to be._

_Not until this one. One would think that as the eldest female of a Japanese family- and a half blooded Japanese woman at that- that she would have been scorned and laughed at, and shunned for being as outspoken as she was. But no- Toki had eight brothers, all of which loved her unconditionally. Eight younger brothers, a mother, and an adopted father who all loved her unconditionally- she was even named head of the clan._

_What a strange, strange family. Cruelty was enamored with them though- they gave her a chance at a fresh start. Yeah, they were close to the site of her original sin. It weighted heavy on her mind every day that she was alive- she could see the mountain just off in the distance, mocking her for..._
what she was and what she had lead the other Anti-hearts into doing.

And then the barrier had fallen- and monsters were on the surface once more.

Part of Cruelty hissed at this, and scorned the monsters for what they had told the people. After all, if the monsters had kept quiet about what the color of Cruelty’s soul had meant- well… The war would not have happened.

But the teaching and the love of her family- it made her want to try again. She was tired. So, so tired. She didn’t want to… continue on her path. She wanted to try and atone.

So she offered them a place to stay- and she began to fall ill. The doctors called it Monster Radiation Sickness- so Cruelty had laughed in spite of it all, and mused to herself that the monsters would manage to kill her at least once. They had failed the first time- and Cruelty had sealed them behind the barrier at the cost of her magic- and all of the magic in the world.

But… The monsters had proven her wrong.

They took care of her- and helped her make the change to her current form. She’d even ended up… Well, she’d ended up falling in love again. Toki never would have thought that she could have loved anyone after what Kindness had done- and how Kindness had effectively broken her heart like-

There was a tug on her clothes that jerked her back out of her memories.

Not her memories- the memories of… of the dream her? Of Cruelty? None of this made any sense…!

She stood in the kitchen, just like the dream from before. Snow was falling outside, thick and heavy, just like her middle felt. Her hand wandered down to it, stroking over the not-so-small swell that was blossoming there, while the other cradled a mug of cocoa.

Toki found small hands tugging on her skirt again, a tiny and impatient voice puffing up at her. She glanced down to spy… A tiny skeleton? A tiny hornless skeleton smiled up at her with teeth just like hers.

“Sorry, sweetheart.” She patted the child’s skull gently. “What’s up?”

“Grandpa’s here!” The voice was hard to tell a gender from- Toki thought it might have been male, but she wasn’t sure. “He’s gonna take us tonight while you spend time with Papa and Daddy. I just wanted to say g’bye, and I love you oodles.”

… Wait, what?

“That’s right!” She laughed gently. “I totally forgot. Your little siblings here make me so spacey sometimes. Alright, alright. You go have fun with Grandpa Tenny, yeah?” She leaned down gently and pressed a soft kiss to the small child’s cheek. “Be good for him too, sweetheart.”

“I’m always good, Mommy!” A cheeky smile was given to her, and then the child was wiggling away. Their striped shirt was a little oversized, but fit them adorably, Toki noted. “I’ll see you tomorrow!”

“I’ll see you tomorrow, my sweet one.” She smiled at the little one, and waved as they dashed off for the front door. Clamoring to her feet, Toki padded out to the living room after disposing of her cocoa.

The house was quiet without children in it, and she made her way up towards their bedroom,
knowing where she’d at least find one of her mates.

Wait- what? One of them?

“Papyrus? Are you up here?” She inquired lightly, stepping over a bundle of toys that had been scattered on the stairs. She shook her head in amusement. Sans and the kids often set up hoards of toys and puzzles and would-

Wait, wait? What? Sans? But he- he was her brother in law!

"Snnrrrrr... hhhuuuuu..." there was snoring coming from their bedroom, but at the calling of his name, the skeleton gave a groan, before he sat up and yawned, "I’m in the bedroom, Toki." Was his call, "Gettin’ up, hang on…"

He sounded mellow, very much so.

That... Did not sound like her Papyrus. That sounded more like Sans mimicking Pap's voice. This Papyrus sounded more like... More like a stoner than anything, Toki mused to herself.

"No, no, it’s alright. I’m coming in anyways, no need to get up." She paddled in, not bothering to close the door, and gave him a lopsided smile. "The kids are with your dad for the evening. So, we can kick off our night together whenever Sans pops out of the woodwork."

"Nyeh heh heh" Papyrus was half-entangled with a bright orange hoodie, though he took it off once more and abandoned it onto the floor, "How about you come here and we get it started for him to... Walk in on~?" he purred, before he gave another soft 'nyeh heh heh', "I can imagine him now... And it’s getting me excited~"

Her eyes dipped down to the start of an orange glow from under the sheets. Both Cruelty and Toki raised a brow. "I can see that." She chuckled. She stripped off her shirt, baring her ribs and swollen middle, before shimmying out of her skirt. "Who knows? Maybe the sounds will lure him out." She purred.

Toki shimmied onto the bed and slowly crawled up towards him, a coy smile tugging at her teeth. She kissed the lanky skeleton softly as she reached him, and entangled her fingers gently in his ribs. "Mmm~ we haven’t had the chance to do this since the last time Sans went into heat. And, if I recall, that’s how you two did this to me, no?" She motioned to her middle as she gave him a wide grin.

"Nyeh heh heh~ Guilty as charged, but hey, I don’t fuckin’ care, you are hot when you’re pregnant~" he purred, running his hands up her sides, stroking her swell gently before he gently rubbed her ribs, moving himself to kneel between her legs.

She rocked back easily enough to let him take control, as he was often prone to doing, though she shivered and groaned as his fingers trailed down her ribs. By magic itself, he could always do the most wicked things to her bones. Her swell was soft, still early enough on that she didn’t have as much trouble as she did towards the end of the twins. Toki gave him a cheeky grin. "Well, best enjoy it then, no? Won’t be another couple years until you get to see it again." She teased, stroking his ribs firmly and teasing down towards his pelvis. She tugged lightly on his usual pants. "You’re keeping your poor beastie all tied up. Poor baby. Why not let him out to play?"

"Don’t mind if I do" he leaned back on his feet, and pushed down his sweatpants. yes, he was wearing sweatpants, and let his cock hang out, and lo and behold...

This Papyrus was hung.
Toki thought her Papyrus was well endowed, but by the stars this one had hers beat hands down. Well... Size wasn't everything. It was the skill of the wielder that made the talent of the tool.

From Cruelty's reaction, this one might have had the talent to match the tool.

"So, you want it nice and gentle, or you want it so good that you feel it a week from now~?" He purred.

She grinned and reached down to stroke his shaft. Her fingers curled around him, stroking from his base to his tip. "If I can't feel it a week from now, I would be disappointed." She purred by way of answer.

"Mmmh~" he smiled and kissed her deeply, grinding against her while leaning in to start kissing and licking her neck.

A pleased sigh left her, and she scraped her finger bones gently down the inside of his ribs while her other hand worked his cock. The orange girth was certainly impressive, and she had every plan of enjoying it. Mouth finding his shoulder, she nibbled over the edge of his collarbone, tracing old marks from the times she had bitten him.

Likewise, his tongue ended up tracing old marks he and his brother had left in her shoulders. Toki bore them proudly though, just as proudly as she bore the motley of colors they tended to paint her.

Firmly her fingers stroked him, from base to tip, and she purred up at him contently. "Your mark is a little faded," she purred. "I'll have to fix that before we're done."

"Damn right" he purred loudly, "God I love you," he cooed, his cock lining up before he quickly rocked his hips into hers. "Nnnnnh~"

The quick entrance brought a squeak from her, and internally Toki had a small freak out. Was this considered cheating if it was an alternate version of her husband and she wasn't entirely willing to be along for the ride?

Toki groaned and rocked into him, spreading her legs with as much flexibility as she could, and then nipped his shoulder gently. "I love you too," she purred. "Our family is my, mmmm, world~"

"Mmhh~ hhaah~ I wouldn't have to have it... ah... Any other way..." he chuckled as he rolled his hips in a steady rhythm, "F-Fuck you're so beautiful." he moaned quietly.

She rocked her hips into him, teeth nibbling along his shoulder. "You're so hot," she purrs, "hot and warm and big~ Mmm, my mates, hot and cold, I love you both." She crooned gently, and took a firm hold with her teeth so she could focus her hands on the insides of his ribs. His cock stroked along her walls, and she fluttered around him rapidly, matching the beat of her soul. "It's a shame your brother is lollygagging," she laughed. "He's missing all the fun."

Toki had the distinct feeling that lollygagging was something this Papyrus did instead of Sans.

"Nyeah heh heh, I don’t know. Maybe he is... Or he could be watching us, right now." he purred gently.

She released his shoulder to lean up and kiss him. “Well, if he is, he’s getting quite the show,” she purred. She rolled her hips gently into his, meeting the motion as she groaned and shivered, a soft keen escaping her as his member pressed into sensitive clusters of nerves.

The grin on his face was unmistakable, as if played on a script. He knew just where to find her
weakest point, and he knew just how to abuse it.

Chuckling quietly, he kissed her to quiet her as he moved her hips up slightly, before he picked up his pace, aiming to hit that spot every time.

“Ah~” Her voice raised in octaves as he intentionally stroked over that cluster of nerves time and time again. Each thrust was almost painful in how good it felt, and she could do little but let him coax pleased cries from her mouth. Her fingers tightened around his ribs, stroking them in time with his thrusts, and using them for handholds to keep her grounded. “Ohhh Papy~ yesssss…!”

He winced sharply at first but licked his teeth and eagerly kept moving, panting and moaning between his thrusts.

“Papyrus! You started without me?” There was suddenly a pouting voice "That's not fair..."

"Nyeh heh heh... hey bro, you're just in time." Pap leaned back to see the other brother standing at the doorway, his arms folded with a small pout on his face, "Come on, there's nothing stopping you from joining~"

“Sansy~” She cooed, leaning back as well to peer at him as best she could. “Come join us~ you know you want to. I'm sorry you didn't get here for the start- but you're not usually one to run late.” She winked. “What kept you~?” She rolled her hips teasingly against Papyrus, trying to tempt the shorter stout skeleton to join them.

Oh gods that was her brother in law- but apparently not here and she was going to- oh god. Toki wouldn’t be able to look at Sans straight without seeing this. Oh gods.

"Mweh. Important royal guard business." He replied, coming over while stripping his armor from his form, quickly joining them in the bed, "But at least now I get to spend time with you~" he purred.

Toki leaned over to kiss him, hooking a finger gently in his collarbone to tug him right up against her and Papyrus. “Yesss. We’ve only got tonight before all of the kids are back in the house,” She purred. Her fingers stroked down to his ribs, and she firmly teased them as she winked at him. “You up for a little Skelesandwich tonight?”

Both brothers grinned at that and Papyrus rolled over onto his back, taking Toki with him to straddle him while Sans moved to hug Toki from behind.

"Whatever she wishes," The elder purred,

"Is to be our command." Papyrus finished.

“Is that so~?” She grinned. “Because then I want you both inside me. We’ll make it fit~” After having kids, her pelvis was permanently larger- so doublestuffing? Totally doable. “I want you both tonight,” She purred. “I want you deep and hard...” They didn’t get nights like this often. Toki shifted and rocked into Papyrus, shifting her pelvis so Sans could slide in from behind into proper sandwiching position.

She quivered, trembling, breathing hot and hard with excited anticipation.

This was wrong, so, so wrong- she didn’t want to see this. Toki could do nothing, however, but be along for the ride.

Papyrus leaned up to kiss her while Sans kissed her vertebrae and shoulder blades, and both gave a deep moan as they pushed inside-
And she woke up with a jolt, realizing she’d fallen asleep at the dining room table while working on her next book. That was a horrible, horrible way to end that dream. She was flustered, because she had felt all of that for herself even if it had been so, so wrong.

Ugh. Sans was her brother in law, not her lover. Trying to see him that way… Well, it could have gone that way, but he was too vested with Grillby, which was fine. Toki wasn’t sure how she’d balance two mates. Truly, she didn’t want two. One was more than enough for her.

She glanced down at her book with an idle sound, and realized she was in the middle of writing a smut scene. Well. That could probably have been why she ended up with that dream. The human woman was in the middle of a sandwich between her elf and dwarf lovers- and good gracious, she must have been tired writing that last line, because it made no sense at all. She sighed, backspaced it, saved the document, and then closed her laptop.

But ugh. Just… Agh. It was awkward and seeing Sans junk and alternate Papyrus’ junk was now seared into her skull. It was… kinda hot…

But admittedly wrong. They were brothers- and brothers didn’t usually share a lover. At least not human ones.

She could hear knocking at the door, and scrabbled to get to her feet. Thankfully the chairs in the dining room were tall, so she didn’t have to struggle as much. She waddled for it, and opened it, trying to push that… dream… out of her mind.

Surprise colored her face as she spotted Toriel and Frisk standing on her front deck. “Uh, hi?” She hums. “I… wasn’t expecting visitors today. Come on in though, it’s colder than a witches tit out there.” The ice was still there- the roads were safer, but it was still terribly cold out there, even nearly a week after the storm. But, what else could you expect from the beginning of October in Ebott County?

Toki steps back from the door with a smile and motions them in, trying not to let the obnoxious bulge of her belly get in the way of everything like it always seemed to. She was one week and three days over due- and was beginning to wonder if she was even overdue at all. They had thought she would follow a human baseline, based on how they were growing, but… well, who knew? She knew that any bigger and she would probably split down the middle like a ripe watermelon. The magical skin was taut and unpleasantly tight.

And was being patted and nuzzled by Frisk as the silent child stepped inside with a happy smile, gently feeling around for any kicks that might occur. When they felt one, they brightened cheerily, and then flounced off into the living room, leaving Toriel to follow.

"Thank you, dear Tokiko.” Toriel replied gently, a smile on her face as she entered the home, "I know we did not warn you ahead of time. I apologize for that."

“It’s alright,” Toki gave her a smile and shut the door behind the massive goat woman. “A little bit of surprise guests keeps me spry.” She smiles up to her, and waddles for the living room. It was the best space to socialize anyways. “Would you like anything to drink? I can get some tea made up? I think I have some soda in the fridge, if you’d like that instead.”

Frisk smiled over at them both from their seat on the couch, and signed to Toriel. ‘I’d like a soda, please!’
Toki had been looking up sign in her down time, got the gist of most of it. She grinned. “If it’s okay with your mom, I’ll get you a soda. Toriel?” She turned to her with a smile, and propped her hand into the curve of her lower back.

"I'll just have some water. Thank you regardless, though!" she replied with a smile, "I mostly just came to see how you're doing."

Toki fetched a glass of water and a soda for the human child, and made her way back. Once she dropped off both drinks, she eased herself onto the couch, and sighed heavily. “It’s good to see you. Mostly I’m alright—just… tired, I guess. A bit frustrated too. I’m ready for them to be here. False-starts are annoying as heck.”

Frisk took a drink from their soda, before bustling onto the other side of Toki, sandwiching the tall skeleton between the goat monster and four feet of eager child. Frisk shimmied up close, and then curiously began to get their fill of her belly.

Toki smiled wryly. “Best get your fill of it now, Frisk. With any luck it’ll be gone soon.” She sighs softly, and gives Toriel a tired and lopsided grin. “You want to feel too?”

"It’s been so long since I’ve felt a child within their mother, I suppose it wouldn't hurt.” the ex-queen chuckled gently, getting up to move close enough to reach out for her middle.

Toki guided her hand, and Frisk obligingly moved theirs as Toki guided her closer. She eased her to where the most motion was felt, and against the large paw the twins roiled and stretched irritably within her. ‘They’ve been fussy since they’re running low on space.” She hums gently, smiling tiredly up to Toriel. “I am so, so ready to hold them. Being on my metaphorical tiptoes waiting for it to start is… exasperating, to say the least. I’m starting to feel a little cooped up, but if I go anywhere, I’ve got so many eyes watching me for anything that could go wrong. I know the village is eager too, but it’s a little maddening, y’know?”

"It's quite understandable, I know how that would go as well." she chuckled gently in reply, smiling softly. Her fingers warmed, and rubbed soothing circles over top of the fussing children.

Frisk giggled gently. ‘I want to see them too, so I understand how the village is feeling. You’re the first one to have kids on the surface- though you’re a human turned monster and not a monster, so I dunno if it counts or not.’

“Technically, my children are monsters, not human.” She quirks a smile. “So they’re the first monsters born topside since everyone emerged, yes. It doesn’t matter that they were born to a human soul- they’re going to be my little monsters. Though, I would love them human or monster, really. They’re mine. I’ll love them unconditionally.”

‘That’s what makes you a good mom.’ Frisk nods, and grins at their mother. ‘Mom? When do I get a little sibling? I’d be the best big sibling ever. Twins would be good- oooh! Or triplets! I’d help you take care of them and everything!’

She chuckled quietly and shook her head, "I'm sorry, Frisk, but I don’t think I'll be having any more children. Besides, I think I’m happy enough with my little Frisk anyways." She chuckled, leaning and snatching the child up into a tight hug.

Frisk squeaked and clung to her, giggling happily as they were squished into a hug. They wiggled one hand out, and signed slowly. ‘Awww okay. I guess I do have Flowey, and he’s enough of a little brother anyways.’
“I’ve heard a little about Flowey from Sans. I’ve heard he’s a pain in the butt. But all little brothers are, aren’t they?” Toki folded her hands over her belly and smiled, though it faded as her belly tightened in another false contraction. “Sooo tired of those. Hey, Toriel? Any chance you know any monster tricks that can help labor happen?”

"I might have a trick or two..." she replied, "I simply waited for when it was time" she explained, "However, if you try hot rags, resting it over your stomach and waist, it should relax your body enough to aid with inducing..."

“Hot rags hm? Alright.” She nods. “I might try that then. Like... Hot rags in a bathtub or like hot rags fresh out of the dryer?” Which meant freshly heated by her magic because they didn’t have a drier. She might invest in a second washer though. If she knows anything from growing up with her brothers, children make messes of their clothes something fierce.

“Both work.” Toriel smiled gently.

“Pap and I will try that tonight then.” Toki nods. “We’ve, uh, tried everything else.”

‘Sex?’ Frisk chirps helpfully.

Toki sputters. “You are far too young for that to pop into your head!”

"Good lord, child, where did you come up with that?!" Tori too was shocked.

Frisk shuffled their toes slightly and kissed Toriel’s cheek. ‘You know what they say about the internet, right?’

“Noooo?” Toki squinted lightly.

‘The internet is for porn!’ Frisk grins cheekily. ‘At least that’s what Duncle Sans says.’ Not really, but it’s not like Sans could get in too much trouble, given his pregnancy. Frisk knew this- and Frisk was not above using this knowledge to their advantage.

"Oh Caeruleus..." Toriel groaned, face palming gently.

Toki snorted, and ruffled Frisk’s hair. “Don’t listen to Duncle Sans. He’s a bad influence.” She nods sagely.

Frisk simply grins, and wiggles out of Toriel’s arms to press a kiss to Toki’s belly. ‘You’re not wrong. Can I go play with the kitties? Thumper told me you have cats now. Hey mom? Can we get a cat? Or a dog? Or several of both? I love animals.’

"Why don’t you go see about finding the kitties. They are friendly, yes?” Tori looked to Toki for a moment.

Toki nodded. “Very. Gracie might get a little playful, but you don’t have toe bones to steal, so you should be alright. But if her tail is flicking and she rolls on her belly, don’t take the bait. That’s asking to get chewed on. Gael is a love though, and you’ll think he’s a doll, I’m sure.”

Frisk beamed. ‘Okay! I’ll make sure to be wary of the belly trap.’

“They’re probably upstairs. Gracie likes to sleep on my pillow. If she’s not in there, try the nursery.”

Toki smiles gently.

Frisk nods and books it, leaving the two adults alone downstairs.
Toki leans back against the arm of the couch, turns to face Toriel, and gives her a lopsided smile, prepared to talk and spend some time with the matronly monster.
Chapter 74

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: I have actually had Toki’s shipping issue often, hence why I don’t buy a lot of stuff online or over the phone. Stupid accidents that mean I have to go allllll the way into town to pick up a package that should have been delivered to my door. At least Silver LIVES in town. I’m all the way out in the fuckwilds of nowhere.

Silverwing Notes: Send me a Thing if you recognize where i'm being Fandom Trash from later in the chapter! -Giggle snort-

Toki woke up in a surprisingly good mood. It didn’t last, but her morning, up until rolling out of bed, had been good. She’d woken up with absolutely no back pain, or cramps- it had been a good morning, and she hadn’t woken up without some sort of ache or pain in months.

She’d even woke up in a sort of a… zen state? She was relaxed, mind clear and calm, and even shifting in bed hadn’t been uncomfortable. She’d gotten woken by Papyrus giving her his customary morning belly kisses before he rolled out of bed for work, but she’d gone back to sleep until a more respectable hour.

It was honestly surprising, given how far along she was.

One more day and it would be two weeks past her expected due date. Two. Weeks. Holy fucking hell, Toki was so, so done. Toriel’s method for kick starting labor hadn’t worked- but it had relaxed her enough to actually sleep soundly for a few hours. However, not only was she done with her pregnancy, but she was done with the damn game store too. The game store was mostly the cause of her morning going sour. Mostly.

She’d rolled out to bed to once more deal with sporadic and slightly painful contractions, and an email from the game store she’d ordered from. The damn place had fucked up on her order- and shipped it to the store on the far side of Ebott City, instead of shipping it to her home. She’d special ordered an X-box for Papyrus- one designed for hands much larger than a human’s hands, with a lot more storage for games, along with several large sized controllers along with normal sized ones.

It was supposed to have arrived several days before then, between the first and the fifth. It was now October twelfth. It was Papyrus’ birthday- and she had just got a message that the X-box was ready for pickup. On any other day, she would have rolled with it- but she couldn’t drive, and her truck wasn’t fixed even if she could fit behind the wheel.

Papyrus was working, Sans was already out doing baby-shopping with Grillby, and Toki really didn’t want to go pester any of the other monsters- who would surely tattle to Papyrus about what she was up to.

So that left… Tenebris. Of which, he didn’t drive his car anywhere, unless it was to a car show.
He’d already taken it to one- and good lord, he had strutted like a peacock when he came back with first place.

Toki had her work cut out for her. Well, she would think so, anyways. There was always the chance that things would go easier than she expected them to. She’d only know once she actually got him onto the phone for a chat, she supposed.

While gathering her things- because if she couldn’t get him to agree, she would have to have someone else drive her- Toki tugged out her phone. At least the cake was coming from Muffet’s, so that was one thing she didn’t have to go to town for.

She quietly dialed Tenebris’ number, because there was no chance in hell she was going to make the icy walk to his house to ask him, and collected her purse. The rest of Pap’s gifts had arrived- including the large collection of puzzle games she had gotten for him and the kids to enjoy eventually- but he couldn’t play his games without his consol.

She’d even paid extra for to-the-door shipping. Bullshit that was. Utter bullshit.

It was a little before noon- they would be able to get to town in two hours, give about two hours for in town things like getting around traffic, and then two hours back, so six hours… which meant they should be home by five, if not before then. Thumper would be out of school, but he would either go to Grillby’s, or go do his homework with Twitch and the other kids.

Toki waited, listening to the phone ring in her ear, for her father in law to answer.

After a few rings, there was a 'kr-click' and his deep, warm voice resonated from within the speaker. "Hello?" He rumbled gently.

"Good morning, Papa.” Toki greeted pleasantly. Her voice was fairly distinct, and only she called him Papa. “Did you sleep well last night?” She didn’t want to just burst into what she wanted- one had to ease into it, rather than just blurring a demand. In her experience, a little bit of general talk worked better than being too straight forward.

"Hello Toki. Yes I did… Is there something you need?” He inquired lightly.

Drats. She smiled slightly despite herself, and shifted the phone against her ear. “Well… Yes, but it’s rude to just call and ask for things, Papa.” She admonishes gently. “Usually you exchange pleasantries. ‘Did you sleep well, how has your morning went’ y’know, usual stuff.”

He chuckled gently. "Would you rather I ask you such questions, and then see what you need?” He inquired lightly.

Drats. She smiled slightly despite herself, and shifted the phone against her ear. “Well… Yes, but it’s rude to just call and ask for things, Papa.” She admonishes gently. “Usually you exchange pleasantries. ‘Did you sleep well, how has your morning went’ y’know, usual stuff.”

He chuckled gently. "Would you rather I ask you such questions, and then see what you need?” He inquired lightly.

"Well, most mornings, yes. This morning, probably not.” She chuckled gently. “I need a favor. And, for you, it’s a big favor.”

"Well we'll see how big it is when you say what it is.” He snorted.

“Well… I need a ride to town.” She sighs softly. “Specifically, more or less, to the small outlet on the other side of Ebott City. I’m willing to pay for gas for your car, since it is a bit of a jaunt and stuff.”

"I don’t know if Eclipse has snow tires...” he hummed in thought.

“The roads are clear?” She chimes softly, hopefulness in her voice. “I mean, Sans and Grillby went baby shopping earlier this morning, so… I mean, if you say no, I’ll… I dunno, ask Wolfen to borrow his van or something. I might be able to fit behind that…” Why yes, she was hinting that she would
try to drive herself to town on her own.

"Tokiko Nara Gaster, you are not driving as pregnant as you are, you hear me missy?" He growled sternly, before he cleared his throat. "Alright. Give me a half hour and I’ll come pick you up."

“Alright,” she laughed gently. “Thank you, Papa. I’ll tell you more about why we’re off to town when you’re here, okay? Go warm up your car, and I’ll see you in thirty… it’ll take me that long to get my damn shoes on,” The last part is muttered more to herself, but she knows he hears it none the less.

Toki clicks the phone off, and goes to struggle into her shoes.

It doesn’t take her a full thirty minutes, but it does take her probably closer to fifteen or so minutes to actually get both of her shoes on. She has her laces loose, but they’re good enough for now.

The purr of the engine caught her attention once roughly thirty minutes or so had passed, and Toki perked up eagerly. She collected her purse, and adjusted her long skirt as it slid down her middle. She was the point where everything was just barely fitting- and eventually it wouldn’t fit anymore. She really didn’t want to have to get more clothes.

Toki padded out of the house after leaving a note for Papyrus that she was running to town with Tenebris, and then waddled down to his car. She took care to shake mud off of her feet before carefully climbing into the front seat of his Charger. It, like Pap’s car, was comfortable and luxurious.

She eased into the seat, carefully setting her purse behind her chair as her middle hitched and tightened. “Huh. That marks another one of those for today,” she mutters. As she got herself buckled, Toki gave Tenebris a bright smile. “Thanks for the ride, Papa. The game store messed up my order for Pap’s birthday and sent it to the entirely wrong place. It was supposed to come here like, a week ago almost, and it just arrived all the way on the other side of Ebott City.”

"Tsk." he shook his head then put it in drive and the car began to roll. "Well it's a good thing you have me... poor girl will need a bath after this…” He sighed. "But if it helps my daughter in law, it's worth it.”

“I can pay for you to take her through the car wash on the way into town, if you’d like? It might get some of the mud off.” She offered gently, well aware that he loved to keep his car immaculate and in pristine condition. As he pulled out onto the road, she could see mud splattered all along the side of his charger from driving to her home. Toki exhaled softly as the tightness in her belly faded, and gently kneaded along the top. “And yeah, I’d be lost without you, Papa. Or,” she grinned slyly, “I'd be driving Wolfen’s van down the road.”

He chuckled gently and shook his head. "I banter and groan but it's not as bad as I let it on to be.” he purred.

“That’s true,” she chuckled gently, and reclined the seat slightly. It took some of the pressure off of her middle and back, and she relaxed as best she could. “You’re my favorite grumpy old man though, and I don’t mind spoiling you a little bit. I might even splurge to let you get Eclipse waxed if you take her through the car wash- how does that sound?” She grinned slightly, eye lights watching the scenery pass.

The roads, as promised, were clear, save a few slushy patches that weren’t a problem for the heavy rig rumbling down the road.

He chuckled and smiled at her, "Deal~"
“Good.” She smiled. She leaned back and prepared for the long drive to town.

A long drive it was. The roads were smooth, the weather good, and the ride was like riding on a floating carpet. There were no distinguishable bumps or bounces, save a few potholes that the thick tires were too wide to dodge, but Tenebris charger was a good and comfortable ride.

It gave no reason for her contractions to pick up pace. They had been irregular but there for most of the morning, but they set a pace. She had the first one getting into the car, and the second one just under thirty minutes later. Toki had a total of four, all of them lasting what felt like forever, before they reached the car wash.

Toki kept quiet though. It seemed like any time she acknowledged the possibility of a pattern setting in, they stopped and didn’t start again for several hours.

Best to keep it out of mind for now. They had more important things to do- like wash his car.

The car wash, unfortunately, had a small line waiting for them. They pulled in behind a small electric car that probably could have fit inside of Tenebris’ Charger, and in front of the electric car was a big, absolutely filthy truck.

She quirked a soft grin as her middle ached, and propped her cheekbone onto her knuckles. “Well,” she hummed, “That’s a look I don’t imagine I’ll ever see on your rig, hm?”

He pressed his lips together, and then he took a deep breath. "Actually, it'd be counter-productive. We're going home after this."

"Um… We’ve got to stop at the game store first,” she said slowly, eying him lightly, "and then we’re good to go home. Though… maybe a stop at the super market first. I’d kinda like a watermelon slushy."

"You know what I meant." he told her, shaking his head and rumbling gently before he turned the car to leave, the line not being too tight.

“Ohhh, I suppose yeah, it’d get gross going home again, wouldn’t it.” She hummed slightly. “Heh. Well, I can help you clean it once the ice and snow is gone. Though… That might be a moot point since it’s only October, and we’ve got snow and ice that’ll keep falling until probably January, or even February. Sorry for misunderstanding- my brain is not all here. Pregnancy tends to make folks scatterbrained.”

"It's okay. My garage is concrete,” he started, "and it has a drain so we'll wash it there."

“That sounds good to me.” She nodded.

Toki fell quiet as he wove them through traffic and into the thick of the city. Despite the given time, the streets were still almost painfully packed with cars. It took them an hour to make it across the city proper, and fifteen minutes to find what she hoped was the proper complex. Toki honestly wasn’t looking forwards to the trip back through the city, because all sorts of aggressive drivers had honked at them for not going fast enough, for going too fast, or for taking a turn that they thought that Tenebris shouldn’t have.

Honestly, city drivers had no manners, and were a source of anxiety and stress for even passengers. Thankfully, they provided decent distractions from the workings of her body, and Toki hummed
along with the radio to keep her nerves low.

If Toki began to get too stressed, Tenebris did once in a while pull to the side to let her breathe, but once in a while he'd just sing to her instead.

It worked marvelously.

Toki’s fingers curled over the armrest without meaning to, sharp digits pressing in on the leather as she exhaled softly, breathing her way through another contraction. They were annoyingly strong today, and took more of her focus than normal to get through.

“Mmmn… The complex should be just around this corner- yeah, this is the place that has Pap’s gift. Ah look!” She perked up. “There’s a super market right there just a few stores over from the game shop. I still want that slushy. And maybe a pumpkin spice muffin. Mmm…”

When they finally pulled up, he nodded gently, "Would you like me to go inside and pick these things up for you?" he asked.

Once the car was parked, Toki unclipped her seatbelt and reached back to fetch her purse.

“Nah, I’m alright to go get them. You’re welcome to come with me though.” The sidewalk was a bit icy looking, and she didn’t trust it. “… You’ll definitely have to help me up though.” She chortled. “I’m a wee bit stuck.”

“Very well then.” He nodded. He eased out of his door, and went around to her side. Opening hers, he reached in and offered her a hand like the gentleman he was.

Toki took his hand, and used both his strength and her own to haul herself to her feet. “At least they salted the parking lot if not the sidewalks.” She mused slightly, and shut her door behind her.

“Alright- I might have you carry Pap’s gift, by the way. It’s expensive, and if I drop it, I would probably be very upset.” He was less likely to drop it, given his ease on ice. The only time he had fallen was the year prior when she’d slid into him.

Literally into him. He’d fallen and she’d gotten stuck inside of the ‘burrow’ as Thumper called it. That had been… an interesting issue. And then Tenebris had gotten hit by the truck- which had really been part of what lead into the conception of the twins, now that she thought about it. The truck, and then Vikki- and then Pap’s heat had triggered, and they’d… Well, they’d had their fun with souls.

"Oh but of course, that wont be an issue at all." He assured her. "Mm… while I’m here, there's a shoe store I’d like to inquire."

“Thanks, Papa.” She smiled up at him warmly, took his arm, and then made for the game store. “We can hit the shoe store after, yeah?” Though what use he had for human-made shoes, she wouldn’t know.

He nodded gently, "Though, it'll be something I'll take care of myself. I don’t need to bother you by having you come and join me to go ask stupid questions." he chuckled.

“I suppose so.” She hummed. “I’ll probably tag along all the same.”

The store was clean and tidy, with all sorts of new games being advertised, and the air in the store didn’t have any particular smell that stuck out to either of them. There was a stack of games on the front counter, and a bald man behind the counter. He looked up at them, blinked, and then waved slightly. "You’re, uh… Tokiko Nara, right? You ordered the monster sized X-box and it got shipped
to the wrong location?"

“That’s right.” She nodded, not bothering to correct him on her name change. Most people still recognized her for the Nara part of her name, though she was only Tokiko Gaster now. Even Tenebris called her Tokiko Nara Gaster from time to time- but she honestly didn’t mind. Toki was a Nara at heart, and she wasn’t ever going to be upset about being referred to by her old name.

She stepped further inside, leaving Tenebris to follow, and waddled for the counter.

“I’m so, so sorry it went to the wrong location. Sometimes the website can fuck up and whatnot- it happens to a lot of people, actually. You’ve already paid for it, and you don’t really need ID since… Well, I’d recognize you pretty much anywhere. I’ll go get your X-box. If you’ll just give me a couple minutes?” The man edged behind the counter, slowly moving towards the door to the storage area.

Toki nodded slowly, and leaned against the counter. “Take all the time you need to do your job safely.” She smiled soothingly at him, and watched as he padded into the back room. Toki glanced back at her companion and chuckled. “Well, at least I know I’m not the only one who’s had a package sent here.”

Tenebris watched her, and tucked his tail between his legs, wrapping it around one of them as he went to look around, a little curious about all this, "Toki, do me a favor..." he spoke up.

“Hm?” She glanced at him curiously, wondering what he could want.

"Explain to me how one is supposed to survive fighting against a zombie apocalypse..." he then held up a case labeled 'Lollipop Chainsaw', 'Dressed like a bloody cheerleader while wielding a chainsaw!"

She stared at him for a moment, before guffaws of laughter escaped her. She leaned heavily on the counter, and just brayed with laughter. “Oh my g-gods, I don’t think I’ve heard it d-described like th-that. Oh gods, I don’t know, Papa, oh my god.”

The man came out from behind with a large box in hand, and looked at the laughing skeleton with a small iota of worry for if she fell over from laughing too hard. “Lollipop Chainsaw is… a weird game.” He hums. “You’d have to play it for yourself to see how she survives, I guess.”

He glared at it for a moment, then put it down once more, "Hm, later perhaps," he murmured, coming back, though he noticed a little something below the counter, "Hm?" he then reached and picked up what revealed to be a bright red fox plushy, and he blinked once.

"That's from Five Nights At Freddie's." The man murmured lightly. "It's a horror game that focuses on jump scares and animatronics."

"Not a chance in hell." Toki snorted lightly, still quivering from her laughter. "Jump scares tend to make me- ah... Nnnnm." Ow, ow, contractions were much worse when standing upright. They were getting closer together, she noted.

"Uh... Miss Tokiko? Are you okay...?"

"Mhm." Came the terse answer as she braced herself to ride though it. Oh yes she preferred to deal with this while sitting. Standing was so, so unpleasant.

Tenebris reached out and set a hand on her back, rubbing gently by reflex as he looked at the man. "I’ll take that package, if everything is all set to go." He offered.
"It, uh, is." The man nodded and handed the package over. He at least seemed genuinely worried for the poor woman. "Is she going to be all right?"

"I'm fine. Just... A cramp." Toki hummed softly. His hand on her back felt nice, and the warmth of his palm grounded her. He would, however, feel the tightness of her muscles and be able to note them as more than just a cramp. It took several seconds for the contraction to fade, but once it did she gave them both a lopsided smile. "Alright. You wanted to stop at the shoe store next, right Tenebris?"

"I'll put it off... I'll get what you wanted from the supermarket while you settle down in the car." He told her gently.

Toki rolled her eye lights. "You literally only come to town when someone drags you here. Really, ten minutes in a shoe store isn't going to kill me." She eased away from the counter gave the man a cheery look, and then guided her father in law outside again. "I'm not gonna a just sit in the car while you run my errands, Tenebris. We'll stop in for your shoe questions, and then scoot." She wasn't feeling very hungry suddenly, but pregnancy did that to her sometimes.

He sighed and gave her a firm shake of his head. "No. I don't want you to overexert yourself, not while we're away from home."

"I am legitimately with the best doctor I know. I'm not going to exert myself by doing some easy stuff, Papa." She opened the door, let him put the game system inside of the car, and then hugged him reassuringly as they locked it again. "If you're really that worried, we can skip the slushy. I'm suddenly not very hungry. You know how it goes." She hummed soothingly to him.

He hugged her gently and sighed in defeat. "How about I get you a small slushy in case you do get thirsty? It'd last I'd say the few minutes I need for questioning about getting shoes made."

She hummed softly and nodded. "Okay. A small watermelon slushy would be fine. Mmm... I guess I'll sit in the car." She shifted and opened the passenger door again once he let her go. "I give you too much trouble sometimes, I know. I'll chill here. That last contraction was a bit rough." It had been progress at least. Toki was pretty sure that it might be soon. They had been regular for a while now.

She eased down into the seat with a soft sigh and cradled her belly in one hand as she got comfortable. Well, as comfortable as one could be with everything beginning to ache like hell. So much for her ache-free morning.

He helped her into her seat and pecked her head before he went to make his run. He brought back her slushy and a small pumpkin spice muffin as he promised, though as he turned to leave he paused, and blinked once as he 'smelled' the air.

Toki relaxed as best she could and nibbled slightly at her muffin and sipped at her slushy. Pumpkin spice and watermelon was an odd mix, but cravings could be the weirdest things. She glanced up at him as he paused, seeming to be huffing air in through his mouth. "Er... you alright?"

"Something smells strange..." he murmured, looking at her, leaning his face into the car slightly as he did it once more, "How do you feel, Toki?" he then asked.

She made a face at him, and leaned back just slightly as he leaned closer to her. "It could be the muffin? I'm, uh... Fine, I guess? Kinda tired and sore around my middle. I've had a couple contractions, so I'm a bit tender. Why do you ask?"

"The smell is... strange, and yet the first thing I can tie it to is 'birthing'." he then sighed and shook his
"Are you sure you don’t feel like you're going into labor or anything of the sort?"

“Well… maybe? They’re regular, and getting closer together. They started about when we left, about thirty minutes apart. They’re a little closer together now though, and a lot more uncomfortable than they usually are.” She peers up at him quietly and frowns. “I didn’t want to say anything because any time I get my hopes up, it ends up being a false labor.”

"You have your phone on you, right?" he asked.

“It’s in my purse, yeah. Why?"

"In the case it's not a false labor, you can call me... You were right about not getting out enough. I do want this taken care of before the day is done, so I’ll go and see to it real fast.” He nodded gently.

Toki smiled and tilted her head gently. “I’ll call you if anything comes up, okay? So long as you don’t take two or three hours, we should be good.”

"I'm not going to take even one! It's simply for questions!” he chuffed, before he turned, "I'll be back soon, my dear."

“I’ll be here.” She gave him a cheery wave, and closed the door to the car. She stretched out to finish her muffin, and then settled in to sip at her slushy. Toki idly rubbed her belly, massaging her fingers gently into where it ached the most, and closed her eyes to relax and wait for her father in law to ask the questions that he wanted to know.

As he walked into the store, the smell of leather and shoe polish was nearly overwhelming. Behind a short counter was an equally short older woman who was polishing a pair of black loafers. When the bell jingled, signifying a customer, the woman didn’t even look up.

“Welcome to Shimada’s. I’m Yuri Shimada, how may I help you find the perfect pair of shoes today?” Her words were kind and sprightly, though she remained dedicated to her task.

"Good afternoon, ma'am." He rumbled as he approached, his tail tucking away around his leg once more. "I was hoping to know if you were able to do custom shoe orders, now that there's more than one type of foot out in the world."

That brought her gaze up to him. To her credit, she didn’t startle. Wrinkled lips puckered, and she gave him a firm once over. “Not many come asking for custom shoes. Shimada’s still does custom orders, but it is a craft that is dying out. My apprentices will take measurements for your feet, and I will see what I can do with them, yes?” She leaned back in her seat, old joins popping and crunching as she stretched. “Hanzo, Genji! We need a measurement done for a custom set of shoes.”

There was a rustling of movement in the background, before a young man stepped out. He wore a pair of glasses that seemed to have tinted glass, hiding his eyes from immediate view. Tenebris didn't try to stare, but he did notice the odd looking belt keeping up the young man's pants.

"Genji is on break, Grandmother. You said someone has a custom shoe order for us?"

"Thank you very much." he rumbled, before the young man walked out of the back. From what he's heard, this one is Hanzo. What a handsome young man, looked quite able in his skill of aiding his grandmother. Upon the questioning of his summoning, Tenebris cleared his throat lightly as to make his presence known.
The young man blinked as the monster drew his gaze, and then gave him a shrewd once over. "Hm… Yeah, with feet like those, there’s no way you’d fit in a normal pair of shoes. Alright. If you’ll put your foot up here, sir, I’ll get your measurements. Are you getting a pair made today? It might take several days to get it made, as we’ll need to experiment and find out what leathers work the best and what shape we’ll need."

"If it does not take too long, I wouldn't mind simply starting with just the measurements." he responded, approaching and lifting a foot, placing it on the pedestal as requested.

"Measurements themselves don’t take too long." He assured, and carefully got out his measuring tools. He rested one next to the side of his foot, measuring from the tips of his claws back to his heels, and then carefully edged one under the highest point on his foot to measure the height. Quietly, Hanzo began to record the sizes. "If I might inquire, what has you in such a rush today, sir? Most people don’t come to custom shoe stores unless they’re planning to get a pair made and taken home with them the same day."

"I live far out of town, and was brought in with my daughter in law needing to make a run. She's pregnant and at the final stages before she has her children, and cannot drive on her own. I had been meaning to stop by sooner but once more, I do not get out as much, she insisted that I take care of this before we return home." he replied.

"Ohh, congrats! That’s nice of you to take her to town." Hanzo nodded. "Are these your first grandkids?" he asked curiously, carefully pressing down on Tenebris foot to see how his paws splayed out. He recorded the widest width, and the narrowest width, and then carefully investigated his claws. "We might have to go steel-toed on your shoes. Your claws will wear through any base leather we could use."

"Steel-toed is fine." he rumbled, before replying. "Yes. I have two sons, but soon enough I’m going to have three grandchildren." he replied cheerfully. "I suspected, but never considered that the first born would end up being twins, rather than one child."

"Twins on the first try? Lucky man!" Hanzo laughed. "Do twins not run in your family?" he asked conversationally, and quietly marked down a few things. "Do you want laces, slip-on shoes, or Velcro?"

"Slip-on please, and actually, it's rather the opposite. My kind would normally have larger litters under normal circumstances, however, the mother is, or rather, was human."

"Oh, really?" He perked up slightly, and smiled softly to himself. He reached up to tilt his sunglasses down, and peered up at Tenebris through bright blue dragon-like eyes. "HTM’s are pretty common, but I haven’t heard of any having kids with monsters. There’s not a lot of actual monsters in the city—but that’s for a good reason with those assholes out there hunting you guys… Anyways, humans can have several kids naturally, but it isn’t common. Single births are by far the most common, but… naturally, I think humans have had up to… four maybe? I haven’t really looked into it. I know one woman had eight at one time, but that was done by medical professionals. Anyways, when are your Grandkids due?"

He smiled gently at seeing that this woman accepted her grandson, as it was now clear to him that he was an HTM. "She's overdue, actually. Two weeks..."

"Ha! She should be popping soon then. Two weeks is usually when a doctor induces- any longer is usually detrimental to the mother and the child’s health. Though it might be different with monsters.” He gave him a grin, carefully catalogued a few more things, and then stood up. “Alright- I’ll get started on prototyping these. It could take anywhere from a few days to a week or so to get it done. If
you’ll write your name and number down on one of the note cards on the front desk, I’ll make sure
to call you when we get a possible prototype going. Heh. I’m excited!” His belt twitched, belaying
the truth to his words as what was revealed to be a tail wiggled slightly. “I’ve never designed
monster shoes before. It’s going to be fun!”

"Thank you very much. I'm glad I could give you the joy of such a task." he rumbled softly and
allowed his own tail to unwind from it's hiding place, letting him know that he wasn't the only one to
do that with his tail. "I'll bring pictures of the twins when they're born."

“That’d be awesome!” He beamed brightly, eying his tail slightly. He nodded, and moved to get a
note card for him to write down his information. “Here- name and number will suffice- good luck
with your daughter in law, and congrats again on the grandkids.”

“Mmm, bring them here if they need shoes like you, yeah?” Yuri hummed slightly from her spot
behind the counter.

"I'll bring in my youngest, he needs a pair of shoes if I can convince him." he chuckled, writing
down his name and phone number with skillful strides of the pen. "Thank you Miss Shimada,
Hanzo. I cannot wait to see what you come up with." he rumbled happily, giving a small bow before
he turned to leave.

“Such a respectful young man,” Yuri sounded pleased. “You do good by his shoes, Hanzo.”

“Of course, Grandma, I wouldn’t do anything less.” Their words followed him out.

Outside, Toki had the door open again and was brushing crumbs of muffin off of her self so they
didn’t land inside his car. She peered up at him as he came out and tilted her head. “Did you get your
questions answered?” She inquired lightly.

“Indeed. I hope I wasn't too long.” he replied with a smile.

“Not at all.” She smiled at him crookedly, and finished removing the crumbs from her person. She
paused in sliding properly back into her seat, and leaned her skull against the door as a contraction
rolled over her. “Mm… I’m ready to go home though. Pretty sure this is labor. I haven’t felt these
kinds of contractions since Pap stopped my early labor.”

He nodded, quickly getting into the drivers seat and starting the car.

She righted herself and got herself buckled in her seat. Once Toki shut the door, she curled her
fingers over the arm rest and exhaled slowly. “Mmm… Well, it’s going to be a long ride home.”
They had three hours at least. More if there was traffic. Toki gives Tenebris a faint smile. “So, you
alright? Not getting all anxious over there, Grandpa?”

"Trying not to think about it, Toki." He answered.

“Alright.” She nods. She leans over to fiddle with his radio, and turned it to an ‘old’ music channel.
Old being anything that was made before the current year. Quietly, she leaned back and hummed
along, trying to offer both him and her a distraction as they wove their way back into the city.

The traffic had, thankfully, cleared off somewhat, so they managed to make it through the city proper
in about forty-five minutes, which was record time for Ebott.

About halfway home from the city, or possibly further than that since it was hard to keep track of
time and landmarks when she kept zoning out, her contractions grew more uncomfortable, and edged
into the painful side. Humming along with the music wasn’t helping. She couldn’t really shift
positions to find another one that didn’t hurt as badly, so she was literally stuck until they could get home.

By the time the next one rolled around, she was very nearly putting holes in the leather of his armrests, breathing quietly to herself as she rode it out. Her teeth ground, a soft, squeak of flint-like bone grinding together, and thankfully the slushy she had slowly been sipping kept her mouth too wet for sparks to fly.

Tenebris’ tail was starting to rattle nervously behind him as he looked at the road, his foot putting a bit more pressure on the gas pedal.

The nervous rattle was not very comforting to hear, and Toki forced her fingers off of his armrest. She flipped her hand over and wiggled her fingers at him, offering to take his hand, or his tail or something other than ripping holes in his nice leather. “Easy, Tenebris. It’s all right. It’s all natural… Mmmnn…”

"So was that leather." He keened, letting her take his tail so he could keep both hands on the wheel.

"I'll pay to get it fixed." She ground her words out tightly. Her fingers curled over his tail, holding the noisy thing still as she tightened her fingers over it. "Hn... How long until you think we'll be home?"

"I can get us there soon… Can you call the boys?"

"Yeah." She fished with one hand for her purse, and managed to get her phone. It took her a few tries, but once her contraction ended, she dialed Pap's number. As the pain eased some, she gently rubbed her fingers over Tenebris' tail in silent apology in case she had hurt him.

Tenebris wasn’t bothered by her grasp; otherwise he wouldn’t have set it within reach.

"Toki?" Came Papyrus' voice from the phone.

“Hey, Pap.” She smiled slightly despite herself. “So… I hate to be the bearer of awkward birthday news, but… Surprise, you’re probably going to be a daddy very, very soon?”

There was a pause, where he was processing this information, but it didn’t last very long. "What do I need to do to be ready?" He questioned. He did sound like he was starting to panic, but kept himself chilled and calm enough to prepare for her return.

"Get some towels." Toki glanced at Tenebris, and hummed slightly. "Towels, and... Ah, perhaps put some of those plastic covers down on the couch? I dunno how long I'll be in labor, but I know it'll be a while. And... Keep yourself calm maybe? Your dad is a bit of a mess already. I need someone else to be calm. Can you do that for me?"

"I... I can do that..." He murmured, taking a deep breath to steady himself. "Yeah... I... I can do that."

“Okay.” She exhaled softly. “I know you can do it, Pap. Now… I’ll be home in… Shit, I don’t know. I haven’t been paying attention to the surroundings and landmarks… Probably thirty minutes now? Maybe forty minutes? Possibly less. Anyways, I need to call Sans. Presumably,” she eyed her father in law in the front seat, “so he can take Thumper for tonight, since we’ll need Tenebris with us.”

"I'll call him now, I love you and I’ll see you soon."

“I can call him, Pap, but alright. I love you too, and I’ll see you soon.” She waited until he hung up,
and then slid her phone back into her purse. “Mmm… Okay. So,” she glanced to Tenebris, “Do you happen to know how long we’ll be? I was serious when I said I wasn’t paying attention to the landmarks.” Time had gotten a little fuzzy with contractions, and she probably kept missing them.

"Not long," he murmured, "Not stopping, not stopping."

“… Tenebris?” She eyed him warily. She shifted her grip and bundled his tail into her arms trying to draw him out of his probably panic induced daze. Toki tweaked his tail slightly, rolling the bone-armor between her fingers to distract herself and him. “You have to stop sometime, or you’ll pass right by the compound.”

His tail wagged slowly before he slowed down and looked at her, "If I hadn't had stopped I would have gotten you home before you went into labor…"

“Technically my contractions started this morning, but they only really got regular when I got into the car. So… Technically that’s not true.” She stroked his tail gently for a moment, before her fingers tightened. Toki inhales and braces herself, her fingers slipping between the hard bone to grasp what rested below. She pressed her forehead to his tail and moaned lowly. “Oh gods, I can’t wait to get home so I can move.”

"We're almost there…" he murmured, "Almost…"

Something gave in her belly as the compound gates came into sight.

A warm scent flooded the car, smelling strongly like Toki, but something… else. Her skirt was soaked with luminescent green fluid, and it oozed over his seat and down along the floor. Toki squeaked, and jolted slightly in her seat, having not expected that sensation. Some of the pressure died out in her belly though, and she relaxed just slightly. Not all of it was gone, but at least a little bit off made it feel much better. “Uh… I think my water just broke… Or whatever that is…"

Well, at least she knew for sure it wasn’t a false labor now.

Tenebris' pupils thinned as he picked up the scent and his grip tightened on the wheel as he drove, but he was relieved to see the guards already opening the gate. “Leave it to Papyrus to make sure they were ready... Atta boy…"

Shifting made another gush that stained his natural leather seats, so Toki chose to sit still. Well, as still as she could be. Leaving the road put them on the bumpy, muddy ground for a short time, and that was a painful experience that she never, ever wanted to have again. When the car parked in front of her house, Toki released Tenebris tail and opened her door. She couldn’t get out without help. “At least we made it?” she murmured to Tenebris, side-eying him briefly. They wouldn’t really know how bad his seats looked until she stood up…

Tenebris didn’t reply initially. He just got out, taking a breath to calm himself, and came around to her side and offered his hand to help her up. "Let's get you inside."

Toki accepted his help and hauled herself up. More ooze slid down the insides of her legs, and she visibly shuddered. That was the grossest feeling. It didn’t have the consistency of water, more like a warm and liquid like gelatin- just yuck. Yuck, yuck, yuck.

Standing upright, though, let them see that his seats were effectively ruined by the sticky luminescent fluid that oozed over them. Toki winced, and leaned a little heavily on Tenebris for a second, before going to fetch her purse and Pap’s gift out of the back seat. “I’m super sorry about your car,” She murmured softly, collecting her things from the back of the car before turning to let him guide her
"Forget about that right now, right now I am focusing more on you..." He told her gently.

She can’t help the automatic roll that her eye lights do upon his words. Like father, like son. “You and Papyrus are a lot alike. He says that a lot.” She informs him seriously. Still, she hobbles easily up the front stairs, and lets Tenebris open the front door for her. Her arms are full, after all. “Pap?” She calls gently. “I’m home.”

"I'm here, Toki!" Aliquam called from somewhere in the house. "I just finished setting up." He slid out into view and gave her a shaky smile.

Toki gave him one in return, sure she looked like quite a sight. Her nice, white skirt was now an interesting shade of green, and she was making a mess of their floor. She hefts up the box, and gives him a sheepish smile. “Happy birthday?” She slips the large game system onto one of the side tables, and eases her purse off of her shoulder as well. “I am so glad to be home.” She sighs contently.

I’m already in labor,” she points out gingerly, “and this sort of stuff takes time. I’d… kinda like to get cleaned up though. Do you think you can go start a bath while I get my skirt into the washing machine?”

"You'll go with Father to the bathroom, I'll drop off the skirt and join you soon enough."

Toki nodded, sighing softly as she did so. She was goin to just have to accept that she was going to be babied. Toki slipped her skirt and ruined underpants down, giving no shits if Tenebris caught sight of anything, and bundled the clothes into a glob of gross. Her shoes, stained a horrid color, also joined the pile. She made a face, and offered it to him. “Alright. I'll put my shirt in the hamper upstairs- just toss that in with the usual mix, yeah? I hope that’ll take the goop out…"  

He nodded gently and took them while Tenebris started upstairs with her. "Atta girl, come on."

"I'm coming, I'm coming." She chuffed slightly, and padded up slowly with him. She ended up needing his support on the way up, as she felt shaky and wobbly.

Getting to the top of the stairs was an achievement though, and she guided him into her room once she was good to go. Her shirt was discarded into the bin for later washing, and she stood nude once more in the bedroom. Toki took the time to spread some plastic over the bed, in case she wanted to move there later, before moving to the bathroom. “How are you holding up, Papa?” She glanced back to her shadow as she eased herself onto the bathroom sink counter, so she wouldn’t be in the way when Papyrus came up the stairs. She needed either him or Tenebris to start the bath, since bending down wasn’t a thing for her.

Oh. Oh. She’d be able to bend down soon. That… was actually exciting. She perked at the thought. Full mobility… gods, she was so excited for that, and to hold her kids.

"I'm steeling myself for this." He murmured.

She quirked an amused smile at him. “You and me both. Do we need to call in Todd? I know he’s been studying a lot of stuff- if you don’t think you can handle it, this is sort of your last chance to back out. Of course, you wouldn’t be able to get the delivery on film for further record if you’re not here…” Toki paused, and rubbed her belly with a soft sigh. “Speaking of- you can probably go get your go-pro and park your car if you want. Nothing’s going to be happening right now that Papyrus..."
and I can’t handle.”

He snorted at that, "Don’t sound so eager." he told her, before he nodded. He was nervously twitching for a second, loathe to just leave her alone- but he eventually sighed. "I'll be back."

"You don’t have to rush," Toki nods gently. “Go get your kit, and anything else you need.” In the mean time, she would keep her seat on the sink counter, and wait for her husband to come up to join her. She was growing a bit tired, but she supposed she was losing a lot of magic based on what was coating her legs- and soaking basically everything she’d touched since the car.

Tenebris nodded, gave her a gentle pat on the skull, and then padded out.

Aliquam soon joined her, sidling in and gently hugging her. "Tokiko~"

“Hey, Quinn.” She smiled and kissed him gently, leaning into his embrace with a soft sigh. “Looks like it’s finally time. Heh. Think you can get the bath going, daddy-to-be?”

Toki exhales gently, and smiles up to him with a tender look. This was it. They were going to ring their little skeletons into the world sometime within the next several hours. They would be parents. It was a little overwhelming- but in a good way.

"Of course." He gave her a tender kiss, and a soft touch to her belly, before going to get the water started.

Toki took a moment to ease off the counter, and then scrubbed it clean with a washcloth. Honestly, she was gross. Ugh. “You may not want to get in the tub with me initially,” She hums softly to him. “I am gross. This is like the worlds stickiest gelatin. Ugh.”

"Toki, what do you think I am? A clean freak?" He snorted. "I'll be fine with a little mess."

“Well, sometimes, but I think everyone has their moments where they just have to clean.” She chuckles, and rests a hand lightly on his back. His shirt is warm under her fingers, and she finds herself relaxing in close proximity to her mate and the calmness he was exuding. If he was panicking inside, he was hiding it a lot better than his father was. Toki couldn’t tell. Or was too distracted to tell. “If it doesn’t bother you, then I would love for you to join me.”

"I think I will then." He chuckled softly. He leaned upright, hugged her softly, and pressed a kiss between her horns. "I'll get in first so you'll have the perfect cradle."

“That’s fine with me.” She smiles. Toki shifts slightly in his arms and hums. “You might want to get in quick though. I can feel a contraction coming soon, and I’d rather be in the water than try and stay on my feet.”

Papyrus nodded, and gently stepped away from her. His clothes were discarded neatly but swiftly, leaving him just as bare as her. He gave her one more kiss, and then eased down into the filling tub.

Toki eased down after him, carefully sliding into position between his legs. She hadn’t quite gotten comfortable when the contraction hit, and she leaned back into him with a soft moan. Her hand clenched on his knee, holding him firmly as she closed her sockets and tried to breathe through it. She’d heard stories of contractions growing worse when the water broke- and they weren’t exactly false. The right side of her belly felt like it was made of hellfire, and she had to breathe gingerly through it.

He smiled and wrapped his arms around her, kissing her head gently. One of his hands briefly snaked down and pressed against her lower back, locating a pressure point that the books had talked
about and then firmly pressing into it. "That's it," he purred, "Keep doing that."

Toki’s breath hitched gently, and she eased into his arms, letting his embrace and the use of her pressure points help to relax her. Pressure built in her middle again- and a second pop occurred, and the tub was suddenly flooded with green magic amniotic fluid. Toki didn’t notice until the contraction faded, and once it did, she eased against him with a soft shudder. Two different waters breaking meant that her children likely weren’t identical. “… Well, at least I was in the tub for this one.”

Not that it helped- now they were sitting in magic sludge filled water. It was… an unpleasant smell, at least to Toki. She reached out to drain the tub and let it refill while they were in it.

He reached up and gently massaged her stomach gently, helping her relax as much as he could before he reached up and grabbed the showerhead with his magic. Turning on the water to rinse her off as the water drained, Papyrus peppered the back of her skull with gentle kisses.

“Thanks, Pap. You are the literal best.” She let him rinse her, and scrubbed her leg bones and lower bits as best she could. The shower head helped most of it get down the drain, but she was slowly, slowly leaking little bits of the magical amniotic fluid. Once she was mostly clean and the tub was free, she turned the water back on, plugged the drain, and leaned back into him with a soft and tired sigh.

He turned the shower setting to massage and gently ran it into her femurs, a small smile on his face.

“Oooo, you spoil me.” She slumped into him with a soft purr. The massage setting set out little pulses of water designed to massage flesh- but it did wonders on bones too. “I love you.” She murmured suddenly. “I love you a lot, you know that?”

"I love you more..." he purred, kissing her cheek.

There was a soft knock on the doorframe. “Toki, Papyrus, I’m here."

“Mmm, come on in, Papa.” Toki shifted softly, and nuzzled into her mate with a soft sound. “Did you get everything you needed?”

Now that she was clean, and her femurs were being massaged, she could feel herself almost drifting. Her energy levels had been up and down at random since before her due date, and she found them plummeting again. She felt safe in Pap’s arms, pressed up against his chest. She was tired and slumped against him, and he was warm and safe- and the hot water slowly filling the tub felt amazing too.

"Yes, I did." he replied, approaching and setting up the camera. He tucked his go-pro into his shirt and clipped it on about chest height, so it would get everything that he was pointing at. "I appreciate you willing to let me record this for science. I'll turn it off if you get uncomfortable."

"It's all for the greater good, right? It'll help you prepare for helping Sans and any further children that come from us." Or from their children, and their children’s children. Toki heaved a soft, sleepy sigh, and then grimaced at a cramp in her lower belly. "You might not see much though to start. I'm... Mm... Pretty tired. Energy levels are flagging again." They were both used to her nearly narcoleptic spells that she had during the last couple weeks of her pregnancy.

Her body had been stockpiling energy, trying to fill up what the contractions took.

"That's fine, we can wait." he assured her, "You're okay to rest for a little while if you need to."
Her eye lights tracked over his frame, and she nuzzled her skull back into Pap’s shoulder. She was relaxing, contraction aches or no, and there was nothing she could do to stop it. Toki sighed gently, and curled one of her hands gently over Papyrus’ knee again. “I think I might need to.” She murmured softly. “If I’m gonna make it through transition, then I’m gonna need as much energy as I can get… I’d like to stay here for a little while longer though. I’m relaxed here.” And relaxed in labor was something not easy to come by.

"Rest.” Aliquam kissed her head gently. "I love you."

“I love you too.” Her free hand snared her husbands, and she laced their fingers together before closing her sockets and relaxing. Sleep would take some time- but she was safe. She was warm- she had her mate, and the protection of her father in law. Whatever instincts made these things a priority, they were certainly pleased. Pleased enough to eventually allow her to succumb to soothing, relaxing sleep.
Strider Notes: Sorry to end it on a cliffhanger~ but it was getting a bit long, y’know. Here’s the big event~ Silver and I are actually going to be taking a short break from posting chapters after this. This’ll give us time to unwind and relax, and figure out the majority of the rest of the plot. It’ll also give us time to stockpile chapters, so that when we do come back into it, we can come back in with a surplus and a steady plan for uploading them.

Also, other news that’s hilariously related to this chapter in particular- I’m now a mom. To a sweet little calf- her name is Tough Cookie. Her mom had her in the mud, and lost her, and then refused to accept that she was her calf when we reunited them. So… Yay? I’m a mom again in time for my 21st birthday, come the 13th.

ALSO THERE IS ART WE HAVE DONE OF THE TWINS UP ON THE TUMBLR. COME VISIT US AND SHOUT AT US.
http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Silverwing Notes: *puts a needle to a balloon* The time has come.

She had drifted in and out, rousing to awareness during some of her contractions, but otherwise she slept soundly. Or, at least she thought she did. She’d had a weird dream where she’d been growling at something or someone- but she hadn’t really been aware of it during her brief flashes into awake, and then back to sleep. Sometime during one of her contractions, she had been moved. She’d been aware of it, because the movement of being carried had been distinctly uncomfortable, and she’d instinctively growled at whoever was carrying her. She wasn’t dropped though, despite the hesitation she’d felt in the one carrying her, and Toki had been fast asleep again as the contraction began to fade off.

Contractions were horribly, horribly exhausting- and she woke up still feeling tired, but she felt… she wasn’t sure. Like something had changed while she had been sleeping. Her pelvis felt heavy, making her really wish someone had placed something between her femurs to provide some sort of support to her lower body, and her belly felt tight near constantly.

Toki woke up in what she realized was her bed. She woke abruptly at the tail end of a contraction, her sockets lighting to what she realized was the sound of a game playing. She could vaguely hear Tenebris and Papyrus behind her, and shifted slowly in bed so she could turn to face them. The plastic ruined her attempt at being quiet, crinkling noisily as it protected her sheets from the stuff sure to come.

They had apparently gotten the flat screen from down stairs, and had brought it upstairs. It was sitting against the wall, propped up on its stand, with the new X-box off to the side. Tenebris and Papyrus were visible from behind. Toki identified the game they were playing as the two-player version of Portal 2.
Ah, so he had found and opened her gifts. She idly wondered what time it was, and sought out the alarm clock on her nightstand. It was twenty minutes after midnight. She had slept for... probably close to five hours then. Likely, Toki mused, she had slept through the worst of the transitioning stage. Her mom had done that with two of her brothers- and Toki found herself glad that she had too.

She’d seen the transitioning stage at it’s worst- and it was a horrible, horrible thing to experience. There was no way of really knowing what all they had to see and hear- but she supposed, eying the camera propped up not far from her, that she could just watch the video and find out.

She shifted slightly on the bed, still bare and naked. Papyrus, she noted, was garbed in his usual orange turtleneck. She could smell him- smell them, together- on the bed below her, and it was the single most relaxing thing she could think of at the moment. Each soft whiff brought some sort of soothing feeling through her. She was safe within the reaches of her family.

Toki sighed gently, and turned her attention to Tenebris and Papyrus as they navigated through puzzles that she would have had a hell of a time trying to do. All of the monsters in her family were wicked smart, she mused.

Slowly, Toki reached out and gently rubbed her fingers over the collar of Aliquam’s turtleneck. She rubbed the well-worn fabric with the tips of her finger bones, and closed her sockets with a soft content sigh. The twins shifted inside of her, strangely quiet across the soul links, and she gave a soft grunt as their legs pressed against her ribs.

"Enjoying the game?" She asks quietly, a soft hum escaping her as she watched the screen from over their shoulders.

Tenebris sat up slightly as he heard her moving, and he let out a greeting chirp.

Aliquam paused the game to turn and kiss her cheek, gently rubbing his fingers over hers. "How do you feel?" he asked gently.

“Tired.” She says softly. “Kinda like I slept, but didn’t really sleep… Mm… Sore. Hungry. Heavy… A lot of things.” She nuzzles her face gently into his, and buzzes a gentle tone of greeting to Tenebris’ soft chirp. “Are you enjoying your game?” She inquired again.

"Yes, this is so much fun." he replied happily, "Definitely a new type of puzzle for me!"

"It definitely makes you think." Tenebris nodded lightly.

“Good.” Toki smiled at him warmly. “I’m glad you’re having fun with it. I watched some folks playing the game, and I thought you might enjoy the puzzles and the stories through both games.”

Toki shifted where she lay, and carefully lifted herself upwards so she could sit. Her bottom was tender, and sitting wasn’t entirely pleasant, even on the plush top that was her bed. She felt warm, like her magic was gathering in preparation for something. “Did you both get the chance to eat dinner while I rested?” She asked softly. “I figure Grillby probably dropped something off…” She knew Muffet was supposed to bring a cake by, but had no idea if the spider woman actually had since she was pretty certain her labor had been broadcast across the village.

"We didn't want to leave you alone for too long." Her husband hummed gently to her.

"So we ordered Grillby's for pickup. I'll only be gone a few minutes to pick it up." Tenebris explained.

“That’s fine.” She nods softly. “Go ahead and go pick up your order from Grillby’s, yeah? I'll be
okay for a few minutes.” She smiles slightly. “Is he even open past midnight though? Or is…” Could everyone be awake waiting on news about her delivery? Something told her that this was likely the case. “Speaking of Grillby… a snack sounds good about now.” Mm… Milkshake.

Her magic was depleted after all. Even if most doctors recommended against eating during labor, she sure as hell didn’t want to chew on ice chips or something likewise. But… She wasn’t sure she really had time for more than a snack. There was an odd feeling inside of her- it wouldn’t be long, she thought. Not overly long at all.

"Perhaps after your labor. Right now you need something gentle on the stomach." Tenebris told her softly.

“That I do know. I could still go for something soothing, like a vanilla milkshake or something.” She hummed softly. Her sockets closed, and she shifted as her belly tightened in a contraction. Toki rocked backwards in her seated position, riding it out as her belly tightened and forced the tight feeling in her pelvis to grow worse. Her fingers found Pap’s, and she tightened her hold around them as she rode it out. “Hah… Ah… You might want to go get your food, Tenebris. Teleportation is your friend right now. Pap and I will be okay until you get back, yeah?”

He nodded and put the controller down, teleporting out to go get their meals.

“C’mere.” Papyrus set down his controller and stood up to gently slide his arms under her knees and back. He slid her up to the headboard, and then gathered a generous pile of pillows and rested them behind her. Te took a moment to ease his hand behind her and make use of the pressure points again to ease some of her discomfort.

Toki didn’t respond to him for a short time, until the contraction passed. Being moved during it was no less comfortable than sitting still, but she did take comfort in being able to lean back against a mound of pillows so she could be semi-upright. “Thanks, Pap.” She leaned heavily against the pillows, and then sought out his hand again. “Mm… I’m sorry I slept so long.” She thrummed softly. “I think I just needed it though.”

"You did need it, so I don’t care." He told her, stroking her stomach gently.

She smiled, and watched as the twins shifted faintly below his touch. She parted her legs just slightly to release some of the pressure in her pelvis, and sighed up to him. Idly, her fingers found his unoccupied hand and she held it, stroking her thumb along the backs of his knuckles. “Mkay… Heh… We’re getting close.” She murmurs, just a little breathlessly. “I can feel it… We’re going to be parents soon, Pap. Parents.”

"So soon." He purred happily.

“Mhm.” She smiled wider, and stroked her fingers along her belly again. “I’m ready to hold them, Pap… So ready. Mm… Do you have the blankets ready for them?” He probably did, but a mother’s paranoia wasn’t something she intended to ignore.

“Within reach,” He promised, purring gently and pressing a kiss to her fingers.

“Good.” Toki smiled at him gently, and then shifted. Another contraction built up, this time slow and steady, forcing her pelvis shift uncomfortably as something pressed down slowly from within her. She squeezed his hand slowly, and exhaled shakily as she brought his cooler knuckles up to press against the heated bones of her face. “You may want to eat fast when your Dad gets back,” She shot him an amused look. “I think the show’s going to start soon.”
"If I have to wait to eat, I will wait. I don’t care if I have to wait.” He hummed softly.

“I know you don’t.” She hummed, exhaling shakily as it passed. It was swift- but they would only grow closer together. “But I do. I want you to eat if there’s time.” She cleared her throat slightly, and shifted her legs, idly kicking the light blanket that had been covering her off down to the end of the bed. “S-so, how are we going to do this? The bed is comfortable, but against pillows alone I don’t really have that much freedom to change my angle if I need to.” Part of her wanted to have Papyrus behind her, sort of like their bathtub position, for when the time to push came. It was a safe position, and made her feel safe and supported. Toki was hesitant to ask, though.

"We can use the blankets to aid you, Father could move you as needed, or I could sit with you." He rattled off a few ideas automatically.

“I’d kinda like it if you sat with me,” she hums softly. “Kinda like we did in the tub. It was a very… good position.” And if she needed to be hefted upwards, he was tall enough to give her a little bit of support off of the bed. “Probably need to move to the edge of the bed though, and do it facing off the side.” That would give Tenebris, who was a large monster, plenty of space to do what he needed to down below her.

He smiled gently and nodded. ”As my mate wishes, just gotta scoot forward a little bit.” He hummed softly to her.

“Mhm… For now I’m okay though. I don’t quite feel the urge yet.” It was building, but not quite urgent yet. Soon though. Very soon. Probably within a couple contractions, she mused. Toki inhaled and exhaled, simply listening to the sounds of her mate as she relaxed and waited for her doctor to return.

"Deep breathes, slowly settle down, and just lean into me.” He murmured softly to her.

She did as asked, and leaned slowly into him. He might have still been standing next to her, but he was a reliable force. He wouldn’t let her fall. Toki leaned into him more firmly, and suddenly sighed as some of the pressure in her pelvis abated. “Ohhh… mmm…”

“Grillby, the sneaky bastard, got into our kitchen and cut us up some fruit. That means you'll get some too, Toki.” Tenebris laughed gently as he entered the bedroom from outside the door, carrying a bowl of cut fruit in his hands.

Tenebris appearing again had her perking slightly, and she straightened again. “Grillby’s had a mate before, so he probably knows what a laboring one needs.” She hummed softly, eying the fruit. “And that looks delicious. Is that strawberries and apple slices?”

"Yes, precisely." he replied, sitting by her and offering her the bowl.

Toki smiled and took a handful of fruits from it, settling the bowl gingerly on her belly. She nibbled them lightly, feeling the small flurries of magic they created as she ate them. “Mm… Fruit is good stuff.” She thrummed. She tilted her head curiously. "What about your orders though?” She hadn’t seen him bring that in- but to be fair, she had zeroed in almost immediately on the fruit bowl he had been carrying. She was still partially focused on it, nibbling through precisely cut apple and strawberry slices. Grillby had even removed the green tops from the berries.

"Right now we need to simply focus on keeping you calm and comfortable. When the twins are ready, they'll come out, and we'll be ready for them."

“Mmm…” She simply nodded in his general direction, and continued nibbling her fruits.
Toki finished a good portion of the bowl before her desire to eat was gone, and then she offered the rest to them. Her hunger was sated, which had her instincts kicking over to other more important things; like the contraction steamrolling over her. It had taken her fresh bout of energy that she’d ingested and tossed her headlong into another one. Her fingers tightened on the bowl, and she offered it out wordlessly, trying not to drop it and spill it across the plastic on the bed.

Aliquam took it from her without needing her to ask. "Thank you." he purred gently, setting it on the side table as he reached out to rub her stomach. "Easy you two." he murmured.

Toki grimaced as her muscles pulsed under his fingers. She took in several deep breaths, feeling something shifting in her pelvis. His fingers didn’t get any responding kicks, and Toki figured out why at the feeling that tingly over her more heavily than before. “I… I think we need to get into positions.” She murmured softly, rasping in a soft breath as she shuddered through the remnants of her contractions. The force resting heavily in her pelvis didn’t go away, and she groaned uncomfortably at the bed pressing in on her pelvis. “I, uh, think the first one’s head is engaged in my pelvis. It’s really uncomfortable.”

Tenebris moved into position and carefully shifted her as well so that she had her legs draped over the edge of the bed. He then propped up her legs on his shoulders, lifting her pelvis with one of his hands so he could ease a pillow under her.

Papyrus reached over and started the camera before he slid behind her, his arms coming around Toki. Nuzzling his face into her neck, he pressed several supporting kisses to the back of her spine. "Deep breaths. Push with the contractions… that's what the book said, right father?"

"That's right."

Part of her was honestly touched. They had both studied, and despite the earlier panic from them both, they were doing well to stay calm. As Toki settled against Papyrus, seated on her pillow, but also between his legs, she found a happy buzz leaving her. “You both studied,” she smiled. “That’s… That’s awesome. I’m proud of you both.” She thrummed softly. She relaxed as best she could, keeping her breathing matching Pap’s, and curled her hands gently over his knees. With his arms around her ribs, she felt secure and safe.

The next contraction came swift now that there wasn’t the counter pressure of her sitting on the bed. Her middle tightened, and Toki couldn’t help the guttural grunt that escaped her. Her fingers sank tightly into the fabric covering her husband’s knees, and Toki clenched her muscles, and pushed.

“Holy fuck, that stings.” She hissed quietly, closing her sockets with a wince. The head engaged in her pelvis felt massive, and she had a sudden growing respect for her mother. Her mother had done this nine times- Granted, she never had to do it twice in a row, but nine times trumped her two. “Ah, ow, ow…” She did make progress though. Faster progress than if she’d have been human, for sure. She could feel the skull moving down slowly- but it stalled and slid back some as the contraction lightened. It didn’t fully end, but it let her catch her breath.

Pap kissed her head a few times and muttered words to encourage her while Tenebris stayed focus, his gaze sharp as he kept one hand on her body, the other on her leg, stroking it with his thumb.

Catching her breath was for naught as another contraction stole it. Like a vice grip, it tightened over her middle in an unforgiving grasp. Her fingers, likewise, tore small holes in her husband’s pants, and she leaned forwards just slightly against him, pushing sharply. The comforting touches were nice, and well noted, but she had more pressing issues.

The skull moved swiftly downwards, making her pelvis shift positions as she adjusted to what she
felt she needed. Toki pushed, rested, and then pushed again.

It was a long cycle, and she lost track of how long that cycle lasted. She fell into a single-minded focus, and everything else fell onto the back burner. Papyrus’ words were white noise to her ears, comforting all the same despite her lack of total comprehension of them.

She snapped out of it, though, as her lower lips bulged outwards. A small, green-stained skull began to peek through, even as the burning intensified many times over. She squirmed, a soft keen leaving her, and she took a long moment to shakily rest and get her bearings.

"That’s it... that’s it..." Tenebris carefully cupped the child’s head, holding it so on the next contraction it would come right out. "Papyrus, the blankets?"

"By the bedside."

A location easily accessed by Tenebris' tail. He hooked a blanket and draped it over his leg for when the first child came out.

Toki grimaced, panting roughly. Her bones were clammy, beaded with drops of condensation, and her legs rattled shakily. She used to think that burning alive was the most painful thing she’d ever felt- but crowning? Crowning took the cake. Her focus remained, unfortunately, as the next contraction rolled through. She leaned forwards with a grunt, and bore down, fighting past the ring of fire that seared agony into her being. She might have made some noises- but she’s not entirely sure.

Her being wound down into hyper focus on getting past the head. With several hard pushes, the head popped free, and she had to rest again. Tears beaded in her sockets- but she was close. So, so close and the first one would be here. “So close,” she whispered shakily, fingers almost kneading Papyrus’ leg as she tried to unlock the stiff joints. Another hard push, and she eased the first shoulder out- and well within range of Tenebris providing assistance there.

His second hand came and hooked the shoulder, a careful grip and he was able to start to gently tug, watching her body make sure that the counter pressure wouldn’t distress her. "Deep breath, and when I say, push, push. It's almost out." he ordered.

Toki shakily inhaled and nodded. Her fingers found purchase again, and when the next painful tightening came and he gave his signal, Toki pushed.

There was a slightly painful sensation of being stretched too wide for too long- and then the pressure was gone and she felt emptier. She slumped into Papyrus, shaky, with her eye lights trained on Tenebris.

Tenebris pulled the child out, and on instinct he brought the child up and ran his tongue over its face, cleaning it and allowing it to jolt to life. It's mouth opening in a screeching wail until Tenebris wrapped it in a blanket and passed it to Aliquam, who cradled it where Toki too could reach.

"Look Toki, you did it..." He purred.

“I did it.” Her voice was perilously close to a sob. Even if it had been weird to see her father in law lick her newborn, she was too tired and elated to care. She lifted a finger and gently held it up to the tiny, screaming bundle that was essentially cradled to her and Papyrus. She stroked gently over the not-very-tiny skull, taking in the softer jaw line that the little one had gotten from her. “Our little one has my teeth,” she smiled softly.

A tiny, angry orange spark lit up in its little eye sockets, sputtering and flickering as sharp, sharp
baby teeth finally closed into a fussy whimper.

“And they’ve got your eyes, Pap…” She murmured again. “Gods, they’re beautiful…”

Papyrus smiled proudly, kissing Toki’s head gently. "Toki, I’m so proud of you... So proud." he praised happily, tears welling in his sockets and running down his cheeks again.

“We did it,” She smiled, and nuzzled him softly. She was a little shaky, but she managed to gently take the tiny fussy skeleton into her arms, so she could properly hold the little one, if only for a moment or two. Gently, she rocked the fussy baby, stroking her fingers softly over warm cheeks, and hummed a gentle song for her baby.

The fussing quieted down into softer burbles, and, exhausted from being born, the tiny being settled into a small nap in her arms. Tiny fingers came up to hold onto Aliquam’s finger.

Equally teary eyed as her husband, Toki gave Tenebris a shaky smile. “Do you… want to officially hold your first grandbaby? P-putting the blanket on them doesn’t count, y’know. That’s doctors duty, not grandpa’s duty.”

"What if I’m both, silly pup?” he chuckled almost as weakly as Aliquam sounded, "But no... It looks like they are clamped to their father... I'll hold the next one." he laughed shakily. "I'm so proud of you, Toki."

Toki smiled at him, and sniffled softly. “Thanks, Papa. I’m proud of you too. Of you both. You held together really, really well in a stressful situation. You did good… Think you can handle a repeat performance?”

"For you, anything." he replied, giving a smile and a nod, "I've been going crazy in anxiety for this moment."

Suddenly, there was a familiar FWIP of a shortcut.

"You could say you were going goo goo gaga in anxiety." Caeruleus truly was the superman of puns.

"Caeruleus!" Aliquam groaned, "That was absolutely bloody awful, but you have... uncanny timing."

And Aliquam’s loud groan proceeded to wake the baby again. The little one whimpered and released the bigger skeleton, instead curling tiny fists towards their chin with a fussy sound.

“Shhhhh.” Toki didn’t scold Aliquam for his groan- that was his instinctive response to puns, so the chances of him stopping were nil. Toki turned tired eyes to Sans, and offered him a smile while she rocked and soothed the whimpering newborn. “You have interesting timing, Sans… heh… You're an uncle now,” She hummed. “Though… dunno if you’ve got a niece or a nephew yet… Papa…? You mind checking since the little one isn’t latched onto Papyrus anymore?”

"Gladly." Tenebris gently took the infant, bouncing and cooing to it gently as he undid the blanket, examining the pelvis. "This one's a little boy." He purred, bouncing the child carefully as he re-wrapped him up, taking a moment to just... savor this feeling.

“His name," Toki glanced up to Papyrus, shared a look, and then smiled widely, “Is Skylar Eras Gaster.”

Tiny fists unfurled at the new presence, and Skylar blurrily reached a tiny hand up for anything to
grab. His fingers curled gently over one of Tenebris’ massive ones, and he settled down, recognizing the feel of his grandfather. His fussing whimpers slowed, and he settled back into his nap.

His smile shakily grew bigger and he began to laugh gently, "Oh, little Skylar…” he murmured happily, nuzzling the child while purring loudly. "I think he recognizes his Grandpapa." His smile couldn’t have gotten any physically bigger, and neither could the warm feeling in his soul.

"I've never seen him so happy." Aliquam murmured to Toki gently, "Perhaps he was like this when Caeruleus and I were born."

A tiny stuttering purr rose up from the baby by instinct, though it sputtered out after a few seconds. Skylar was too thoroughly exhausted to be woken by the nuzzling and sounds.

“I’m sure he was.” She smiled gently, and leaned a bit more heavily into Papyrus. Her middle was smaller now, and it was so… odd to feel so much lighter. She hadn’t felt this light- or sore- in a long time. “The first grandchildren are special, Pap… Come time for us to have our own, I know I wont be any better than he is right now.” She shifted to look up at him with a tired but affectionate smile. “You’re a dad now,” she hummed. “How do you feel?”

"I can't believe it... I'm happy, I'm excited... and I’m scared..." he murmured.

Cae came over and smiled at the sight of the elder showing such pure happiness at holding the child, before he looked at Aliquam. "Hey, Pap. You're the Great Papyrus, you can do anything!"

"Sans, that was a childhood nickname in my moment of great ego." the younger brother laughed gently.

"So what? You're still great! You'll be a fantastic father" Sans encouraged him, "Just like how Pops is a good father, AND grandfather. And he just started that second job."

"Nyeh heh heh... That's... true."

“You’ll be a good dad.” Toki smiled softly, and nuzzled him. “Just be who you are. Being a dad will come naturally to you,” She purred softly to him. Toki shifted, and paused before she could say more though. Her middle tightened, and she winced. Gods, everything hurt, and she really wasn’t ready for round two. Round one had been painful, and everything felt raw. “Mmm…”

Tenebris was nearly attuned to the soft moan that he picked up on from Toki. He perked up, eyes flashing over her, and then he turned to his eldest Son. He was the only one in the room who wouldn’t be occupied shortly. “Cae, take your nephew.” Tenebris ordered firmly, gently passing Skylar to Caeruleus before he moved back to position. "Alright, Toki, are you ready for this?"

It was almost scary how quickly he went from happy nearly sobbing Grandpa to sharp and ready for anything once more doctor.

Toki swallowed shakily and shook her head. “No, no I am not, but my body says I am.” She trembled just faintly as the contraction worked the second unborn child into place. It wasn’t pleasant, but now that her body had figure out how it would go first one… The second one would hopefully go smoother. Toki keened softly as the head lodged into her tender pelvis, and locked her fingers gently around Pap’s knees. “Alright… Round two, here we come…”

"You're ready for this, Toki." Papyrus told her, while Tenebris reached up and was able to gently massage the skin around the second child, hoping to aid the contractions where he could.

“Mmmm…” The massage normally would have felt good, but her flesh was overly sensitive, and
everything pertaining to it felt raw and overworked. She took a deep breath, and waited for the first one to pass. Come the second one, however, she was ready. Toki pushed- and almost immediately yelped and squirmed in discomfort. “Oh god, OW!” It felt like there was something sharp being worked down from inside, getting hung up on things that it shouldn’t, and sharp was not a pleasant sensation. She had to obey the contraction though, and pushed as the need came. However, once it faded, she trembled in place, looking shaky and sore as she leaned heavily into her mate. “S-sharp, something is very sharp on the skull.”

"This one has horns..." Tenebris warned her, before he spat onto one hand, carefully lifting up her hips with the other. "Toki... think about your bees, think about Stripe... Clover, and Sugar."

Her sockets might have gone devoid of light. She stared at him nervously, and rattled uneasily. “Horns… What… Why? What are you going to do?”

"Relax, Toki... I’m a doctor, and I’m your papa. You can trust me." he assured her, "I wouldn't do something unless it meant helping you."

“I… know… That doesn’t mean I’m not nervous… Nnn…” She winced slightly. Heavens above, horns. There were horns trying to work their way out of her. “Okay, okay, do whatever you need to do. Just… nnn ow, ow, ow, ow, it can’t hurt less than horns.” She couldn’t even pin the blame on Papyrus for the horns. Those were all on her.

"Your bees. Your hornets." he told her.

Aliquam caught wind and reached up, cupping her jaw with one hand as the other covered her eyes, while he gently sung to her to keep her focused elsewhere as Tenebris did as he had to.

A long digit slowly pushed into her until it met the child's skull. He slowly gave a small push to dislodge her, before moving his finger to use it to take the jabbing of the horns.

His other hand came up and rubbed over her midsection, waiting to feel a contraction.

Pap’s hand might have gotten nipped as Toki registered just what that was that was invading her body. She tensed, insides tender and raw and feeling every motion of that no matter how much she thought of her bees or of her hornets. Pap’s singing was once more white noise, and the sound that came from her mouth might have been a strangled snarl as her hands dug furrows into his bones.

The next contraction that came rolled over her hard, and she clamped painfully tight around his finger, body working to expel her child as best she could. It hit her hard, and she couldn’t quite brace for it. A pained cry escaped her, muffled by the hand cradling her jaw.

Knowing it'd be harder, Tenebris rolled his hand to coax the child out and he hummed as well, his tail rattling loudly to keep her senses distracted at all times. "Steady, that's it." He praised.

The distractions only worked for so long, before Toki lost herself to the same urges as before. Her teeth ground, sending sparks over her husband’s fingers, and she lurched forwards. She bore down with a buzzing snarl to rival Tenebris’, her fingers digging furrows in her husband’s ruined pants. Toki gasped sharply, eye lights still blinded by his fingers, and she pushed.

She wasn’t sure how long she strained and struggled- it was a slow and steady process, and it definitely took longer than her son. Tenebris’ fingers were an enormous help despite the discomfort, and they kept the horns from snagging and hanging up even more, but it was not pleasant and she liked none of it.

It was an endless ring of fire for her, her battered walls burning and stinging, and Toki wasn’t even
certain when she snapped out of her brief trance. Her breathing was ragged, bones hot, and she shook and rattled like a fragile leaf in the wind. The head wasn’t out- but the skull was crowning, showing two pearly nubs of horns that had given her so much trouble.

His hand that rested on top of her middle was tapping gently, as if playing the keys of a piano, to distract her.

"You're doing good, Toki... now that the horns have gotten out of harms way, you can take a breather, focus on catching your breath more than pushing this time, and put your arms above your head."

Toki shuddered, mouth dry, and slumped back tiredly into Papyrus. She trembled, sockets closed, and lifted her hands gently to tug his away from her face so she could see if she so chose. “S-so tired,” she rasped softly. Getting her breathing under control was easier said than done when she kept getting the urge to push. Her abdomen trembled though, shaking and quivering, and she did as she was directed, and rested as best she could.

Arms above the head, however, took energy that she didn’t have. So she propped them up on Pap’s raised knees, and took a moment to gather her breath.

Papyrus helped her, whispering praise to her as he lifted her arms. Tenebris kept himself still as well, watching her carefully before he looked to Cae, extending his hand. "Let me have Skylar, I need you to get Toki some cold water rags."

"Gotcha, Pops!" Carefully passing over Skylar, Cae shortcut downstairs.

Toki trembled, and let him heft her arms up. With her arms up, she could take deeper breaths, and found herself regaining her breath quicker. She shivered, and tried to quiet some of her fussing so she didn’t wake Skylar, who was much closer to hear her sounds now. “I-I’m okay,” she panted, voice less ragged than it had been. “I’m just… tired…”

Tenebris nodded slowly, "You're doing fantastic, Toki... Don’t try to rush this, it'll be done soon."

“I’m n-not trying to r-rush… B-but Cae better come back soon, ‘cause I n-need to push again here really soon.” It wasn’t so much a want as it was a need- her body was building up momentum again, working and toiling to expel her last child now that she was so, so close. Toki nuzzled Papyrus, and blinked slowly. “You can let my arms down n-now.”

He nodded and let her arms down, "There you go." he murmured, rubbing her arms as Cae reappeared.

Toki eyed the wet rags that her brother in law had in his hands, and shifted faintly where she was seated. Her hips twitched, and her head rolled back with a pained sound as fire lanced up her pelvis. Her middle contracted again, slowly forcing the skull downwards, and Toki couldn’t utter a warning or ask what the cold rags were for before she was grunting and leaning forwards, toiling to bring her second child into the world.

Her hands found purchase in Aliquam’s, and she clutched his hands like a lifeline.

Using his one hand, Tenebris focused on helping where he could, while Aliquam comforted her, and Caeruleus dampened the rags and put them on key points on her frame, her forehead and her collarbone. He then dried his hands and took Skylar back, allowing Tenebris the use of his other hand.

The use of his other hand was necessary- as with a few pushes, far weaker in strength than the ones
from before, the small skull was out. Toki didn’t stop to rest—her strength was waning, her body tiring out and exhausting from her labor and the several weeks of tiresome false starts.

She pushed and groaned, working to ease the shoulder out. The cold rags nearly sizzled against her bones, steaming as her body strained and worked. It took several minutes, but the second child’s shoulders slid free, first the right and then the left, and another push had them slipping right into Tenebris’ hands.

Toki collapsed like a marionette without strings, the glow of her belly dimming without a purpose to sustain it anymore. She trembled, eye lights shakily resting on Tenebris, waiting to hear the little one cry and news of a gender.

Tenebris caught the child and smiled, bringing them up to groom them as well, making sure they were breathing properly before doing anything else. It took a little longer than Skylar had, but soon the child was giving whimpers and whines until they were wrapped, though Tenebris hadn’t needed but a moment to check. "A girl." he purred.

"Our little Honey is a beautiful baby girl." Aliquam whispered happily.

“Honey Verdana Gaster,” Toki whispered gently. She shakily held out her arms, a silent request to hold her little ones. She caught Cae’s eye, and motioned for him to bring Skylar as well.

Her middle lost volume and opacity as she waited, and then proceeded to melt alarmingly like an amalgamate or an ice cream cone might do in the sun. It disappeared as the middle sloughed off, the magic spent and long since used up.

It left Toki visibly exhausted as a literal chunk of her magic tore itself away. But determination kept her going—she couldn’t succumb to exhaustion without holding both of her children. She refused.

Cae came over and helped Aliquam take both children into his cradling arms, before stepping back and giving Tenebris a rag to clean his hands.

Toki smiled, and let her husband brace their children against her chest as she leaned into him. She brought her arms up to cradle them as well, crooning a soft, wordless song to them as she leaned down to nuzzle and kiss each of them. They both had the thick, sturdy monster bones of their father. Where Skylar had her teeth and the soft shape of her jaw, Honey had her father’s more angular jaw structure. She was lacking the crocodile like teeth that both Toki and Skylar had, and instead a set of pearly and straight teeth. Other than the sharper canines, she had a very human looking jaw, with her father’s more pronounced cheekbones.

Honey fussily wiggled, her soft cries dying down into whimpers as she relaxed. Her eye lights were blue—Toki could see a blue tinge to her bones, in comparison with the orange tinge to her son’s bones. Her own, she noted, were tinted just slightly green, and she realized their magic probably colored their bones a bit.

Papyrus shared the same orange as their son.

“Honey has your smile, and the prettiest blue color to her little eye lights.” She says softly to Papyrus, stroking her fingers over soft, warm baby cheeks. “My horns though.” Or they would be. They might have felt sharp inside of her, but they weren’t quite to the quality that Toki’s were. But Toki couldn’t find herself caring.

She was exhausted, magically and physically, and her bones felt sore enough that the slight breeze from Tenebris moving made her bones throb in agony. She didn’t want anyone touching anywhere
above mid femur or below her ribs. But… “They’re perfect…” She whispered.

None of the pain mattered. Not when, cradled to her and Papyrus, the most perfect little bundles of bones had been brought forth.

Tired tears beaded in her sockets and dribbled down her cheeks as the fussing twins calmed at close proximity to the soul that had nurtured them for months. Tiny fingers tangled in her ribs, and they settled down in their respective blankets as Papyrus held them.

They were worth all of that pain, Toki decided then and there. They were worth it- and she’d do it all over again if she had to.

After getting away from her body, Tenebris took to covering her bones with cool rags to cool them down, before he covered her lower half with a towel. He then covered her body up with a thermal blanket, already put on high to warm her comfortably.

"I’m proud of you, Toki. You did well." He praised gently.

“So did you two,” She smiled tiredly. The blanket felt nice, and she tucked it gently around her and the twins being held to her chest. She rubbed their backs softly, noting that they were fairly large for infants, and settled more firmly against Papyrus. The towel over her lower half felt scratchy and tender against her bones, but it was easier to simply cover her. “Mmm… Everything hurts.” She sighed softly.

There was a soft coo from one of the twins that caught her attention briefly, and Toki flicked her gaze to Tenebris. “They… look healthy, right?” She’d never seen a baby skeleton, so she couldn’t say right off the hand if they looked healthy or not.

"Physically, yes. They need only a bath. If I may take but a moment to examine their souls?" he requested, coming to the bedside and kneeling down.

Toki nodded. She helped shift them as best she could, angling them with Pap’s help so that Tenebris could pull their little souls forth. She adjusted their blankets so their little ribs were bared briefly. “Of course,” she sighed softly, “Anything to make sure they’re healthy. Though… both them and myself could probably use a bath… though I’m too tired and too sore to even want to attempt standing, let alone letting anything touch my bones right now.”

"After everything, you definitely deserve rest." Aliquam purred as he wrapped his arms around her, once he was sure she was stable in holding the twins.

"You can rest with Aliquam, how about I go wash them, and give them their first checkup?" Tenebris offered.

Toki hesitated, part of her not wanting to let them go so soon… But she could see the merit in it. Slowly, she nodded, and used her fingers to gently disentangle their hands from her ribs and then offered them carefully out to their grandfather. “Okay.” She nods softly. “I’d like that, yeah… Mm… Go ahead and get them in clothes too? The onesies that should fit are in the top drawer of the dresser in the nursery.”

He took them gently and purred to them, before he leaned in and kissed their mother tenderly on the forehead. "Atta girl. Rest as long as you need, Ol’ Grandpapa Tenny will take good care of the pups." he purred gently.

Toki nodded, a tired smile sliding over her teeth. “I trust you,” she purred softly. “I do… Have fun getting them washed up, yeah?” She shifted slightly, legs twitching and making her grimace. “I’m
gonna try and get comfortable with Pap… Bring them back when you’re done? I want them close tonight.”

He chuckled gently, "As she wishes." he replied, before he gently toted them to the bathroom, humming to them gently.

When he disappeared into the bathroom, Toki smiled over at Sans, and then shifted against Papyrus. She grimaced, a soft pained sound leaving her. “Gods above, my pelvis is so sore… Nnn… If you can slide back, Pap, I want to try laying back against the pillows again.” The one under her backside was… gross, least to say, but it wasn’t like they didn’t have extra pillows.

He nodded gently and slowly moved out of the way to let her lay back. "There you go." He purred gently.

"I'm proud of you, Tokes, glad I could come and help." Cae said with a smile, before it fell, "though, uh... Am I gonna have to deal with that too?"

Toki eased back, the plastic covering on their sheets crinkling slightly, and managed to get herself into a good position. She was propped up, and could relax a little bit under the heated blanket covering her. Papyrus was given a warm smile, and a beckoning motion for him to snuggle up. To Cae, she simply smiled. “It’s possible it’ll be different for you,” She says gently. “Your pelvis is probably different than mine, and your makeup is different than my own. Mine is just a basis to go off of… Mm… But if you do deliver like I did, I can promise you, the pain is worth it when you get to see them and hold them. Though… Heh, you didn’t get to see Skylar’s delivery. It was a lot less painful than Honey’s. You don’t have horns, and neither does Grillby.”

"Hopin’... so... I'll go ahead and let you guys rest, you deserve it after all that." he chuckled, "See you later, Sis." he winked at her, then shortcut out.

When he was gone, the bedroom was quiet. Toki shivered slightly, and tucked the heating blanket around her better. She nestled into Papyrus, a soft, simple sigh escaping her. "We did it," She murmurs tiredly to him, a happy sigh escaping her. "We both did it."

“You did it, Toki.” he purred, “I’m so proud of you.”

“No.” She shakes her head. “We did it. I couldn’t have done it without you. I might have done the harder work, but you were my support, emotionally and physically. I don’t… really recall all that you said when I was pushing, but I could hear you, and feel you, and that was a huge comfort to me.” Toki shifts so she can snuggle into his side, and groans quietly as it makes her pelvis throb. “We’re parents now… We’re in this together. Speaking of- I didn’t… ask if you wanted the twins in here for their first night. I just sort of assumed…”

"Of course I do, don’t be silly." He chuckled softly.

“Good.” She smiled softly. Toki nuzzled into him and closed her sockets, not quite sleeping but simply resting and recovering as best she could.

Things were silent for a while, save the sounds of the twins getting their first legitimate wash- though it was broken as they started whimpering in the bathroom.

Toki wasn’t sure which one it was, but one of them started wailing, followed by the second, and her sockets popped open again by automatic instinct.

She shifted and sat up shakily, her gaze drifting over to try and see into the bathroom. “Everything alright, Tenebris?” Her voice might have been anxious, but she couldn’t help it. They were new and
crying and she had no idea why they were crying. Did they not like water? Did Tenebris drop them? She could vaguely feel their emotions, but they were distressed and… hungry? That might have been hungry. That wasn’t something she’d felt from them before, since they had fed off of her while being within her.

"They’re alright." he called gently, "Just don’t like being out of their blankets."

She shifted, and gingerly eased back against her husband. “Partly that, at least…” She murmured. “I think they’re hungry too. It’s not an emotion I’ve felt from them before though.” How… did one even feed a baby skeleton?

She answered her own question moments later when something heavy formed on her chest in response to the needs of her children. Toki twitched, startled, when suddenly there was something squished between her and Papyrus. She glanced down- and there were very swollen, very tender and brightly glowing breasts on her chest that were squished to her husband’s arms. “Uhhh.”

Papyrus blinked, then he slowly retracted his arms, only to reach out and gently cup one of her boobs. "... What is that?"

“That would be a boob. You remember them from Valentines, yeah?” His touch was gentle, thankfully, but the globe was tender. Her magic swirled and gathered, and seemed to be collecting what it could into the mounds of flesh. “I… don’t understand why they appeared though. I didn’t summon them intentionally. They won’t go away either.”

"I remember." he murmured with a nod, before he smiled, "Perhaps this is how you feed our children?"

Her teeth puckered, and she sighed softly. “As a human, yeah, I’d say this is totally how it goes. But… I’m a skeleton. I can’t lactate.” Though she wasn’t absolutely sure something wouldn’t come out of the nipple if he squeezed her breast or put any sort of pressure on it. It looked like there was something inside of it, and the magic curled there felt warm and ready. Overall, they were tight and full feeling. “Hrm… Tenebris?” She calls. The twins were still wailing- and getting louder with their insistence for someone to make the hungry feeling stop. “Good lord, they got your loudness, Pap. Anyways, Tenebris? What do baby skeletons eat?”

Tenebris came out after long enough with them, freshly cleaned and wrapped and wailing loudly. "I’m not immediately sure. I hypothesize that since skeletons are so simplistic in their anatomical design, they adapt to the secondary species’ needs.” he explained as he walked up to the bed with the twins, "Here we are two clean, fussy, and hungry pups.”

Toki reached up to collect the twins, and gently cradled them to her chest. She leaned a bit onto Papyrus, using his side and the pillows to help keep her propped up. “That’s possible. Grillby did say that skeletons were able to universally reproduce with most monsters. It would make sense that we would adapt to fit the needs of our offspring.” she mused gently.

The wailing quieted down as they were bundled up against her breasts. They, and Toki, fumbled for a bit, trying to find a good position that worked for them. “I, uh… Think I need some help. I can’t… get their mouths close while holding them.”

Aliquam helped here, reaching up to gently coax the children to their respective nipples.

It took a bit more fumbling, but soon they latched on. Toki grimaced a bit, her breasts sensitive under the sharp and hard baby teeth. Skylar had teeth like hers- and didn’t have the grace or practice not to chomp on hard. Thankfully her defense was still in place, so she didn’t have a huge issue.
It took the twins some time, but soon there were the soft sounds of suckling, and the pressure on her breasts released. With the pressure going, she exhaled a sigh of relief, and leaned more into Papyrus. Her sockets slid to a half lidded position, and a content and tired buzz escaped her. “Mmm… Heh. At least we’re getting this all on film, yeah? C’n probably check out the boobs when they’re done eating. I wonder just what they’re eating…” Probably her magic. She could feel the slow drain on her stores. Nothing that a good night’s sleep wouldn’t fix, really.

Tenebris dried his hands and sat down at the end of the bed, observing quietly.

The twins drank, but not hardly enough to release all of the pressure inside of her breasts. Eventually they fell asleep, and released her. Toki was very nearly asleep too y then, but something sticky clung to her breasts, and she was loathe to let them smear it all over their faces- so she glanced to Papyrus, and very gently handed them over to him.

Papyrus cradled his children to his chest, and crooned softly to them as he just held them and ingrained their little faces into his mind.

“Tenebris?” She spoke quietly so as not to wake the newborns huddled against their daddy’s chest, “Can I have a wet cloth please? There’s somethin’ sticky on my chest… Whatever is inside my boobs apparently.” And her boobs weren’t going away. It appeared she had exchanged her belly for breasts- and she’d never bought more bras after all of them had burnt up in the fire. Oh well. “The twins are messy.” They were new at it and so was she.

He chuckled at that and handed her a wet rag, "Here you are."

Toki took it with a tired smile and carefully cleaned her chest. Unluckily, her right breast, the one that Honey had suckled at, began to leak a thick, glowing liquid. “Uh… That’s… Alright then.”

He noticed and reached into his coat, pulling out a vial before he looked at it, then glancing to her. "Toki, do you think I could borrow a sample of that for study?" he asked.

“Borrow? No. But you can have a sample. I certainly don’t want it back.” She nods, and motions for him to come closer with the vial. “Alright, bring that here. If you hold it, I’ll try and make sure I get it in the vial and not all over your hand or the bed.”

He chuckled at that and uncorked the vial before he reached over with it. "Here."

She guided his hand into a decent position, and then lined up her leaking breast with it. She wasn’t sure how to go about this, really. She had never… well, milked anything. Toki eased her fingers along her breast, and gently squeezed as she did so.

The luminescent green liquid thickened from a slow drip into a small stream, and she easily filled the vial for him. Her chest still felt heavy, and she was even more tired from the magic that was let off, but she found her breast stopped leaking. That must have removed just enough pressure.

She leaned back and peered up at him. “We’ll do that again in a week. I wonder if it’s like a humans- I know you looked it up, and for the first while the mother produces a special milk for her infant. Think it’s the same with this… boob juice? I hesitate to call it milk.” It wasn’t milky in color in the slightest- in fact, it sort of looked like a slightly watered down radioactive honey of sorts.

"Fascinating." he looked it over then he smiled gently. "Thank you." he then corked the vial and tucked it away but when he pulled his hand out again he ran his tongue over one of his claws real fast before he began to pat his other pockets for his pipe.

She squinted at him. “Did… Did you really just… lick the green stuff off your finger…?” That
was… Gross. So gross. Toki shook her head and sighed. “You are so weird, Papa. First you lick my newborns, and then you lick… whatever it is my breasts are oozing. That’s just… so weird.”

He blinked once, with faux innocence. "Did I?" he chirped quietly, before he shrugged, "Huh… Tasted like honey.

“… And now I’m curious.” She eyed her chest. “But not curious enough tonight. That’s… so weird.” She shakes her head and then returns back to snuggling her husband. Her children are fast asleep on his chest, and she eyes her father in law quietly. “You can probably turn off the camera now, Papa. You’ve gotten all of everything recorded now, I think. You can-” a yawn interrupted her, “Go over the footage at a better hour or something… If you sleep tonight that is.” Her new parent jitters wanted her to stay awake, but her post-labor exhaustion was flagging her energy levels down.

He nodded and got up, turning the camera off before he tucked it away. The one on his chest was also clicked off. "I'm proud of you, Toki. Get some rest."

“Thanks, Papa.” She smiled at him softly. “I’m pretty tired too… Can you… Slide the blankets up please?” She’d kicked them down to the bottom of the bed before she’d delivered, and she couldn’t find the energy to do it. Toki wasn’t going to ask Papyrus, who looked so at peace and in love with the two infants sleeping on his chest for her to bother him to move. The woman had full intentions of just curling next to him and drifting off once she could.

He smiled gently and came over, gently pulling the blankets up before tucking her in and kissing her on the head. "Good night, Toki. I'll come check on everyone tomorrow." he purred.

She gave him a tired smile, dark circles highlighting the spaces under her sockets, and nodded. “M'kay… Night, Papa.” Toki turned carefully onto her side, gentle with her tender pelvis, and curled up to Papyrus and her newborns.

"I love you." Papyrus breathed out gently once she nuzzled close, his eyes opening the slightest bit to look at her. "My wife... My Toki..." he whispered.

“My husband… My Papyrus. Light of my life,” she smiled up at him gently, and eased an arm across his middle. The heated blanket along her back and pelvis felt good- but pressing to Papyrus and just relaxing… that was bliss. “I love you too. We did it. We’re about to enter a whole new chapter in our lives, Pap." She smiles wider, sockets drifting closed.

"A new story." he purred gently, "A new tale..." he then yawned and closed his eyes gently.

She rested her head on his shoulder, and tucked her forehead against his jaw. Toki exhaled softly, exhausted, and began to drift off against him.

It would be a new chapter, a new arc in their lives. Parenthood changed everything- they had something else to fight for, something else to protect. Everything was about to change- but it would be for the better, because they were together, now and forever.

They could handle anything the world tossed at them- they would always come back to each other, always have each other's back. Parenthood was a massive and imposing challenge. But together, Toki and Papyrus would be able to handle everything.
End Book 1 of Tale Of The Underground.
Chapter 76

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Hey, guys. It’s been exactly two months- which is about how long of a break we planned. We’re going to be operate on a slower schedule, with about two chapters a week. We’ll be trying to upload every Sunday and every Thursday. Time for book 2 to start- and dearies? It’s gonna be an adventure, I promise.

Silverwing Notes: WEEEE'RE BAAAAAAAACK! You guys thought Book 1 was good, just you wait until we dive into the depths of book two!

We're about to blow your fuckin minds...

... By starting out with cute civil talk between family >/u/<

Four months was probably a long time to wait before updating your will- but being a parent to twin newborns wasn’t something that was easy. Four months came and past before they even really realized it. The holidays were blazed through, birthdays too, and the weeks rolled past without them even really realizing it. Thankfully, despite the time flying, everything stayed mostly quiet. Though, it was mildly alarming to have heard nothing from Cruelty. They wondered if, perhaps, he was building up for something.

Toki and Papyrus were busy- between his work as a guard and the children, they rarely had time alone together. Not that they minded- Papyrus, like the rest of the village, was enamored by their young. Toki was too, and thusly they spent every waking moment enjoying life with the children, making memories from silly incidents and watching them grow swiftly.

And grow they did. The twins grew faster than a human- not as fast as Tenebris thought they might, but certainly faster than anything human or naturally monster. They attributed that to his lingering effects on their genetics. They were, after all, not purely skeleton like their mother. Even if they appeared purely skeletal, they were not down in their genetic roots.

For every month it seemed they gained two. They grew like weeds, their grips becoming stronger and stronger day by day. They ate and slept for the majority of the first month, waking only when they wanted attention or for bath time. The twins did not handle the nursery well with as young as they were, and were distressed to be away from their parents for too long. They were usually fine when the sun went down and they would sleep through the night- but during the day, they did not like to nap there or be away from their parents. So Toki had Lana devise a traditional carrying sling for them, and went about her day with two children sleeping nuzzled to her breasts while Papyrus worked. It was easier, truly, for they could feed when they wanted and had the comfort of a mother’s touch to keep them calm.

They slept just fine for Papyrus when he was home- and he had his own sling for carrying them as well when he was home. When he got home, they would transfer the twins from her sling to his, and they would spend some precious bonding time with their father while they got dinner going, or did their nightly chores.
During the feeding session that always happened before Papyrus got home, Toki sat down and finally got the gumption to call Simmons.

“Easy, Skylar. You don’t need to be so rough with me, my sweet.” Toki admonished gently, brushing her fingertips soothingly from his nasal bone up between his eyes. That was a calming motion that usually worked when the twins got too rowdy. Obligingly, the infant eased his abuse of her breast, and settled down with a sleepy coo to finish his desired snack. He wasn’t intentionally rough, but he was a baby with sharp teeth, and sometimes he got a little too excited for his own good.

Simmons picked up on the third ring, his voice rough and deep. “Hello, Miss Nara.”

Toki shivered and a frown tugged her teeth down. That was a lot like how Cruelty had sounded. But it couldn’t be- she’d called Simmons work number, and his usual ‘waiting’ jingle had been there. “Hey, Simmons. I actually go by Gaster now, if you recall. You sound like you’ve got a cold.”

“Ah, yes, my apologies. I’ve unfortunately gotten the cold that’s running amok in the office right now.” He cleared his throat over the phone, and his voice went back to his normal tones. “I recall that you got married last year. Or at least I heard rumors of it. I’m sorry I couldn’t make it to your wedding- work and all of that.”

“It’s quite alright, Simmons.” She smiled to herself, and eased down with her children. “I got married and had kids last year, actually. I was calling to update my will and make sure everything stays in order.”

“You did? Congratulations then. Kids, as in plural?” The clicking of a mouse sounded, letting her know that he was pulling up her documents so he could get everything recorded.

Toki kindly gave him a couple minutes to make sure he had everything ready before she began to speak again. “Twins, yes. I’d like for them to be recorded on my will. Skylar Eras Gaster was the firstborn and my heir- but should he not want to take the title as head of the clan when I am ready to concede it, then it will fall to Honey Verdana Gaster, his younger twin sister.”

The sound of typing filled her ears, as Simmons presumably began to record. “And your husband’s name…?”

“Papyrus Aliquam Gaster. Should anything happen to me, sole custody of any and all of my children go to him. If something happens to him, then my children should go to Tenebris Gaster, their paternal grandfather. Sans Caeruleus Gaster would come after Tenebris if something happens to him as well, or he is unable and unwilling to take my children.” She hums softly. This sort of stuff was not really what she wanted to think about- but Cruelty was still here.

“Not your parents?” Simmons hummed, surprised. “I would have thought you’d prioritize your own family over your in-laws.”

“My in-laws are monsters,” she chimes, “and my children are monsters. I love my mom and dad, and all of my brothers and sisters in law, but… They’re human. They would not know how to teach magic properly, and given the nature of one of my children’s magic… well, that could prove to be bad. So, my monster family does take precedence, because in the long run that is what would be best for my children.”

“I see…” He didn’t sound very enthused, but she could hear him typing away obediently.

“If Sans is unable,” She continued, “Then it would fall to Grillby. Er… Shit, I don’t know his full
name.” It hadn’t been on his paperwork- so she was sure he simply went by Grillby. She wouldn’t know though, unless she asked.

“You can find out and call me about it later.” Simmons hummed. “I’ll just write down Grillby for now though, if that’s alright with you. That is G-r-i-l-l-v-y?”

“Change the ‘v’ to a ‘b’ and you’ve got it down.” Toki responded kindly. “Continuing on- if Grillby is unable, then my children should go to my family. My mother and father would come first, obviously, and then my brothers, from eldest to youngest.”

“And in the case that no one in your family is willing to take them, or is unable to keep them?” He questioned.

“Leave them in the custody of King Asgore. He’ll either take care of them himself, or he will find someone within the monster community who will raise my children for me.”

“Alright.” He quietly typed for a while. “And if something happens when your children are old enough to care for themselves?”

Toki contemplates, and gently rubs her fingers along Honey’s back to soothe the start of a fussy sound from her daughter. It didn’t help much- Honey wasn’t fond of Toki being on the phone for extended amounts of time, particularly during their usual nursing times. “If they are sixteen years or older, and there is no one left or willing to take them, including my eldest children should I have more in the years to come, then they will be given all of my estate and holdings for the to do with as they will.” She decides firmly. “If they are under sixteen, all of my estates and holdings will be frozen until they are of age, and then everything will fall to them, divided evenly between them. The eldest, however, will retain the rights to the house and property surrounding it, so that my children always have a place to stay.”

“Of course, of course.” More typing. “I’ll work on getting everything in order, and transcribed into the usual terms that it needs to be in, Miss Gaster. I’ll call back in a few weeks once the necessary paperwork goes through and is approved, and we can go over everything again to see if there’s anything you’d like to add or have changed. In the mean time, discuss with your husband and see if he can help you come up with anything you might have missed that you would like to have added.”

“Thanks, Simmons.” She smiled slightly. “You’re the best, really.”

“I’ve been handling your things, and all of your family’s things, for a long time.” He chuckled quietly. “Of course I’m the best. Anyways, Miss Gaster, I’ll let you go. It sounds to me like you have a fussy baby on your hands.”

“I do, yes. Honey isn’t fond of me being on the phone. It was good talking to you, Simmons.” She crooned gently to soothe the building tantrum her daughter was working towards.

“It was a decent chat, Miss Gaster. Have a good evening, and I’ll call you when everything is ready to be looked over once again. Did you wish for me to call everyone and let everyone know of your choices?”

“No.” She shook her head, never mind that he couldn’t actually see her. “I don’t plan on dying or going anywhere any time soon, Simmons, so there’s no need to alarm anyone with a phone call. I’ll look forwards to your next call, yeah?”

He chuckled quietly. “Of course, Miss Gaster.”

She hung up shortly after, and tucked her phone away before gently hushing and bouncing her
Honey had finished eating, and was fussily nuzzling her breast, whimpering and making displeased buzzing sounds. Her daughter nuzzled her head into her palm, tiny horns catching on her fingers. Her horns were growing slowly longer and sharper, but she hadn’t torn anything with them yet or hurt herself or her brother so Toki saw no need to worry about them.

Her youngest pouted up at her and gave a watery sniffle. “Ohh... I know what this is,” Toki hummed gently. “Someone wants their daddy, don’t they? Oh, my sweet, he’ll be home soon I’m sure. It’s okay, Honey. Shhh...”

Toki was saved from a tantrum when the front door opened. She eased herself off the couch, careful not to jostle her young, and adjusted her sling and the twins. “Hey, Pap?” She could hear the sounds of his armor clinking as he stepped inside—no one else wore armor into the house, so it was little wonder who it was. “I think someone missed their daddy today.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh! Is that so?” Was the call from the front door where Aliquam had just closed said door. He reached up and undid his torso armor, setting it down and stretching in the underlying chain mail before going to greet his wife and children, "I could feel it from the front gate so I thought I’d take my break to come say hello to my favorite pair of ladies!" he piped up cheerfully, giving her a tight one armed hug before going to press a soft kiss his daughter’s skull.

Tiny fingers reached up from inside of the sling, and made grabby fingers for Papyrus. The twins, along with growing quickly, were learning fast too. Her fussing died off, crocodile tears drying up, and she cooed eagerly up at her dad.

Toki smiled warmly, and kissed her husband tenderly. “I think one of your favorite ladies would like for her daddy to hold her.” Toki smiled. She shifted, carefully eased Honey out of her sling, and then gently offered the wiggling infant towards her daddy. She could fix her shirt and her sling after, but it wasn’t like Papyrus wasn’t used to seeing her boobs now.

He chuckled gently and after giving Toki a kiss, he scooped his daughter up and held her up where he could beam up at her, "Ahh, there she is! Look at that beautiful baby girl!" he laughed gently.

Honey let out a pleased squeal, her little fists and legs flailing happily as he hefted her up. Her skull bobbed a little bit, but she and her brother were both holding their skulls up on their own now. Honey burbled at him happily, reaching for his face with soft baby fingers. She was adorable, bedecked in her striped green onesie. They weren’t large enough yet for the ones that Grillby had made- but soon they’d fit in them no problem.

Toki smiled and fixed her top. Skylar fussed at his sister’s loudness, but snuggled more firmly into Toki’s chest and settled into his usual after meal nap. “She’s been fussy all day. I think someone’s turning into a daddy’s little girl. On the flipside, I’m thinking someone else is a mama’s boy.” She patted his bottom gently, and smiled at the pleased sleepy coo she got in return from him.

"Nyeh heh heh, well I’m not surprised! You did tell me that laziness runs in your family." he chuckled, "Who knows, maybe when she’s a little older, I’ll take her out with me for a patrol. Would you like that little Honeybun?" he cooed to her.

Papyrus got an excited squeal for his efforts, and doubled wiggling of the infant held in his hands. Her fingers reached for him again, but she sufficed with his thumb, and claimed it for her own. Honey happily nuzzled it.

“I think that’s a yes.” She chuckled. “And that I did. It apparently skipped a generation though. Heh.
Honey’s going to have an interesting time trying to motivate her big brother into being active, isn’t she?” Skylar only really got excited sometimes during playtime. Mostly he was excited for food. “Who knows though? He could grow out of it. I did, didn’t I?” She left her son to sleep in his sling, and beamed at Papyrus. “I would at least wait until she’s walking before you take her on patrol.”

Toki wasn’t worried about Honey going on patrol. Not only would Papyrus watch her like a hawk, but every other guard on the force would also be watching her. That is, if her self appointed Auntie Undyne didn’t kidnap her to play with her first.

"That you did, though if Skylar ended up lazy, he'd be no better than my brother!” He joked, "I'd have to yell at him to get him to pick up his socks." he laughed, before nuzzling Honey, "Alright, we’ll wait until she's walking."

"Maybe not yell, but we’ll definitely teach Skylar to pick up his socks, even if he ends up being lazy." She chuckled softly. Toki leaned up to kiss her husband's cheek. "Indeed. Then I'll get to watch you and Undyne compete in keeping an eye on her, and that will be amusing." She giggled softly.

Honey cooed happily and snuggled into her Daddy's embrace. A soft and content sound left her, and she finally released a sleepy yawn.

He fixed his hold to cradle her in one arm, before he used the other to wrap around Toki, pulling her close to kiss her once more.

Honey settled in his arm, content to be cradled and held, and nuzzled close to his chest. Her tiny fingers tangled in his chain mail under armor, and Honey cooed sleepily.

Toki leaned into him easily, kissing him with warm affection. Her eye lights tinted a loving minty color, and she beamed at him tenderly. "Mmm... I love you, you know that?"

"Yeah, well I love you more." he purred as he nuzzled her, his smile one to match.

"No way. I love youuuuuuuuu more." She smiled softly, and then giggled. "We're such saps, you know that?"

"You're sappier." He cackled, gently clacking her skull with an affectionate kiss again, "And I wouldn't have it any other way~" She giggled gently and smooched him again. "Well, I suppose that's good then, 'cause I'm a mom. We're supposed to be sappy." She reached up to caress his jaw gently. "You're done with work for today, right? Because I don't think Honey is going to let you go now that she's got you in her grasps." Toki thought it was his last shift, but she could have been wrong.

He shakes his head softly. "I'll at least stick around until she is dislodged, but I have one more shift I'll have to do before the day is done."

She nodded softly. "Alright. I'll do a late dinner then. I'm glad you're giving her some of your time before you scoot- she's been fussy all day." Honey was usually a pretty easy baby, but she was very much a Daddy's girl when she wasn't hungry. "I think she got spoiled with your day off yesterday. She's not quite sure why you weren't home today." She giggled gently.

"Well, Daddy is a busy skeleton, he cannot stay at home all day like Sans does."

"Oi, I resent that statement!" Was a snarl from the doorway to the kitchen.
"Oh! Hello Sans. You know it's true though." Aliquam folded his arms gently under Honey as he turned to his brother.

"Whatever." The older snorted, coming over and gently punching Quinn in the shoulder.

Honey made a fussy sound against Pap's chest as he was shifted from the gentle punch.

Toki gently flicked the back of Sans skull, and then tugged the taller monster over so she could smooch his cheek. Toki's eyes glimmered cheerily over at her husband as she affectionately nuzzled her brother in law. "Hey, Sans. Raiding my kitchen for sweets again?" She had discovered he had a craving for honey, so she had made more tarts and tended to leave them unattended in the kitchen for her brother in law to steal.

"I'm hoping you have any of those tarts left." he replied with a smile, coming over and gently tapping the top of her head in his own skeletal kiss. "How're the kids?" he asked.

"Happy as they can be." Pap replied.

She smiled at his returned affection and nodded. "I have the tarts, but they need honey on them. I'll get them made in just a bit if you don't mind being patient." She hefted Skylar up a bit more in his sling. "The twins are good. Honey is happy since her daddy visited a bit before he has to go to work."

"I can be patient, yeah..." he replied, before he smiled and looked over at Aliquam, "I bet she'll be thrilled when you go back to work" he snorted.

Aliquam chuckled and shook his head. "Very funny, Sans."

"Oh she'll be sulky in her sling when he has to hand her over." Toki chuckled. "She's usually not too bad about crying, though she might chew on my breast until Pap gets home again. Speaking of, Pap-is your break nearly over?" Toki was loathe to see him go, but since the twins arrived he had been even more serious about his job.

"Indeed, I best get back to the gate" he murmured, gently bouncing Honey in his grasp until he was able to dislodge her, "Get the sling ready." he murmured.

Honey squirmed, her little fingers losing hold on his ribs. She yawned and curled her fists up to her face, blinking sleepily in confusion.

Toki nodded. She pulled the sling open, well aware that she was flashing her boob to her brother in law but not really caring, and angled it so he could deposit Honey back in.

Sans didn’t really look like he cared, either. He simply smiled and watched as they did their thing.

Honey made a fussy sound as she was deposited into the sling, curling instinctively around Toki's breast. She latched on instinctively and settled down.

Toki sighed softly, and eased the sling back around her. "Alright, she's settled for now. She'll nurse until she's asleep again." Toki shifted her gaze to her husband and gave him a soft look. "One more kiss before you go off to work again?"

"Only for my love." he chuckled as he leaned in and kissed her gently.

She kissed him gently back and caressed his jaw affectionately. He still had to get his chest plate on, but he was quick about getting his armor on and off anymore. "I'll see you when you get home. If
you're going to run an extra late shift, let me know by text, okay?"

"Oh of course. Will there be dinner or shall I pick some up?" The tall skeleton inquired lightly.

"I'll have dinner ready." She smiled warmly to him. "Be safe, okay? And tell Undyne that we're on for our usual Saturday training session." Since she wasn't pregnant anymore, Toki could get some actual combat training in. Undyne was the best bet, because the fish woman still intimidated the fuck out of Toki.

Alongside that, Papyrus was hesitant to really attack his wife.

"Sounds perfect, but don’t feel obligated to make dinner, I’ll cut some fruit up if you can’t make it on dinner." he purred, clacking her head before he let her go and began out.

She smiled gently and watched him suit up and go. Shaking her head with warm amusement, Toki sighed. She had no problem making dinner. She was a bit of a housewife, but since she worked from home while he worked guard duty, she really didn’t mind. He helped if she didn’t have it done when he got home anyways. That’s just how house chores went. She’d done house chores before she was married, and she’d do them after she was married.

Toki clapped her hands quietly together and then turned to Sans. "Alright, let's get you and my little niece or nephew some honey tarts. How are they doing, by the way?" She inquired and padded for the kitchen.

"They're keeping me warm at night." he chuckled, rubbing his stomach gently, "Grillby is still overjoyed at the factor alone that it took and it's survived so far, but he put me on a diet, can you believe it? I'm starting to lose my gut." he pulled his shirt taut, revealing indeed he was starting to get smaller, excluding the pregnancy swell.

"I can believe it." She chuckled. "He loves you and your child. It would devastate him to lose you. I think he just worries- I mean, Papyrus pretty much did the same thing. He made sure there were healthy things in the house, and that I ate healthy things. The only thing he didn't constantly supply healthy things with were my cravings, which I think grossed him out." She does slip closer though and lean down to smooch his belly. It was smaller yes, but still big. At thirty-one weeks, Sans was getting close to that final stretch. "Do they move often?"

The attention to his midsection made him shutter and he sighed quietly, a small smile on his face "Despite being mine, heh heh... Yeah... I'm starting to pick up patterns too..."

She nuzzles his belly again and smiles affectionately. It really was warm, almost like hers had been. "Looks like you could use some belly rubs... Lemme make your tarts first, though, or we'll get distracted." She straightens, quirking a grin at him as she fixes the twins in their sling. "But patterns, huh? You'll discover that certain foods, activities and exposure to certain sounds will make the little one react certain ways."

She shifts and sets to work making him honey tarts for his cravings. At least her honey tarts were healthy, she mused.

"Oh god a belly rub sounds like the best damn thing right about now." He groaned, "But yes, go do the tart thing..." he waved her off, then he grinned once more, "Yeah, the kid seems to enjoy the casual ruckus of the Bar. I sit in there and just feel them react to whatever gets picked up in there."

Well, they are the child of a bartender. Alcohol is probably in their blood." She teased playfully. Toki worked at the tarts, and got a big plate made up quickly. She offered it out once it was finished.
"Bone-appetite~"

"Heh heh heh." he took the plate, "Thanks, Tokes..." he murmured, before he smiled at her gently, "So... You said something about belly rubs?"

"I didn’t forget, I promise. To the couch with you, and we'll see about those belly rubs." She grins at him and heads for the couch. They really should just rename it to the snuggling couch or something equally mushy. "Enjoy your treat and let me pamper you a little bit, yeah?"

He let out a happy sound as he started into one of the tarts, turning and walking to the awaiting couch.

A mischievous grin tugged at her teeth, but she said nothing as he headed for the couch. When he got settled, she eased down beside him and set her palms on his middle. His shirt was scooted up, and she began rubbing soothing circles with her thumbs, working over his flesh in the same way she had done to help relax her middle. "How are the tarts?" She inquired lightly.

His midsection was very warm under her hands, and the little ember inside reacted with a cheerful glow to her touch. Small movements were picked up as well.

"They taste so good~" Sans purred happily.

Toki beamed at the little cheery light inside his belly. He literally glowed. It was precious. She rubbed gently, and hummed a soft tune to the little ember inside. "I'm glad you enjoy them. You know," she said conversationally, "your dad told me once that my breast milk tasted like honey. If not for the glowing green color, one couldn't tell the difference from actual honey."

He let out a quiet giggle at that. "Is that so? That's hilarious."

"It was pretty weird." She agreed, easing her fingers to the base of his belly where it met his pelvis. She massaged gently, kneading his flesh expertly. "He actually took some samples at different times. Apparently there was a higher concentration of nutrients for the first week or so, and then it ebbed off into what it is now. Still highly nutritional, but not like it was. It's weird. We hypothesized that skeletons make what they need to match the needs of their offspring."

"That's interesting actually really cool if you ask me." he chuckled quietly, "So... you think it'll be the same with me?" he asked quietly.

"It's possible. You'd have to ask Grillby what baby flame elementals eat." She quirked a soft smile at him. "If that's the case, and you do get boobs, they're actually not all that hard to handle. You just don't want to pinch your nipple between your finger joints. That is painful." She knew from experience.

"Duly noted." he laughed at that, "Though seriously. Me. With boobs? I think... I would look ridiculous."

A slow grin crawled up her face. "Not really. You and I have a similar skull structure. You've got the softer angle to your jaw, unlike Pap. You could probably rock some boobs. In fact... You can actually summon them now if you want to look and see what they're like. Provided you know enough about what they look like to summon them, that is."

He blinked once at her as if she were crazy, then he leaned forward, his gaze trailing down… Right on to her pair, still quite visible thanks to the position of the sling and the twins.

She followed his gaze and snorted. Her boobs were milk filled monstrosities, and were quite full.
"Smart ass. Looking at mine can tell you what they look like, yeah. But do you know what they feel like? How they move? The texture when you hold one?"

"No I haven't. Not when they're that full." he answered, leaning back before he focused for a moment. After a short time, his chest swelled out, forming a pair of breasts under his shirt. He then looked at them. "Ah... What do you think?" he asked, reaching up and cupping them, leaving the plate of tarts balanced somewhere between the boobs and his belly.

"Uh-huh..." He stared at them for a while, squeezing them gently and weighing them in his hands, "They're... heavy."

"You're heavily pregnant." She points out. "Manifesting them manifests how they are in relation to your body. I first manifested mine during Valentine's. Er... Two Valentine's ago, technically. I was still early in pregnancy, and mine were smaller than they are now, but bigger than they had been when I was human." She explains gently.

After a moment, he focused and they got a little bit smaller in his hands now, now a smaller C before Cae smiled, "I think they feel better like this..."

"If they feel natural, then that's how they should be." She smiled gently at him and continued to massage his middle. "You should surprise Grillby with them. Boobs are actually a lot of fun if handled properly, believe it or not."

"Mmh... I'll keep that in mind" He replied, letting them linger until he stopped focusing enough to let them fade once more, popping one last tart in his mouth, he gently chewed it as he rested his arms over his chest, a relaxed look on his face as he let her do as she offered, "Mmmhhhh...." he eventually whined out, though it didn't sound like discomfort, it sounded like that one mood you get when you sob and laugh at the same time, absolute bliss but just about heartbroken.

Such was the ways of pregnancy one would suppose.

She arched a brow at his sound, and leaned back slightly so he could sit up if he wanted. "Sans? Are you alright?" She asked gently. Had something triggered a mood swing?

He was still gently chewing on the last tart in his mouth and had the blissful look on his face, but the tears in his eyes were definitely out of place, indeed a mood swing had hit him... He wished Grillby was here, this was so nice...

Toki simply sighed and continued to rub his middle. There wasn't much to do but let his mood swing pass, and try to keep him as calm as possible. "So, have you and Grillby thought up names yet?" She asked gently, hoping to distract him from whatever was making him feel weepy.

"Mmmh..." he finished munching the tart and swallowed it before he sat up and rubbed his eyes, "Yeah... Solstice."

"Solstice is beautiful." She beams at him warmly. "Fitting for your little sunshine here. Heh... How are you doing by the way? Grillby keeping up with magic donations?"

"He does really well, yeah." he replied, "He makes sure that the kid is glowing well enough before we go to sleep."

"That's good." She nods. "Older monsters seem to have a lot of magic stored up. I'm glad he's tending to you both though. You don't want to experience the exhaustion that happens from running low. It is not a fun thing to feel."
"He's a good mate." He purred gently.

"He is." She nods gently. "He takes good care of you. So... You two going to get hitched any time soon?" She grins. "You might fit in my dress. Maybe."

He snorted at that, "Yeah... I think he's been trying t' find a way to approach me about it, heh..."

"That's good. He seems pretty shy so it'll probably take some time for him to ask." She grinned cheekily. "Do I get to be your bridesmaid when you say yes?"

"Oh my god Toki." he groaned, before he cackled and grinned at her, "Like you even need to ask?"

"Well I thought it better to ask than assume. Assuming makes an ass out of 'u' and me." She laughed gently too, pausing only when the twins stirred. "Oops, we were a bit noisy." She leaned back, pausing in his belly rubs to gently rub their backs as they fussed sleepily against her.

He cackled a little more but when she took back her hands, he slowly sat up and pushed down his shirt, content with the belly rubs, "Thanks a lot, Toki... I feel better."

"I'm glad you feel better." She smiled at him gently. "I know the value of a good belly rub from time to time. Any time you need one, you need only ask. Heh."

Tiny fussy hands wiggled free, and Skylar wiggles his hands towards his paternal uncle. He cooed tiredly, wanting extra attention from someone he identified as family.

"Heh..." he looked down at Skylar and reached, rubbing his head, "Hey there, buddy." he chuckled, gently tickling his chin. "Looking good down there."

Skylar cooed at his uncle and took his thumb in hand. Sans’ thumb was guided to his mouth for a proper chewing- which wasn't a pleasant option given his type of teeth.

Toki simply smiled and grinned. "He wants attention. He's a snuggly baby- but he's chewing a lot. If he bites you too hard, just stroke between his sockets. He lets go easily enough."

He nodded gently, "Noted." He murmured. The teeth at least didn't hurt so badly at first, so Skylar had a little time to enjoy it.

"I'm not sure why he's chewing. Your dad doesn't see anything wrong with it, so maybe it's something you guys did when you were little?" She continued curiously.

Skylar's bites weren't too bad so long as his teeth stayed on solid bone and away from the joint. As his innocent gumming strayed... Well, it would begin to sting.

Sans indeed had to gently rub between his sockets, and the chewing let up long enough for him to shift to a less painful position. "His teeth are still growing in. I think he's just working on finding a way to make it hurt less."

She nodded. "That's possible, though he was born with a full set. I don't actually know if he'll lose them, or if he'll grow with them. They don't feel loose. Well, any looser than normal." She reaches up and wiggles one of her teeth for example. The bone they're attached to is flexible, hence how she's able to smile at him. Toki does so, settling for a crooked grin.

That got a small laugh out of him and his own grin extended on his face, "You know, I've noticed we kinda have the same looking kind of teeth. The difference is mine are a bit more uniform."
"You also have some sort of lips covering yours." She chirps slightly. "But yeah. Yours are a bit more uniform- I'd call yours closer to shark teeth than anything. Mine are sorta like a crocodile’s, considering how they overlap. It's... kinda weird though. I have a similar skull to yours too, but human skulls aren't as soft. They also have a defined hinge, sort of like Pap's skull- mine doesn’t. The rest of my bones stayed fairly human. My skull is really the only thing that changed a lot. Y’know. Horns and teeth."

"True. You know, I bet with a friend on whether or not you were gonna grow a tail.”

“Eh?” She looked befuddled. “Why on earth would I grow a tail? The horns I get. Clover and Sugar have a set just like them- but why on earth would I grow a tail? I’m a skeleton. You don’t have a tail, do you?”

"... Well..."

“More than just a tailbone.” She says firmly.

Skylar huffs and puffs and tugs lightly on Sans’ finger, before releasing it and turning back to his mother’s much softer breast to chew on.

Sans takes his hand gingerly back. "Yeah I was gonna say, I mean if it were in that case you'd have a tail too ya' know."

“Technically I do have a tail. Tailbone and all of that- but it’s not like... long? I don’t really know, Sans. I’m not flexible enough to look at the backside of my pelvis.” And she’d never really had a desire to see what her ass looked like. For all she knew, she could have a longer tailbone.

"You could use a mirror though..."

“Sans.” She eyed him with amusement. “How many people actively use a mirror to look inquisitively at their bare asses? I have never, ever done that, even as a human.”

"You mean you don’t? Really?” he asked.

“Other than checking out my ass in a pair of pants or skirt to see if it fits funny, no, really I don’t.” She blinked at him, baffled. “Is... Is that a thing normal people do?”

"..." He then shrugged, "I mean, maybe? I don’t know?"

Toki chuckles slightly. “Well, now I have something to look up later. Anyways- I need to go get dinner done. I was thinking honey roasted chicken breasts, and those take time to marinate.” She paused, and then grinned down at Sans. “… If I added some green food coloring to the honey, do you think Papyrus would freak?"

"That’s terrible." he laughed, "But maybe, yeah!"

Toki’s grin grew wider. “You up for helping me make some green honey, bro?”

"You're awful. Let's do it."
Chapter 77

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Silver and I have come up with the theory that the influence the twins got from their grandfather is the fact that they grow and mature faster than a normal child. You’ll get to see a lot of this later as they go through ‘growth spurts’ of sorts <: Also the irony is- they never do get to fuck, for all of their teasing at the end of the chapter. :D

Totally forgot to do this last time, but come hit us up on the TOTU blog. We're not always super active- I've gotten back into rp, so I'm not stocking the blog 24/7, but I check for things fairly often, I promise. You can find us at http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

Also there is fanart i made for this chapter! You can find it here! :D http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/post/159536254940/strider-this-is-actually-relevant-to-the-chapter

Toki had begun letting the twins down for small times during the day. They didn’t usually like to be on the floor, but they had, in the previous weeks, been slowly trying to crawl when they felt like being on the ground. They still wobbled and bobbed like newborn fawns, but they were adorable and precious.

Today was no exception. Toki had dressed the twins in their bee onesies, finally fitting them inside even if they were just a little bit, and they had tiny antennas and wings that bobbed and bounced with each precarious step they took. They were getting better at moving, and could actually make great time in following her around the house. Toki kept the doors closed, and put all sharp things well out of their reach, and then let them wander and play with their toys and each other to their hearts content.

They still came to her and fussed for their meals, but didn’t always stay for their after-meal naps. Sometimes the twins would play some more after, and then fall asleep in a pile next to each other.

Toki had lots and lots of pictures of them now, and was steadily adding them to the scrapbook that Tenebris had restored for her.

Toki was sprawled on the floor with the twins today, arms crossed under her chest to keep her breasts from getting squished by the weight of her bones. Toki wasn’t quite napping, so much as she was letting Honey play with her face. She couldn’t see Skylar, but she could feel him. Her son was playing with her toes.

Honey was laughing, loudly, her little green bee onesie making her that much more adorable. She reached out and tugged on one of Toki’s teeth.

Toki blew a soft puff of air on her- and Honey broke out into peals of laughter again. Toki’s eyes twinkled merrily, and she honestly hoped her Husband was seeing this cuteness for himself.
Oh he was doing better than that, Papyrus had borrowed his father's camera and was recording this for the memories.

Toki blew another puff of air into her daughter's face when her tooth was tugged on, and was rewarded with more laughter.

Honey giggled and patted her mother's face, before reaching up and curling her fingers around her mother's horns. She shifted, rocking on her little behind as she tugged on them.

"Those don't move, sweet thing." She smiled at her daughter. "Mommy's horns don't move." And hopefully they wouldn't ever move.

Honey cooed at her cutely, and spotted her daddy over top Toki's skull. A desire to visit her favored parent filled her, and she tugged herself upwards to take the shortest route. Honey managed to pull herself into a standing position against Toki's face using her mother's horns. "UbaAH!"

He laughed at that. "Careful, Honey! Don't go accidentally hurting momma, okay?" he cooed.

"She's fine, Pap. My horns are pretty tough. I caught a burning beam on them, after all." Though that had been what made that nasty crack down her skull, her horns had held and probably kept the beam from splitting her skull in half. Toki blew a raspberry against her daughter's belly, before she realized something. "Papyrus. Papyrus quick- she's standing. She's holding herself up but she's standing on her own legs." He totally had to get this on film. She didn't care if Honey was using her horns to hold herself up. She was technically standing- furthering Toki's beliefs that her children were growing at twice the normal rate. They were nearly five months old- standing usually started between nine months and a year.

Honey squeaked at her father insistently, before chewing harmlessly at her mother's horns.

"Aaaahiiiiiiiiiiii!"

"Oh my stars! She is indeed!" He giggled happily, "Look at her, oh my goodness, I'm so proud!" he cooed. His attention briefly slipped to his Son, making sure he hadn't endangered himself in his play.

Skylar was stubbornly working his way up his mother's backside. He sat on her lower back and then bounced, excitedly patting her back and cooing up at his sister.

Honey cooed back to him and then babbled... Something odd at her twin. They were able to communicate on some level with each other, though the extent of that communication no one really quite knew. She reached out for him, leaning into Toki's face and using her to balance herself.

Skylar reached back- and his little sister helped him pull himself up from the other side of Toki's skull.

Toki was effectively a jungle gym for her children, but she couldn't be happier. "What is Skylar doing?" She could feel him, but couldn't tell what he was doing. She had to keep her skull still or her little ones would lose their grip.

"Using you as a jungle gym with Honey's help! Nyeh heh heh heh!" he laughed at the sight, before he put the camera where it could keep recording so he could go join in. He then got up and came over, smiling gently affectionately. "You three are some of the best things to happen to me." He purred.

"I could say the same to you," Toki smiled warmly, and then sputtered as a cloth clad foot tried to use her very sharp-toothed mouth for a step stool. "Help please, Honey is trying to go up and over my skull."
Skylar looked pleased to be standing on his mother. He proceeded to bounce in place—until his little legs gave. He landed on his bottom and grunted, balancing on his mother's shoulders. "Nuhhh."

"Nyeh!" Honey chirped, and continued to attempt to climb between Toki’s horns.

"I'm on it!" he gently scooped both up, "I gotcha both!" he cackled, kissing their heads.

Honey squeaked as she was lifted and curled into his arms happily. Likewise, her bother did the same, though he met the kiss with a sloppy one of his own. He might have been a mama’s boy, but he loved his daddy too.

Toki took the moment to sit upright and cross her legs. She smiled and patted the floor for him to join her. "Let's see if we can encourage more standing. All the exercise will make them nap good and hard later."

He nuzzled them gently and sat across from her, setting the twins down gently, "Alright you two, go to Momma~" he cooed, his hands carefully supporting their tiny bodies as he gave them a little something to lean on as they stood for the first time.

Honey had no desire to leave her Daddy's grasp, and happily cooed as she wobbled on her feet. There were grippies on the bottom of the onesies, so thankfully she had something to keep from slipping on the slick tile.

Skylar was eager to go to his mother. He remained upright for about half a step, before dropping into his hands and knees with a grunt. Once he was in his usual moving position, he crawled for his mother's grasp.

Toki accepted her son gently into her arms. She lifted him up and kissed his little nose, before looking at Papyrus. "We may need to switch if we're going to work on teaching them to walk. Honey looks too content to leave your hold." She chuckled. "So... Baby trade?"

"Baby Trade." He agreed with a laugh, moving up to a better position before holding Honey out.

Honey fussed as she was held out and gave her mother a huffy glance.

Skylar had a grumpy look, but more because he had just expended the effort to scurry over to her.

The switch was seamless though, and Toki soothed Honey's fussing with a peppering of kisses and soft playful noises, while Skylar settled with a pouty face in his Daddy's arms. "We probably should do this one at a time, or they're going to run into each other." She quirked a grin at him, and eased Honey gently onto her feet. The baby bounced and stretched her metaphorical muscles, straining lightly against her mother's grasp and reaching for Papyrus with grasping fingers.

He nodded and chuckled gently, "Sounds perfect." he replied, "Let's have Skylar go first. He looks ready to start fussing."

"He is a Mama's boy." Toki nods smiling. One hand keeps Honey upright, while the other opens and beckons to her son. "Does my little Skylar need mommy snuggles?"

"Guhwa!" Skylar huffed, reaching for her with his little fingers. His sharp little teeth gnawed on his father's fingers since he wasn't letting him go.

He chuckled gently and slowly let him go. "Go on, Skylar."

Skylar wobbled on two legs for a moment, seeming to contemplate this newfound skill, before
hesitantly toddling forward. He managed a couple steps before his legs crumpled, and he landed on
his hands and knees. A displeased grunt escaped him as he scuffed his little palms, before he crawled
swiftly for his mother. Once he reached her, he whined and held up his fingers.

Toki kissed them gently and welcomed her son into her lap. "Good job, Skylar," she praised warmly.

Her son beamed at her, and snuggled close, pleased to be back where he wanted to be.

Toki carefully released Honey, and kept her hands ready in case she fell immediately. The twins
were a bit more resilient to falls given the sturdy nature of their bones, but likewise they were also
prone to crying if they did. The falls didn’t hurt, not always, but falling was scary. As advanced as
they might be, they were still babies, and a baby’s response to fear was to cry. Usually quite loudly,
too. "Go to Daddy, Honey."

The little skeleton gave an excited trill, before speed walking away. Or trying to, anyways. She over
compensated in her excitement and fell flat on her face about four steps away from Toki, and well
out of immediate catching range for her mother. Honey landed with a grunt and laid there for a
second, shocked at the impact of landing on the hard tile.

"Oh Honey," Papyrus scooted closer and scooped her up into his arms. He nuzzled her affectionately
and crooned to her. "You almost had it." He praised gently.

Honey's little lower jaw jutted out in a pout, and her blue eye lights wobbled as tears beaded in her
sockets. Like any child under the age of four or so that falls, she began to cry, and clung to Papyrus
for comfort against the scary fall.

Skylar's teeth wobbled as his sister began to cry, and Toki tucked him gently into her neck and
shoulder and shushed him. Predictably, it quelled his coming tears. Toki gave Papyrus a lopsided
smile. "He doesn’t like it when his little sister cries. He’ll be a good big brother someday."

"The best protector if we cant be there when she tears up." He purred. He gently cradled Honey,
resting her firmly against his shoulder. His palm folded over her back, and he rubbed soothing circles
as she cried. Papyrus hummed gently, and let his fingers slide up to stroke the back of her skull.
Offering comfort and riding it out were often the best options for when Honey got scared. Cooing to
Honey as he gently bounced her, Papyrus nuzzled the tiny budding horns on her skull. "Oh there,
there, my little honeycomb."

“Quite true.” Toki bounced Skylar for a little bit, and the repetitive motion helped keep him from
joining his sister in crying. It didn’t mean that he didn’t whimper, but it didn’t progress more than
that. Toki shifted, and then winced slightly as a throb went through her skull. “… Ah, ow. Hey, did
you know that summons, when they want your attention, can tug really, really hard on a mental
link?”

Honey’s cries thankfully never lasted long unless she was in a serious snit. The attention from her
father helped to calm her down, and soon she was back to just simple hiccups and sniffles. She
nuzzled into his shoulder, tiny fingers fisting tightly in his clothes.

"Indeed. Honey mostly does that when she feels like something needs to be changed, usually it's her,
Nyeheh heh heh heh." he joked lightly while pecking Honey's head.

Toki chuckled and cradled her skull with one hand. Clover- yeah, she was pretty sure it was Clover-
was basically ramming against her mind like a battering ram. Their children could tug over the soul
links too- though only did it when in a particularly foul mood or in what they considered to be a
desperate need of something. “Oh sure, you can joke about diaper changes, but lemme tell you now,
we have it easy since skeletons don’t poop. Just wait until one of my brothers has another kid- you’ll get to experience an actual diaper change.”

Honey sniffled slightly, and leaned back once she was calmer. Her face was streaked with little blue lines of magic, but now that the scary had passed, she was ready to move around again. She wiggled slightly against him, and gently headbutted her daddy with great affection.

Ali gently butted back and smiled at his daughter, setting her down slowly while holding her hands. "Come on, you can stand~"

Toki smiled quietly. “It’ll take a little bit before they’re walking on their own. But we can help them figure out how to stand, though.” Standing came before walking- they had to be able to keep themselves upright before they could walk. Toki shifted Skylar, who’s whimpering had quieted, and went to set him down as well.

He fussed at her, thinking he was going to be handed off again. His fussing stopped as she simply held him up, gently bouncing him so he could use his own weight to strengthen and exercise his legs.

His daughter peered up at him for a moment, before slowly wobbling to her feet. Her legs were like blades of grass in the wind, not used to supporting her weight in such an unusual position. Honey wobbled, but used her father’s hands to keep herself upright. She bounced contently, and cooed happily again.

"Atta girl!" Aliquam praised with a laugh, "That's it, Honey!" he encouraged her.

Eventually her legs tired out, so she simply sat down. Honey cooed softly up at her dad, and made grabby fingers for him.

Skylar lasted a little longer, but he too eventually sat down and reached for his mother. Toki scooped him up gently, and slipped him inside her sling when he pawed at her breast. The sling was getting a bit tight with two of them in there, but they didn’t seem to mind sharing the space. Toki supposed that several months sharing a womb made sharing a sling a bit more tolerable. “I think he tired himself out,” she chuckled gently. “Or he wants a snack.” She mused moments later as he latched on.

He chuckled and hugged Honey close. "Look at my pretty girl." he cooed to her, "Just so wonderful~"

Honey burbled happily and settled into his lap with a sleepy coo. After playing hard, the twins crashed hard as well. They might not have played long, but they had been active.

“They’re both wonderful.” Toki beamed at him gingerly. “They’re growing so fast, too. They’re nearly five months old and already trying to stand up. You were right when you said they’d be growing quickly.” They were going to have to cherish the memories with them this small- soon they’d be running amok on their own two legs, and before you knew it, they’d be off to school. That’s how it had been with her brothers- and good lord, now she understood her mom’s nostalgia at times.

"What will we do for their education?” He asked. "Father perhaps?"

“Well, the school here does have the capabilities for all grade levels. So, I think they can go to public school here.” Toki smiled slightly. “Magical instruction, however, I’ll leave to your dad. But, not until they’re in school.”

"Alright... do you think they'll be okay there? Being skeletons and all?"
“It would be in a human school that I would be nervous about.” Toki shakes her head. “The monster kids aren’t as… racist, frankly. Here, they’ll be safe and surrounded by other monsters.”

He nodded in agreement, "Right, of course... that would be better, wouldn't it?"

“I was thinking so, yeah.” She nods softly. Toki frowns slightly, and taps at her skull. “Are your summons going bonkers? Because Clover is going to give me a migraine if she keeps battering my skull like this.”

"Now that you mention it, Neko is being very loud..."

Toki grimaces and nods. “Let’s go see what’s bothering them. Outside though, please.” She just swept. Clover wouldn’t fit inside, but Neko could, and she really didn’t want the cat skull to knock something over. Toki shifted, carefully balancing Skylar against her chest as he nursed, and then offered a hand out to help Papyrus to his feet.

He took the offered hand and stood up. He carefully tucked Honey into the sling he had on, and clicked the camera off so it wouldn’t waste battery, before he linked arms with his wife and guided her out the back door. "Alright, let’s see what they want."

Toki went with Papyrus, adjusting Skylar just slightly as they stepped outside. It was starting to warm up towards the end of February, but it was still a bit chilly for the twins to be out and about too much. Toki squinted as she glanced to the sky, and flexed her magic. With a quick flick of her wrist, the sky tore asunder with a rush of fire and brimstone.

From the fire in the sky, Clover descended. Her new saddle was still on, as she never really let them take it off. Toki and Clover had taken to frequently flying together, as it was something they would need to know how to reliably do in case she ever had to fly with her in actual combat. The massive hornet was faster than she looked, and Toki had only fallen off once. She was caught, of course, by her mount, but she hadn’t ever fallen off again.

Leg straps helped with that.

Toki stepped forwards to meet her as she landed, and blinked as the massive hornet set down what looked to be a very large black grub. It squirmed on the ground, and turned to reveal a tiny set of horn nubs, and small legs on it. It wasn’t like any form of bee larvae she had ever seen- it had fully formed jaws, and was staring at the skeletons with lazy curiosity.

Aliquam summoned forth his feline, and given he didn’t have to fight or anything of the sort, he was able to summon Neko’s full form.

The skeletal cat landed in front of her master, before she put something down before him, sitting and holding her head high like the proud feline she was.

It looked... scraggly... like a naked blob... When it started to move and lifted its head, it revealed that it was some sort of baby bird demon. It was naked and awkward, blobby and wobbling on two skinny legs.

"What the..." he sounded... extremely confused now as the baby bird cheeped at him and Honey.

Honey perked up, having woken up with the noise from the arrival of the summons. Clovers wings were loud. She looked down at the peeping blob, and cooed, reaching for it and leaning out of the sling her daddy had her in.

"Uh..." Toki eased herself down in front of the grub, and reached out to touch it. Right about the
time that it rushed forward and blobbed itself right into her lap. She looked bewildered as she gathered the rather large insect into her arms—where it wiggled right into the sling with her son, and then settled down to... Sleep? Skylar reached out to touch the grub, and cooed contently in his sleep. "... Do you think these are our kids summons?"

Clover looked on with fond indifference, and settled down to lay on the grass.

"If they are... I pray they'll age WITH the children." he replied, putting an arm around Honey as he knelt down to scoop it up.

The bird screeched and clamored into his arms. Featherless wings beat at his bones like floppy sausages, and it wiggled into the sling with Honey, before nestling against her. The bird peeped contently and nestled it's sharp beak into the crook of the infants neck, making small, pleased peeps.

The baby cooed happily and patted the bird, burbling happily as she nuzzled it. Honey made a sound closely resembling the peep, and settled contently.

“I… Guess we’ll see… How exactly do we take care of a… larvae and a baby blaster bird?” Toki looked absolutely befuddled as she straightened. The grub wiggled in the sling, draping against her Son as they both slept in her arms.

"... Uh...Well... I'll be honest.” He looked perturbed. “I have no idea.”

“Maybe your dad knows? H- Hey! Where are you going? Clover! I'm not qualified to raise a grub-thing! Clover!” Toki protested vehemently as her summons lifted into the sky again, and proceeded to disappear back through the gate. She got a distinct feeling that the insect would possibly come back- but there was no guarantee. “Damn it, Clover.”

The bird lifted its skull and peered up at the one holding it, and then proceeded to curiously peck at Papyrus’ chin. It peeped at him curiously.

Honey was bemused by the bird, and her giggles echoed out of the sling.

“To father’s then,” he insisted quickly as he deflected the beak away from his chin with gentle fingers.

Toki nodded. “No teleporting though. You know it make Skylar sick.” And she didn’t want to be covered in baby barf any more than the grub wanted to be, she imagined. Toki links her fingers with Papyrus’ own, and then heads off around the house, guiding him to the front to go find Tenebris’ house.

He nodded and followed her, keeping his hand gingerly on Honey to make sure that the needy bird didn’t hurt her.

The walk to the house didn’t take overly long, thankfully, though they had Papyrus’ summons shadowing them curiously as they went. Toki knocked soundly on the door, bouncing Skylar and the grub gently, and waited for Tenebris to answer.

"Yes? Who is it?" Was called out.

"It's me, Father, and Toki!"

"Come in, you two!" Tenebris called.

Toki opened the door, and stepped inside, shifting with a slight hiss as the grub used her rib to scoot
closer to Skylar in its sleep. She knew they looked interesting—both parents with their slings full. Likely, Tenebris would wonder where they got the two extra children. She glanced up, looking for her father in law.

Tenebris was in the main room, watching a video while on the floor.

Toki paused as she spotted him. “… You’re doing yoga?” She inquired lightly, noting that he was ridiculously flexible. He was in his boxers, but was naked otherwise. With his feet nearly on his damn skull. “Nearly naked yoga. Okay… Uh… Well… Sorry to interrupt but Papyrus and I have a problem. Two, new, tiny and possibly hungry problems.”

"Did your breasts stop flowing?" he asked, "Or did you have a-" He was cut off as Aliquam dropped the bird on his head.

"Father, be serious."

"I was being serious." he growled.

The bird squawked loudly and beat tiny wings against the sides of Tenebris skull. It wouldn’t hurt much- the talons digging into his scalp likely hurt worse. The bird screeched up at Papyrus, tiny mouth opening in unhappiness.

Likewise, Honey whined, and reached for the bird from inside of her sling. “Nyehh!” She fusses.

“Do I have a what?” Toki blinked, baffled. She swatted Papyrus lightly, and then leaned down to collect the bird off of Tenebris’ skull and ease it carefully onto the floor. Tiny talons scrubbled and it went to bounce at the tall skeleton’s feet, demanding access to their daughter. “Skeleton beast bird or not, it’s still a baby. Don’t drop babies.” There was a stern edge to her voice- a mother’s warning not to do it again. “No, Tenebris. My breasts are still producing— but our summons stopped by today and gave us… these. We were wondering if you have any idea how to take care of them.”

Toki sits down, and eases the massive larvae out of the sling and into her lap. It fusses, until she rolls it over and rubs along its belly. It settles with a gurgle, and goes limp like a sack of Jell-o.

Rubbing his head, Tenebris sat up, "Well, it looks like you’ve been given the summoning for your children." he told her "A baby avian and what looks like some breed of insect."

“It’s a type of bee Larvae. I think. Clover brought it to me, so I’m assuming it’s a type of bee.” She adjusted it and draped it on her lap. “I can… sort of feel it. It’s distant though, more like… it’s a distant relative of my summons, or something. It might be a hive mind thing though. It feels… male. Not like the Queens. Anyways,” she eyes him. “Clover dumped it in my arms and then left. So… How exactly do we feed them?”

The baby bird eventually gave up demanding at Papyrus, as the tall skeleton refused to give in to it’s desires, and went to look at the bigger monster. It sniffed at him, flapped it’s stubby wings as it shivered, and then fusses noisily at Tenebris.

Tenebris gently picked up the bird, then sighed and rubbed its head, "Well. Lets see here... remembering back to Caeruleus and Aliquam...” he murmured slowly, getting up and sitting on the couch to examine the bird.

He got nipped for his efforts, but the bird did settle in his lap, sharp claws tangling in his boxers as it sought something to hold onto with its talons.

Toki glanced up at Papyrus and motioned for him to join her on the floor. No point standing like a
stork, she mused. The grub shifted in her lap, and she lifted it slightly, stroking it’s back as it rolled over in her lap. It seemed content with the touch, and settled into the warmth she exuded. “At least the grub isn’t as fussy as Honey’s is. I suppose the personality matches the master, though.”

Honey was huffing and puffing unhappily in her sling, after all, since Papyrus had plucked her snuggle buddy from her.

Tenebris chuckled at that as his son took a seat next to his wife. "True indeed. Heinz was the laziest dog I’ve ever seen, meanwhile Bastet was the most active cat."

The bird fussed a bit more, picking up on Honey’s fussing, and huffily bit Tenebris in the soft part of his thigh.

Toki nods lightly. “I wonder what my summons say about me. Anyways- uh… It… is trying to eat your leg, I think.” She really hoped that it didn’t eat monsters. They couldn’t have a monster eating bird around- that would just be asking for bad things to happen.

"Ow." he chuckled, before he picked the bird up, "Let's see here... usually they fed themselves in the other world, but needed help discovering what they ate... so... we experiment." he told her.

The bird hissed at him and flapped feather-less wings. Beady blue eyes leered at him, before his fingers were pecked in a demand for him to be more careful.

“Allright. Well… Most birds with that shape of beak are carnivorous. Larvae at this stage usually are in combs and eating honey, but… This one apparently isn’t. It’s also got fully formed jaws- so the grub could be carnivorous too.” Toki wasn’t honestly certain. She shifted the grub and gently rolled it- him, she reminded herself- over, so it could sit on the carpet. It made a weird noise at her, and then flopped right where she had set it. “Though… I think this one is more lazy than anything. I’m more worried about the bird trying to eat the grub, honestly.”

"So... am I going to be sharing from my meat freezer?” he asked.

Toki shakes her head. “No. I’ll just have to order some from town.” She scrubs a hand over her socket, and then has to lean down to scoop up the grub as the noise of bone on bone makes him flee for the under side of the couch. She tucks him back in her lap, and then looks at Papyrus with sudden alarm. “We need to make sure they don’t eat the cats. That would be bad. Very bad.”

"Very, very bad. Keep an eye on this one." Tenebris warned her as he held out the bird, though Aliquam took that one and tucked it back with Honey. "That one looks like it'll take off some fur."

The bird nestled back into the sling with the cutest, happiest chirp.

“Pretty sure the cats can outrun the grub, but that’s a bird of prey. Once it grows into it’s stubby little legs, it’ll probably be hunting for them.” Toki sighs and rubs a hand tiredly over her sockets again. “They’re going to need names. We can’t just call them bird and grub. Though the naming should be up to the kids- Y’know, the kids can just rename them when they’re older.” She sighs. “Our summons are pretty smart. Clover sasses me when she thinks I’m not paying attention… So maybe these two are intelligent too?”

"Well, why don’t we call this one Sobek?" Aliquam suggested.

“You like your Egyptian gods for names, don’t you?” Toki quirked a smile at him. “But Sobek works. Uh… Not sure what to name the grub. Sugar and Clover are entirely different kinds of bees. He’s got flecks of orange on him.” Her Queens were black and green. She wasn’t sure what sort of larvae he was. “Spice maybe? Or Snuggle, because all this one seems to want to do is snuggle up to
Skylar.”

"That does work enough." he rumbled gently, "Alright, Snuggle it is."

Toki snorted softly, and bounced the grub in her lap. “Snuggle the eventual Hell Hornet. Well… Looks like life just got more interesting.” She sighs. “Well, we had a pretty easy nearly five months of being normal parents?”

"Keyword: Had."

She lightly bumps her husband with her shoulder. “Well, we get to learn a new style. Two skeletons, a grub, and a screechy chick. Hm… Maybe we can use our summons to baby-sit the baby summons?”

"Neko can do that.” Aliquam nods.

Toki nods alongside him. “Clover can help too. We… might have to look into a possible stable being built. If Snuggle grows to be the size of my hornets…” The house couldn’t fit Clover. It could barely fit Sugar. Toki shakes her head. “And we’ll have to assume the possibility of any more kids we have getting summons, which could take years for them to grow too before they return to their realms- I’m thinking we need to make a space in the back yard for a stable.” The back of the compound had plenty of space, really.

He nodded, "But we don’t really have them out that often, would it be necessary?"

One could see the gears turning in Toki’s skull as she pondered that. And, predictably, her brows furrowed, and a word vomit proceeded to follow. “We don’t, no, but presumably until these guys are big enough to go back to their realms, they’re going to need to be here. Our kids likely have access to their own spaces within the planes of the summoning realms, so they likely have to let them back into their own areas. We can’t open their summoning doors for them. And,” she eyes their son, “The kids aren’t going to be practicing more than the basics until they’re in school. We don’t need them accidentally falling into their summoning realms. In that time, we could end up with more kids- and then we’ll have more oodles of summons to care for. The house only holds so many, y’know?”

"Okay Toki, you’ve made your point... Father, do you think you can help us?"

"Oh yes, of course I can help you." Tenebris rumbled, though there was concern on his face and the tiniest of flinches that he was quick to hide from his son and his daughter in law. There was a reason he had his form- though it wasn’t from falling into his summoning realm. "The children falling into the summoned realm is impossible, but there’s still that fraction of a percentage... Please do be careful when they get around to that."

“I don’t want to imagine trying to get them out if they did manage to fall in.” Toki shakes her head with a sigh. “Particularly if their worlds are like mine.” Any time she tore a hole between the worlds, hellfire and brimstone spilled forth. Anyone who wasn’t fire proof would roast alive. Toki shakes her head again and hums. “There’s a lot of left-over lumber from the construction crew. I’m pretty sure they covered it, so we should be able to construct something to start… Between you and Papyrus, I’m sure you can figure something out. You two did manage to put together Ikea furniture- anyone who can do that can build without issue. But we don’t need it yet, unless these two grow faster than the twins…”

Tenebris had been so sure that the twins would have been up and running around on their own after a ‘nap’ as he had put it. So, Toki was inclined to believe that blaster beasts grew faster than normal monster kids.
Toki sighed and patted her son's back gently. "Anyways, thanks for your help, Tenebris. You're a goldmine of information... I suppose we should let you get back to your nearly naked yoga, yeah?"

"I'm not sure if you were hinting on sarcasm right there, Toki, but of course my dear." He rumbled lightly. "Yes, yes, go and learn about your children's summons, have fun." He laughed gently.

"The world may never know," she wiggled her brows at him and then eased onto her feet. "More like set boundaries for the summons, however. Gotta make sure Sobek doesn't eat Gracie or Gael."

"Indeed so." He contemplated the chick in his son's sling, and then tilted his head slightly. "I do believe you're looking at raising a vulture of some kind."

"More of a scavenger then, but still probably able to hunt all the same." Toki hummed. She offered a hand to Papyrus, and smiled at her father in law as she helped her husband to his feet. "Thanks again, Tenebris. Papyrus and I would probably be lost if we didn't have you to bounce things off of."

He laughed at that. "Run along you two." He told them, waving them off with his tail as he scooted down from the couch to settle down on the rug, going to resume his Yoga as she suggested.

Toki laced her hand with Pap's, and guided him out the door. She sighed as the fresh air rolled over her. "Well, looks like we have two more critters in the house for the foreseeable future."

"Indeed." he gave a quiet sigh, and then gave her a cheeky look. "Good thing we don’t have to pay any additional pet fees on our home, eh? Nyeh heh heh heh!"

It took Toki a moment, but she caught the terrible joke that he made. She laughed warmly. "I dunno. The landlord might have some hidden fees we don't know about. We’'ll have to ask her really sweet like what the fees are for taking in a baby blaster vulture, and some sort of demon bug larvae. Think you can sweet talk her?” She winked at him playfully.

"Who knows? I might need to do her a favor~" He purred, trailing his fingers gently down her side as he slipped his fingers out of hers to tease her.

She smiled, a warm flirty thing, and leaned into his touch as they padded along. “Maybe once the kids are down for tonight, you can see about doing that favor, hm~?”

"Rrrr~" he smirked and nipped her neck.

Toki squeaked and jumped. “Papy!” She giggled. “We’re in public! Save that for when we’re home.”

Papyrus gave a quiet, shameless laugh, and slid a hand affectionately down to squeeze her hip. "If you insist, my dear~"
Settling into life with two blaster beasts was difficult- but thankfully, they were intelligent. Toki and Papyrus had set rules for them- such as no eating the cats, don’t scratch your talons on the couch, and no eating any of the furniture- and thusly the rules had been strictly followed. Snuggle was better at following them, but the grub was fairly stationary. He remained close to Skylar, but other than following the infant around and eating come time for dinner, the grub didn’t do much else.

Sobek was much more rambunctious. The bird was still unsteady on his legs, but followed Honey around as best he could. When Honey napped and he didn’t want to, he followed Toki like a curious baby duck. It was kind of cute, until he picked up Gracie’s habit for stealing toes.

Thankfully, both the chick and the grub didn’t seem violent towards each other, so they were fairly easy to keep together. The ease of which that Sobek and Snuggle got along meant that they could just plop them into one of the ‘baby jails’, as Sans called them, and keep them from running amok when they had things to do outside. Sobek was a bit more aggressive than Snuggle was, and anyone who wasn’t immediate family was usually pecked and clawed at.

Sobek and Undyne, for instance, had a hate-hate relationship. Sobek was quite fond of fish meat- and Undyne was a giant fish monster. She got pecked and clawed a lot.

The twins were easier to manage, as they were okay cuddling with whoever held them. In this such case, Honey was snuggled against Papyrus, while Skylar was draped over Stag, completely asleep.

The white deer was settled against Papyrus, legs folded daintily under him as he silently watched the proceedings in Toki’s back yard. Stag was fond of the twins, and the deer, despite their fierce meeting, had proven to be quite gentle around children and small things. He was playful and was the biggest dork of a deer that anyone had ever met. He was graceful in his bipedal form, but on all fours he tended to trip over anything, and if he got to running too quickly, it wasn’t uncommon for him to misstep and be sent tumbling.

Stag still disliked Tenebris, but he was no longer soiling the big monster’s lawn.

The grass had been cut and soaked heavily with a hose to reduce the chances of a fire breaking out- because Toki wasn’t sparring with Undyne today. The fish woman was off to the side, sitting next to Papyrus and keeping an eye on the baby jail and the babies themselves, while Toki faced off with the only sparring partner that can take her heat.

“Are you sure you’re up to a spar like this?” Toki gave Grillby a concerned look. He was an older monster, yes, and also made of flame- but Toki worried about hurting him. That was one of her main issues- she was worried about hurting her friends. It impeded her fighting, and impacted how well she did during practice.
They hadn’t managed to find a trigger to send her into attack mode yet. She fought defensively— but that didn’t help her expel much magic. Since the only thing she regularly used magic for was bringing out her summons, and general house chores, Toki had been steadily building a surplus. More of a surplus than she was used to, more like. Now that the twins weren’t draining nearly as much magic as when they had been gestating, Toki had a large, large surplus.

The surplus was causing odd effects— Grillby had been brought in to try and get her to release some of that surplus in a spar. Fire verses fire— and his stores were more vast than hers. It was a hope that she’d burn through her stores faster and leave her less jittery or moody.

He gave a nod. "Of course, Toki... You are no longer pregnant, so now you must learn the extent of your magical capability. By sparring with a fellow fire elemental, you can maximize your output without harming me. As a veteran, I am also aware of some triggers that might not come to the untrained mind. I am your best asset if you want what you came to me for." He told her calmly.

"Are you... sure I can’t hurt you?" She gave him a more concerned look. Toki’s magic had been even more unstable when it came to offense or defense. She wasn’t practiced at handling this much magic, and the instability came from lack of practice. “I don’t want to hurt you. I know you don’t burn like Undyne can, but...” She edges awkwardly, and shuffles her bare feet through the wet grass. “I don’t want to hurt anyone.”

"That’s the damn problem!" Undyne shouts from the side. “I told you, we’re tougher than we look!”

"I know, but..." She awkwardly shuffled in placed again, and nudged a pebble with her toe.

"Toki." He spoke her name sternly before he took a breath and lifted his weapons, a sword and shield, and stalked towards her. "I'm a member of Humans Against Monsters. I've just cut down your husband. After I kill you, I'm going to kill your children." he growled. The heat and venom in his voice was almost convincing as he charged at her, knowing that perhaps the best way to start a spar was a jumpstart.

Toki did her best to ignore his surprisingly convincing threat, though the way he growled sent a nervous spike through her magic, making her eyes briefly blaze. The jumpstart was effective in the manner that Toki made use of ducking and rolling. Though she couldn’t do a true summersault, as her horns would legitimately get stuck, Toki could throw herself to the side and dodge. Her tank top was tightly bunched behind her, covering the bindings she had over her breasts, and the grass stuck to it as she rolled to the side. “Shit!”

Knowing that dodging wasn’t the main goal of this fight, Toki scooped up a stick at her feet, reinforced it with magic, and threw it at him. It caught fire, but the fire burned out the moment that she let go of it. It clattered harmlessly against his shield, making a loud bang before dropping into the damp grass. Toki didn’t have a physical weapon to summon, unlike the skeletons and Undyne did, so the best she could do was imbue her magic into whatever she was using. Sticks and stones, mostly.

Her bees would be useless, and she’d rather not feel them get squished against a useless fight with Grillby.

He spun his sword in his hand, and shook his head, "There's no use in dodging. You can do it, but only for so long, Toki." He told her, before he slammed his sword against his shield, "Come on!"

Bravery was not her natural trait. Not at all. Toki swallowed nervously and gathered her magic around her. Flames gathered in her fingers, and she tightened them with her fingers. She didn’t have a physical weapon— but she’d seen Grillby turn his flames into ropes of sorts. Ropes could be used
like a whip, not that she knew how to use one of those either. Toki formed her flames as best she
could, though they lurched out of control all over her hand, and cracked the general shape of them
against his shield.

She might have aimed for his shield, which didn’t do any good against him, but she hit it with a
satisfying cracking sound. That was an achievement, and she perked slightly.

Though really, being distracted because she landed one mildly decent hit was not usually a good
thing.

"One hit will not take your opponent down!" he told her, before he lunged at her again.

“Shit!” She hesitated, trying to figure out if she had an option to fight back. She hesitated too long,
and soon he was bearing down on her. Toki threw her magic swiftly into her defense, like she’d
practiced with taking hits from Undyne, and prepared to take his strike.

He struck her with a blow from his shield, and then swiped at her with his sword.

The blow from his shield knocked her off balance, but it was enough to save her from too harsh of a
strike from the blade. The blade cut into her arm, and chipped the bone as she twisted away from it
instinctively.

The chip was painful, and her fingers clutched at it as she gasped. She didn’t sit still though—chips
and nicks could heal, as Undyne had proven when she’d battered her to help better her instinctive
defensive capabilities. Papyrus and Tenebris could fix what they broke, she knew.

Toki tucked her shoulders and rolled again, ducking between the taller monster’s legs to scamper
away and give herself space to gather the gumption to strike again.

"I apologize in advance, but when you are facing the enemy, they’re not going to ease up on their
strikes and grant you mercy!" He told her, turning swiftly on his feet and swinging his blade at her
unprotected back.

Toki took another blow, this time the sharp side of the blade cutting a furrow across the backs of
several of her ribs. She cried out and kicked back at him, jetting a small stream of flame out of the
bottom of her foot as she stumbled. Toki kept her feet though and turned to face him, irritation
tugging her teeth down. “You don’t think I know that? They killed my brother, Grillby. I know
they’re not going to give me mercy of any kind.”

"Nor would they spare your children, Toki!" he told her, swinging once more.

Toki braced for it this time, and forced flames to cover her bones and act as a temporary shield as she
shoved her arm against his blade. Still cut her, but she repelled it, and danced away from him. “I
know they wont!” She cried, gesturing angrily behind her where her family was seated. “I know
they wont! They’ve burned me alive, murdered my brother, and are still after me and all of monster kind!
But you’re not Humans Against Monsters! You’re Grillby, and you’re not going to hurt my
children!”

He slammed his shield against her and he glared down at her with a snarl. "... Would you really want
to make that gamble?" he questioned. Without warning, he brought the handle of his sword up and
hit her in the head, before he turned and lunged past her, going for the twins.

The blow to her skull caught her right above the scar that ran around her left horn. Pain seared across
her vision, and it temporarily went white as she staggered back.
Honey cried out, a distressed shriek as her mother was sent staggering and the one that struck her stalked for her. She shrieked again, sharp fingers tugging at Papyrus in panic.

Toki didn’t stop to think about if he was bluffing or not. The pain sparked her anger- that was a dirty trick, aiming for the one place on her skull that couldn’t take a direct hit like that. Instincts struck first before rational thought slid into her skull, and she reacted to the panic that she could feel coming from Honey’s soul.

The sound that tore from her teeth was not quite human, and she lunged after the fire elemental with her jaws gaping. She hit his back with little force given her lack of physical bulk, but she scrambled up and sunk her sharp, sharp teeth into the junction between his shoulder and his neck. Her eyes blazed the same color as her magic, and green fire crawled over her, searing her clothes and bindings away as she savaged his neck in an instinctive measure to draw the perceived predator away from her children.

Her fingers clawed at him, sharp bones raking through his clothes and ruining them effectively, as her flames engulfed them both.

Grillby wanted a reaction- and Grillby got a reaction.

He tensed up and winced, shouting out as the fangs dug deeper into his shoulder, before he reached back and grabbed her horn. "That's it, Toki!" he snarled, before he fell right backwards, aiming to land on her.

She was light enough in the body, even with her breasts weighting her down, that she could use his own momentum against him. She scrambled up, letting him fall back, but not onto her, and used the force of his fall to rip her teeth from his shoulder, taking a good chunk of that part of his body with it. The burning flesh was spat out, orange staining her teeth a grisly color, and Toki roared.

Flames spilled from her mouth, and the flaming skeleton engulfed the fire elemental in the same burning green hellfire that her summons lived in. The stench of brimstone filled the air, spilling from the glowing part of her maw.

Grillby roared in pain at the sudden loss of flesh in his shoulders and he snarled, putting his shield up to deflect the enraged skeleton, "Well to be fair I was right about her trigger point!" he announced, before he winced. "Papyrus!"

Putting Honey down, Aliquam ran and grabbed Toki fast, pulling her off of Grillby and away from him. "Toki! That's enough!"

Grabbing her wasn’t the wisest idea. The green of her flames had engulfed her, and it burned through his gloves like they were made of paper. The flames seared at his hands, and only as she turned flaming eyes to him, did she realize who exactly had her. Toki shook him off and stumbled away, coiling her arms defensively around her naked form and trying to keep from burning her husband worse. She had burnt her clothes, and most of Grillby’s away- but the flames wouldn’t stop.

She winced, and clutched her skull with one hand, cradling the spot where Grillby had effectively concussed her with the pommel of his blade. She took deep breaths to try and rein her magic in, though it didn’t seem to be helping. The stopper that she’d had on her violent reactions had been effectively burnt away by Grillby’s insistence in making her fight, and she had no way of making it stop.

The magical build up that had been growing and growing since she no longer had her tiny leeches draining her was too much. She didn’t know how to stop it now that she had started.
Grillby looked to have underestimated her abilities, and was now holding his shoulder as he tried to stop the bleeding.

Aliquam slowly sat Toki down, ignoring the burns blistering over his bones and trying to calm her down.

Tenebris appeared with a sharp crack of displaced air and set a hand on his shoulder, excusing him to go help Grillby while he tended to Toki.

Tenebris knelt in front of Toki and held up his hand, holding the hole of it over one of her eyes. "Watch me." He ordered quietly. He waited for her to be focused on him for a moment before he pierced the back of her soul with a tendril, draining her magic.

The grass around her steamed and caught fire, but she couldn’t exactly stomp on it to force it to extinguish. She sat on her knees, chipped arm covering her breasts as she tried to rein in her magic. Her eye lights focused on Tenebris, staring at him through the hole in his palm like he demanded, though the sharp strike from his tendril had her crying out.

As it latched on, her magic lashed, unleashed, and scorched the ground in a hot circle in defiance of his attempt at subduing it. It pounded through her marrow, a raging inferno that she had no control of. This was what she feared- losing control of her fire, of burning someone and hurting them beyond repair. This was why she never fought full bore, why she never went onto the aggressive with her family or close friends.

Toki never imagined that she would have lost herself like that. Grillby, for all of his guff, would never have hurt the children. Never. But… HAM would. And he needed to hammer that into her- and if it took hitting her upside the skull to get it, then it appeared he would do it.

She shuddered and curled into herself with a whimper. The inferno around her was steadily turning into a wildfire, consuming the grass all the way to the cement walkway not far from her. “I can’t make it stop,” she cried out. It was her fire- she should be able to control it! She’d been okay controlling it before, but she’d never fought by hand before either. She’d always summoned something, her insects or her hell hornets, and they had done the hard fighting for her. The only exception had been Vikki, and Vikki had fled with a multitude of severe burns marking her skin-

Just as she thought it would peak, however, the flames began to die down. She could feel the magic being steadily sucked back into Tenebris, and shuddered as the overload was drained away. Slowly the flames receded over her, until she was simply a naked, scorched skeleton sitting in a pile of ash with the bloody marks from biting Grillby staining her mouth.

Tenebris’ breathing was a little picked up as he took a step back, tendril releasing her as he did so, and shed his turtleneck so he could drape it over her shoulders. "It's okay Toki... It's okay..." He told her gently, hugging her tightly for a moment before Papyrus came back.

They traded positions, her husband hugging her while Tenebris went to help Grillby.

“IT'S NOT OKAY!” She sniffed quietly. His turtleneck was swiftly coated in soot, and the slow ooze from where her bones had gotten damaged by Grillby’s sword. Her ribs were admittedly the worse, though the nasty clock to her skull had reopened the scar wrapping around her horn. It oozed lazily, though his turtleneck only really touched the one on her ribs that was nastily oozing soot and magic onto it.

She was hot still, her bones heating the turtleneck uncomfortably. “I hurt him...” She could see the pile of flesh that she’d bitten out of him turning to ash and blowing away in the wind. She gave it a
nauseated look. “W-we were just sparring and I hurt him. I don’t want to hurt any of you- your hands!” She spotted the blackened parts of Papyrus’ hands and gave him a wounded look. “I burned you…”

"Calm down, Toki..." he murmured, "Come on, let's go cool you down." He told her, getting up and gently pulling her with him. Tenebris had collected Grillby and teleported away, leaving Papyrus to help his wife.

“I think you killed the lawn, by the way.” Undyne hummed conversationally as she and Stag relocated the kids, and the quite flammable baby jail, to the safety of the paved sidewalk. The flames had spread, and consumed the entire inside of the sidewalks dimensions. The sidewalk, however, kept the grassfire from spreading to the tree and to the flowerbeds.

Undyne got the hose turned on, and offered it out to Papyrus, the spray nozzle keeping it from spraying immediately.

Toki tucked her chin, not really wanting to hear that she’d destroyed several years of careful landscaping. It had even survived the house fire- only to be killed by her apparent magical tantrum. Anger sizzled through her again, but more at herself for losing control, and her bones heated up a little more under Papyrus’ hands.

“Is Grillby going to be alright?” She questioned quietly. She could taste him in her mouth- fire and embers, mixed with the brimstone that had rushed from her before. It was a gross mix.

He took the hose and turned the setting to shower to cool her down, before carefully running it over her bones. "He'll be okay. I promise, Toki."

She sighed through her nasal cavity, and turned under the spray. It hit her bones and steamed immediately at first, before she cooled off enough for it to actually run down her body. She carefully kept a hand on the turtleneck, using it to cover her chest, but let the water rush down her back as she turned. It stung in the cuts on her ribs, but it washed out any soot that had gotten into it from her clothes burning away. “I hope so.” She murmured. Toki shook her head. “I acted like an animal. I can’t believe I lost myself like that… Are your hands okay? Just scorch marks?”

"Just a little charred." He assured her, smiling warmly. "But I assure you, Toki, you gave Grillby exactly what he wanted... I'm proud of you."

“If that ever happens again, and I get out of control like I was, please don’t hold onto me for so long. Just toss me away if you have to but and spray me with the hose… Don’t let me burn you, okay?” her teeth grind, too wet to make sparks, and she opens her mouth to rinse it out with the spray from the hose. “I doubt he wanted a chunk bitten out of his shoulder, Pap. I was savage.”

"That is true..." he murmured quietly, before he smiled, "Toki... I’d never toss you away." He told her honestly. "Even if you were burning up."

She hides a wince at his agreement to her savagery, and simply nods to him as she scrubs herself clean of soot and debris. “You’re too sweet, Papyrus. But seriously- the only reason I didn’t try to fry you was… actually, I’m not sure. I just sort of turned and… it was you there.” She grimaced. “Anyone else might have gotten a face full of fire.”

"Toki... I don’t fear you." He told her sternly. "No matter what, you're my wife, and I can take anything you dish out." he then clacked his teeth to the side of her skull in a soft kiss. "I love you."

Toki leaned into his kiss, despite the sting it brought to the tender crack on her skull. “I love you too,
If ever there came a day when he was afraid of her, she would know that something would be wrong. She nuzzled him gently, and then shivered. “I think I’m cooled off now. Thanks, Pap.” She gave him a tired smile, and rung out Tenebris’ turtleneck so she could cover herself with it. A small puff of magic, which came to her far easier than it usually did, dried it out and made it warm and fluffy. His turtleneck was hilariously massive on her, but it served to cover her well enough.

“So, uh, can I bring your kids over?” Undyne had a sleepy Skylar on one hip, and a wiggling, fussing Honey on the other. The tiny horned skeleton was reaching for her mother with tears in her little eyes. “Pretty sure your little girl’s upset. Skylar is chill though. You sure he’s not Sans’ kid somehow?”

“Yes, yes, come closer.” Aliquam summoned gently.

The fish monster turned off the hose, and then padded closer. She offered out the two skeletons once they were in reach.

Toki took Honey and cradled her close, leaving Papyrus to take Skylar. Stroking between her horns, Toki held her as she hiccuped and nuzzled into her neck. She huffed and puffed against her, but seemed to settle since Toki smelled more like water, instead of the ooze coming from her cracked bones. “There’s my little girl. I’m sorry you got scared, baby. Momma’s okay though, I promise.” She crooned softly.

Papyrus took Skylar and hugged him gently, kissing his head gently. He gave his daughter a fond stroke as well, but left Toki to calm her down, since her mother was the source of her anxieties. “It’s okay, little Sky. Mommy and daddy are okay, I promise.”

Skylar snuggled into his daddy and clung to him quietly. He wasn’t as upset as his sister— but he had been napping on Stag during the fight. He’d only woken at the end when Undyne had picked him up so they could move off the burning grass. Skylar tucked his skull into his Daddy’s neck, and burbled sleepily.

Honey was slowly settling against Toki, hiccuping quietly and sniffing noisily. Toki sighed and winced slightly as it expanded her ribs. “Do you think you can heal up the chips in my arms and ribs? I don’t want to ooze too much on your dad’s shirt.”

"Of course... let’s get you and the twins inside first, okay?" he purred, pecking her cheek.

Toki smiled quietly and kissed him back. "I’d like to check on Grillby after we’re done, if that’s okay. I hurt him pretty bad, and I want to make sure we’re okay." Papyrus might have said that she’d given Grillby what he wanted, but that still didn’t excuse her hurting him so badly. She had just… snapped. It wasn’t fair that Grillby got the brunt of that.

"You did!” Undyne grinned. "That was a gnarly bite. I want a scar like that- maybe not the burns, but that would be a scar worthy of telling a story about. At least you didn't get sick. I was expecting to see you spew when you came to your senses."

Toki made a face at her and a rude gesture that the fish woman gleefully returned.

"Not in front of the children!" he scolded, hiding Skylar’s eyes.

Toki gave him a sheepish look. “Honey didn’t see, if it means anything.” Their daughter hadn’t pulled from her neck, and Toki was still smoothing her hands gently along her back.

“The guppies are too young to understand the shit we’re pulling,” Undyne rolls her eye lightly, and snorts softly. “Anyways, I’ll go talk to some of the rabbits and see if any of them have any grass
seed. I'll get your lawn replanted while you go get healed up- it should be grown back at least somewhat by… I dunno, June?"

"Thank you, Undyne." Papyrus nodded. "Please make sure you don’t flood the terrain again, we don’t need a repeat of what happened last time."

She made a face at him. “I’ll make sure not to flood it.” The big fish woman made an immature noise at him, and trotted off with Stag at her heels, curious to see what she was up to.

Toki shook her skull with a sigh, and then headed for inside after grabbing a corner of the baby jail to bring Sobek and Snuggle inside with them. She bounced Honey gently, and took note that she was settling into a fussy sleep. “I think it’s nap time for the twins,” She hummed gently.

"Alright. You need one as well." He told her.

“Healing, then checking on Grillby, and then I’ll nap.” She hummed softly to her husband. “I’m not pregnant anymore, love. If I nap as often as I used to, I won’t sleep as well during the night.”

He looked at her for a moment, and then sighed. "Alright, we'll put them down and then you can go check on Grillby."

“Thanks, love.” She kissed his cheek gently, and had him help her get in the house.

She settled the baby jail along the wall of the living room, leaving Sobek and snuggle inside of it for the time being, and then carefully rocked Honey. She eased her off of her neck, and then lowered her down to settle her into the baby jail with Sobek. As much as she hated to admit it, Honey slept better when she could be close to both her brother and her summons.

Snuggle shifted over, and looked up at Papyrus. The insect gave him the bug equivalent of puppy eyes, in hopes of getting to spend time with his master as well.

Aliquam smiled and after he set Skylar down in the baby jail, he gently picked Snuggle up, stroking his head gently. "Aww~" he pecked his head, and then put him with the infant.

The fat grub, which honestly looked more like a weird bug-lizard mix, rolled over as soon as he was set down and snuggled right up against Skylar.

The infant cooed contently and nestled close to his summons.

It didn’t take long for all four of them to be asleep. Toki gently draped a light blanket over top so the lights in the living room didn’t stir them, and then sighed. She shifted and stripped off Tenebris turtleneck, leaving herself bare, and took a moment to check the inside. “Good. I didn’t bleed on his shirt this time.”

"Heh heh~" He hugged her gently. "I don’t think he'd fuss over a little blood."

"No, but if I stain it then I have to clean it. That's how it works." She rolled her eye lights gently and leaned into him with a soft sigh. "Careful where you hug me, or I'll ooze on you too. At least you're in dark clothing. Why your dad wears white and off white I won't ever know."

"I think he's trying to put more color in his skin, otherwise he looks like a ghost..."

"White on white doesn't help with that." She snorted, and then turned around so he could heal her back. Her skull stung something fierce, as did her arm, but neither were life threatening. The one that was bleeding meant the marrow had been breached, and could probably get infected.
He focused his magic on her wounds and smiled as he watched it seal. “I suppose that’s true.”

Her back healed up first, and then the chips in her arms sealed. The mark on her skull healed back up again, but only as far as it had been pre-spar. Toki gave him a warm smile. "I never tire of the feel of your magic." He was light and warmth, love and happiness. The naked skeleton touched her skull lightly and sighed. "You know, I wonder why the big crack in my skull never fully healed. The rest of me did, after the fire."

"Perhaps it was inflicted in the last few seconds you were human?"

“Problem is, I don’t know when that was. It happened when I caught the beam between my horns.” Toki hums quietly, and wiggles away once she’s healed. She pads for the stairs so she can go get into clothes, and motions for him to follow. “I’m pretty sure I hadn’t been human for a while. The fire hurt, but I was walking around even as my muscles literally burnt and fell off. You… saw flashes of what it was like when you touched the red marks that used to be on my soul.”

He nodded, a grimace touching his face as he recalled the searing pain that had dropped him to his knees. It was hard to forget. "I remember, yes..."

"I'm not sure, but I think a lot of my sickness was my body literally dying around my new form." She padded into their room to get dressed. "I don't really know though. I burnt alive before we could figure out how skeletons are made from humans. You saw and experienced it through me- did you glean anything from your glimpse that I might have e missed during the event?" And she hadn't heard of any cases of humans turning into skeletons. Toki sighed as she tugged a shirt over her head, and replaced the more traditional bindings around her chest. "Can you tie these in the back please?" It helped keep her from bouncing around as she went outside. They were useful for training too.

He nodded and reached up to gently secure the bindings, so she wouldn’t be bouncing around. As much as he enjoyed them, he didn’t particularly want others enjoying his wife’s breasts either. "Here we are."

"Thanks, Pap." She smiled, and went to put on some pants while he answered her first question to him.

He took the silence for what it was, and placed a contemplative hand on his chin. "Well... let me think... I’m trying to remember clearly, but it's been a while."

"It has." Toki nods. "I don't think you can see it again either. My soul has healed, after all. The scars on it don't trigger anything when I touch them... Maybe if you did?" She gave a curious hum and buttoned her pants. She'd had to toss out all of her pre-pregnancy pants. Her hips were too wide for them now.

"You want me to try again?"

Toki didn’t need to see his face in order to practically see the disdain at that thought. Truthfully, Toki wouldn’t want to do it again either. She shakes her head and goes to slip on a pair of flip-flops. "I wouldn't want you to do something you don't want to."

"It's not that I'd be against it, you know, if it means I get to help you..."

"Papyrus, my love, it's simply a curiosity. I won't die if I never find out why it doesn't heal." She rolls her eye lights fondly. "Besides, the next time you touch my soul, I'd rather it be whenever we're trying for more kids. But, y'know, not until these two are at least done nursing." She chuckles softly.

He nodded, a light chuckle escaping him. "Of course." He laughed gently. "Alright, once everything
"Maybe heal was the wrong word." She chuckles lightly. "It's just a scar now. I just wonder why it never closed. You can't even tell my rib cage got blown out the year before last, can you? Those healed up seamlessly." She gives him a gentle smile. "I'll go check up on Grillby though. You mind keeping an eye on the kids and making sure they don't wake up alone?"

"Sure thing." He nodded. "Of course he can." Watching the children wasn’t hard work, truly. He could play some puzzle games until Toki got back. Papyrus was fairly fond of the Portal games she had gotten for his birthday, after all.

Toki leaned up to kiss him gently. "I love you." She smiled warmly, and stroked her fingers over his sharp cheekbones. "You're the best, most handsome husband ever. While I'm gone, think of what you want for dinner tonight, m'kay?"

"All right." He kissed her head gently and smiled. "And you're the best thing I could imagine ever happened to me. You, and our beautiful children." He purred. "I love you so much."

"I love you too." She smiled and nuzzled him softly. "You're my world. You, and our sweet little babies. Alright- walk me to the door?"

"Of course!" Rather than just simply walk with her back down the stairs, Papyrus playfully scooped her into his arms, and peppered her face in kisses. He quietly pranced out of their room and down the stairs, enjoying the laughter of his giggling wife as she clung to his shoulders and enjoyed the ride.

Once at the door, he set her at her feet with a broad grin.

She gave him one more kiss, as a thanks for the rather playful ride down from the second floor, and then scooted out the front door. Toki meandered at her usual pace, which was much faster than it had been months ago. She was slowly getting back into shape- and then hopefully into even better shape than before. Undyne was… enthusiastic about her trying to get into shape and finally being able to practice her magic, after all.

A stop by Tenebris' home proved that the fire monster wasn't there. So, she headed right for the bar, and slipped inside once she reached it. The bar was empty save for Grillby, Sans, and Tenebris.

Toki nervously swallowed. "How's he doing?"

Tenebris smiled gently. "He's going to be fine." He told her warmly.

To Tenebris, she smiled slightly. "I'm glad he's going to be okay."

Grillby smiled up at her when he saw her. His voice was warm and low, and rumbled across the bar to her as she slowly edged closer. "Toki, you did well in our spar. I'm proud of you."

She buzzed sharply at Grillby. "Acting like a savage doesn't mean I did good, Grillby. Yes, I fought back and did decently, but I hurt your shoulder something nasty in what should have been just a spar. Speaking of... Sorry for hurting your man, Cae."

"He insists that it’s just temporary damage." Sans replied, smiling gently, before hugging Grillby with one arm. The other rubbed over the considerable swell of his belly, massaging where a tiny lump of a foot was probably jabbing at him.

"The damage is considerable, but it's still proof that you're not just a lesser threat. That would have
been fatal for a human." The elemental hummed slightly. "You did as I asked."

"Yeah. Not so much asked as demanded, though." She shuffled awkwardly. "I don't want to kill anyone though." She eyes his bandaged shoulder, and hesitantly approaches. "I... Healed Fuku's scalds that one time. Maybe my magic could help your shoulder heal?"

"Perhaps it will work. I'd like to see you try." He rumbled. "By all means, Boys, if you'd be so kind."

Sans slowly moved away while Tenebris gave Toki room. "Go ahead." Tenebris rumbled.

Toki approached, and gently rested her fingers on the bare chest of the fire elemental. His pectoral muscles were warm, and she flattened her much smaller palms over them. Toki really was very dainty compared to all of the monsters.

Her fingers spread out, and then she pushed her magic towards him. Despite Tenebris draining a fair amount from her, she still had plenty to use. Toki mused that this was likely what a true boss heart could do. One whose soul wasn't damaged, that was. Toki exhaled gently, and guided the heat of her magic towards his shoulder, hoping to heal him.

He hummed gently and closed his eyes as he focused on receiving the magic to heal his shoulder. He guided it along with small pulses of his own magic, and felt the flesh of his shoulder tingle and pulse, slowly growing back and filling out what had been taken. By the end of it, Grillby settled and smiled up at her, with marginally less damage than when she had came int. "That helped considerably, thank you, Toki."

She nodded quietly and frowned. "I don't know how much that healed with the bandage on..." But she didn't want to take it off in case he was still bleeding, or oozing. She exhaled slightly, and stepped back. Her shoulders rolled lightly, and she shuffled her toes awkwardly. "Maybe not go after my kids in a spar next time? I don't like knowing I literally bit a chunk out of you."

She was civil, damn it, not some savage animal.

He chuckled lightly, "Yes of course. I'll be more careful next time."

Toki nodded. "Good." She sighs softly. "You know, it kind of sucks trying to spar when I can't summon a physical weapon. That whip I tried to make was terrible and half-assed."

"Perhaps we'll see if you can next time we train."

"Undyne and I tried." She shook her head slightly and sighed. "I can only conjure bees, not weapons. I can breathe fire like a dragon though, apparently."

The pregnant skeleton on the bar whistled lightly. "That's pretty damn cool o' you, Sis."

"So can you when you sneeze, apparently." Toki eyed her brother in law lightly. "Pregnancy fun, neh?"

He closed his mouth at that, before he looked away. "... Neh." Was all he replied.

Toki experimentally gathered magic in her skull, and exhaled in an attempt to puff out a tiny flame. It shot out her eye socket, making her squawk and bat at her face. "Okay, I need to practice at that."

That got a laugh from the men around her. "That was cute." Sans commented dryly.
She stuck her tongue out at him. "Just wait. You'll have a baby skelemental and my niece or nephew will sneeze fire at all the adorable but horribly timed moments."

“… Skelemental?”

Chapter 79

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This was originally going to be a short chapter, but like all things in this damn fanfic, it ran away from us. XD Well then. We were planning probably 2k words, if that- and ended up with well over 5k.

Silverwing Notes: Sometimes there's great battles, sometimes there's wounds that take weeks to heal...

and then there's this precious shit

enjoy the chapter~

Her practice was upped to twice per week. She would work with Grillby for one of the days, learning fire manipulation and how to better control her flames- including making weapons from them and breathing fire out of the correct area- and metaphorically exercising her magical muscles. Though it was slow, since he was still healing from the nasty bite she gave him. Training with Undyne was done on another day. The fish monster took over strengthening her physical skills, and making her stronger for her size and getting her into decent shape.

Truthfully, Toki was in better shape now than she ever had been. She could run for more than a few minutes without getting severely winded now. It was slow but steady progress.

Of course, being chased by a spear wielding shark-toothed maniac was motivation enough to make anyone run for longer. Undyne was a tough love sort of teacher with adults- not nearly so with kids. If Undyne got too much out of hand, Toki let her know with words- and if words didn’t work, bees made a wonderful persuasion tactic to make her listen.

Undyne’s ferocity unnerved Toki about as much as Toki’s swarms of flaming bees unnerved the fish woman.

That was to say, quite a lot.

When she wasn’t practicing, she was taking care of the twins, writing, and keeping in contact with the police station. They’d gotten a few sparse leads on Humans Against Monsters, but nothing had panned out yet. Toki was holding out on the hopes of them nailing the terrorist organization hard.

Today broke up her usual routine though- her husband was home, and it wasn’t his scheduled day off, either.

Toki crept out of the nursery silently, her bare feet barely making a sound on the tile as she eased the door partly closed. She left it open enough for them to hear, but for the noises of the night time house activities not to disturb the sleeping twins and their summons.

Toki eased down the stairs, and made it out to the living room where Papyrus was waiting. Her husband had, once again, pulled something in his shoulder. How a skeleton could pull something,
she didn’t know, but he was sore and had to take the day off.

So, thusly, she was going to give him a rub down. They had to wait for the twins to settle down for the night, however, to really get into it. They’d been fussy most of the day, picking up on their father’s discomfort, and hadn’t settled down for their usual naps. They’d have done it while they were up, but Honey liked to try and help, and as much as she loved having her daughter join her for usual things, eating the massage oil was not healthy for her.

They had several hours before they would try to wake up, though. She’d put them to bed with full bellies, after half an hour or so of feeding in the rocking chair, so they would sleep like little logs.

Toki snagged the bottle of massage oil, specifically formulated for monsters and beings that didn’t have skin like other critters, before sliding into the living room. Mettaton was a ghost, after all, and the star did enjoy his massages. It was one of the few MTT brand items that she really used.

The couch had been moved, pushed back and away from the coffee table, for a large expanse of floor space to be opened. After layering multiple blankets and pillows along the tile floor, it had been made into a soft surface for the skeletons to rest on.

“Alright,” She hummed softly, “Strip off your shirt and lay on your front, dear. Lets get you rubbed down, and see if a hot bath after can help ease your aches, yeah?” Toki had gotten some lessons from Sans about rubbing bones properly- as he gave the best massages- when Papyrus had come home several months back with something strained. The life of a guard wasn’t always easy.

Papyrus looked at her with a shaky smile, a pained look in his eyes as he removed his shirt before he lay down, vocalizing in pain when he shifted something wrong. "F-Fuck... I really did it this time..." He groaned.

Toki eased up behind him, and carefully straddled his pelvis. She curled her knees gently into his sides, and then spread a bit of the oil into her palms. Rubbing it to spread it around her hands, and to warm it with her magic, she hummed soothingly to him. “You work yourself too hard,” She scolds gently. “You should take more than just one day off, Papyrus.” Still, despite her scolding, she settles her hands gently along his spine at the base of his pelvis, and begins to massage. She intends to work upwards, letting the heat of her magic and the soothing qualities of the oil ease his aches. Her poor husband really had done a number on himself.

"Nnn... Nyeh..." He made quiet sounds as she began to work on him, his eyes slowly lulling closed as he enjoyed her soothing touch. "Oh stars Toki, you are too good to me~"

Toki quirked a gentle smile, and worked up his vertebrae. “You would do the same for me,” she purred. “Besides, I don’t like to see you hurting. If I can help, I fully intend to do so. Let me know if I hurt you by accident, okay? I’ll go over it lighter until it doesn’t hurt anymore.”

"Nnnhh~" he moaned gently in response, settling himself on the pillows as he hugged them tight to his chest. The pain definitely stung something awful, and Aliquam was less than happy at his predicament, but he was undeniably pleased at his mate's gentle touch. Each caress, each rub and application of pressure made him exhale or moan quietly in enjoyment. "Ahh... nyeh..."

She took her sweet time working up his spine, carefully checking between the vertebrae to make sure nothing was caught between them. Toki smiled, enjoying each of his pleased little sounds as she worked up his back. When she reached his ribs, she eased her fingers between them and rubbed, stroking firmly and easing the heated oil between them. Rubbing oil into bone was an odd thing, even more so when the magic based product was absorbed into him like lotion on skin.
Toki smiled coyly, and kissed the back of his skull as she worked her way up towards his shoulders. He had a lot of ribs, and each rib got the same thorough and gentle treatment. “You know,” she hums softly, “I love the noises you make when I get my hands on you.” Was that a shameless flirt? Yes. Yes it was.

"Mmmhhh...." he moaned when she kissed his skull, then he chuckled and looked over his shoulder at her, eyes gleaming gently in amusement. "You silly woman.” he chuckled, before he winced and gasped sharply. "A-Ah!"

Her fingers had found a particularly tense spot along his scapula, and laid gently into it. “I’m your silly woman,” She purred softly. Her fingers eased under the edge of his left shoulder blade, and paused, before working her fingers further under. She fished around, and nudged something. “Love, I think you’ve got a rock lodged between your scapula and your ribcage. Isn’t this the shoulder that was hurting?”

"Nnh... Yes..." He whined softly.

She nudged it lightly, and it gave just a little bit with a noisy sound of stone against bone. She grimaced. “Alright,” She soothed softly, “I’m gonna lube up your shoulder something good, okay? Then I’ll get the rock out. It’s gonna hurt- but I’ll make the pain go away after, I promise.” Her husband was a royal guard- he was tough as nails. But, in her experience with her brothers, even the toughest man could be reduced to the biggest crybaby when faced with the oddest of wounds.

Toki liberally squirted oil between his shoulder and the rest of his bones, and then began to work it deeper around the rock.

He keened quietly and nodded before she started her treatment. He was mostly quiet about it, but when she succeeded in dislodging the rock, he gasped loudly, before he sighed in relief and let his head drop into the pillows. "Oh god... it's out...” He sighed.

Toki tossed the rock where he could look at it if he wanted, and sunk her fingers back under his scapula. Fire magic coiled in her hands, and she pulsed it into his bones, warming and relaxing them much like she had for Tenebris on several occasions. “You did good,” She cooed softly to him and nuzzled the back of his skull. “A little rock can sure put a kink in everything, hm?” Her thumbs massaged and worked over his shoulder, seeking to make the pain of the rock disappear.

"Oooohh..." He sighed and moaned gently in relief as his eyes lulled closed. "Thank you, Tokiko~" he cooed weakly.

She smiled and buzzed softly for him. Her fingers kneaded and massaged, and she worked over his other shoulder and the rest of his back slowly. Her hands ended up on his shoulders, with her having had to scoot further up his back so she could properly reach. “Anything for you.” The shorter skeleton was glad she could be of some use to her husband. “I don’t mind doing this, you know that. I love you- that’s reason enough to spoil you.”

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" He cooed happily and hugged the pillow under him, going to settle down and relax under her loving care. He really did have the best wife, no bones about it.

Toki smiled and continued to rub for some time. Once all of the oil had been rubbed in, and his body was sufficiently relaxed and eased, Toki eased down and layed across his back. Her breasts pressed softly between his shoulders as she made use of her smaller frame and used him for a bed. She wasn't idle, though. Toki acted like one giant heating pad to continue to soothe his bones. Heat, and alternatively cold sometimes too, could do wonders to soothe pain. "I love your laugh," she smiled, "it's absolutely adorable." Married or not, romance and flirtation were not something that would ever
"Mmmhh..." he closed his eyes and sighed gently. "I love you so much~" he cooed, "And you make
me laugh."

"Laughter is one of the key components to a healthy relationship." She kisses his shoulder, tasting
him and the oil lightly against her teeth. "Laughter, communication, affection, understanding- there’s
a lot of things key to a healthy relationship." Toki sighs contently, and relaxes on top of him.

"And massages, because you are just so good at that." He murmured.

She giggled lightly. "Those too. You know, I teased your dad back in the early stages of my
pregnancy about taking up a third occupation as a massage therapist with my fire based magic. You
should have seen his face. He was so disapproving of me taking even more onto my plate. This was
before you all got your rights- back when I was doing mountains of paperwork daily." She had been
basically a paperwork ninja.

Looking back, Toki wasn’t sure how she managed all of that without getting behind. It seemed unreal.

"Well you know this totally could work if you wanted to do that." He purred loudly. "You're really
good at it~"

Toki laughed gently and kissed the back of his neck affectionately. Her teeth nibbled teasingly.
"Maybe when the kids are in school. I want them to be raised by a mother, not a nanny. With both of
us working outside the home, someone else would be left to raise the kids, pretty much. My work
thus far is mostly at-home sort of stuff. Speaking of- one of my books might be becoming a movie
series. I just heard from my editor- she’d like to discuss it with me later once she hammers out some
details."

He chuckled quietly at the nibbles and hummed affectionately, letting his rumble vibrate up through
his bare bones and into her chest. "That's wonderful~"

"I thought so too." She smiled slightly. "It'd be a big boost to household funds." Of which, they
weren't really lacking, but there was no such thing as too much money. They’d have something to
fall back on if anything happened.

Her phone goes off and vibrates noisily between her pelvis and his. She groans, and fishes it out of
her front pocket. "I just got comfortable," she whined fussily. Without checking the number, Toki hit
accept, put it on speaker, and set it on the pillow next to her and Papyrus so she could snuggle back
down on his back. "Toki here," She hummed softly to whoever was on the other line. "Who’s this?"

"Hello, my dear Kindness. Despite all that's happened, it's good to hear you so positive, you've
maintained that habit."

Toki tensed on her husbands back, and shot a tight look at the phone. Only one person called her
that- and Cruelty's voice oozed smoothly from her phone speakers. Her teeth curled into a snarl.
"Cruelty." She said evenly. "It's been a long time since you've bothered to call. I had hoped you'd
given up after you failed spectacularly with Tenebris."

"The beast had a powerful sense of will, even when he reverted to his bloodsake. I knew it would
not last long." He hummed. "Everything was played as per the plan."

Toki knew Papyrus was listening, and knew the bigger skeleton was taking note of everything
Cruelty said. The smaller woman swallowed slightly. "So it was your plan to have him fail at killing
anyone? That’s so mild. Murdering good people isn’t above you; after all, your followers killed my brother, orphaned a young boy, and killed several other monsters.” She sighs loudly. “Why do you even bother calling me, Cruelty?”

Aliquam’s eyes narrowed as he sat up and he growled quietly.

"I apologize for your loss, truly. Your brother was a good man... He had earned a purple heart, had he not?"

Her husband sitting up neatly dumped her off of his back. She didn’t care, however, and huddled up tensely in the pillows. She stared at the phone as if it was the man himself talking to her. “He did.”

She replied tensely. “He didn’t deserve to die like that. You and yours are hurting hundreds of people like Han with everything you’re doing. The Humans Turned Monsters are people who were like Han- and what you and Humans Against Monsters are doing is wrong, Cruelty. Why... Why do you insist on doing this? I know you think Monsters- and myself apparently- have wronged you... But... Why? Everyone deserves a second chance to redeem themselves. Why won’t you give them one? They’re good people. All of them are good people.”

"An opening of redemption is only the same as an opening of betrayal a second time.” He hummed evenly through the phone. “We are smart. We are careful. We are superior because we do not allow openings."

Toki didn't like the sound of that. She shot a mildly frantic look to Papyrus- he was in charge of planning guard shifts, so he would know if there were openings anywhere.

Papyrus didn’t like the sound of that either.

"Sometimes it's worth the risk of trying so you can find peace within yourself... Though that didn't answer my question, Cruelty." To her credit, her voice shook only a little bit. Toki crossed her legs and trembled quietly. "Why? You've had... Countless lifetimes to find and... And take your revenge against... Against my prior lives. When will it be enough? When will the killing stop?"

"When this all stops, Kindness.” His voice over the phone took on a sharp tone. "When the monsters finally die off. And we die together, and stay dead.” He growled.

"When we die together...?” Confusion glimmered across her face and through her words. When they stayed dead? She knew he apparently reincarnated or something, but she didn’t get memories or anything like them.

"The balance in no longer in synchronization, our sides will never again stand as equals, there is only the victor and the loss!” Frustration lingered in his voice.

"I don't understand," she said slowly, hesitantly. "The balance of what? Our... Our sides aren't equal because you seek mass genocide. That... That's on par with Hitler, Cruelty. And if you know anything from history, is that it always repeats. You... You will lose this fight in the long run, just like he did.” She was so, so sure of that.

"But do you really believe that?" Cruelty murmured. "You stuttered.”

"I..." Did she? There... There was a lot to consider, a lot to think about. Their sides weren’t equal-they couldn’t be. She would like to think he had the capacity to be an equal, but... His actions...

She swallowed and shook her head slightly. "I do. So long as we have hope, family, love on our side, and let kindness guide our actions, we'll win. The rest of the world is against you, Cruelty. I believe good will triumph. But... There is the capacity for good and evil in everyone. I... Might be
Kindness to you, but I'm more than just my soul color. I am Toki. And... You're more than just Cruelty too. You could be kind too, if you wanted." Just as she could be cruel. Every fiber of her being, of her soul, cried out against the idea, but no one was perfect. She knew she would never be intentionally cruel to anyone.

But that didn't mean she wasn't capable of it. Toki just chose not to- and that, she thought, was the major difference between her and Cruelty.

"I could be kind... or I can be merciless. Either way, it ends the same." He growled, before he snapped. "IT DOESN'T END! We die, and you are the one allowed blissful ignorance."

Toki swallowed sharply and closed her sockets. “It’s not my fault that you’re the one cursed with having your memories in tact, Cruelty. Maybe it’s karma for what you’ve done and did?”

"No... It's not your fault... nor is it Karma. It's our curse. I have found you in every past lifetime. Did you know that? I've watched you grow and I’ve seen you loved. But only in one of our lives after the barrier was put up was my love your own." He growled softly.

“You... you talk about it like you haven’t been loved since then. Surely... Surely you’ve found love since then? You must have had brothers, sisters, parents? They... They would have loved you. You could have loved them, if you let them in.” She shuddered. He... He sounded so crazed- but living as long as he had claimed to? It was little wonder. She had to wonder how monsters avoided going insane from living such long lives. It must have been the company that they kept, the love of their bonds and friendships keeping them going. Toki shuddered again, and leaned into Papyrus. “How is it our curse? Why are we connected? How are we connected? It doesn’t make sense. You said long ago that we were... We were lovers, and that the monsters had something to do with... with us- my past life and you- not being anymore.”

"The magicians. All those years ago, my dear... We were perfection. We were a balanced force. Our power was harnessed and controlled for the sake of good, and yet those accursed mages sought to tear us apart." He snarled. "We wanted to reach out, didn't we... We all wanted to branch out and teach to the multi-verse our potential! And our punishment was our separation."

“Wait, what? Our separation?” She balked. “If... If we were so powerful,” As Powerful as Grillby had told her that the Boss and Anti-hearts were, “Then how did mere magicians ‘separate’ us?” He wasn’t making total sense, but it was likely that he was lost in his anger. “What... do you mean the Multi-verse? There’s only one universe- and it’s the one we live in.”

"Oh, that's where you're wrong." he chuckled, "There is indeed a multiverse... You'd dream of it..."

“I... I what?” She frowns. “I... I know I’ve had some weird dreams, but... That... that’s not possible.” But... It had felt so real. Then... Then it was real. Panic lit her eye lights up, and she stared in horror at the phone, before glancing to Papyrus. So... She’d really... She’d really seen another version of her self get killed by Papyrus? Or that world’s version of Papyrus, at any rate.

"It is. And you witnessed your lives." he purred. He was silent for a moment, seeming to gather himself based on the shuffling coming over the speaker. "You know more than you let on, my lovely Kindness." he told her with a now sane-sounding, casual voice. "You're not an idiot. Think about it." He told her.

“But... you couldn’t have known I witnessed their lives...” She ground her teeth, sending sparks over her clothes. “I... I don’t know what to think.” He had handed her a lot of information.
"You’ve… referenced the word ‘balance’ a couple of times, I think. Or at least, that’s the word that stuck out to me the most.” She didn’t know why it did. “What does ‘balance’ mean to you, Cruelty?”

"Not the same as you apparently." he told her. "We. We were balance. That was our souls element... I was not cruelty. You were not kindness. We were harmony."

"Balance?" Information was swirling in her head. It was overwhelming- it felt like she should know all of this, but she didn’t at the same time. Toki clutched a hand to her skull and whimpered. "You’re... saying we were once one in the same? We were one person? One being?” That’s what she was gathering from this. Her soul fluttered in panic. How could they have been one? How could they have been split so unevenly that whoever had split them called them Kindness and Cruelty? Who had the power to do such a thing? They were supposed to be the most powerful of all of the mages... weren’t they?

"Yes Toki. We were one, and I was so pleased to feel so important. We were admired, we were appreciated. We were mentors and we had a chance to make great leaps in the history of mankind!"

Toki swallowed, her shoulders slinking lower. There was a vague, aching feeling inside of her soul as he spoke, like hers was calling to something long lost. “But... What happened? Why were we split? Who... Who had the power to split us?” She asked quietly, sockets dimly opening. She was listening. “If we were doing such good things... was it because we... wanted to help the multiverses?”

There was something needling at her about this, and more than just the overwhelming knowledge that she and Cruelty had been one. They had been one person- one soul. They’d literally been one entity- she had been him, he had been her- could... Could she have ended up like him? If given a different track of life... She... She could have...

"Magic. Magic tore us apart- and yes. We wanted NOTHING from our actions! We learned, and we taught. And we wanted to keep teaching across the timelines. Look at what happened... If we simply took what we had instead of listening and taking sides with the monsters, we would still be perfection incarnate, we would be happy! We would be one. That is why I lead these people. For the truth! The truth that you cannot deny any longer."

Toki looked more and more stricken the longer that he talked. She shuddered, eye lights blinking out as she squeezed them tightly shut. Flickers of thoughts and memories reached her, nothing clear and coherent enough for her to keep. They slid through her mind like oil on water. If humans hadn't taken sides, if Cruelty hasn't decided to live up to the moniker the Monsters had given him... they would have been one. That was her main thought. But... A small, small part of her thought he was right. If the monsters hadn't coined Cruelty for being Cruelty, perhaps... Perhaps...

She hung up the phone with a click and buried her skull shamefully into her palms. A long, low keen escaped her and she trembled like a leaf in the wind. No, no, no, no, no...

"Toki..." Papyrus had stayed at her side to listen to every word and he hugged her tightly as she curled up. "Hey..."

“It’s true,” she whispers. “What he says is true. I... I feel it in my soul.” She whimpers, leaning into his hug shakily. “I... I was one with him. I was one being. I could feel it as he was talking- whatever he said triggered... I don’t know, but... but I know, and I don’t know, and it’s confusing- I don’t... I don’t know what to think...” She was overwhelmed by the knowledge that he had given her. “And I... I... Some small part of me agreed with what he said, and I...” She was a terrible person. She
knows it’s wrong- The monsters didn’t deserve what happened to them. The large portion of her would always think that- but knowing what she did now, knowing what he had told her- it put a whole new perspective on everything.

Toki sobbed, trying not to babble in panic between her tears.

He held her tightly and stroked her head as he hushed her. "Shhh... Shhh."

Toki thankfully kept her sobs down- the twins upstairs stirred over the bonds but didn’t wake, and she strove to be quieter. She wasn’t sure how she could calm them when she herself was a mess of nerves and nauseated disgust at herself.

Toki didn’t manage to speak again until her sobs died down. And that task was a long one- but one eventually done. She shuddered, caught between anger, panic, and disgust. “It’s not going to be okay,” she whispered shakily. “I… It’s all so much…” She swallowed. “I… I used to be a single entity with him, Papyrus. I… We used to be the same person. But… But… Whatever… Happened… It made us like this, and… And then…” Presumably mages happened- the Monsters told what the soul colors meant, and mages and humans alike shunned Cruelty and the other Anti-hearts. “It doesn’t… It doesn’t make what they did right,” she whispered. Her hands clutched at her skull. Memories weren’t coherent- that, she recalled, was not her gift.

She paled suddenly, bones bleaching a whiter white. “The dreams…” She whimpered. “They’re real…”

He listened to her words and stroked her head when she seemed most distressed, but at the last things she whimpered… He paused. “Toki... What Dreams?”

“You… You remember the camping trip? Not… Not long after Tenebris got back?” She sniffled quietly. “Remember I told you about… about the dream where an… angrier, darker version of you mercy killed me after your father b-beat me badly? That’s… That’s the dream he was talking about. I… had another one too, just a little bit before the twins were born.” A laugh left her, but it wasn’t a nice one. It was torn between frantic and despairing- because she didn’t want to believe she had witnessed her own death. “I was cruelty, and it was some ass backwards world where you were a lazy mega-hung stoner and your brother was a hyperactive chatterbox and we had several kids and we were all three lovers and I just thought it was a weird pregnancy dream like the time I dreamed your spaghetti proposed to marry me.”

She cut her ramble off and laughed again, that same broken hysterical sound. “I watched a not-me-but-me die by a not-you-but-you’s hands.”

He listened as he held her and he stroked her head before he hushed her gently. "Toki... Toki... You're you... and you're here. You're here with me... You're here with our children and me. And that's never going to change."

She hiccup quietly, and leans into him more. Her fingers shake as they latch onto him. She needs grounding- and he is her rock, as she’s said before. “But it might,” she sniffs. “It might. H-he’s not going to stop, and eventually it’s going to be him or me and I don’t know if I can kill anyone…” She whispers. Her eye lights light up, and glimmer up at him with a shaky look. “Pap… I don’t… I don’t know how I’m going to handle this. He’ll die and then he’ll come back again and again until he wins.”

"Toki... we won't let him win." he told her, "Remember he'll be an infant, he'll be a child... he wont come back already grown and with his army. He'll have to go through all the stages of life again... and you know what? Maybe he'll know better."
Toki sniffled quietly. “He’s gone through so many already, Pap. He’s been born again and again and again- and I think each time has made it worse. He remembers everything- and if he told anyone, he’d probably be put in an institution or something. He’s not going to stop- he’s only going to get worse. What if he’s reborn as an HTM next time? Can you imagine him with all of his magical properties again?” She would say he was already an HTM, but… The chances of HAM allowing an HTM to lead them was slim.

"If he comes back as an HTM, then he's not going to grow up the same way, memories will remain but they will be... different."

His wife leaned more heavily into him, bones shivering. “In one of the other worlds, in the dream I experienced, I was Cruelty.” She murmured softly. “And I was... Different. So old. So tired. I remember feeling ready for it all to end, but knowing that it wouldn’t ever... It was disheartening. I lost hope- but... I found it in monsters. I don’t... Understand why Cruelty couldn’t have taken another approach. I think he’s too... Too lost in hopelessness and anger to find another path, Pap. It’s people who have nothing to lose that will do the worst things- and I think... I think that’s what scares me most.” She whispered.

He hugged her tightly and hushed her gently, stroking her head and back as comfortingly as he could. "Demons run when a good man goes to war..." he murmured, "But of a man with a broken heart and spirit..."

“He will run no more.” She finished gently, and shuddered against him. “Cruelty is broken, Papyrus. He is broken in ways neither of us will understand. It doesn’t justify his actions- but... I’m ashamed at myself that I can understand some of why he did it. I’m ashamed that... some small part of me thought, for a split second, that he was right. If... Monsters hadn’t... informed the world what soul colors meant...” She shakes her head vehemently. “Monsters only meant for humans to be wary, to know what they were dealing with, and to know the possibilities for misdeeds that someone of a specific soul color could do. It’s... It’s the fault of Cruelty, and the other Anti-hearts, that they gave in and proved to the world that they were right. We... We all have the capacity to be more than our soul color. We can be kind, we can be cruel, we can be brave, cowardly, determined, corrupt- we all have that capacity. That’s human nature. They... They chose the wrong path. And that’s the difference.” She was coming to realizations as she babbled, her soul, so, so old, older than she was, pulsing in a more rapid tandem.

Boss hearts reincarnated too- but they didn’t retain memories. Not conscious ones. The soul knew, but the mind did not. The soul was ageless, and so, so old. She wondered how many lives she had lived, how many choices she had made.

“Choice. That’s what differentiates boss hearts from anti-hearts. We... We chose, time and time again to do the right thing.” Her soul pulsed in her chest, almost painfully so, and her hand splayed on her sternum as she gave a slightly pained sound. Her soul was glowing brighter behind her shirt. “I could have been like that- there are times in my youth where I saw two distinct paths, and I chose the better of them. Cruelty chose to walk the dark path- and I always chose the light. This... Magic did this to us. Magic made us two equal parts, light and dark- but Magic didn’t balance the light and dark in either of us. We are too light, and too dark.”

He sighed and nodded, nuzzling his head to the top of her skull. "You are not too light. I think you're perfect where you are. You're kind, and you have mercy, but you do not lack the will the fight. You choose your kind heart. You chose to help us like this." Papyrus murmured firmly against her skull. "That's all that matters to me."

“Thank you...” She whispered softly, sockets closing. She pressed her face to his shoulder and took
deep, shuddering breaths, letting his scent calm her.

It took a long time for the painful pulsing of her soul to ease, and for the all-consuming panic to stop feeling like it was overwhelming and drowning her.

When she was calmer, she leaned back quietly and looked up at him. “I… I do not want to fight. I will fight if pushed, but fighting isn’t my inherent answer.” Even after having grown up with her brothers for as long as she had, and getting into friendly scuffles with them on more than one occasion, fighting was not her first answer. Fighting should never be the first answer. “But… sometimes it is the only answer. Reasoning didn’t work with him… Papyrus? Eventually I will have to fight him. I don’t… Killing him isn’t the answer though. I don’t… know what is the answer. But it isn’t killing. I don’t… know what to do…”

"Tokiko. Toki..." he told her gently, trying to coax her off the topic, "Toki... The answer isn’t killing... but I trust you... you’ll find the answer."

She could see his coax for what it was. It was a common tactic to help someone calm down. She scrubbed her cheeks with her hand, removing the magic staining them, and nodded slowly. Topic shifting wasn't immediate though, but he had her now on possibilities. "Yeah... I don't know what the answer will be though. Unless there's a way to keep a soul from shattering after you die, he's going to reincarnate eventually. Humans only live so long, and Cruelty is probably my age, if not older. He probably only has another thirty to forty years. Even if we manage to capture him and put him in prison..." She shakes her head. "It doesn't matter. There's no way to do it, so... It's fine. We'll... Figure something out. I need to do something though or I'm going to go crazy. Think Undyne would be upset if I made cookies for all of the guards?"

"..." He looked at her, then he sighed, "It doesn't matter... yeah..." he then slowly smiled, "heh... I don't think she'd mind at all... you know..."

Toki sighed softly and gave him a wobbly smile. She had a lot of things to think about. "We need to tell everyone that he called again. Wish I had thought to record it... Anyways, it doesn't matter if she minds at this point. Stress cookies are a thing. If your back is feeling okay, you can join me in the kitchen?"

"I'll give Father a call to let him know, but my back is definitely better thanks to you. Of course I'll join you." he answered, giving her cheeks a few loving kisses.

"Please do. I don't think I can relay it without losing composure. You... Might want to talk with Undyne about doubling the guard. At least for a little while. He only calls when he has something planned." She meets a couple of his kisses with gentle ones of her own, and the gets to her feet. She's a little wobbly, but she stabilizes and offers him a hand up. "Want me to bake anything specific for you?"

"I'll take care of it, I promise" he told her, taking her offered hand to get up before he shook his head, "Go ahead and just work on the cookies."

Toki stepped closer to hug him and nodded against his chest. Hugs before cookies, always. "I don't know what I'd do without you." She sighs softly. "Probably be a panicked mess hiding in a corner or something."

"Well then it's better I stay with you, eh?" he purred gently, nuzzling her.

She nuzzled him back and nodded. "Definitely." She leaned up to kiss him softly, and then stepped back. "Keep me company after your phone call?"
“You know I will.”

"Good." She smiled at him, passed him her phone and then headed off for the kitchen.

She wasn’t okay. Not by a long shot. But... She would have to be. Toki was a mom now, and she had to protect her children. If that meant... Planning for Cruelty, then she would have to do it.
Chapter 80

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Alternate title for this chapter: ‘How To Improperly Finish Gestating Your Skelemental’

Silverwing Notes: So, this has a more complicated childbirth than chapter 75 did, there will be details that might make some men squeamish (I only say that because Women know this song and dance already, whether as a mother themselves or had before bore witness to childbirth.) Other than that, enjoy the chapter ^^

"Happy April fool's day!" Toki chirped cheerily to Sans as she stepped into the upper part of the bar. The twins were out with Papyrus on a self imposed 'take your kids to work day' that all of the guards were participating in.

The guards had been doubled after Cruelty called, and there were no guards left alone or unattended. The guards were all well-fed too- Toki had been stressed since the call, and had baked every day. Hoards of cookies went out of her house per day.

She had even sent a literal car load up to the castle with Tenebris.

He had gone up a couple days prior to visit his lover, and spend a little time up there before the final countdown for his youngest grandchild's birth.

Toki had taken it upon herself to spend some time with Sans- and Undyne had threatened to trash her kitchen if she kept fattening up the guards with loads of stress cookies.

So the woman had brought cookies for her brother in law.

Toki hefted the plate up and put them on his counter, before padding out into the main room to see him. She was tired- she hadn't been getting a lot of sleep thanks to Cruelty. Nightmares were an unpleasant part of her nightly life again. On top of the nightmares, the twins were painfully perceptive of when something was off, and had her up at all hours because they wanted to be held and comforted. Toki looked tired too, with dark marks under her sockets.

Still, she had a warm smile for Sans as she moved closer. Grillby was down in the bar handling business as usual. "I was surprised you're not down doing your whoopee cushion trick on all of the patrons today, Sans. Isn't today your favorite not-holiday of the year?"

"It is, but I've been feeling a little off today." he answered, shrugging from where he was worrying over a cup of cocoa on the couch. "Something's up... It's... not normal."

"No?" She tilted her head lightly and eased down on to the couch with him. Toki set a couple cookies down in front of him, in case he wanted to eat them. "What are you feeling?" She inquired gently. Toki was well aware of what the last couple weeks felt like. "It's been a while, but I still remember the end of my pregnancy quite well." Despite having a serious case of pregnancy brain to boot- it was quite impressive
"The kid is more active then I’d like..." He grimaced, and pressed his fingers into the top of his belly. It wasn’t visible through his jacket, but there was a set of feet shoving up to his ribs. "I'm starting to wonder... what the fuck's goin on with them, is it okay?"

"Active?" She inquired lightly. Toki tilted her head and scooted closer. "If you have a flashlight, we can take a look at them? It might feel more active since you're so close, but it's likely that they're running out of space." She gave him a soothing smile, and laughed gently as well. "Movement is normal. Lack of movement entirely for long periods of time isn't good, however. You had me worried, like sudden pain or something else."

"I mean, I’m getting that too..." As if the timing was pre-set, Caeruleus hissed in pain as a cramp washed over him and he stiffened on in his seat for a moment, before he shuttered and slumped, looking at her with a shaky smile. "Heh... yeah..."

She frowned slightly. "Is it like... A tightening feeling? Sort of rolls up from your pelvis, up to the peak of your belly, and holds for a while? How often are they?" He was early, two weeks early, but then and again she had been two weeks late. Fire elementals gestated different than skeletons did. It was possible... But also Braxton Hicks were a thing. The bane of her existence too.

He nodded gently, "Yeah, that sounds about right... They've been happening a lot more frequently today..."

"If they're closer together and lasting longer, then it's likely contractions." She smiled lightly. "False starts or real starts- they happen." She reached out gently, and rubbed her fingers gently over the peak of his belly. "Have they been spotty, or pretty consistent?"

"They're getting consistent, and it's freaking me out." He murmured, eye lights trailing up to her face uncertainly. "Is it cool if I stay with you, Tokes?" He asked quietly.

"I'll stay with you." She promised with a soft smile. With Tenebris out at the castle, with Todd there for lessons, she, Grillby, and Papyrus had the most experience to help Caeruleus. "I know it's a bit of a personal question, but... Have your, uh, parts summoned below and not gone away?" Hers had summoned on her delivery date, but it had been two weeks until she delivered.

"... Am I close to havin' the kid already?" Sans nervously inquired.

"If your parts summoned, then yeah. Mine summoned two weeks before I had the twins." She rubbed her fingers along his belly, massaging and seeking to help keep him relaxed as best she could. "Your little ball of sunshine has to come out sometime, after all. You're two weeks early, but we have to take into account the difference between your mate and mine. Skeletons change to meet the breeding needs of their mates." Toki quirked a gentle grin at him. "If the cramps get to be too much, I can give you a backrub with you sitting in the tub. Hot water helps. God, it helps."

He took a soft breath and tucked his hands into his coat-pockets, smiling at her gently. "I wouldn't mind that... but if I went into labor, wouldn't Grillby be unable to help...?"

"Only if you stayed in the tub." She quirked a grin. "I was in the tub for a while, and then Pap and Papa moved me. You'll probably want to wash off anyways. I dunno if you saw your dad's car, but if your water breaks, it's gonna be messy." Not all waters broke after all. There were children born with the sacks in tact, but not often. None of her brothers had that. "Anyways, birthing in the tub wouldn't be that comfortable. Your bottom gets tender, and porcelain is not plush and comfortable. Did you and Grillby discuss methods and positions that you are comfortable with?"

"You're the woman, you know more about this shit than I do." He laughed nervously. It was almost
odd seeing the larger male this uneasy about having a child. One could only wonder how much one would pity the human male set with this sort of task... "As for positions, we did talk about it, but we don't know for the most part about how this would go... you know?"

"That's sexist." She quirked a brow at him, but offered a soothing smile. His nerves were visible, plain as day, and she read them like an open book. "I know that quite well. Really, positions are up to you and how you feel. You saw my position with Papyrus when you popped in. It made me feel safe, comforted, and supported. Those are important things to feel during that time. If it helps keep you feeling comfortable, then you should go with that. Have you practiced any positions to know how they feel?"

"I found that I really like one of those larger body pillows tucked at the base of my spine. Makes the weight shift a bit." The larger being explained gingerly.

"That's a common thing for pregnancy in general." She chuckled. "Pillows are basically a saving grace. Heh... Positions don't have to be with a partner though, if that's not your thing. There are singular positions, such as crouching, squatting and bracing against a bed or a couch- lots of variants." She leans back, taking her hands away from his belly and looking at him contemplatively.

"Hm..." he took a moment to consider any positions he took fancy to during his time of later-pregnancy relaxing. "Spooning with Grillbz was always nice."

"You might take comfort in having him behind you then... Assuming he's the big spoon?" She wiggles her brows playfully at him. "Speaking of spooning. You two haven't been too roughly intimate, have you? That can kick start labor."

"Yeah he's been the big spoon as of late." Hey, no point in denying it. "As for The... intimacy... No, we haven't done anything." He answered lightly.

"I figured." She hummed. "That's good. You can be intimate, but you have to be gentle about it. Anyways, how are you feeling? Still feeling off?"

"I never realized i could get pregnant in the first place, how off do you think I feel on that?" he sassed her before he sighed, and loosely grinned, "Yeah, still havin' that contraction crap..."

"Monsters of both genders can carry." She rolled her eye lights at his sass, and rubbed his leg gently. "Feel like trying to walk a bit? Sitting on the couch is good and all, but walking will either progress your contractions or make them ease."

"Yeah sure." he replied as he moved to get up, "I'm pretty sure a small walk shouldn't hurt."

"I wouldn't think so." She smiled. She stood up with ease, adjusted her chest wrappings, and then helped him up. "You want to stay in the apartment? Or go for a walk in the park?" The park wasn't far from the bar. Well within walking distance in case he was in active labor.

"Well... maybe we could just walk around a little bit?" he suggested, "Just a small walk around the block, you know?"

Toki nods. "That'd work." She smiled softly, and offered her arm out to him. "A small walk, and we'll come back if you're ready by then. Shall we, brother mine?"

Laughing gently at that, he locked arms with her for a moment. "We shall, dear darling sister." He spoke all posh-like before chortling warmly.

"Do that voice too much, and you'll sound like Tenebris does." She laughed. Toki guided him gently
to the front door, where they collected their shoes, and then down into the bar.

Grillby was busy at the bar, making up lunches for several guards who had swung by on their breaks. He glanced up as his pregnant mate and Toki came downstairs and edged around him to get out from behind the bar. "Is something the matter?" He inquired quietly.

"I've been feeling a bit out of it lately, so I’m just doing some walking with Toki." He answered him with a smile.

Grillby hesitated, gaze flicking between the two of them, and then nodded. “You have my cell phone number if anything happens.” This was directed more towards Toki.

Toki rolled her eyes and patted Sans’ arm lightly. “We’re not going nearly far enough for that. If something happens, Clover can get us home.” The big hornet wouldn’t have a problem with hefting both her and Caeruleus.

The fire elemental nods slowly, and casts a faint glowing smile to his mate. “Be safe, and enjoy your walk, then.”

"Thanks, Grillby, we'll see you soon." Cae smiled at him and gave a casual wink before he followed Toki.

Toki lead him out of the bar with a soft smile, adjusting her top as the light breeze ruffled it. “At least the weather’s nicer. It’s warming up- Summer will be here soon, I think.” She smiles slightly. “I can’t wait to take the twins out to my hives.”

"Yeah it is, I’m kinda excited." He answered with some happiness of his own, a smile on his face as he walked. "A spring-born kid would be nice, since Spring isn't too hot or wet."

“Spring is the better time to be pregnant,” She countered lightly. “Or late-stage pregnant. Summer on the other hand, is murder. Be lucky you were in the early stages during my later stages.” She shudders and laughs with light amusement. “Next kids Pap and I have are going to be planned and timed just right- so I don’t have to be huge over summer.”

"Would you be better off during winter though?" The taller being inquired, laughing softly as he adjusted his grasp on Toki’s arm.

“Hell yeah I would be.” She chuckled. “It’s easier to keep warm than it is to cool down. Considering that, when I’m too warm, I can heat water I’m submerged in, going swimming doesn’t even help.”

"I'll definitely keep that in mind if I ever consider having a second ki-" He was cut off by a sharp gasp and he winced, hugging his midsection with one arm as he stuttered in his steps. Contractions were the bane of his fucking existence."Oh fuck that one hurt..."

“Walking during them hurts worse than just holding still.” She eased him to a stop, and let him lean on her. She probably couldn’t carry him, but she could support him. Toki traded hands for supporting, and smoothed the hand closest to him down to his lower back and rubbed gently. “Try to keep breathing,” she advised gently. “Distractions can help. So, you plan to have a second kid with Grillby? Going to populate the world with little skelementals?” She wiggled her brows teasingly, seeking to keep him talking while waiting it out and seeing if he was alright. "Or you just going to be tryin’ to catch up to Papy and myself for number of kids?”

He let out a soft whoosh of air and sighed as he waited it out. Once it faded off, he relaxed a bit and glanced down at her. "It was mostly sarcasm." He answered dryly.
She snorted and rolled her eye lights at him. Once he was able to walk again, she eased him back into an easy but steady gait. “If carrying the kid bothers you that much, just make Grillby carry the next one. You can choose who carries, right?”

"... We can?” he piped up, giving her a bewildered look.

“I… sort of assumed?” She blinked. “Since, y’know, you and he and…” She had a verbal brain fart, making a noise similar to a key-smash, and then shook her head. “Never mind. I sort of assumed… Maybe you can ask your dad? Tenebris knows a fair big about monster reproduction. I wonder if HTM’s can pick and choose… Probably not, since we don’t require intent to reproduce…”

"I guess if we ask Pops and Grillby both to get more than one opinion, we might get better answers, right?” He laughed gently.

“I’m pretty sure that’s how science works.” She chuckles lightly.

Toki guides him around the corner, and pauses to watch the kids romping through the schoolyard across the way. A smile tilts at her teeth, and she rubs his arm thoughtfully as she does so. “You know,” she hums, “Our kids will likely go to school together. I feel like we’re going to get a lot of calls. The twins are part Nara- and Nara on their own are lazy. But, in large numbers…” She wiggles her fingers teasingly at him. “Mischief happens. You remember when my brothers buried you in snow, yeah?”

He chuckled quietly. "Yeah I remember, those little shits." He snorted, "So when you say a lot of calls, how many do you think we're talking?” he asked.

“Well… My brothers- some in particular- got called down at least three or four times a week. Though, uh, most of that was for squabbling. Though… There was an incident with ketchup packets under the toilet seat that almost got Kon and Ryushi suspended.” She snickered slightly. “It wasn’t a student they pranked.”

Sans paused, then he snorted and began to laugh.

“You laugh about it now, but you didn’t see Mister Homura’s face when his nice slacks were ruined with your favored condiment.” She snickered lightly. “Anyways, Honey is going to be a handful. If she’s anything like me growing up, she’ll be able to coerce everyone into shenanigans. Your little ball of sunshine will probably be included.”

"Solstice will definitely be a troublemaker. I suppose I best get my 'I know my kid is in trouble' voice practiced between now and then, eh?” he laughed.

“You’ll have a few years to practice,” she laughed. “Though, since you’re an older brother you’ll have a head start on that. I’m sure you’ve had to use the ‘you’re in trouble mister’ voice on Papyrus once or twice.”

"Not as much as you think, he came out of old habits fast. I rarely had to actually scold him.” He hummed to her.

“You lucky dog, you. I had to scold my brothers more times than I could count. They made slingshots and catapults out of my bras one time, and kept shooting at Grandpa’s house.” She snorted wryly.

That had Sans laughing again. "That sounds hilarious." he chuckled, before wincing at another cramp, "Ow, fuck... okay... That hurt more than the others did..."
She let him lean on her as he needed, and hummed softly. “Well, they don’t get more pleasant.” She murmured. “We’ve got another corner or two and then we’ll be back at the bar, if you’re ready to call it quits. Just breathe through it slowly, okay?”

He took a slow, deep breath to try and let the pain pass, before he nodded, “Yes. Yes. I’m okay”. He told her, stroking his stomach, “Easy in there, kid.” he murmured.

She rubbed his bicep softly. “That one was closer this time.” She murmured softly to him. “It wasn’t even fifteen minutes since the last one, Sans. You feelin’ alright?”

"Yeah... yeah i think i'm fi- SON OF A" He winced and hugged his gut again as his eye flashed.

7/10

"Fuck... Ow... ow... something's wrong..."

And so said the fluid coating now running down the inside of his pants, "T-TOKI!" he gasped.

6/10

“Shit!” She squeaked. They weren’t far from the bar- but she couldn’t lift him. It didn’t take much for her to shout though- and this was part of her husbands rout today, and she knew, if she was loud enough, Papyrus could hear her. “PAPYRUS!”

All the same, she ripped a hole high in the sky, and called down Clover. If he didn’t hear her, he should damn well be able to see her. “Hold on, Sans. Clover will get us to the bar.” She pushed magic at him, hoping she’d be able to help even if she couldn’t heal.

"Tokes... I.... I don’t feel too good..." he murmured, leaning against her as his eyes closed.

5/10

Thankfully, Aliquam was sprinting closer, having heard his mate, "SANS!" he yelled upon seeing his downed brother.

He was heavy, and she struggled to hold him up. Her mate, however, was stronger. “His water broke, but there’s something wrong, Pap!” She called, shoving her shoulder under Sans’ to keep him upright. “We need to get him back to the bar and call your dad- Can you heal his HP?”

"Weren't you counting? Isn't he not yet due?" he asked, carefully hoisting Cae up before releasing healing magic to try and stabilize him, "He's already lost half his health..."

“He’s two weeks early,” she said. “None the less- keep healing him. Focus your magic there- Can you teleport us all there while healing him? If not, Clover can bring us to the bar.” The big hornet had descended and was hovering near them, ready to lend aid if the need arose. Toki clasped Sans hand tightly. “We’ve got you, Sans,” She murmured softly. “You and Solstice are going to be okay.”

"I can't teleport, not like this.” he told her.

“Clover then.” She motioned to the hornet to come closer. Clover didn’t bother mounting up- she set off at a brisk pace down the road as Clover grasped Papyrus with her legs, and lifted him while he held Sans.

It was a bit risky- but risky was necessary. Clover’s saddle wasn’t built for multiple riders, let alone someone who wasn’t doing good health wise, and that was the only way to get him there without
jostling him too badly. Thankfully, she flew smoothly and evenly, and the jostling was minimal.

Toki met them at the front of the bar, with Grillby standing next to her. He looked worried, and kept twisting his apron anxiously as Clover set Papyrus and Sans down.

"Toki said his water broke?" The fire elemental had cleared out the bar the moment the shortest skeleton had burst in. “And that his HP was dropping?"

"Yes and yes, fast." Papyrus answered, carrying Cae in while trying hard to keep him stabilized.

Grillby guided him over to one of the tables as Toki took a moment to lower the blinds. All the seat cushions in the lower establishment had been fetched- and Grillby waited until Sans was settled before scurrying into the bar to grab the richest monster food he had that was intended for healing. He hurried back, and worriedly offered it to his mate. “This should help stabilize his hp…”

Once the curtains were down, Toki approached. She rested her hands gently on his soaked shorts, rubbing his femurs soothingly, and shot a quick look to Papyrus. “Kids with Undyne?” She was basically the emergency babysitter.

"Yes." he replied, helping Cae get the food down.

10/10

That bought them time.

"I'll call Father." Aliquam then told them.

“Please do so.” Toki nodded. She shifted, and glanced up to Sans. “Hey, Sans? I’m going to shift your shorts down, okay? Being in sticky clothes isn’t going to help you stay comfortable. Grillby, do you- Ah, yes, thank you.” His apron was handed over, and Toki gently draped it over Sans legs. “Talk to me, Sans. What are you feeling right now?”

Grillby took position behind Sans, and held him shakily. His fingers trembled as he laced them through the Skeleton’s, and his soul thundered loudly in his chest as he held his mate. His HP had dropped- and he could have lost him and the baby if Toki hadn’t been with him. Grillby couldn’t have handled another loss like that. His flames sputtered and dimmed briefly, before brightening again.

No. Losing Sans… he’d have fallen.

"Don’t care." the pregnant skeleton rasped out, one arm draping over his eye sockets as his hand clenched Grillby's, cutting a weak grin up to the elemental, "Don't you start none of that shit" he hissed, before he winced at another contraction, "F-Fuck...!"

8/10.

“Focus on breathing, Sans.” Grillby let him hold him as he needed, and squeezed back gently. His focus turned inwards, watching Sans’ soul. He collected another small thing of monster candy, and held it stubbornly out to his mate. “I’ve got half a bag of these- you’re going to be sick of them by the time this is over, but I’m not losing you.” His fingers trembled slightly around his mates, but his resolve is firm.

“We’re not losing either of them.” Toki hums. She shifts, and eases his shorts down. She… well, never really wanted to see these parts of her brother in law. She gave him a teasing look, hoping to bolster his spirits. “Hey, Sans? I guess we’re even now, since you popped in when I was having
She used the clean parts of his pants to gently clean him off, and then tried to gage how he was doing visually.

"F-Fair enough." he giggled at Toki's words, working on slowing his breathing as he rested his head on Grillby's form, though his gaze was obvious.

Monster Candy? Really?

Grillby was a master of silent communication. “It’s the smallest form of healing we have in surplus.” He says. “So yes. Monster candy.” The only other healing food he had in surplus was burgers and fries- and Sans eventually wouldn’t be able to eat more of those.

“It’s small enough that it shouldn’t upset your stomach.” Toki hummed gently. She glanced up at him and tilted her head. “Sans? You need to tell me how you’re feeling, alright? Contractions, pain outside of the usual stuff… Shit, I’m super out of practice with this.” The last baby she had help deliver had been her little brothers- and they were adults now.

He groaned loudly at that and laid his head down again. "I don’t know what the usual shit is, Tokes." he whined, "I can feel the kid moving in there... really riled up..."

“It… might be distressed.”

“It’s likely.” Grillby swallowed. “Fire elementals labor hard and fast- Sans’ body isn’t likely prepared to deal with it. We are a fragile folk and very defenseless during labor and birthing- so we adapted to deliver quickly.”

“His body might not be prepared for how quickly.” Her eye lights sparked up with thought, before she looked down to Sans. “Alright, bro? We’re going to see if you’re dilated or not. But first… Papyrus?” She glanced to him. “Tuck the phone against your shoulder and get me a big bowl of water, please.” Sanitary at this point would only help, and her hands were definitely not sanitized. Hot water, however, would help with that. “Did you get Tenebris?”

"Father is on his way. He thought it was an April Fools joke- I had to assure him this was not the case." He then went to get the water as asked.

"F-Fuck... heh... D-Don't think I'll ever admit this again... but... shit... ’m getting a bit scared, Grillby..." Sans murmured, before wincing at the lost of another 2 HP.

Grillby slid a candy into Sans mouth, keeping careful watch on his HP. “I know you are;” he murmured softly. He was a ball of panic himself, but keeping calm was important. “I know you are. But you and our baby are going to be fine.”

Toki soothingly patted his leg, and then gently spread them. He was like his magic, blue and glowing, and she waited until Papyrus had the water set next to her, before she shoved her hands into it. A flash of magic later, and the water was superheated. “Alright- I’m sanitized now. This probably isn’t going to be too comfortable, Sans, but it won’t be that bad.” Her hand, relatively, was probably smaller than Grillby’s dick.

He probably wouldn’t even feel it. “I’m going to see if you’re dilated- and see if your baby is hung up somewhere. Think happy thoughts- tell me what you think your baby will look like. Boy? Girl?” She readied herself for when he would start to chatter.

He munched on the candy and sighed as it brought his health up a few points, before he leaned his
head back. "I just want it to live." He murmured. He really didn't have much to say about it, but he wouldn’t care that much about her hand anyhow...

Toki lightly pinched his femur to distract him as she slipped her hand inside. Oh. Gross. So, so gross. But, she knew what she was feeling for. Or at least, she thought she did. “Your baby is going to live,” She informs him simply, “so no bad thoughts, mister, or I’ll ban Ketchup until your baby is toddling.”

Her fingers wiggled up and up and up- and came to the opening of what she realized was his cervix. “So, uh, you’re pretty dilated. I can slip my fingers through- but the baby’s head isn’t small enough to fit out yet. I can try to stretch you a little bit to see if we can move it along faster, or we can wait for you to progress naturally. It’s a two hour drive for Tenebris to get here- and he’ll exhaust himself teleporting. An hour and a half if he really guns it. Your baby will probably be here before that.”

“An hour is longer than an elemental usually births. Labor can take time to build up, but once it gets going, it is swift. It is, however, your choice, Sans.” Grillby murmured.

"As long as she pulls it off before you run out of snacks," he hissed, "I just want to see the kid alive... Please Tokes..."

Grillby’s hand tightened on Sans, and his flames flickered nervously. “Papyrus- monitor his HP.” The old general rumbled shortly. He would apologize for his shortness later- there were more important things to handle than feelings.

“I’m not gonna let my niece or nephew die.” She stared up at him firmly. If… it did go bad, Frisk could load, and they could have Tenebris here to do this properly. Toki took a deep breath, and coaxed heat to her hand and gently began to widen him. Her fingers slowly splayed, feeling a skull slowly pressing against her fingertips. “I can, uh, feel the skull. If you get any sudden urge to push, let me know. And trust me- you’ll know the urge when it hits, Sans.”

Papyrus didn’t need to be told twice. He settled with his brother and began to keep him stable.

"I... f-fuck... I... I think whatever u-urge you're talking about is- Ghhahhh!!" he cried out in pain as the contraction rolled over him. His legs jerked and he leaned forwards reflexively with a sharp cry, and gave into the urge. He pushed. "F-FUUUCK!"

3/10.

After the contraction fell, Sans slumped, his gaze going blurry until Papyrus flared healing magic, allowing his HP to get an emergency boost.

A candy was shoved into his mouth almost frantically, and Grillby’s flames flickered a nervous yellow.

Toki’s hand had literally gotten stuck when he’d clamped around her, so she’d simply had to let him ride it out. “And that,” she said softly, “is what it’s like to push.” She widened him a bit more, until she felt that he was what ‘ten centimeters’ were equivalent to in a big boned monster. Toki slid her fingers in and gently loosened around the skull, and helped lodge it in the entryway of his cervix. There were tiny nubs- that made her pause, and she glanced at both Grillby and at Sans intently for a second. “So remember when I said you wouldn’t have to handle horns? You have to handle horns, Sans. Take it slow.” she said softly. “If you push too hard and too fast, you’re going to hurt yourself. Give yourself time to adjust- the skull is bigger around than any dick you’ve probably ever taken, and you’ll rip on the horns or… or something equally bad if you try to rush this.”
Sans groaned and leaned his head back. "Tokes... this sucks... Wait..." he half-sat up again, "HORNS?!" He then looked at Grillby, "You have horns?!"

Grillby’s head changed colors briefly, and he reached up to part his ‘hair’. Small horns were nestled within it, made of the same solid fire-flesh that he was. They were smaller than Toki’s horns- hence why no one would ever notice them. The flames of his ‘hair’ kept them hidden. “I... yes? I thought you might have felt them during some of our...” He flushed.

“Sometimes people are distracted when doing the do.” Toki gave them a bemused smile, and shifted to ease the horns out of his cervix a little better. “Good news is, they’re smaller than the nubs I had to deal with. Bad news is, they are very sharp, and might have been causing your health problem. Keep an eye on his HP- I’ve got them blocked with my fingers. Come the next contraction, let me know if it’s helping keep his HP from going down.”

"Grillby you bastard, you didn't tell me the kid would have horns!” he bared his teeth at his mate before he winced and held Grillby’s hand tightly. "This fucking hurts..." he hissed. "But... I’m really getting scared now... Something's wrong..."

“You never asked?” Grillby held his hand tightly in return, and let him squeeze as needed. His flames were a kaleidoscope of colors in his worry.

“I know it hurts, Sans,” Toki hummed softly. “I need you to tell me what you’re feeling. I’m not a doctor, Sans- and you’ve got a very large baby that is very ready to join the world. If you feel there’s something wrong, describe what you’re feeling- you’ve got a contraction coming, Sans. Brace yourself.” She just hoped his baby could fit.

That was a large, large skull, and she could see and feel his pelvic bones. His pelvis hadn’t widened like hers had- something she attributed to perhaps his health problems, or his gender. Either way- it was going to be a tight fit. She just... hoped it actually fit.

"Something's stabbing me..." he groaned, before the contraction hit.

His magic gathered, tensing in his middle with a sharp pulse. The pulsing grew stronger, and Sans cried out as it got worse and worse.

But instead of pushing, his magic suddenly snapped and dispelled in a violent outburst of energy and he went down, falling limp on the table.

0.1/10

"SANS!” Papyrus screamed.

“Sans!” Grillby’s voice echoed Papyrus’ own, and he trembled, trying to rouse his mate. His gaze was torn, however, because the swell of Sans’ belly was no longer there under his coat. “Heal him!” His voice barked at the younger brother. He was unconscious- you couldn’t force a monster to eat when they were unconscious, and they had to do something now or his HP would fade and he would crumble to dust in their arms.

Papyrus hugged his brother tightly and his soul began to glow bright as he reached out to his brother’s remaining soul essence to try and get him back.

Sans! Sans don’t die! Please!
Sans, I’m begging you! Wake up!

His magic shifted in color, it was burning with fear now as he held to his brother, keeping him from losing his last point but unable to immediately get through to him.

Toki’s hand was no longer encased in blue magic either- and she could feel a wet skull pressing tightly to her palm as she kept it from lodging in his pelvis. She leaned up, not hesitating to yank his coat up. “I’ve got the baby,” She said, shakily extracting the limp skeleton from inside his pelvic cradle. His bones had scratches from her horns- no wonder he was hurting so badly.

It- a she, she noted as she shifted to cradle the little one- was covered in a viscous blue fluid that gleamed like oil in the light of the bar. “It’s a girl,” She stuttered, gently patting her backside in the hopes of rousing her. The baby- who was quite massive and would not have fit through Sans’ pelvis- gave a weak whimper.

“You need to light her,” Grillby managed. “Use your magic and your teeth- light her. Elementals need to be lit when they’re born- quick, quick!”

Toki clicked her teeth to summon a flame, and sustained it with her magic. She pulsed it down into the baby- who promptly burst into blue flames in her arms with a titanic wail and a squirm. The change was astonishing.

She glanced up with a worried sound to look at Sans, who was still unresponsive. She leaned over, cradling the wailing, flaming baby to her chest, and pushed her magic into her husband, donating and giving him a boost in power. “You can do it,” She said softly to him.

“C’mon, Sans, c’mon,” Grillby whispered against his skull. “You hear that? That’s our little girl, Sans. She’s crying- she’s beautiful. C’mon… Open your eyes, please, please, please…” He begged.

There was a sound behind them and Papyrus looked up for a moment to see Tenebris panting roughly as he came closer, kneeling beside his son and set a hand on his chest. He closed his eyes and his magic joined the mix to try and rouse the skeleton

It’s time to wake up, Caeruleus.

...

You can dust another day, but today you are needed for something no other monster can provide... Think about your mate... your daughter...

G-Grillby...

0.5/10

That’s it, Sans... Open your eyes.

"U-Uhnn..."
The skeleton shifted, then winced and slowly his eye lights lit up. "...nnh..."

Toki perked, withdrawing her hand to better cradle her niece. The baby wailed louder, flames scorching at Toki’s clothes, and she rocked her softly, gently shushing her while Sans roused. The flames didn’t bother her- but she didn’t wear fire-retardant clothing, so her clothes? They were steadily becoming ashy under the baby’s lack of control. “Welcome back, bro.”

The sheer relief in Grillby’s face was enough to be considered heartbreaking. He held him tighter, and nuzzled him with a shaky inhaling of breath. “You scare me like that again and I’ll... I’ll... Do something probably terrible.” The fire elemental rasped shakily.

"I'm not afraid of you." he murmured, nuzzling his mate tiredly.

“I know you’re not,” he whispered shakily, “but sometimes I think you should be.” He shivered softly. “You’re going to be okay now. Right?” He looked at Tenebris tightly.

He chuckled tiredly and nuzzled him.

Tenebris gave a nod, "His healthy is rising quickly, Caeruleus is going to be just fine, as is the child, by the looks of things.” He purred.

“Good.” Grillby could have slumped in relief.

“Uhuh. She’s a screamer- real fussy.” She was also huge in Toki’s arms, nearly double the size that the Twins had been. “When you’re ready, I think she’d like her Momma to hold her.” She smiled warmly.

Cae chuckled quietly and reached up to take the child, "Little blue Solstice" he purred quietly, "She's... just gorgeous..."

Toki helped her settle into his arms, and then leaned back to give the new parents a moment. In the meantime, she scrubbed her hands in the still hot tub of water, and shuddered quietly. She’d nearly watched Sans die- what a fuckin’ spectacular day. “Happy April fools,” she mumbles to herself, “have a baby and a heart attack all in the same damn day.”

Grillby reached down to help support her, and stroked her little arms gently. The ball of fire was fully skeleton, but covered in a layer of fire-like flesh much like his own. He smiled, and kissed Sans temple. “She’s perfect, Sans. You did it,” he crooned softly.

Laying his head on Grillby's chest, he sighed and closed his eyes, smiling gently to himself. "I love you so much... thank you..."

“I love you too.” Grillby nuzzled him again and trembled with leftover shakes.

Solstice gave a fussy whimper, burrowing her little face against her mother’s chest. The flames licked at his jacket, and her little mouth fell open with a cantankerous fuss.

Toki smiled and stepped to the side to go stand with Papyrus. She dried her hands off on her pants, as her shirt was fairly soiled. “You did good,” She said to her husband. “That was a rough situation- but you did good.”

"You performed admirably.” He replied, cupping her cheek as he pulled her into a tight hug. "However. I never. EVER. Want to do that again... I'm very sure I've lost some years..." he chuckled weakly.
"You and me both." Her chuckle echoed his, but was doubly as shaky. Toki leaned into her husband with a tremendous shiver. "I was utterly lost on what I was doing. Very, very out of my league. So, uh... Think anyone would object to having at least one monster who knows how to handle this in the town at all times when we have someone pregnant in town? Because I don't really think can do a repeat performance without scaring years off me too." She leaned into her husband a bit heavier, and tightened her fingers over his. "I wonder," she mused, "If we could have had that happen if Tenebris hadn’t been there, or if my defense hadn’t been so absurdly high."

His arm tightened its hold once more as he released her cheek to set his head on her shoulder. "I don’t know if anyone else would, but Father will no doubt seek pupils." He explained as he thought about it, that next set of actions sounding most logical.

"As for when your labor had come around... I don’t want to think about it." he shook his head and pressed his face into her neck, "I only want to think about it and remember how everything went without a hitch."

The only hitch they’d had during her labor had been the pain from Honey’s horns, and how long it took to have her little girl. But, compared to Sans, who’s middle had literally burst because his daughter had been too big to pass through his pelvis and who had nearly died from the damage Solstice’s horns had done... Hers had practically been smooth sailing.

Toki buzzed gently for him, and stroked her fingers down his skull. She cupped the back of his neck, and made soothing sounds as she massaged the vertebrae, and held her disquieted husband close to her. “It wouldn’t be a bad idea for Tenebris to take on students. We’re learning as we go with our kind’s reproduction- but other species have other needs. If it wasn’t for the fact that I can’t seem to grasp healing magic, I would probably try to learn too.” Todd had tried to teach her- since she was the greenest that green magic could be, given her Boss heart status- but Toki couldn’t get it to work. Her magic always heated, not healed, or burned if she put too much effort into it.

"No doubt Father will see to consult Todd as well." he rumbled, "Have him more on call if that is possible."

“Todd is still learning more about healing at the castle. He was actually in a seminar with Alphys and other healing students today.” Toki hums softly. “Thumper was staying over with Rosie and Felix at Bo and Wolfen’s house while they were gone. He’s learning a lot- He’ll probably have everything memorized and be ready to open up that clinic he wanted to by the end of this summer.”

Todd, as they had discovered, was a scarily fast learner. The fox monster was as wily with his studies as he was kind to his patients. He intended to open up a clinic in town once he learned everything he needed to know. He was getting certified by monster law to treat monsters once his classes were done.

“Thankfully no one else is due to have any kids until next September, so we should be fine until then.” Toki murmured.

He nodded in agreement and took a moment to lead her to some chairs where they could sit down and focus their breathing.

She didn’t bother with a chair of her own, simply scooting into his lap and leaning against his armor. Not the most comfortable, but it would do just fine. She just needed to be close, and give Sans and Grillby plenty of time with their new baby. Tenebris could continue to heal him and make sure he was alright while the husband and wife relaxed.

The front doors opened inwards, and a large bee face peered in at them expectantly.
“Shit,” Toki muttered, “Sorry, Clover.” She’d forgotten to open a door for her to get back. A quick tug of her magic, and the bee was disappearing through another portal as the bar doors closed once more. “Did you want to go hold your niece?” She asked her husband gently.

"Only if Grillby and Caeruleus are willing to part with her long enough." he chuckled quietly.

“I’m sure they are.” She smiled, and scooted out of his lap. She patted his shoulder, and motioned him over. “Go on, you goober. Go see Solstice- she’s really cute. A little hot though- I’d advise keeping your gloves on.” Her singed shirt was proof enough of that.

Grillby looked up as he registered his name being mentioned, and motioned with his chin for the tall skeleton to come over. He was cradling Solstice now, his flames regulating her own and keeping her from burning his clothing, while Sans rested and Tenebris whipped up some ointment to spread on the deep scratches in his pelvic bones.

Aliquam stood up at his wife’s urging, laughing as she claimed his seat, and then came over to Grillby and offered a friendly smile. "She's beautiful, Grillby."

“She is,” The older monster smiled warmly. His large fingers stroked through the flames covering her little cheekbones. He looked exactly like Papyrus did when holding his children for the first time- and it must have been like looking into a mirror for the skeleton. Grillby shifted, and glanced back to him. “Did you want to hold her? I need to go get something upstairs really quick.”

"Oh, yes please!" he purred happily, extending his arms to accept the baby.

Grillby handed her over easily, setting the baby in the crook of his arms. He took the moment to take brisk steps upstairs to get some clothes for Sans, Solstice, and something else along the way.

While the twins had looked huge in Toki’s arms, Solstice looked massive in her uncle’s arms. The little girl was bigger than her cousins now, even though they were more than five months older than she was. She fussed unhappily, legs kicking out and flailing. She looked a lot like Sans, though the fire giving her flesh and matter was obviously Grillby. Solstice settled down slowly in his arms, the wild nature of her flames settling. Unlike her father’s head, her flames were lower, settling more into curls than the wild-flickering style that her father had for his ‘hair’.

Aliquam smiled gently and cooed warmly as he moved a hand up to stroke her hair. "Hello little one." He cooed gently.

Fussy blue eyes peered blearily at him, and she flailed her fists to try and grab his. Her fussing took on a hungry tinge, and she managed to land a hand into her mouth where she proceeded to gnaw on it instinctively. Her head leaned into his touch though, her bones dried by the flames that Toki had ignited for her.

“Hey, Pap?” Toki called lightly. “Can you check her soul?” Sans had bad stats- she wondered if he had passed them on to his daughter or not.

"Sure I can." he replied, sitting down and calling her soul to have a look.

The little upside down heart was close to the same color as her flames, though tinted something between blue and purple instead of strictly blue. Her health read out at thirty points, defense and attack at solid a solid one. All in all, her stats looked fine and healthy.

Solstice, of course, wanted nothing to do with her soul being pulled, and let out a screech befitting a banshee in response.
“You know, Sans and I both are very quiet. I don’t know where on earth she got that set of lungs from.” Grillby muttered as he came back downstairs. “How do her stats look?” He inquired. He had his arms full of things, and came to rest them on one of the tables. His hand came down to fiddle with something in his pocket as he came closer to Sans with a loose pair of shorts in hand for him to slip on.

He winced at the screech but smiled, "Her HP is at thirty right now, but her Attack and Defense are both at one." Right now, he was thankful enough with the good health.

Sans was still pretty out of it, resting on the table with a spaced out look in his eyes as he simply rested.

“That’s about what the Twins had when they were born. I think Skylar had a defense of three, but considering my skewed stats…” Toki wobbled her hands lightly, and made a ‘so-so’ motion, “Our kids are bound to be outliers.”

Grillby rolled his eyes lightly and nodded as he reached his mate. He was gentle in sliding the pair of shorts up and onto him, making sure to leave it loose around his pelvis. He recalled how sore Toki had been, and resolved to let him have as much space as he could between the loose fabric and his bones. Once his pants were on, Grillby scooted up and gently cupped his face. “Sans?” He called softly to get his attention.

Sans groaned quietly and slowly opened his eyes a little more, his eye lights focusing on Grillby, "Hn?"

Grillby gave him a shaky smile, and stroked his cheeks. His free hand fished around in his pocket, and he tugged something out. He eased down onto one knee, glad the table wasn’t very tall, as it still let Sans see him properly. “I know you’ve been patient with me, and I haven’t found the right time… But after nearly losing you and our daughter… Now, as odd as it seems, feels… right. Waiting longer would be wrong.”

He initially hadn’t ever planned to marry again. But… They had talked about it a few times, and Sans had seemed eager and willing to marry one day. Grillby… Well, Grillby wasn’t one to let Sans go without. If ever he was going to marry again- it would be the skeleton.

“Sans Caeruleus Gaster, mother of my daughter…” He held out the box, and opened it. Inside was a ring, with a stone the same color as Sans’ magic, and of their daughter’s magic too. “Will you marry me?”

He looked at the ring and his eyes widened. He was expecting some smack at humor... But this... "G-Grillbz... shit... Heh..." Cae shakily smiled up at Grillby, before he reached for him. "God damn, it get over here so I can reach you." His voice had a faint whine to it, and he sounded damn near like he wanted to cry- happy tears, however.

Grillby slid up and eased his hip onto the table. He tugged him close, and hugged him tightly with one arm, not willing to jostle him too badly just yet. “Is that a yes?” He asks hesitantly, the ring still sitting in the box in his hand.

"You think I would be crazy enough to go through all of that just to tell you no?" he murmured as he hugged him tightly, pressing his face into Grillby's chest. "I love you so much, Grillby, of course I’ll say yes." He muttered.

Grillby held him tightly and nuzzled him warmly with great relief. He had been so uncertain… “Good. Good.” He trembled faintly, and eased the ring out of the box and onto Sans finger, before
holding him closer.

He nuzzled close and chuckled, before he looked up at Grillby, "I’m not wearing a dress though."
He chuckled.

“Dress, tux, either way you will be perfect,” The fire elemental hummed. Good humor made his eyes
twinkle lightly, and he couldn’t help but tease lightly. “I could wear the dress instead.”

Solstice took that moment to shriek, and flail in her uncle’s arms.
Toki chuckled. “That’s a ‘feed me now’ cry.” She was all too familiar with those.
Cae laughed at that but when he heard Solstice start to cry he lifted his gaze and his eye glowed
gently before suddenly his coat began to inflate. "Huh...?" he lifted his shirt collar to look down it
before he groaned, "Oh man..."

“Might want to rethink the dress, Sans.” Toki winked, motioning to his chest as his coat filled out.
“Pretty sure you’ll rock it.”

Grillby motioned for Papyrus to bring Solstice closer, and held out his arm to take her from him.
Papyrus handed the child over while Sans continued to grumble about it but after some help he sat up
a little and took Solstice to let her have her fill.
She huffed and fussed and squirmed in his arms, searching for his nipple but unable to find it first.
Grillby leaned over, and gently shifted his bared breast for Solstice.

With her Daddy's help, Solstice managed to get his breast in her mouth. Her fussing quieted as she
figured out just what to do with it. Soon, she was sucking like a champ and making pleased noises.

Toki snagged her husband's arm as he came back over to the chair she was on. Her eye lights
twinkled merrily at him. "I want more kids." She teased lightly, though was quite serious as well.
"Baby skeletons are so cute."

He looked at her for a moment like she was crazy, before he chuckled, "Alright, but not yet. First lets
raise the twins."

She butted her head against his arm and smiled. "At least until they're not nursing anymore." She
grinned. "Siblings usually do better if there isn't a hugely massive age gap."

"We would have help with raising the next batch." he agreed, giving a nod.

"Mhm." She chuckles, though it fades off. "I think we'll wait until... We handle Cruelty." She
murmured. "I just... Have a feeling that something is coming. Not sure what though."

He nodded gently, "I know, it's gonna be hard, but we'll make it through, I know it." He purred.

"We all have each other." She smiled, watching Grillby and Sans with their new daughter, and
Tenebris fondly watching his firstborn with his third grandbaby. "Cruelty might have an army of
homicidal minions, but we have love and friendship. We'll be okay. I know we will."

He nodded gently, "That's right." he purred gently, before he kissed her cheek.

She smiled at him warmly. "Let's go get our kids. Grillby and Sans are okay in Papa's care. I need to
change. I've got gross all over me, and our sweet little niece baked it into my shirt."
He snorted at that and nodded, "Of course. Caeruleus, Grillby, I’ll see you guys later." he piped up warmly

"Sounds good, Pap. See ya." Cae waved him off with his free hand, cradling his daughter close with the other.

Toki laughed softly and took her husband's arm. "Give us a call and let us know how your first night goes. Oh! Take pictures and put them on Facebook. Mom's going to want to see."

"Sure thing, Tokes." Cae called after her.

Toki smiled and nodded, and leaned into Papyrus. "I know you don't like to do it, but do you think you can just teleport? Everyone is going to stop and ask us how it went, and I don't have the energy after that to keep retelling it. Let Grillby do it while he runs the bar."

Aliquam nodded gently, "Alright." Wrapping his arms around her, he teleported them both home.

"Undyne watching the kids here?" She inquired as they arrived home.

"If you peck me again while I try to feed you, I'm gonna make roasted chicken out of you, I swear to all the stars in the sky!" The big fish monsters familiar snarl rang out of the kitchen.

"Sounds like she's having a discussion with Sobek." he chuckled quietly, "Come on, let's go diffuse her before she does something rash."

"Augh, Sobek no!" Undyne was nearly shrill.

There was a successful squawk, before the bird came running out of the kitchen with an entire roast in his beak. He ducked between Aliquam's legs, and then booked it for the stairs.

Undyne gave chase- and in full armor, the captain plowed into the skeletons like a freight train, having not expected them to be there.

Above the deafening clang of metal as Toki was squished between Papyrus, Undyne, and the floor, she could hear the manicual peals of laughter from her daughter, who thought the angry fish was the best thing since making fart noises on her mother's breast while nursing.

Aliquam hadn't expected to get hit by the fish woman, and groaned loudly where he laid, though he was the first to attempt getting up, "Right. Let's... Let's go and get that bird." He groaned, getting up for a moment before going down once more.

Toki wheezed as he managed to get up, only to go right back down... And into the impromptu dog-pile on the smallest skeleton. "Oh my god you guys are heavy," she wheezed.

Undyne wasn't so bothered, and she huffed and glared down at Toki, before lifting herself, and Papyrus, up. She shook her shoulders to try and dislodge him from her back. "You need to teach your damn bird some manners. He stole a whole roast. That was for him and the fat grub."

"I don't do animals, I do the bugs. Teaching Sobek manners was Paps job. Oh god my ribs, ow..." She groaned.

One would have to would have to see about rousing Aliquam in order to successfully pry the roast from Sobek's jaws

With Undyne up enough, Toki could slip out from under Undyne. She stood shakily and leaned
down to rouse her husband. "Papyrus," she said, having used this one before, "the spaghetti is burning."

"Nnnnnno!" he sat up groggily, rubbing his head before he looked at Toki and shot her a look.

"Oh don't get huffy with me. You both squished me." His wife rolled her eyes, and motioned to the stairs. "Go get your daughter's mischievous summons and keep him from getting sick on the tile again."

She recalled the last time he had over eaten and shuddered. Ugh. Gross.

He sighed and nodded gently, "Yeah, I'm on it." he murmured, popping his back and starting upstairs.

There were little meat drips on the floor that lead to the nursery, where Sobek had wedged himself under the cradle.

"Alright, Sobek. You know how this is going to go." Aliquam sighed as he entered the room, "I'm gonna find you, I'm gonna catch you, and I'll put you in the time-out birdcage again."

The bird was quiet at first, save for the sounds of meat being ripped and torn and gobbled down. At the mention of the hated cage, pudgy wings beat against the ground like angry sausages in protest and a gurgled squawk was likely translated into something quite rude.

"I don't want to hear it, Sobek." He growled, reaching under the bed and grabbing the bird by the head, before grabbing his shoulder and pulling him out.

Sobek let out a muffled shriek, free wing flapping and beating at the hands that kept his bloodied beak from biting, and from hurting himself. Angry legs kicked out and clawed at his wrist, sharp talons ripping angrily at his gloves. Sobek was having none of his manhandling.

He pulled him out from under the bed and moved his other hand to grip his legs, tucking him under his arm to trap his wings as well as he carried him downstairs, tutting quietly

"Get the time-out cage ready, please." He announced his success to the ladies.

Toki was quick to go to the large bird cage they had for moments like this. As Sobek was getting bigger and more accustomed to his home, he was causing more and more trouble, so it had become necessary. He went in timeout for a bit, and then would be let out. He was smart enough to know better, after all.

She pried open the cage, and gave the bird a soft sigh as he came into sight. "You know, if you just behaved you wouldn't get in trouble, Sobek."

The bird looked mutinous, and was flailing harder in Papyrus' arms.

He put him on his back in the birdcage, then released him fast and closed the door, securing it.

His sharp beak closed over the bars and bent them as he bit down. Sobek shrieked angrily.

"None of that." Toki crossed her arms and leaned down to give the bird a stern look. "You know the rules, and you were incredibly rude to a guest under our roof. You do the crime, you do the time, Sobek."

He hissed at her.
She buzzed, low and sharp and met his gaze firmly, until he huffed and looked away.

Aliquam went back upstairs and recovered what was left of the roast, coming back down with it.

By the time he was back down, Sobek was sulking in the back of the cage, and Toki and Undyne had gotten to mopping the tile with towels on their feet. They scuffled along, getting the droplets of blood mopped up.

Toki grimaced at the mess of the roast. "Well, Sobek ate most of that... Snuggle shouldn't have a problem eating the rest of it. Oh- Gracie no! Don't roll in that!" She scooted closer and spooked her cat so she would leave the blood alone. "Good gods- at least Gael doesn't roll in things. Hhhhh. What a long day..."

"Was meaning to ask about that. Sans went into labor?" Undyne hummed, addressing the less frazzled Papyrus. "How'd it go?"

"It was a close call, but they are both alright. Father came back to take care of him.” Papyrus settled the meat into Snuggle's food dish, and then went to wash his gloves. Ugh. Gross.

"Close call?" Undyne frowned. "His HP give him trouble?"

“Yeah…” he grimaced. “He almost dusted.”

She nearly tripped over her towel as she scooted across the floor. Her eye went wide. "Holy fuck."

"UCK!" Honey mimicked giddily from the kitchen.

Toki's eyes could have murdered. "Watch your language. Honey is trying to mimic the sounds of words. She doesn't know what they mean yet, but she's trying."

Aliquam's eyes could match Toki's as he cleared his throat. "However." He then spoke up, "They're both okay."

Undyne gave him a nervous grin. "Uh, yeah, that's good. So what'd he have?"

"An absolutely massive little girl. I had to light her on fire. She's precious, though doesn't have control over her flames yet." Toki indicates the burnt mess of birth fluids covering her ruined shirt. "The stuff she was covered in was flammable."

"I didn't want to ask what that was, but that is disgusting." Undyne grimaced.

"Not as disgusting as you think it to be." Aliquam chuckled.

Undyne made a repulsed face. "Don't even give me that. I saw parts of the video of the guppies being born. That shits gross. You're all skeletons, and it's ectoplasmic, so it's less gross, but still as revolting as normal stuff would be. Yuck. At least with Alphys and I it's just eggs, and not... That." She shudders.

Aliquam folded his arms and raised a brow, before he chuckled, "Riiight."

She makes a face at him. "Oh shush. Eggs are much easier. None of that... Mess. Of course we have no intention of having kids yet, until she can move down here with me anyway."

He chuckled and shook his head, "Sure, sure, though do you think she'll leave the lab so eagerly?" he asked, "I mean, thinking back, Father called it his second home."
"She wants to come down here eventually. She's mostly... Waiting until the thing with Cruelty is handled, and she's finished lessons for everyone who is learning healing magic." Undyne sighs softly. "I'd enjoy it if she was here, but as it is I wouldn't see her much with our work schedules."

"If Father wasn't retired, I would say he'd possibly be able to help."

"He pops in from time to time to give lessons." Undyne rolled her eye lightly and finished mopping the floor. "But he's retired, like you said."

“That he is.” Toki shakes her head and sighs. “Anyways- Ah shoot.” Her eye lights flick to the cage where gross sounds were coming from. Looks like Sobek was regurgitating anyways- what a spiteful little shit. “Who wants to draw straws for cleaning the time out cage?”
Chapter 81

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: I don’t really like how the fight scene in this came out- but I suppose not all of them can come out good. This chapter just… didn’t want to happen. HUFF PUFF PUFF.

Silverwing Notes: Ah, the greatness of trouble in paradise. <3 Hehehe! Let's have some fun with our favorite pair of lovebirds!

It was closer to one in the morning when one of the twins fussed, and Toki pried herself out of bed to go tend to them.

It wasn’t often anymore that they fussed this early in the morning- but sometimes, just sometimes, they got hungry in the middle of the night. This was one of those nights.

So, slipping out of bed and trying not to disturb Papyrus, Toki padded across the way and went into the children’s room. She scooped up Honey, who was working her way past whimpering and into full out hungry crying, and then went to settle in the rocking chair.

She unbuttoned her nightgown, and freed her breast. Settling Honey, the infant greedily latched on and began to suckle. Tiredly, Toki began to rock, stroking Honey’s back even as she made fussy feeding noises.

Her eye lights wandered out the window, and she watched the lights in the village streets. The only ones out and about at this time were the guards- and she could see them moving in their groups as they patrolled and kept an eye on everything.

“Buuuubhhh.” Honey fussily made a noise against her breast.

Toki hummed, and stroked her cheek. She paused as Skylar began to stir, and mused that she would either need to wake Papyrus, or she’d have to disturb Honey so she could go grab her son. She didn’t want to wake her husband- he had shift early in the morning- but… Hhhhhh. Choices, choices.

Aliquam shifted as Toki had rose and he sighed quietly before he stretched. "Nnnnh."

"Toki...?" he murmured tiredly.

Given that the doors across rooms were open, he could likely see her across the rooms. She gives him a tired smile as she rocks. “Hey, Pap.” She murmurs softly. In the quiet of the house, only their chatter and the soft fussing of the children was audible. “If you’re up, can you bring Skylar here? He’s going to start up here in a minute, if his whimpers are anything to go off of.”

From the corner of her eyes, she could see the lights in the top of the bar flick on, and an amused
look glinted in her eye lights. It seemed they weren’t the only ones up dealing with fussy babies—though theirs weren’t newborn.

"Yeah… sure I can do that." He murmured, yawning widely before he got up and padded to the nursery. He scooped up Skylar, pecking his head gently.

Toki gave him a soft smile, and opened her arms for their son. “Thanks, love. You can go back to bed if you want. I know you’ve got work tomorrow. I,” She yawned, “I woke up to Honey fussing. We’re not the only one’s up though.” She tilts her chin towards the window. Very, very faintly, the wailing of an infant is audible.

Solstice, unlike her father, is very, very loud.

Papyrus laughed gently as he heard it, "Oh my gosh..."

She settled Skylar against her chest, and nodded tiredly as he settled in to feed. “Where Solstice got those lungs from, I wouldn’t know.” She chuckles softly. She glances up to him with a tired smile. “Go back to bed, Paps. You look exhausted.”

"You think he could have gotten those lungs from Caeruleus?” He inquired, leaning down to kiss her skull and not bothering to acknowledge her comment on going to bed.

“I don’t know- other than when he was in labor, I don’t think I’ve ever heard your brother get that loud before.” She smiles and met his kiss with her teeth, gently nuzzling him warmly. She winces slightly, and rubs softly along Skylar’s mouth. “Ah, ow. No biting Momma, now.”

He shrugged loosely and then reached and gently pressed a finger into Sky's mouth to coax him loose.

Skylar let out a garbled snarl and chomped fussily on his daddy’s finger, grinding a loose tooth fussily into his finger when Papyrus pressed in on a sore tooth.

Toki tsks gently, and strokes the back of his skull, crooning to try and soothe her son’s aggressive sound and fussing against his father’s actions. “I think they may be starting to teethe soon. Which… is odd, since they already have teeth.” She frowns. “But we don’t know much about how these two will grow, I suppose.”

"Ow." He murmured gently, tugging his finger back before he nodded. "It's odd yes, but I'm not going to complain."

“It’s not your nipples that are going to be chewed on, so of course you’re not going to complain.” She comments dryly as Skylar goes back to working at her breast. He half chews, half sucks, but all the same it’s uncomfortable. Toki bears it strongly either way, and gives Papyrus a wry look. “We need to dig out the teething toys we have for them.”

He chuckled quietly at that, and then he nodded, "Let's take care of that." He agreed, "Give you a easier job when it comes to nursing."

“Mhm.” She shifts, and adjusts in the rocking chair, before sighing tiredly. The soft sounds of sucking, and Skylar’s grumbling, fills the darkness and the silence until she speaks again. “I think the teething toys are in the box in the closet. Can you check? If they’re not there, try the upper storage shelves. We can put some in the cribs- maybe Skylar will gum on them and sleep easier.”

"Alright, I don’t know if we want to put the part-liquid toys in there with him, he might bite right through it."
“He’s got my teeth- he’ll sheer right through them. Those are meant to be frozen first anyways.” Toki tilts her skull to watch him move in the dark, and hums softly to herself. “Try some of the solid rubber ones- I think they’re at the bottom of the box. We have them all sorted- but I just don’t remember what order in which they’re sorted. We can go ahead and take out the ones with the liquid centers though- the cold will help the ache in his mouth, I’m sure. If they do pop, it’s not like the liquid is toxic.” It was all baby safe- that’s why it was in a baby toy.

Papyrus nodded, and chuckled quietly. He went to fetch one of the solid toys, rifling through the closet until he could locate the box. Once he did, he pulled out two of them, and the freezable rings as well. The rings went onto a shelf to be handled in the morning. The solid rings, he brought back over to his wife.

By the time that Papyrus had found and selected two of the solid rubber teething rings, the twins had finished feeding, and were gumming at her fussily. Toki perked as her husband returned with the rings, and shifted the twins so they could give them the rings.

Skylar immediately went to town chewing on his, gnawing on it sleepily while burbling tiredly. The rocking motion kept him calm, and he was beginning to doze against Toki.

Honey was quieter, simply tucking the ring in her mouth and holding it. She didn’t chew so much as she wiggled it, but she seemed to be settling towards sleep faster than her big brother was.

Toki took the moment to button her night gown again, and then shifted the twins against her with a soft sigh. “They’re getting so big, aren’t they, Pap?” She hums tiredly. “So big, so fast.”

"I can't believe it either." He chuckled weakly, "Wow... Look at them." he purred gently.

The twins were growing like weeds, nearly doubling in size already. They were working on walking, talking- they were growing quickly. Very, very quickly.

Little tears nearly beaded in Toki’s eyes, but she held them at bay. Instead, she gave a wobbly smile. “I feel like they’re growing too fast. But, I think that’s just the mother in me. Mom used to tell me and my brother’s that too.”

He chuckled and hugged her to help comfort her. "We're all growing by the day." He murmured.

She nuzzled him gently in turn and sighed softly. "Yeah, we all are. Sorry I got all emotional there. It just... Happens, you know?” She sighs softly, and smooches his cheekbones.

"It does, but hey... we're here now, I'm so happy we are too~" he purred

"Me too," she laughs softly. "It's hard to look back and think that it's been... Gosh, nearly two years now? Nearly two years since you all came out from under the mountain. We've come a long way. We've all grown and matured a lot."

"We've all done it, yes." He agreed with a purr, "You're a fine young woman, I'm a silly guardsman, and Caeruleus is well... Caeruleus." He laughed.

Toki gently bumped her forehead to his and gave him a soft laugh. “You’re not a silly guardsman. You’re one of the best guards I know.” She smiles up at him gently. “Sans is... Well, Sans. He does ten thousand and one things, but no one really knows what they are.”

Skylar began to snore softly against her chest, finally drifting off to sleep alongside his sister. Both infants held their toys in their mouths.
He hummed in agreement, taking a moment to simply stroke the children’s heads, "No matter what, I
always have you and my children to come home to... it's so reassuring."

“It is for me too.” She smiled softly, and simply watched him. The twins shifted, and turned their
skulls into his touch instinctively. “It’s nice to know that I’ll always be able to come home to you and
our babies. Though,” she laughs, “It’s not like I go very far. It might be stereotypical, but I enjoy
being a stay at home mom.” Her work was in her back yard and dining room, basically.

He laughed gently at that and he gave her a content nuzzle, almost wanting to sigh at the peace...

Of course, the peace couldn't last as there was a booming sound in the distance, one that had
Aliquam straightening fast. “What the?”

Skylar and Honey startled awake on Toki’s chest, and Toki lurched out of the rocking chair. She
scooted to the window, and looked outside.

On the far side of the village, flames could be seen, and lights were coming on all across the town.
Several flares were going up, and shouts were raising.

Red smoke was shot up as well, visible in the light of the magic flares shot up by the guards.

“Red smoke- that’s, that’s the one for Humans Against Monsters, right?” Toki tensed, cradling the
infants tighter to her chest as her eye lights tightened.

His eyes widened, "No, no, no, no, no...”  he hugged her for a second, a tight, desperate hug, before
he ran out, getting his armor before going to investigate the cause of the commotion, he hoped the
signal was an accident.

Toki watched him rush out and frowned. She gathered the cats with her into the twins room, and
gently shut the door. She shushed the twins quietly, and settled them into their crib, before settling
near the door. The house couldn’t burn- it was literally made of brick and cement, with tile covering.
The furniture could, but there was no wood bracings- none of it could burn again. And the window?
That could be broken if she really needed to get out.

For now, she looked out, and watched as all of the guards rushed to the commotion, frowning and
hoping that everything would be alright.

Aliquam was fast to make it to the other end of town, where Tenebris was standing, already dressed
and bristling slightly, "What's happening!?”  He inquires.

Undyne has a spear summoned in hand, and is directing it this way and that, sending guards
scattering among the houses. “They blew through the fucking wall!” She snarls, indicating one of the
walls around the village where there was debris from an explosion. Two houses had been ruined, but
they still stood. However, dust piles were visible inside the homes. ‘Civilian and guard casualties
reported, and HAM agents seen fleeing inside the village. There are more outside the wall- we can’t
split forces to keep them out and track down the ones inside. I don’t know what the hell they’re
doing- their plan makes no sense. They’ve got us scattered all over here.” She snarled. She glanced
to Papyrus, single eye glinting sharply. “Cage and capture, do not kill unless you have no other
choice. I’d like the chance to question these punks before the human police get to talk with them…”

The sight of the piles brought a sickening feeling to Aliquam’s stomach, but he knew he had to be strong for those who he could still save. Summoning a bone, Aliquam nodded to Undyne’s orders and Tenebris bared his fangs, ”I'll search the perimeter and see if there are any more set up to try and get in.” he told her.

Aliquam spoke up. "I'll find the infiltrators!"

Undyne shot Tenebris a look. “You’re technically a civilian, and I should be sending you straight back into your home. However, I know that’s a useless endeavor, so I’m gonna make use of you.” She said. “Take the deer, and if you see a bomb, don’t fuckin’ set it off.” She motioned to Stag, who was standing at the ready. He was usually under Toki’s control- but she’d ‘ordered’ him to train with Undyne.

Stag gave a soft grunt, and shifted to follow Tenebris.

Chuffing a respectful greeting to Stag, Tenebris moved out with him.

Undyne looked to Papyrus and hesitated. The last time something bad had happened, he had been forced to kill. She didn’t want to put him in that position again. “I’m coming with you.” She decided. “Wolfen!” She barked. “You and the guards keep everyone out. Papyrus and I are gonna get the rest of these assholes out of our city. We’ve got the skill sets for capture.” Spears could be used to cage just as well as bones could. “If more of these assholes get in, use the purple flare. If you manage to run them off, use the green flare. If shit goes sour, send up the yellow flare.”

Wolfen saluted firmly, and set to his task. He was barking orders rapidly, taking over for the two captains as they set out to capture the few that had gotten inside before they could kill or harm any more civilians, while the rest of the guards mobbed the breach in the wall from the rest of the city.

"I need to see that someone goes to my home as well! I cannot protect Toki and find these humans at the same time." He told Undyne, before barking said order to a guard that happened to pass at that moment.

The guard gave him a salute, and turned around to head back towards the house to guard Toki for Papyrus.

Undyne nodded, watching the wolf guard trot off. “He’ll keep an eye on her for you.” She said. “Now c’mon. We’ve gotta find those humans. Your mate can handle herself for now- she’s a fuckin’ boss heart, but the rest of the monsters here are just monsters. Now c’mon. These humans can fuckin’ sneeze and dust them.”

She hefted her spear up, and headed out. Her gills flared as she inhaled, taking in scents in ways she didn’t usually. Undyne could draw in the water vapors in the air, sucking them in through her gills and tracking the ‘scent’ through the particles in the vapors.

“Keep your eyes out,” She huffs.

He nodded and watched the shadows, his eyes narrowed as he focused on the task on hand, even with all his worrying about his mate.

Undyne tracked them through the shadows, and came to a stop. She knelt down, and tugged out a dark shirt from where it had fallen behind a crate. Small, but not a child’s shirt, and covered in dust. She grimaced, gills working over time. She set the shirt down gently, and continued on her way.
Her armor was heavy, but she moved quickly, tracking the humans that lead them on a merry jaunt around the village. They didn’t find anymore dust- but they found several doors that had been tried, and locks nearly broken, before the humans had been forced to move on.

The smell of dust clung to them, though, and that’s what let her track them better. “What the fuck are they doing?” Undyne hissed softly, steps rushed as she turned a corner. “They’re goin’ in circles? What are they lookin’ for?”

Aliquam took a second to think... then it hit him and he tensed, abandoning his weapon as he took off in a sprint. Panic flooded him. ‘Nononononono…’

“P-Papyrus! Stop! We haven’t caught the humans! What are you doing?” Spears came up to block his path, rising from the ground and barring his way. Undyne gave him a frustrated look. “Get a hold of yourself. You’re a guard- your duty is to the monster denizens. Toki is one of them too- but she is protected. She has a guard. We need you out here to prevent more dust piles.”

“They're trying to find her!” he snarled, whirling on her with a fierce look. "A group of humans with the intent to kill versus a single guard!!?"

“Stop and fucking think!” She snarls back. “Where the fuck do you live? Right by the main fuckin’ gate. Where have you always lived? By the main fuckin’ gate. If they were after her, they’d be headed for the main fuckin’ gate. They’re not headed for the main fuckin’ gate, are they? No. They’re not. They’re circling around here, trying doors and making dust piles of innocent monsters. How would Toki feel knowing that you left killers out here killing monsters- our friends- just because you didn’t trust the guard to keep her safe? I’m sure he grabbed others, Pap. He’s not dumb. He knows we don’t work alone.”

He grit his teeth, then sighed and pressed a knuckle to the space between his eyes. "Right... I'm sorry... still in father-mode... a little... let's go." He responded to her, going back to following her as told initially.

She huffs a sharp sound through her teeth and eyes him irritably. "I get it, I do, but get yourself under control and try not to let it happen again. Monsters could die because of incidents like this." And with that, she dropped it.

She turned, gills flaring, and darted down to the right. Her boots pounded, and she took sharp corners, lips curling into a snarl. "Take the left alley here, and then the next right. I can smell them. We'll box the fuckers in and have a little talk about why they're here."

He nodded and re-summoned his spear, moving into the alley and pressing to the shadows.

There were six men in the alley, working at a door. They had the lock undone- but there was a monster visible, holding the door shut as the men shoved at the door.

The first thing Undyne did, besides blocking off her end of the alleyway behind her, was shove up a barrier of spears between the men and the door, giving the monster the leeway to shut the door and shut the deadbolt again. The panicked monster’s face appeared in the window briefly, before they bolted upstairs to the second floor of their home.

Undyne faced the six men, waiting for Papyrus to block them off on the other end, and gave them a sharp grin. Spears rose up around them, slowly caging them in as they tried to scatter. “We’ve got some questions for you, boys,” She crooned mockingly.

“Ask away,” One of them spat, “You wont get anything from us.”
It was easy for Aliquam to cut them off and approach with a small growl.

“Shit- that’s the one that murdered Vikki in cold blood.” One of them muttered. “Fuckin’ beast. You’ll get what you deserve for killing her. You all will.”

The men didn’t fight capture- which was odd. Undyne frowned, gills flaring, and glanced over to Papyrus, hoping he didn’t take the accusation of him killing Vikki too hard. Her teeth bared, and she sealed them fully in with spears. “Why are you punks not fighting?”

“We’ve already done some dusting. Besides- we know we can’t take you.” The first one spoke with a snort.

"Smart thinking, keeping your weapons away." He didn't seem phased anymore, Toki had long since helped him clear his mind of the concern.

“Our real weapons are elsewhere.” The man said elusively. “We’ve got other objectives.”

“What are they?” Undyne questions sharply.

“Not fuckin’ telling a sardine.” The man snorts.

"She is not a sardine, she is the captain of the guard and you will show her respect." Aliquam warned.

“I’m not gonna respect a fish any more than I’d respect those bags of bones you call children.” The man sneered. “Toss them to my dogs more like, let them chew ‘m up real good. That’s all you skeletons are good for- chew toys. I wonder if the boss will let-”

“Quiet!” Another hissed.

“Right, sorry.” He grunted. He squirmed in his prison, and glanced to the sky. “Should be soon…”

He growled lowly, before he took a low breath and snapped his fingers, turning their souls blue, "That's enough of that. You're coming with us."

One of them grinned and began to laugh, even as their bodies began to sag under the weight of their souls turning blue. “Good.”

Undyne frowned. “You seem awfully eager to come with us… Why?”

“Reasons.” The man laughed. “We have our reasons.”

Undyne frowned, and then looked to Papyrus. “They wouldn’t be related to Toki, would they?”

The man simply grinned wider. “Should be done by now. In and out- we got you all here. We saw you all flood to the walls, like flies to a fresh wound. Easier than stealing candy from a baby.”

He tensed then looked at Undyne, his gaze filling with fear, as well as a powerful 'I TOLD YOU' aura.

Undyne tensed, and jerked her chin. “Go.” She said, giving him all the permission he needed. “I’ve got these guys. Check on them, and get them to Grillby’s so they’re not alone.”

He nodded and turned, the bone wall falling as he booked it for his home.
Toki heard the front door open, and heard footsteps in the downstairs. The footsteps turned into a scuffle- and then the clang of armor falling down as it dropped, suddenly not suspended by flesh anymore.

She tensed, worry flooding her. She didn’t know who had been in the armor- and it was the worry that had her venturing out of the nursery. It could have been Papyrus for all she knew- and she was a coward for having remained in the nursery hearing the fight, but… She just… She couldn’t…

Toki eased out of the nursery, and to the stairs. The house was dark, which was both a blessing and a curse. She couldn’t see, but no one else could see her either. She squinted, trying to see anyone moving in the shadows downstairs.

Unfortunately for Toki, hands lunged out of the dark for her. A dark gloved fist clawed at her eye socket, and she stumbled back, flailing blindly as pain twinged through her eye lights. “Ah!”

“Ha!”

It was dark, and there was blind scrambling on her part- a massive frame stumbled over her, rushing mostly, and lurched to the nursery to shove at the door.

It popped open, and the twins began to cry, the light from their irritated summons glowing from within.

Toki really didn’t stop to think- she was up, scrambling to her feet and racing after the form. He was after her babies- He wasn’t after her life, he wasn’t after anyone else but her babies.

The broad shouldered form was a man, but not as tall as Grillby. Several inches taller than she was, but broader across the shoulder- definitely not someone she wanted to be tussling with. But, tussling she was.

She hit him like she hit Grillby, scaling up his back. She was clear of mind, unlike when she snapped and went after the fire monster, and she hesitated a moment clearly unable and unwilling to hurt the man, before sinking her teeth into his shoulder regardless.

The padding of his vest ripped and tore, and he muttered a curse, and reached up to tug at her horns.

He ripped her mouth free the first time, letting her spit out the thick mouthful of protective padding that kept her from biting through the first time, but his hand slipped on the slick surface of the bone.

Toki went back in for another bite, and sunk her teeth into his shoulder. Blood flooded her mouth, and the man began to shriek.

The twins began to scream in response, Sobek letting out a squealing sound, and Snuggle making a few garbled buzzes. The man jerked forwards, and tried to shake Toki off- but she held on.

She might have hesitated on the first bite, but that didn’t mean she hesitated on the second. She held on, as he thrashed the nursery, and managed to keep herself in place for a short time- until he managed to get a hold of her arm. He pulled her around to his front, locking her arms at her side with bruising force.
She squirmed, unable to do anything, and watched as he rocked his head back to laugh at her.

“How I’ve got you, you fuckin’ biting menace-“

And Toki bit again, lurching her mouth upwards and clamping shut over his exposed throat. She didn’t think, she didn’t hesitate, she just reacted with the only thing she could think of short of setting the room- and her babies- on fire.

One of her arms was tossed away, landing somewhere by the door, and the man beat at her, his gurgles loud and gasping in her ears. The twins wailing was louder, and the crib had been jostled and knocked out of the way.

Blood was everywhere, thick in her mouth and over her face. It was running down her jaw, her throat- but she held on, and bit tighter, sharp teeth shearing through meat and gristle, scraping the bone of his spine.

The man shoved her away finally- and a chunk of him came with her.

He went down after, hitting the floor with a few spastic jerks. The entire chunk of his throat was missing, gushing blood that spurted in hot waves up and out of the gaping hole. In the light of the angry baby summons, Toki could see that he had night vision goggles on- and wondered, briefly, just what he could see.

The stuff in her mouth felt sour, but she felt numb.

Toki spat out the hunk of the man, noting that it seemed to be in the distinct shape of her teeth, and didn’t hesitate to grab her children. The cats had bolted the moment that the man had opened the door, but the summons and the terrified infants were still in the cradle.

Toki grabbed them, cradling them to her chest with her arm as they latched onto her firmly in their terror, and crept quietly down the hallway. She left bloodied footprints down the stairs, but she didn’t want to alert anyone else in the house- her children were a first priority- she had to get them some place safe. For the moment, she crept to the downstairs bathroom, which was one of the furthest points from the front door, and the least likely place for someone to look for her.

She tucked herself inside, shut the door, and sat against it with the children against her chest. Not that it mattered- the twins were wailing loudly, a beacon of distress for anyone to hear. But the door was thick, and if all else failed… There was enough space to summon Sugar in here. The concrete and brick, at least, helped muffle some of the children’s crying. Not much, but… Some…

Over all though…

Toki was numb.

She’d just killed a man. Ripped his throat out without even thinking about it- she’d just… done it. She’d killed. Ripped it out. She had his blood in her mouth, in her throat- she’d swallowed it too. It was all down her. She’d done it to protect her children.

She’d do it again.

Toki’s eye lights glinted sharply in the darkness, and she tucked her children closer.
Pounding footsteps was the only warning to Aliquam appearing in the broken-in doorway, his breathing rough as he looked around, before he lifted his head, "TOKI!" he called upstairs, moving past the dust-covered armor, hauling tail to get upstairs.

There was no immediate sign of her, upon his first appearance upstairs. However, just inside of the doorway to the nursery, Toki’s arm that had been torn away lay curled, spattered in a sticky, red fluid. There was a lump of flesh that had been dropped next to it. The trail of the sticky fluid made bare skeletal footprints that led downstairs.

In his haste, he had bypassed the bloodied footprints in the darkness of the house.

He looked around as he came upstairs before he felt something hard hit his foot. Or rather, his foot hit it. He reached down and picked up what he realized was an arm and as his vision came to him, now accommodated a bit more to the darkness of the house, he realized it was Toki's arm. Panic hit him again, cold and hard, and he had to force it down. "Toki!" He called again. "Skylar! Honey!" he turned, still unable to see the blood, other than the obvious pool around the dead human.

Toki shifted in the bathroom, still loathe to be making noise and bringing any more humans running straight for them. But, Papyrus was loud, and he would only grow more frantic if he couldn’t find her and their children. She shifted, but was unable to get up under the weight of two summons, and her children. So she scooted, and tapped her foot on the tile, the bone making a chilling, but obvious sound.

She was down stairs. She was here. They were here. They were safe.

He heard it and stiffened slightly before he moved downstairs again, "Toki...!" he made it to the bathroom and tried the door. It didn’t open inwards like it should, so he heaved with his muscles, and ripped it the wrong direction on the hinges, wincing at the smell of the blood that wafted out. "Oh my god, Toki... what happened?" he asked.

Toki didn’t say anything at his prompting. She sat quietly on the floor, having been leaning against the door he’d ripped open, and scooted momentarily over so she could lean against the counter. She simply shook her head, and curled her single arm tighter around their children, who whimpered more against her.

In the dim glow of the bathroom nightlight, Papyrus would see blood. Lots of blood staining Toki and her nightgown.

Honey spotted her daddy, and sniffled from her mother’s shoulder. She unfastened a hand and reached it out to him, the palm bloody from clutching tightly to her mother’s bones.

Sobek hissed in Toki’s lap, but remained stationary, watching and guarding warily.

He looked at her with a shocked look, but carefully eased down so as not to spook her. He carefully put her arm back into place, and quickly claimed his children, hugging them tightly in one arm before he reached out and pulled Toki over into his other arm, "Toki... Oh my god..." he murmured, "I knew it... I knew I should have come back sooner..."

Honey latched onto him. Bloodstained fingers making marks on his armor, she wiggled up until she could curl herself against his neck. She sniffed there, quietly.
Skylar, meanwhile, kept a hand on Toki. He gripped her clavicle tightly, little fingers shaking and not wanting to let go, even in his Daddy’s arms.

Toki kept a hold of the summons, now that she had the use of both arms thanks to Papyrus. Sobek took a perch on her shoulder, and the bloodied grub laid in her free arm. The other one tangled in Papyrus’s armor, latching on tightly. “He wanted our babies.” Toki’s mouth doesn’t move much- a little bit, but it’s enough to show there’s meat and raw things stuck between the tightly clamped laces of her teeth. “He wanted our babies.” That’s all she says.

That’s all she needs to say. She was a mother protecting her children- she wasn’t a meek little bee keeper anymore- she was a mother, with the power to protect her children. She had magic at her fingers- even if she didn’t think immediately to reach for it. She reacted physically. But it had worked.

He growled and he held them a little tighter, "Damn it..." He hissed.

“Ow…” Toki whispered softly at the tightness of his grip, her sore arm protesting the grip. “We… You need to report the guard… He died.” She whispers softly again. “We can… Grillby or… I don’t… I don’t…” She didn’t know. Shock was setting in a bit- shock and the numbness.

He nodded slowly. "But... only once I clean things up here... The smell..."

She lets out a low, morbid, hiccupping laugh. Toki is not all right. She just ripped out some guy’s throat with her teeth. “It tastes even worse.” She assures him almost blandly, trying to force her mind to focus so Papyrus doesn’t disturb the crime scene. “Dead guy’s not goin’ anywhere. Can’t clean him up. Police need his body. Can’t… Can’t clean me either. They’re gonna need photos of me too, or I’m going to go to jail for… For…”

For ripping a guy’s throat out like a savage.

"..." He growled slightly, then he snarled and he sharply thumped a foot, a habit from his father. "Toki... I will make sure you are the first thing they see to... so I can get you cleaned off... immediately..."

His habit, which he’d gotten from Tenebris, who had gotten it from Thumper, usually made her smile. Now she just laughed, hoarse and broken sounding, and it is not a nice sound. “Okay.” Is all she says. “Okay.”

His mate and wife is not alright. She’s not okay- she’s far from it- and she hiccups and stutters in his arms like a leaf in the wind.

He might recall how he felt upon killing Vikki- and realize she’s probably only holding it together because the children were there.

He kissed her repeatedly on her head and cheeks, comforting the children and his wife as best he could, he couldn't even find himself able to move from where he stood, simply holding them tightly to bring them peace.

There was no peace to be found for Toki- none at all. The kisses to her skull simply smeared blood onto his face, and she turned away from his kisses, trying to keep the gore on her face from spreading to him. It needed to be as undisturbed as possible.

The children, however, took solace and comfort in Papyrus, and soon came to rest against him again, with the summons also coming to rest on him.
Toki’s soul was too disturbed by killing someone to bring peace, or to be at peace. So she sat, eye lights unfocused, until the sound of boots clunking approached. A head peeked in, spotted them, and ducked back out again after a few moments of looking them over in the dim lighting of the night light.

It was silent for a time, though there was activity outside the house. Good or bad, Toki didn’t know.

The boots returned shortly.

Undyne ducked into the hallway, flicking on the lights. She flinched, seeing the red, so like her hair, staining Toki’s pearly bones red. She’d seen it in the night light, but under the florescence… It was worse.

Papyrus hadn’t gotten to see it in the light, but the gore was that much worse in the light. What could have been mistaken for small things in her teeth were veins, bits of trachea, and shards of human bone she’d scraped off of his spine from the bite she’d done.

Toki was a mess.

Undyne whistled softly, and glanced to Papyrus. “We got the men to talk. Planned diversionary tactics. They planned to either kidnap the children- your children- or kill them in front of you. Didn’t know why Cruelty wanted them- but I see they didn’t succeed.”

Toki’s mouth twisted up into a grimace, and she stared at Undyne darkly.

Undyne swallowed. “We got permission under the circumstances from the police to have a certified doctor take photos of you, and to document the evidence- I think that means clean your teeth and take your clothes- and then you can go wash up. We’ll have Tenebris in to have your teeth picked clean- just… Don’t move and shed anything.”

“Okay…” Toki whispered.

"It's going to be father... No one else is going to see this." Aliquam murmured, before he lifted his head.

"Undyne."

His voice was almost venomous as he spoke. He was upset. Not just at her, but at himself for doubting his instincts. His father had always taught him to never lose faith in his instincts, and because he did, a guard was dead, and his wife was covered in viscera.

"Make sure that no one else comes in. No officers, no guards. Only Father." That wasn't a request like he would normally ask politely. It was an order.

Toki's head ducked down at his words, and she wondered if Papyrus was ashamed of her. She had... She killed someone. Killed. Because it was either them, or her babies, like Grillby had said.

Undyne's fins flared, and she met Papyrus's gaze squarely. "Careful," she warned. "Remember who is the Captain here. I'll do what I can, but I can't control the human police. I'll go get your father now. I would suggest taking your children to Grillby's and letting Sans wash them up. The situation is contained, and the town is secure. Teleporting would still be faster, however, for moving them. Toki will be alright by herself for a few seconds, right?"

"I don't want them far..." Toki tensed, eye lights flicking to Papyrus.
"My children not leaving my sight." he growled, before hearing the footsteps of his father coming closer, the beast appearing from the back door of the house.

"Aliquam? Tokiko!"

The footsteps made Toki tense, and her teeth made a sickening squelching sound as they ground together in stress. She didn’t relax when Tenebris’ voice sounded out, only made a small sound and closed her eyes.

Skylar whimpered at the sound her teeth made, and turned his head into his father’s armor, even if his finger’s tightened on his mother’s clavicle.

“Down here, Tenebris.” Undyne’s voice was calm and collected, and she met Papyrus’s gaze calmly. “Take it from me, Pap. You might want to get them some place where they wont have to see her like this for much longer. It… makes an impression. The traumatic things stick the longest.” The way she said it spoke from experience, and there was something in her yellow eye that said it was true. She turned away, however, and headed for the front door. “Down stairs bathroom. Watch your feet- there’s blood on the floor, and the police need undisturbed pictures of it. You got your camera?”

"I do." The older replied, slowly stepping over the path of blood as he approached, "Papyrus, can you take the pups to your brother while I take care of Toki?" He questioned, coming and setting a hand on his clean shoulder. "I’ll take good care of her, I promise.” He rumbled to him.

Papyrus gave him a conflicted look of anxiety, but slowly nodded. "I... A-Alright..." he looked at Toki, "They're not hurt... I'll stay to make sure they're safe and I’ll come right back... okay...?"

Toki nodded slowly, and swallowed thoughtlessly. Iron burned a foul taste down her mouth, and her face twisted. “Y-yeah… Check them over please. When we were… fighting, he… hit the crib a couple times. I don’t know if they got jostled or not.” She murmured softly.

Her fingers came up to gently pry her sons hand off of her collarbone. It didn’t take all that much effort- but Skylar began to cry when she got him to let go, and her soul lurched in her chest. She longed to take him in her arms, to bring him close and make his sobs go away.

Undyne left them be, her boots clonking loudly on the tile as she went down the hall.

Papyrus slowly let Toki go and took both children into his careful cradle, as well as the summons from Toki, as he teleported out.

Once they were gone, Tenebris sighed and looked at Toki. "You can sit down on the toilet, Toki... You're safe, and thanks to you, so are your children." He purred to her gently.

Toki glanced to Tenebris in the sudden silence of the bathroom, and then she nodded quietly. She padded to the toilet, and took a seat, leaving bloody footprints as she went. She sat down, and glanced down at herself.

She looked like a bad horror movie prop.

“"I killed a man, Tenebris.” She said softly.

"No, Toki..." he told her, tilting her chin up with a single knuckle, "You killed someone who wanted to kill you, and your children. You fought back when you absolutely had to, and it just happened to come that the man had to be stopped by your last resort." He told her.

She stared at him.
“I bit down.” She said. “I bit down, and I held on. I didn’t use magic- I could have used magic- I didn’t think to use magic. I just… reacted. And… I ripped his throat out.” She gave a rasping laugh. “With my teeth. I’ve got parts of his throat in my mouth and- and the worst part… I’d kill him again. Because it was either him, or my babies.” Killing shouldn’t have been the only way.

But… apparently sometimes it had to be.

"Toki, if he was threatening you, or your children, know that i would not have hesitated to do the same. Instinct can shine brighter than any capability of magic" He told her, "You protected with the wrath of a mother" he purred, "That's nothing to be ashamed of."

Toki just shakes her head and looks away. She opens her mouth, teeth squishing, and motions for him to take pictures and remove the... Debris. "I don't regret protecting my babies... But I never wanted to kill or hurt anyone." She says softly.

"No one does, Tokiko." he told her, taking pictures of the evidence before he began to clean her teeth of the viscera.

She shifted, and squirmed as he began pulling viscera from her teeth. This was the remnants of someone in her mouth. Part of her was nauseated and wanted to hurl- but the other part of her was just too deeply shocked and disturbed. Too numb. The feelings warred on her face, Toki looked lost. She looked many things.

She knew for certain she would kill that man again- she would do it again in a heart beat. But... Did that make her like... Like Cruelty? Because she would do it? Or not, because she was doing it for her children, and he was doing it because he could?

"Papa?" She questioned softly. "How do monsters tell what marks a positive soul and a negative soul? What makes us different?"

He hesitated at that, then he sighed, and he stopped for a moment, before he continued, "A Negative soul is just that. It's cold... toxic. It's hurt and seeks to spread the pain if only to ease it's own. It takes a true sick heart to savor it for the sake of pleasure." he explained,

"A positive soul... It's not nearly as bad... it can show its pain louder than a negative soul does, as a Negative soul hides it because they often see it a weakness."

Toki nodded quietly and glanced up at him. "... I think you're right and wrong." She says softly. "I think you're what you choose to be. I... I choose to be kind. You can be more than your soul type dictates. But... But if you embrace it... If you embrace it like... Like Cruelty did... Then yeah... That sounds about right."

Her bloody fingers ache to hold something, but they can't, not while he's documenting and cleaning out her teeth. Toki sighs, iron scented air wafting over him in a vile wave. "I am afraid..." She says. "I'm afraid... Because I would kill again. It would be for my child or someone, but... I... I'm tired of everyone dying... I hid in the nursery while that guard died in the living room. I am afraid, because I would kill again... If I would kill again, even for someone else... Does that make me like him?" Her words didn't really make much sense- but a lot of that was a lack of knowing how to phrase it.

"Toki..." he spoke with a stern tone, "No more. You need time to let your mind settle." he then told her with a more gentle voice, "It's going to be okay. Let me clean you up."

She flinched at the stern tone, dislodging a shard of the man's spine from her teeth. It fell down and landed on her nightgown. "S-sorry."
"It's gonna be okay" he purred again, cleaning the rest of her off before he turned to start the water in
the bathtub. He then turned back to Toki, his gaze gentle as he cupped her cheek, care little for the
blood, "Toki... You're my strong, brave daughter, Nothing can hit you down and keep you there.
You're stronger than that."

She looked at him quietly, but didn't nuzzle into his palm like she wanted to. She shuffled
awkwardly on the toilet, and glanced at the bathtub. "Thanks... Can you just... Take me to some
place else please to shower? The police will be here soon..." And being naked with cops was not
what she wanted to be doing, really. "I don't... There's a lot of b-blood still in here."

"The water's warming up as we speak" he told her, "For your privacy, I’ll leave your clothes on. It'll
give me a head start in washing out the blood too." he chuckled, shifting his footing before offering
her a hand, "To the bathtub then."

She didn't share his chuckle. She glanced away quietly, staring at the bathtub to the side of her which
was flecked in specks of dried blood from who knows what part of her, but shakily reached up and
took his hand. "I was just going to throw the night gown away." She wasn't going to be able to wear
the same gown again that she took someone's life in, even in defense of her children.

"Then lets at least keep it on for the officers." he told her, helping her up and to the bathtub.

Apparently he had misunderstood her request to go somewhere else. Or just hadn't wanted to since
the bathtub was already filling. That wasn't what she had meant by somewhere else. She had hoped
to maybe go out of her house, away from the blood and the gore, and the fact that there would no
doubt be police officers wanting to see her no matter what demands her missing husband made of
Undyne.

Toki deflated a bit, but didn't have it in her to ask again more firmly for a different cleaning location.
She just hunched her shoulders, ducked her skull, and tried to ignore the sticky trail of footprints she
had left since the up stairs of the house. Toki closed her sockets, and for once, wished she wasn't
home as her toes slid into the hot water and stained it a rusty red.

He stroked her head and sang to her gently as he used the showerhead to clean her off. Her teeth got
the most attention, his thumb stroking gently over her teeth, claw tips serving as a final pick to her
gum line to clean her up.

Her mouth opened listlessly, letting the water rinse over her teeth and rinsing out the inside of her
mouth. Her fingers twitched in the water, scrubbing uselessly against the pale nightgown that was
quite thoroughly ruined by the carmine stain covering it.

Her eyes were dim, however, and listlessly watched as his claws removed the last of the stuff from
her mouth. Her teeth interlocked fairly tightly, but they were flexible given her range of expression,
so there has been stuff stuck. Not anymore.

The water rapidly turned red as she stood in it, quietly cleaning off what she could off herself.

He scrubbed her clean as he continued to hum, but he backed up for a moment, "I can remove your
nightgown and wash off what's left, I have time, so it seems, to get you dried and changed before the
officers arrive" he told her gently, "would you like that?"

By the time that she was clean, Toki had stopped scrubbing entirely, and simply let him do as
needed. The water ran clear, even if the gown looked stained to high hell.

Her eye lights drifted to his face as he spoke, showing she was listening, but the slow blink showed
that she was also not really processing much of anything happening around her. His question went right over her head, metaphorically. Toki simply stood there quietly, not at all home.

He looked at her for a little while, then he sighed and he gently sang to her as he continued his delicate work. This was almost as bad as her trauma from the fire...

He lifted her nightgown from her and discarded it into the sink. Before he continued cleaning her, using the showerhead on a gentle setting to run over her bones.

By the time he finished, he let her drip dry a little before he brought over his turtleneck and used it to turn her into a Toki-Burrito, picking her up before lifting his tank top and using it to cradle her in one arm, the other holding her head to his collarbone gently. His singing continued as he walked her out, looking for the officers in case they had shown up

The officers had shown up- but were not in the house yet. Undyne, however, was, and spotted him as he appeared in the main room again. She frowned upon at him, and held up a bag for him to take. "I got some clothes for the twins out of the dresser, and some of Papyrus and Toki's clothes from their room. The house isn't going to be available for them to be in for a couple days. It's a crime scene, as is parts of town. Trade you, evidence bag and camera for clothes. You can go ahead and take her to Grillby's... I wonder why Pap never came back." The last part was mostly mused to herself, but was said out loud anyways.

Toki was a limp lump of bones in his arms, but the right and secure position was safer and she responded by nuzzling just faintly into him.

He took the bag and rumbled quietly as he tucked it in Toki's lap. "They're both in the bathroom. All you need is the SD chip." He told her.

Undyne nodded quietly. Her gaze slid down to Toki, and she frowned. "I'll make sure to get everything for sure."

The bag garnered no response from Toki.

Undyne frowned deeper. "She shut down, didn’t she?"

He nodded slowly. "Yes, terribly."

Undyne grimaced. "Toki’s a gentle soul.” She said softly. "Killing just… isn’t in her. Just… We’ll do for her what we did for Papyrus- everyone is different, and reacts differently, but… We’ll be there for her. For now, take her and go to Grillby’s. I’ll handle the cops and we’ll… get this place cleaned up and the body removed.”

At the mention of the body, Toki curled up more and whimpered.

He gave a sharp 'sh' sound as he held Toki a little tighter. “Of course.” He nodded. Tenebris gave her one more look, shifted Toki slightly, and then teleported to Grillby’s home above the bar.

Grillby’s living room was dark, all of the lights off save for some candles that were lit to keep attention off of the bar- but there was a glow in the bed room, and the sound of fussing children.

The big bar tender came out as the sound of feet hitting the carpet came around, his sleeves rolled up over large biceps, showing he was quite willing to brawl if it came to it- and he sighed as he spotted Tenebris. He tilted his head, seeing the bundle in his arms. “Papyrus and Sans are in our room.” He says. “You are welcome to come in. Is she… alright?”
"Disconnected." he answered as he came over, "How are the pups?"

“Worn out, but distressed. They know their mother isn’t near, and refuse to settle.” Grillby says. He ushers the larger monster into his room, and shuts the door behind them. The bed had been foregone, the floor instead turned into a massive nest of pillows and blankets. Sans had their newborn daughter asleep at his chest, and was curled near his brother, who had the twins with him.

The twins were fussing, squirming and kicking, and gurgling to themselves. They’d been stripped out of their bloodied clothes, and washed, obviously, and their father was also cleaned and out of his armor. They were fairly naked, and clinging to Papyrus’s underclothes. Sobek and Snuggle were nowhere to be found- the summons had been stuffed away in one of the side rooms, so as not to risk Grillby’s newborn daughter with any of the bird beast’s roughness.

Toki stirred in Tenebris’ arms, reacting to their fussing. “Nn…?”

"Well thankfully, they've all gotten cleaned up and that will allow them to try and get some rest." he murmured to Grillby, before walking to the bedding where Aliquam laid.

The younger monster’s eyes opened and he looked up at Tenebris. "Father... Is she okay?" he asked, getting only an uneasy look in return.

As he reached up for his mate, Tenebris came and laid the young woman down with his turtleneck, allowing his son to pull Toki close and squeeze her tightly.

The bag of clothing fell from her lap, landing somewhere along his legs in the nest of things, while she was tucked gently into him. Her eye lights closed, and she shuddered quietly. Toki’s fingers curled into his chest after a moment, clinging to him quietly. “Nnnn…“

Grillby nodded quietly, and collected the bag that had fallen. A quick glance, and he frowned.

"Clothes?"

He nodded. “I can go and get more clothes from their home if needed, but this is a little something to start off…” Though, Tenebris mused, he shouldn’t be able to get in. But what the police and Undyne didn’t know didn’t hurt them…

Grillby frowned lightly. “Then their home isn’t accessible to them.” He says. He glances down to his mate, and frowns. “Our place is a little small, but it is open to them for as long as they need it.”

Toki shivers suddenly, and curls herself around her mate. Her fingers shift, and reach out to tangle with her babies, and they cling to her, their fussing finally quieting as they can touch both parents finally.

"I can take them if it comes to be too much." Tenebris rumbled as he shifted on his feet. "My home has enough room."

“It once held them all, I know.” Grillby nods. “But you now have your adopted son, so your house is not nearly as empty as it once was.” The fire monster shifts, and eyes the monsters huddled in the nest. “Go get Thumper, Tenebris. Let us take shelter here tonight- and keep watch over Papyrus and miss Toki.”

He nodded gently. "Yes." He turned and teleported from the home once more, going to collect his son.

While Tenebris went to fetch Thumper, Grillby went to fetch more blankets and the like.
Which left Sans, Papyrus, one sleeping infant, two calmer infants, and one traumatized woman.

The horned skeleton shifted slightly, eye lights dim, and rubbed her thumbs lightly along the back of Skylar’s hand, as her son brought her thumb up to his mouth to gently chew on it. He cooed lightly, and crooned to her, and she hummed a faint sound in response to her child’s noise.

Aliquam nuzzled and kissed Toki's head gently, "My beautiful Toki." he murmured. "I love you so much."

Toki shifted at the kiss, and her eye lights flicked up to him. They traced over his face for a time, trailing here and there, before dropping off and back down to his chest. She snuggled close, and kept contact with him and her little ones. A deep and shuddering breath escaped her quietly. “Love you too…”

"You were so brave. I'm so glad you are okay." he purred, "You protected our children."

Toki twitched against him, just slightly. Her fingers flex, and she trembles, and hides her face. “Not okay. Not brave.” She was neither of those things- she’d hid up in the nursery while the guard downstairs had been murdered. If that had been Papyrus… A shiver rattled up her spine, making her tremble inside the cocoon of Tenebris turtleneck. “Not, not, not,” she muttered. “Not okay…”

Grillby eased back into the room with a mass of blankets and pillows, saw that they were still waiting for Tenebris to get back with Thumper. He padded to the nest, and dropped the mass of blankets in, before glancing at the couple, and then sliding in to join his mate. “She’s not okay right now, Papyrus,” He said softly. “Think back to what happened after Vikki, and how you felt. She’s not okay right now- and she’s going to need some time before she will be.”

"I meant physically." he murmured as he hugged her tightly with one arm, landing kisses on her face and teeth.

Tenebris, in the mean time, came inside Grillby's home, wearing a deep black turtleneck while he had a sleeping thumper over his shoulders, the bunny draped in warm clothing to keep him snug.

Toki didn’t really notice as Tenebris and Thumper slipped in and tucked into the growing pile of monsters. The kisses to her face and teeth roused her again, and she trembled, eye lights quivering in their sockets. Slowly but surely, she returned his touches, though shakily.

“She’s not okay enough to differentiate that right now,” Grillby says softly, and pats the young man’s shoulder. He shifts, and eyes the duo, before looking at the twins. “… You both need the contact, as do your children. Are you alright with the twins as is? Or would you like for me and Tenebris to dress them?”

“They’re alright for now.”

Grillby nodded, and moved back to give them some space.

Aliquam nuzzled and kissed Toki's head gently, "My beautiful Toki." he murmured, "I love you so much, and I’m so proud of you... You protected them so valiantly..." He praised between kisses, stroking her head gently.

Toki shuddered shakily, and began to shake slightly under his words. Her fingers withdrew from the twins, drawing into the shirt she’d been bundled into, and Toki sniffled quietly as he peppered her with praise and kisses. “I… shouldn’t be praised for killing… For… For hiding. I didn’t... help that guard...”
"You did what you could." He told her, stroking her head, "You could only do so much, and you did plenty." He told her gently.

“No.” She shook her head. “I didn’t.” She just tucked her head against her side, and shakes slightly. "I didn’t even… try… I just… Hid and listened and came out after, and… No. Just… No.”

He sighed and nuzzled her, "Don’t worry about it..." he told her gently as he kissed her some more, "It's going to be okay, Toki... it will." he told her quietly.

Skylar and Honey shifted on his chest, and sniffled against him, squirming fussily.

Toki didn’t respond to his words, simply shaking her head, and reaching out. She brushed over her children’s bare backs, and frowned softly. “They need clothes…” She murmurs softly.

"Father brought them clothes." he reached with a foot and hooked the bag on it after Grillby nudged it over again, pulling it closer so he could grab it with a hand. "Looks like there's something for you too."

Toki shifted slightly in her bundle of borrowed clothes, and shakily sat up in them. The bundled the twins into her arms, cradling them to her chest, and nestling them close as they clung to her.

“Mmmhm… Help me…?”

He nodded and brought his hands up to help dress the twins, murmuring comforts to her.

Once they were dressed in one piece outfits, Toki tucked them into Tenebris’ oversized turtleneck with her, and curled around her. She looked at her hands as she cradled them close, and shook lightly. Her hands were blood stained now- even if they were clean. She took a shaky breath, and looked up at Papyrus as the twins nuzzled at her chest, seeking the comforting sensation of feeding more than they were the actual food. She shifted to adjust them accordingly, and let them nurse and seek comfort as they needed. “I… What do I do now, Pap…? What do… we do now?” She sounded lost.

"I don’t know... but we're not alone." he assured her gently, "We have Father. We have the rest of the village too..." he ran a hand down her arm, bringing it back up to squeeze her shoulder firmly, "We’ll be okay... no matter what." he purred.

She sniffled and nodded, and tucked back into him with a shaky sigh. “We’re not alone.” She murmurs in agreement, glancing out over the cramped nest, to Sans next to her husband, and Grillby across from him, and Tenebris and Thumper wedged in too.

No, they weren’t alone. And alone wasn’t what she needed right now anyways. She tucked her children in tighter, and nestled in closer to Papyrus, before closing her sockets and just resting.
Chapter 82

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So I know kids can change your sex life… but Silver and I just figured this out… Toki and Papyrus haven’t fucked in nine months. Nine. Not since before the twins were born. Dude. Just. Dude. He’s got the self-control of a damn saint. Also silver and I are gross and somehow we sexualized milking. _. We have no shame. None. Fuck. THIS CHAPTER IS MOSTLY NSFW. THE LAST LITTLE BIT IS NOT, BUT 90 PERCENT OF IT IS.

Silverwing Notes: So, We all know the definition of BlueBall, yas? We can all safely agree that pap is by now so blueballed you could mistake him for his brother.

Let’s fix that~

The men that they’d captured hadn’t said a word as to the location of Cruelty’s base. Undyne had questioned them, and the police had questioned them- but… Well… There was only so much that they could do without legitimately torturing them, and that was breaking all sorts of laws in many different countries, including their own.

They had people working on them, however, as updates came out across the news informing of any new information that the greedy press managed to suck from the police department. Nothing good or nothing new yet, but something eventually would come…

Or Cruelty’s men would get to the captive one’s first from inside the jail, according to the news castors gossiping and speculation. Either or seemed to be highly likely at this point.

It took a week for them- Toki and Papyrus that was- to be allowed to go home. It took two weeks for Toki to manage to scrub the last of the blood out of the cracks in the tile with bleach. At three weeks post kidnapping and murder attempt, they had managed to patch the hole in the wall of the village, and Undyne and the guards were going over Human tactics of war. Four weeks post incident, and Toki was still waking in the middle of the night with nightmares- but she was much better than she was four weeks before. Her nightmares were not violent ones, with her thrashing out of bed and waking her husband- but she’d wake with tears in her eyes, and the taste of blood in her mouth.

Thankfully, the twins seemed okay. They woke up in tears any time they slept for the first week and a half, but thankfully it seemed to have ebbed off. However, Skylar did not like seeing Toki wearing red shirts.

He would cry, until she changed.

Also thankfully, there was no LOVE in her soul, and no EXP- nothing that had gone up anyways. Sans had assured her of that the morning after the incident. That didn’t mean that it didn’t haunt her. Yes- she had technically killed before. She recalled that, in all technical truth, in the incident where Han had been murdered, she had initially summoned Sugar and Clover, and her summons had… well, they had slaughtered countless members of Humans Against Monsters.
Indirectly her kills, but her kills all the same.

But, they hadn’t been innocent people—no one in Humans Against Monsters was innocent. They might have been, before Cruelty and his minions had gotten their hands on them, but… After that? After that, they weren’t any longer.

They might have been redeemable though. And for that… That is what haunted Toki.

That, and the fact that she had sat back and let a guard die in her living room. She could have gone to help— and maybe, just maybe, the guard would still have been alive.

The nightmares didn’t just come at night, however. They came during naps too— and naps were more frequent, given her lack of ability to sleep straight through the night. There was nothing to be done, she knew, but to wait it out. They’d had to wait out the nightmares about Han, and the nightmares about Tenebris— but they’d been doable. These, likewise, would be doable. They just… needed time.

Dreams interspersed with the nightmares. Not just normal dreams— but the… World viewing dreams. One in particular stood out— and it was the one that woke her from her current nap after chasing a nightmare from her.

She’d flashed into a world very much like this one— everything was very similar. Except… well, Papyrus definitely was not a virgin, and the Royal Guard was not the Royal Guard.

Toki had never been a part of an orgy before. After experiencing that in that dream… She’s not sure if she wants to, or if she doesn’t want to. Either way, it was a hell of a dream to wake up to— compiled with the nightmare, she’s not sure what she was feeling when she opened her eyes with her head in Pap’s lap.

Dark circles marked the under parts of her sockets— Toki wasn’t getting a lot of restful sleep. Papyrus had been much the same when he had killed Vikki. He’d been a mess— but it had taken him time to want to talk about it. Toki had talked— and now it was just about waiting to see when it would start to begin feeling better for her nightmares and night terrors to stop.

Toki could hear their children, also sleeping in their napping cradle with their equally tuckered out summons nesting protectively around them.

She glanced up at her husband, hoping she had not been making any… noises in her sleep in response to the… rather interesting sensations she’d been handling in the strange lusty verse. If she had, she’d been right in his lap, and he’d have heard every one of them.

His eyes were closed and he was slouched over her, his hand unmoving on her hand. She was lucky. His secret was... safe.

Toki had the distinct urge to do… well, something, growing in her undergarments, and it made her shift uncomfortably, rolling over on the couch and sighing just faintly. She tucked her face further into his lap, settling onto her side and burying her skull into his belly with a tiny hidden buzz. At least he hadn’t heard anything— and didn’t have a sense of smell like Tenebris did. She idly played with his fingers, willing herself to go back to sleep and ignore the conflicting feelings the nightmare and the dreams had left her with.

Aliquam let out a quiet sound as she nuzzled into him, though he didn’t exactly wake, so she would be dancing in a snake nest. But, one could suppose that would make it that much more exciting.

A snakes nest could be exciting— particularly since she was nestled above a metaphorical den. The first thing that came to mind was exactly what could be under her head, and her face flushed brighter.
She shifted and rotated, bringing her arms up to press his hand to her chest. She could… Well, Toki could tease him. The twins were asleep, as were the summons, and they had a blanket over them. If she was quiet…

But they were in the living room, where the guard was…

Her magic churned against her bones, and against the hand she had clutched against her breast, ripe with indecisive feelings, and she huffed against his belly, nuzzling his middle and lap quietly.

The nuzzling made him stir again and his hand gently gripped whatever rested under it, in this case, her breast.

Which prompted a leak from the still nursing mother, dampening her shirt and his fingers as his hand gently squeezed her breast- which was full since the twins hadn’t eaten in several hours. Toki sighed slightly, a tiny groan escaping her as she hid her face in his lap again. Well, that was embarrassing. She hadn’t had that happen in a while.

But at the groan, his eyes opened, and bright orange orbs looked down at her, "...Toki... Just how pent up are you?" he asked quietly.

"… You just squished my boob." She squeaked quietly, her flush crawling down her skull as she realized she had woken him. Shit- shit, shit and a damn again. "Which is kinda… full again since the twins aren’t eating as often.” A lot yes, but not as often. Did she answer his question? Not at all. She didn’t look up to meet his eyes either.

"Does my dear wife need to be milked~?" he purred quietly.

Toki was pretty sure her face was going to combust. “A-Ah… Maybe?” She shifted, and finally peered up at him, eye lights tinting a minty green as she angled her skull upwards, horns curving back and over his opposite thigh. It wasn’t even a heat and she’d woken up feeling frisky- and all of that was to blame upon that damn dream with that place with all of the- Hhhhhnnn… “C-could we?” The twins wouldn’t be wanting to eat for another two hours- three maybe. Given her volume of magic, she’d probably be right back at the same quantity in another hour.

Toki kept the twins well fed.

She flushed harder, however, and glanced away. This wasn’t something they usually did- she usually handled milking on her own for if she was out of the house and he was going to be alone with the twins- and they hadn’t done anything like this since she had… well, killed that guy.

He chuckled and nodded, "Sit up, I’ll go get some bottles." He purred, running his hand over her skull gently.

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Toki nodded quietly, and shifted to sit upright after nuzzling into his palm. His hand got the softest of kisses from her teeth, of which she was oh so careful with now, before she scooted over to let him up. “Alright, Pap.”

He got up and walked to the kitchen. He rifled around a little bit, making only a little bit of noise, before coming back after a little while with a few empty baby bottles in hand. "This should work.” He spoke as he came over, kneeling before her with a smile. "You'll feel better in no time.”

Her blush was rampant and not going away. Her breasts certainly weren’t her only issue, and she wasn’t about to tell him that. Toki simply nodded, and shrugged out of the shoulders of her shirt and baring her chest to him. “Thanks, Quinn.” She smiles quietly. “You’ve never helped me milk by hand before. Do you… want me to show you how?" Or did he just want to figure it out as he went?
She didn’t have a problem with doing either, she supposed.

"As eager as I am to help you. I have no idea how." He admitted with a quiet laugh. "Please, teach your student." He purred, eye sockets resting at half-mast as he peered at her.

Well, that made her blush deeper. “Of course, love.” She smiled. Her fingers flitted up, and lifted one of her breasts, cupping it gently. They weren’t like human breasts for all that they looked very, very similar– she’d looked up how those worked, thinking she needed similar techniques for draining her milk reservoirs, and those were particular in how you had to milk those. Those, you had to push into the chest wall, form a ‘c’ shape with your fingers, and make a lot of rolling motions, and be careful not to damage the tissue. These, you could just gently squeeze the breast itself, and it could leak. She guided one of the bottles closer, taking it from him, and giving him a lopsided grin. “You’ll probably have an easier time. Bigger hands and all that. It’s pretty easy- just be gentle. They’re very sensitive.”

She adjusted her grip, bringing two fingers down to grasp her nipple and keep it angled over the bottle, and then used the rest of her hand to gently work her breast. It eased milk out slowly, the glowing green fluid thick and warm. “A breast pump is easier,” she admits, “but it kinda… hurts. My breasts aren’t designed like human ones. At least, not on the inside. So doing it by hand is just easier.” Toki explains quietly. And this, she muses, is what she was doing any time she left him alone with the kids.

He watched as she explained how to do it and he nodded, giving her the bottles to hold in position while he moved behind her and nuzzled her while reaching up and cupping her breasts, "I'll do my best to be gentle then." He murmured.

Toki flushed a bit more, and leaned back into him as he took up a position behind her. She tilted a little to the side, so he could lean over her shoulder, and then let his hands take over once she had finished her demonstration. Without thinking, she quietly cleaned her fingers with her tongue, and then dried them on her shirt, before carefully shuffling the bottles into position under her nipples. “Just remember, gentle,” She says softly, “like how you are when you handle your, ah…” She wiggled her backside against his pelvis to make her point. “Remember that, and you’ll do just fine.” She smiled encouragingly, and waited for him to begin. His hands already felt nicer on her chest than her own did, and Toki couldn’t help the pleased purr that escaped her in response.

He shuddered and chuckled gently, pressing a few soft kisses to the side of her head with the flats of his teeth before he began to shift and massage her breasts, following her example to start lightening her unpleasant burden. "Like this?" He inquired.

The massaging motion helped to relax her, and urge her milk to ‘drop’ as it were. The motions gave irregular streams, without his fingers to direct the nipples or help work the openings, but he was getting it, slowly but surely. “Ah- you want to gently pinch the nipple between your fingers, like I did before.” Toki says softly, flush crawling further over her skull as warmth blossomed in her breasts. She angled her skull, and nuzzled it into his neck with a soft sigh. “It, hah, lets the milk release easier. Kind of like… Kind of like when you’re checking the temperature on the bottles for the twins. But ah- mmmm- yes, very good…”

It was very, very different having him handle her breasts than it was for her to be doing it. There was some manner of pleasure when she did it, but his hands always felt perfect when they touched her. This was no exception. Mmm…

"Mmm... You're soft. And warm." His voice purred gently along the side of her skull as he worked, fingers shifting to do as she directed, and he pressed a few gentle kisses to her shoulder. "I love you so much, Toki... Does this feel good?" he asked warmly.
“It does, yeah.” She nodded softly against him, pressing a few gentle kisses to the under side of his jaw line. She shivered, and traded out the bottles as they filled up, a soft, pleased groan escaping her without her meaning to. “A-Ah, s-sorry about that.”

He smiled and kissed her neck as he began to cradle and knead her breasts, getting creative with his milking method.

Her hands shook a little bit as they held the bottles, warmth spreading up from her breasts as his hands kneaded and stimulated them, making it difficult to focus and keep the bottles steady. The kisses at her neck prompted her to tilt her head away and offer more of her neck, conscious thought leaving her as she wiggled her backside back into his pelvis with a teasing rocking motion. “Ah~”

He smiled and kissed her neck some more as his hips shifted upwards to grind against her pelvis, "Feel good? It's been so long since you were so responsive... I missed this~"

Toki rocked back into his grinding, rolling her hips gently against his own instinctively. She leaned back with a soft sigh, a pleased sound escaping her. “It feels really good,” she murmurs softly. “I’ve missed your touch. The last time we’ve gotten to do something like this... Gosh, was before the twins? Nearly nine months ago, wasn’t it?” The comment on being responsive has her chuckling softly, and, as she’s trading out a bottle, she pauses to reach up and stroke his skull. “I’m sorry,” Toki murmurs softly. “It’s... It’s been a long month.” She admittedly hadn’t been nearly as affectionate this past month as she normally had. Her teeth... Bothered her a lot. Kisses had been more sparse-she just wasn’t sure how he could want to kiss something that had torn someone’s throat out. “I haven’t been a very attentive wife this month.”

"You were hurt. You needed time." He told her gently, running a hand over her nipple with a purring coo. "You needed to recover."

She let out a soft gasp, and managed to cap the bottles before she spilled them all over herself. “S-shit,” she squeaked, still having to mop up a few spilled drops. Her breasts weren’t empty, but then and again, they never truly did empty. They just depleted their stores. Such was the life of a nursing mother. “I, ah… yeah. I’m still... Not all okay. But... But I want… to do this…” Her head tilted to the side, teeth shifting to leave a soft peppering of kisses along his jaw as she wiggled back against him. “If, you... if you want to, that is...?"

He smiled and kissed her, helping her cap the milk bottles before setting them aside. "I want you... I want you so badly. And I want to make you feel better than you have in a long while." He murmured, "You’re my beautiful wife, and my wife is my goddess. I’d praise her on my knees if that’s what she so demands."

Toki giggles bashfully, and shifts in his lap. She fixes her shirt shyly, and peers up at him with a lopsided smile. “I’m no goddess, my love.” Her hand strokes up the strong line of his jaw, and she sighs quietly. “Definitely not a goddess. Just an earthly mortal- but an earthly mortal who loves you with all her being... And I... I want you...” Her hand slips down to tease the hem of his slacks. “I want you badly. However... we’ll have to be quiet...” Unless they turned on some music first, to drown out any... noises. The twins were just across the room.

And Toki was not going to go upstairs and leave them downstairs. Not after last month- and she’s pretty sure Papyrus wasn’t either.

“Though... Is it right to? Here, I mean...” She glanced away again, fingers hesitantly twirling teasing circles along his bones and stimulating him. “A guard was dusted down here...” It was their living room, yes, and it would also be a death site as well- but there were just things that they would have to get over. This, Toki supposed, was one of them.
"He was recovered and his body will be mourned... We do not do this to mock his memory..." He told her first-off, before he smiled and kissed her gently, distracting her as he quickly and dexterously stripped his wife with ease of memory he hadn’t put to use in a long time.

“I, ah, know we don’t…” It had been a while since Papyrus had stripped her, but her husband still remembered how, and he soon had her divested of her clothing. Toki quick summoned Stripe just long enough for the bee to turn on a light bit of music, so any noises wouldn’t wake the children, and then had her summons removed swiftly.

She shifted in his lap, turning to face him, and wiggled her fingers down to unbutton his slacks and slip them gently down over his hips. She didn’t manage to fuss much more, however, as his distractions slid her mind in other directions. She kissed him again, and unbuttoned his shirt and slid it off his shoulders. That left him in just his undone slacks, with her sitting bare bones in his lap, and she leaned closer to kiss him again, her breasts pressing softly to his ribs. “Mm… you might get a little damp,” she warns softly against his teeth, “if you squeeze them too hard.”

He smiled down to her as he shed his clothing, "So what?” he purred, kissing her deeply as he gently hiked her hips up, "I love you too much to care, honestly. Do you expect me to stop on the account of your breasts?” He purred.

“Well, no,” She shivered, teeth working gently against him as she rocked her hips gently against his. His pants were in the way, but for now, with her sitting on him, it would do. “It tends to be hit or miss though on what can bother you though. You were curious about them once, back when I was pregnant, but they didn’t tend to, uh, leak back then.” She hums, and licks a slow line down the side of his neck, so she can nibble at his collarbone. Papyrus also wasn’t Tenebris. Tenebris had… weird habits.

Like licking things.

“Mm, sorry. I just... worry. Self-conscious. Y’know. Mom-body stuff. ‘S normal.” Over all, she was probably more fit than she had ever been- except she had her breasts still. Once the twins turned one, she was probably going to start weaning them for more solid foods.

She shook her head, mind wandering, and turned back to the task at hand, and let her tongue slide out to lick a slick line up the side of his neck.

He smiled and slowly leaned his head back at her long lick, moaning quietly as his hands wandered, rubbing her hips firmly before slowly crawling lower to massage bones where more sensitive flesh would be if she had it. "You’re my beautiful wife, Toki~ nnh... I don’t care." He cooed.

“Don’t care, hm?” Her teeth parted, and she hesitated for a long, long moment, before gently scraping them lightly over the vertebrae of his neck. “Prove it,” she purrs, rolling her hips first into his hands, and then rocking them down to bump the bones against his clothed pelvis. Her hips were wider than they were pre-pregnancy, rounder and more bell shaped from carrying their children. She nudged him gently, with her chin, and nibbled his neck again, before threading her fingers into his ribs and stroking firmly.

He grunted sharply at the nibbles as well as the touches to his ribs and he gave a sound off, before he took her hips and ground them against his own instead. "Nnh~"

Her teeth were gentle as she nibbled, and she grunted, rocking against him as he ground down onto her. She shifted, and tugged softly on his ribs, leaning back to arch her brow at him lightly. Her fingers stroked firmly again, trailing firm lines along his bones, and then she dragged leaned closer to grab his spine and tease it too. She dragged her hand down, and slid her hand into his pelvis, swirling
her fingers around and tugging him upwards to meet with her grinds slightly more roughly. “It’s been too long.” She whispers.

He chuckled lowly and licked his lips, before he groaned and summoned his magic, letting his cock erect under her before he began to rub her hipbones, "Summon... something please." He murmured.

“It’s been so long,” She teased again, “maybe I don’t remember how?” Despite her words, however, a flash of magic, and there was a soft green glow between her legs. The orange glow of his cock rubbed gently against the outside of her lips, and she shivered, rocking gently against him as she pressed her chest to his with a shivering breath. “Haaa… Ahh… I’m all yours for the taking, Papyrus. How do you want me?”

He smiled at the feeling, before he kissed her again, "I don’t care... I just want you... and I want you to love what I do to you." He murmured, giving her a deep kiss as he then pulled her hips down.

“I always love what you do to me.” She rocked against him, her hips about as flush as she could be as she rocked teasingly against his member, but didn’t quite mount up yet. “Shall I ride, my love?” Toki asked gently, rolling her hips slowly, teasingly, quietly wondering how much more his patience could take.

He nodded slowly, though it gained speed the more she rocked and teased him. "Yes... yes please..."

Toki nodded softly, and shifted up finally. She eased herself back down onto him, and worked her way down his shaft slowly. It had been a long time since they had been together, and she didn’t want to get sore or rush. She rocked gently, so gently, and eased her way down his shaft. He was still large and thick as ever, still filling her full- but there was an extra bit of space inside of her that didn’t used to be there, on account of her pelvis having widened from having kids.

Either way, Toki took her time slowly hilting him, and then just sat for a moment, letting her body adjust to him again as she leaned back and stretched, rubbing his bones playfully. “Ah~ You feel good,” she purrs, rolling her hips gently against his and grinding his cock gently against her walls as she clenched around him.

He moaned breathily at the hilting of his mate and for the longest moment he felt...

A surge spiking up his neck.

Papyrus shuddered and groaned, grabbing her hips and holding them firmly. "Mmmhhn~" He didn't move her himself, just let her do her thing for now. "F-Fuck... oh god this feels good…” He moaned.

Toki grinned gently above Aliquam, and gripped the edge of his pelvis gently with her hand. Slowly, she stroked up the pelvic arch, teasing him as she adjusted her legs and got herself into a good position. The nice thing about being made entirely of bone, she mused, was the fact her legs could collapse entirely flat against each other without it getting uncomfortable. Toki’s other hand took a firm grip around one of his lower ribs, and then she lifted herself on his cock.

As she lifted up, she slid her hands on both his rib and his pelvis, timing it so they slid in tandem with the motion of his member drawing out of her- once she reached nearly the tip, Toki sank back down with a quiet and pleased sigh, taking him deep again as her hands stroked down on his rib and pelvic arch, eye lights watching him pleasantly as she tried to keep quiet.

The music would help muffle their sounds, as well as the thick blanket blocking out the light and general house noise over top the cradle- but they had to do this quietly, or they would be waking up their children.
“Papyrus,” She crooned his name in an enthralling tone, “Do you like that~?”

"Oh god yes." He whispered, before he grit his teeth, "I want to lose myself... But I don’t want to hurt you..." He hissed gently.

“You haven’t gotten to have me since before the twins, Pap.” She purred, and bounced again. Her mouth came down, and she nibbled his neck. “I’ve got a high defense, love. Cut loose- you’re not going to hurt me,” she promised with a purr. “Lose yourself in me. Make me lose myself in you.” She nipped him gently, oh so careful with her teeth against his bones. “Do it,” she urged. “I want to forget everything but you right now.”

He shivered and glanced down at her. "..." He kissed her gently, and then he reached up and gripped her horn. "Toki... I love you so much." He purred, before the look in his eyes changed.

*Follow the urge. Let the instinct take hold.*

He kissed her, and then he grabbed her shoulder and turned her to press her over the couch arm.

Toki was pressed face first over the couch arm, a soft grunt escaping her as she shifted, carefully bracing her elbows as she took half a second to get situated. This left her back bare to him, bones and shoulder blades warm and ready for his touch. “Mmm~” She rocked her hips back gently into him- the change in position had disengaged them, but the new position left her wide open for him to take control if he so desired. The hold on her horn was new and nice, and she kept a nice, submissive position.

However, Toki piped at him, low and warm, and egged him on eagerly.

He stroked her hips gently and leaned in to kiss her neck, before he began to move his hips to thrust into her. "Mmmhhh~"

Toki arched her back, taking the position for what it was, for a time, and letting him thrust to his souls content. As he kissed her neck and rocked his hips into hers, Toki shifted and rocked back into him, a soft groan escaping her. She shifted and bucked back into him, challenging him just slightly from below him.

Papyrus held her firmly and gave a deep moan into her eat, before he bit into her shoulder and picked up his pace, growling quietly as he did. "T-Toki... fuck..." He snarled quietly.

The bite against her shoulder felt good in a way it probably shouldn’t, and she arched into him with a sharp buzz of pleasure. Her hips bounced back against his own, fingers clawing gently against the couch, and Toki’s mouth fell open. “Ah, P-Papy, yes~” She crooned eagerly. It had been so long since either of them had gotten this- and she was worked up from the dream prior- she could already feel her edge coming. “S-shit, nnn~”

He unfortunately hadn't had such a dream, so his rile was still growing, and he'd have a long way to go before he came, even with his body melded with his wife’s.

Toki shifted and squirmed under him, and managed to rotate under him with a moment of awkward positioning so she could face him. Face down was good- but face up? Face up means she could nip back, and her hands could play too. Her back bowed against the arm of the couch, pushing her breasts up against his chest, and leaving her neck bare for him to nip at. Her hands fisted in his ribs, stroking as her legs hooked over his hips.

Stroking her toes up the backs of his femurs, Toki met his thrusts with shaking and rolling thrusts as her breaths came in heavy pants, and Toki’s mouth nipped and nibbled over his shoulder, teeth
leaving faint marks along the bone in her desire fueled haste as she marked him for hers. “Mine~” She moaned breathlessly. She was close, trying to hold on to the edge for him as her walls fluttered and clung to him tightly.

"Mmnh~" He groaned happily at her giving him attention and he held her a little tighter to himself as his hips continued to thrust, rocking into her with a near bruising pace. "Nnh~ yours... a-and you're mine." He hissed happily.

“I’m yours~” She crooned. Toki held out for a little longer, her attention she was giving him stuttering as her focus faded shakily as her end drew near. Eventually her edge came, and she toppled over however, and she came before Papyrus, barely managing to keep a shout from falling forth as her body arched back, thrusting her chest forwards as she gasped his name with a near forced quiet. Her walls clamped around his cock, and she milked his member tightly, legs hooking over him as she came. “Ah~ Papyrus~”

"My Toki... M-My beautiful wife." He purred, kissing her where he could while he let her ride her climax out, "Nnh~ You feel so tight around me~" He nuzzled his face against her chest as he groaned.

Toki trembled, and rode out her orgasm against him. When she came down, she was panting and flushed- but she knew he hadn’t come yet. So, Toki rolled her hips gently, flexing around him and milking his cock manually, hands coming to tweak at the vertebrae of his neck. “You’re so big,” she murmurs, “so thick... You fill me so full,” she purrs, “you always do~”

"Only for you, my darling." He cooed, leaning his head back before he began to rock his hips and continue his thrusting pace as he had before. "Mmmnh~"

Toki rocked with him, and leaned up to nip at his collarbone and sternum, lathing her tongue along them gently and then mock sucking lightly on one of his upper ribs as her hands stroked his neck. Her hips bucked and rolled into his, slightly sore from lack of use and then sudden over use- but she wasn’t going to complain. Not when she had been lacking his touch for so long, and he hers.

"I love you~" he whispered again as he began to pick up his pace, "hnnn... ahh... fuck... Oh you're s-so good... after so long~" he then lowered himself and hugged her tightly, pinning her arms at her sides as he started to buck his hips more wildly.

With her arms pinned to her side, Toki couldn’t touch him as well. Her hands could stroke up and down the broad bones of his arms however, so that’s what she did, sliding in and out of the spaces between his bones, trailing in and out of seams that only her daintier bones had access too. “I love you too," She purred, legs loosening a little over his hips to accommodate his more wild and frantic pace, “I love you so much…” her mouth peppered kisses along his neck, before she tilted hers back, and bared her chest and neck to him to do whatever with he could wish. “So strong," she purred, “my strong Papyrus, holding out for so long… you wont have to hold out any more though, my love. Let go.”

Papyrus slowed for a moment at her words, before he snarled and moved once more, grabbing her by the shoulders and now just holding her down as he positioned himself on his knees and began to fuck her without relent, truly pounding into her body after so long without having his mate’s touch.

The pace was rough- damn near painful- but Toki withstood it as her body adjusted to his bruising thrusts. She gasped softly, mouth falling open slightly, soft pants of heated air escaping her as her used sex rolled against his. Toki rocked into his motions, encouraging with her touch, her soft sounds, her submission. Papyrus was skeleton- but he was also beast as well, if only partly. It was easy to forget that, with how well mannered he was. But, Toki had introduced him to sex during her
first heat- and had kept him sated many a time after. But now the beast had been denied his mate for far too long- and it was time to sate his hunger.

It was kind of hot to see him come so undone too.

Indeed he was coming undone and with losing himself came accompanied with carnal habits, meaning he'd start to bite her; delicately in some places, while harder in others. He'd go from only leaving small specks of glowing orange saliva, to full on bites that left teeth marks in her bones.

It felt so good to lose himself for her.

She took every one of his bites, even the ones that sunk into the soft flesh near her breast, drawing out glowing green blood that rolled heatedly down under his daze. The bites hardly registered under the haze of sensation from his touch, and Toki rolled her hips against his, before piping, not quite as quietly as she probably should have. She piped to him, a queen to her mate, as he lost himself in her, and she let him mark her. His teeth marred her bones faintly, rending faint scrapes and harmless bruises in the wake of her defense.

It felt good to let him loose himself.

“My Papy~” She croons softly, heat pooling in her bones again. It curls in her middle again, that invisible spring of heat that signals her second orgasm coming swiftly without her meaning for it to. Shit- she was so sensitive to his touch…

The piping that went off seemed to spur him on further and he ended up pushing her a little against the side of the couch, giving grunts of effort as he thrust into her harder and faster. "Toki... Hhhahh... Toki..."

“Ah- P-Papy, hhnn, hah- Pap~” She met each of his thrusts with her own from below, their pelvises grating together with heated friction. The arm of the couch groaned below the pressure he was putting on it, bowing just faintly under the pressure the guardsman was putting into it as he pushed her into it.

Toki shuddered and bucked, feeling her edge rising as his harder thrusts rose up. It didn’t take long for him to send her over again- and she lurched up as she came again, and her mouth closed over his clavicle with a snap as lights danced through her min, her body clamping around his again. “Mmm~”

This time, even when she came, he didn't stop, rather his bites roughened as his thrusts did, and he began to grunt with each thrust that roughly clacked their hips together.

Toki could simply hang onto him the best she could and ride it out, as his bites left deeper and deeper marks against her bones, fangs poking holes into her shoulders as his larger and the different shape of his skull let him take more of her frame into his mouth at a time. “Ah~” All the same, the sound that came from her mouth didn’t sound like she disliked the bites.

He looked at her when she gave that sound but didn't relent, rather just pressed on her more and growled as his pounding sped up, jerking her body with every last thrust.

His growl had her trembling faintly, a shiver down to her core as she was squished down more into the couch.

There was a creak of wood, and the arm of the couch gave a little bit more under his onslaught.

Toki opened her mouth once she came down from her orgasm, and bit down on his collarbone, meeting his thrusts with a nip and a rock of her own hips. Her pelvis was starting to hurt and her own
motions were slowing, tiring- but he wasn’t slowing, wasn’t even hesitating in his pacing. He was almost frantic, almost- feral. She had told him to let go- but, she had to wonder how far he’d gone.

She shuddered, eye lights an aroused but exhausted green as she leaned back to look at him the best she could under the onslaught of his thrusts, baring her neck to him again.

His eyes flashed when she bit his collarbone and he snarled loudly, before he sank his teeth into her shoulder again. This time though, he didn't relent and the fullest of his bite came to her shoulder.

Crrk

Denting and cracking the other skeleton's shoulder as he seemed to be growing desperate now in his thrusts, growing close to release with each pound into his wife, Papyrus’ didn’t quite seem to realize fully what he was doing as he was lost in base instincts.

Her left shoulder splintered under his fangs, and Toki choked on her summoned tongue, head tossed back as pain seared over her shoulder. Her hands fistied on his against him, and she went still instinctively, striving not to make him worsen the bite.

Oh yeah- Papyrus wasn’t home.

There might have been more beast in her husband than Toki might have originally thought- and she might have poked a little too far.

"Kii... K-Kiii..." he vocalized ever so quietly, despite how loud he was moments before with his thrusts, but it wasn't long before he hilted into her, and snarled out in bliss as he filled her with his load, a load that kept coming... and coming... nine months worth of time finally releasing into her body where it belonged.

Toki whimpered as his load flooded her, his seed filling her walls, and then flooding back out around his member as she had no womb formed for it to flood into. She panted as his faint murmur of what might have been a mumbled version of her name registered to her, and Toki trembled under him, trying to keep her shoulder stable.

She shook under him, body sore and achy, also content full as well as in pain. Toki was a bundle of sensations- and waiting to see what her husband would do next- and if he would release his teeth from her shoulder.

The bite tightened a little more, but it then fell slack as he slumped over her, his eyes closing as he sighed in exhaustion, "Nnnyeh..."

His bite tightening made her whimper- she couldn’t stop it from happening, and she shivered under him. “Hhhh…” She panted lightly. Well... She’d asked for him to go wild. And... Well, he had. She just hadn’t accounted for him having the same bite strength as his father. Or similar. Goodness.

Ow.

“Mm... Papy?” She shifts hesitantly under him. “Is... that you?”

"Mmmmhh...?" A tired groan, it's him alright.

“Ah... that is you. Good... Can... you scoot down a bit please?” She squirms. She’s not going to complain- if she does, Papyrus sure as hell isn’t going to let loose like that again. That was hot as hell- she just needs to learn how to handle it better. She was doing fine until she’d nipped him again. Then he’d gotten aggressive that last time- so she’d just need to be careful about what she did.
“You’re squishing me a little bit, love. And uh, the couch arm sounds like it’s going to fall off.”

He whined quietly, but nodded and slowly pushed himself so they were now resting on the body of the couch rather than the arm, "Nyeh... Oh god... I’m exhausted... Wh-what happened?"

She was fairly limp under his touch, but held her shoulder stiffly so as not to jostle it. Toki was a bit of a mess, covered in bite marks, with a nifty looking one on her breast that was bleeding slightly. The exhausted skeleton blinked up at him slowly. “You don’t… Remember?” She inquired softly. “At all? We uh… Well, you cut loose.” She said. “You let go. Uh… Completely.”

He blinked once, then he sat up fast, "WHAT?! O-Oh stars, your shoulder!” He gasped, immediately worried for her, as she had no doubt predicted.

The fast motion jarred where she was still connected to his member, and she groaned. “Ah- Ow, Pap, ow. Easy- It’s okay. I told you to let go, didn’t I?”

He whined quietly, as if he were a guilty dog who had done something particularly bad, and his eye lights roved worriedly over her as he looked down upon her. ”Toki... I... I'm sorry...!”

"It's okay, Pap, really... You, hah, can just fix up my shoulder and I'll be fine? I mean, you were pretty pent up- it makes sense that you'd be a little... Well..." She pauses and winces as she shifts under him. She is very well used. "I'm not actually sure what that was. I will enjoyed most of it- it was hot to see you let loose like that. I think I just... I dunno... Set off your... Inner beast or something? I'm not sure what to call it."

"Father calls his 'Unhinged'." He murmured quietly as he reached and took her shoulder into the cradle of his hand to release healing magic. He aimed to ease some of her pain, if not heal the poor shoulder he bit down on.

Her shoulder responded well to his magic, as her body always did. The bone hadn’t fragmented or fully shattered- so the cracks sealed up once more, flowing back together into solid bone and stinging slightly as it settled. Any other nicks and chips healed as well, and her general ache in her upper torso eased some. She reached up to wipe the slightly bloody ooze off her boob. Apparently the flesh part could bleed. “Unhinged is a good description.” She said. “You were... feral. It was kinda hot, really. You uh… have some stamina when you’re like that.”

He rubbed his head as he slowly let his magic fade, allowing her the chance to slump where she laid. "Well... I am the son of my father..." he chuckled quietly, "I have beast blood within me, though diluted it might be."

She gently extracted herself from him, and eased upwards on the couch. The arm wobbled dangerously as she braced on it, and she listened for a moment.

The twins didn’t seem to have woken, which was good. The music had done its job.

“Even Tenebris has to let his beast out. I don’t think I’ve ever seen you let yours out.” Toki said gently, shifting carefully to sit. She winced. “Ah... ow. Wow, I haven’t been this sore since my first heat. Still not as bad as having the twins. Are you okay?”

"I'm fine.” He sighed. “I'm mostly just worried about you…” he told her with a shaky laugh, leaning down to press a gentle kiss to her teeth.

“I’m alright, Pap. You healed up that bite.” Toki kissed him back gently all the same, and nuzzled him quietly. “You don’t need to worry, okay? We’ll just… practice when it comes to… well, you
letting loose."

He nodded gently and kissed her yet again. "I love you so much."

"I love you too." She said softly. "Now, c’mon. We need to, uh… Clean up. The couch is a mess… We might have broken the arm too."

"I'll fix it, shhh~" He laughed quietly. "No one will notice~"

"I'll notice." She rolls her eyes. "Now c’mon, up. In case you hadn’t noticed, y’ kinda flooded me. And the cushion. You were a little pent up, my love. We’re going to want to wipe this up before we flip the cushions."

"A little?" he teased, before he sighed and fell back, "I'm going to sound like my brother.... but first? I'm just gonna.... yeah... crash." He chuckles.

"Then crash on the other side of the couch," Toki laughs and prods his ribs. "I'll get the couch cleaned up while you nap," She says.

He sighed and closed his eyes, his head falling back, "God I love you." he sighed quietly.

Toki grunted, and then rolled him down the couch. "I was serious about moving, you great big lump." She laughed. Once she’d managed to roll him- which was a feat in itself involving lots of pulling, tugging, and the swinging of very naked breasts near his face- she set to mopping up the couch with their soiled clothes, and turning the cushions.

Aliquam was happy to be exhausted like this, his breathing slowed down after a while to show that he indeed had passed out again.

Toki rolled her eye lights, draped a blanket over her husband, and went to go properly clean up.

By the time she got back, freshly washed, with a hitch in her step that was entirely her husband’s fault, she just managed to catch the tail end of someone knocking on the door. “Pap!” She calls, speed limping for the living room with a wet washcloth and a pair of pants she had intended to use to clean up Papyrus with. “Up! Someone’s here!”

He groaned and looked up at her, "what...?"

She repeated what she said and flung the pants and the washcloth at him.

Though as it was repeated to him he got up and groaned, "Hang on!" he called out.

Toki left him to get wash off his pelvis with the wash cloth, and to slip on the pants and replace the shirt from before, which was still clean. In the mean time, she took the bottles of milk and went to put them in the fridge, where they would keep for a later date.

When she got back out to the living room, she glanced to Papyrus to see if he was done.

He was, and now making his way to the door, looking back to her to make sure she was decent as well, before he turned and opened the door.

There was a guard standing at attention at the door, though one arm was raised to knock once more. As Papyrus opened the door, he lifted his arm into a respectful salute, before nodding to Toki.

“Papyrus, Sir- we just apprehended a human who keeps claiming to be cowardice. He seeks refuge from Cruelty, or so he claims.”
He raised a brow at that. "The Anti-heart, Cowardice?" he questioned.

“Ah… yes." The guard nodded. “That’s what he keeps claiming. He seeks refuge, and wishes to speak with… Well, either you or Toki.”

He shifted his jaw, and then looked to Toki, "Do you want to cover this or do you want me to?" he asked.

Toki grimaced, and glanced away. “… I’ll do it.” She says. “I’m the Boss Heart for Kindness- it’s kind of my job to handle these anti-hearts. Just… stay with the kids. I’ll handle this guy.” She’d go too, with a hitch in her step and everything. “Just… I need to find my shoes first.”

He leaned down and kissed her gently, fixing her with a firm look. "Let me know if you need me, just call for me and I’ll be there for you." He told her sternly.

“I know you will be." She kissed him gently back, and slipped her shoes on. “Keep an eye on the twins- and get the laundry going.”

"Can do." he chuckled, kissing her gently before letting her go.

And with that, Toki grimaced, and gathered herself up and headed off to go see this supposed Anti-heart.
Chapter 83

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And enter Cowardice. He’s gonna be a fun little character for however long he lasts~ Also Silver came up with the name for Cowardice, so yeah :D more you know.

"Listen I know you're probably, ah... reasonable monsters, m-maybe we can work something out right?" The male voice stammering to the guards was clearly unnerved, terrified, as akin to his namesake, "You know? M-Maybe these chains aren't necessary, I mean, you're big, I'm small, you're strong, I'm weak?"

The voice itself is what drew Toki’s gaze as she made her way to him, and she made a face as she picked up the stammering tone. The guards didn’t respond to the human, only glanced to Toki as she made her way over to them.

The tall horned skeleton arched a brow at the man the guards had detained, and offered him a sharp-toothed but kind smile. Innocent until proven guilty- if he was hiding from Cruelty, maybe he could help them find Cruelty. “Sorry about the chains,” she said, “We’re not taking any precautions though. We know the power of a boss heart- and we don’t really want to know what an Anti-heart can do.” She gives him a once over, taking in his looks.

"Oh well of course! I understand that of course, yes, yes, yes!" he gave a nervous smile, his glasses half-hanging off his nose, "I mean, after everything’s that happened! You would want to make sure that no matter what happens the monsters are safe, you guys are good at that."

“We’re not as good as we would like to be.” Toki said, eyes roving over him. He was thin and wiry-with thick glasses askew on his face. She reached out to fix them, so he could see her properly. He had dark black hair, and the typical eyes for an Asian man. She tilted her head. “So I was told you came here seeking refuge from Cruelty- and that you claim to be Cowardice. I’m Toki, by the way; Boss heart of Kindness.”

"O-Oh yeah, I know you're Kindness!" he stammered, flinching backwards from her until his glasses had been pushed back. "O-Oh... thank you," he said quietly, fixing his glasses by crinkling his nose, before he cleared his throat, "Yes... I'm... ah..." he then sighed and took a deep breath, "I'm Koshinu Tamashi!" He introduced himself, "Carrier of the Anti-Heart Cowardice!"

“Koshinu Tamashi.” She blinked, and internally grimaced as she translated his name. That… was a bit nail on the head. Given the fact that anti-hearts remembered their past lives, she had to wonder if karma had a sick sense of humor when Koshinu’s parents had him. “I’m not Kindness.” She grimaces faintly. “Cruelty calls me that. Please- refer to me as Toki. I’m not just my soul color- and you’re not just Cowardice. If you are, that is. Would you mind if I…” She motioned to her own chest, and then to his- a soul check was the easiest way to tell.

Boss souls were different than non-boss souls. That was the only way not to lie. And the Anti-hearts lacked magic to pop souls anymore- or at least Cruelty obviously lacked magic.
His hands moved over his chest protectively, looking a little uneasy. Souls were private things to a lot of beings- and to one as old as he was, it was definitely private. Though he simply swallowed and sighed, before nodding lowering his hand. "Right, okay... Yeah... I know you'd want to be sure..." He murmured.

Toki nodded. “I’m not going to be cruel about it, Koshinu.” She approached him carefully, and crouched down. Toki offered him a quiet smile, and tugged on her own. “I see yours, you see mine-fair’s fair, right?” Hers appeared in front of her chest for him to see, as she reached out with her magic and drew his forth as well, coaxing it gently from his chest with a few gentle touches so she could examine and compare the colors of the souls. Papyrus was orange- she knew Bravery. Cowardice was the opposite of that shade- so it wouldn’t be too hard to tell, once she saw it.

He looked at the gentle green color and it seemed to distract him long enough for her to coax his soul from him, though it didn't stop him from shuttering roughly.

"Oh g-goodness..." he groaned, before looking at his own soul, almost as if he hadn't seen it enough before.

Where the color of Bravery was like the sun, orange and fiery and bright, Cowardice was dark and dim, like a dark amber stone that had been polished until it shone. Toki brought his soul closer, side by side with her own, and peered at it. It was the same size as hers, but his seemed faded and worn, torn by scratches and scars. She frowned, and cupped his soul gently, warming the seemingly cold heart with her magic as she held it.

“You poor man,” She said softly, true and honest empathy in her voice. “Time really hasn’t been kind to you, has it? Whatever left these marks has hurt you deeply…”

He shuttered again, then looked up at her quietly. "..." He opened his mouth as if to speak, but couldn’t seem to find the words. After a moment, though, his gaze lowered again. "I... I seek sanctuary..." He murmured.

“So you do.” She murmured. She let his soul return, and tucked her own away. “You’ll be under watch,” she says, “because… well, we can’t be too careful anymore. But… I’m pretty sure we can grant sanctuary.”

Once his soul was tucked away, he smiled at Toki pleasantly, "Thank you, Miss, I will not forget your given mercy to me." He bowed to her gently before he looked up at the guards. "Ya'see? We're all friends right? Heh... I guess I should next be saying, ah... lead the way to where I ah... hope to stay... yes?"

“My home is open to those seeking shelter from Cruelty.” Toki said softly. After all- you held your friends close, but held your possible enemies closer. She wasn’t going to house him among civilians and then find out he killed someone when they let their guard down. It would be just like Cruelty to send in a sleeper agent… She glanced up to the guards, and nodded. “You can let Mister Koshinu free from the chains now.” She says.

They hesitate, but nod, and release him from his bindings. “We’ll go inform Undyne where he’ll be. She’ll want to ask him some questions.”

“And questions she can ask him.” Toki says once he’s free. She turns sharp eyes to him, the kind smile not leaving her face. Kind she might be, but she was very done with Cruelty’s games. “I’m sure he’d be all too willing to help us as best he can, right?”

He rubbed his wrists as the chains were removed and he sighed in relief, before he smiled up at her
sheepishly, "Yes, of course! Whatever you ask of me!"

“Good.” She smiled at him kindly, and motioned the shorter man to follow her. She turned, keeping him to her side instead of behind her, and then began to lead him for her house. She’d have Papyrus move the twins into their room for the time being- while they cleared their guest and made sure his intentions were just.

“So,” she hummed softly, “why did it take you so long to come seek sanctuary?”

He followed her quickly, sticking nervously close, but upon being asked the question, he slowed a little bit. "... Well... I'm not exactly brave, I couldn't muster up the strength to leave early on..."

Her smile fades little, but she nods. "You can be more than your soul color if you try." She mentions softly. "You managed now though. That's what matters. So... If you were with Cruelty... Are there other Anti-hearts with him too?"

"Yes, there is... One." He replied, "The Yellow heart."

"The yellow heart?" She inquired. "You're sure it's Corruption?"

He nodded. "Yes. Corruption is their spokesperson."

She paused, nearly missing a step. So many things clicked into place- how easily people seemed to be swayed, and how good people could be turned bad so quickly. Even without their magic, the Anti-hearts would still probably have tricks up their sleeves. "That... That would explain a whole lot about how Cruelty keeps turning decent people into these terrible, terrible people..."

"I fell behind in the food chain, and I knew that once I served my purpose... well..." He rubbed his head and sighed.

Toki ground her teeth, and sighed. "Yes." She said. "I know." She glanced to him, and tilted her head, making her horns glint in the light. "You should know that here is not likely very safe. If you’ve been with Cruelty this long, you know, undoubtedly, that I am a target. We’ll do our best to keep you safe- but there are no guarantees. Any information you give us is going to be helpful in stopping Cruelty.” Toki glances back to the road, and waves off the guards that look at her with concern. They adjust their grips on their spears, eying Koshinu warily.

It’s sad, that they have to be so wary. But it is good that they are- they’ve been trained well- and their wariness will help to stop more deaths, she hopes. Toki glances back to the man accompanying her. “But... Tell me something, Koshinu. Be honest with me, before I welcome you into my home. Were you a... willing participant in Cruelty’s plot to rid the world of monsters? Do you share his racist views? Or did he bully you into helping him?”

"I was a tag-along in the beginning, he made me think he was right... But long he did... I didn't like it anymore... His methods were no longer as harmless as he claimed they would be. And I began to think enough was enough... Especially after I saw what he did..." he trailed off, his gaze lowering.

“I doubt he meant them to be harmless at all, Koshinu.” Toki grimaces, but his trailing off is noticed, and she glances to him. “I don’t know who is right and who is wrong, Koshinu. He made me doubt my conviction too, at one point. But no one deserves to be locked up underground- and no one deserved to be ostracized for their soul color. I think monsters and man were in the wrong- and everything spiraled out of control. But... The boss hearts did nothing to stop it- so I suppose it’s my fault- or my... prior self’s fault too. Now... What did you see? There is a lot that he has done.”

He shifted his jaw, then he shook his head slowly, looking at her quietly, "I... uhm..." he then looked
away, not wanting her to change her mind about helping him, so staying quiet.

“If it’s something that I need to know, please tell me.” She glances to him and purses her teeth tightly. “You’re going to be expected to answer everything, Koshinu, or there is probably going to be a lot of problems in letting you stay here. The monsters... They’re going to be very wary about having an Anti-heart here. But... I’m a firm believer in being more than your soul color. So... Please. What did you see?”

"The large beast...The one that he had captured after the fight that... killed your brother.” He started hesitantly.

It takes a lot for her to not reflexively flinch. But that doesn’t stop the furl of anger that bubbles up from within her, raising the ambient temperature around her a few degrees, before she quashes it with a harsh fist and cools it. Grief instead floods her, and her soul hurts in her chest. Han... “I see.” She swallows. “That was a long time ago. You know... It’s June.” She says, “It’s been exactly a year and some change since Han was killed. That’s... heh.” A sad laugh escapes her. “That’s kind of morbidly ironic that you turn up now. With everything going on, with all that’s happened and being a mother, I had missed the anniversary of my brother’s death. Thank you for reminding me, Koshinu. I need to light some incense for him.” Shame curled in her belly. She’d been so preoccupied with everything going on that she had missed it.

It had been three days ago.

She shook her head, taking a shaky breath before she could let it unsteady her. She couldn’t get knocked off balance with this one. “But I see. I... I see. That would be Tenebris Gaster, the former Royal Scientist- and my father in law.” She gave him a moment for that to settle in as she eyes the house coming into view. She spots Papyrus at the window, knowing he’d probably heard her talking, and was quick to try and straighten her face into something less upset looking. She just hoped he hadn’t seen the upset on her face. Koshinu wasn’t a monster- and reading a skeleton’s face was hard. But, to another skeleton, it was pretty easy to see that she was upset about something. “Come- this is my house. My husband is home right now- so you’ll be meeting him too, before Undyne comes.”

He was thankful he didn’t have to say anything more. She had completely gone off track at the mention of her brother. It was unintentional on his part, but he felt a throb of guilt in his own heart. "Of course... I'm right behind you..." His guilt rose higher and he spoke again. "B-But! If it's all right... I'd like to pay my respects... I know what he did. He was a hero for our country. And Cruelty or not, I respect those who fight for us.” He requested.

Toki had, admittedly gone off track. But being reminded suddenly that one had forgotten the anniversary of their brother’s death... That wasn’t easy. She swallowed as she guided him up the stairs, and headed towards the door. “Han was a good man.” She said. “He had just found happiness- and it was taken from him.” She exhales sharply, and shakes her head. “I don’t mind if you pay your respects. He deserves it- he did a lot for everyone, even after he left the service.” Her music loving muscle head of a brother had been a good man.

Toki’s soul mourned him still.

He nodded and offered a small smile, but it fell and he took a half-step back as Aliquam opened the door and stepped out.

The tall skeleton didn’t hesitate in embracing his mate firmly. "Toki... I'm here." He murmured gently.
She shuddered as her husband embraced her, and looped her arms around him gently. She gave him a soft squeeze, bones rattling with a noisy shiver, but didn’t let herself crack. She could do that later—not when there was a strange man there to see. She took a deep breath to steady herself against him, and glanced up. “I’m okay.” She said softly. “We, uh… We missed Han’s Anniversary.” She said. “We need to light some incense for him tonight. Ah… Papyrus- this is Koshinu Tamashi. He’s here to seek refuge from Cruelty— and he’s going to tell us anything and everything he can about Cruelty.”

"Koshinu." He repeated quietly.

'Coward.' The meaning stood out to the tall skeleton with certainty.

He gave a slow nod and with one arm, squeezed her as he extended the other to shake the smaller man’s hand. "My name is Aliquam." He introduced himself calmly.

Koshi smiled hesitantly and reached out, taking the offered hand and shaking it nervously. "Pleased to meet you, sir...!"

Toki grunted lightly as he squeezed her, and elbowed him gently. She was still a little tender from their rather rough round of sex. And, now that she thought about it, the house smelled like they had… well, been busy. She managed to force a flush down, and hoped the human couldn’t smell it. “He’s going to be staying with us.” She says. “At least until he’s cleared for a place for his own.”

She leans up though, under the guise of kissing his cheek, and murmurs softly to him so Koshinu can’t hear her. “We’re moving the twins into our room until he’s out of the house. I’m not taking chances.”

He nodded and once he released the human’s hand, he rose to his full height, intimidating the Cowardice heart with a sharp once over. "I'll go check on the children." he told her gently, before he turned to go inside, giving her hand a gentle squeeze before he left her with the smaller man.

Toki watched Papyrus head inside, and motions for Koshinu to follow her. “Come in, please. We’ll go prepare some tea, and then get settled in the living room.” It would give Papyrus time to get the kids upstairs and things moved into their room. “Undyne will be along shortly, and you’ll need it. She can be…” She pauses, and chuckles. “Intense.”

The skeleton leaves him to follow her, and pads straight for the kitchen. She gives the living room a glance, eye lights roving over the urn on the fireplace mantle, and her aura pings sadly.

"Thank you, Ki-… I mean... Toki..." he corrected himself as he followed her, keeping his hands close to himself, though as he passed the living room he could see Aliquam now holding his children. The look that he had when he lifted his gaze to the human made Koshinu uneasy, and he hastened his steps to follow Toki.

Toki guided him into the kitchen, and scrubbed her face as she picked up the sounds of him hurrying after her. She heard him almost address her by her soul color, and found herself smiling faintly as he corrected himself. “Koshinu,” She says as she goes to fish out bags of tea, “What type of tea would you like? I’ve got orange blossom, green tea, black tea, and some fruit teas.”

"Some black tea sounds wonderful, thank you.” He replied as he followed her into the kitchen.

She nodded, and collected the bags. She got orange blossom down for Papyrus, and some apple tea for herself, before quietly plopping them into some mugs and adding some cold water from the tap.

Toki turned around, holding the mugs, and then casually heated the water right there in her hands. Magic had it’s uses. Once the mugs were steaming, she handed it out to him. “Just give it time to
steep.” She advises. “It’s hot too- don’t burn your hands. I can’t heal you if you do.”

He nodded and held it carefully in his hands as he blew on it, before he took a sip and smiled at her, "Mm."

Toki smiled at him quietly, and padded back towards the living room. She motioned for him to follow her, and hummed a soft sound to herself. “So,” she says, “I’m sure there are things you’d like to know. Do you have any questions you’d like to ask, before Undyne gets here?”

"Uh... well..." He took a breath, trying to think of any questions he might have as he followed her. As they came to his mind, they died before they could reach his tongue, so he gave up, and gently shook his head, before he took a sip of his tea... it tasted good and he felt himself relaxing a little.

“Alright... Well, if you have any after, we can go over them then.” She leads him back to the living room, which is devoid of her husband and children now, and gingerly runs her fingers along her mug of tea. She sips it, and cradles it, and Papyrus’ own, close, and motions to the couch. Thankfully, it had been straightened up while she had been out, so there was no sign of their activities. “You’re welcome to sit down- but mind the right arm of the couch. It’s, uh… broken.”

He nodded and sat down on the left side, keeping his mug in his lap, "Thank you." he murmured again, before he looked up at her, "I... do have one question... I hope to get off my chest."

Toki took a seat in the middle, leaving the end for Papyrus when he came back. No need for him to be put between her and Koshinu- that could just get... bad. Particularly if his beastly side was still lurking near the surface, she mused. She didn’t need him to get overly protective. “Please, ask away.” She nods with an encouraging smile.

"The... Beast... You said his name was... Ten-Something? It's about him...” he started, shifting as the front door could be heard opening.

The heavy stomping boots were no doubt Undyne as she stomped off dust and dirt- though what was undetected under the heavy armored footsteps were a more silent pair.

“Tenebris.” She nods. “What was your question about him?” She inquired. The orange blossom tea that she had for Papyrus smelled good, as the strong smell wafted through the room and covered up the smell of her and her husband’s prior activities, and she was tempted to steal a sip. The heavy steps had her pausing. “We’re in the living room, Undyne.” She calls.

"Well I’m wondering if he’s alright... Or still alive for that matter...” He didn’t know if Tenebris had survived after they set him loose... Cruelty hadn’t been particularly forthcoming with him about it- and Koshi had been kept further and further out of the loop of things as his usefulness began to fade.

"A good question.” a familiar, deep rumble resonated as said beast entered the room.

Koshi looked at him and paled.

A jolt of electricity was accompanied by a bellow of pain. He could see the hatred in the burning purple eyes, the bared fangs promising to rip his throat out if the beast ever managed to escape, and yet he backed into a corner like an animal as the prod came closer once more, pressing into his body and making him screech once more

His mug dropped from his hand as he almost immediately tumbled from the couch with a clatter as the mere sight of Tenebris caused his limbs to spasm.

Toki barely managed to catch his mug of tea with her pinky before it shattered, as the small man
practically flailed off her couch and—fainted? He fainted. Her teeth pursed, and she glanced up at Tenebris. “You just made him faint.” She says.

The fish monster following Tenebris laughed heartily, and reached down to haul the human back up onto the couch. She deposited him none too gently, and patted his cheek to rouse him. “That’s a good one. Cowardly, this one. C’mon, human. Wake up.”

Tenebris planted himself in his chair and leaned back with a rumble as Undyne moved to rouse the human.

Enough of her bothering did cause him to rouse and his eyes opened as he let out a quiet groan, "...?" he then blinked a few times, before he sat up. "What just happened..." he groaned.

“You saw old man Tenebris and fainted.” The sharp toothed fish woman blocked his view of Tenebris across the way, and she gave him a shark like grin. “So you’re Cowardice, huh?”

“Koshinu.” Toki said tartly. “He’s Koshinu.”

“But he’s the Anti-heart for-”

“And I’m the boss heart for Kindness, but if you call me Kindness, I will do unspeakable things to you during our next practice. He is Koshinu.” The smallest skeleton was having none of this labels shit. She gave Undyne a flat stare, and then scooted the orange blossom tea across the coffee table towards her father-in-law. “Here, Papa. Quinn isn’t down yet, so you can have his tea. I’ll make him more later.”

Koshinu didn't respond before Toki intervened and corrected Undyne, and he gave the skeleton a half thankful smile.

"Don't mind if I do, Toki. Thank you." Tenebris took the offered teacup.

Koshi's absentminded glance towards the owner of the voice had him look at Undyne for a split second before he looked away again, chewing his lip, before he realized. "Oh goodness, I spilled my tea... I’m very sorry..."

“Actually,” Toki lifted his mug from where it was still precariously balanced on her pinky finger, “I just barely managed to save your tea. So, here.” She offered it back out to him.

Undyne stepped back out of his way, and took post just across the way from him. She peered down at him thoughtfully, letting him see Tenebris once more, and crossed her arms. The one-eyed fish monster rumbled lightly. “Hm… Well, Koshinu, I’ve got questions for you.” She held up a voice recorder. “And they’ll be going to the Police as well, once you answer. Now- are you ready to answer my questions, or do you want to finish your gross grass-water first?”

Koshi took the teacup and murmured a thank you to Toki, before his gaze traveled over to Tenebris once more.

He survived the look this time, as instead of being a scared, hostile beast, Tenebris was in his favorite black turtleneck, looking rather fluffy as he sat in his chair, sipping his tea and being all-around relaxed.

The human took a drink, and then lowered the teacup to his lap, "I... I can do both. I have n-nothing to hide anymore."

Undyne nodded, and thumbed lightly over the recorder. “Good. The entirety of this conversation is
going to be recorded- however, I’m going to have to ask that mister Koshinu and I have this conversation alone, so there’s no interruptions from… outside sources.” She tilted her head to Toki and Tenebris. “Why don’t you both go check on Papyrus and the kids while he and I talk?”

Toki nodded slowly, and glanced to Tenebris. “I don’t mind.”

Tenebris nodded and moved to get up, "Sounds good. I too shall step out then," he rumbled, "Excuse me."

When they left, Koshi took a deep breath and looked at Undyne, "Alright," he spoke. "Ask away."

Toki too left with Tenebris, guiding the bigger monster up the stairs and leaving Undyne downstairs with Koshinu. She kept an ear open, listening to the quiet murmurings of the two beginning to talk, and then headed towards the bedroom.

She opened the door, to find her knees besieged by Honey, as the baby wobbled upright, and latched onto her. Her eye lights glanced behind her, and brightened to a happy blue as she spotted her grandpa.

“Appa!” She squeaked, butting her horned head against Toki’s knee affectionately, and then making grabby fingers up at Tenebris.

Skylar was toddling his way around the edge of the bed while Papyrus was reassembling the crib in one of the corners of he master bedroom. They were working, slowly, on walking. They weren’t very good at balancing on their own yet- neither of them had the balancing down pat- but walking while holding onto things was becoming something they were capable of. They just didn’t do it often- not when there were others they could sucker into holding them.

“Let Grandpa and Momma in, sweetheart,” Toki crooned gently, setting her tea on the nearby dresser to gently lift her up and turn her around. “There we go- go stretch your legs.”

The little horned toddler gave an excited croon, and wobbled her way surely towards one of the dressers, letting Toki, and Tenebris, slip inside.

Toki glanced back to Tenebris. “They like to be held.” She said. “Held more often than they like to stretch their legs anymore. Particularly after the… Incident. We’re trying to encourage them to toddle around.”

Skylar, having spotted her, gave a low buzz that Snuggle echoed, and Toki returned in kind.

Tenebris smiled as he entered and he scooped up the pups, nuzzling them while cooing to their guardians gently in greeting.

Aliquam, meanwhile, looked up to Toki, "Are you sure this is wise, Toki?" he asked.

Toki rolled her eyes at Tenebris. She says they’re encouraging them to walk more- and what does he do? Scoops them both up. She shakes her head fondly at him, however, and glances to her husband when he addresses her. She frowns, teeth flexing and furrowing nervously. “Not really. I once said my house would be a safe haven for anyone seeking refuge from Cruelty- and I can’t just… turn him away, just because he’s an Anti-heart, Papy.” She rubs her arm uncertainly. “That’s why I had you move the twins here. If he turns out to be dangerous, we’re both better equipped to handle him than the civilian populace. I’m… well… Me.” She’d killed before, and she knew she would do it again to
protect her children- “And you’re the best guard I know.”

The twins cooed happily, drawing her gaze briefly, as they latched onto their grandfather. Honey bumped her skull roughly to his, her horns poking his cheeks, while Skylar nuzzled his face gently to his neck with a happy croon.

"Heh... That's very true..." He agreed gently, before he looked to his father, "Of course, Father would also be a good example of why he should behave himself." He chuckled quietly.

Tenebris meanwhile was proving to be the exact opposite of what Aliquam was talking about, nuzzling into his grandbabies and cooing happily as he gave both children attention.

Toki snorted, and came closer to her husband. She rested a hand on his shoulder, something she couldn’t easily do unless he was kneeling down most times, and gave him a faintly bemused look. “My love, I am fairly certain you were enough to remind him to behave himself. Don’t think I missed the look you gave him earlier. You postured at him.” She mimicked puffing herself up some, like he had done at the door when he’d risen to his full height and intimidated the smaller man, and rubbed his cheekbone affectionately. Though a glance to Tenebris had her chuckling softly. “Oh yes. Grandpapa Tenny, most terrifying of beasties. Rawer. He’s going to nuzzle you to death.”

Honey squeaked enthusiastically, recognizing the word ‘Grandpapa’ as she head butted him again with happy gusto. Yes- this was her Grandpapa, and she loved him lots. So did Skylar- but he was more gentle about his affections.

He leaned into her hand when she rubbed his cheekbone and he smiled up at her, before he chuckled warmly. "Well he just happened to be all nuzzly when I said that."

Toki chuckled. “That he did. Good timing on both of your parts.” She smiles slightly, and then scrubs her sockets with one hand. “How are you feeling?” She asks quietly, hoping not to draw Tenebris attention. “I know you didn’t get much rest before we were interrupted. And, uh… You looked pretty tired after…” After his beast had come out to play.

"I feel a lot better." He replied with a smile, "Thank you for asking. I hope you feel fine as well."

"Indeed, with how feverish it smelled in here I could have only wondered just how much more relieved you two felt." Tenebris piped up.

It had the effect of immediately flustering his son, who hid his face with his hand. "Father, oh my god..."

Toki flushed a bright green. “Well, I’ll be feeling better when I don’t have to hide the hitch in my gait, if you know what I mean.” She quirks a faint grin to Tenebris. “I’m walking about like you are after a long weekend with the king.” She wiggles one of her brows. “Of which you don’t complain about, do you, Papa?”

"Not at all. Touché, Tokiko. Touché.” He chuckled, grinning at her.

Aliquam continued to groan where he held his face in his hands. "Toki... Father... why."

Toki patted his shoulder gently, “Oh Papy, you know Papa and I poke fun at each other often. Lots of dirty jokes and the like.” She quirks a grin to him. “He has to have someone to tease him.”

“Grandpapa!” Honey shrieked, and reached up to bap Tenebris where his nose would be- before making an attempt to reach in and play with his teeth. She liked to play with sharp teeth- her mothers, her brothers, her grandpa’s, her auntie Undyne’s. If it was sharp, Honey usually wanted to play with
Toki paused, and then blinked, shocked. “… I think that was her first full word.”

Skylar gave a fussy noise at his sister’s shriek, and hid his face in his Grandfather’s chest.

Aliquam and Tenebris were both surprised at the thrilled shriek, the latter not even bothering to stop Honey from playing with his teeth, but he did at least give Skylar a comforting bounce, cooing to him gently.

"Oh my Stars." Aliquam spoke quietly, before he smiled proudly, "Her first word."

“Heh.” Toki smiled, and cupped her cheeks. “Her first word was Grandpapa. Dawwww~”

“Loud.” Skylar mumbles faintly into Tenebris’ chest, grumbling at his sister and nuzzling into the comforting motion with a soft huff. “Nuh wan’.”

"And it sounds like Sky's was 'loud'." Tenebris chuckled, pulling his mouth loose before kissing Honey's cheeks, before moving to nuzzle Skylar, cooing softly to him.

“Oh my god.” Toki laughed. “Grandpapa and loud. That’s… I honestly don’t know what I was expecting, but it wasn’t either of those. At least it wasn’t a curse word.”

Honey happily squeaked at the kisses and gave her Grandpa a nuzzle in return. Her arms clung to him affectionately, and the little one giggled gently.

Skylar, on the other hand, puffed at his sister’s noisiness, and nuzzled into Tenebris, before settling down with a grumpy sound.

Aliquam got up and came over to take his son, smiling at his father before cooing and gently tugging at Skylar, "Come on, we'll go put you with Mama to settle down with..." he purred to him.

Skylar huffed, but turned to cling to his father, grumpily nuzzling into him. “Papa.” He mumbles faintly.

Toki smiled lightly, and went to meet him half way. “Is he getting fussy?” She asks. “I think his teeth have been bothering him. He’s been more irritable as of late.”

"Yes, teething no doubt. Next time I go into town, I can pick up some teething toys for him.” Quinn answered, handing the child over to his mother, "Though I think Honey is doing well enough through it."

Skylar cuddled up to Toki as soon as she took him, and she stroked her hand gently over his skull. He wasn’t so easy to hold anymore- neither of them were- but she made due. He curled his face into her shoulder, and closed his sockets. “Mmm…”

Toki rubbed his skull gently, rocking him soothingly. “Honey doesn’t chew right through them though. She’s got your teeth.” She points out. “He’s got my teeth- and anything that’s baby-safe is not really teething proof for irritable babies. I mean, I let him chew on my arm the other day when we were relaxing in the living room, but I can’t exactly just give him one of my bones for a teething toy.” She pressed a soft kiss to his skull, and sighed, glancing back to the mostly finished crib. “I think at this rate, we’re mostly just going to have to deal with his grumpiness. Freezing the teething rings helps- but he can break the frozen gel now.”

"Perhaps we should ask Father?" He asked, "He might know something we can use."
Toki shrugged uncertainly, and glanced over to Tenebris. She arched a brow. “He’s not paying attention, obviously,” She says, gently adjusting Skylar as he starts to chew on her shirt. “Sweetie, not my shirt.” The gentle scolding has him making a fussy sound, so Toki simply sighs, and offers her hand for chewing instead.

Sharp teeth go to town on her bones, working them over with irked grumbles.

Toki tilts her head back to her husband, and gave him a faint smile. He smiled back, then looked at Tenebris, before he cleared his throat, "Father." He spoke up to get the other's attention.

"What- yes?" The older looked at the two from where he was getting his face pushed on by Honey. Honey was having the time of her life pushing on his face- with both her hands and her horns. The nubbins weren’t sharp enough to hurt him yet, so it was mostly like a little goat playfully head butting a larger one. She made happy noises each time she managed to nudge him.

Toki motioned with her mouth towards her son, and then did a moderately creepy thing where she flexed her teeth at him, like flexible little crab legs. It would serve to draw attention to the feature that her son got from her. “Someone keeps biting through every teething ring we have- including the solid ones. So… Ideas?”

"Hmm... Have you tried giving him softened bones?” he asked, "You can make them more bendy and harder to fracture by soaking it in vinegar."

“We haven’t, no.” She shook her head. “Wont he hurt himself if he chews on those, though, even if they’re soft? I mean, I’m careful with how he chews on me, so he doesn’t just snap his little teeth off.”

"No. The vinegar breaks down the calcium and makes the bone softer. If his teeth come out, such is as it is, that's how a teething goes."

She contemplated that, and then nodded, before glancing to Papyrus. “We’ll give that a try then. Anything at this point would help, before he starts to eye the furniture. Do we have any bones in the freezer for making beef stock, Pap?”

"I think so. Unless father has been doing some snacking." A look was shot at the older male.

Tenebris held a hand up and wiggled his finger at his son. “I've been sticking to my own stock." He defended quickly.

“IT doesn’t matter if he has raided our freezer. We’ve raided his before.” She arches a brow at the both of them, and sighs as Skylar finally releases her wrist. “We kind of raid each other’s supply- it’s what living near family means.” She hums.

Aliquam settled and chuckled gently, "Fair enough, I mean, I know I bother Caeruleus sometimes..." he hummed, before he sighed and kissed her head gently, "I'll go start some bones then."

She shook her head, and grasped his arm before he could go. “You can’t.” She said. “Not yet. Undyne is still interrogating Koshinu. We can set the bones to soak shortly- I’m sure she’ll be done with her questioning here eventually.”

"Mmh…” he would have to pass through the living room wouldn't he, "Alright..."
“Unless you use your little trick.” She arches her brow. “Teleporting, that is. You use it sometimes, and sometimes you don’t.” It honestly made her think that sometimes Papyrus forgot he could teleport, in all honestly, with how little he used it. “Whatever you do, we have to keep quiet though. Either way… do we even have enough vinegar to soak a bone?”

Aliquam was thinking about his shortcut ability when Tenebris piped up. "I might have enough." he spoke, "I might be past teething age, but I always love a good bone to chew on." he rumbled with a shameless smile.

“Careful, Papa, or I’m gonna have to tell Asgore you’ve found another bone you like more than his.” Toki teased unabashedly.

Tenebris choked at that and bristled at Toki.

“Booooone!” Honey crowed, and beamed at her bristling grandpa. “Grandpapa bone.”

Toki laughed heartily, soothing Skylar as he grumbled at her. “Yes, Grandpapa likes bones, sweetie.” She grinned unrepentantly at Tenebris, and wigged a brow at him. Then she glanced to her husband. “I’m sorry if I’m embarrassing you, love. I always like to ruffle Tenny’s feathers- it keeps him spunky.”

Aliquam had his face in his hand, but he had a wide grin on his face. His broad shoulders shook with laughter.

Toki joined him, though kept her laughter quiet so as not to disturb her son. She rubbed his shoulder gently, and eventually the grumpy baby settled fully on her shoulder.

He didn’t get to settle to sleep though, before the stomping of heavy boots began to work their way up the stairs. They stop half way, obviously keeping Koshinu in her sights, but leaving her well able to speak to the three monsters in the master bedroom. “Hey!” Undyne calls. “I’ve got all of the questions answered that I needed. I’m going to take a trip to town- the police are going to want this information. With any luck, we’ll catch some of these bastards tonight.” She sounds smugly pleased.

Tenebris turned and walked to the door, pulling it open. "Thank you for your help, Undyne. Have a good day." He called to her.

“You too! Keep an eye on this punk, you three. He’s a big ass chicken, but it’s the ones that run that you can’t trust.” With that said, the monster’s footsteps retreated back down the stairs.

Toki heaved a deep sigh, and glanced to Papyrus. “You finish the crib,” She says, “Your dad and I will watch the kids. I’ll go put a couple bones on to soak for Skylar, and then get Koshinu settled into his room. Papa? You want to take Sky?” If she could get her clingy son to let her go, that was. If all else failed, she’d just have to do this with a baby on her hip.

Aliquam nodded gently, "You got it, Toki." Her husband gave her a smile, and went to resume finishing putting the crib back together in their room.

Tenebris took Skylar from her with only a little fussing on the boy’s part, and smiled at the male, nuzzling him and cooing to him gently to keep him busy. "Go ahead, Toki~"

Toki smiled and nodded, and turned to head down the stairs. She had a couple bones to soak- and a new human to get settled into her house.
News came later that evening, over the television while everyone was getting settled into the house. Mark had ended up driving up and picking up Koshinu- as he was technically affiliated with a terrorist organization, they had to take him into custody.

Thanks to the information from Koshinu, however, the police managed a raid.

They caught two hundred people associated with Humans Against Monsters- though no one of high ranking. But it was a start- it was a footstep in the right direction.
Moving the crib into their room had really been… well… not necessary, since Koshinu had been taken into custody by the police. It hadn’t been all that hard to move back, however. Once they’d done that, they’d spent the night lighting some incense for Han, and then spent the evening reveling in the fact that they’d finally made headway against HAM.

Cruelty surely wasn’t going to be happy that they’d caught so many.

A few days later had Toki and Papyrus out in the park with the whole family for a family picnic. It was the beginning of summer again- so it was starting to heat up. Nothing too bad- but it made for a good enough time to go have sandwiches in the shade of the trees, and watch Papyrus try to fit down the slide with Honey and Skylar perched in his lap.

Toki’s rather fit husband did not fit down the child-sized slide very well, even if he was made of bone.

Toki was on baby duty though- she had her niece tucked against her chest, the not-so-tiny fire baby sleeping and drooling on her shoulder while Sans and Grillby were up and about preparing things and stretching their legs. She didn’t have an issue with it- she leaned back against the tree she was perched at, and hoarded her adorable niece for the time being.

If she didn’t, Tenebris would swoop in and steal her- he was quite the baby thief, her father-in-law was, and she had no idea where he was lurking.

Toki patted the sleeping skelemental’s back with an amused snort as she watched Stag come running past, with Thumper clutching his horns like a lifeline. The boy was seated on the deer- and the deer was taking him for quite the rodeo as he bucked and bounced and frolicked. Stag was amused and having fun- and Thumper was too, by his hooting and hollering.

Solstice stirred against her shoulder, making a fussy whimper, and Toki cooed, gently rubbing her fingers through her niece’s flaming hair. “Awww, that’s just your crazy Uncle Thumper.” She crooned softly.

"I feel like I’d get bucked off, and spat on, in no specific order, if I tried that." Tenebris appeared beside her as he spoke, hanging upside down from the tree.

What of his tail that did not hold him up was rattling with a childish excitement that came with the
pleasant energy of the day. Tenebris chortled happily, and then looked to Stag and Thumper, "Look at him go! I bet that's faster than he can even run." he laughed gently.

Toki startled as Tenebris’ voice appeared from above her, and craned her neck to look up at him, trying not to poke her horns into the tree bark as she did so. She ran her fingers lightly over the tiny nubs of horns that rested on Solstice’s head, and gave him a bemused look.

Thumper and Stag raced by again, the deer tossing his legs and nearly throwing the rabbit. Thumper whooped with laughter, and Stag let out his strange, bleating call, tinged with amusement, before racing off and around the play set. The good mood stemmed from the beautiful day, and the headway made into taking down Cruelty- and it seemed even the deer beast wasn’t immune to the good disposition.

"I wouldn’t be so sure," Toki laughed. “Thumper’s probably faster than you when he puts his mind to it. He’s a fast little rabbit, that’s for sure. And you probably would get bucked off and spat on- but at least Stag isn’t shitting on your lawn anymore. Or leaving dead things.” The monster might have been of a monster body when he was in his bipedal form, but his deer form, the fleet-footed golden-antlered form that Thumper was riding, was very much a basic animal with basic bodily functions. A leftover tidbit from the blood magic, no doubt- but all the same… gross. “The dead things were worse than the poop, honestly.”

"At least there's that, who knows, soon enough he might let me pet him.” Tenebris chuckled, disappearing once more into the tree before he dropped down beside her, landing much like a cat would. The big pale monster rose to his feet, leaning on the tree beside her with a pleased smile. "It's good to see everyone having fun." He sighed. "It’s rejuvenating."

"It really is.” She adjusted Solstice just slightly, rotating the infant on her shoulders so he could sit down if he wanted to without getting anything accidentally lit on fire by the sometimes-uncontrollable baby in her arms. “It’s nice to see everyone having fun. We’ve all been… well, walking on eggshells, waiting for the next bomb to drop, to be frank.” She laughs slightly. “It’s nice to just cut loose and relax. Even lil’ Sol here hasn’t cried all day, and she’s usually fussy and doesn’t like to leave Cae.”

"I'm glad she's opening up to everyone. It’s one of those little things that one wouldn't expect, but shan't complain about" he rumbled happily, before hearing a call from Aliquam.

"Father! A... ah... A little help please?” He looked up to see a slightly frantic Aliquam stuck half-way down the slide with his children in his arms. "I'm stuck!"

Tenebris blinked at the sight, before he smirked, and began to laugh, "Oh goodness, Aliquam!" he laughed, before starting over to the playground, "Coming, coming, my boy!" he chuckled.

Toki got up as well, following Tenebris over to eye her husband. A bemused laugh escaped her, as she cradled Solstice gingerly. “Oh my god, Papy, you really did get stuck.” That ass that she loved so much was wedged right between the metal sides of the slide, and he was definitely not moving.

The twins were laughing loudly though, their laughter spiraling into the air as they clung to Papyrus. “Daddy!” Honey squeaked. “Fuck! Daddy fuck!” Honey was more and more into words- and picking up things more and more. Both of the twins were, actually. Since their first words, they were absorbing language like sponges. ‘Fuck’ was not an intended curse word- so much as it was her attempt to say ‘stuck’.

“Stuck!” Skylar had it down, unlike his little sister. “Grandpapa!”
Tenebris stopped and pressed his mouth into what remained of his palm, letting out a loud 'pffffff!' sound into it as Honey unintentionally cursed, "Oh goodness..." he laughed, before he burst out laughing.

"Father!" Aliquam whined loudly, "Please! This is embarrassing! The least you could do is take the children!"

Toki laughed and reached out with her free arm. “Here- C’mere, my little clingy babies.” She took Honey, and slid her around onto her hip. The little one clung on tightly, and then Toki took Skylar, and eased him down onto his little feet.

After Tenebris had his fit of laughter, he came and took his son's hand, pulling him with a sound 'Shthunk' from the slide, allowing him to fall forward and catch himself.

"There we are, free as a bird." The elder chuckled, patting the younger male's shoulder.

Toki laughed, and eased Honey down to stand on the grass. The twins proceeded to cling to her legs, making her shuffle awkward as they weighed her down. “Free as a bird indeed.”

“Birb!” Honey croons from Toki’s left leg.

“Booob.” Skylar agrees cheerily from his mother’s right leg.

It takes all of Toki’s effort not to laugh heartily.

At least this time Aliquam was able to have a laugh with his father at the children trying so hard to pronounce things correctly.

“Save me from the cuties!” Toki laughs lightly. “I don’t want to drop Solstice, and I have little leeches stuck to me!” The twins had fastened themselves to her legs, clinging like small koalas, so shuffling was amusing.

“Daddy!” Honey crowed happily from her mother’s leg, and rubs her horns against Toki’s shin. “Uh!” She wiggles her fingers at him in demand.

He laughed at that and came over, picking Honey up and kissing her cheeks gently, "My beautiful baby girl~"

“Eeee! Keys!” Honey butted her head against his kisses, happily giggling.

“Speaking of baby girl- I think you have mine?” Grillby dusted off his hands on his pants, and approached Toki with a faint smile on his face. “May I have her back?”

“I dunno,” She tilted her head and quirked a grin to Grillby. “I kinda like her. She’s like a small, flaming bean. I might like to keep her. What do you think, Pap?” She wiggles her brows teasingly to her husband. “Think we need another one?”

He laughed happily as he nuzzled his daughter, before he looked to Toki. "Perhaps so. Would you want to go for having more children?” He asked.

She couldn’t tell if he was serious or not about that- so she’d just answer him seriously. Toki simply quirked a grin to him in response. “I do, yeah.” She nuzzled Solstice with a grin, watching as Grillby rolled his eyes at her, and then shifts the baby in her hands. “I did say I wanted a big family, I do recall.” She chuckles. “I want the twins to have lots of little siblings.”
“Ibbies!” Honey crows, and presses a sloppy kiss to her daddy’s cheek. She had no idea what her parents were talking about, but she was picking up more words, and words were good.

Grillby accepts his daughter easily, tucking her swiftly to his neck with a pleased crackling sound, and then pats Toki on the shoulder. He glanced to Papyrus and quirked an amused smile. “Have all of the kids you want,” he says, “but this one is mine.” He was wary of having any more with Sans after how Solstice’s birth had gone- but they’d discuss that later.

Her arms devoid of her niece left Toki able to gently heft Skylar up into her arms so she could pepper his face with kisses. He howled with laughter.

Tenebris was purring and rumbling loudly as he watched everyone speak of children. he himself would love to be a father again, but being with Asgore, and both with only siring anatomy... Or at least, only functioning siring anatomy…

But with all the grandchildren, he was still happy.

Such thoughts passing through his mind allowed him to settle and take a deep breath of air...

And that's when it began to change. Tenebris tasted something... something that didn't belong.

His expression fell and he took the air again, before he looked to the sky, listening, "Toki." He then spoke up.

When Tenebris spoke up and drew her attention to him, Toki had to ease up on her laughter in order to properly answer him. She eased Skylar down into the grass when he squirmed to be let down. "Huh?" She inquired. "What's up, Papa?"

He took in the air and growled quietly. "Is there very much air activity here?" He asked.

"Air activity?" She blinks, watching Skylar scoot over to cling to Aliquam's leg. "Uh... Not really, no. I mean, we get the occasional private plane practicing flying, but the air here is volatile so we don't get them often. Why?" She could vaguely hear the hum of an engine, and squinted to the sky, trying to see the plane. It could be a big one far off- Tenebris always got set on edge by the noise of the engines.

 Mostly, she thought, because they were louder than he was and he couldn't make himself louder than a plane engine.

"Something's coming closer... and the smell... It's..." he took another deep break, "Gas..."

She frowns. She could vaguely see shapes approaching rapidly. "I can see... Six planes? Maybe it's a performance group out to practice. I've seen air shows before. They're really neat." That didn't account for him smelling gas though. "Maybe there's a pilot in distress? Should I fly up with Clover and see if they're alright?"

He growled again, wary. "Be careful... That scent, it's so strong..."

"It could be a gas tank leak then." Concern grows on her face. Airplane crashes were messy- and traumatic. "They might not even know something is up until something goes wrong."

The small skeleton trots away from the play set, and lifts a hand to the sky. She tugs, and her magic parts the air. Clover comes forth at her prompting, and Toki rushes forth to hop into the saddle. She takes a moment to do up the straps so she doesn't fall off. "Please explain to everyone for me, Papa! Plane crashes are bad, and if I can prevent one, I'm going to."
"Mama?" Honey turns in her daddy's arms and puckers her little teeth, reaching for Toki as she mounts up.

"I'll be back, sweetheart!" Toki calls to her daughter. "Keep an eye on them, Pap!" She was the only one who had an air capable mount, and Sugar couldn't fly for her to take someone with her. So, Toki took to the sky on her own, Clover heaving into the air with a grunt and a sharp buzz.

Tenebris nodded, and Papyrus picked up Skylar, taking him and Honey and jogging for the house inside in case there was going to be danger. Caeruleus seemed to get the same idea, and began urging his mate to go home.

Toki flew out to meet the planes, which were flying in a staggered pattern. She was glad she didn't need oxygen, as the speed at which Clover was moving would have stolen her breath away. The buzz of her wings was heavy, drowning out the weighty growls of the engines until Toki got closer.

She leaned up once she was sure the pilots could see her, and waved her arms at them. She had no idea how to tell them that there was something wrong with one of their planes- she could smell the gasoline from here- but hopefully the skeleton flying in the giant hornet that looked fresh from the bowls of hell would let them know something was amiss.

Though... Those didn't look like any air show planes she had ever seen. They had sprayers on the wings? And looked to be leaking something. Weird.

The planes didn't stop, they seemed to be flying fine, but one of the planes then twisted, flying right at her.

"What the-" Going head on with a plane was not what she intended to do. However, Toki didn't have time to direct clover up- so they skirted just under the plane.

They barely made it, Clover having to stall her wings lest she hit the wings that skirted right over top of her. The plane clipped Toki- and one of her horns snapped off half way, lodging in the belly of the plane.

She shrieked, and clutched at her skull, clinging to the saddle as Clover was knocked ass over head by the wind of the plane blowing over the both of them.

As they fell a few feet, Clover tumbling and struggling to right herself under the sensation of pain from her summoner, Toki managed to catch sight of the big, red HAM emblazoned on the bottoms of the wings of the planes.

The big green form of the bug falling was obvious to anyone watching her, even from a distance. It didn't take Clover long to recover however- and she turned midair to speed back for the village.

Tenebris was already raising alert, warning citizens to get to the shelter of their homes.

The planes were faster than Clover, and ate up the sky faster than she could. Toki leaned into her mount to reduce wind resistance, and looked on with panic.

The two of the planes broke off as they reached the village. Four of them began to spray something over top of the village, blanketing it and the surrounding forest in a thin spray of harsh smelling liquid as the monster below began to panic.

Tenebris snarled as the danger escalated, "EVERYONE GET INSIDE!" he roared, "GO NOW!"
The Guards were moving, all trying to help get everyone to safety before anything worse could happen.

The monsters fled indoors, escaping the foul smelling liquid. As the village rapidly emptied of outside residents, the planes made a second loop, and sprayed once more. The thick liquid coated everything- and matted the fur of the guards as they helped citizens get inside.

The liquid, however harsh smelling, seemed harmless however.

Until the first set of planes came back around. Something small was dropped out of the luggage bay- and it plummeted nearly invisibly down towards the village.

However as it struck the pavement outside of the school, it exploded- and the liquid coating everything caught fire in the heat of the dried out and hot summer day. Fire rushed forth, and the screaming began, over the roar of more explosions going off.

Clover pushed harder, and reached the village in time to slam into one of the planes spraying what was obviously gasoline. Her jaws came down on the cockpit, and she bit at the glass, trying to shear through the metal.

Toki tugged upon her magic, pulling upon the massive well within her that made her a boss heart- and the sky filled with flaming bees that swarmed at the planes, trying to blind them and throw them off course, and away from her home. She threw everything into her attack- because she was the only one who could fight from the sky.

Toki was done letting Cruelty and Humans Against Monsters come into her home and hurt people. She hadn't been training for months for nothing, after all. She might have only been a civilian, but she was better now than she had been nine months prior.

Toki sent Stripe down to the house, the fat queen meant to go stay with Papyrus and her children, to keep her linked and informed about how they were doing.

She could see monsters with Earth based magic trying to fight the gasoline based Fire, and Monsters with water based magic trying to fight the fire that was rapidly consuming homes after having burnt through the gas that had acted as the fast acting ignition.

More bombs fell, blasting apart Muffet's bakery, and several homes, igniting more fires. Clover's jaws crunched through the cockpit, ripping it off of the plane and bathing the pilot in skin blistering heat.

Tenebris had by this time unhinged, now sending powerful blasts of energy flying at the planes as they flew by, hoping to shoot them down before they could cause any more damage.

The plane spiraled out of control, and went down in the park with a crash and dragging a deep furrow into the ground. Stag was there, hauling themselves through the fire to savage the pilot with their horns.

Clover locked onto one of the bombers, and having come to hover not far from the house, and Toki fed her magic as she gathered a blast of heat from within her belly.

The plane went straight for them, the other bomber heading straight for Tenebris- and Clover got her shot off first, damn near point blank.

The bombs detonated, the concussion and blast wave blowing over the hell hornet and her rider- and shrapnel puncturing the thick carapace and wings of Clover, and making Toki cry out as she shared
her pain. Clover listed to the side, trying to stay airborne- and right into the path of one of the sprayer planes.

Tenebris yelled out as he went flying from the shockwave, bowling into a house with a crash, though he was soon up and fighting again, "TOKI!" he screeched.

There wasn't any time to dodge- the plane drove into her, sharp propellers slicing through the insects carapace. Clover gave a gurgling shriek, legs coming around to cling desperately to the front of the plane as it shredded her front and the saddle holding Toki in place.

Molten hot plasma squelched from the wounded beasts jaws, and the plane began a nosedive as its engines stalled, bringing Clover, and Toki, down with it.

Toki fisted her hands in the flaming mane of the fire bug, her belly burning with the phantom sensations- and the ground rapidly approaching had her sockets widening.

Clover shot one last beam of light into the sky as the plane came down on top of her and her summoner- and then all of the bees in the sky dropped from the air, dead and dying with noisy shrieks and buzzes as the plane crushed the small skeleton under the weight of her mount and itself.

Burning fire and crushing pain consumed her- and then it was all imposing blackness was sucking her down into it's dark depths and she was falling...

Falling...

Toki opened her sockets and laughed, glancing to Papyrus as she got the jelly out of the fridge. "Love, can you hand me the peanut butter? You put it on the top shelf again, and we need it for the finger sandwiches."

"Butt flies!" Honey patted the window, where she sat on the counter, and squeaked excitedly. Outside was a butterfly, flitting around with one of Toki's flowers. "Daddy! Butt flies!"

"Butt-Ter flies, Honey." he corrected his daughter gently, before going to the shelf and picking the peanut butter from the shelf, "Sorry, but I swear to you these two are devious. I’ve got to put it up there sometimes." He chuckled as he held it to her.

"Butt-turrrrrd-flies!" The baby spotted the peanut butter as he brought it out, and let out a happy shriek. "Peebutter! Want!"

Toki laughed and took the jar gingerly. "You can have some peanut butter later, sweetheart. You always manage to get it everywhere- and I don't want to have to rassle you to get it out of your eye socket again." She grinned up to Papyrus, and leaned up to kiss his chin. "It's alright, I know. They're walking more and more, and from there the climbing is going to happen. We're probably going to put a lot of stuff up high"

He leaned down and gave her a soft kiss in return, smiling for all but the two remaining moments of peace before there was a frantic knocking at the door.

Toki blinked at the knocking, and set down her supplies. She scrubbed her hands on her legs, and then moved to open the back door. She blinked, spotting Cae. "Whoa, whoa, where's the fire?" She jokes lightly. "What's up, Sans?"
One could immediately tell someone there was something wrong. The look in the skeleton's eyes was too tense. He was trembling lightly on his feet, and he didn't even snort at the joke; in fact, he seemed to flinch, as if it was taken in bad taste. "We gotta get out of here... We need to get everyone out of here NOW." He told her.

She blinked at him for a moment, a grown tugging at her teeth. "Wait- what? Get out of here- but what- why?" The baffled woman stepped back from the door, glancing over her brother in law with a worried look. "Did something happen?"

"Toki, you just gotta trust me on this... This isn't something that can wait... We need to get what we cherish most, and get back to the underground!"

"Wh-what?" She blinked, sockets popping wide. Her mouth parted, taking in the shake to his voice, and she glanced over to Papyrus, before speaking quietly. "... Alright, Sans. Alright. I trust you." She says. "But we need to have a reason to sound the evacuation alarms..."

"They're going to attack us again... and... It can't happen again." he told her, before he told her what their enemy was bringing to the fight- though leaving out what happened at the end. She didn't need to know that- not yet.

His words had her sockets widening. "Shit." She cursed. Again meant it had happened prior, and if they had to evacuate, then the fight hadn't gone in their favor. Toki wondered who had died, and hoped they'd make it out this time. "Alright. Sound the alarm." She glanced to Papyrus. "Tell them we got an anonymous tip about an incoming attack." Not everyone knew about the resets and loads- so anonymous would have to work. "Use Papyrus's guard code to authorize it- and then get out as fast as you can. We'll be behind you." She promises.

Cae was gone fast after hearing her promise, and soon enough the alarms had begun to sound off. Immediately, as if practiced, the inhabitants of the compound were loading up and moving out to where it would be safe, most of them beginning for the mountain, as the underground would be safe.

With that said, and Sans gone, she turns, abandoning her cooking and leaving Papyrus with the kids, and races off to go fetch and crate up the cats. They wouldn't be able to withstand the explosions- and neither would Cae's dog. Sobek and Snuggle would be easier to get- but Gracie and Gael would be a bit harder to herd into their carriers.

Once she got them crated though, it would be a scramble to get what valuables she could- her scrapbook from Tenebris, emergency clothing, baby stuff and the like- packed up while Papyrus got the twins into the car.

After the twins were secured in their seats, Aliquam had gone back in and come back out with a few of his own things, tucking them away in safe places in the car before he climbed in. "Have you got everything?" The tall skeleton asked of his wife.

Toki was quick to stuff the cat carriers into the car, along with their children's irate summons. They went into a large dog kennel though, to keep from shredding the seats. Stag had also folded themselves up into the car, laying in deer form along the floor boards of the back seats. It was a tight fit, but they made it work. Stag wasn't going to be left behind either- where Toki went, Stag went.

At the question, Toki paused, and then made one last dash into the house. She came back out with Han's urn, and tucked it gently into the back of the car, before flinging herself into the front seat. She buckled in shakily, and nodded. "Y-yeah." She'd gotten all of their important information, and her laptop as well, so they had everything legal they would need. As she got settled, seeing Grillby in Sans truck as they pulled out ahead of them, and Tenebris with Thumper and his car not far behind
their rig, Toki paused, and frowned. "... We've got everything that can be taken..." Her bees couldn't- her hives would be destroyed, but they didn't have time to load them up into her truck. It would take hours- and they didn't have that much time.

"I'm sorry about your bees..." He told her, as if he already knew why she mourned. But he smiled all the same to her. "I'll help you start a new hive. Our own colony from the beginning." He promised, before he started the car and began to pull out with the line.

They were near the rear, and as the last few cars retreated into the trees, an overwhelming smell of gasoline blew in on the next breeze, making Aliquam gag silently.

He hit the nail on the head as to why she was upset, but there was nothing to be done for it. Her entire life work would go up in flames- again. Though this time, everything would be gone- not just her house. "I'd like that." She manages to whisper, and laces her fingers tightly with his.

The smell of gas reached even her, and she had to croon gently to the twins as they fusses about the smell. Toki rubbed Quinn's knuckles soothingly, having caught the lurch in his middle out of the corner of her eye.

She glanced in the rearview mirror in time to see the smoke start to rise up, along with the flames, and had to glance away. "He's getting what he wanted." She says sadly. "We're going back to the Underground..."

"Not for long..." he promised, reaching and taking her hand tightly, cradling it in the firm grasp he held for her. "They may have won this battle... but the war isn't over." he told her, "We'll get our home back."

She smiled shakily. "We're going to have to rebuild again." The boom-crack of an explosive going off rattled the car, even this far off, and her fingers tightened over his. She lifted his hand and pressed it to her skull, rubbing one of his knuckles gently over the crack that went down along her forehead with a soft sigh. "Everything is gone..."

"Not everything. We have each other. We have our family." he told her, his hand slipping down to caress her cheek, "Everyone is safe."

"Yeah..." She leaned her face into his touch, and shuddered gently as they listened to another bomb go off. It was farther off this time. But still audible. She was thankful the thick trees covered the road, or the line of cars would be visible from the sky. "We have each other, and we have our family." She heaves a deep sigh, and leans over in her seat to nuzzle to his arm- up until one of the twins starts to cry, where in she turns, and reached back to offer her hand to their distraught child.

"Where are we going to stay?" She asks quietly once Honey stops crying.

"My old home" he replied, "Despite everything that's happened... You'll love it there, and so will the children."

She smiled quietly, reclaiming his hand once more. "I’m sure I will. It was beautiful there… It’ll be nice to get to spend time in your childhood home.” He’d been living with her in hers- it would be nice to get to spend some time with him in his. She glanced at him thoughtfully though. “It was mostly empty last I saw it... I guess we’re going to be roughing it.” No bed, no blankets or pillows- though blankets were moot with her.

"We might not have much, but we have each other, and last I checked, I left everything on my bed, so you guys will sleep just fine." He assured her with a smile.
“We,” she corrects gently. “We’ll all wedge in together.” It would be a tight fit- the twins were getting bigger and bigger, but it wouldn’t be all that big a deal for them to wedge together. Toki sucks in a soft breath, and then sighs softly.

He looked at her for a moment, and then he chuckled and turned to continue driving.

The sounds faded off into the distance, and Toki slumped the further they got away from what was their home. It was no doubt just ramparts at this point- and she knew Undyne, or one of the other guards, would have called the police and fire department to let them know what happened. But, they were a long drive out- so Toki just hoped they managed to stop the fire before it consumed the forest.

Exhaustion settled over her suddenly, and she leaned over in her seat to rest her forehead against his shoulder, and just closed her eye sockets. They might have won a small measure against Cruelty with that raid- but... He’d gotten what he wanted. They were going back- not all of them, but the vast majority of them were going back.

The rest of the drive passed in relative silence- though they had to come to a stop quite some distance from the castle. There were a lot of cars, and only limited amounts of space. As everyone got parked to the best of their ability, Toki grimaced and sighed, before glancing to Papyrus. “Well, at least we have Clover to cheat with.”

Keeping the cars hidden by the trees was smart and Aliquam got out of the car, taking a deep breath. "I need to help with crowd control..."

“Right. Guard duties.” Toki eased out of the car with a deep sigh, and gave her husband a nod. “Go ahead, love. You’ve got your duties as a guard. I’ll get everything out of the car and onto Clover, alright?” The saddle on the hornet had spots for things to be tied to, so hauling their things up wouldn’t be hard to do.

"Alright. I love you so much." He came around the car to kiss her gently, and gave love, to the twins before he went to help the guards with the civilians.

Toki watched him go with a sigh, musing that she knew what she was getting into when she technically married the monster equivalent of a police officer. He was always going to be on call for duty- and she knew and accepted this. Toki was swift in getting Clover summoned and loaded up, draping Stag across her saddle like he was a fresh kill, and then she was mounting up with the twins strapped to her chest. She’d found the old sling in one of the bags- it was a little tight, but it served to hold the kids in place.

She didn’t fly high- more to keep out of sight, even if there was no way the planes could see her from a two hours drive away from the castle. She kept low, and searched for the rest of her family as she went. They could teleport, yeah, but that didn’t mean she wouldn’t offer to help if she could find them on her way up towards the castle.

Tenebris was helping with the crowd, making sure everyone stayed with each other, and putting them into three groups as to where they’d be going. Caeruleus was with Grillby and Solstice, leading the Snowdin group.

Toki kept overhead and kept an eye on everyone. She intended to wait for Aliquam, and watched as the crowd began to thin slowly as monsters made their way back into the castle. As the groups headed out, and the mass of monsters dwindled and dwindled, Toki soon found herself able to bring Clover in to land at the entrance to the castle to wait for Papyrus. They’d need to talk to the king, no doubt- if Undyne hadn’t done that already- or Sans.
One of the two- either way, they'd need to check up with Asgore, most likely, before heading down to Snowdin.

Tenebris and Sans were in the throne room when she and Papyrus caught up.

Tenebris was resting his head on the king's shoulder, while Sans explained to Asgore what was going on.

Asgore frowned. "We saw the smoke from here- but there was truly nothing to be done?" He had Tenebris on one shoulder, and Thumper clinging to the other. The rabbit had latched on as soon as he'd gotten past the front gate, and the king hadn't let go of the boy he had partly adopted with Tenebris. "You're saying that she really...?"

Toki stayed mounted on Clover- mostly because it saved on walking space- until they reached the main part of the throne room. As the big bee touched down, she glanced to Papyrus, and motioned for him to help her down, since she had the twins strapped to her. "Are you getting Asgore caught up?" She called to Sans, giving the king a friendly look, though saddened she might be.

The king looked properly horrified at her, but managed to hide it after it flashed across his face. He instead managed a nod to her, smoothing his hand gently along Thumper's back.

Toki looked befuddled at that look. "... What's that look for?"

"I'm just really glad that it didn't happen again." Sans told him with a frown, before he looked at Toki. "Pap can go ahead and head home now, the crowd's been taken care of by the guards down here already."

Toki nodded, reading the tense lines of his frame as she dismounted. She left Clover summoned- they did have some stuff to carry, and she had no desire to carry it all the way to Snowdin. It was a long, long walk- and the Riverperson was probably super busy. "Alright." She said. "Where is everyone staying at?"

"Tenebris and Thumper both are staying with me." Asgore said firmly. "I do believe Grillby and Sans are taking Solstice to his old bar, to stay with Fuku."

"Which leaves the old Snowdin house to us." Toki nods slowly. "Alright... Well, keep in contact, alright?"

"Of course." Asgore dipped his head gingerly to the boss heart. "Take care of yourself, Toki. You and Papyrus both."

"I'm gonna come with you." Sans piped up, "I... Kinda want to reminisce about home sweet home." He chuckled shakily.

"You speak as if it's a problem, Sans." Aliquam came to his brother and patted his back gently.

"You're always welcome with us." Toki nodded. She'd have hugged him, but she had her arms full of the twins, who wanted nothing to do with being confined to her grasp. "Grillby and Solstice too, if you'd rather all stay with us rather than at the bar."

She scoots over and nudges his shoulder gently, offering him a reassuring smile. "At least this time you can't trick me with that da-" she paused, thought over her words and the impressionable twins in her arms, and then changed it mid word, "-med treadmill prank. I'm on to your shenanigans, mister."

That got a chuckle and a grin from Cae, "I dunno, you never know", he chuckled smugly, "I might
just getcha again."

Aliquam chuckled and looped an arm around his brother's back, "Come on you prankster," he gave his brother a grin to match his own trademark grin.

Caeruleus chuckled quietly, "R-right behind you guys."

At this, Tenebris smiled at the sight, and it warmed his soul

Everything they went though, no matter what. They were always brothers in the end, and it warmed Tenebris' heart to see his sons acting as family would.

"Heh..."
Chapter 85

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And here we explore some interesting things about what happens to those who died, or were in the process of dying, during a load. This was actually Silver’s idea- very spur of the moment.

Silverwing Notes: So you guys thought things were bad before, WELP, just you feckin wait >:3 you guys are gonna LOVE this

It had been a few hours since they arrived in the Underground, Tenebris had stayed behind with Asgore, while Caeruleus followed his brother home, back to Snowdin.

It was odd, being back there, but there was a familiar air that seemed to soothe the brothers. Well, more Aliquam than Cae, who was still severely disturbed by something he knew, but seemed intent on keeping to himself.

Cae had gone to his room to rest on his brother's orders, while the latter worked with his wife to get everyone comfy, as well as clean up a bit while Grillby took Solstice to go visit Fuku at the bar.

When it was done, Aliquam gave Toki time to rest on the old couch they’d managed to scrounge up as he went to talk to his brother.

"Caeruleus?"

Aliquam kept his voice low as he rapped his knuckles lightly on his brothers old door. The tall skeleton monster listened quietly, picking up faint sounds from within. They were mostly drowned out by his wife and children down stairs. Toki might have been tired, but the twins were not.

"Brother," he tried again, speaking just a hair louder perchance Sans hadn't heard his quieter indoor voice the first time, "it's me. May I come in?"

"... C'mon in, Pap..." Was a reply from inside, just barely loud enough to hear.

A frown tugged his teeth downward, but he masked it with a neutral smile before he stepped inside. He eased in, and shut the door gingerly behind him, glancing to his elder brother as he did so.

"Sans," he said, "are you alright?"

"No... Quinn..." His brother replied from where he sat on the unmade bed, his eye lit up. "I'm... I'm really fucked up this time..." He whimpered.

"Oh Sans..." Papyrus sucked in a soft breath, before exhaling quietly. He padded closer to the bed, and then neatly tucked himself next to his brother. He lifted his arm, and tugged the older monster close, tucking his chest against his side. It was... Weird, given his brothers... mammary glands. But, anything for his brother. And his brother looked like he needed a hug. "Talking about it always helps you," Quinn suggests gently, large hand rubbing his brothers shoulder. "I am here to listen."
Cae hugged his brother tight when the hug came around and the elder took a deep breath, "It was another... Load... a Bad dream now but... it was real... It was real. It could have happened again if I didn't remember..." He murmured into his brother's chest.

"I figured, since you warned us about the planes." Aliquam rubbed soothing circles on his shoulders, and let his sockets glow quietly to comfort his elder brother. "It didn't happen though, because you remembered and you saved us." He pointed out gently. "You took charge and you changed things for the better." It occurred to Quinn that this was not something Sans usually did. "You don't usually do that, do you...?" What could have happened to make him act?

"..." He sighed quietly, "A... A lot of people died, Quinn..." he started hesitantly.

Papyrus winced. "I assumed as such." He said gently. "Don't be afraid to tell me, Sans. I can handle it- and you need to tell someone. Who died?"

"..." his grip tightened, "Dad... Grillby... Solli... a-and..." His voice cracked when he spoke his daughter's nickname and he couldn't bring himself to speak, hiding his face again as his grip tightened.

Papyrus tightened his grip over Sans as well, and rubbed his arm more firmly. Losing their Father would be hard- but losing Grillby and Solstice would have ruined Sans. No wonder his brother was so distraught- losing his niece, father, and future brother-in-law was an upsetting thought to Papyrus too. He rumbled gently though, prompting him to speak more. "Thumper?" He guessed gently, speaking of their adopted little brother.

"Toki..."

His mind reeled, and it took only seconds for him to become entirely focused down onto the name of his wife.

Toki had... Died? There had been close calls before, but they hadn't ever lost her before- Sans would have told him if they had. "... How?" It's the only thing he can ask, even if he knows he shouldn't be asking it. Asking is only going to make his soul throb worse- but some part of him needed to know.

"She... n' Clover... Got fuckin' nose-ended by one of their planes..." he hissed, "And... Pap..." His grip was tight enough that his fingertips could have torn through his brother's clothing, "You fell... And nothing I said could pick you back up... I was gonna be alone... And the kids... th-the kids..."

How his brother could manage with this knowledge, he would never know. Just this small nugget of information was making his stomach churn with anxiety driven nausea, and the hands that held his brother struggled not to clench tight. Too tight, and his fragile HP would go down. It took tremendous effort to keep a steady front, and to keep breathing evenly as he listened.

He'd fallen. Of course he had... Toki was his love- his mate. She was... She was the one. Losing her... Papyrus never handled loss well. "What happened to my children?" He whispered softly, prompting his brother automatically so he wouldn't stall up.

"They felt it... they knew..." He murmured, "They got really bad... Lethargic, lifeless... Even Sobek didn't bite me... But... I went right to the kid... they reloaded... I... I stopped it... A-Are they okay?"

Papyrus just had to stop for a moment and just process that. That sounded like the infantile stages of falling, which... Which was not uncommon in children who had lost both parents at a young age. So Toki... Toki died... His wife died, and he fell, and then his children... Fell...

It took everything he had not to rattle uneasily. He took a deep breath to calm himself, and rubbed his
brothers arm. "The twins are okay," he says. "They know we're upset about something, so they're on edge, but they're okay. You got to all of us in time, Sans. We're all alive." He had to remind himself of this as well. "We're all alive, and this is now."

"I... I'm just glad I was able to save them... to save you..." he reached up now, abandoning the other's clothes to grip his brother's head, "You're my baby brother, Pap... What kinda big brother would I be... if I went and let this happen"

"You'd still be my big brother." He leaned down to nuzzle his face gently against Sans, though his mind was reeling and his body was sending out so many upset signals that he wasn't sure which one to listen to. "You fixed it." He said. "I'm not falling, and Solstice and Grillby are alive, and so is Father and Thumper and Toki... We're all alive and perfectly healthy."

There was a sharp thud from downstairs, the sound of bone striking against something, along with a soft, floating groan that was obviously from Toki.

The twins were eerily silent, though began to whimper moments later.

And for all but that moment, Cae believed him.

But upon hearing the clatter, the pain in Toki's voice. Caeruleus was off of his bed like a bullet, going to see what had happened.

His door pulled open, and he was on the guardrail immediately, "Toki!?"

Papyrus was not far behind his brother.

Toki was braced against the entrance to the kitchen, and had a hand over her face. She leaned heavily on the doorframe, just barely in view. What was in view, however, was the trail of thick green luminescent glowing magic that was splattered on the floor. "Cae?" She called wearily, trying not to make more of a mess on the floor. "Do... Do you have a towel somewhere in your room? There's... Something wrong... I'm bleeding? I don't feel... Good..."

Skylar began to sniffle, and clung to his sister where they sat by the couch.

"..." The lights disappeared from his eyes.

He turned and returned to his room only long enough to push a towel into his brother's arms, before he shortcut from the room, disappearing from the house with a crack of displaced air.

Toki heard the sound of his teleporting, and groaned softly. "Couldn't even bring me a towel... Pap...? I need a towel please. I'm... Eugh, it's everywhere... Aww, Sky no, mommy's okay... Shhh, baby... Shh... It's okay..."

"I'm coming, Toki! I'm coming!" He called, leaping over the banister with ease, and landing beside her in a crouch. He straightened, before he held the towel out to her. He couldn't see a lot of what was wrong with her hands in the way- but he could see the magic dripping and it concerned him. "Here... take this and go to the kitchen. Use the faucet to wash off, I'll take care of the children." He told her, stroking her head gently before he went immediately to help the twins.

He scooped them into his arms, but immediately stiffened, "Oh my god..." They were hot to the touch... Were they... sick...?

Sick...
He held them close, hushing and cooing to them gently to comfort them as he moved to check on Toki.

"Toki, are you okay in there?" he asked gently.

The twins clung to him tightly once he'd lifted them, and they pressed there faces to his neck, clinging shakily.

Toki had taken the towel to wash off as instructed, and had made use of her height to use the ungodly tall sink the Gaster family had apparently decided they'd needed when they lived here. The towel was soaked and she scrubbed her face clean, her bones burning uncomfortably. She felt hot and light headed, and dizzy and nauseated- and it had hit out of the blue too. She had been fine one moment, and then not the next- and she’d been dribbling magic blood onto the floors, and stumbling towards the kitchen to try and contain the mess.

When he spoke to her, Toki turned to look at him, finishing swiping away the last of the mess on her face. Or what would have been- if a big stream hadn't come trailing unnaturally from her eye socket and nasal cavity. "I... I don't think so." Her chest convulsed, and she fought down the urge to cough. "Are the twins okay?"

"Toki..." He summoned Bastet, who opened her mouth widely and took the children into her protective cradling jaws. "They're... They've gotten a fever... But they're okay enough for me to worry about you... you're bleeding..." The father in him worried for his children- but there wasn’t anything he could do for a fever for the children at this moment. He needed to call his father- but there was immediate panic in the fact that his wife was bleeding from her face.

The twins latched onto Bastet just as easily as they did their father. They were well socialized with their parents summons, and their own- and it wasn't any huge surprise that they found comfort in the massive cat skull beast.

Papyrus came to her side and stroked her cheek, before he growled in frustration of his foolish actions of his younger years. He'd have to fix that damn sink... "Come on... come on." He coaxed her towards the bathroom, setting the towel on her chin to catch any of the dripping from her face. "The sink there is intact at a decent level. We can use it to clean you off better than I thought this damn thing could." He snarled.

Toki lifted a shaky hand to her face, keeping the towel in place to catch the dripping magic. "Nn... Tend to the twins first," she twits a little under his focus, her worry as a mother overriding her worry for herself. She didn't go to her babies though- because this could be contagious if she wasn't careful and she didn't want them to be bleeding. She still made her way towards the bathroom, her steps visibly unstable even if they were carrying her. "It's just... A little blood. I'm... I'm okay..."

"Bastet will carry them long enough to let me help you... This bleeding isn't normal!" He told her urgently, showing that his talk with Cae definitely had him stressed.

"It's not." She agreed, feverish bones brushing his as she staggered into him. "Don't want you to catch it though." She could detect his higher levels of stress coloring his voice, and went to inquire about it when her chest heaved again. She coughed, magic spurting last her teeth and dribbling in a grisly mess down the towel.

Her legs gave out, and she dropped like a rock.

"TOKI!" he caught her fast, picking her up bridal style and getting her to the bathroom quickly,
"Toki... It's gonna be okay... It's gonna... it's gonna be okay." he told her, stroking her head before he
clacked it gently

"It'll be okay..."

More magic rolled down from her sockets and nasal cavity, and every exhale sent flecks of it out onto the towel she was using to catch it all with. Toki lolled into him almost limply. Where the twins had a steady fever, it felt like her bones were growing hotter by the moment.

"What's... Happening to me?" She asked blearily as they reached the bathroom. Toki reached out a hand to try and turn on the faucet, and struggled to get the towel under the edge of faucet so she could re-wet it. Her hands shook too badly to be of much good.

"I don't know..." He didn't know... and after what he heard from his brother... He was panicking. He set her down in the bathtub, tenderly easing her in so she wouldn't be too uncomfortable. He turned and pulled another rag from the cabinet, soaking it swiftly in the sink, before bringing it over and wiping her off. "Toki. You're going to be okay, I know it..."

Ultimately, Toki stopped fighting Papyrus tending to her, and let him clean her face. Every time he swiped the blood away, however, it just seemed to come back, rolling back down in thick, green waves. Eventually it started to ease off though. And the streams seemed to come less often. "I'll be alright with you here," she murmured. "I always will be... Mmm... Haven't died yet," she jokes gently, "so I'm pretty sure I'll be okay... Might... Might want to call someone though... Let them k-know our house has sick folks in it..."

Relieved at the easing of the blood, he nodded slowly, barely even breaking a reaction at her joke, "I... i don't think you're the only one..." he murmured, "Caeruleus... He may have led me to many more that we will need to care for..."

"But... Why? What makes us special?" She inquired blearily, eye lights trembling as they struggled to stay locked on him. She was shaky and sick and not obviously well. Toki shuddered roughly where she lay in the tub, and watched him toil over her. "I... Hope everyone is okay..."

He stroked her head gently, wiping away the blood as it came, sensing as Bastet cradled their children, shifting to bring them relief, "Caeruleus has already gone to check on others."

Eventually the blood stopped mostly, leaving her shaky and exhausted in the tub with only the occasional droplet escaping. Her fingers curl along the sides, nuzzling her skull up into his hand as it touched her. "Is that where he teleported too?" She blinks slowly.

"I fear so." he nodded gently, before he smiled and cupped her cheek, "Toki... I love you... I love you so much... We'll get through this... All four of us" he told her, setting down the rag to better lean in to embrace her, as he had done for his brother just minutes before. "I won't let anything happen to you... you're my wife... And what kind of husband would I be to let this happen..."

"I love you too..." she says. "It's not your fault that I'm sick. You didn't do this to me, and we can't control it." She closed her sockets and tilted her skull into his hand, a shaky sound escaping her. "Hah... I'm... Really dizzy, Pap... Is the bleeding stopped...?"

"It looks to have slowed down enough to start clotting properly... I'm glad... But for now, rest. I need to make sure the children are all right... But drink some water." He spoke as he stood and filled a glass of water from the sink. "And I'll be right back to watch over you once more."

"I spend a lot of time in tubs," she muses. "They're not very comfortable." The glass of water is accepted though, and she sips at it shakily. "Go please. Check the twins. Make sure our babies are
okay." She grimaces slightly and pressed a hand to her sockets. She was burning up. "Twins need their daddy." She murmured.

"Just as my wife needs her husband." He told her, before he sighed and got up, going to his children. He cooed and hummed to them as he collected them from Bastet's teeth, pulling them close before he checked them over. "It's okay, Daddy's got you now."

Toki's sockets closed as he left, and she slumped in the tub, slowly sliding downwards. Without him there to distract her, Toki really did feel terrible. So maybe she could just close her eyes for a second... Just a second to rest them...

The twins were still feverish, but that was all that seemed to be wrong with them. Honey, however, seemed to be feeling like she was having quite the upset stomach, and the little girl was whimpering against Pap's shirt as she nuzzled into it. Skylar likewise was also whimpering, but he seemed better than his sister was.

He held Skylar in the crook of one arm as he adjusted Honey, singing to them gently as he rested his daughter against his shoulder, patting her back gently, "it's okay, my little blossom" he whispered to her, "I know you feel icky but you're going to be okay"

She hiccuped gently against the patting motion, and whined. The patting didn't help settle her stomach- in fact, it seemed to make the nauseated part of her magic react more. "Icky," she whined, voice pitched high as she rested her head on his shoulder. "Nuhhh..."

Skylar nuzzled against his father, content to cling where he could. He watched his sister, and felt out along his familial bonds with wary uneasiness.

He cooed and hummed to them both, no longer patting Honey's back, rather stroking it tenderly, "It's okay..." he cooed gently, smiling as he nuzzled them both. He slowly took them over to Bastet again, and collected their summons as well, before returning them to the safety of Bastet's teeth.

The twins settled without fuss in their father’s summons grasp, clinging to their own summons as they rested. They wanted their mother- but they understood, on some instinctual level, that there was something wrong, and that she would come when she could.

Once the twins were settled, Papyrus headed back to check on his wife.

Toki was slumped in the tub, her skull resting along the side of it with her chin resting on her chest, with a trail of blood having rolled down from her nasal cavity down over her interlocked teeth. The glass of water had been set down between her legs in the tub, but she was limp and still, sockets closed and dark when Papyrus returned. From her position, it was hard to tell if she was breathing or not- though skeletons didn’t need to do it, technically, it was still a reflexive action. One of her hands was hooked on her shirt, clutching at her chest, while the other was dropped at her side.

Bastet's mouth closed as she came to a stop at the doorway to the bathroom, though the panic from Aliquam definitely gave her a start.

His soul twisted in his chest, and Papyrus didn’t recall crossing the distance in the room to reach the tub. "TOKI!" He fell to his knees beside the tub and reached up, cupping her cheeks. "Toki! Oh god please wake up, please wake up!" He pleaded, before one hand moved over her chest to check her soul.

Toki didn’t rouse at his touch, and her skull rolled in his hands as he cradled it. Her bones were hot to the touch, in a way that not even her magic usually made them. Her breath did waft over his hand
in small puffs, though they were barely detectable if one wasn’t focused enough to check for them.

The color of her soul was sickly and dim looking, reflecting about how she was feeling. It pulsed shakily in the grasp of his magic, twisting faintly- but it was there, and alive. Her HP wasn’t down though- so there was no damage to her soul or her body. There was no doubt that there was something very, very wrong, but there was no way to tell what was wrong.

“P-ap…?” His name was whispered shakily from between her teeth, and her sockets opened to look at him questioningly, eye lights dim and quivering. The sensation of her sickly soul being pulled forth wasn’t pleasant, and it had roused her.

He was trembling as he held her soul in one hand, her cheek in the other. Tears had welled in his eyes. "Toki... Oh god... I was so worried." He whispered.

Her hand lifted, detangling from her shirt, to brush against his face. She swiped the tears gently from one of his sockets, cradling his cheek. "I was just… resting." She manages to murmur. Toki took a deep breath, and seems to visibly gather herself, before taking note that he has her soul in his hand. Toki shifts in the tub, bones clattering slightly against the porcelain as she tries to sit up. “Pap…? Why were you checking my soul?”

"You... You stopped moving." He whimpered quietly, wiping his eyes, "I-I'm sorry."

Befuddlement flooded her. Her stopping moving didn’t quite equate to her the sort of panic she could see in his eyes. She managed to haul herself upright, trusting him to hold her soul, and shakily cupped his face after wiping her face off on her sleeve. “Love, no, it’s okay. I just don’t understand how that has you so panicked,” she says gently, confusion present in her face as she rubs his cheekbones gently. “Talk to me, Pap- what… what’s got you so upset?”

"I-it was what Caeruleus told me... He... about what he saw happen..." He whispered gently.

“What happened…?” She whispered softly. Her eye lights searched his for a moment, and it took her a few minutes for it to click. “He told you about the attack.” That was the only thing that made sense. With the click of the first light switch, others also connected. “And the only reason you’d be responding like that to me being still… I died…?”

He was so glad she didn’t make him say it... Trembling, he tugged her to his chest and hugged her tightly, letting out a shaking gasp. Tears beaded in his sockets, and rolled down his cheeks.

Being held while half in a tub was awkward, and Toki shifted, nudging the glass of water to the other end so she could properly hold him. Thankfully, he seemed to be holding most of her weight, so she could focus on making her arms work as she coiled them around his neck, tucking his skull against her shoulder. “I’m here now,” She says softly. “I’m here now, and it’s okay. I’m not going anywhere.” She wobbled in his arms though, weakly trembling as she held him tight and comforted him. “I’m not goin’ anywhere again, love.”

"D-Do you promise?” he asked quietly, before he grit his teeth. "N-no... You have to promise me... you'll never... ever go anywhere I cant go with you."

“I… That’s not a realistic promise, love.” She cradled the back of his skull gently, and nuzzled him softly. “After all, you can’t come with me into the women’s restroom, can you?” It was a gentle tease, trying to cheer him up a little bit. She didn’t have to use the bathroom- but the point still stood. “But… How about this.” She leaned him back some, and brought their skulls together. She rested her brow against his, blinking up at him slowly. There was another beading fleck of blood gathering at the edge of her nose, thick and lazily trying to drip again.
“How about this.” She says once more. “I promise… No matter where I go, or what happens, or whatever comes- I will always find my way back to you. I’ll always, always come home- to you, and to our children. I promise you this.”

"H-Heh... I... I guess I can agree to this." He whispered, stroking her head gently. "I love you, Toki... So... so much."

“I love you too. You’re my world, Pap. You and our kids- you’re my whole world, and I’m always going to come home to you.” She leaned into his touch with a wobbly sound, before humming. “Now… I want out of the tub.” She says softly. “It’s not comfortable.” It wasn’t their tub from home- which was comfortable as hell- and she didn’t want to be in it. “I want to lay down with the kids… Mmm…”

He nodded, and cleaned the rag he brought in the first time, wiping her off one last time before he picked her up gingerly. "Come on, then."

Toki urged him to let her soul tuck back into her chest once he’d lifted her, and she didn’t fight him hefting her up. She wasn’t feeling well, and she wasn’t going to try and fight that- but she wanted her children to feel better too, and sometimes they just needed a little bit of care from their parents. With her face cleaned up, Toki simply looked pale and shaky.

Once both parents were in sight, the twins started to fuss in Bastet’s mouth, squirming and prying demandingly at her teeth in an attempt to get down and get to their parents.

“Ma!” Skylar cried, wiggling his fingers for his mother.

"Come on, Bastet, we're putting them to bed." Aliquam told his summon, who rumbled and slowly followed him up the stairs, and into his room.

Once Toki was laid down on the bed and covered up by the blanket, Aliquam went to Bastet and collected the twins from her. "Good girl." He reached up and pet her head in praise, hearing her chirr happily as he set the children with their mother. "You're going to be okay, Toki...” He told her gently as he stroked her head. "I'm going to do some cleaning. Sleep, and I'll have Bastet stay nearby if you need me."

Toki leaned her skull into his touch and nodded, a soft, fevered breath escaping her as she nestled the twins gingerly to her chest. They shivered against her, basking in the heat her body was putting off, and she was careful to make sure that they didn’t get too warm.

She gave him a soft nod, and a lopsided smile. “I’ll be okay… Maybe… maybe call Tenebris too? This isn’t normal, whatever it is…” Her sockets drift closed, and she exhales softly. She lifts her finger to the sky, and a quick tug has one of her smaller bees out with them. It crawls into Papyrus’ shirt, and settles there against his neck, a dormant ball of warmth. “If I need you, I’ll have it buzz.” She says. “It’s easier than trying to communicate verbally sometimes.”

Honey whimpered softly against her, and Toki dropped her hands down to stroke over her horns. She massaged along the bases of the growing prongs, and exhaled roughly. Toki buzzed softly, and the soft sound seemed to help both twins settle better against her, even if it seemed to exhaust her more. The things a mother does for her children.

Aliquam smiled and pet the small ball of fluff, finding comfort in it as he clicked the light off and let his family rest, needing to clean up as he had said to help remove stress.

Though he worried... if Toki was this bad... and if he was right thinking others were going to get
Grillby had taken Solstice to visit Fuku- they hadn’t gotten to visit often since Solstice was born, and it was high time that Fuku got to spend time with her little sister. The big fire elemental had been fine with Sans taking some time to go with his brother and his sister-in-law.

Sans had been a mess in the car- Grillby had to talk with him most of the drive up, and it had taken him a while to calm him down and remind him that they- Grillby and Solstice, that was- were alive and well, and that everyone was safe. But, he’d managed to get through to him- but there was no accounting for what Sans had seen when it came to his brother and to Toki.

The skeleton hadn’t wanted to talk about it, and Grillby hadn’t wanted to stress his already fragile mate. That was something he needed to vent to his brother first, he knew- and then, when Sans was feeling stable enough and ready to try and tell him, well, the rather large fire elemental would be there to listen.

Grillby watched his daughters at the bar with a smile on his face, and felt a tickle in his throat. He ignored it at first, sticking with carefully setting down and organizing what luggage they had on them at the time, but the tickle got worse and worse, alongside a less pleasant feeling. Perhaps the stress of the day was getting to him- it wasn’t often one had to pack up, endure a long, stressful car ride, and then tote a baby and multiple suitcases all the way back across the Underground. Grillby was in good shape for his age, but he was still an older monster.

When Solstice sneezed suddenly, a strange tingle crossing her bond with her father, the sound sparked a giggle from Fuku, and Grillby couldn’t help a laugh as well.

The laugh, however, bubbled into a cough- a hacking, horrible wet cough. A wet cough coming from a being made from fire is a horrifying sound to hear. He lifted his arm, tucking his mouth into his palm as he choked and sputtered, flames dimming as he struggled to make the spasm of his insides cease.

Liquid touched his hand, spattering his palm as he coughed.

Across the way, Solstice also began to cough, a stuttering wail of confusion leaving her.

It was hard to see when he drew his hand back at first, but as his flames began to dim, Grillby realized what it was. It was the strange magma like magic that made up his blood- they usually only got to see it when they got scalded.

He choked again, hand clutching the table as his vision swirled behind his glasses.

“Dad? Dad!” Fuku’s voice rose in a panic, and she hopped off the bar, cradling her coughing little sister close to her neck.

Grillby swayed on his feet, but was unable to answer her as he hacked and choked. His flames continued to dim, and the elemental felt them receding back into the dark coal like husk that made up his skin when it was cool.

Seconds into the panic, the door swung open and Cae entered the bar. "GRILLBY!" He cried out as he spotted the big fire monster first. Caeruleus had seen Toki's blood, and all he could think about
was his own mate and daughter...

Grillby’s flames were rapidly dampening, like someone had sucked all the air out of the room. Blackened skin flecked with the red glow of his blood as he hacked and coughed. The clatter of the door blew in a gust of air from the outside- and it was enough to blow the last of the flames out.

The big fire monster collapsed, flames lit, but dampened and just barely flitting over dark skin. He hit the ground with a thud, knocking over the table he was leaning on, and sending up a small puff of smoke and charcoal. Without his flames, it was easy to see the small, dark horns perched on top of his head, and the glowing orange fluid bubbling from his mouth and eyes, and staining his hands.

Grillby was very, very still where he lay.

“Sans!” Fuku was torn, panicked as she held her little sister.

Solstice was wailing, though it was petering off rapidly- her flames were going out, no matter what magic Fuku was pumping into her. Her hands fisted along her skull, brushing her tiny horns, before they fell away, going limp at her sides.

“Sans!” The young elemental’s flames jumped high, the green lighting up the room as the blue of Solstice’s flames entirely died out. Her voice took on a shrill tone, as she half expected to suddenly be holding a bundle of dust. Like her father, Solstice simply went quiet- unconscious. “What’s wrong with them?”

"I-I Don’t know!” he choked out as he stumbled closer, immediately going to check on Grillby. "Oh god... oh god... Grillby..." he wiped the fluid away from Grillby's mouth but it smeared as he lacked a cloth, "Oh god..." His soul was racing and tears were blinding him as he tried to hear if Grillby was breathing on not, though unable to due to his panic. "F-Fuku... Help me." He pleaded from where he sat.

The younger elemental wasn’t much better, but she managed to come closer, cradling the limp infant in her arms with terror in her soul. She eased down next to Sans, and settled her hand in front of her father’s mouth.

Over the wet rasp of the blood still bubbling out, his breath could be felt. “He’s alive,” she manages to say. She rests her hand on his head and grunts, washing magic into her father’s frame. “C’mon, Daddy, c’mon, open your eyes…”

It brushes against his own, stirring the flames briefly along his head and horns for just a moment, before they’re gone again, not returning no matter how much she pours magic into him. He doesn’t stir, or make a sound, except the low gurgling of labored breathing.

“We need a doctor. He’s not responding to my magic. N-Neither is Solstice…” She cradles the flame-less skeleton infant in her arms, and looks lost. Fuku was young- she hadn’t been able to go to the surface because she couldn’t handle the rain of waterfall even- and this… was a lot to handle. “We need a d-doctor for Daddy and Sol…”

Cae had to think. He had to clear his mind.

He grit his teeth, and then took a deep, shaky breath to focus. "We gotta clear his airway..." he started, getting up to get a clean rag from behind the counter. He’d get Grillby to forgive him later, but if he was going to go try and get his dad... He knelt down and carefully pulled Grillby to be sitting up slightly, allowing him to wipe his mouth, "'nd... I need to go get Dad..."

Fuku helped as best she could, but she didn’t want to just set down the baby in her arms. Solstice had
silent against Fuku, but she could feel the baby breathing against her. She kept her larger father propped up for Cae, and slid a chair over to keep him upright.

“I don’t understand what’s wrong,” She whispers. “He was just fine- so was Solstice. Solstice was giggling for me, and then she sneezed- and we all laughed, and then he started coughing and…” She adjusted the big infant in her arms, and looked at Sans. “If… if it’s something from escaping the attack, then how come you’re not sick too? Is… Is anyone else sick? Or… Or is he… Is he falling?”

She didn’t want to think about her dad falling. She didn’t want to ever entertain that idea- but it was a logical option. Except… falling was usually a lot less violent than that. At least, according to the books.

“Go get Mister Gaster. I’ll watch Daddy and Sol.” She glanced down at the baby, and her flames flickered. “Shit. Hurry. She’s bleeding.” She dabbled at the little line of blue magic trailing down from Sans’ daughter’s nasal cavity, swiping it away with her sleeve. It came trickling back down again, and she simply kept her sleeve there to keep it from dripping down onto the infants clothes.

"I..." he grit his teeth and gave Fuku a gentle hug, "Make sure they keep breathing, I’ll be right back." he told her, pressing his teeth to her forehead before he teleported through the Underground to the castle

"Asgore! Pops!" he called.

Most of the castle was empty- but there seemed to be a buzz of activity in the medical wing. There were healers rushing in and out, medical staff rushing in and out of several rooms.

Several monsters were sitting in beds, bleeding from their eyes, noses, mouths, or coughing up great swaths of blood into hospital pans. Most of them seemed to remain conscious, however, save a few which were unconscious and rapidly being hooked up to monitors.

As Cae worked his way into the buzzing area of activity, he would bypass a room with a familiar red fox in it- who was hunched in a chair between two beds. Todd wasn’t harmed- he hadn’t been at the compound during the attack. But he was clutching his children’s hands like they were his lifelines, and trembling ever so slightly. He wasn’t rushing around with the rest of the healers and doctors staff- but for good reason.

Rosie and Felix weren’t moving, and blood flecked their lips as they breathed shakily into the ventilators the healers had gotten set up for them.

Toriel could be seen rushing in and out of rooms, her clothes billowing as she picked up slack where she could. Healing didn’t seem to be working- magic wasn’t doing anything, and the monsters were freaking out.

Asgore stood outside one such room, his white fur and clothing stained in a familiar black liquid. Thumper was at his side, clutching tightly to a black stained hand as they looked in at the limp figure unconscious in the cot of the medical wing. Frisk was with Thumper, holding the child’s hand tightly and offering the trembling boy what comfort they could.

Frisk seemed calm about the whole thing, despite the chaos going on around them.

Asgore turned his gaze to the shorter skeleton when Caeruleus came into his view. “Sans,” he breathed. “I don’t… I don’t know what’s wrong… Tenebris- he just started to cough, and there was
blood coming from his eyes and his mouth- and he collapsed. He’s not… He’s not responding…”

Cae could feel himself losing faith. "O-Oh no... D-Dad too...?" Standing before Asgore with such dire news being given to him... But he swallowed hard. He had something he had to tell them, and he wasn’t going to leave until he did. He took a deep breath to focus himself mentally, before he spoke, "G-Grillby... a-and Sol... And Toki..." he started shakily, "I need a doctor... they need help... But... How many are there?" he asked.

“We... We don’t know.” Asgore answered shakily. He lifted his free hand to rest it on Cae’s shoulder, but thought better of it. It was coated in black- and the red staining Sans’ hands wasn’t good either. “If it’s them too, it’s not just located here. So far it seems to just be certain monsters who came from the city- it’s not everyone.”

“My King!” There was a small rabbit monster who flitted up stopping long enough to give the both of them news. “We’ve gotten calls from the three city district clinics- they’re overflowing with monsters displaying the same symptoms as everyone else- fever, bleeding of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and or coughing up blood. Some of them are unconscious, but those seem to be very few and far between. All of the afflicted are refugees from Nara Village, Sire. None of them are responding to medical treatment- we have no idea what’s wrong, or how to treat them. They’ve run out of room at the clinics, so most of the monsters are staying in their homes- they’ve got friends and relatives caring for them as best we can, but we’ve got at least six hundred confirmed cases- possibly more coming in.”

“I see... Once everything is stabilized here, send out as many doctors as we can spare to go check over everyone down in the city districts.” The king’s order was weary- he wasn’t sure what good it would do, but he had to try.

“Of course, Sire.” The rabbit nodded, and hopped off to resume tending to patients.

Asgore’s frown grew, and he glanced down to Sans, completely lost. “… Bring Toki, Grillby, and Solstice here,” he says. “We will try to provide the best care that we can... and just... hope for the best, and try to keep them comfortable for... whatever may come.”

“They’ll be okay.” Frisk says softly, patting Thumper’s shoulder gently and glancing at them. They used their actual voice- their hands were busy consoling the terrified child clinging to the King- so it was guaranteed to draw attention to them. They did not speak often. “It will pass in a few days.”

"Kid..." he looked at Frisk with a sunken look, but he nodded, "O-Of course..." He looked at Tenebris, who's breathing was the loudest thing there when all was silent, and he slowly came closer, reaching out and setting a hand on his father's head. Tenebris didn't twitch, "... Damn it Pops..." He hissed weakly, before he sighed, and let him rest as he looked at Frisk. "Kid... You can help us, right? You'd know more than any of us know about what's happening..."

Frisk bit their lip, but nodded. They ushered everyone inside of Tenebris’ room- it wasn’t common knowledge about the resets, and they didn’t want it known to the general populace, even if the doctors seemed too busy to really care.

Once Frisk shut the door, isolating everyone inside of Tenebris’ room, they turned back to Sans, Asgore, and Thumper. For the sake of the fact that Thumper likely didn’t speak sign language, they continued to speak. “It doesn’t have a name,” They said, “not one that I know of, but for the sake of ease, lets just... call it Deaths Rebound.”

They walk closer to Tenebris, and reach out a hand to swipe away a dribbling tear of blood as it trails from one of his closed eyes. “It happens when I load, and someone dies, or is in the process of dying.
It doesn’t when there’s a reset- I don’t know why. I haven’t loaded after a bad attack in this timeline before… I didn’t know it could effect others.” They say. “It is… probably something to do with the body’s response to having died in another ‘world’ so to speak, before being brought back. I don’t really know.” They shrug. “The more you die and get loaded back, the less it effects you. It no longer bothers me."

They had died a lot though- but there were monsters out there that hadn’t ever died, and some that had on more than one occasion. The ones that were evacuated during the bad runs- or the ones that they hadn’t gotten to on the bad runs- they were the ones unconscious. There were several who hadn’t to deal with the deaths and loads before- and several that had. The ones less effected were the ones, Frisk mused, that had been through the death-loads more than once.

“Though…” They muse, “I never fell unconscious when it first happened. But I was very sick, for several, several days.” They had holed up in the Snowdin forest after they’d died and loaded the first time, before ever meeting Sans. “Monsters are a lot more fragile than humans are. Though… Rosie and Felix are both unconscious too… Is Toki unconscious? Remaining conscious might be a boss heart thing, if she is.”

The little Determination boss heart fixated their eyes onto Sans, and tilted their head, waiting for his answer.

Neither Asgore nor Thumper really knew what to say, and so they say quietly and listened. Asgore knew about the loads and resets- but to hear Frisk talk about it so… easily… It was disconcerting. And the fact that they had died before…

He frowned, and turned that thought away for later debating, turning his attention to Sans.

"Grillby never died... Pops only just got out of the void... A lot of the civilians were refugees." Cae murmured quietly, before he sighed, "I don’t know about Toki. As soon as I saw her bleeding, I went to see if Grillby was okay..."

Frisk nods. “We may want to call.” They say. “See if she is conscious. Just for curiosity’s sake.” They shrug lightly, and rub their fingers gently over Tenebris’ forehead. “They’re going to be very sick for a couple days. Fever, bleeding- some might even vomit blood, or just vomit if the discomfort makes them sick, if that’s how their bodies work. I did it once- that wasn’t fun.” They make a face, and shudder. “But they’ll get better. For the ones that are the sickest, taking them to waterfall might be best. The water helps- I soaked in it for a little bit, and whatever makes it glow helped me feel better quicker. Though, uh… Not for Grillby and Solstice. Fire and all that.”

Frisk had died a lot trying to escape Undyne the first time. They had died a lot. They’d gotten very, very sick from the buildup of all of that death energy, and had spent several days vomiting blood, and trying to survive it.

They shiver at the memory, and glance up to Sans. “We’re just going to have to ride this out. Three days at least, a week at most. You’re going to have to figure out how to feed Solstice though. We need to keep them fed and warm and safe. It will pass. I promise.”

He nodded slowly, "Thanks, Kid..." he murmured quietly, taking a deep breath before straightened up to leave. "I should go get them here now." He told them, looking to Asgore. "Can you see where an open room is?" He asked, "Or is there enough room here in this room?"

“I can have a bed brought in, if you can give us ten minutes before you bring them in.” Asgore nods, and rubs Thumper’s head gently. “And a cradle for Solstice. Though we will likely need another room if Papyrus brings Toki. Speaking of- call your brother. Let him know that Toki will be
“Alright, and see if he wants to bring her here.”

Frisk makes a face. “And check on him too. If he died in the last load, or was in the process of dying, he might be sick or slightly sick. I loaded while in the middle of dying, and I ended up feverish and achy.” They cross their arms, and nod to him.

He nodded gently and pulled out his phone, giving his brother a call.

Aliquam was breathing quietly as he lay on the couch, his body feeling sore and not really wanting to move... but as his phone began to go off, he reluctantly reached out and picked up his phone.

“Nnh... Hello?”

“Pap... Hey...”

Papyrus straightened as he picked up his brother’s voice, forcing himself to sit up in case Caeruleus popped in. He’d only laid down for a moment- he’d been cleaning and working off his fretting, but eventually that kind of wore down into an unpleasant ache that he was sure was just sympathy pains for his mate and children- but it apparently it was enough for him to feel like he’d gotten stuck on the couch.

“Sans?” The stress isn’t fully out of his voice, and he takes a moment to clear his nonexistent throat. “Caeruleus, is everything alright? You left very quickly.”

"It's not as good as I want it to be, but look, how is Toki? Is she okay?"

“No, she’s not.” Aliquam swallowed slightly. “She’s up in my room with the twins. The twins have fevers- they’re sick too. Not bleeding, thank the stars, but... Toki was coughing blood, and bleeding from her sockets and nasal cavity. I just got it to stop not too long ago, but... She’s really weak.” The younger brother gave a shaky chuckle. “She passed out in the tub, and I, ah, thought for a second that she had... She wasn’t moving, brother, and she was hardly breathing. Does... Does Father know what’s causing this?”

"Pops couldn't tell me anything even if he did know... It... It got him too, Pap... Grillby and Solstice too... but the kid knew what it was... It's happening because of the load. It's affecting everyone who died. Or came close to dying."

Papyrus grimaced. “Father…” He sighed. “Grillby and Solstice too? Crap. Alright... Frisk knew? Is... Is it going to get better?”

“Yes... but only with time... we can only take care of them while they recover... Your kids... they’re gonna be just fine for sure, it's residual at best, but I just gotta...” Cae's voice cracked slightly. "Find a way to help keep Solstice lit..."

“Do you want to bring them here?” He shifted to haul himself off the couch, his joints aching. “I can get your room prepared for them- your old bed should fit Grillby. We can... We can take care of them. I know Asgore will be tending to Father. Unless you’re taking them to the castle?” Part of him hesitated, and he glanced up to the door to his room.

He could hear Toki coughing inside, and feel the faint buzz from the twins as it disturbed them. Papyrus made a faintly stressed sound, and went to collect a cloth from the bathroom again- if she was coughing, she’d probably started to bleed again. “Should I bring Toki and the twins?”
"We're going to move them to the castle. Get Toki and the kids too. I’ll be down there in less than an hour."

Papyrus swallowed and nodded. “Alright. I’m going to leave the Summons here- we’ll need to come back from time to time to check on them, but we can’t keep an eye on them around so many sick monsters. Where do you want me to meet you?”

“The bar.”

“All right. We’ll be there, brother.” He tucked the cloth into his pocket, and then began to move his way up towards the bedroom to get them ready. “I’ll see you shortly.”

"See you soon..." Sans murmured, before he hung up. He glanced to Asgore. "I'm going to go get Grillby and Solstice ready. I’ll be back with everyone."

“All right.” Asgore nodded. “I’ll go get another room ready for Toki and Papyrus.” The king hefted Thumper gently up into his arms, and Frisk as well, and nodded to Sans. “Get them here safe, and take your time. We’ll have a bed put in here for Grillby, and a crib for Solstice- and cribs for the twins as well. We’ll see you shortly, Sans.”

"Thank you, Asgore." He looked at him, and then teleported from the room to return to Snowdin.

Fuku was waiting for the skeleton in the bar where she had been before, with her Father braced on her legs, and her little sister limp in her arms. She rubbed her limbs gently, listening to the wheezing breaths of the sickly baby, and the deep gurgling coming from her dampened father.

When Cae popped up at the door, the relief on her face was obvious. “Oh thank the stars- did you bring a doctor? They haven’t gotten any worse, but they’re not any better.”

"We're taking them to the Castle, Fu." He told her as he came closer, kneeling down to look Grillby over. "I know what's wrong with them now, and it's nothing we can cure. We just need to sit through it and wait it out. But things will be okay." He assured her, "They're going to live as long as we stay and help them through it."

Fuku nodded hesitantly, and her flames flickered slightly. “Alright… I’ll close down the bar,” She said. “I’m not going to be much help, but... I don’t know. He’s my dad, and she’s my little sister- I’ll try to do what I can.” Right now, she was keeping the babybones warm in her arms.

Grillby was much the same, breathing ragged as Cae checked him over.

It wasn’t long before the door to the bar was opening, Toki pushing it open with a shaky hand for Bastet to walk though first, while Papyrus carried her. He hadn’t wanted to risk her carrying and dropping the twins, if she got too dizzy or lost consciousness again- so Bastet was on baby carrying duty, while Stag was staying behind to watch the cats and the baby summons.

She had a green stained towel pressed to her mouth, and looked worse for the wear.

"My god... Tokes." Cae murmured, before he scooped up his mate. It was a bit of an armful, given their height difference, but he did his best.

Grillby was limp, but he wasn’t exactly unconscious to complain.
Toki coughs again, a nasty, wet sound, and manages to catch it on the towel instead of her sleeve. “Oh dear… Little Sol,” she spots the flameless lump in Fuku’s arms, and grinds her teeth slightly. Grillby was positively frightening to look at - sort of like a solid lump of magma that had gone cold, though stained with still drizzling bits of his magmatic blood. “We- hah- we teleporting? Can… Can you both manage that distance with so many of us?”

"If Pap helps me out, we can." Cae nodded, bringing his mate over to his brother and half setting Grillby down to touch his arm.

"You can count on me, Sans. Just tell me when." Quinn replied.

"On three." The brothers looked to their company to make sure they were ready. Bastet nuzzled close, ready to go.

Fuku approached as well, and looped her hand tightly around Papyrus’ arm. She let her legs brush against the skull beast holding the twins, and grimaced to herself, hoping everything would be alright.

Toki stretched her free hand out and fist it in Cae’s jacket, taking a firm hold of his arm and completing the connection. “If you need to make several smaller jumps,” She rasps, “Go for it.”

He smiled and shook his head, "With Pap, I wont need to." He then leaned his head on his brother's chest, the other resting his head in turn.

"One... Two... Three!"

A surge of power came from them both, and in a matter of seconds they were standing in the castle hallway.

Slowly, Cae pulled away, before he blinked, smiling, "It worked... heh... holy shit it worked..."

Fuku stumbled away from them, keeping a firm grip on Solstice, but looking several shades paler than she did before. She looked vaguely ill. "That… that was the worst sensation I have ever felt. Teleportation sucks.” She informs them shakily.

Toki chokes, and manages to lean out of Quinn’s arms far enough to retch without getting it on either of them. Her middle heaves, and she chokes, spitting up magic from their meal they’d had at breakfast that morning, and the water that Papyrus had her drink earlier. It would appear that her body wasn’t quite in the condition for teleporting- and the disorienting feeling that came with it had her nonexistent stomach rebelling. “Nnnnn…”

“Oh dear…” The hall was still buzzing with activity, but not nearly as much- doctors were moving to other halls, now that this one was ‘full’. The room right across the hall from Tenebris’ was open, and Asgore stood at the junction between the two, waiting for them. He was alone this time, Frisk and Thumper having been sent to his home to relax while they got everyone in. The king was quick to get a sick pan, and carefully tucked it under Toki’s chin.

Though it seemed Toki wasn’t the only one feeling out of it. Aliquam stumbled to lean against Asgore and let out a loud, sickly groan as he winced.

The noise immediately got Cae's attention, "Pap! You okay, bro?" he asked worriedly.

Aliquam grit his teeth for a moment, and then he pulled away from Asgore and huffed. "I-I'm fine. Lets just get everyone to bed."
The groan definitely caught Toki’s notice too, but there wasn’t much she could do, since she was in his arms. Her fingers shook as they hooked on his arm, and she trembled against him faintly, supporting the sick bin under her chin as she tried not to be ill once more.

Asgore sighed, and gently hooked a hand behind Papyrus’ shoulders, guiding him around the puddle of purged magic and towards the open room. “Go lay your mate down- and lay down with her, for stars sake, once you get your children settled into their cradles. Your bones are warm to the touch, Papyrus. I got an extra wide cot put in this room for a reason.”

The twins were mostly asleep, but starting to stir against the new sounds of the medical ward around them.

"Th-thank you, your majesty." He wanted to try and last for the sake of everyone, but it was a battle he was losing.

He made his way to the bed with his wife, laying her down gently before bringing over Bastet. He'd had her summoned for a while now, and it was draining on him. "Nnnh. Bastet, it's time to rest.”

Bastet opened her mouth for him, and he was able to transfer the twins to the large cradle, laying them down before a final pet of praise sent her home. Aliquam covered them both, and then laid down with Toki, smiling at her shakily.

Toki had abandoned the sick bin, and mopped up her face as best she could. She wheezed faintly as she shifted on the bed, rolling over to face her husband. She lifted her hand, and caressed his cheek, giving him a shaky smile in return. “You’re sick too,” She rasps softly. “Why didn’t you say anything…?”

He looked at her, and then closed his eyes. "I must be strong for you..." He murmured, "I cannot let myself become ill when I must watch over you.”

““We look after each other,” she rasps gently, stroking his cheekbones gently. As his sockets close, she rubs over them, massaging with shaky hands. She pauses to lean back, however, and fishes another rag out of her pockets, dabbling at her socket when she feels more magic begin to dribble down. “In sickness and in health, even if those weren’t our vows.” She coughs again, a nasty wet sound, and covers it with the cloth. “Hah… We… we all need rest.”

Fuku took Solstice and went into the room with Tenebris, having spotted the crib for the baby. She got the baby settled down gently, and then went to help Sans get Grillby into the room.

Cae was tired, and relieved when his mate was laid down on the bed. He couldn't cover him, but sat beside him, stroking his head with a soft sound of worry, "Oh Grillbz..." he murmured.

Fuku gently stroked a hand over her father’s hand, stroking the blackened flesh with her fingertips. “He’ll be okay.” She says softly. “His flames need to stoke back up- so he needs to be able to breathe. Help me get him out of his shirt.” Her hands came to the buttons on his vest, and started to undo them. His pants would stay on- but his shirt could come off for the time being.

He nodded in agreement and reached out to undo his shirt. "I've never seen him like this. He's always been the one that survives..." he spoke quietly.

Grillby without his flames was an odd sight. The roping muscles were more visible- but so were the thick scars that were usually hidden by fire. His skin cracked and flexed as he breathed, the
additional air stoking his flames just enough that the light peeking through the cracks in his skin brightened just a hair. He still didn’t rouse- but it was a minor improvement.

“I don’t know what that means.” Fuku says gently once they eased him out of his shirt. She doesn’t touch his pants, but she doesn’t cover him up. “But… Daddy’s a survivor. He survived when… When mom got dusted. He’ll be okay.” She sniffs quietly, and pats his chest gently. Then she moves over to Solstice, and scoops up the limp infant, doing the same thing to her. She stripped her bare though, and then lifted her up, brushing her magic over her with a sharp snap.

Solstice lit up once more, but her flames were low, just barely flickering over her bones. “There we go,” Fuku whispers. “Her flames are going again. We’re… going to need to figure out how to feed her… Baby flame elementals need food regularly to keep up their flames.”

"I can share my soul with her, she'll absorb soul aura if I feed her that way.” Cae murmured, stroking Grillby's jaw while examining him over another time, "Thank you, Fuku... For being so brave... I'm proud of you, kid.” he smiled up at her.

“That’ll do then.” She nodded. She brought the baby over, and glanced to him, before offering the bare naked baby out to her mother. “Here- I’m sure you want to hold her. It’s… It’s been a long day. And… Thank you, Sans. I’m not… I’m not brave. But I tried to be- because I needed to be.”

Asgore poked his head in, and peered at them quietly. “Fuku,” he said softly, “I’ve got a room prepared for you at the guest quarters of the castle, if you would like. The hospital room can only hold so many…”

“Ah, yes, please, Sire.” She nodded, dipping her head, and glancing to Sans. “You’ll be staying here?”

He nodded, taking Sol gently before he smiled to the green elemental. "Yeah, I’ll stay here... but Fuku... Don’t lie to yourself like that. You're a very brave young woman. And if I may go so far as to say this... I’m proud to call you my daughter." He told her, cradling Sol in one arm while the other extended for a hug with the young woman.

Fuku stepped around the bed to meet his hug, and tightened her arms around the taller man with a quiet sniffle. “Th-thanks,” She manages, “I wouldn’t mind if you wanted to call me your daughter. Heh…” She gives him a shaky smile, and then gently steps back and scrubs at her face. “I’ll be back to bring you guys something to eat later, okay?”

"Thanks kiddo." He kissed her head gently as he gave her a squeeze, and as she pulled away, he sat down, cradling Solstice close as he stroked her head. "I'll be here with the old men." He snorted gently.

“Alright.” Fuku gave him a smile, and patted his skull fondly, before scooting out the door.

Asgore gave her a bemused look, and then glanced to Sans as he skirted over to check on his lover. Tenebris was still unconscious- and he had to wonder when he would come around. “Old men, hm?” He rumbled teasingly to the smaller skeleton.

"You guys have at least a few hundred years on me, Asgore." He stuck his tongue out at him with a cheeky grin. "But you know I appreciate all three of you anyways, heh heh heh." Asgore chuckled gently, and quirked a soft grin at the small skeleton. “A few hundred years is generous, Sans, truly. I think I’m closer to several hundred years on you by now. But we appreciate you too, my boy.” The king stroked a hand over Tenebris head gently, and then exhaled with a
warm sigh.

He chuckled, and then sighed and looked at Tenebris.

The older beast's breathing was still a little ragged, but it wasn't nearly as bad as before, the bleeding had definitely slowed, though another thought came to him as he watched his dad. "Pops might end up melting again if he can't keep anything down enough to take his pills." He mentioned.

"He took his pills this morning," The king mentioned with a sigh, "I was on the phone with him when he did. So… With any luck, he'll be awake tomorrow to take them. We'll see how he feels then." One of the king’s ears twitched, and he tilted his head, glancing across the way as he watched Toki squirm up and away from Papyrus, hunching over the side of the bed to retch into the sick bin she had previously discarded. The king grimaced. “Let’s hope he can keep stuff down. Having multiple monsters puking isn’t a fun process.”

He nodded in agreement, before he sighed and nuzzled Sol, letting his soul free to help feed her. "My poor baby girl." He murmured.

Asgore politely turned around to let him tend to his child, and sighed softly. “I’m going to go check on Papyrus and Toki while you tend to your daughter.” He hums, “And see if they need any help. I’ll be just across the hall if you need me, alright?”

"Thanks, Asgore." he purred, holding Solstice a little closer, relaxing to do as he said he would.

The kind king nodded, and stepped across the hall. He poked his head gingerly into their room, and winced quietly as he took in the sights.

Toki looked like a mess, to be frank- she had trails of blood dripping from her sockets again, and was leaning over the edge of the bed shakily, trying to keep as quiet as she could so she didn’t disturb the twins still sleeping in their cradle as she choked and spewed.

“Do you need anything, Papyrus?” The king inquired gently to the one who wasn’t occupied by vacating magic violently out of her mouth.

"Just some wet rags to take care of Toki." he replied, smiling to Toki as he rubbed her back. "Thank you anyways."

"I'll get some wet rags, and some water." The king nodded. He headed off down the hall with quick steps to go fetch the items he promised.

Toki sputtered again, spitting to clear her mouth, and leaned her back gently into his hand. "Hhhhh... Thanks, Quinn. Mmm..."

When Asgore returned, he brought with him several damp rags, and a few bottles of water for them to sip at. He brought them to the side of the bed where Papyrus was, and slid over a side table for him. "Here, son. Here's the rags, and some water to rinse your mouths out and stay hydrated. We might not be creatures made of genetic molecules like humans, but monsters need water too. Particularly fevered monsters.”

"Thank you, Asgore. I appreciate your help.” He purred gently.

The king chuckled gently, and patted Papyrus' shoulder. "I get the feeling that I'm going to be doing a lot of it, if you're sick too."

Toki coughed and spat, and leaned back, opening her mouth so she could try and scrub her teeth
clean with the dirtied cloth. "I'm so tired of bleeding," she rasped gently. Fuck the bleeding, and fuck the nausea lingering from teleporting. "H-how are you doing, Pap?"

"My condition is of far less concern." He answered. "I'm spending more energy worrying about you, you need attention more than I do."

Asgore was kind enough to pass over one of the wet rags when Toki motioned for one.

The dirtied cloth just wasn’t cutting it. The new clean cloth, however, helped her clean up her mouth and face, and let the trembling skeleton collapse back against her husband with a rattling breath. She turned carefully over in his arms so she could face him, and then kicked him in the shin. Given that it felt more like a nudge than a kick proved just how weak her limbs were. “Far less concern my ass,” she grumbles. “Just because I’m sick doesn’t mean I’m not worrying,” She says. “So don’t try to push too hard for me, okay? The twins are an acceptable reason to push yourself.” She was not. Toki neatly tucked one of the rags under her head, to keep any leaking magic from running down and staining the bed, and then nestled against her husband. Fever hot limbs curled around him, and she buried herself in his scent, letting it wash over her as she kept part of her senses carefully on the twins.

"Ow." He chuckled weakly, pressing his forehead against hers before he wrapped his arms around her, cradling her torso in his arms. "I'm fine, and as long as I'm here, you, Skylar, and our little Honey are going to be too." He told her gently, stroking her skull with tenderness to match.

Toki nuzzles her forehead to his, the fevered bones feeling hot against his own. He might have a temperature, but it wasn’t quite as hot as hers- his bones felt almost cold compared to hers. “I worry too,” She murmurs softly to him, leaning into his touches with a soft sound. Her sockets half lid, dim eye lights flickering weakly in their depths as she focuses on just how nice it feels to have his bare fingers stroking over her skull and around her horns. “Mmm… If they start to fuss, you can bring them here,” She says, “and we can all four rest together. They’re asleep now though…” They’d settled down once they’d been tucked in and close to one another.

Sickly feeling babies slept well. “I just don’t understand why they’re sick too, or why you are.” She sniffs quietly, and muses that her nose wasn’t bleeding anymore at the moment.

“It’s called Death’s Rebound,” Asgore says softly from where he lingered in the doorway. “Frisk said it… happens to those who died, or were in the process of dying, when a load happened. It’s possible that Papyrus and the twins were on their way towards deaths door when the load came.”

"Caeruleus told me what happened… After you were… killed… I fell… and the children were suffering when we were both lost…” Aliquam murmured, not wanting to reminisce in the memory of what Cae had told him.

“That would do it.” Asgore nods. “They are young enough yet that they were likely falling as well- children do not do well losing one or both parents when they are at this young of an age.” The king sighs gently.

Toki nuzzled her face to his with a soft sound. “It doesn’t matter now.” She says. “We’re alive… Sick, but alive. We’ll… We’ll get better.” There is firmness to her tone, despite the weakness in her body and words. “I know it.”

“You will.” Asgore nods. He tips his head, and steps back for the door. “I’ll let you both rest. If you need anything, just call- either I or I imagine Sans will be able to hear too.”

"Of course, Sir… Thank you." Aliquam thanked him, before he closed his eyes and pulled Toki a
When the king left, Toki nestled closer to him, and wedged a leg gently between his so she was more thoroughly entwined with him. She rubbed one of her hands gently along his ribs, seeking to help him relax as best she could. “Get some rest, my love,” She says softly. “We’re not going to be going anywhere for a while…” She murmurs.

He nodded slowly, smiling as he gave her a tender kiss. "I love you... I love you so... so much."

“I love you too, Pap.” She returned his kiss gently, teeth flexing gingerly against his, and she gave him a tired look. “I’m sorry I scared you earlier…”

"You? Scare me? Pfft." he chuckled quietly, shaking his head, "No, you didn't scare me."

“You cried.” She said simply, keeping her voice down so others didn’t hear, and stroked his cheek. “Me passing out in the tub terrified you enough that you cried, Pap. I think that counts as scaring you.” Toki tuned her head to the cloth and coughed for a moment, before nestling back against him with a soft sigh. “Didn’t mean to scare you…”

He chuckled shakily, and then he sighed and kissed her gently. "You're forgiven. But don't you go doing it again. I don't know if I can handle that kind of scare again." He teased gently.

“I'll try not t' do it again, my love.” She smiles softly, and nuzzles him. “Mm... Now, are you going to panic if I try to get some sleep...?” She inquires lightly.

"Only if you don't wake up again." He chuckled seriously as he kissed her.

She kissed him back gently, and settled in close to him. She got as close as she could with her chest blocking the way, and settled down to rest. “If it makes you feel better, you can wake me every hour to check?”

"I wont fully wake you." He purred. "But at least I'll watch you stir enough to respond." He murmured. His arms slid gingerly around her, and he cradled her close, palm settling in the small of her lower back.

“Okay.” She nods softly. “I can work with that.” Toki exhales softly, and closes her eyes.

It’s almost scary how fast she drops off to sleep, her breath puffing faintly over his face as she rests.

The breathing made him content, and he smiled, closing his eyes as he nuzzled her, before he settled down to rest as well with her nestled safely in his arms.
The first day was rough. The monsters that were unconscious didn’t wake up for the entirety of the first twenty-four hours since they had gone down- and those who were sick were horribly sick. Toki spent the first day alternating between bleeding on and off, and being unable to keep anything down, sleeping in small bursts and waking up with cold chills and shakes to tend to their children and feed them as best she could.

Honey struggled to keep things down too- she would eat, and end up sick, and then would cry, which would set off Skylar.

Needless to say the first day was rough- Toki did her best to tend to her children as best she could, but there was a lot of messes that were cleaned up, and a lot of crying from the twins.

Thankfully, the medics rolled in old televisions for them to watch TV as best that they could, so that helped pass the waking moments a little easier for everyone.

News came in over the television as well. The firefighters had managed to stop the fire before it turned into a wildfire- but the compound, and all of Nara village were in cinders. Only the brick and cement foundations of Toki’s house had remained in the footage that had been shown- or a little of it did. It was collapsed, where presumably a bomb had been dropped on it.

The pilots hadn’t been caught- but the planes had been found landed and abandoned, and were being investigated.

The entire world was in a state of shock at the violence- and the people were rising up, demanding the governments step up and actually do something.

They would have to see what would come though- everyone was still reeling over the attack, and the decimation of a village that was nearly two years in the making.

On the second day, those who were unconscious began to stir, and those who were ill were beginning to bleed in less often spurts. Temperatures were still high though, but it was hopeful that food might be able to be kept down most times. However, body aches were a thing- painful, painful
body aches. Touch was unpleasant, along with the weight of their own bodies, let alone trying to walk.

Solstice was one of the first of the unconscious ones from their group to stir, waking with a weak coo against Cae’s chest. Her flames were still flickering lowly, thanks to Fuku relighting her- but they were flickering, and she was awake.

The second to stir had been Grillby, the big fire monster inhaling with a deep sound and feeding the smoldering embers of his fires. The exhale had been a wet cough, prompting the fire monster to roll onto his side and vomit a wave of magma over the side of the bed- but he was awake, and very weak. The black color of his skin brightened to an orange-brown color as his fires tried to rekindle and heat him back up to the temperature he should be- but it was a slow process, and he couldn’t heat fast enough.

The last to stir was Tenebris. The older doctor had woken a fair bit more peacefully than he had gone down, but he was shaky and weak, and still bleeding from his eyes from time to time.

It was good though, that everyone was up.

Frisk certainly seemed chipper about it, even if everyone felt like shit the second day around. ‘I told you that they’d start improving.’ They spoke with their hands again, the medical ward quiet with monsters resting in their private rooms. The only rooms with their doors open were the Gaster and Fyrus rooms, so it wasn’t that hard for Frisk to be ‘understood’, even if Toki couldn’t really see from her hospital bed.

The shortest skeleton had wanted to cross the hall and visit Tenebris, Grillby, and Solstice, but her body ached too badly for her to put weight on her limbs. She had tried getting out of bed while Papyrus had been resting with the twins, but pain had shot up her joints, and she’d collapsed onto the floor, and scared the bajeesus out of practically everyone.

She’d been banned from moving on her own- as had any other monster, as the medical staff learned from her mistake.

Frisk glanced to Cae and tilted their head. ‘A trip to Waterfall still wouldn’t go amiss- though it wont help Grillby and Solstice. Might help with the aches Toki, Tenebris, Papyrus, and the twins have.’

Cae seemed reluctant to leave his mate and child, but if it meant helping everyone else, he could make a second trip with the others to Hotland for a lava-pool bath later on.

"Yeah... sounds like a plan. I'll go get them, then." He murmured, before he looked to Frisk and smiled, "Kid, thanks a lot for telling me what was going on. I was scared I was gonna lose everyone regardless of what we did." He chuckled, patting the young adult's shoulder before going to get Aliquam and Toki.

Frisk gave him a salute, and went to keep an eye on Solstice and Grillby for him while he was playing bus boy.

Toki was settled on her side in her and Quinn’s room, trying to keep from moving, because moving hurt no matter what she did. She had Skylar nestled at her hip, with the achy baby leaning on her and trying to relax as best he could. Quinn wasn’t in the room- he was down the hall, getting a new bucket and fresh towels for their room.

Honey was crawling around at Toki’s feet, and chasing a little bee that Toki had summoned to keep her entertained. The aches bothered the little girl too, but she was also bored- and a bored Honey was
Toki stirred as Cae popped into the room, wincing as she lifted her head. “Sans? How’s Grillby, Sol, and Papa doing?”

”Awake.” He said. “But Frisk had an idea that I think would help you and everyone else here out. The glowing pools in Waterfall are medicinal in their own special way, and Frisk got me thinkin’ that it’d help you guys loosen up a bit, stop feelin’ so sore.”

“Mmm, maybe?” Toki shifted some on the bed, a pained sound leaving her as her body wanted to refuse to twist. Skylar made a concerned noise, and then whimpered when he turned to look at her. She strove through the pain, to rub a hand down his skull and soothe him. “I’m not going to turn it down if it’ll help. But, uh, I can’t walk, and Pap’s achy too.” Her husband could move- but she didn’t want him trying to carry her, and the twins, all at the same time. “H-hah… What about Grillby and Solstice? They can’t go into water…”

“They’re going to the lava pools after you guys are returned here, safe and sound.” He explained. Toki wasn’t sure how magma would work with the little skelemental, but she supposed Solstice would likely be all right with just being around the heat. Toki shakily nodded. “Okay. Hah… Should probably get us there first- I can heat up one of the pools with my magic, so Papa doesn’t get cold.” She did recall that waterfall water was very, very cold, even if it did have it’s own healing properties to it. “Mm… You should be okay to take them there while we relax in the water. No need to make them wait. We do have cell phones. Though… Hotland would probably melt those.” A quick flex of her magic, and Toki sent a hornet to snuggle into Cae’s jacket. “There… If you need me, the bee can contact me, and if we need you, it’ll buzz at you. Hotland wont hurt it either.”

He reached out and rubbed his fingers lightly over the hornet, and then he smiled. "Let's focus on getting you to waterfall first.” He chuckled. "Hunts can carry you if you can't carry yourself, and Heinz can take the twins. I don't want Pap using more magic than he has to."

The bee buzzed pleasantly, and wiggled into the space between his neck and his collar.

Toki nodded, and exhaled roughly. She coughed again, bracing herself automatically with one of the many cloths she’d kept dirtying, and grimaced as the feeling going through her ribs. “Yeah.” She rasps, and then rolls her eyes at him sharply. “I literally fell on my face this morning when I tried to go visit you guys in your room, Sans. Walking isn’t happening.” That didn’t mean she wanted to be carried in the mouth of a large skeletal dog thing, though, or whatever it was that Sans summoned. Toki tugged on her magic, and Sugar appeared at the side of the bed. “So long as you don’t drop us into the water, Sugar can carry me.”

The wingless hornet peered at her mistress quietly, and shoved her head up onto the bed to flick a long tongue out and lick both children in greeting. Toki urged her to behave, and made to sit up, though that was difficult with Skylar clinging to her hip.

“How are you going to get Papa there? You can’t lift him.” She grunts as she manages to sit up, arms shaking like branches in the breeze. “Mm… I can’t fit clover into the room with Grillby’s bed. Sugar might fit though. I could send her back with you?”

Cae came over and helped her up, making sure she didn't land on Skylar, and he sighed. "I'm thinking about it... If Sugar doesn't mind helping him outside, I'm sure Clover can carry him, no problem."

“If you can get him rolled onto her back, then she can carry him.” She glanced down at her
summons, and worried her teeth together quietly. “She does better around him than she used to.” She says. “She’s still nervous, but not as bad. You’ll need to take me to the outside so I can summon Clover there- I can’t do long distance.”

Toki shifted where she was seated, and gently eased her son off of her lap and into the bed. Skylar fussed, and reached for her. “Easy, baby boy,” She cooed gently. “Mama will hold you in a little bit- we’re going to go somewhere that’ll make us feel better- but Mama can’t hold you until we’re there, okay?”

“Ma…” His teeth wobbled at her, threatening a tantrum, and she sighed, and scooped him up to her shoulder, where he latched on and refused to let go.

“If you can take Honey, I can hold Skylar.” She says, keeping a firm grasp on him as she shakily eases a leg up and over Sugar’s side. The bee eases her large self against the bed, and lets Toki slide onto her back, where her legs cradle her easily. “Mmm… Where’s Pap?”

“I think he went to get you some fresh towels.” He answered, "Want me to help you to the courtyard first, or should we wait for Pap?”

“If we leave, and he comes back to us gone, he’s probably going to panic.” She informs him. “So probably wait.”

Honey crawls to the end of the bed, and reaches out for Cae, making a grunting sound at him. “Unca Snas.”

He smiled and stepped over to the bed, scooping Honey up and rubbing his head to hers, "Hey there, sweetheart.” He chuckled lightly, "How’s my favorite little Honeybug?” He cooed gently.

She butted her horns up against his cheek, and puffed huffily. Her little blue eye lights peered at him for a moment, before nuzzling into his chest. “Nuh… Icky.” Her fingers took hold of the jacket above his breasts, and she nestled close, eyes resting at half-mast.

“At least she’s not throwing up.” Toki sighed. “Anymore that is. Yesterday was… long. You were a lot of help though.” As the only skeleton that hadn’t been sick, Cae had bounced back and forth and helped as best he could. So, he’d held a lot of sick babies while messes were cleaned, and vice versa.

"Icky she says, poor thing.” He kissed Honey's head, and then smiled at Toki. "Hey, what is family for? I wasn't about to leave you high n’ dry when you needed me most.”

“That’s true,” Toki shakily leaned into Sugar, and carefully adjusted Skylar. Her Son wasn’t letting her go, and he made a high keening noise at her when she attempted to dislodge his hands from around her neck. “Well, he’s not coming off.” She says. “Hm. Alright… Anyways… I just wish none of us got sick in the first place. I hate seeing my children sick, and being unable to make them feel better is… probably one of the worst feelings in the world.”

It was a perilous time- after having everything decimated, and with the governments having to reach out to Asgore… They couldn’t afford to have more than half of the Underground sick. Their force of guards and fighters couldn’t get out of bed.

Honey sniffled quietly, and chewed on the edge of his jacket, before huffing, and making a fussy sound at him. “Unca Snas- icky too?”

"No, Not Icky. I feel a lot better, though I’ve been kept busy helping take care of you.” He put her in the cradle of one arm and offered her a finger to chew on, not quite responding to Toki since he didn’t know how. It really was one of the worst feelings in the world- but he’d had worse. His
daughter had died. And he remembered it.

Honey latched onto his finger and started chewing avidly.

Toki shot him a bemused look. “You don’t do that with Skylar.” She teases. For good reason, too- even Papyrus could hardly handle when their son chewed on him. Like she’d once said, her teeth were not made for gentle nibbling, and neither were Skylar’s.

She perked, hearing footsteps coming down the hall, and wondering if it was her husband.

"I think the only thing that could take his abuse is Pop's tail. If we're lucky, he'll shed soon." Cae chuckled gently, "Then he'll have a chew toy. But she's just got molars and two little fangs, nothing too bad."

Indeed it was. Aliquam had an armful of towels and a clean bucket in hand, he did lean against the wall for a little support but he seemed to be recovering well enough.

Toki waved at Papyrus as he entered the room, and nodded to Sans. “He chewed through the bones we soaked in vinegar, so… yeah, he needs something. I mean, he can chew on me, but after a while, it begins to hurt.” That said, she shifted in her seat. “We’re off to Waterfall, Pap. Want a ride?"

"Oh... Waterfall huh?" He piped up quietly,

"Frisk thinks the glowing pools will do you guys some good with healing. You, Tokes, Pops, the twins." Cae explained.

"Ahh..." Aliquam nodded in understanding, before he smiled, "Alright. I like the sound of this."

“Thought you might.” Toki smiled slightly. She glanced down at Sugar, and hummed thoughtfully, before patting the empty space of Thorax behind her. “C’mon, mister tough guy. You can ride with me, if you don’t feel up to walking. We have to stop in the courtyard first, so we can summon Clover.” Neither she nor Papyrus weighed as much as Tenebris did. They were bone- Tenebris was muscle and meat among other things.

"Sounds like a plan." He laughed gently, coming over and setting his collected things on the bed, before he sat on Sugar's thorax. He patted the bee gently. "Hey girl." He purred to her.

The big hornet buzzed at him with a chipper undertone, and it took a little mental guidance from Toki to keep the hyperactive insect from bouncing like a puppy.

Skylar peered over his mother’s shoulder to give his father a decidedly grumpy look, before sticking his tongue out at him and then burying his face into his mother’s neck.

Toki patted his behind gently, and glanced up to Cae, none-the-wiser to her son grumping at his father. “If you’ve got Honey, we’re ready to go. Keep a hold on me, Pap- Sugar doesn’t have a saddle, and we don’t need you sliding off her thorax.”

"I'm already sore enough. I don’t need a bruised tailbone on top of that.” Quinn snorted quietly as he wrapped his arms around Toki, nuzzling her gently before he leaned over and kissed Skylar's head. "Muah~"

"I've got her, let's go." Cae agreed, giving a thumbs up to his sister-in-law as he balanced the baby chewing on him.

“Alright. I’d say race you to the courtyard, but you can teleport, so that’s cheating.” Sugar’s feet
clicked on the tile of the castle, and she squeezed through the medical wing door before padding down the hall at quick speeds. Toki kept one hand on Skylar, the other fisted in Sugar’s mane, and left Cae to keep up with the fast moving insect.

Skylar growled at his father, and tiny, sharp teeth nipped irritably at him as he clung tighter to his mother. Irritable orange eyes leered at him.

Cae rolled his eyes and chuckled, casually going after them while humming a tune to Honey.

"Nyeh heh heh..." He then leaned over to Toki’s other side and gave a small nip to her cheek. "Mind if I have a kiss~?" he cooed.

The nip caught Toki’s attention, and she tilted her skull to the side, turning easily around to give him a smile. “You have to ask?” She laughs gently. She kisses him tenderly, and smiles against his teeth, eye lights warm as she peers back at him. Sometimes being a skeleton without any flesh was nice—she could turn her neck nearly all the way around when she wanted to. “I never mind giving you kisses.”

Someone else minded though, and there was a tiny angry baby buzzing on Toki’s shoulder. The buzzing only made his little joints hurt worse, which made his mood fouler— and he hissed noisily at his father, possessively clinging to his mother. “Mine.”

He chuckled gently and gave her another kiss. "Muah~" Mostly it was just to mess with Skylar.

His son needed his feathers ruffled sometimes.

Skylar gave an unhappy shriek, and buried his face into his mother’s shoulder.

Toki winced at the sound, and patted his back gently. “Really,” She rolls her eyes, “You’re antagonizing your son. Shame on you.” Despite her words, her voice is teasing.

She ends up in a small coughing fit as they reach the court yard, and has to pause to catch her breath—and not splatter Sugar’s mane in the viscous magic she’s hacking up— before ripping the air open.

Clover settles down easily, though she too looks worse for the wear. The massive insect, too, had died, and it showed. Her colors were dimmer than usual, more washed out, and she seemed tired. But she landed in the court yard and patiently awaited orders while her mistress coughed and hacked.

"He's being cranky, and I’ve had a bad few days; we all have. I have my brother's bad sense of timing for a craving for some humor." He chuckled quietly, before he lightly patted Toki’s back. "Easy... easy..." he told her gently, before he looked up to Clover. "There's our big girl."

Toki’s coughing fit lasted until Sans caught up with them, and she unfortunately soaked the sleeve of her shirt again. She sighs, her ribs aching, and wipes her teeth clean as best she can. “Skylar’s also not even a year old,” she rasps, “even if he’s more advanced thanks to your Dad’s side of the genetics. Give him some slack, love— he’s your son, and tantrums are bound to happen.”

That being said, Skylar was sniffling quietly into her shoulder, thanks to the jostling from her coughing. She crooned softly, and rubbed his back, before glancing up to Clover.

The big hornet eyed Cae as he approached, and leaned down to brush her mandibles lightly across Papyrus’ skull in greeting. She really did not look well, compared side by side with Sugar— but the big Hornet was trucking on.

Toki lifted her hand and brushed along the side of her face. “Hey Clover... I know you’re not
feeling well either, but we need you to carry Tenebris for us here in a little bit. But until then, you’re welcome to stay here and relax, okay?”

The beam of sunshine in the courtyard felt nice. The hole in the mountain up top that let it in was being visibly guarded by several guards- and it was safe to assume that any other entrances into the Underground were also being guarded.

Clover nodded slowly, and shifted to lay down.

Quinn reached up and gently massaged the hornet's head when she leaned down, "That's a good girl.” He praised gently, before he sighed and smiled, sliding off of Sugar to relax in the grass that grew beneath their feet. "Mmh..."

Toki snorted at Papyrus, as he sprawled in the grass. “You realize Sans is right over there, right?” She glanced at the medium sized skeleton holding their daughter. “And you’ve got to get back up now, and I can’t hold your weight to help you up.”

Being on the ground also put him right down in face licking range- of which, Sugar took advantage of. The big hornet shoved her face into his and began to briskly groom his face and skull with slick, slobbery licks.

Clover simply looked on with amusement and made no motion to help him.

He let 'nyeh!'s of regret as he was attacked by hornet tongue, and he reached up to ruffle her fur, "Alright, alright! Nyeh! I love you too, Sugar, but please!” he keened, pushing against her snout.

Like with getting licked by a dog, talking while getting attacked by kisses was never a good idea. Why? One often would get an impromptu French kiss. And in Papyrus’s case, that is exactly what he got, complete with slobbery sulfuric saliva all over his teeth, before the hornet finally subsided under his weak flailing, and instead used her mandibles to grab him around the chest and lift him gingerly to his feet.

Her eye lights sparkled at him, mane ruffled and fluffed. Sugar looked quite proud of herself.

Toki was laughing too hard to be of much help, and her laughter was making her cough again- but his near instant regret had been hilarious.

He leaned against her and let out a 'Bleehhh!' as he wiped his face.

Karma was a very cruel mistress... And Quinn had first example of this. "Bleh..."

“That’s what you get for t-teasing Skylar,” Toki choked as she laughed.

Honey shared her mothers giggles, and laughed around her Uncle’s finger as she chewed on it. “Nyeh!”

Sugar just looked very, very pleased, and offered her back to Papyrus once more.

He climbed on and coughed, before he leaned his head on his hand, "Blegh."

“Tastes a little bit like licking the devil’s butt, doesn’t it?” Toki wheezes and teases him lightly, before nudging Sugar over towards Sans.

"Vile.” he chuffed, casually wiping his mouth on the back of her shoulder.

Sans came over and patted Sugar gently, rubbing the hornet’s head with his hand as soon as he freed
his finger’s from Honey’s chewing grasp. "So..."

“We’re ready to go when you are,” Toki gave the oldest skeleton a lopsided grin, and closed her sockets, curling her hand tightly into Sugar’s mane. “If you bring them both with you when you bring Papa,” she referred to the hornets, “then I can de-summon them there.”

Clover really didn’t need to remain out if she was sick too- she’d recover best in her realm, where the other hornets were. And, honestly, Toki wasn’t sure she could keep up the summoning for them for very long at one time. But, it wasn’t a big deal to call them back. She’d make sure to give Clover plenty of attention when they were both feeling better, however.

"Sure thing." Sans walked over to Papyrus, who had since righted himself on Sugar's back, and passed over Honey, before he whistled to Clover. "Good to see you up and kicking, big girl." He told her, smiling widely. "I'll go get Pops. Be right back." He chuckled, before he teleported back to the other rooms.

Toki rolled her eyes as Sans teleported. That wasn't the plan- but whatever worked. She was too sore to fuss- if he could get Tenebris over to them, and actually heft the heavy monster up long enough to teleport him to Clover so she could lift him, then Toki wasn't going to complain.

Clover shifted upright at Toki's prompting, sighing gently and moving over to where Sans had last teleported from. She settled down to wait for him to appear.

Within Tenebris' room, the elder was sitting up in his bed, his breathing slow and his gaze unfocused, though as his son arrived, his eyes lifted and looked upon his son

"Caeruleus."

"Hey Pops... Thought i'd come get you and take you out for a small field trip, we think it'll help you feel better."

"The glowing pools?"

"Yeah, how didja-"

"I know this realm, it was my home. I know better than that.

Frisk was still there with Solstice and Grillby, and was humming a soft tune to the dozing skeletal elemental baby in their arms while Grillby rested. They waved at Cae when he popped in. 'How are you going to get Tenebris there? He is very heavy.' They signed.

"Toki insists that Clover's gonna carry him" He replied,

"I may be hurt, but I will not be carried. I have my own damn legs." Tenebris gave a growl.

"Yeah, I knew you were gonna say that.” Sans shrugged. “Don’t sweat it, I can have Hunts help you out, worst case scenario."

'There is no shame in accepting help.' Frisk says wisely. 'Its less shameful than falling on your face or hurting yourself because you're too prideful.'

Tenebris rumbled quietly and looked at Frisk as they signed, before he huffed and brought his legs around. The pads on the underside of his feet pressed against the ground before his toes tensed,
claws digging partly slightly into the tile. "Mmmh...." Why did he feel as if a pup tumbling out of the nest for the first time...? He coughed into a fist and his eyes pressed closed for a moment, before he opened them again and made to get up.

He made it maybe two steps before his legs buckled and he hit the ground with a hard sound as his shield struck the tile.

Frisk gave him a little smug look as they watched the big white monster splat out on the ground. 'And now you look silly.' they inform him lightly. 'Are you okay though, Tenebris? Dunkle Sans, you might just want to teleport him to Clover. How is Clover by the way? She died, if I recall. Does Deaths Rebound affect summons too?' It might have been a little eerie to ask, but Frisk was genuinely curious. It was also good information to know. Dark little eyes glanced over to Cae, and they hummed again, smiling as Solstice tugged sleepily on a handful of their hair.

"She was looking pretty worse for wear, but she's doing alright." He answered, helping his father sit up at least.

Tenebris was looking like his pride got dented, his form fluffed up a little bit even as he leaned into his son to help keep him upright.

'That’s good.' They hummed. Frisk watched Tenebris puff up and gave him a faint smile. 'At least you don't have a nose to break?' They shifted in their seat, and then gave both of them a cheerful wave. 'I'll keep an eye on Grillby and Solstice while you're getting them settled in, Sans!'

"Hardly need a babysitter," Grillby rasped faintly. "But I appreciate you watching Solstice. She likes your hair."

Frisk beamed. 'Hair is a lot of fun! I just have to be careful so she doesn't burn it.'

He had the pout that lasted even as Sans teleported to the courtyard.

"Here we are!" The younger announced.

"What took you so long?" Toki inquired lightly, tilting her skull at them quizzically. She spotted Tenebris sitting on the ground, and could only guess. He'd probably tried to walk- he could be so damn stubborn sometimes, honestly.

Clover rose to her feet without prompting, and the massive hornet came closer, and bumped her face grumpily to Tenebris’ own. She chuffed, and opened her mouth, wiggling her mandibles, before twitching a leg towards her saddle. She couldn’t speak- but it was obvious he had two choices. Saddle up if he could, or she would carry him in her mouth. Intelligent eyes focused on him, and she settled in to await his answer.

"Pops tried to walk, went down hard and fast." He laughed.

Tenebris looked up at Clover and reached up, patting her face. "I could use some help, girl." He murmured, before he got a better grip, trying to pull himself up.

“That sounds like Papa.”’ Toki snorted, and nudged Sugar closer. The smaller hornet was hesitant, and kept eying Tenebris warily- she hadn’t forgotten the reason for her lack of flight, and it was slow, but steady, progress for her to get closer to him again. It was hit or miss on if her nerves would get the better of her or not, though.

Clover chuffed against his hand, and curled her mandibles around his chest before hefting him carefully onto his feet. Once he was up, she buzzed sharply to Sugar, and tucked her head down so
Tenebris could lean on her and work his way to her saddle.

The smaller bee stopped her anxious dawdling at the larger hornet’s scolding and skulked over as Clover rotated in place and settled herself as flat on the ground next to Tenebris as she could. Given that she was about fifteen feet long, and stood about nine feet tall on a good day, it was still a long way for him to go. And, since Clover lacked a definitive neck, she couldn’t exactly help him up into her saddle.

However, Sugar could. The smaller bee edged closer, and pantomimed using her skull to nudge him up into Clover’s saddle, shuffling awkwardly.

Toki was reading into their conversation through their bonds, and tilted her skull at Tenebris. “Sugar’s going to give you a boost up into Clover’s saddle, Papa. Quinn- make sure you’ve got a hold on Honey and on me. She’s probably going to rock onto her back legs- and we don’t need anyone falling off.” Toki might have been weak in the legs, but she was very surefooted when it came to staying seated on her bees.

"Sure thing..." Tenebris did appreciate the help, and as he climbed up, he gave a few small kicks of the air before he got a good foothold and was able to push himself up into the saddle. "Oof! There we go!"

Sugar had pushed her horns up under Tenebris’ backside, until the big monster was able to swing his leg up and over Clover’s back.

Clover grunts as he gets seated, and her wings shift, rustling against her back as she shifts and gets to her feet.

“Comfortable, Papa?” Toki hummed up to him lightly from her much smaller mount. The saddle was comfortable- and durable.

"Yes, thank you." He replied, adjusting his legs before he looked at her.

“Alright.” Toki nodded. “We- ah…” She broke off into another fit of coughs. Thankfully, it didn’t last long, but it rattled her all the same, and left her quietly trying to mop her mouth with her soiled sleeve. “We’re ready, Cae.”

"Sounds good." He grinned lightly and came over, "Ladies and gentlemen this is your captain speaking, keep your hands and feet inside the hornet at all times, thank you for flying Air Caeruleus." His eye glowed as he set a hand on both hornets and with a surge of magic, Caeruleus took a shortcut with the group to the end of Hotland, where it met Waterfall.

Though he was wheezing pretty damn hard, bent over with his palms on his knees by the end of it, the middle-sized skeleton managed it. Transporting two massive hornets was NOT as easy as he expected it to be.

Clover staggered as she landed, her feet sinking slightly into the watery parts of Waterfall. She hissed sharply, the water stinging, and growled at Cae for his landing placements. She only reason she didn’t shake herself off was because of her passenger.

Toki kept her balance on Sugar, and looked marginally less queasy this time of teleporting than she had yesterday. “You alright, Cae?” She manages to ask, as she pats Sugar’s side gently. The smaller hornet whines, not liking the sensation of teleporting.

“F-Fine!” Jus’ fine!” he managed to wheeze out after a moment, "Just... outta practice."
Aliquam and the twins took the shortcut well enough, though Tenebris looked a little green in the face. He didn't look like he was about to be sick, though he did look a little nauseated.

“Lot of bodies on a long distance.” Toki nods. “You need to rest some.” She nudges Sugar gently, and the bee grumbles, before easing her way towards one of the more secluded glowing pools. “We’ll all be okay here for a little while.”

Clover swayed slightly as she edged over to the pool that Toki was at, and she chuffed before glancing back at Tenebris, and motioning for the water with her face. She could only get so close—She was heavier, and the water bank would collapse, and she would fall in.

Cae wheezed again quietly and sat down to relax.

Tenebris caught Clover's hints and carefully slid off her back, using her as support as he sighed. "Alright... Thank you, Clover."

Clover chuffed and nosed him slightly, before extending her wings out over her back. They surrounded him on either side, and created railings of sorts that lead straight to the water—she might not be able to go closer, but that didn’t mean that she wouldn’t offer him walking support.

Sugar stopped once she reached a certain point, and Toki glanced back at Papyrus. “Hop off, Pap. She can’t get any closer without the ground giving in. If you can take Skylar, I can try to make it to the water on my own.” That way, if she fell— which she no doubt would—her son wouldn’t get jostled when she hit the ground.

Skylar sniffled against her shoulder, but it seemed his tantrum had faded off some. He peered up at his father and his twin from over his mother’s shoulder.

"That’s a good girl." Tenebris purred gently to Clover.

Meanwhile, Pap carefully climbed off of Sugar and took the children, "I’ve got them; be careful.” He warned gingerly.

Clover moved her head and urged the doctor onwards with a huff.

Toki nodded, and eased off of Sugar. Her legs shook, pain lancing up from her aching joints, and Toki managed a step before hitting her knees. “Ah- ow. You know… It’s not a long crawl. I’m not a very prideful person- I’ll just… do that. Slowly.” She began shuffling along the ground, grumbling softly.

Tenebris made it to the edge, and then he willingly fell back to land in a seated position, shedding his coat and starting on his turtleneck.

"Will you want to undress or soak fully clothed?” Aliquam then asked.

Toki eyed her husband warily, and de-summoned her insects once they were no longer needed. “I’d rather go without clothes.” She makes it to the edge of the pool, and starts to shimmy out of her top. She pauses, and buzzes at herself. “Agh, breasts. Whatever- we’re the only ones here, and it’s not like you haven’t seen them before.” And that went for literally everyone there.

Cae had walked in on her feeding the twins multiple times—honestly, it wasn’t that big of a deal anymore.

“Boobles.” Honey cooes.
"Yes, boobies, sweetie." Toki hums. "I can dry your clothes if you’d rather soak with clothes on, Pap."

"We're family, we've nothing to hide in shame." Aliquam laughed gently.

"I dunno," Toki hums mysteriously, "I don’t see you waving around your disco stick for your dad to see." She arches a brow at him as she divests herself of her clothing. Nude, the bare breasted and bare boned skeleton slips into the water. "Ah! Cold."

It doesn’t take long for the water around her to start to heat though- both her magic and her fever working to churn the glowing water’s temperature into something higher. Once settled, Toki lifts her arms. "Here- lemme see the kids. Gotta get you all out of your clothes."

"Nakkie!"

He chuckled and nodded, helping undress them before passing them over.

Toki took them in her arms, and settled lower into the water, while waiting for Quinn to join her. A small flush of her magic, and a space of water around her was sufficiently bubbling.

Skylar literally sighed and slumped against her, the heat and whatever made the water glow and have it’s properties helping to soothe his little joints.

Honey simply purred and relaxed.

Toki smiled, glad the twins pains were easing.

Aliquam soon joined her, his bones exposed to the water which summoned forth a blissful sigh, "As if a hot bath right from the faucet--" he cooed.

He could hear movement of the water behind them, Tenebris finally undressed and sliding into the water as well.

Toki quirked a grin. "Having a wife with fire magic has it’s perks." She hums. She drifts closer to him and nestles into his side, before beckoning with her chin for Tenebris to come near as well. She might as well act as a portable heater until she manages to heat up the whole pool. "C’mon, Papa. Water’s warmer over here, and I know you get cold when you’re in the nude."

Looking over, Tenebris made his way over. His legs were kicking a little easier in the water than they would carry him on land, so this was good therapy for those who were bedridden. He quietly coughed, then smiled and sat near her, purring as he could feel the thermal difference in the water, "Mmmh..."

His pleased sound had her chuckling, though that faded off into a wet cough. She sighed, and tucked her head against the bare bones of Papyrus’ shoulder, before nuzzling into him with a soft sound.

Skylar shifted in her arms, and reached out, fisting his hand into his father’s ribs. He slowly began to pull his way from his mother’s arms over to his father’s arms.

“I think someone is trying to say he’s sorry for being grumpy earlier,” Toki hummed gently.

Papyrus purred and took his son into his arms, pulling him close and pecking his head, "There's my boy." he purred.

Skylar nuzzled up to Papyrus with a tired sound, and curled his fingers tightly around his ribs. The
child settled there, content to soak and cling to his father now that the heat and the water was making him hurt less.

Toki nuzzled her head onto Quinn’s shoulder, and adjusted Honey- who was beginning to doze off against her. “Mmm… The heat helps.” She murmurs.

"Indeed so." He slowly sat down and put Skylar on his shoulder, smiling tiredly, "We could all use a nap."

“Mmm… I know we can go without air if we nap in the pools, but can Papa?” Toki inquired lightly, glancing over to Tenebris.

"I do not require oxygen to survive, but my skin can be affected if I am submerged too long... But something short and simple like a nap is no harm." The bigger monster replied quietly.

Toki nodded thoughtfully, and closed her sockets with a soft sound. “Mmm… Alright. Well, I suppose if we all bundle close together, we can probably nap. I’m not going to be able to keep the water as warm in as large of a radius if I sleep.” Her subconscious output wasn’t that big.

Tenebris swam closer at that and curled around them, hooking his teeth on the vertebrae of his tail as he brought them a little closer together for comfort.

Aliquam smiled and sighed happily, leaning against Tenebris' back, giving Toki his shoulder.

Being curled around was a relaxing thing, and Toki couldn’t help the tired sound that escaped her mouth afterwards. She nestled into Quinn, and closed her sockets. “Mmm…”

Everyone seemed to settle down at that moment and in their little world, everything was perfect.

With Cae, who had since recovered, he simply watched on from the shore for a little, making sure everyone was okay before he departed. He had another pair who needed his help...
Chapter 87

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Sometimes, Humanity hurts more when it tries to help.

By the fifth day, everyone was mostly back on their feet. Some of the worst cases were still coughing if someone got them too excited about something, but everyone had, for the most part, recovered from Death’s Rebound flawlessly just like Frisk had promised that they would.

The castle was mostly empty once more, as were all of the clinics. Monsters had been released to go home once they were sure that no one was going to fall or turn to dust- and once everyone was nearly fully recovered, keeping them all confined to medical rooms was a moot point.

The only ones still lingering in the castle were the Gaster and Fyrus families, though they would soon be departing as well.

Thumper clung to Tenebris’ shoulders, the boy unusually clingy after watching his second father figure go down while coughing up waves of blood. He was quiet, watching Asgore as the king talked with some humans.

The governments had come together and sent in troops to help protect the monsters. The monsters were citizens, in all technicalities- and they had the right to be protected as well. So, there were dozens of armed squadrons that were beginning to unload into the castle- Asgore was talking with them about implementing them with the Royal guard for the time being, so they could be shown around and safely be guided through the Underground, until they got used to traversing it and all of the traps and puzzles through it.

Toki watched them warily while her husband and Cae chattered, standing near Tenebris as the brothers chatted and handled the children. She tilted her skull, and pursed her teeth quietly.

Some of the soldiers were watching her.

In a… decidedly focused manner that was almost disturbing. Their attention might have been on Asgore and their commanding officers, but their eyes tracked her movements.

She coughed slightly- she was one of the ones with a faint lingering cough- and glanced up to Tenebris. “Is it just me,” she murmurs softly, “or am I being watched?”

Tenebris didn't respond vocally at first. He held Thumper in the cradle of one hand, the other lowered and at his side, but his claws were tapping his side with either a mental attempt to control himself or a show of anxiety.

"It's not just you, Toki." He growled quietly, before he swung his tail around and let it gleam in the light where the soldiers could see.

It wasn't a threat as much as a warning. Tenebris could protect himself, but after all that's happened, he wasn't too keen on trusting any old human off the bat.
Some of the soldiers shifted nervously at the large bladed weapon coming into view.

The ones that just watched, however, didn’t seem perturbed by it. Instead, they seemed almost…

excited by it.

Toki shivered, a faint nervous rattle of her neck vertebrae. “You don’t… Think that maybe they’re with…?” Toki didn’t want to think that the Governments had HAM agents in it- but… Well, they could be anywhere. “Maybe they’re just… not monster friendly.” She wanted to give people the benefit of the doubt, but… Well. Past experiences were proving that giving benefit of the doubt was not always wise.

"They best hope they're not one of them, for if I find out…” The blade sank into the floor and his eyes glowed as he growled, "Monster friendly or not, they were sent here, they better get used to it.”

Toki nods lightly, and grimaces, before tapping his arm. “You’re ruining the floor.” She chides. “Stop that. But yes... We’ll just be careful.” She sighs.

Thumper nuzzles his face against Tenebris’ arm, and murmurs softly. “Are those bad humans? Like the ones that killed my parents?” He questions softly to the bigger monster.

"I hope not, Thumper.” He murmured to his son, stroking his head as he pulled his tail from the ground, "It's gonna be okay, Thumper.” He purred.

The rabbit made a small distressed sound and tucked his face against Tenebris’ neck. “I wish they would go away. They took my mom and my dad and our home on the surface- I don’t want them to take you too.”

Toki rubbed his back gently, stroking her fingers soothingly down the boy’s shoulders. “They’re not going to take Tenny from you, Thumper,” She soothed softly.

“I never thought they’d make us come back under here again either.” The boy sniffled quietly, tone morose as his little claws prickled at his adopted father’s clothes. He clung to him tightly, not wanting to let go. “But they did.”

"We're not staying down here, not for good..." Tenebris snarled quietly, giving Thumper a gentle squeeze, "Not again." He pecked his head a few times, and then turned to resume watching the soldiers who were awaiting their instructions.

“But if they don’t stop, we wont be safe on the surface…” The boy murmured quietly. “Then only down here will be safe…”

Asgore waved a hand, and groups of guards came forth. Several of them took groups of four humans or more along with them, implementing them into their platoons. Once they were divided up, they set out onto their patrol routs, and Asgore approached with the human man who was obviously in charge of the soldiers that had been sent to help protect the monsters under the mountain. “Tenebris, Toki, boys- this is the commander of the garrison the governments put together for our protection.”

He motioned for the man to introduce himself.

The man looked at the two and gave a nod, "I am Commander Nick Hancock. A pleasure to meet you both."

"Greetings, Commander. My name is Tenebris Gaster, and this is my son, Thumper."

“I’m Tokiko Gaster.” Toki nods. She motions back to Papyrus and Cae, who weren’t paying them very much attention as they talked animatedly about something out of earshot. “That’s my husband,
Papyrus, his brother, Sans, my children, and my niece."

"Well met, all of you. I'm sorry for your losses and give you my word that I will do what I can to ensure that you are not put in danger again." The soldier gave a firm nod to the three of them, a hard look on his face, though contrasted by a gentle look in his eyes.

Thumper gave the general a wary look, but offered a shy wave of his fluffy paw, little pink nose twitching as he peered at him out of amethyst eyes.

“I’m pretty certain we’re bound to be in danger again sometime, Commander.” Toki gives him a faint smile, hoping he isn’t bothered by the gator-like grin of her teeth. She doesn’t have a nice set of teeth for a gentle smile, like Papyrus or Sans does, after all. She unnerves people more often than not- particularly with how she speaks without opening her mouth. “But thank you for your condolences and your support. It helps us to feel safer against the threat from Humans Against Monsters.”

Asgore nods lightly. “After the hard loss of Nara Village, it is good to have the support of the rest of the people to help us in our time of need. Now- the Commander and I have worked out a regime for his soldiers. They’re being split into small platoons, divided up per guard group and going out to learn the layout of the Underground.”

Toki grinds her teeth, and glances to Tenebris, catching his eye. Should they warn the commander about the weird feelings? Or were they just being paranoid about humans staring at them after everything that happened?

He looked unbothered by her appearance, nor was he really uncomfortable at all.

Tenebris nodded once before he spoke again, "And you can promise you've no turncoats amongst your men?"

"My men you see here were chosen for their reliability. Many of them volunteered to come, I have faith that we have no undercover agents from the organization.” The commander replied.

“I see…” Toki nodded slowly. She glanced to Tenebris again. Perhaps they were just being paranoid then. Still, those stares unnerved her. She’d be locking the door to the Snowdin house when they went home. “For the sake of the monsters here, Commander, I hope you’re right.” She says. “The organization,” she used his term for them, “has taken too many lives as it is. The mountain is our only safe place.”

“I doubt that the leader of that Organization could manage to infiltrate the governments of the world.” They couldn’t outright call him Cruelty, since the humans, or the vast majority of them, were not aware of the boss hearts and anti-hearts. If they were, it was likely they’d try to begin using their magic for weapons and the like. Asgore knew this- as did every monster who knew about the bosses. “Are the governments not secure from such measures?”

“I’m sure they are.” Toki hums softly. “But nothing is impossible.”

"Since the organization has reared it's ugly head, there has been governmental precaution taken, but no plan is one hundred percent guaranteed.” Hancock explained, "We can only hope that they had not already been inside before we took precautions."

Toki nodded at that answer. “That about sums it up, I’d wager.”

Asgore nods slowly. “You’ll have to forgive my blunders. I am more familiar with the terms of monarchy rather than democracy, and there is a lot of information about Democracy to retain within
only a few short years time. Monsters still follow a monarchy, however loose my title might be now, and I have had a long, long time to memorize the rules.”

“Oldest goat to ever exist.” Thumper mumbles faintly against Tenebris’ neck with a general fondness for the old king.

"Mind your tongue, Kit. I'm only a few hundred years younger than him." Tenebris reached up and gently tugged on Thumper's cheek, rumbling gently in amusement.

Hancock got a chuckle out of it and his arms fell to his sides. "Humans have such a short lifespan - the range of a single decade... compared to the centuries you monsters must live, it is miraculous."

Thumper giggled gently and stuck his tongue out to lick Tenebris’ finger. “At least you can admit you’re old too, Dad.”

Asgore chuckled gently. “It is as miraculous as it is daunting. It is only boss monsters who have such a lifespan, you see. Most monsters live, on average, about a hundred years, to a hundred and twenty. But, boss monsters live much, much longer lives, so we often see our friends fade away with time.” He explains. “Myself, Tenebris, Papyrus, and Sans are boss monsters - as such, we will live much, much longer lives than normal monsters. There are several other boss monsters in the Underground as well.”

"That's interesting. I hope, once everything has worked out, that we start to learn more about monsterkind." The commander spoke with a polite smile.

Asgore returned the polite smile. "Perhaps once Humans Against Monsters has been dealt with, we can open up schools for learning about my kind." The king hummed. "For now, having a lot of information being common knowledge would be... Bad in the hands of those who mean us harm."

He nodded, "When the danger is no more." He agreed.

"Indeed. So, Commander Hancock, would you like a tour of the castle?" The king motioned to the general area with a sweep of his massive arms. "If you are to be here for long, it will be helpful to know where everything is at for ease of access and emergency response."

"Of course, Your Majesty, please, lead the way." Hancock responded

Asgore nodded, and guided him off.

Toki watched them go, and shook her head. She glanced over to Tenebris. "I'm going to steal Papyrus from Sans, and head back to the Snowdin house while he takes Grillby, Fuku, and Solstice back to the bar. Pap and I wanted to show the twins the Underground, since we're feeling better."

Thumper nods and tickles his whiskers along Tenebris cheek. "It's really pretty. I'm sure they'll enjoy it a lot." He hums softly.

"Go right ahead. I'll be here, with Thumper." Tenebris rumbled as he reached up to scratch his cheek, "See what I can find to occupy myself, now that my body can keep up with my mentality."

Thumper tickled Tenebris cheek again with his whiskers and grinned. "Could always go run around the courtyard? Or in Hotland."

Tenebris chuckled and put Thumper down, "You twerp."

"You twerp." He smirked gently.

Toki nods, and heads over towards her husband. "See you, Papa! Hey, Pap! C'mon, chatterbones,
let's show our babies the world where you grew up."

Looking over, Aliquam smiled to Toki and came over, "Alright, Toki." he replied, coming over, before he gave his brother a wave

"See ya, Bro!" Cae chuckled with his default grin on his face, casual and friendly, promoting his improvement despite what had happened.

"See you Cae!" Toki waved to Cae, glad that he seemed to be doing better than he had been before, and then leaned up to tickle her children where they clung to their father.

Honey and Skylar shrieked with shrill laughter, and shimmied higher onto his shoulders.

"So, Hotland first? I bet I can handle it now. I don't have the cracks anymore." She beamed cheerfully.

"Of course! We'll backtrack all the way to Snowdin, or have River give us a lift." He snorted quietly, "Whichever happens first."

"It's a long walk." Toki hummed. "But we have plenty of time, and I'd love to see everything. I didn't get to see all of it the times I was down here. Well, I got to see a good chunk of it, but not all. I was freshly turned the first time," she recalled, "and heavily pregnant the second. Neither times did I get to see Hotland. It's going to be fun." She offered her shoulder as her daughter squirmed her way over, and then tucked the child onto her shoulders. Honey took hold of her horns, and rested proudly in place, rubbing her little nubbins against Toki's horns.

Sparks rained down, much to the little girl's amusement

Toki offered him her arm, and smiled. "To the elevator we go~"

He took her offered arm and smiled to her happily, "To the elevator!"

"Ele-" Skylar hummed softly.

"Vator!" Honey chirped, finishing her brother's word excitedly. She tugged on Toki's horns. "Up down! Nyeh!"

"Up and down is right," Toki laughed gently.

"If we cut through the hotel, the elevator I'm sure we'll be taking can actually go left and right too." Quinn mentioned.

"What, really?" She blinked, shocked. "That sounds like something out of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory."

"Nyeh heh heh. it's rather amazing, this technology." He rumbled, "Then again, I wonder why the humans hadn't come up with it yet."

"We're pretty limited on what we can achieve feasibly. Mostly limited by our minds, human error, and our own lack of magic." Toki hummed softly.

"I suppose that's where the term 'only human' comes from." He chuckled, before he gave her arm a gentle squeeze, "Despite the consequences, it's nice to be back here... it has its own unique aspect that just screams 'home'."

She squeezed his arm back gently, palm resting on his bicep. "Pretty sure that's where they coined
that term, yeah. Or somewhere along those lines." Toki chuckled gingerly. "I understand that. You were raised here- this is your home town, basically. Or your home... City, I suppose. Either way," she smiled at him, all sharp teeth and crocodile like grins despite the warmth that permeated her gaze, "it's nice for the kids to experience both aspects of their family heritage."

He laughed gently, and nodded in agreement. "You know, I just remembered. There's something you missed last time you were here in the underground..." He spoke with a small smirk now.

"Oh?" She heard the smirk in his voice, and tilted her skull as best she could with their daughter holding onto her horns to peer up at him. "I'm sure I missed a lot, Pap. What are you thinking of?"

"The vents." was all he giggled to her, before letting her go and moving ahead with a swifter pace, "Nyeh heh heh heh~"

"The vents?" She blinked, her shorter legs struggling to keep up as he strode ahead. She eventually let him gain ground, and simply met him at the elevator. She rolled her eye lights lightly. Really- they had the same destination.

The elevator opened with a ding and Quinn entered it with a smile, "You're going to love the vents, they're the best way to get around, it's so much fun!"

"Sometimes your definition of fun is very different than mine," she reminds him lightly. Puzzles and building and the Ikea Incident come to mind most immediately. She wasn't fond of any of that- but she knew he was, and liked to indulge him when she could. She scooted into the elevator with him and then suddenly chuckled. "You know... We're going to have to get all new furniture again. Which means you get to put it all together again."

And with that his face dropped from its ecstatic look to a different one. It settled on a flat glare accompanying a grin, "You're not pregnant this time. You're helping me." He told her firmly.

Toki laughed at the grinning glare he gave her as the elevator door closed and started to go down. "And you get to see how truly atrocious my building skills are." She grins. "But of course- I’m not going to abandon you to putting everything together on your own. We’ll grab Papa and Sans too. And we’re not going to Ikea again. Or if we are, Cae is banned from coming with us."

She remembers the puns.

She remembers them all too well.

"Agreed. So very… Very agreed." He groaned, clearly remembering them in the same.

“I know I tease you with the occasional one, but I’m nowhere near as bad as Sans is.” Toki chuckles. “The occasional pun does you good though. It’s good to have something to ruffle your feathers.”

“Uns?” Honey cooed curiously.

“Puns.” Skylar chirped. He paused, and considered the words he’d heard, and then leaned up to tug on his father’s shirt. He buzzed curiously. “Pr-preg-narrt? What?”

Aliquam laughed and kissed the child’s heads, "I love you two so much, oh my gosh~"

“Pregnant, sweetheart.” Toki chuckled softly, correcting Skylar gently. She then answered, since Aliquam didn’t. “We’ll tell you when you’re older.”

“Pregnant.” Skylar chirped, and leaned into the kiss from his father. “Kay.” His little teeth puckered,
and he pressed a kiss to Quinn’s cheek, before snuggling closer to him.

Toki smiled wider and grinned. “They’re growing in leaps and bounds.” She says. “They’re absorbing words like little sponges.”

"And knowing how to use them as if they were already in school." He praised happily, "I'm so proud of you both~ yes I am~" He cooed to them.

Toki laughed faintly as the twins coo in response. “I think you and your dad were right about their growth rate. They might not be a year old yet, but they definitely act like they’re well on their way to being two.” She hums gently. “So… Makes me wonder… should I start weaning them?”

"It'd be wise." He agreed gently, before his more excited expression reappeared as the elevator doors opened, "Come on~" He told her eagerly, setting a hand on her back to coax her along.

"I'm coming, I'm coming." The warmth of Hotland washed over them as the doors opened, and Honey made a delighted sound atop Toki’s skull. Toki let herself be guided out of the doors, eyeing him with wary amusement, and let a smile tilt her teeth up. “The first kids are always the ones that end up being the ‘test’ children.” She says. “By the time we have the second or third round of kids, if we decide to do that many, we’ll have our methods down pat.”

“Hot!” Skylar chirps, delighted, and lifts himself up in Papyrus’ grasp so he could see better.

Papyrus gave Skylar a small boost as he led his mate along, a smile on his face as he approached a ledge, "I suppose you're right. You're the mother after all." He chuckled gently.

Skylar eagerly cooed as he peered over the ledge, gripping tightly to his father’s shoulder with his hands.

She watched as he approached a ledge, and tilted her head curiously. “And you’re the father,” she rolls her eye lights. “But I also came from a big family, and I was the first child. Mom was very, very good at the motherhood routine by the time she had Roshi. Ah- Pap? What are you doing?”

"Are you ready for this?" He laughed. He pulled Skylar close to his chest, and then ran forward and cheerfully whooped as he landed on the vent, before it gave a powerful gust of air and he went flying with a cheerful holler.

Toki froze as he bolted, eye lights locking on him as he stepped onto the vent. It shot him- and her son- into the air. And straight. Over. A chasm.

She might have made a strangled sound, and reached out with her hand for him as her eye lights disappeared from her sockets.

He landed on the other side, safe and sound though.

Skylar did not, however, share his Father’s enjoyment of having gone over the vent. His little orange eye lights flared bright, and he hunkered down in his arms, clinging tightly to him with a terrified buzz. He’d seen how far down that chasm had gone- and though he had no concept of how far that was, it had terrified him all the same. The fearful child buried his face against Pap’s shirt and whimpered.

He held Skylar close with a laugh and he landed with a shutter of the ground below him. He laughs again. "And he sticks the landing!" He then looked over at Toki, "Come on! The vent is safe!"

“Hel-ECK no!” Toki sputtered. She certainly wouldn’t be sticking that landing- she had no grace
what to speak of, and she wasn’t going to risk tossing Honey by accident. “You can stick to your vents! I’ll just fly. That way if you miss, I can catch you and Skylar before you go splat.”

Skylar whimpered again.

"Don’t say that where he can hear it.” He scolded, stroking Skylar's head gently, "It's okay, I used the vents all the time when we still lived underground, they get fun after a few times.” He assured him.

“Noooo,” Skylar whined.

Toki grimaced, and quickly summoned Clover. She saddled up quick, and took to the air once she got Honey settled in her lap, rolling her eye lights down at her husband. “I think you took the wrong twin for your vent hopping shenanigans, Papyrus.”

"Then trade me, eh?” He suggested with a soft laugh, "Honey should get a thrill from the vents."

Toki rolled her eyes again, and drifted down with Clover. The hornet landed precariously on the narrow platform, and she adjusted their eager daughter in her arms. “Just be careful, okay?” She says.

Honey reaches out, eager to leap into her daddy’s arms.

Skylar, on the other hand, practically flails to get out of his father’s arms, and get to the safety of his mother’s grasp. “Mama!” He shrieks.

"Careful is my middle name.” he assured her, taking Honey and passing Skylar up with a smile. And yes, he was careful, but now that he was back in his natural environment, he felt young again, more relaxed.

Prone to having some damn fun for once.

“Technically, it’s Aliquam.” She snorts, and tucks her son against her middle. Skylar clings to her, and she takes off into the air again, and hovers above him in case he needs her help. She wasn't going to keep him from having his fun- but she wasn't going to be careless either.

Honey croons excitedly, and loops her fingers around his neck, bumping her skull against his chin. “Daddy!”

He stuck his tongue out at her with a soft laugh, and then he kissed Honey’s head. "Ready for some fun, sweetheart?” He purred to her.

Honey chirped excitedly and nodded, butting her horns briefly against his teeth in her exuberance, before she turned and clung to him tightly, more than eager for him to begin jumping. “Daddy jumpy! Jumpy jumpy jumpy!”

He chuckled and held her tightly with one arm. "Here we go!" He then ran to the end of the next ledge and leaped on the vent; the hot air sending them flying as he whooped and laughed.

Honey shrieked loudly, but it was a shriek of laughter, excitement bursting like fireworks along the soul connections to her parents. Her little fists kept a firm grip on Papyrus, but her legs kicked eagerly. “Eeeeeeeiii!”

Toki watched protectively from above, and hovered along as they went. Her daughter’s excitement made her smile.
He landed again, and with his daughter's excitement fueling him, he took off in a sprint, leaping from vent to vent until he reached the end. "Alrightie, last one! Ready for the big leap, honeysuckle~?" He cooed to his daughter.

"Ya!" She beamed at him, blue eye lights sparkling. His daughter had his grin, and his energy, and she was absolutely pumped for whatever the ‘big leap’ was going to be. "Jumpy!"

"HERE WE GO!" He whooped, running at the last vent. He slammed his feet into it and sent himself flying as the vent gave an especially strong shot of air, sending them high into the air, "WHOOO HOO HOO!"

Clover gave an irritated buzz as she had to dodge her master’s flying mate, and drifted well out of his range before coming back down again.

Honey shrieked excitedly, arms flying up and trusting her father to keep a hold on her as she enjoyed the rise. "EEEEEEE!"

His grip stayed locked around her body and he did a roll in midair before he landed hard on the ground, cracking it under his feet, before he fell back to his rear, his laughter pure and truly unleashed as he sat there with Honey.

Honey’s laughter rang with his, lighter and innocent ad she clung to her father. She cackled heartily, little shoulders shaking as she expressed her delight at the vents.

Toki brought Clover in for a landing, and quietly tried to quell the mild panicked fluttering of her soul. She didn’t want to rain on his parade- but watching him leap with their daughter over a several thousand foot chasm was very, very panic inducing. "So," she hums nonchalantly, “You feel up to just riding Clover the rest of the way home, mister chuckles?"

His laughter lightened and he looked to her with a gentle smile, "I suppose, heh heh heh~” Holding Honey close, he carefully got up and climbed aboard Clover, giving her a gentle pat before hugging himself close to Toki, smiling into her neck as he sighed happily. Honey was set on the saddle, gentle sandwiched between her parents with one hand kept around her.

Honey didn’t mind being sandwiched, and simply wiggled back against her father’s shirt, making it lift up so she’d have more space with his rib cage being open.

Toki heaved a softly relieved sigh as Papyrus pressed against her back. Her soul was probably damn hear able to be felt with how it was pulsing behind her ribs- so she simply hoped he wasn’t paying it much mind. Instead, she clicked her tongue to the back of her teeth, and leaned slightly in the saddle as Clover lifted off.

The hornet headed off, eating up the sky faster than they could over the ground. Monsters looked up and watched them go with various stages of awe in their faces. Not all of the underground-native or underground residing monsters had seen the giant hornets yet- but they’d heard stories.

As the heated faded away to the trickling rivers of Waterfall, Aliquam grew a little heavier behind her, sighing in relaxation. If one listened to the cavern around them, they could hear water dripping, landing and creating notes that practically formed a lullaby around them... It was very soothing.

Toki kept a firm grip on her husband’s arm around her, so he didn’t slip off, and let Clover take them home without issue. The big hornet didn’t have a problem zipping through the rain- it stung, but it didn’t come down nearly hard enough to extinguish her flames.

Clover took them down and out of open space. However, she reached a point in the waterfall caves,
where she could no longer fly. The caves were too narrow for her wingspan to be able to fit. So, she carefully lowered down onto the ground, and began a fast crawl, speeding through on several powerful legs.

Aliquam's eyes had closed at this point, his hold on his mate and daughter firm but all else gone slack.

Eventually, the air started to get colder, and colder, though the heat from the bee they were seated on helped to combat that. Clover eventually brought them out from cramped spaces into an open, underground forest. Snowdin loomed ahead of them, and the hornet took to the skies, shaking the ice off her feet with an indignant buzzing noise.

Toki took note that Papyrus might have possibly fallen asleep while ‘riding bitch’, as Kon would say, on Clover’s back. She kept an eye on him as Clover flew- and made sure to hold him, and their children, very steady once they reached the Snowdin house.

Once there, she reached back and gently nudged his leg. “Pap? Pap, we’re back at your old house now.”

"Mmmn... Nyeh?” he slowly opened his eyes again and sighed, "Ah~ Good."

“Sounds like you need a nap.” She quirks a faint grin, and starts to un-do the straps holding her legs in place.

"Admittedly, I haven’t vent-jumped in a good couple years... I would even go so far as to admit... I’m rusty at it.” He spoke with a yawn interrupting him partway in before he sat up and collected Honey in his arms, a smile on his face.

Her faint grin widens into an amused smile, and she chuckles softly, finishing undoing her latches. She hefts Skylar, and once she’s sure Honey isn’t going to face plant without her there to brace her front end, Toki carefully hops off of the hornet.

She lands with her feet in the cold snow, and peers up at Papyrus. “You sure you’re just not getting a little older?” She teases. “We all get older sometimes.” He was only in his early twenties- unlike herself- so that wasn’t the case at all. But that didn’t mean she wasn’t going to tease him about it.

"Very funny." He chuckled sarcastically, climbing off as well, "There's no harm for the occasional nap, as Caeruleus insists. It's healthy."

“Given that you have nearly boundless energy, it’s just surprising to hear you mention naps.” She chuckles. Toki dismisses Clover, and steps over to the front of the house. A quick peek inside shows Stag asleep in the corner of the living room with Gracie and Gael asleep on his back. Good enough.

Toki slips inside, and glances back at him. “Then, shall we go to my room and get comfy?” He asked.

“That sounds fine to me.” She nods. Toki adjusts Skylar in her arms, and makes for the stairs. Her hips sway as she makes her way up, bobbing just faintly with each of her steps as she goes up and towards his room with a sleepy toddler clinging to her.
Likewise, Honey starts to yawn, but covers it with her Daddy's shirt.

He holds Honey gently as he stroked her head, "Don't worry, Honey." He purred, "It's nap time~" He cooed as he stroked her head, "We can all get some needed rest."

"We'll all pile onto your bed." She chuckles as she heads up the stairs. "Make a big nest of sleepy skeletons."

"Seepy..." Honey agrees with a soft sound.

"Mmmhm." His gaze lifted to watch her swaying derriere, and he smiled with tired mischief, reaching up and pinching her rear between two knuckles. "Nyeh~"

Toki squeaked, and glanced back at him. She chuffed at him, and rubbed her fingers over the spot he'd pinched. "Now what on earth was that for?"

"I appreciate this so much, such a perfect mate." He cooed tiredly.

When she reached the top of the short stairs, she turned around to face him, and gave him a crooked grin. She reached out to rub his cheek gently. "So a tired Papyrus appreciates my booty with butt pinches." She grins cheekily, and leans down to give him a quick kiss, before scooting out of reach and heading down the hall. "To be fair, I appreciate your backside too. It looks particularly fine in a pair of tight pants." She purrs. "C'mon, sleepyhead. Let's get settled into bed. You've been pretty active, even while you were sick."

He nodded gently in agreement, wiggling a brow at her cheekily in return. Ultimately, he didn't pursue it though. They had children in hand, after all. "We've all had one hell of a week, some bed rest sounds perfect."

"We literally just came off of bed rest. Well... I did. You were stubborn and kept walking around and doing things." Toki glanced back at him as she headed off for the bedroom. She eased the door open, and slipped inside. Sprawling on the bed was easy, as was tucking Skylar into her arms, and she scooted to the edge of the bed so Papyrus could wedge in with her. They'd make a little nest between them for the kids.

He lay down beside her and sighed, wrapping his arms around her after nestling Honey down next to her brother. "I love you so much~" He purred.

"I love you too," she murmured to him and gave him a warm smile. With the twins curled in the empty gap of their middle, Toki took notice that they were definitely getting larger. They didn't fit nearly as well there as they used to.

"I'm glad you're okay now... I was worried about you..." He murmured.

"We were all worried about each other." She gave him a soft smile, and massaged his hand gently. "We're okay now though. Frisk was right that we all got better."

"That's right." He agreed, "But we're at least safe now... we know we're safe here." He sighed gently, stroking her head.

"Yeah." She agreed, leaning into the touch to her skull. She tilted her horns into his fingers, so he could rub that too. Toki couldn't help but think about the guards that had disturbed her and Tenebris, and wondered just how safe they actually were. "Get some rest, Papy. I dunno when the kids are going to want up, but they're not going to want to be cooped up in the house forever. We're bound to go play in the snow."
"Mmm... After a last night of rest to see the illness off, yes?" He rumbled quietly, peering at her. He and the twins were fine, even if he was exhausted - but she still had an occasional cough.

"More like a morning nap." She laughed. "It's only morning after all. We'll probably be up after noon." She snuggled closer to him and nuzzled her face to his as Skylar wiggled up into her ribs and settled down to sleep. "But yeah. Nap first, and then we'll go build snowmen."

"True." He hummed, stroking her head gently as he thought about. "I think today we're gonna end up pulling a Caeruleus... and just sleep the day away." He chuckled quietly.

"Maybe." She giggled quietly, leaning into his touch like a cat does. "If we didn't have children we could. But you sleep. I'll handle the kids. I did more resting than you did at the castle. I'm not as tired."

"You positive? I'd hate to leave you t' do all the work..." He murmured, though he was definitely exhausted.

"Pap, I usually run the house while you're out doing guard work. I can handle the kids while you rest." She kisses him gently, and nuzzles close to him. "I'll rest a little with you though."

"Mmh... If you're sure..." His eyes closed as she nestled closer, and his exhaustion definitely overwhelmed him, as he was asleep within minutes.

Toki smiled, and cuddled him close, along with their children. She too soon joined them in sleep, sighing contently as she relaxed.

It felt strange, wandering these old halls... And yet Tenebris felt a nostalgic feeling as he walked down the corridors of the castle... The tiles were cool under the pads of his feet, and the old beast found himself purring at the relief the coolness brought. He stopped for a moment to simply take in the air about him, but that's when he heard it...

Rustling...

There was no one designated to this section of the castle, whether refugee... Or guard.

Tenebris growled and searched for the source, listening until he found the room where someone was knelt on the opposite wall, "Hey!" he barked sharply

The figure kneeling by the wall tensed, like a runner, and then turned, drawing dual knives from sheathes on his calves. There was only one entrance to the room - and Tenebris blocked it.

Behind the man sat a nearly assembled mass of parts - to the scientist in the doorway, it would easily be recognizable as some sort of explosive device.

The man didn't hesitate. He lunged, knives whirling, and aimed to take down the big pale monster blocking the doorway.

Tenebris had already been on guard, and the man stood no chance against him as rage and instinct took over the beast. He swung his tail and slammed them into the assailant's legs, knocking him off balance long enough to allow Tenebris to lash out and give an attack of his own, his claws sliced into the other's armor, reducing it to shreds. The man yelled out as Tenebris slammed him against a wall, before wincing and turning his head as Tenebris unhinged his jaw, screeching in his face before he
closed his jaw once more and snarled at him, "How many of there are you? You've already destroyed our home, why must you continue to terrorize us?"

The man turned and spat in his face. "You'll all be buried." He hissed. He answered none of his questions, and instead struggled to stab him with the knives he'd held onto.

He caught the wrist that held the knife and easily disarmed him, leaving behind the knives as he dragged the man behind him, going to report him to Asgore, before executing him.

The man struggled and flailed, pulling hard to get away. He had no luck though, and that just seemed to make him angrier. So he turned instead and sank his teeth into Tenebris' wrist, biting down as hard as he could.

Tenebris snarled in pain and grabbed him by the hair, releasing him with his other hand. "Let go, let go!" he demanded

In response he bit harder, sticky black blood flooding his mouth, and shoved his now free hand into his ruined flak jacket to dig out one of his extra knives and run the blade over the pale monster’s arm as many times as he could. He would damn well try to bleed the monster dry if he had to.

Tenebris bellowed in pain as his blood began to run from his arm and he slammed the man against the wall repeatedly to dislodge him from his arm.

Several teeth were knocked loose, remaining embedded in Tenebris arm as he slammed him essentially neck first into the wall. Blood flooded his mouth and he choked on it, coughing heavily, and ended up releasing the pale monster out of reflex.

He gripped his arm in pain, hissing angrily before he grabbed the man by the back of the head, glaring at him furiously, "I dare you... try something like that one more time" he threatened with a venomous tone.

The position left him close enough to stab at his middle, swiping the knife across his turtleneck. He only grazed the skin, splitting it only deep enough for it to weep- but he thoroughly ruined his clothing, and then proceeded to laugh and spit one of his ruined teeth at him.

He snarled in fury and slammed his face into the wall again, before he roared to get Asgore's attention as he made it to the main hall of the Castle, his form bristling.

The man was limp after having his face smashed into the wall again, face bloodied and nose very much broken.

Asgore startled at the roar, ears and mane flying as his head whipped around in response. Commander Hancock was still with him, and the king paid him not mind as he took in the human dangling from his lover's hand. "Tenebris? What happened? You're wounded- and so is he."

"We... Have a spy in our midst." He hissed, before he threw the man forward, "he was planting explosives... and attacked when I discovered him." Tenebris hissed, now moving to cradle his bleeding arm, his black blood dripping off it steadily with the damage he sustained.

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Asgore stepped closer, healing magic coming to his hand as he took Tenebris arm into his grasp. He began to knit the bleeding flesh back together, and turned steely eyes to Commander Hancock. "I see... Commander. With all due respect, I'm going to have to decline the assistance of the human governments. If it is possible to have one traitor in your higher ranks," he says, "then there is no telling if there are others."
Tenebris leaned against the king, the healing magic now allowing Tenebris to settle down and allow the shock of the damage to wash over him.

Hancock, though shocked at the damage the man had taken, looked completely understanding as he knelt and checked the man's pulse. "I understand completely, Your Majesty." he replied, "And I will respect your wishes, and have all my men withdraw and return to the surface."

Asgore supported Tenebris easily, and nodded to the Commander. "You have my gratitude. Please, extend my appreciation to the governments you represent. I'll be sure to smooth things over with them later." When he could contact them, that was. The king sighed. "No more humans in the Underground- not past the castle, at least. Not until Humans Against Monsters has been handled. I will take no more risks. I am done being toyed with."

"It will be as you say, Your Majesty." Hancock gave a respectful bow, and sent a message to his soldiers to see that their cadets were immediately counted for to return above ground.

Likewise, Asgore palmed at the communicator at his hip that he had for talking to his royal guard. He lifted it up, and gave orders to have any and all humans who had arrived with the Commander escorted back to the castle and hereby removed for the time being.

Tenebris shifted and stirred at this point and he let out a quiet rumble to Asgore, "Tell them... beware of explosives..." He warned.

Asgore nodded, and quietly spread the word for them to be on the lookout for explosives, and for the wolf guards to check the scents for anything explosive related.

The man on the ground lurched into consciousness once more, kneeing Hancock in the face as he did so, and scrambled to his feet. He pulled another knife, and charged at Asgore's back while the king wasn't looking, a frenzied look on his bloodied face.

Were it not for Tenebris looking up at that moment, Asgore might have gotten stabbed.

But he didn't. Because Tenebris swung his knife first.

With a new surge of adrenaline, Tenebris shoved Asgore out of the way. One of his clawed hands swung for the other's gut, the other swinging for the man's neck with tail blade in hand.

Red insides spilled across the beautiful tile of the castle floor, as body and head fell in separate directions.

The king recovered from being shoved just in time to see the head land with a wet sound, spurting blood all over the floor. He frowned. "Oh dear..."

Tenebris panted roughly as it sank in what just happened, and he slowly pulled himself back, his breathing picking up slightly, "H-He was... Th-The knife...!"

Asgore stepped in, and gently took his hand. He turned him away from the mess on the floor, and murmured softly. "I know... You protected me, and for that I am thankful. It is alright, Tenebris." A knife to the back wouldn't have killed him, but his back wasn't as heavily armored as his front was most days. "Hancock." He glanced over his shoulder, voice firm and detached. This was not his first time seeing a dead human. He had killed many after all. "Have your men remove the body. We'll clean the mess."

It wasn't Tenebris' first time either, but the initial shock that he had killed the man in what had been a spur of the moment didn't make it any more pleasant.
"As you wish, sir." The commander called his men to now clean up the... unhappy mess.

The king's voice softened. "Thank you." He said gently. That done, he gently resumed checking Tenebris over, and fixed up the cut across his middle that had ruined his turtleneck. "Come, old friend. You need some tea and someplace quiet to relax while I go finish handling things. You may need company too..." But he had things he needed to do- immediately, given the severity of what just transpired.

Tenebris let out a quiet chittering as he nodded to Asgore, going to follow him wherever he was going to lead him, as he would in any other situation as well.

The king took him by the hand covered in blood, and guided him away from the mess in the main hall. With quick, prudent steps, he headed for his house.

Hancock, left behind with the mess, wore a small frown, how many others slipped past his notice... if any monsters died... it would be on his hands... he couldn't allow this to happen...
Aliquam had been blissfully unaware of what happened back at the castle- and the Guards kept it quiet, even into the following morning. As a result, spending time with his wife and children had gone well, as it had for Caeruleus and his fiancé as well.

Aliquam was in the middle of preparing breakfast for the children, whistling a soft tune as he did. It was good to be down in his old home... It brought back memories that would make him smile to himself as they passed.

Toki was gently dissuading Skylar from what he seemed to think was breakfast, while she waited for Aliquam to finish cooking. They’d decided to start weaning the children- starting with breakfast- and their clingy son was having none of it. So, she was keeping him busy with a few toys they’d managed to pack for them.

While Toki distracted Skylar, Honey was at her father’s feet, her little fingers fisted in his pant leg as she stood next to him, peering up at him curiously. Her little mouth worked, and she mimicked his whistle, completely botching the tune, but trying to join her Daddy in making music while he made up something that smelled really good.

With little Honey at his feet, he took extra precautions, but couldn’t resist showing off a little. He would flip the eggs in the pan with skill, a sprinkle of cheese here or a dash of spice there, he made sure Honey could see and enjoy the show. His work soon had two plates with omelet’s and two with a small amount of cheesy eggs.

"Breakfast is up!" He announced. He carefully scooped Honey onto his foot and let her ride as he moved around the kitchen a little, grabbing some silverware before heading to the living room.

Honey didn’t have an issue becoming a leech to his shin, gleeful laughter escaping her as she was carted about.

Toki perked up as her husband came out into the living room with a giggling growth attached to his shin, and gave him a warm look. She took a moment to clear the coffee table, lamenting momentarily that they didn’t have highchairs to feed the twins in, before carefully taking a seat on the floor. This was going to be easier to do while on the floor, rather than on the couch. She crossed her legs, and sat Skylar carefully on a pillow next to her, before reaching up to help him settle the plates on the table. “I see you’ve got a giggling limpet attached to you.”

"She is having the time of her life right now. I'm perfectly content toting her around.” He chuckled.
He set down the plates then lifted his leg and straightened his foot as to have Honey slide right into her pillow-seat. "But when it comes to breakfast, we sit at the table, right Honey-suckle?" He cooed to his daughter, patting her head gently.

"Ya!" Honey beamed up at him, leaning her not-so-little horns into the pats to her head. She wiggled on her pillow, and got onto her knees so she could actually see over the table. A gleeful giggle escaped her, and she sniffed, a happy coo following as she inhaled the smell of the food. “Oooo. Is yum?”

“It sure smells yummy, doesn’t it, Honey?" Toki smiles warmly. “When Daddy cooks, Daddy is an amazing cook.” She ruffled her little skull gently, and scooted the children’s plates closer to them. She glanced up at Papyrus and grinned. “Thanks for making breakfast today, Pap.”

Skylar shuffled in his seat, adopting a similar position like Honey. He looked at his plate of cheesy eggs, and poked at it with his finger.

"My pleasure. Cheesy eggs were one of my favorite meals growing up. Father always added something that made them extra delicious." Aliquam chuckled. He settled down with the intent of feeding Skylar the eggs, since he knew weaning would make him fussy.

Skylar made a face at his father, and poked at the eggs again. The cheese on his finger was licked off, and he contemplated it thoughtfully, before simply poking at the eggs again.

Toki laughed and directed Honey’s fingers to her fork, carefully showing her how to scoop the eggs up towards her teeth before the eager toddler could shove a fist full in with her hand. Bless her little soul, Honey picked up on what she was doing quite quickly, and was soon scooping slightly sloppy forkfuls up into her mouth. Egg and cheese still got everywhere- but slightly less everywhere than with her hands.

Toki took a moment to nibble at her omelet, and then grinned at her husband. “Eggs and cheese go really good together. The only thing that makes them even better is a little bit of salsa.” It was an odd quirk she’d gotten from eating at her grandparent’s when she was younger. They had a lot of different ways of cooking- and she’d adopted a lot of them for herself.

Aliquam fed Skylar with small forkfuls of eggs, playing airplane until he got the hang of it. Though at the statement of salsa, he made a face, "Sounds interesting, but I’ll pass."

Skylar reluctantly ate the eggs, enjoying the taste even if it wasn’t really what he wanted. He eventually just took the fork from his father, and sulkily continued to eat on his own.

Toki patted her son’s skull gently, and gave Quinn an amused smile as she ate. “It’s actually better than it sounds, I promise. Ketchup’s good too, but only in small amounts. Everyone’s got different tastes, I suppose.” She chuckles lightly. She gives him a warm look, and glances down to their sulking son. “Mmm. Skylar’s going to be a pain to wean, I think.” Skylar was close with Toki- which was partly why he was sulking so much.

Honey on the other hand, was close to her mother too, but was very much a daddy’s girl. Said little girl cooed happily, egg stuck to her face, and shoved another forkful in her mouth.

"He’s doing alright to start with, so I have some faith." He agreed, patting his head gently before leaning over to Honey to clean her up a little bit, "You're getting egg everywhere, Honey" He laughed gently.

Honey stuck her tongue out at him and blew a very messy raspberry, before stuffing more egg into
her mouth.

Toki was quick to finish scarfing down her omelet, so she could take over for Papyrus. “He is, but he’s probably the sulkiest I’ve ever seen him.” She laughs, nearly choking on her last bite. Once she clears her mouth and her teeth with a quick swipe of her tongue, she leans over to shoo her husband over to eat his meal. “Eat, Pap. Cold eggs are gross, and reheated eggs are even worse. I’ll handle the kiddos.”

"Alright, alright." Once the baton was passed, he settled and began to eat, rumbling quietly as he enjoyed his breakfast.

Toki enjoyed listening to his pleased rumbling sounds, and smiled to herself. She cleaned up Honey’s face, and urged Skylar to finish his eggs, while mopping up his mess as well.

Honey finished her eggs first, and, like most kids, not so sneakily tried to steal a forkful of her father’s omelet just to see what he was eating.

His was a bit more adorned with additional bits and pieces of food, ham, onion, and such of the like. It was also a little more spiced.

Honey nibbled the bite she stole, and made a face, proceeding to pry out the small chunk of onion she’d gotten. The rest of it she ate, but she set the onion on her plate and poked it with her fork. “Icky!” She proclaims.

Toki laughs. “Someone doesn’t like onion.”

”That's usually why you try and put that on the back of your tongue, rather than near the front.” He chuckled gently to Honey.

“Why eat ick?” She tilted her head, and pushed her plate away. She was full, and content to go play now. “Is ick- ick is not eats.”

“Food, honey. Ick is not food.” Toki corrects gently.

“Ick is not food.” Honey obligingly restates.

"Onion is food though." He told her, gently laughing.

Honey looked at the plate, and then at her father, and then back at the plate again. “Nope.” She says firmly. She scoots off, away from the table, to go track down Sobek and play with her summons.

Toki watches her go, and chuckles, carefully mopping up Skylar’s face as her son finishes his eggs. “I don’t think you’re gonna win that one, Quinn. Some kids just don’t like certain foods.” She laughs. “We’re going to find out their likes and dislikes as they start eating more and more solid foods.”

"Fair enough." He chuckled, "But I hope to get points for trying." He then shrugged, before he finished his omelet. It was good while it lasted.

“You do get points,” she chuckles, “but we might have to wait until they’re older before trying to coerce them into trying different types of foods they don’t like.” She quirks a grin to him, and stretches a leg out under the table to brush her toes against his.

He chuckled and sighed, "Agreed, I suppose." he rumbled, "But at least we can cross onions off the list for her."
“True.” She nods. “But might not be completely. I dislike avocado, but I don’t mind it in certain dips, so she might not mind it in certain dishes. We’ll see.” She winks at him lightly.

He nodded, giving a light smirk before he looked to Skylar, "And how are you doing, Skylar?"

Skylar peered up at him and grinded his teeth before chuffing and dropping the fork on the completely empty plate sitting before him. “Neh.” He huffs. “M’ kay.”

"But you cleared your plate." He praised, kissing his head gently, "Good job~"

“Was hungry.” Skylar points out, puffing air between his cheeks as he’s kissed. He crosses his little arms and sulks at his dad, orange eyes peering up at him balefully.

“Solid food will stay with you longer than milk will, baby.” Toki smiles. “You might not even be as hungry come afternoon.” She glances up to her husband and chuckles. “If we give Honey the option, think she’d choose your cooking over mine?” she twitches her chin towards her chest playfully and wiggles her brows.

"I dunno, maybe. She downed her cheesy eggs pretty fast.” he chuckled, shaking his head.

“I thought she was just going to use her little hands and shovel them in.” She laughed gently. “Which is what human kids do, I mean, but I’m glad she picked up on how to use the fork.”

Honey toddled back and babbled something at Skylar, to which the little boy babbled something back, not entirely in an understandable language. The two of them left the table- no doubt to get into mischief- which left Toki and Papyrus alone.

Toki turned to watch the two children go pester the baby summons, and chuckled gently.

Papyrus chuckled as he watched the two children scramble off and he scooted around the table so he could lean against Toki with a happy sigh. He quickly finished his omelet as he did so.

Toki was glad as he joined her on her side of the table, and she offered him a lopsided smirk, before leaning up to kiss his cheek. “They’re going gonna be a handful when they’re a couple years old.” She laughs. “They’re already nearly a year old. I can’t believe time’s flown by so fast.”

"I'm so proud of how far they've come, as well as how far you have come, Toki~" He wrapped his arms around her and nuzzled her with a happy sigh.

“Oh yeah?” She tilted her head to the side and quirked a grin at him. “We’ve all come a long way, Pap. Every one of us.” She nuzzles him back. “We’ve got a long way to go even still. Our family will still grow- we’ve got a life to rebuild, and a home to restart. Just another leg in our journey… heh- I wonder how the twins will do when we decide to have more kids.”

Skylar was awfully clingy- her son would probably take the news of another baby the hardest.

"I'm sure he'd understand," Papyrus chuckles, having picked up on her trail of thought. "We're never going to stop developing in life, and we all have to branch out in our own ways... Find someone to love, to dedicate our future to."

“It’ll be a while before our kids are ready for that.” Toki chuckles. “I’m ready to be a mom again- not quite so to be a grandma.” She nuzzles his shoulder with a soft sound, and trails her hand down to his to play with it quietly. “I think they’ll be okay being big siblings- we just have to make sure they know they’re still loved, even with a new baby coming into the house. Kids can get the silliest thoughts in their heads- and we’ll have to soothe their fears. Heh… but that’s not for a long while.”
She sighs again. Which was a shame, too. She’d have liked to have planned around a year gap between them, like her mother did with her brothers- but… well… Humans Against Monsters complicated plans.

He nodded gently, and then he sighed, "Do you think though... we might wait until this all clears up?" he asked, "I mean... what with everything that's happening..."

“That’s been our plan, yeah.” She nods quietly, and pauses when her horn catches on his shirt. She hadn’t done that in a while- goodness, how embarrassing. Toki takes a moment to disentangle it without ripping his shirt, before glancing up at him. “I just… Don’t know how long we’re going to have to wait.” She says softly. “Wars against terrorism can… Can last a long, long time.” Her murmur is very, very soft. “The twins could be ten or fifteen by then, if things… if they continue to drag out."

"There's no way they could possibly consider tormenting us for that long." He growled quietly, shaking his head. "They can't... It's..."

“It’s wrong and it’s cruel and it’s disgusting… but they will, because they’re determined to see us wiped out… You’re not stupid, Pap.” She nuzzles his shoulder again at his growl. “I know you’ve done reading on human history. They’ll continue to plague us until they’re handled.” She murmurs. “But… I think we may be well on our way to doing that. I watched a little bit of the news while we were in the castle. The humans are upset about what happened to Nara Village.”

She sucks in a deep breath, and then exhales. “Alright, alright. Enough of the downer-talk. We need something a little bit nicer to talk about after everything that’s happened… Hm… how about... When we start to rebuild, how many bedrooms should we plan for in our home? I know a good portion of it is still standing, but it’s going to just be easier to knock it over and start again.”

He sighed and hummed quietly as she changed the topic. "Three at least... unless the idea of bunk beds appeal to you." He murmured.

“Maybe when the kids are, well, kids- but teens aren’t going to want bunk beds, I can tell you that.” They were all going to want their own rooms eventually. Toki sighed thoughtfully, and tilted her head with a soft sound. “Mm… We need to have extra bedrooms for the holidays too. Remember, when I host them, we have all of my family over too. And that’s a large number of people- who can all bunk together, yes, but you can’t fit seven men, their spouses, our nieces and nephews, and my mother and father all in our living room.” She ground her teeth thoughtfully, and sighed, scrubbing her hand down her face. “I’m thinking upwards of seven or eight. I mean, worst comes to happen, we convert them into different rooms until we need them for bedrooms. Like… a music room for you to teach the kids to play instruments in, or a playroom specifically for them to play in so we don’t have toys everywhere or something.”

"You’re right, that would be smart to consider, not to mention refugees... Heh... You know, this reminds me." He chuckled as he leaned back. "Father and Caeruleus, a few years back, would talk about a great mansion. I never understood much but the way they spoke about it was as if they had lived there.” He murmured.

Toki laughs softly. “I doubt our house would be a mansion- even if it is sized for someone of Asgore’s height to walk in. But huh… Maybe they did before you guys moved out to this place here in Snowdin?”

He hummed quietly, "Indeed... I just remembered and thought it would be interesting, but really, a mansion would take years to build, and forever to maintain.” He chuckled as he gave her a squeeze.
Toki laughed lightly and squeezed him back. She wiggled her fingers up under the edge of his shirt, and tickled them lightly over the edge of his pelvic crest. “Forever to maintain indeed.” She laughs. “We’d have to hire a maid. Keeping our old house clean was a full time job in itself for someone of my size. My trusty stepladder and I still managed to get everything clean though. What I couldn’t get, my bees could.” Speaking of bees… “Were you serious about helping me start up my apiary again?”

“What? Yes, of course!” Papyrus squirmed a little at the touch to his pelvis, but didn’t let that deter him from turning a bit to face his wife. "Did you think I was kidding? We can raise this new apiary together, in memory of your first colony.” He told her with a smile.

“Well… no.” She ground her teeth quietly and rubbed her fingers together. “But in the grand scheme of things, I wasn’t sure if you’d said it simply to help me calm down, or if you’d meant it or… I dunno.” Her hands retreat to her lap, and she kneads them into her knees. “It was probably a stupid question to ask- I’m sorry. I’d really like to raise an apiary with you.” She smiles to him quietly.

He chuckled and kissed her cheek gently, "I love you, Toki. You're really something perfect for me." He purred, "I would love to raise an apiary with you~"

"Good." She smiled at the kiss. “’Cause I’d love to raise one with you too. Heh- you can help me put the hives together. Kohaku helped me put my last ones together. The only one I put together on my own was the one that had the da-RNED leak in it all the time, and grew that funky moss in the bottom.” She laughed softly.

Toki smiled up at him and leaned up to kiss him warmly. “House first though- can’t have builder’s being bothered by bringing in new bees.”

"Agreed." He laughed gently, giving her another squeeze as he returned the warm kiss. "It would be rather rude for us to do that to the poor construction workers."

“It would.” Toki shifts a little and leans into him with a content sigh. She collects his hand and rolls it over, quietly looking at his fingers for a moment, and tracing her digits gently over where his wedding ring sits. She clinks her ring gently with his and chuckles softly. “You know,” she says, “I’m surprised I haven’t melted my ring by accident with the number of times I’ve lit myself on fire while training with you guys.”

"You think I didn't take the nature of your elemental magic into account?" He tutted, tapping her skull a few times, "Toki, Toki, Toki... I took great precaution into preserving your ring, just to make sure it survived as long as you did."

She chuckled, and played lightly with his hand again. “That you did. It makes me happy. I’d be really sad if it melted- and probably sore too, since it would melt into my joints.”

He chuckled quietly and nodded. "Of course... I made it so that would never happen." He purred as he kissed her cheek a few times.

Toki broke into a soft bout of laughter at the peppering of kisses to her cheek, and her eye lights twinkled a warm green up at him. “Well, my bones might be a little prettier if they were gold-plated~” she teased lightly.

He laughed at that. "Probably can't afford that much.” Papyrus’ amusement was palpable in his words. "But maybe... a gold tooth or... horn?” He tweaked one of her horns lightly and flashed her an amused grin.

She laughed. "Can you see me with a gold plated tooth? I'm not even sure how that would work.
They're tightly fit as is." Anything else on them just wouldn't work. Her mouth wouldn’t be able to properly close. She sighed and nuzzled him softly, before winking at him. "I could rock gold horns though. I'd match Stag."

Her phone began to ring, and Toki groaned. Laziness abound, she used a summoned bee to bring it to her, before flipping it open and hitting answer, turning it on speaker. Anything they had to say could be said between the both of them.

"That would be really cool." He chuckled again, and then went quiet to let her have her call.

"I must admit, I'm surprised... it was not even twelve hours before the humans were expelled from the underground. One if them within a body bag, I might add..." The voice on the line was calm and low in tone.

Unmistakable.

The mirth was gone from her voice in an instant, even as confusion flitted briefly through her mind. Humans? What humans? Did he mean the guards the governments had sent? Had something happened? "Cruelty," Her voice was flat. "I don't know what you're talking about with humans, but how dare you call me after what you did to Nara Village. What do you want this time? You only ever call when you're planning something bad."

He chuckled, and then a soft hum was made from his vocal chords, before he spoke up again. "I take it then that you are not with the king and his... company... Oh indeed you have missed quite a bit, Kindness..."

"I wasn't at the castle. I'm not at the castle." She corrects, a glance flicking to Papyrus. She silently motions for him to use his phone and text. They need to know what the hell happened at the castle. "I know a couple of the humans looked shady. I'm guessing you had plants?"

He nodded and pulled out his phone to text his father, doing that while Cruelty once again released a chuckle.

"Clever girl. Though, not clever enough, I must only wonder now who has blood on their hands... Could it be the King found one of my men and executed him without hesitation... Or was it the black-blooded creature who seems to have hatred sewed into his very being...?" He mocked, a grin evident in his tone that shone where physical appearance could not.

"I've killed too." She comments sharply, trying to distract him from commenting on her father in law or the king. She did this know who had killed the human- or what he did to deserve it... But Toki didn't want to listen to it. "Back when you schemed to try and take my children from me. I ripped his throat out with my teeth and watched him drown in his own blood. If one of your men was threatening us again, here under the Mountain, then I applaud them for doing so. I am through with your games."

"Ah, but there's no fun without games, now is there..." he taunted, "Games are what make things interesting, Kindness... And the games are not over yet."

There was silence only for a moment, before he chuckled again.

"I've taken it you met my little... runaway."

"Koshinu." Toki hummed in response. "Oh yeah. We met him. He's in Federal Custody. But, he sure helped us nail something close to two hundred of your little minions. Quite an impact on your little cult." She grimaces, digits tightening against the table.
"Or so you think, my sweet Kindness." He purred quietly, "The runaway rat may be safe for now, but I am not pleased with him thinking he has escaped me... The runaway mouse never knows when a promising offering brings round the metal bar to snap his neck." A growl was underlying his voice... that was a definite sign of Cruelty's anger.

Well, at least Toki could have that much, hearing that there was indeed a complication for Cruelty in his sick game.

"Better the metal bar that is quick and efficient than the poison in the nest that slowly and painfully kills and leaves you a frothing corpse." She retorts. His anger did please her a little bit. It always made her a little happy when something got under his skin. "Cut the crap. No more of your games-you can't get to us under here, but we're not going to be here forever. The world is rallying against you now, Cruelty. They saw what you did to Nara Village- and they're angry. They're out for your blood." She says. "It's a matter of time before you and your game comes to an end. What did you want when you called me? Just to taunt me and gloat at me?"

He chuckled quietly, "No, that's not all. I'm calling to give you... well... let's just call it... a challenge. The final challenge, if you will."

"... Final challenge?" She inquired, eye lights flicking to Papyrus again.

"Indeed. I've been playing nice, but it's clear you are being underestimated. Well... Why not we settle this... Mano-e-Monstrosity. Within the ruins of your precious village, bring your greatest and your strongest, and in return, I will bring mine. I will show you the true strength and might behind my organization."

"Are you going to be there?" She questions sharply. Toki briefly mentally apologizes to Koshinu in advance for this, but... "Or are you going to hide behind the skirts of your little terrorist groupies like Cowardice would?"

"Now that would be cruel wouldn't it?" He teased, "No, my dear... I will be there."

Did... Did Cruelty just fucking *pun* at her? What... What the fuck? She was flabbergasted for all of a minute, before she growled. "Fine. Nara Village. When? It takes two hours to drive there, but you probably know that by now with your nasty stalking habits."

"Seven hearts was what the king needed. Seven days is what I will give you." He told her, "The hour need not matter, but be there on the seventh day. Oh... and Kindness... One last thing."

"I'll be there before noon. Make sure you're not late." Noon was... Noon was an acceptable time, she thought. She swallowed, and made a noise to show she was listening. "What is it now, Cruelty?"

"Consider it a favor to me, as well as yourself. Show up, and leave the police out of it- I have no qualms about killing them, and if you do not show up, I will bring the mountain down on top of all of you... and truly, that is no satisfying way to bring forth my victory."

Silence reined for a moment.

"See you in a week." And he hung up on her.

The silence of the phone was punctuated only by the twins laughing in the background as Honey heckled Sobek, and the bird wanted nothing to do with it.

Toki on the other hand sat there, staring at the phone, and could feel her breathing quickening. Oh god. Oh god, oh god she'd actually done it, she'd actually practically made a fucking date with him to
have a final showdown like some goddamned old school movie. Oh god people were going to die and she was going to die and if she didn't show up he was going to bring down the mountain on them and then everyone else was going to die-

It didn't take much to realize that the shorter skeleton was having a silent panic attack.

As soon as the line went dead, Aliquam advanced, wrapping his arms around Toki and pulling her close, "Toki..." he spoke her name quietly, but directly into the side of her skull to get her attention.

It took her several breaths before she was able to muster more than just a panicked internal monologue. Her bones were practically cold to the touch, her magic sucking inwards as she leaned into him, flighty panic bringing her fingers to cling to him. "O-oh god, Quinn, what are we going to do?" She stuttered. "People are going to be killed."

He held her tighter, hushing her gently. "Toki... I know... I know... but... we're going to lose people... but... we're finally going to see him... aren't we... he'll be there..."

"What if he isn't there?" She manages to gasp quietly, trying not to be loud and draw attention from the twins. She shudders, wondering if her husband had told his father about the call. "What if it's just a trap and we all... We all die...? Frisk can... Can load, but... How will we know it's him?"

"The evil that will resonate from his soul will tell us... Perhaps Father will recognize him..." He murmured.

Tokiko glanced at him and shakily nodded. She trembled in his grasp, limbs shivering against his. "We'll... We'll know... We'll figure it out." She sniffs quietly. "We need to tell the King. We're... Going pretty much to War in a week at noon." She hiccups an almost hysterical laugh. She didn't even have armor for going to war.

He nodded, "I'll let him know... No doubt he or father will be calling soon enough" he murmured, "Have faith, Toki... we are strong because we work together. As one. Because Monsterkind are family. Together to the end, whether you are born a monster..." he cupped her cheek, "Or you warm up to it."

"I do have faith." She whispers softly, and tucks her head into his hand. She snorts at his remarks, and lightly socks him in the shoulder. "But I accepted. I just... I just signed the death certificates for anyone who gets dusted while we're out there. It... It could be me, it could be you, it could be Grillby or Sans or Tenebris or any number of monsters. And... It'll be my fault " her voice cracks faintly. "I'm not... I'm not a soldier. I'm not a fighter. I... I fight off of instincts I've had only since I became what I am now. I... I just hope it's enough..."

Glad to see he could spark her sense of humor. He smiled and clacked her head gently, "We will teach you. You have learned much, but we will keep training you." he promised, "And even if we do perish, we will never die." He promised her, now tilting her chin up to kiss her properly.

She met his kiss warmly, shifting in her seat so she could face him better. She shivered at his touch, and her eye lights lingered on his bones. Even if they did perish, they would never die... Because of the loads Frisk could do. Toki swallow softly and nuzzled him. " Might want to get me some armor of some kind. Since, you know, my defense is rubbish once I go into attack mode."

He nodded gently. "Indeed, it's a wise idea." Aliquam agreed. “Armor would do you some good."

She sighed, and scrubbed a hand down her face, before shoving to her feet. “We've got things we need to do today.” Toki murmurs to her husband, having used his shoulder to heft herself up. “Sitting
around panicking isn’t going to get anything done. I need armor and… to practice moving in said armor. Any idea where to get me some armor? We also need to tell Asgore and Tenebris everything and figure out an emergency plan, and… And what we’re going to do with the twins.” She swallows sharply. “I can’t stay behind to stay with them… and I know there’s no chance you’re going to let me go out there without you, is there?”

"Yes, I have a few ideas… It will allow me an upgraded set as well… Father and his Majesty will know everything by day's end… and..." he sighed and nuzzled her, "The children will be safe... But that means no- I’m not going to leave you to face him without me."

“I didn’t think you’d stay behind.” She quirked a faint, soft smile, and offered him a hand up. “We don’t have any time to waste, my love. We’ve got a timer. Seven days from now, at noon, we’ve got… Well… a date with the devil, pretty much. I would love to hear your ideas on the way to the castle though."

He nodded and got up with her help, then offering his hand to her to hold. "We best be swift, then." He rumbled softly.

She nodded, taking his fingers momentarily to kiss his hand, and then let him go. “Let me get the twins. Stag can watch the critters, but I don’t trust him to watch the kids yet.” Not when they could charm the deer out of pretty much whatever they wanted.

Toki was quick to go get the twins, hefting them up into her arms as she returned to him. They fussed at her huffily. She looked at him. “Think Fuku would mind babysitting while we… talk war stuff?” A war room was no place for children.

He nodded gently, letting her get the children while he gave them a call.

Fuku answered the phone on the second ring. “Hello, this is Fuku speaking. Can I help you?”

"Hey, Fuku. Something’s come up and Toki and I need to head to the castle.” His voice was firm, though polite. “It’s serious and we would rather leave the twins in good hands, than take them with us for this. Are you available to watch them?” He inquired.

“Uh… Sure? I mean, I’m watching Solstice too, but she’s in a sling on my chest, so I can manage the twins. Go ahead and bring them by- do I need to send Sans and Dad to the castle? They’re, uh… upstairs,” Her voice briefly edged into awkward, because she knew what they were up to, and didn’t want to allude to it, “but I can go get them, no biggie.”

"Toki, will we want my brother and Grillby to accompany us?" He looked to his mate when the question arose.

Toki paused, and pursed her teeth as she juggled two squirming toddlers. “No. If we don’t have to involve them, I don’t want to.” Cae had a new-ish baby- one that was still quite firmly attached to him- he didn’t need to be out fighting. “You can tell them something’s up when they’re done with… whatever activities they’re up to.” She was close enough to hear that much over the phone.

Poor Fuku.

Fuku heard Toki, and hummed. “Alright. Go ahead and teleport over then. The grill’s closed, so it’s just us- tables are cleared out, so you’re not going to hit anything if you just come right inside.”

"Alright, thank you, Fuku, see you soon.” He told her before he hung up.

Toki shuffled closer to Pap, and sighed softly. She pressed shaky kisses to the twins, and tucked
them tightly to her chest, before glancing up to him once more. “Alright. Ready to go when you are, love.”

He nodded and held her close before he flared his magic, teleporting them both to the bar.

They landed successfully, as Fuku had promised, and he smiled at the younger girl as they arrived. "Hello, Fuku."

Fuku was gently bouncing a sleeping Solstice in her arms, and steadfast ignoring the noises from upstairs. She smiled at them pleasantly, and took in Toki’s pinched features before sweeping in to kidnap the children from her. “Hey, guys.” She smiles at them gently. “Whatever’s going on, I’m sure you two can manage- I’ll keep an eye on your kids as often as you need me to, okay?”

“We’re going to need it often.” Toki says softly. “For the next seven days, at least.”

“Seven days?” Fuku looks curiously up at Papyrus for explanation.

He had to contemplate carefully on what to say for a moment. "Something has arose that requires us to be at our best... and in order to be, we need to make the time we have count."

“The time you have count…?” Fuku frowns. “You sound like you have a time limit or something.”

“We do.” Toki says quietly. “Listen, Fuku, I can’t explain right now. Maybe… maybe later. But… Not right now. Thank you for watching them though.”

“Sure, Toki, it’s no problem. You’re family, you know- I don’t mind.” She lets the twins down to play, and nods. “If you’ve got limited time, please, go ahead and go. I’ll watch them for you.”

"Thank you.” Aliquam smiled at the girl. Then, he turned to Toki and set a hand on her shoulder, before teleporting them out.

The landing in the castle was rough- as multiple teleporting tended to be- but they made it. Toki took a moment to link her arm with his, and nuzzle his shoulder gently. “We can do it.” She murmurs softly. “Together.” The little civilian beekeeper, and the co-captain of the Nara-Village guard- they could do it. She hoped so anyways. “Now… where’s your dad and the king- ah, I smell tea. Follow the tea.”

He chuckled at her immediate recognition of how to find the eldest of the Gaster clan and his mate, and was quick to follow her.

In the tearoom, Tenebris was sitting with his hands folded in his lap. His tea was beside him, left untouched, on a small table, but his eyes were closed, his face nuzzled into his turtleneck.

He was tired after his blood loss, as well as his age taking this time of any to catch up with him, even if would be just a short-term condition.

His wounds from the assault were mostly healed, though still woefully tender and wrapped up gently, and the blood cleaned from his tail, which was now curled up behind his feet.

Asgore not far from him, the kind king exhausted from having to deal with the fallout that came from refuting help from the governments- and for having taken the blame for killing the human. He took the fall for it- had to summon his trident to prove he could have made the killing blow. Either way- it
had been a mess.

The king had his ankles crossed, with a fresh cup of tea in hand as he stared down blankly at the tea. One of his ears twitched, picking up the sound of bones moving down the hall. “Tenebris,” he murmurs, “One of your children is coming. Possibly two.” It didn’t matter which skeleton it was- Sans and Papyrus were his sons, and Toki was basically his daughter.

The blaster beast's eyes opened a crack as Papyrus appeared in the doorway, but his eyes closed again as he let out a quiet rumble, "Hello Papyrus... Toki..." He murmured.

Toki frowned at the lethargic look about her father in law, and stepped past Papyrus to go to him. She brushed her fingers faintly against the bandages, trailing her eye lights over them quietly. “Well, I guess he was partly right and that it was you who found the human.” Toki murmured softly to herself, and pulsed her magic gently against his arms. His skin felt cold- likely from blood loss- so the warmth of her magic likely felt good. “Hello, Papa, Asgore.”

“Toki, Papyrus.” Asgore dips his head, and glances at the taller of the two skeletons. “What brings you to the castle so soon?” He hadn’t caught her softly muttered words with the distance between himself and Tenebris.

Tenebris rumbled out a soft, happy sound as the warmth enveloped him and he leaned into it, purring quietly.

"We... got a call from Cruelty..." Aliquam started hesitantly.

Like ripping a bandage off, it was best to do it quick. “Seven days from now, at noon in the ruins of Nara Village, we’re going to face off.” Toki says. “He’s going to be there, with all of his men.”

Asgore tensed, and rocked up in his seat. His teacup was nearly spilled as he set it on the table. “What.”

“Exactly as I said. He gave me seven days, or he said he’s going to bring the mountain down on top of us. I don’t know how he’ll do it, but… I don’t want to find out.” Toki wasn’t sure he wouldn’t stoop to dropping suicide bombers in from the holes in the tops of the Underground. A big enough bomb… all of the caves would collapse.

Toki pursed her teeth, and continued to warm her father in-law’s arms, trying to hide the tremble to her fingers.

Tenebris had stopped purring, and now had a worried frown on his face. "In ultima pugna..." he spoke quietly, "He's finally decided it's going to end... I just hope we have what it takes to beat him..."

“That’s what I’m worried about too.” Toki murmured. “Look. None… none of you are required to come with. It’s… Well, it’s pretty obvious that a lot of people are going to die if they come with me.” She rubs her fingers lightly over his arms. Toki won’t meet his gaze. “Pap is going to help me get some armor, so I have some protection. I’m going to end up fighting, and… Well, my defense goes to shit, and I’d rather not die so easily.”

“You won’t go alone,” Asgore murmurs. “I will be joining you- as will any of the Royal guard who so chooses to come with.” He would not make it an order- but an option? Yes. He’d give that option to all of the monsters. “The castle armory hasn’t been used in a long time- but it is still functional, and still has armor from the last war. Still in good condition too.” It was taken care of- polished and checked on weekly- so he knew quite well the condition of the metal. The great king rose to his feet,
and rubbed a hand back through his mane, arm bumping one of his horns. “Seven days at noon. Alright. I’ve worked with less.”

Tenebris lifted his gaze as Asgore stood up, and he let out a quiet chatter, "I will come as well..." He insisted, "I will not sit idly by while you face this threat."

“You don’t have to come.” Toki said gently. Her fingers rubbed lightly on his arms. “Cruelty... He’s probably going to... do a lot of bad things, and mess with your mind if you’re there. He likes playing games- and he’ll play you like a fiddle if he can, Papa.”

Asgore sighed through his nose, and rubbed his forehead again. “If you are coming, you will be coming in armor, old friend. I do believe I still have your old suit- though we might need to make some adjustments. You were much younger then- I think you have filled out some in muscle tone.”

“You’d know better than most, huh Asgore?” Toki manages to joke lightly.

The king flushes under his fur. “Must you tease me like you tease Tenebris?”

“No one escapes my terrible humor; not even a King.”

Tenebris snorted at that and he leaned up to nip Toki’s horn. "You're awful." He chuckled. "But I will be there when it comes time to fight... If he wishes to play me like a fiddle, he better be ready to have the devil holding the bow.” He growled.

Toki didn’t flinch at the nip, and instead, simply quirked a brow ridge at him. “You know, I can’t even nip you back, or you’ll be missing flesh.” She flexes her teeth like crab legs at him, and then settles them back into their stationary position like usual again.

The motion of her teeth unnerved Asgore just slightly, and he shifted awkwardly. “That was... creepy, Toki. Anyways, up, all of you. We’re going to the armory- and then we’re going to open up the war room again. I’ll call my generals- we need to plan what to do, and set up a contingency plan for the children of the underground.”

At his bidding, Toki nodded. “Alright, alright.” She stood, ruffling her hand over the smooth plane of Tenebris’ skull, and lightly pushing his head with a playfully affectionate shove. “You sure you’re alright to be moving, Papa?”

"It was my arm that was shredded, not my legs.” He rumbled, "I'll be fine.”

“Blood loss.” She flicks his forehead lightly. “I was once a meaty flesh creature too- blood loss is not a fun thing. Last time I experienced it, I was hurling it up by the liter. If you’re not up to it, you need to rest. The wrists and stuff bleed easy.”

"If I’m going to let a little blood loss slow me down, what good am I on the battlefield?” He insisted, rubbing his forehead as he slowly got up, chuffing at her stubbornly.

She chuffed right back at him, but moved back over to her husband. She linked arms quietly with Papyrus, and nuzzled her forehead to his upper arm. “If you say so, Papa.”

Asgore hummed slightly, and motioned for the three to follow him, before slipping past the skeleton duo. He padded out the door, and headed down the hall, quietly summoning his generals with his communicator as he did so.

Toki watched the king slip past, and nudged Papyrus to lead on, offering her other arm to Tenebris so they could make a chain, if he so wished to join in.
Tenebris rumbled quietly, though with his dominant arm still rather sore, he carefully offered his tail instead. Quinn chuckled quietly though and indeed took her other arm in the chain, aiming to play her light-hearted game if but for a moment.

It would likely be their last chance to have a truly light hearted moment- and Toki wanted them to have as many as they could… there was no telling what would happen in seven days. She did know, however, that monsters were going to die.

She just didn’t know which monsters would perish- Monsters, or monsters in human skin.

So she brightened up a smile for the both of them, and the trio followed the king towards the armory, to get fitted up for the days to come.
Chapter 89

Chapter Notes

Silverwing Notes: The final countdown approaches, you can hear the seconds playing down in your head until the moment they come face to face with the fucker that’s ruining their lives...

But hey, why stress about it when you can fuck your wife, innit that right PAP!

Enjoy the chapter folks, some lighthearted sex between our happy couple before the fateful day that is very much nigh <3

Strider Notes: They have prepared, though we don’t get to see it all. OWO we get to have some sweet love. This is an NSWF chapter- also there’s some soul stuff thrown in, so that’s something to note too. ;3

ON THAT NOTE. It has come to our attention that there are several under-aged readers reading TOTU. This story was not intended for minors. However, given that we can’t stop you from reading it, and we’re not going to discourage you from reading it given that the smut content is fairly low per chapter count in general, all we ask is that if you are UNDER the legal age of 18 that you please skip any and all smut that you come across. Neither Silver nor myself can continue to write if either of us are in jail, and neither of us want to go to it, so if you respect us as the authors, you’ll abide by that. So… that’s that.

And we do have a tumblr account- you can find us here.
http://sinsoftheunderground.tumblr.com/

All of the Nara Village Guard, and the Royal guard, were going to go down to the village. Several of the civilians had stepped forwards as being ex-military. As in pre-war ex-military; and they’d armored up once more, offering to stay behind underground with those who didn’t want to fight, or those who couldn’t. Grillby was coming out to fight- as was Caeruleus.

There was an influx of recruits into the Guard, however- all fresh and green, and eager to help bring down Cruelty once and for all. The greenest of the Guard were remaining behind with Toriel to keep the children safe.

Toriel was taking charge of the children of the underground- and they were going to escape through the Ruins of the old city if things were to go sour. Honey and Skylar were also going to be entrusted into her care- as it was unfair to leave Fuku saddled with a fairly new baby, and with two mischievous twins- but Papyrus and Toki had their children with them for one more night, to spend what time they could with them no matter how the following day happened to go.

They had a plan to handle Cruelty.

Asgore had the containers used to hold souls. Toki wasn’t privy to all the details on it but frankly, she didn’t want to know; sometimes there were things better left unknown. The plan was to kill Cruelty and whoever was closest when he died simply needed to encase his soul in their magic and
hold it together and stabilized in time to bring it to one of the capsules- and then he’d be caged, and unable to ‘die’, for the rest of eternity.

Toki wasn’t… Sure on the idea. It seemed a little too much like what he had done to them- trapping them under the mountain, and leaving them there to rot. But it had brought a unanimous vote from everyone else- save her- so there wasn’t much that she could do to fight it.

But she was left thinking about other options- and Toki had an idea of what to do, if she could get it to work. She kept it to herself though- it wasn’t likely to be a popular idea, and Papyrus wouldn’t allow her to go out to fight if he had any idea about what she was possibly planning.

Alongside the contingency plan, everyone now had full suits of armor- including Toki. Her armor wasn’t very heavy- as they didn’t have any fire-enchanted armor to work with, outside of Asgore’s set, and Toriel’s old set from back when she had been Queen. But, the ex-Queen’s armor would not fit Toki by a long shot- not just around the shoulder’s either. The goat woman was broad all over.

Toki’s armor set off to the side, with Quinn’s armor, and well out of the way of the children getting hold of it and the weapons that had been installed inside. The last thing they needed was for an accident to happen- the children didn’t need to get hurt.

But the armor was well out of the way- so there was no risk.

Toki shifted on the floor and stroked her fingers gently along Honey’s skull, smiling as she stretched out. Skylar was astride her back- the position familiar in a strangely distant way- with their daughter switching between playing with her horns, and with trying to coax all of Papyrus into sitting on the floor with her instead of up on the couch where he was perched in the most awkward position possible.

Aliquam was happy where he was though. He was more or less resting his head on Toki’s ass, his eyes half-lidded and occasionally closing before he’d take a deep breath and open his eyes again. "Toki..." he murmured, before he sighed and nuzzled his head back into her again. "I couldn’t imagine having done any of this without you... You're so wonderful... an asset I never want to be without..."

His head was pretty much on her ass, and with leaving his part of his body on the couch, it was an awkward position, but obviously he was comfortable. She hummed softly as he spoke, and then smiled softly. "An asset, huh?" She chuckled. "I know I wouldn't be here without you. And... Well, they wouldn't be here without either of us." She rubs Honey’s chin, and then laughs as their daughter huffs.

Honey gets up and toddles over to flop across his chest, squirming up so she could sit on him like how Skylar was sitting astride their mothers back.

He chuckled at that, and tickled Honey’s little feet. He was rewarded with a gleeful giggle. "That's very true... but things happened, and now we have two wonderful children. Which is bound to increase as soon as you get a case of baby fever~" He teased.

"I have baby fever now," she laughs. "But... It's not the time." Not with... Not with them facing Cruelty tomorrow. That was a somber thought. "Maybe... maybe after tomorrow... So," she glances back at him lightly, and grins. "What about if you get baby fever? Though you're probably too young for it." She teases lightly. He might have her on physical age- since Monsters aged slower, particularly boss monsters- but she was still technically older than him in some ways.

Honey pats Papyrus’ face and chirps at him. "Daddy! Love you."
"I love you too, Honey." He kissed her hands, and then smiled up at her, before looking back to Toki out of the corners of his sockets. "Perhaps in the future, but my mind is elsewhere at this time... something that has more precedence over having any more children." He shifted until he could embrace them into his protecting arms, "Keeping safe what I already have to hold and cherish; my beautiful wife, and my priceless children." He purred.

Skylar squeaks as he scoops him off of Toki, but doesn't fuss as he's snuggled into his dad's arms. He croons, and pats his arm, nuzzling him gently. "Daddy squish!" He chuffs softly.

Honey giggled, all too pleased to be close with her daddy.

Toki chuckles gently, and rolls so she can sit, and actually pillow his head in her lap and not on her ass. She sits up, flexing 'muscles' she didn't have months ago, and strokes a hand over his skull as she peers down at him. "Once we get this handled, and we're all back home... I think it would be nice..." She smiles softly. "The twins will be safe. Toriel will keep them safe, no matter what happens." She rubs his cheekbone gently. "I don't want you taking hits for me though, Pap. I've got armor for a reason." She hums gently.

He looked up at her as her hands came to rest on his cheeks, and he gave a small smile, "Forgive me in advance if I end up taking one or two smacks for you. A mate has his protective urges..."

"So you do," she smiles gently down to him. "But who's the one who has the absurdly high defense stat when not in attack mode?" She rubbed his bones gently, loving him gently as she savored his touch. If all went well, they'd get to do this again and again... If not... If not, one of them, or both, might be dead. She swallows, and her eye lights shiver in their sockets. "I want you to promise me that whatever happens, you'll be okay and stay okay for the twins. If I promise to always come back to you, you have to promise to be okay. Can you do that for me? Please?"

He looked up at her, and then he smiled, "I swear it. Nothing will bring me down... I could lose a leg... my arm... My entire body, and I would still manage to kiss them good night every night..." He promised, before he made a contemplative face. "Though now I wonder, how well can one make pasta when you've only your tongue to use..."

"Good." She smiles gently, and kissed his forehead. "You're a good man, Pap. A good man, and one heck of a good father. The twins will be safe with you no matter what. Not that I plan on going anywhere." She chortles. "I plan on staying around for a long time."

At his comment on using his tongue, she laughs. "Oh goodness. I dunno. Use it to summon a couple bones, and make yourself a body out of summoned bones?"

"I'd be like one of those silly skeletons from those old black and white cartoons I found.” He laughed.

She laughed. "You would. It would be silly. But I could see you doing it." She leans down and nuzzles him again, a soft sound leaving her. "I love you." She says firmly. "I love every part of you from your silly toes to your silly nose."

"I love you too. And I couldn't find myself happier than I am now with you." He purred, nuzzling her before he gave her a gentle kiss.

She met his kiss gently and smiles warmly. Toki gives him a fondly affectionate look, and nuzzles his skull again. "I think I could." She admits softly. "I'll be happier when Cruelty is handled." She still didn't agree with sealing him away... But she had an idea. One that might... Might possibly work. "I'll be happier when he's handled and gone and we can be out from under his threat."
"And be under the blue sky instead." He chuckled quietly

"Yeah." She smiles wanly, and kisses his forehead.

Honey yawns on her father's chest. She rubs her little eye socket. "Daddy. Tired." She pouts.

"Looks like it's bed time for the rugrats." Toki smiles softly.

"Indeed so." He braced the children to his chest with one arm, and then carefully rolled backwards onto his knees, and then stood upright. His lack of horns allowed him to do that motion- if his dear wife tried it, she'd get her skull stuck in the ground and have to be pried out.

Toki helped to boost him upright, and followed him upstairs as he took them to the bedroom. Toriel would be by in the morning to take them- and Toki had all intentions of joining the twins and sleeping cuddled to her babies later- but she wasn't ready to sleep yet.

Skylar yawned, and scrubbed his face on his dad's chest, before nuzzling his chin. Honey did the same, and both twins cuddled together as he settled them down on the bed, and got them tucked in.

Toki watched with a smile, and waited by the door to let them have a moment.

The two were tucked gently into the bedding, in their own little spots as they usually went.

Quinn kissed their heads gently, a loving look in his eyes to match the smile on his face as he bid them goodnight.

"I love you two so very... very much" he purred,

"Love you 'oo," Skylar croons sleepily, and snuggles into his sister. His orange eye lights, so like his father's, disappear behind his bone lids as his sockets close, and he settled into sleep.

The blue haze of honey lingers a little bit longer, but ultimately she too begins to succumb. She doesn't give him any verbal words, but the feelings over the emotional bonds are thick with what she wants to say but is too tired to try and think of the words for. Her eye lights blink out as she settles to sleep, little arms clinging tightly to Skylar.

He slowly moved away, smiling warmly. Her silence was more than enough to him...

Toki smiled warmly and waits for her husband to back out, so they don't wake the children.

As he backed out of the room, and quietly closed the door, he sighed, and then smiled at Toki.

As the door closed, Toki hooked her fingers gently in his, stroking her digits gently along his finger bones, before tugging him with her down the stairs. She let him go down ahead of her- let him reach the bottom of the stairs first- and then had him turn around so she could use the stairs to stand at an even height with him.

Toki curled her arms around his shoulders, and pressed a warm kiss to his teeth, simply basking in his presence and staring at him. She quietly ingrained him into her memory, rolling her fingers tenderly over the vertebrae along the back of his neck, and sliding one hand up to cup the strong line of his cheekbone.

“So,” she murmurs gently, “We have some time to ourselves. What do we want to do?”

He stroked her cheek gently, and then he smiled at her weakly. "If it's... alright... I have one thing in mind~"
The weak smile pulls one of her own, and she cups his face to bolster him into a slightly less weak smile. “Oh?” She leans into him a little bit, enjoying the boost to her height the stairs give her, and gives him a warm look. “What did you have in mind, my love?”

Her bolstering gave him a more confident smile and he chuckled quietly, before he let his hands wander to her sides, caressing gently. "I want to feel you... take the most of our last night of peace before the final battle..."

“Feel me?” She inquires lightly, and tilts her skull. She lets out a soft, pleased sound as his hands wander over her sides. Toki grins slowly and wiggles a brow. “Does feeling me entail clothes?” She teases lightly.

"More accurately, the lack thereof~" He purred gently.

She blushed brightly, and chuckled. “Only if you strip too. If I’m going bare bones, I want to be able to enjoy you too. You have such a lovely little tailbone~” She waggles her brows.

He blushed a little at the mention of his tailbone and it pulled a quiet 'nyeh heh heh heh' from him. Though he didn't really play hard to get as he lifted a hand to tug up her shirt slightly, Papyrus gave her a flirty grin all the same. "Deal~"

Toki lifted her arms willingly, her shirt sliding up over her skull easily. She had a bra on- and she didn’t waste time having him remove it for her. Her arms twisted behind her, and fisted in the material at the back so she could unhook it, and then carefully undid it. “You know,” She comments to him with a coy grin as her bra fell away and let the deep green weight of her ecto body’s breasts fall forth, “I honestly can’t wait for my breasts to go away. I miss being able to lie flat on my front. Soon though, once the twins are weaned.”

Boobs were nice and fun- but she liked being able to lay flat on her front. Men did have that going for them, she supposed. She never realized what she was missing out on until she actually got to do it- and then when she couldn’t anymore… Well, she definitely missed sleeping flat on her front.

Once completely topless, Toki didn’t waste time in reaching out, sliding slim fingers under the edge of his turtleneck. She eased it up, and leaned down to press a kiss to one of his lower ribs, gently teasing her teeth across the bone, just to see him squirm.

The gesture did indeed give a reaction and Aliquam shivered as he let a groan slide past his teeth. "Hhnnn..." His hands traveled to her own ribs, stroking over them gently as his gaze met hers. "Heh... I know you'll be happy they're gone, but part of me will miss them.” He teased.

Toki shivered as his fingers ghosted over her ribs. The long healed cracks from the ill-fated shotgun incident had left no remnants of scars- but the ribs were always very sensitive. A soft gasp is tugged from her teeth, and her sockets close, a pleased sound leaving her. Her fingers gently grasp his lower floating ribs, and she strokes them, fingers curling along the insides. She lets the sharper points of her fingers scrape lightly along the insides, stimulating as she goes, and she purrs for him, a wide grin crawling up her face. “Mm... Yeah, but they can come back any time we want.” She grins and gently nips at his shoulder. “I can summon them- they just wont be all leaky, or permanent.”

He chuckled at that, "True. Very true.” He agreed, before he nuzzled her with a few appreciative kisses.

Toki smiled and peppered him with a few soft kisses. “Won’t be permanent- unless you knock me up again.” She teases playfully. Her finger swirls gently over his ribs again, and slides up his sternum, tapping gently against the broad bone there. “… May I?” She motions to the white light fluttering
behind his bones.

"Nnh..." He hesitated when he caught on what she meant, and he sighed, before he nodded slowly. "A-Alright."

She smiled, but paused, and then took him over to the couch instead. The stairs was no place for this. Toki pushed him down gently, and clamored into his lap, leaving her pants, and his, in place as she seats herself against him. Once she’s perched, she gives him a warm look, and reaches out, and gives a gentle tug.

His soul floats free, whitish orange and beautiful and whole- and she cups it gently in her hand, before lifting it to her teeth. She nuzzles the whole of his being, giving him a warm look, and speaks behind her teeth. “You’re welcome to... take mine out, if you want.” She murmurs. A soft kiss is pressed to the core of his being, and she strokes him with her fingers. “You’re so amazing, Pap. Such a warm orange color- the most beautiful shade.”

And Toki's plan was so very well thought out, for if she had begun to do this on the stairs, he would have eventually buckled there and made quite the noise.

Though now even secured on the couch, it didn't stop his vocals from letting loose, and he let out a moan before the invitation to return the favor was made. He looked at her with a shaky sound, and then he smiled at her, his breathing shaky as his soul was caressed as it was.

Again, the offer to take her soul was just that, an offer. She didn’t expect reciprocation- she simply wanted to feel him- all of him. She’d love to meld souls with him again… but given the fact that human souls didn’t need intent to reproduce… They ran the risk of her conceiving. Or him, she mused, since Sans had gotten pregnant. Though… maybe it worked differently with human souls.

Toki shook her head momentarily, shaking the thoughts from her mind, and slid her tongue out to gently rasp it over his soul. “Beautiful,” She murmurs, “Handsome, amazing, strong, kind, sweet, brave, mine…”

"Mmhh... W-what else would I offer to someone l-like you, Toki?" He murmured, shifting and arching in pleasure as it shot through his limbs and pooled deep down in his groin and lower abdomen. "Hhhnn~"

“Nothing,” She murmurs against his being. “You don’t have to offer me anything- because you’re perfect, and I love you as you are.” Her teeth part, pursing just slightly so she can rub the tips against his soul, scraping gently, oh so very, very gently against his core. Her tongue rasps out again and lathes over it, as she massages her fingers against the back.

Toki rocks her hips against his, and drops a hand to guide his hands back up to her ribs so he’ll have something to hold on to. She purrs against him, watching him steadily, and gives him a warm, tender look, before gingerly brushing the tips of her teeth over him again.

He choked and gasped loudly in the pleasure that surged almost painfully from her treatment of his soul as it continued. His hands, moved from the couch to her ribs, twitched and tensed repeatedly, but he let out a keen. He knew her defense was miraculous when passive, but he always had the urge to do her no harm, so as a result, he tenderly rubbed her ribs, before lowering his hands once more, smiling at her weakly as he shook his head.

“You’re not going to hurt me if you touch me, Papy.” She kisses his soul gently, and rocks her pelvis into his again, teasingly gyrating on his lap. Toki could read the hesitance in his face- after he’d let himself loose on her that one time and cracked her bones with a bite, he was so, so hesitant to hurt
her again. Toki wasn’t going to be that stupid to egg him on improperly again- it was a learning experience for them both. “If not my ribs, then my femurs?” They were covered in pants, but much more sturdy than her ribs appeared to be. “I just want your hands on me.” Her tongue licked along the top curve of his soul, and she savored his taste with a pleased moan. “You taste like sunshine, Pap. I have no idea how, but you do.”

He shuddered at the lick, but couldn't resist laughing lightly at what she had said next. Though he did get an idea from her offer, and he acted upon it. He hoisted her up and rolled her over onto her back, taking his position over her, “I suppose... I could work with that.” He chortled quietly, moving to take off her pants. "As well as... a little something else I have in mind."

She giggled as he rolled them over and took the top position. He was so cute- he was not a very dominant man most times, try as he might. She lifted her hips a little to help him, and soon she was divested of pants. Toki curled her tongue around the edge of his soul and sucked gently on it. "Something else in mind, hm? Pretty sure you have too much pants covering you for that, Papy."

She purrs, eye lights blazing a loving green. He shuttered and gasped sharply as his soul got sucked on and he moaned, before he shivered and chuckled quietly, "H-Heh... I might not have what you think I have in mind." He murmured. "Oh?" She lifted a brow at him, and sucked again, dragging her finger gently against his soul with a playful purr. "We're you thinking... Maybe your tongue~?"

He licked his teeth and smiled at her, his shoulders shivering as she stroked his soul. "Hhnn~ heh~ I'm that transparent?" He cooed.

"Well, I can see right through you." She winks, and wiggles a finger through his rib. She pauses at that, and gives him a momentary curious look as she played with his soul. "You know... If I can summon breasts and a belly for carrying the twins... I wonder what you'd look like with a summoned body. Full body, not just that delicious dick of yours."

He blinked, "You... think I'd look good with a solid form?" He asked as he slowly sat back on his knees. He focused on his magic and slowly his body built into form, his body glowing orange under his bones.

"I dunno. You look good with what your magic fills out with clothes, so it's possible?" She shrugged lightly. She releases his soul for the moment and lets it float back home, and sits up enough to rub over his ribs as he started to form his body under his bones. "You look good in bones. I bet you'd look good in flesh too." She smiles and then sits back to let him get it situated. "It might be fun to let you feel what touch feels like on skin." She winks.

He cupped his soul, now able to focus his magic, and he sighed gently as he was able to better harness his magic, "Mnh." As the magic utilized, it better inflated his body and allowed him to build his body for her to see.

"If you're sure. What do you think?" He purred gently.

She looked him over with a critical eye. He wasn't heavily muscled like the thick material of his turtlenecks might have suggested. He had more of a runners body, almost- but he still had muscles and abs to die for.

Toki grinned and leaned up to lick a trail up from his navel to his pectorals. "I could lick every inch of you. You're perfect, my love. How does it feel to have flesh constraining you?"
He shivered as her tongue started giving attention to the somewhat new exto-body that, "I-It feels weird..." he murmured

"You've never had skin before." She grins. Her hands slide up, and she traces over his hips and up his sides, tracing over the flesh hiding his sensitive ribs. She circles his nipples with her fingers, and pinches them gently.

"Nyeh..." He let a shaky breath pass before he smiled at her and reached to gently cup her hips in his hands, "Mmh... so what... you intend to rub it in?"

"I intend to rub something in." She wiggles a brow at him, and purrs as his hands settle on her hips. She groans, and rolls her hips in his hands. Her fingers tweak his nipples gently, before they slide up to his shoulders. She suddenly grins. "Ohh. I think you're gonna like this." She gently rakes her fingers down his back, dragging the sharp points gently so as not to hurt him- but enough to leave little scrapes. It was definitely different than on bones.

He arched and his own fingers curled back slightly as he let out a hiss, but the look in his eyes when he recovered told her that what just happened was definitely not discomfort.

She grinned. "Oh yeah. You definitely like that, didn't you? There are some benefits to having flesh. Would you like me to do that again, my love?" She trailed her fingers back up his back, awaiting his response to her offer.

"Yessss~" He purred eagerly.

"As my love wishes." She drags her fingers down his back again, and nibbles her teeth gently across his chest. "I love you, my good mate~"

He shivered and moaned at that, "that feels... so odd" he cooed, before he wrapped his arms around the small of her back and pulled her into him, their hips pressing together as he pushed his face into her neck, allowing him to kiss and nibble happily.

She raked her fingers gently up and down his back as he kissed and nibbled at her neck, letting her head loll back with a soft blissed sigh as warmth crawled down from where his touch trailed. Heat blossomed across her bones, and Toki smiled warmly. "It's a good kind of odd though. Mmm, this is what it felt like when you touched my ectoflesh. Sensitive, isn't it?"

"Mmm... It feels really nice." He purred into her neck as he rutted against her, easily growing excited with everything new going on.

She chuckled, and rocked her hips up into his as he rutted against her. She kissed his neck, nibbling along the flesh that stretched up to his jaw. She peppered it with kisses and scraped her teeth along his neck in time with her finger tips up and down his back. "My good mate," she purrs, "my good, strong mate. You like this, don't you? You like me leaving marks on you, letting the whole world know you're mine~ I bet you like leaving marks on me too." She purrs. "I know I sure do. It let's the world know I'm yours~"

"Hhhnn~" He kissed the vertebrae of her neck before giving a few nips along the bones, grinding again as his cock, which had accidentally been summoned with the rest of his body, hardened and ground against her bare body.

Toki grinned, and shifted under him. She wasn't going to leave him as the only one doing it. She paused in her attention for just a second, and formed her full body under him. It was all soft rolls of green, with muscles and toned parts interspersed with soft places from bearing children. Her hips
plumped out, and she rocked against his hardening cock with her soft folds as she raked her fingers over him again. She left her neck bones bare, more than content to not have an actual throat. She hooked her legs over his hips, and craned down to give his ass a squeeze. "Mmmm, that ass, and it’s all for me~"

"All yours~" He cooed, his hands moving up and gently groping the plump folds of magic, smiling at the feel, "Mmhm, and every last one of these beautiful curves..." he murmured, looking up at her as his eyes gave a excited glow, "Every last one is mine to treasure and praise~" He cooed. His hard-on ground against her a little more before it withdrew as he pulled back his hips, a hand lowering to line it up with her entrance.

"Every last one is yours," she purrs in agreement. Where Toki was soft curves and the remnants of a mother's body, Papyrus was harder edges and a runners body. She was the soft to his hard- but she always had been. She gave a pleased squeak as his fingers lined himself up, and she angled her hips to help him drive home. Her soul strained in her chest, and it fluttered against her ribs and conjured flesh, aching to be one with the mate it could sense just above. It made a glowing light below her flesh, and she panted as it drummed against her ribs.

His soul was pulsing hard in his chest, now that it was tucked away in the safety of the summoned flesh, it yearned the same, but he knew better, it was not the best time for children. "I love you." He cooed to her again as his hips closed the distance with hers.

She rocked her hips with his and cried out quietly with a pleased sound as he eased into her. She hadn't been prepared so much, but she didn't need it. Toki just wanted him in her, around her. And he was filling her now, the orange glow of his shaft visible from within the green of her body. "I love you," she rasped, "my love, my mate, my Papyrus." Her fingers raked down his back again.

Her soul popped free between them, and floated between them. She took it in hand, and offered it to him with a shaky look. "I know we don't want more kids yet, but... As much as we don't want to face it, this could be... The last night together for one of us. I want no regrets."

He hesitated as he listened to her words and his soul gave a soft hop in his chest, before he slowly summoned his own, "I... I don't want to risk impregnating you at... such a poor time... But... I feel the same..." He murmured.

"It... It took what, three or four days for the ecto body to show up last time?" It had been during his heat, and she'd woken up with it the day after it had ended. Who knew which soul merge brought upon the twins conception? She swallowed. "Even if... We do, it won't matter. We have... We have until tomorrow. Tomorrow might be our last day, so... Let's make the most of today." With that said, she lifted her fingers and offered her hand to his, offering to link their hands, and souls, together like they had before. Toki smiled gently. "And... If things go... Go amazingly, we'll win with no casualties, and have another baby on the way."

He looked at her offered hand, then sighed, and smiled at her, "V- Very well." He murmured, before he leaned in and kissed her, entwining his hand with hers before gasping as their souls touched.

It had been a long time since they had touched souls, and Toki couldn't stop the open mouthed gasp that pulled from her. Her feelings washed against his, like a scorching wildfire blazing against the sun that was his soul, and he fed her embers and made them bloom. She trembled around him, her walls flexing with sudden need and the sudden sensation of feeling him being in her- and feeling her being around him, through him. Joining souls was something she could never regret.

Love flooded him from her, and she likes ked their hands tightly as her soul pulsed and latched onto his. "Oh god, Papyrus, I love you so much, with all of my soul, and all of my being... Mmm..."
Her words brought a smile to his face but he lost focus on his ability to reply, and rather spent it on fucking her like she deserved, with all the love and passion he could offer.

She met every one of his passionate thrusts with a buck of her own, her free hand raking down the skin of his back and her teeth biting gently into the flesh of his shoulder. She made sure not to puncture skin, as every rocking thrust brought a blissed cry from her.

The sensation of her teeth definitely gave him a surprise and he gasped out, before he put more weight on her, no longer holding himself up as well as his hips continued to move, his thrusts meeting her with a sharp smack that was accompanied by a quiet sound from him.

Toki cried out and mewled under him, lost to sensation as he drove into her. Her hand and mouth urged him faster, legs tightening around him in time with his thrusts. The feedback loop of sensations were driving her insane- so surely they have to be driving him insane too. "Ah~"

Indeed they were, but he seemed to have a grasp on it, at least until a surge went through him and he snarled as his thrusts grew faster, his grip tightening on her hand, "H-hahhh...! Toki!" He growled with happy eagerness.

"Ah!" She arched against him, mouth opening wider. "Papyrus! H-haahh!" Her fingers flexed, tightening against his own, and quashing her soul more firmly with his. It beat faster against his as her free hand shifted from raking down his back to simply trying to hang on. She didn’t have a grip on the sensations- and her lack of grip had her lost in a storm of pleasure that had her coherent thoughts struggling to come through. All she could feel was love, so much love, so much lust, so much need, and the desire for more.

He tried to focus on anything he could, but the sensation of the pleasure was too much and he let out a choked sound of ecstasy as he dug his fingers into whatever rested below them before he let out a blissed cry, his soul shuttering hard as he gave a last few hard thrusts before a final jolt filled her with his magical essence.

His orgasm triggered her own, and she came hard, walls clamping around him like a vice. She cried out a wordless sound that might have been his name at one point. Her fingers made faint marks down his back as she arched under him, chest pushing against his own. Her breaths came in heated pants as lightning flashed back and forth between the souls fluttering like mad in their palms.

It seemed to take forever for the reverberations of their orgasm to die down, and by the time it did, Toki was a twitchy, panting mess under him, her green skin glimmering with glistening beads of sweat as she heaved for breath. Her eyes were open a crack, focused dimly on him as she tried to catch her breath and get her wits about her.

"H-h-holy shit," she rasped.

Where she still had a thread of consciousness, he was shuttering above her, very out of it as his body was drained of both cum and energy.

Her rasp did seem to stir him though, and he looked up at her face, smiling weakly, "H-Heh..."

She shakily loosened her fingers from his, and kissed him gently as she did so. Their joined hands were stained a sticky mottled green and orange color, the secretions from their soul- and Toki gingerly released her hold on her own soul. It was reluctant to part from his- but she didn’t want to let it linger too long, lest they tempt fate. The true test would be to de-summon her ectobody and see...
Her stained soul slid between their hands, and slowly crept back into her chest, easing back through her ribs reluctantly as she heaved for breath under him. “Mmm… W-wow… That… That was good…” She smiled up at him lovingly.

"W-wonderful." He whispered, trembling as he slowly fell to the side, laying on his back with a shivering sigh.

Toki gave a soft sound as he slid out of her, and cuddled up to his frame. She traced her fingers down his chest, tracing over the muscles of his abdomen, before going back up his ribs with a soft hum. It was several minutes before she had enough of her wits about her for a full coherent sentence- and to tease him some. “Mm… you can go ahead and drop this.” She hums. “As much as I enjoy you being so soft,” She teases, referencing the fact he always calls her soft. “I’m used to your bones.”

Her body flickers, but disappears without a fuss. The only thing that staunchly refuses to go away is her breasts- but she didn’t think they would.

He hummed quietly and smiled, taking a deep breath before he sighed and allowed his magic to fade, returning to her his bones. "Mmm, better?"

She kissed his ribs and ran her teeth teasingly over them as she settled against his bones. Hers brushed with his, and she sighed, pleased. “Mhm. I’m so used to being with a skeleton, it feels weird to be with someone who has flesh. You do look dashing in your meat suit though, Pap. You, ah, actually have a very attractive physique.” She flushes a bit. “Very yummy.”

"Glad to hear you approve of me either way." He purred happily as he wrapped an arm around her, pulling her into a gentle squeeze.

She laughed, and nuzzled him gently. “Heh. I’d love you even if you were soft and flabby like some parts of me seem to be. I might not show the baby weight like this, but boy, I sure noticed where it lingered when I summoned my body.”

"Mmm, that body type is more Caeruleus." He chuckled, before he sighed and stroked her hips gently. "I love your 'baby weight'." He purred. "I wouldn't have you any other way~"

She quirked a smile at him, and shimmied up to press a kiss to his cheek as his hands stroked over the crests of her pelvis. “Cae did have a baby not too long ago,” she reminds him with light amusement. “I’ve had a long while to get rid of mine. I suppose I probably look better now than I did right after having them.” She chortles.

"Of course you do. But then again, you always look 'better'." He chuckled, pulling her close now with his other arm and planting a few soft kisses on her head.

That just made Toki laugh quietly. “You’re such a flatterer.” She relaxes as he kisses between her horns, and sighs softly, contently. “Hey Pap…?” She rubs her fingers lightly over his collarbone as she simply relaxes and basks in him, “When… When tomorrow is over, do you still want to rebuild in the old compound? Or do you want to… I dunno. Find someplace else to start over?”

The question had him pause and he leaned his head back to think it over.

It took him a little bit to come up with an answer he liked, but when he did, he then smiled. "We'll start where we were, and we'll keep growing." He answered, "Stretch out where we can... welcome more monsters to the sweet surface air, and the freedom that will start the beginning of their new lives."
Toki smiles slowly, but warmly, and laughs quietly. “I like that idea. That… that sounds perfect. We’ll rebuild right where we were, then.” She nuzzles his chest with a soft, content sigh. “You know what I think I want to build when we rebuild our house? A balcony off our room, so we can sit outside from the top floor, and watch the stars. A skylight would work too, but that lets the sunlight in during the morning and wakes us up earlier. But… a balcony would be nice.”

"Mmm, now you're getting the idea." He sighed happily, stroking her head gently as he chuckled. "A balcony sounds like a perfect idea, and a skylight even more so, since I wake up early anyways.”

Toki laughs gently. “Yeah, but for those of us who aren’t up at the ass crack of the ass crack of dawn, it’s murder. Particularly when we have more kids- and you like to let me sleep in for hours on end. Though that might be moot, since we have children now.” She chuckles.

"Indeed so, we're parents now, and I'm still a guard, so we both have our responsibilities, and then some." He sighed, stroking her head gently and letting it go to the tip of her horn. "Perhaps we'll hold off on the skylight, so my dear wife gets her beauty sleep." He chuckled as he gently pinched her horn, giving it a small, playful tug.

She laughed at the playful tug, and gave him a playful grin in turn. She kissed him gently, and then bumped her nose to his. “Welcome to parenthood. And I suppose we could get a skylight… if we can get a cover over it too so we can sleep without being blinded.”

"Automated so you don’t get the waking light until you need it." He suggested with a soft laugh, smiling up at her as he gave her horn another tug.

She laughed at the tug on her horn, and tilted her head into his tug. She playfully shook her head at him, making sure not to point her horns at him. “That would be a good idea. Automated… Maybe one in all the rooms, so the kids can enjoy it too.”

"Keep a kid-proof lock on those ones though." He chuckled, before he leaned up and clacked her forehead gently, "You're silly". He cooed.

Toki playfully blew a curl of smoke from her nose towards him. “Considering our kids can summon possible flying minions, yes.” She chuckles. “Unless we don’t have opening skylights, and just stick with stationary ones with covers.”

"It would be wise to have the stationary with the covers." he replied, before he giggled, "I just hope Sobek doesn't think it's an open window."

That made Toki burst into giggles. “Oh goodness. All I can think of is those pets that don’t see the glass sliding doors and run right into it. I’m sure we can tell him that it’s not a window.”

"We hear a thunk, check on him and the poor bastard's out cold." He laughed gently. “We’ll have to watch and make sure it doesn’t happen.” She chuckles softly. She gives him a soft smile, and kisses him gently, before nuzzling closer with a sigh.

Toki closes her eyes, and simply basks in his presence for a time. They would need to make sure it didn’t happen… but they first needed to ensure that it could happen, by making sure that tomorrow… Tomorrow, they succeeded, and that Cruelty was defeated.

By whatever… whatever means were necessary.
The following morning, bright and early, Toki and Papyrus were visited by Toriel, who lead a small smattering of children, young adults, and those unable to fight as they headed for the old ruins and the emergency exit. Stag, Sobek, and Snuggle would be going with them, along with the twins and the family cats.

Toki cried at having to leave her children. She tried not to- but she did. She managed to see all of them out the door after they cried and clung to her and Papyrus and babbled incoherent words of distress at being forced to go- but the tears came after, and a good ten minutes had been spent in tears just trying to get them to stop.

Once they did, she sobered up, and then it was off to the castle with Papyrus and every other guard who was coming with. Once everyone had gathered, they set out for the ruins of Nara Village.

It was pretty much a small army that they had upon arrival to the ruins of their home. Everyone took a moment to take in what had become of Nara Village- and

The fire had been stopped, but a small portion of the forest had burned. All of the houses were gone, as was the park, and the gardens. The only thing still standing were the stone walls surrounding the compound and the vast majority of the village, and the brick and cement portions of Toki and Papyrus’ house. At least, the portions of it that hadn’t collapsed from spots where the material had heated, expanded, and then cracked when the fire department’s hoses had rapidly cooled it.

At least, that’s what they could assume. It could have been… the explosions from the bombs the airplanes dropped.

Even the clan trees, which had probably been around since the days before the monsters had been sealed, had been burnt to nothingness. Between the gasoline that had been sprayed, and the dry summer heat… Well, not much had stood a chance against the man made wildfire that had been created through the illegal activities of Humans Against Monster’s cruel acts.

The whole area seemed to be pretty empty- but one of the wolf guards that had come along could smell a massive amount of humans- along with a lot of foreign technology just on the other side of the old crumbled wall on one side of the compound. No doubt Cruelty’s minions… They didn’t seem to be doing anything, however- so at least Cruelty was punctual.

It was thirty minutes until noon, and counting down on the time. No one was milling about- everyone was preparing themselves, and double checking their armor time and time again and making sure weapons were stocked, primed, and sharp.
Frisk had saved, of course. They had insisted on coming along- and so, they too were here. But they were up near the back- and well out of range of fighting. Their entire purpose was to load if things went sour- which, knowing Cruelty and the company he kept, things would likely go sour a lot. Frisk was their contingency plan. They were manning the save and reload button.

They even had armor that kept them safe.

They weren’t the only one’s now bedecked in armor. Sans wore an identical set of armor as Papyrus did, albeit sized to fit him better, and there were several rabbit monsters garbed up in full plate as well. Tenebris had a full set on as well to keep him protected, though his were customized severely since he had grown some since the time that he had last worn it. It still fit- but places had to be reinforced and extended some for him to fit.

Toki’s armor wasn’t much different from the usual royal Guard armor. However, Lana had gotten hold of it- and the royal guard symbol had been removed. Instead, the symbol that had been on her wedding dress had been painted on the arm bracers of the silver plate armor- and then an even larger one had been painted across her chest. Instead of the red cape to mark her as part of the royal guard, Toki wore a cape that was the same green color as her soul, with clasps that came around and secured around her neck. Because Toki couldn’t carry all that much, the armor had been modified to be thinner and lighter. It would crumple easier- but she could carry it, and it was guaranteed to make people think twice about shooting her and potentially wasting a bullet.

She was bent over the tiny card table they’d brought with them, peering down at the container that Frisk was going to be guarding. It was supposed to hold Cruelty’s soul when they killed him and took it. She still… She still didn’t like the idea. It made them all hypocrites, and she didn’t like to be a hypocritical asshole like some folks like to be.

She watched it intently for a moment, before sighing, lifting an armored hand to rub the back of her neck. Toki had her idea- and she fully intended to work with it. But… she had to play along for now. The others… surely wouldn’t go for it. And… honestly, if her idea didn’t work, then they could still fall back on the more hypocritical idea.

The clanking of armor was so, so loud around her. Clover and Sugar were off getting fitted into their armor, which was designed to protect the soft and squishy part of their abdomens, as well as reinforce their hard chitin that kept them well guarded normally.

Toki quirked a smile and watched as Sugar was a handful as per her usual self. She bucked and bounced and was just a general pest, but a quick thought from Toki had her sobering and standing patiently while the monsters got her into her armor. Clover was much better behaved, and the massive insect was even behaving while they reinforced her saddle to put armor along her wing joints, so she’d be protected from anything that might seek to remove them. In close quarters, the armor could also be used for fighting.

Toki seemed to like the idea, so Toki didn’t mind.

Though Aliquam looked well adjusted to his own armor, Caeruleus and Tenebris looked a little uncomfortable, the latter grumbling about ’had he grown to a full-fledged blaster beast, he wouldn’t even need this metal armor around his form’.

Cae didn’t complain about his, rather stayed close to Grillby, whose armor had seen days almost this
bad back during the war. But his hand had went tight around his mate’s, and he pressed close. It was obvious that he was a little nervous. Seeing resets never really helped him steel his nerves, and he knew that after this, he wouldn’t be able to sleep, if they even survived at all.

Toki slid closer to Aliquam after she left the table and nudged him lightly, her armor clattering against his own. She peered up at him gently with a soft, quiet sound, and nudged his hand gently. “How are you doing?”

“I’m alright... a little unnerved if anything, but hey, aren’t we all?” He chuckled as he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. ”And how are you?” Aliquam asked gently.

Toki nuzzled her head to Papyrus’ armor, and hummed at the metallic clank it made. Cuddling in armor wasn’t fun. “That’s true… I’m alright. Just… Kind of tired. Drawn out, I guess. I dunno. I’m ready for it to be over, but not ready for… well, for the fighting that’s going to come.”

“We’re both ready for it to be over… but it just will take us that last leap to get there… but it will be worth it in the end, for us, for our children...” He purred to her.

“Yes.” She agreed quietly. She sighed, and turned to look out over the forest. She kept her voice quiet as she spoke to him. “Do you really think he’s out there watching us right now? Do you really think he came?”

“If he didn't, then we by default should be victor... he issued the challenge...” He murmured.

“That’s not how war works, and you know it.” She nudges him gently, and she frowns, watching the trees. The clock was ticking down, and noon was approaching. She felt like she could be sweating if she had skin- skin beyond her chest, that was. “So how do you think this is going to work? Are we just going to… I dunno, walk out, meet in the middle, and start fighting? Or is someone going to take a potshot first…? Mmm… Knowing Cruelty, he’s going to want to gloat to my face, isn’t he? ‘Muhaha, you’ll never win, Kindness, I’ll get you and your little monsters too.’” She does a horribly cheesy impression of his voice- completely intentional, since mimicry was something she was fairly good at.

He laughed at that quietly, before he shrugged lightly. ”I’m afraid I haven't a clue... I don’t think we'll be able to really expect anything and be sure of it.” He admitted, giving a shrug again.

“I think you’re right.” She agreed softly. Toki sighed, and glanced up at him for a moment, before looking back out to the trees. “War... War never changes.” She muses quietly. ”It’s always caused by someone hating someone, or someone offending someone to cause this hate... It’s a never-ending cycle of cruelty and malice and death. But there’s no way to bring about world peace. It’s in human nature to seek conflict, to strive to fight and do battle...” She rubs her forearms quietly, and catches a glimpse of humans moving around in the trees. “They’re watching us, just as we’re watching them.” She mutters.

“We have not provoked them, so they will hopefully stay away until it comes to the fight.” Quinn took her hand and began to walk towards the ruins of the house.

The compound was ashy, and they kicked up small puffs of it that clung to their armor as they walked. Their house loomed not far from the remnants of the gates- or what was left of their house. The bombs had hit it, obviously, and knocked the cement and brick foundation down. Several spots on it had collapsed, including their bedroom, and the children’s nursery. The fire had swept over it too. Nothing remained inside of the house- it was a hollowed out burnt husk of what it once was.

Behind the house, visible just outside of the house compound walls, were the burnt husks of Toki’s
beehives.

Toki swallowed thickly, and tightened her hand on Pap’s hand. This was her home… It had been her home, and her families home, for centuries. It had been bad when she’d lost the first house in the fire… But now… Now it was all gone. All of the old clan trees, all of the old store houses, her apiary, everything. Every last, single thing she had ever owned, or had been owned by them… gone.

The only thing that remained were the trees far around the edge of the compound, which were thick with HAM members, and buzzing with low voices of conversation. Likely humans doing the same as they were- talking before battle. Toki was hesitant to go too close to the trees, and so stirred her husband away from them- but she let them come close to the burnt husk of their home. She reached out to touch the cold brick, her gauntlets making a faint noise against the charred material. “At least I had the right idea in making it out of cement and brick…?” She tried to be optimistic- but that just came out slightly hollow sounding. She’d originally done it out of fear of accidentally burning down her house with her lack of control.

"Very true." Quinn gave a chuckle to assure her it was not depressing for her to joke about such a thing.

Tenebris gave a soft sigh as he looked to where his home was, though Cae kept his gaze lowered. They had stuck close to Papyrus and Toki- and did not wander far. They shadowed the two of them as soon as they had broken away from the pack.

"I was surprised to see you actually came." A voice cut the dead air and immediately Tenebris, Cae, and Quinn were on their guard.

"The same could be said for you." It fell from her mouth before she could stop it, and Toki whirled to face who had spoken to them.

From out of the darkness, a middle aged man stepped out. He had dark brown hair, marked by a smattering of salt and peppered flakes at the temples, a hooked nose, and plump lips. He was well built, though not of great height, and he walked with a steady gait in thin plate armor with an old sword at his hip. Blue eyes peered over them with the shrewdness of a lawyer, or someone who handled official documents often.

There was an age to his gaze that Toki had never noticed there before. She had never thought to look for it before.

She frowned. “Seymour Simmons?” Shock and hurt flitted through her, though it was primarily shock that overtook her at the sight of her agent, who had been with her since the very start of everything, walking out of the woods with armor and an old sword at his hip. “No… No, no, no, Simmons, you’ve been a family friend for a long time.” Her mouth opened slightly, and her fingers tightened over Papyrus’ own. “It… It was you? You’re Cruelty?”

"I do hope you'll eventually forgive me, young Tokiko. Family friend I might be, but as soon as the monsters were freed, and you opened your heart to them… well, I realized who, and what you were...” He sighed, shaking his head. "I simply had to bide my time... it is a pity that we lost one good human in the crossfire, but a life of one weighs naught to the weight of humanity as a whole. We are a species that does not need the blight of monsterkind at its heels."

“One? One good human?” She bristled. “You and your people have been abducting and no doubt murdering HTM’s! And anyone associated with monster lineage, or related to them! They’re human
too- I’m still human at my core! They were good people- and monsters are good people too. They’re no blight. If anyone is the blight, it is you, Simmons.” Toki pauses, and frowns, before shaking her head. “No. No. Cruelty. You’re not Simmons- Simmons died the day you decided to take up the mantle of an aspiring genocidal monster.”

The monsters began to rally behind Toki and Papyrus, spreading out and readying their weapons for when it would come to blows. Asgore came to stand beside Tenebris, leaving Toki at the head. As king, he should have been leading- but this… This was a clash between titans of power beyond even him.

Fire crackled along Toki’s armor, and the thin plate heated and struggled not to warp. “I will give you one more chance, Cruelty. Turn around now- disband your people, tell them to go home. Use Corruption and tell them that this is over. That it’s done. If not… If not, you’d better make your peace, because your time is up.”

"Oh Tokiko…” He sighed quietly, shaking his head slowly. "It... Truly is a pity... First Han Nara was lost... and now the Nara family shall lose yet another. But then again... who would miss a monster?" He his face blossomed into a lopsided grin, before his attention was snared away from her. He turned as a man approached him. "What is it?" His brow’s furrowed and he practically growled at the other. The other man replied, too low for anyone but Cruelty to hear.

He grinned once more and turned back to Toki. "And with that, I’m afraid our conversation is over... I will not sound a retreat. Not as long as any single one of you monsters exist in this world." He chuckled, before his grin widened, turning up in the corners into something between a grin and a baring of one’s teeth. "NOW, CORRUPTION!" He roared.

A weapon was fired from the shadows and Papyrus gasped, shoving Toki out of the way to take the brunt of the weapon himself. He gave a shout of pain as the shot hit him. The impact had a recoil, sending him flying into the crowd of monsters.

"PAPYRUS!” Sans cried out.

The monsters did their best to catch Papyrus, but Toki lost sight of him as she hit the ground. She scrambled to her feet, still unable to catch a glimpse of her wounded husband, and opened her mouth and shrieked, an unholy noise that was not entirely human, not entirely monster. It was laced with an undertone of a buzzing sound- and with that, Clover took to the sky, speedy movements slowed with the weight of her armor. Sugar plowed over the ground, working her way around the monsters.

From the trees, Cruelty’s men surged, flooding out in numbers that far, far outweighed their own. Where the monsters might have had four or five hundred fighters tops, Cruelty’s numbers exceeded a thousand easily. Several humans had guns and made use of them- but a lot of them had old school weapons like what Cruelty was using. It made sense, given his age, that Cruelty would have trained them in how to fight with weapons that the monsters would use. Guns were harder to get hold of- particularly in mass amounts.

Between Toki’s war cry, and the sound of human footsteps charging forth, that was all the monsters need. “Go forth!” Asgore shouted, before he summoned his trident and drove it through a man with crushing force. The humans and the monsters collided with a clash of war cries- and the fighting began.

Tenebris didn't need to be told twice. He summoned forth his blasters and let them reign hell on the humans. Cae did the same, hells fire having been ignited in his eyes at seeing his brother go down.

Toki lunged into battle with a cry, drawing her own sword at her side and funneling fire magic
through it. She, and the blade, lit up in a blaze of green hellfire, and she locked onto Cruelty with driven intent. He’d sent the command- he’d sent the command, and had Papyrus shot… It was time.

It was time for his reign of terror to end.

Cruelty grinned and pulled from his sword from his hip, giving it a twirl in his hand before he bolted for Toki, "This ends now!" He roared.

“It ends just as it begins- with us.” Cruelty was old, Toki knew. Thankfully, she had been fighting for a while with someone who was also old- and good with a sword. She might be clumsy, but she knew well enough how to block and parry by now. Grillby had drilled it into her until her bones had cracked and bled.

She met his blade with her own, sparks and cinders flying from the force of her strike. She was taller than he was, her skull and body wreathed in flames. She struck out at him hard, parrying and dodging, and then striking in again and exhaling a belch of flame at him.

He dodged the fiery attack before taking the second after it to lunge and have a stab at where her bones were exposed.

His sword struck true, and glanced off the exposed bones along her elbow joint. She cried out and jerked away, pressing a hand to her arm to briefly staunch the wound as she felt her HP ticking downwards.

Toki could see humans and monsters alike falling- some were dying in the crossfire’s of attacks, some were dying in the active combat. She could see humans trying to roll some sort of tanker out of the forest, and had a brief flash of horror as to what it was- but others saw it too, and began mobbing for it.

She clenched her fist and seared the wound shut with her flames. Papyrus couldn’t heal her- she… she just hoped he was alright. The wounded were supposed to go to the back, near Frisk, for wounds to be treated if they were too severe to keep fighting.

There was a thump behind Cruelty, as Clover set down, the massive hornet squashing several humans as she took to land based attacks. She created a barrier, however- she kept Cruelty pinned between her and Toki, and gave him nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. Nowhere but sideways, that was, and both Toki and Clover could follow that way.

Toki twirled the sword, her arm throbbing, and gave him a nasty snarl, before lunging for him again with tongues of flames curling from her orifices.

Another human struck at her from behind, and shoved their blade between the armor pleats covering her shoulders. It slid between the pleats, and stabbed into the ecto flesh under them, making her cry out again and botch her initial lunge. She swung just short on the first swing, but recovered and made to swing a second time at him.

Cruelty had been ready for her attack and he deflected her blade before positioning his feet as to spin, slicing at her and Clover’s face in the same.

Clover took the slice across the flat of her face, her eyes taking the brunt of it. She shrieked, a horrible, wounded noise, and lurched back, rearing up on her back legs as she flailed her front legs at her bleeding, blinded eyes.

Toki dodged the slice- but the pain from her summons nearly made her drop her sword. As it was, she cried out, covering her eyes as the pain reverberated through her. Not far off Sugar shrieked, and
her blaster blast went off, incinerating several humans. “Clover!” Toki cried—unwittingly vulnerable before Cruelty.

The big beast lurched backwards, and managed to huddle down on all fours again— but she was blind now, completely so, from weeping gashes that bisected her face. She cried out, wings spreading and flailing viciously as she tried to locate enemies without being able to see them.

He grinned at her moment of exposure, Cruelty turned and quickly plunged his sword for Toki’s throat, aiming to take her head off with a single strike.

Time slowed down in an instant for Toki as she watched the blade come sweeping for her neck. There wasn’t any way to dodge—she was too close to bend back or forwards, and to the side wasn’t going to cut it. Going down wouldn’t work—

As the blade neared her neck, her mouth opened, and she lifted her blade in an attempt to parry it and divert it off course—

Toki had a split second of awareness where she sees the barrel of the gun coming just as Cruelty shouts out to Corruption, and she twists just as Papyrus goes to shove her out of the way. She twists— and shoves her body against his. The shot slips right between the plates of her armor, and blows through part of her spine.

Agony makes her cry out, and down she goes, green cape fluttering in the wind as her legs no longer work— but Papyrus is unharmed. Her husband isn’t hurt— and that… that’s what matters.

"TOKI!" Papyrus caught her as her legs gave out, keeping the force of the blast from throwing her and possibly wounding her worse. He laid her down on the ground carefully. It wasn’t hard to see where her spine was damaged— most of it was broken through, and only a small part of it remained connected, keeping her upper torso connected to her lower torso. "No...!" He gasped, horrified. His horror only lasted a few seconds before rage set in, and his eyes took on a harsh orange glow. Papyrus summoned a wave of bones. "CHARGE!" He screeched, sending the bones flying at Cruelty and any movement he had caught in his vision in that split second.

The monsters charged, running on either side of them as he carefully picked her up again to get her to the back while the humans were sidetracked with the swarm of monsters mobbing around the fallen Guardian Angel.

Toki cried out as he lifted her, her spine protesting the movement by sending painful signals up the part of her back that definitely could feel everything happening to it. Her legs felt nothing. “J-Just leave me and go,” She gasped, fingers shoving faintly at his armor. “Go—fight! I—my spine is… I’m done for, Pap. I… I’m... Just leave me and fight. Survive. Please...”

Cruelty gave a slow grin as the tall skeleton picked up Kindness and tried to take her. His blade was palmed, and he deftly dodged the bones, or sliced through the ones that he couldn’t dodge. He pursued, cutting a path through the monsters that his humans swarmed to fill in. “Ah, ah, ah, I don’t believe I gave you permission to take Kindness from me yet, Papyrus. Be a good beast and listen to your mistress; put her down so she can watch everyone die.”

He gave her a small hug as he slowly put her down, before rising to stand over her protectively, summoning a bone spear while shooting a loathing look down at Cruelty. "The only one who will die on this day is you, Cruelty!" He snarled sharply, his eye glowing brightly as he summoned Bastet.
and Neko, twirling the bone in his hand, "You will not succeed in your assault!"

“You think I won’t?” Cruelty smiled pleasantly, and tapped the tip of his blade on the charred earth. “I’ve already won. I’ve knocked out your key player- and once Kindness dies… well, you’ll have already lost. There are no other boss heart human turned monsters that my organization could find.” He grins. “We tried. And, even if you do survive today, and Kindness dies… you’ll have lost in a whole other way. Kindness will come back, just like I will- but she’ll never, ever, ever remember you.” He twirls the blade and eyes the blaster beasts, before grinning wider. “Corruption!” He shouts.

A blast pops off- and hits Bastet about the same time that Cruelty lunges for Papyrus with his sword aimed to slice the taller skeleton’s knees out from under him.

He grit his teeth and roared in pain at the hit that his blaster took, but even with tears of pain beading in his eyes he twisted the bone to block Cruelty's blade, before he lashed out a foot to kick him back.

Papyrus was well over a foot and a half taller than him- the foot that kicked into his chest sent him reeling back. However, centuries upon centuries of training had him tucking and rolling smoothly, and gaining his feet once more in another practiced motion. He didn’t wait- he simply grinned and lunged, sweeping towards him as Corruption took another shot at his blasters.

Toki squirmed and tried to get up, shoving with her arms to try and haul herself upright to at least try and help defend Papyrus and his blasters- but there was no luck to be had, no hope to be given. She couldn’t get up. The only thing she could do was turn over and wave her hand, and send a hoard of bees to shield as many people as she could- and aggressively sting the humans that she could get. The attack mode would put her defense on the low- but… But she had to do something.

Bastet was dismissed, and Neko rattled in apology as she scooped Toki up in her teeth, taking her farther away from the duo that clashed, as to put her out of danger.

Papyrus didn’t bother waiting until his foot touched the ground before he swung his bone again, his eyes glowing in fury as he faced off against the man who dared threaten not just the life of his wife, but of everyone he loved and called family.

The clash of bone on metal was noisy, and Cruelty grew moderately frustrated as the other pest stole Kindness once more. A quick shout to Corruption- and the running feline skull beast was shot down, and sent toppling with Toki entangled with its body.

Cruelty laughed, good and hard, and ducked an angry sweep from Papyrus, before bringing his blade down and driving it into his hand, severing it partway up his metacarpals. Not where he could attach it again once more- no, he’d have to grow whole new fingers to use them again.

He screeched in pain as the pain from both the loss of his fingers and the pain that surged to his head, and he stumbled backwards, his breathing growing rough as he summoned another bone spear to take into his left hand. "Gh..." His wounded hand now tucked close, Papyrus bared his teeth at Cruelty again, though was no longer as aggressive in his fight, rather now stood as more of a defensive.

Neko had gotten far enough with Toki that a new head had spotted her and made its way over.

"Toki!" Cae called to her as he shortcut to her side, kneeling to check her.

The tumble had done the rest of the shot’s work- and her spine had snapped clean through. The way her top was twisted was unnatural- even for a skeleton. She had landed face up, however, and
grimaced, fingers clawing at the ashy ground under her. “S-Sans,” she rasped, “Help Pap, help him, please…”

She could see Cruelty and him fighting from here.

Cruelty took his defensiveness in stride, and lunged harder, striking at his hand instead of at the bone. He aimed to take his fingers- but there was little that Papyrus could do. That was the difference in wielding a sword, which had guards for one’s hand, and wielding a weapon made of bone with no such thing constructed.

Where his fingers had fewer defenses, the gauntlet on his hand protected it, so thankfully his bone weapon made do in their situation. The sword made a dent but failed to penetrate the armor, allowing Quinn a momentary upper hand.

Cae stroked his sister-in-law’s head, taking in the fact that her body was bent in a way that it very, very clearly should not have been, and then he growled. "Damn it!" he then got up and shortcut towards where his brother was fighting the terrorist, and he snapped his fingers to turn Cruelty's soul blue. "Got him, this should make him sluggish!" He barked to his brother.

Hearing that, Papyrus planted his footing to make up for the lack of his predominant hand as he made a sharp jab for the other's torso with the end of the bone.

“Make me sluggish yes. Make them sluggish? Not at all.” Cruelty grinned, and swept the end of the bone spear away with his blade- and then gave a shrill whistle.

Several of the men around them turned from the monsters they were fighting and lunged in unison, some going for Caeruleus, others going for Papyrus. They drove their weapons in for any visible bone they could see, others with broadswords aiming to cleave through the thick armor that the brothers wore.

Cae grinned a little and would move just out of harm's reach when they swung at him, before he summoned bones that impaled many of the humans.

Papyrus summoned a large bone plate to serve as a shield, and he used it to strike away the soldiers that got too close, at least until Cae finished with his own bunch of fighters and he shortcut closer. "Up we go!" He threw his hand up, taking Cruelty with it, "Ever heard the phrase, ‘karma is a bitch’?" he snarled, before he slammed his hand downward towards the ground, using the other hand to impale more of the soldiers with bones.

Cruelty let himself be flung, smirking at something behind the tallest skeleton, and in the wake of Papyrus’ rage, a shot rang out from behind them.

And a bullet blasted into the back of the tall Skeleton’s skull, and out between his eyes. Somewhere in the scuffle he had lost his helmet, and his bones offered no resistance to the bullet that bore through them.

“No!” Toki cried out, scrabbling to try and pull herself upright.

Papyrus hadn't a moment to react, the lights in his eyes going wide before they went out.

"PAPYRUS!” Cae cried out, unable to find the will to move as he saw his brother die, and dissolve into a pile of dust where he once stood.

"Pap...” Cae's eye glowed with fury as he then turned on Cruelty, lifting him up again before slamming him towards the ground, this time summoning spiked bones from the ground to impale
Time seemed to slow down as Cruelty neared the ground, and his smirk only grew, like he knew what was happening. He winked at Caeruleus, and let himself fall-

As the bones began to shove through his armor, however, time ground to a halt-

And then…

_Load._

Caeruleus had but a second to realize what was happening, before it all began over and over again.

_Tenebris got caught in the crossfire of a blast, and a bullet blew half his skull apart. He collapsed into a pile of black kinetic sand._

_And again._

_Grillby died by the tanker of water the humans brought out- and Asgore lost his head._

_And again._

_Someone got to Frisk and killed them._

_And again._

_Undyne was killed after using her gift of the Undying._

_And again._
Toki was killed by a wayward spear.

And again.

Grillby by water.

And again.

Asgore, Papyrus, Tenebris.

And again.

Sans, Grillby.

And again.

And again.

And again.

And again.
And again.
Toki had a split second of awareness where she sees the barrel of the gun coming just as Cruelty shouts out to Corruption, and she twists just as Papyrus goes to shove her out of the way. She twists-and shoves her body against his. She’s too late- it still hits him, but it hits him on the hip, and not in the body where it had been aimed. She goes down on top of him, spares just a second to check and make sure he’s not dusted, before she’s back on her feet.

Fatigue hits her from nowhere- she can see humans and monsters alike staggering from it, confusion hitting the lot of them like battering rams, and she has no idea why. Well… She does. She wonders how many loads there have been. How many… How many deaths? How many times had everyone died in rapid succession?

“Enough!” She cries, voice shaking. “Enough! Just you and me, Cruelty. One on one. Here and now, with both of our sides for witnesses. Are you man enough to face me without resorting to calling on Corruption to take a cheap potshot?”

Cruelty’s breathing was shaking in the slightest. A few of those resets, they actually succeeded in killing him, but not as many times as the others had suffered.

Caeruleus was leaned against Grillby, and Tenebris was on all fours, his breathing already rough and heavy as he stood on shivering legs.

Papyrus barely had the stamina to even sit up, holding his hip in pain as Undyne helped him sit up as best she could. "T-Toki...!"

Cruelty however let a chuckle rise from him before he leaned to one side, resting his hands on his hips, "Me and you... you think that will really stop my men from killing the rest of you, no matter which of us fall?" he asked, before he chuckled, "Fine, I’ll indulge you. But this battle is already lost for you." He told her, drawing his sword.

“It’s okay, Papyrus.” Toki swallowed. “This… This is something I should have taken care of. That
kindness should have taken care of back when this all started. This shouldn’t have been allowed to happen like it did.” It was her job to fix it. She swayed a little bit on her feet, but drew her sword. Her magic gathered at her fingertips, and she reinforced the steel of her blade and the armor covering her frame as she took a step closer to meet his draw. “Your men are hardly in any position to fight.” Some of them were- but very, very few were managing to stay on their feet. Several of them looked close to being sick right then and there.

Deaths rebound was a hell of a kicker. And to show up so soon… She had to wonder how many times they’d all died.

Toki took a deep breath, and exhaled smoke. Ash swirled around her feet, and she shifted on her toes, stroking her boots through it. She was born into this body from the flames- it was almost comforting, in an odd, twisted way, to be surrounded by ash at the place where she might end up dying. “Lets finish this just how it started, Cruelty. Together.” She lifted her blade, and took a stance, motioning him to come for her.

"Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.” Cruelty chuckled, before he stepped forward. He picked up speed at the last meter and swung his sword at her.

She lifted her blade to block his, and then kicked her leg out at him, nailing him harshly in the calf as she danced a few steps away from him. Toki had learned a lot of things fighting with Grillby- and keeping light on your feet was one of them, even if it felt like your feet were made from lead.

She danced out of reach, and then slipped back in for her own strike, swiping at the hand holding the sword in an attempt to wound him and make him drop it.

He grunted at the kick, but it did not make him falter. He blocked her swing with his blade, before pulling his blade back into a ready position and lunging for her shoulder plate. Disabling her seemed to be his idea.

She could read what he wanted to do- and ducked his lunge for her shoulder, lashing out as his blade went over her head. She scored it across his thigh, partially glancing off his armor- but the rest ducked down into soft, squishy flesh, and split it wide open. The heat her magic had pumped into it also put the smell of burning flesh into the air.

Red stained her blade, and she nearly locked up at the sight, flashing back to the time she tore out the man’s throat. She swallowed hard, and tucked and rolled away from him, getting out of range and trying to work on whittling him down. She was tired- but so was he.

Cruelty roared in pain as the blade tore through his leg, but with the adrenaline, the pain was short lived. He swung his sword again, going for her hand the same way he had for Papyrus as he lunged after her, following her swiftly.

Toki’s armor wasn’t thick enough to stop the blade from cutting into her- however, she did have enough time to reinforce her magic into her bones, turning any offense into defense. So when his blade struck down, it sunk past the thin metal plates of her gauntlets, and hit onto the bones of her hand- and bounced off with a noisy clang, and ruined that part of the edge of his blade. There might have been a small chip- but he was human. He was human- and he couldn’t hit hard enough to break her bones. Not with the high defensive stat reinforcing them.

She grinned at him at the realization, all sharp teeth in her crocodile like grin, and swung for his leg again. She kept her magic tucked close to her, reinforcing her bones, and advanced on him.

He tried to dodge this blow but yelled out as it made impact again.
He was starting to back away.

He was losing.

No. No, no, NO. He was not going to lose. He was so close, so, god damned close to wiping out these monsters, to ending them once and for all- he was not going to lose and have to start all over again, to scrimp and scrounge and try to start everything all over from the very beginning.

His face twisted in anger, and he lunged at her again, aiming his sword up high for her unarmored neck- and his boot slipped.

The ash under his foot slipped and gave way, and his eyes flew wide as his arms pin-wheeled, trying to help him gain balance again.

Toki wasn’t one to usually take advantage of someone- let alone someone who slipped and fell in combat- but this… She wasn’t going to pass this up. Not for him- not for Cruelty.

While he was flailing for balance, she lunged forth, and shoved her blade into his throat, driving him down and back into the ground and following him down to ensure he stayed pinned. Hot blood spurted out and up onto her face as she severed an artery- and his face twisted into panic as his hands let go of his sword to claw at the one that had ripped into his neck.

She knelt there, her knees pinning his chest, as the world went silent around them. The humans were silent in a sort of horrified stupor- like they couldn’t believe that their leader had fallen. The monsters… Toki didn’t want to look and see.

She didn’t have time.

She reached out with her hand and tugged on his soul with her magic, drawing it up and out of his chest as his body’s twitches and spasms faded into soft convulsions. She only had a little bit of time before he cracked and broke and scattered like Han had done- so she had to make it count.

“Toki,” Asgore’s voice rose up from out of her field of vision. “The container… Get him to the container.”

“No.” She said. “No. Putting him in the container makes us no better than him. He would have imprisoned you for eternity- and you would do the same to him. Two wrongs do not make a right.”

She tugged out her soul instead, drawing upon the idea she’d had based upon his words. They had been one, once. They had been one- and they could be again. As she drew out his soul, its color was vastly different sort of green than hers. Hers was rich, like an emerald… his was sickly, almost like an acid, and covered in cracks that were so old, she wasn’t sure they would ever heal. She held firm, looking at his stats as his body died. He had a LV of twenty- an attack of two hundred, and a defense of nearly zero. No wonder he had on such thick armor- and why he’d never shown his face in combat before then. This really had been his last stand.

When the tethers holding his soul to his body dimmed and snapped, Toki didn’t hesitate. Despite the sounds of disbelief and protest rising up around her she brought his soul to hers, and pressed them together. A bright flash lit up the area, and she had to close her eyes so it didn’t blind her.

She could feel his soul melding with hers, and the heavy weight of magic suddenly thickening in her body. She felt too heavy, too full… But they were stabilizing. In her mind’s eye, she could see her stats equalizing with his- attack two hundred, defense two hundred, HP four thousand… and her LV… Her LV… God, her LV was equalizing with his too. He might have had a LV of twenty- but now… Now she had a LV of 10.
They balanced out- they equalized, harmonized- back into one.

When the light faded, she managed to stumble upright, limbs heavy and hot and trembling- and her soul larger than ever as it pulsed just in front of her chest. It pulsed before her, half of it the rich emerald that she knew, while the other half was the cracked and acidic green of Cruelty. Not… Not a perfect blend, not by far- but better than nothing. In the center, there was no clean line- the line was blurred and mixed and muddled, and seemed to blend into one interesting shade at the very core.

"T-Toki." Papyrus called on a cracked voice, a moment of fear and worry showing for his wife, "Toki!"

Tenebris quickly moved closer, his eyes widening as he gazed upon the fused result of the trait and counter-trait heart.

"Tokiko... What have you done?"

Toki didn’t answer Tenebris. She turned to face Papyrus and everyone else, a relieved smile on her face even with her husband on the ground. It was over- it was finally, finally over, and he was alive and they could fix him and it would be okay. They had done it, after so, so many loads and so many times of dying. Cruelty’s body lay dead at her feet, and Cruelty himself had been absorbed into her body before his soul could crack and scatter to the wind to be reborn once more. It… Hadn’t been the plan, but leaving him caged in one of those soul tubes? That was no fate for anyone, even one so cruel as Cruelty.

Toki wasn’t going to let herself do something that he would do out of spite.

So- absorbing him had been the only real choice Toki could see. And it worked. Her soul felt full, almost painfully so- but the merging process… it hadn’t hurt at all. Their souls had… almost been easy to merge together. She felt full of magic, too full almost, but it was a feeling she could get used to.

The monsters were celebrating, their cheers and whoops echoing off the stone town walls towering behind them and around them, their voices exuberant even if their bodies were beyond the point of exhaustion now. The trees sent their cheers down over the ruins of the village, over the mob of humans that were whispering among themselves in horror.

Toki brightened considerably as the forces that Cruelty had brought with him backed away, wary now that their leader had died. She opened her mouth to speak to them, to tell them that Cruelty had gone and that their cause was lost. She opened her mouth to tell them to give up and face justice for their crimes, sharp teeth glinting with blood from Cruelty’s slit throat-

But it wasn’t her voice that spoke.

“You… You’re so stupid.”

The voice that pulled from her throat wasn’t her own. It was deeper, richer, with a darker undertone that nearly gave it a rasp. From her throat, Cruelty spoke, despite Toki’s best attempts at stopping him. His soul burned in hers- it was their soul now, and Toki realized her folly.

Souls were aware when they were contained. There wasn’t any reason that Cruelty wasn’t aware within her.

Her hands moved of her own accord, and clenched up at her chest. “Yesss,” he purred from her throat, “So very stupid. There was a reason, dear Kindness, that we never merged back then. Magic gave us two personalities- made our souls fuller, so we would long to be one, but never be able to. I
never knew why- I guess this is it. Sharing a body- what a petty, petty thing… But you just did what we were forbidden to do. And guess what?” Cruelty smiled, and it wasn’t a pretty thing coming from her teeth. “We now have the powers of Balance again. Or equal to them. But… you don’t know how to handle them, do you, Kindness?”

Toki’s sockets stretched in her obvious panic, and she struggled to take control again. She managed to catch sight of the horrified monsters staring at her, and gave them a panicked look, a silent plea to run and escape while they could.

Cruelty surged within her, taking full control of her body with his anger overpowering her. She might have been the dominant soul, but she was young, so young, compared to his ageless rage. “But I do. It’s been so, so long since I used the last drops of my magic… but still I remember how. I know what to do. We’ll reincarnate, Kindness, like we always have. Do you feel that pressure in our bones? You feel that tightness, fit to burst? We are so full, Kindness. So very, very full. What happens… if we add more power to that?”

Cruelty turned her body back to his people, and a wicked smile tugged up her teeth. “My loyal soldiers. You’ve served the cause so, so well… And now, you will help our cause even more.” He purred.

Her mouth cracked open further, and her magic- his magic, their magic- reached out to all of the souls. Hundreds and hundreds of human souls were tugged forth, to the extreme panic of their owners. There was a flex of their metaphorical magical muscles, and all of the souls jolted forwards, surrounded by the green color of their magic. The color drew out of the souls, flooding into the barriers and leaving behind a hollowed out gray shell in the shape of a soul.

Bodies dropped by the hundreds, every man and woman dropping dead where they stood as the power and life in their souls were physically yanked from their husks. The gray husks, once empty, crumbled into colorless dust and blew away with the last breaths of their hosts.

The soul colors, a whole rainbow of colors in every beautiful shade under the sun, moved with the motion of her hand. Cruelty raised her hands and clasped them together- and all of the souls crushed into one dark, black ball. The power from them was immense and heavy, so, so heavy.

The air under the mass of magic heated, scorching over the stone by the weight of the magic. It scoured over her bones as Cruelty urged it closer, and Toki wanted nothing more than to get rid of it and give them all their souls back. Cruelty betrayed all of them. All of his people- and that rankled inside of Toki.

“And with all of you,” He purred from within her, “With all of you, we’ll flatten the entirety of Ebott County, and bring Mount Ebott down to nothing but a mole hill. All of the monsters, inside and out- they will be nothing more than dust in the wake of our explosion.”

And then Cruelty swallowed the black orb.

Cruelty reached out, and took hold of something she had only heard Frisk describe. The save, load, and reset buttons appeared to her, as their power overshot that of the child hovering at the back of the battlegrounds. He laughed, voice loud and shaking with the power that was settling into her. “Ha! Now, Determination, this is mine. The power to save, to load, to reset- this is mine, and I’m not giving it back. You can’t cheat me out of this victory now, you nasty little pest.” He shattered the reset button with a blow, and reached out to hit the save button.

He made it to the button- and shortly after it saved, he reached for the load, just to see what it would do.
The magic didn’t settle into her body gently like the merge of souls had. It blew into her bones painfully, the force of it blowing the clasps of her armor off of her body and fractures appeared along the surface of her bones as the sheer power of far, far too many souls flooded her. The pain wasn’t something Cruelty was prepared to handle, and Toki surged back into control several seconds too late as he fled back away from the pain.

She screamed as she was thrown headlong into it.

Her bones buckled, shattering and melting under the pressure of the magic literally blowing out of her. Her arm melted away, but reformed shortly after. Her body was breaking down and reforming too quickly for her to follow, every moment of it an extended agony. The weight of the magic sunk the ground in around them, and Toki, weighted down by the amount of magic that had been sucked from the souls, collapsed onto her knees.

They came in pulses. It didn’t start out slow- it started fast and hard, each pulse tearing some other part of her into nothing before the magic reformed her bones again. It was pain and it was agony- but Toki could feel it building up in her chest. This mass of magic, dark and promising bad intentions, was growing and getting denser and denser within her.

Vaguely through her ribs, she could see thick and oily tendrils of sickly magic, thousands of lives and souls trapped within her and mounting their power. It was a sick blob, and she retched with pain as it thrashed inside of her.

Her ribs cracked from the inside, and Toki heaved out magic that was thick and black and writhing like it was alive. The ash at her feet blew away, and the black mess began melting the soil with the caustic toxicity that was trapped within the inside of her body and trying desperately to escape.

‘It’s going to explode,’ Cruelty’s voice purred inside of her. ‘It’s going to explode, and decimate everything. The power from a single human soul is the equivalent of thousands of monster souls. We’re a living nuclear bomb. We are going to explode beautifully, Kindness. I can see your thoughts, I feel your memories- oh yes, your pain is going to be glorious when you kill everyone you’ve come to know and love. Your children, your husband, your brothers, your monster heathen family- all of them will die by our hand. It will be the most glorious revenge I could have ever conceived.’

“Run!” Toki cried to the only living things still standing in the clearing. She clutched at herself, trying to expunge the power as much as she could. She couldn’t do it fast enough, couldn’t shed it off fast enough. It was too much, too fast, too powerful-

She was going to explode, and there was nothing she could do to stop it.

But… But Toki could hide it.

There had to be some place to hide it. She needed some place to tuck herself away, where she couldn’t hurt anyone with the violent death she was about to meet. Toki plunged backwards into herself, and forced her way into Cruelty’s memories.

‘What? What are you doing?’

She delved deeper. He knew everything there was to know about Balance- about why they were torn asunder, about how they became what they did. He mentioned that they wanted to cross the universes, that she could see through what he called the void, into the other universes that were all connected by core threads.
‘No! No, stop, Kindness! Stop!’

That was it.

It was dark- she could see glimpses of it, from the time long before, that had remained in his memories. It was dark, so dark and so deep. It was an endless plane of darkness, but it served the purpose of bridging the gap between universes.

The void. The void- the expanse between worlds- that could hold the explosion with no detriment to any of the verses. That… That could work.

“That was it.” It was Papyrus- she could hear him, and see him trying to reach out to her. He seemed to be struggling against the air- the magic that was pulsing off of her in waves. “Toki!” His desperate cry of her name reached her soul. He tried teleporting closer, but the energy pouring off of her blasted him back and singed his armor- and his bad leg collapsed and sent him sprawling once more with an agonized cry.

The pulsing waves were coming faster and faster- she didn’t have enough time to say what she wanted to say…!

Tears beaded in her sockets. If she stayed, everyone would die. If she fell into the void… There was no chance she could find her way out. “I love you,” her voice was warped, and ethereal as the magic made it ricochet through the air. “I love you, I love you, I love you forever and always, and I’m so sorry. Take care of everyone for me- Take care of our children. I love you, all of you.”

“Toki!” Papyrus was desperate- her words reached him clearly, despite the magical pressure deafening nearly everyone there.

Toki simply smiled at him. Her love for him gave her the strength she needed, that last final boost to make her decision and ignore the screaming man trying to fight her for control of the body they shared. She reached out behind her- and tore open reality. She dug, deeper and deeper through layers and layers of realities and realms near the surface, where all manner of creatures could be summoned and called. She ignored them- she had to find it. It was-

Darker, yet darker.

When she found it, she tore it wide open, the edges wobbling and trying to close, but unable to fight the sheer magical pressure that tore it asunder. It was black and writhing, alive and oily and dark, so very, very dark.

“NO!” There was a petrified shriek from Tenebris, and he seemed caught between wanting to bolt as far away from the terrifying darkness that was reaching out from the rip in reality, and trying to reach for Toki even though there was no way to get close to her.

As he began to try and move for her, Toki leaned back-

And Toki let herself slide willingly back into the void.

The black expanse of space shut tightly behind her, and suddenly the crippling magical pressure was gone.

But so was Toki.

And at that moment, one could swear the mountain itself screamed with the voices of all those who witnessed as the one they loved disappeared into the place that never gave anyone back.
“TOKI!”
Chapter 91

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Well, what did you think of that, hm? 8) What a good cliffhanger that was~ ;) Got some healthy responses out of you all. Heheheh~

ALSO. PLEASE READ AND NOTE THIS. I DID ART FOR THIS CHAPTER. I DID THIS MONTHS AND MONTHS AGO BACK BEFORE MY SAI PROGRAM WAS RETURNED TO ME. SO ITS SHITTY SHITTY ART. BUT IT IS WHAT TOKI LOOKS LIKE NOW. THERE IS NSFW IN THIS PHOTO SET. SO DON’T SCROLL PAST THE FIRST ONE IF YOU AREN’T OF AGE.

Silverwing Notes: WELL. Wasn't that a fun way to end the chaos! LOL JK WE JUST GETTIN STARTED FAM.

Everything was black and cold and so, so heavy. If her power was a nuclear explosion- then this…
This was a million of them. It compressed around her, pressing her tightly into a shape that she didn’t recognize. It shaped and reshaped her, working her in an endless darkness with a painless touch that warped her bones and poisoned her body.

Every breath she took, she breathed it in, and it was thick and choking, cloying. It filled every surface of her, inside and out- and Toki had no space left not invaded by the darkness of the void.

But it was dark… it was… comforting… it was almost a solace after the pain she had experienced prior. She didn’t want to be here, though. There was… There was no place to go though. She wouldn’t… She couldn’t see her children now- she couldn’t see Papyrus. The last vision she had of him was his face stretched in horror, as he reached for her.

At least she’d gotten to tell him that she loved him and her children. So there was that small mercy, she supposed. She at least got to tell him that.

“At least the void is peaceful,” She murmurs to herself, her words muffled by the thick darkness that choked her existence and kept her confined.

‘Peaceful you say. Tch.’

Oh. Right... One could almost forget how she now shared her mind with the maniac who had terrorized her family so relentlessly.

She sighed, making a burble of darkness crawl past her teeth. “It doesn’t hurt. It’s… It’s so heavy here. It outweighs the pain from out there. From all the soul’s who’s power you sucked into us. Including… Including the power of Corruption.” She grimaced. “He was there too, wasn’t he…? You stole his soul power.”

‘I wonder if I did. He was as cowardly as Cowardice. I'm sure at first sign of bad news, he ran for
his petty, pathetic life.’

“He might not have run if you’d been as loyal to them as they were to you. They were dying for you.” She murmured tiredly. “They did die for you and for your cause— for what you and Corruption made them believe. And you… You turned around, and you sucked all the power… all of their lives… into my body.” She chuckled a tired and quiet laugh. “You know what… It doesn’t matter any more, Cruelty. It doesn’t matter. We’re… We’re together now. What did you say? Ashes to ashes, dust to dust? It is as it should be. We’re one once more.” She sighs. “And we’re never getting out of here.”

‘Heh… You really don’t remember anything, do you, Kindness…?’ Cruelty chuckled quietly, before he sighed. ‘Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. My tears to your tears, my blood to your blood.’ he began, ‘Take my life with you, to find the things we left behind.’

That struck a chord in her, and something inside her half of the soul pulsed against his own. She inhaled shakily, and the darkness flitting against her core. “An uncertain path to the future, revealing a past imperfect.” The words came unbidden, from somewhere deep inside of her. “Flickers in the mirror, glitter and swirl, darkly fading into twisted reflections, blurring the lines between you and me.

One could almost hear the smile on his voice ‘Yes, that’s it. You do remember, if at least a little of what we shared...’

“I don’t… know where that came from.” She whispers softly. “I don’t… It just… I dunno… my soul sometimes knows things that I don’t. It remembers, even if I don’t.”

‘Ha ha ha...’ He chuckled quietly at her words, before he went quiet.

The darkness pulsed around them, and Toki grimaced as an uncomfortable feeling flooded her soul.

“Kindness and Cruelty. It is good to see you again.” The darkness spoke to them both. “I’m afraid you can’t linger here. It is not your fate to linger here and remain as you are. You have something important to do for me, Kindness. You have something very important to do— something that requires all of what you have with you now. You’ll find out what that is when the time is right. I have given shape to what you need to hold the power of which you now possess— there is a block as well, to keep the vast ocean of it under lock and key.”

“A block…?” She blinked, slightly dazed. The voice booming through her head was everything and nothing, and it made her head hurt just to listen to it.

“Yes.” The darkness spoke. “A block. Do not break it, Kindness, nor you, Cruelty, or you will undo all that I have done. Now it is time… Make your peace.”

“Make my peace…?” Toki rasped.

“Make your peace.”

She stirred, body starting to ache— when there was a pull behind her navel. She shrieked, and cried out, body twisting as the darkness began to pulse and twist and warp around her— and then it began to pull her, faster and faster and faster and deeper, down and down into a place that felt even darker—

And then there was light, as the darkness opened up and spat her out.

She twisted, falling through cold, cold air, and spread her hands out to stop her fall— though there was no stopping it. It was only hundreds of feet of falling— but there was snow down below.
Her… Her hand? It… it was a hand. Not bone. With curved talons and fingers, cuffed with a pale link of green fur around her wrist. Something spread on her back, trying to catch the air, but she couldn’t- she didn’t know how to do it-

And she hit the snow, which was just as pale as her pale skin- and she knew only pain and cold.

She sank a bit as she came to meet the icy snow, having made a comical sound one could imagine hearing when one in a cartoon landed in snow so deep.

'Well... that's one thing I can cross off of my bucket list. Oh wait...' Glad to hear Cruelty was reacting with shitty humor. ‘Real glad you’re in control right now, I can't feel anything.'

‘Oh shut up, Cruelty.’ It might have been thick, fluffy snow- but it hurt. Her body was durable, but her skin- her skin- would be mottled with bruises within a couple hours. She struggled upright, finding a foreign weight on her back, and a strange shape to her legs. “That… What happened to my body?” She tried to suck in a breath through her nose- and choked. She didn’t have a nose. “Where’s my nose? Oh my god, I don’t have a nose. What the fuck. What the fuck happened? Where am I? Oh my god, everything hurts.”

Standing upright was doable with the help of one of the numerous trees, and she took a moment to crane behind her, having to look past the fluffy mane of green hair she seemed to have around her neck.

Wings. Big, massive, green insect wings. She had them. Holy shit. Holy shit she had wings. “… This isn’t my body,” She whispers. “This is not my body.” Her hand comes up to her skull and brushes over it, and she nearly stabs herself with a hidden stinger in the green fur of her wrist. At least she still has her scar- she can recognize that about herself, even if it’s covered in what feels like short warm fur. Her horns… her horns feel different though. Much, much different.

Wait. Wait one moment. That was…

That was one too many hands.

Toki glances down.

She had four arms, under very bare and naked breasts. She had two larger ones, broader, stronger, set in the place of usual arms, with a smaller, daintier pair tucked just under those. They’re both identical, down to the green tuft of fur, and the stingers on the insides.

Panic wants to hit her- but dizziness does first. “Oh god… Okay… Okay, I need… I need to go… find shelter. No wonder I’m so cold. Okay.” She manages to stagger a few steps, dual sets of arms keeping her upright, and works her way through the forest. “I can… I can panic later. I need to get home. I need… I need to find home.” She didn’t know where she was. A glance to the sky showed a ceiling as dark as the night, despite the fact that the snow reflected the light like it was daytime. It felt like daytime, anyways.

There was snow and thick trees everywhere- but she had no idea where this was. It was… it was summer where she was, heading towards the middle of it actually. Where was she?

‘Cruelty? I know you’re going to be dick about it, but… Can you see through my eyes? Do you know where we are?’

'Oh wow, am I so obvious?' He was going to be snide whether she called him out on it or not so he ended up being so anyways. ‘I can see through your eyes, and then some... I haven't a clue where we are, however. Whether it helps or it doesn't, I don't care. I think I'm starting to prefer you back when
you were a walking pile of bones. You would have been easier to kill like that.’

‘You’re like the malicious shoulder devil that no one ever wants to hear, so yes, you’re obvious.’ Toki grouses as she makes her way. Walking comes easier than expected- like becoming a skeleton for the first time, she found extra instincts there that hadn’t been there before. They were tinged with a dark, sticky magic, and seemed to be stuck to her consciousness. The more she touched them, the more they entangled with her, and became a part of her.

It was unsettling. Deeply, deeply unsettling. What… What had the void- What had MAGIC done to her?

Toki can’t help but snort as she listens to him. ‘You realize that I’m the one alive, and you’re the one dead- so I’m pretty sure me being a walking bag of bones has little to do with me being easier to kill. You lost- and took out your whole army too, in a failed attempt to kill everyone. But I still beat you- I stuck us in the Void, and it might have… done something to me, but it worked. You lost- and we’re one now. You can’t hurt monsters ever again.’ She exhales shakily, and comes to a stop among several roots. Her vision swirls, and her legs throb. It takes her a moment to look down- and realize that some of the fuzz coating her ankles is not just fuzz.

She’s bleeding? She’s bleeding green from several splits in her pale white skin, no doubt from the fall to the snow- no matter how soft it was, it was still a long fall and she was a being of flesh now. How… How strange. How positively strange… She hasn’t had actual blood in so long… It feels so weird. She’s left a little trail of droplets all through the trees as she had shuffled along. She shakily breathes through her mouth, cycling air through her teeth, and makes to stumble on.

Her legs collapse however, and she hits the ground again on her knees. She hadn’t made it all that far from where she fell… or so she thought. She wasn’t sure. Looking far from her wasn’t easy.

A rolling cough escaped her, and green flecked the ground. What…? Oh… Oh no, this… This wasn’t the place to go through that. She’d… She’d die out here in the cold. But… Where?

The tree next to her had a thick root system, with a small inlet in it. She could… Burrow? No. She didn’t have the strength.

But- there was a wall of rocks not far from here. She could see a small alcove. Toki could make it. Toki could do it. She hauled herself up, her mouth opening in a heated pant. She tried to gain her feet again, but the ground swam too much before her eyes. So on all fours- or all sixes, technically, worked best.

Her larger pair of arms supported her easily, while the smaller pair steadied her when she wobbled. She made it to the alcove, coughing up mouths of blood and blinking green out of her eyes. Toki pauses to vomit up a stomach full of blood- she was bleeding there too?- and then crawls away from the mess. She managed to shove her way inside of the cave. It looked… it looked like it should have fit, but it was a tighter fit than she’d have thought. Or she was just really tired. She crawled into the stone cave, and curled up as tightly as she could. Shivers set in- partly from fever, partly from not.

She curled her dual set of arms around herself, settling on her sides. Her wings, despite being insect-based in nature, seemed to be fairly flexible. It allowed her to drape one over her side, and use it as a sort of blanket.

It was… Going to be a long time in waiting it out.

Outside, the wind started to kick up into a snowstorm.
'What the hell is happening to you?! Kindness!' Cruelty snarled out to her, a bit freaked out about what just happened. 'I demand an explanation!' 

'It’s called Death’s Rebound.’ She responds, tucking her face into her arm and closing her eyes. She didn’t have any cloth to wipe away the blood- so this was the best she’d have to do. ‘It happens when you die, but you’re… loaded back. You know the reset button you broke for ‘Determination’, as you called Frisk? Well, Frisk can control the resets and loads- and they’re the reason we were all exhausted. I don’t know how many times we died- but… we died, and they loaded. And now we have to deal with Death’s Rebound. Which is going to make us wish for death, trust me.’ 

Her breathing grew ragged and she choked, coughing up another spattering of green ooze. He growled at that, but he heard something through her ears. Unable to physically shut her up, he simply started with hissing at her in her head. ‘Shut up! I hear something! Or... Someone!’ 

‘Maybe it’s someone who can help…?’ But who would help a naked, hemorrhaging monster in the woods? Particularly one who… well, she didn’t exactly think she looked very friendly. Toki tried to quiet down, but she couldn’t stop choking. She had lungs now- actual lungs and not phantom lungs that kept trying to fill with blood, and she had to clear them out or she would drown. 

She couldn’t muster the strength to move, regardless, even as her coughing came to a stop. The wind was chill against her back and wings. She managed to tilt her head a little bit, one of her strangely angled horns catching on her arms as she angled so one of her bleeding eyes could creak open and peer at the entrance of the cave.

The form looked large, and rather fluffy. It gave a quiet growl as it started to enter the cave, shaking off snow before lifting it’s head, which seemed smaller than the rest of it. However, the growling stopped, but the form began to stalk closer.

It stopped partway into the darkness of the cave, before there was rustling from within the shape.

The sound of a lighter sparking then could be heard, accompanied by small sparks before a flame took, revealing a pale white face belonging to a form bundled up in a very warm-looking coat, large purple eyes looking upon Toki with surprise, "Oh my goodness..."

'... The beast!?'

Relief flooded her immediately. She couldn’t… see him all that well- but she knew those eyes. Those large, purple eyes belonged to only one monster she knew- along with that voice. She knew him. “Tenebris,” she rasped quietly, before she broke into a fit of coughing again. Her wings bristled but settled shortly, and she shivered, her pale, bare skin already starting to take on a greenish tinge from the bruising she sustained from her fall. Toki couldn’t reach him- but she… She was found. Tenebris had found her.

But… Why was he speaking English? He spoke it miraculously, as if he had been born knowing it, or just had a really long time to learn it. Longer than her Tenebris had, that was for sure.

His pupils thinned in surprise as she spoke, before they widened again slowly and he set the lighter aside as to provide a bit of lighting, as weak as it was, "You poor thing... absolutely miserable...” He came closer, shifting in his coat in the shadows and suddenly she was warm.

"What could have brought such a poor condition to one such as yourself...?" As concerned and eager for an answer as he was, the question was obviously rhetorical as he examined her as best he could,
"You look beaten within an inch of your life..."

He had draped his coat over her- or something close to it, she thought. It was warm- god, it was warm, and it felt heavenly, even though she was fevered and it would do nothing to bring her temperature down. She shivered again, and turned as best she could to see him better. A fresh drop of blood rolled from her eye and down her face, and she panted, before a wet cough spattered more blood from between her teeth.

One such as herself? Wha- He didn’t recognize her. Wait- Wait no. Her Tenebris didn’t speak English as his primary tongue.

Toki’s eyes closed, and she seemed to deflate a little bit. She sucked in a breath through her teeth. Maybe… Maybe things had just changed. There was no telling. Who knows what had happened while she’d been in the void? “I… fell.” It took effort to switch over to English- but she was proud that she did so without too heavy of an accent. “I fell a long ways. Where am I? It’s so… So cold, Tenebris…”

He tensed at that, and then he sighed gently and reached out, setting a hand on the side of her cheek.

'It’s touching me! Make it stop touching me now!

"You are in the deeper parts of Snowdin Forest." He answered, "But please, try to relax and rest, I’ll get you somewhere safe by the time you’re awake." He told her gently.

‘Oh grow up, Cruelty. He’s not going to hurt us.’ She sniped to her ghostly pest. Her eyes closed at his touch, fevered skin burning up. “Snowdin…?” She queried. “But… I was… Nara Village…”

She murmured, trying to sit up. Sitting up proved to be a bad attempt to make, and she swooned right back down onto her forearms. She groaned softly, making a quiet, distressed sound in the back of her throat.

"Easy... easy." He soothed gently. "Rest. Please... I’ll be able to help you better once the storm passes, but you need to rest."

“All… Alright…” She shivered under the coat all the same, and eyed him quietly for a moment. “Are… are you going to be okay? It’s… It’s very cold… you usually get cold really easy…”

Bleeding out of her eyes, spewing blood from her eyes and mouth, and she still worried about others. That was something she was glad hadn’t changed with the addition of Cruelty on her soul.

He didn't answer at first, and then he smiled, and shook his head. "Don't you worry your beautiful little head about me. I'll be okay." He told her. "Rest."

'Flattering from an old man, makes me want to retch.'

‘Good thing you can’t, so keep your retching feelings to yourself.’ Her stomach was woozy, no doubt filling with blood again- but there wasn’t much to be done for it. She wasn’t strong enough to get out of the cave- and she didn’t want to hurl blood on either of them. She nodded quietly, and tucked her head into her arms. She curled them up, her breasts sliding slightly across the stone and making her wince, and then settled down with a faint noise. "If you get cold, take your jacket." She murmurs. “Fire magic… has its uses.” She just wasn’t sure how it would respond, given the volume of magic she could feel at her disposal, but she’d use it if she needed to. She shuddered, coughing again, but let her body settle down.

She didn’t really sleep, so much as she dozed. Solid sleep was hard when she was fighting nausea, and constantly coughing up blood.
I'll make you regret saying that.

Thankfully for Toki, the shock of the cold, even with the offering of the jacket, allowed her to pass out.

What she didn't expect, however, was to wake in what looked like a hospital room.

"..."

The room was dim, she could guess it was intentional, but it was also warm... really warm... or... at least she was. Shifting herself had her discovering she was draped in a blanket that was radiating heat. Oh god it felt good compared to the snowstorm she passed out in.

She took a breath, before wincing and immediately regretting it as a wave of nausea made it feel like there was more than just air wanting to come back out.

"Careful... You're in what I could only consider a critical condition." His voice again. It was like a beacon in the darkness, so to speak- but it spoke with a different tone than she was used to.

Her gaze searched until she discovered who had saved her, and for a moment she almost called the name of her father in law again. But to see him again... she could only guess it impossible. His tone, the way he spoke to her... The youth she could see in his face. It made it impossible.

Toki took a shallow breath, hissing through teeth, and closed her eyes again as grief hit her. She wasn’t home- that wasn’t... That wasn’t her Tenebris, was it? The closer she looked, the younger he looked. He looked so, so much younger than her Papa did. He looked... Hell, he looked closer to his Sons age than the age he actually was.

Her eyes felt sticky and crusted, like the worst case of eye-sleep she had ever had. However, she knew that wasn’t the case. Death's Rebound meant that was blood- and the stickiness meant that there was still fresh blood rolling down her face.

She coughed, nearly retched, and shakily tried to sit up. "It’s a temporary condition," she rasped. She had a fever, she noticed. Alongside the bruises marring her front from her fall, there was a green flush that had lit up her moon-pale skin, and had nothing to do with embarrassment at her very, very naked state.

"And if you know it's length of effect, you know whether or not it is contagious, correct?" He asked.

That was telltale in itself. Her Tenebris knew what this was, and what the symptoms were. He had lived them, intimately, before. "It's not contagious," she coughs, angling her head so she doesn’t spatter blood on the blanket. The bed gets a fresh coat of green however. "Its... It's called Deaths Rebound." Toki rasps to him, trying to clear her mouth. "Probably... Probably a week. Maybe... Maybe longer. Maybe two. I don't know. It might be longer." She hadn't ever cheated death that many times. "But it'll end, I promise. With me alive." She says that pointedly, because it did look like she was quite looking like she was dying.

He watched for a moment, then his shoulders lowered from their tense position and he came closer, "This knowledge is critical, and I'm thankful you know as much as you do, or this process would not be as easy." He told her as he held up an empty bucket to her. "Here." He set it in her grasp before he sighed. "I will not ask too many questions of you right now; you must get some rest. I will do what I can to help you in the meantime, but rest is your most valuable asset as of now,"
The bucket is settled in her lap, and she holds the edge with one hand. Her stomach is twisting, but not ready yet. "Thanks, Tenebr- ah... Thank you." She coughs. "Unfortunately, I'm not one of the ones lucky enough to be unconscious during this process. Rest is few and far between." She glances up at him with weak, feverish eyes. For all her weakness, the power thrumming through her being has her lucid. Or her fever just isn't high enough to make her thoughts blur. "Please. Feel free to ask what you want of me. I'm sure you must be very curious about a lot of things." She coughs.

He tilted his head slowly at first, then he sighed, "I am... But it can wait... I can offer you a dose of anesthetic to help you sleep, or if you think slumber is impossible, a moderate painkiller that might make you drowsy."

"I..." She swallowed, closing her eyes briefly. "You seem pretty dead set on making me sleep." She tilts her head to regard him, her breath rasping from her lungs in wet gasps. "I... Guess a painkiller wouldn't be bad. I feel like I've been hit by a truck." Which he had. Well... His other self had. She wondered if he even knew what a truck was.

Her wings hinged up against her back as her stomach gave a lurch, and she groaned as she leaned over the bucket. It didn't take long before she vomited- a thick wave of blood sliding forth into the bucket. God, that was awful. Her mane of hair flopped faintly into her face. And one of her smaller hands shakily leaned up to push it out of the way.

"There's no worse feeling than feeling this sick while forced to stay conscious. I was trying to be considerate and offer what I thought was best. Forgive me if I was wrong." He muttered dryly. "If you'll allow me a moment, I will prepare the painkiller."

Toki finds her first of many uses of having more than just two hands. Two hold the bucket, one holds her hair, and the other is left to give him a thumbs up. Her mouth is too busy purging her stomach of the blood it had retained, and she's struggling not to choke on it.

The thumbs up would have to suffice for approval until he got back. She'd apologize for ruffling his feathers when he returned.

He returned a short while later with a syringe and cleared his throat as he approached, "This won't hurt a bit," he told her gently, "I've also added an agent that should help with your nausea." he told her, "Might I see one of your arms?"

She had finished purging her systems by then, and had set the empty bucket on the floor by the bed. When he returned, Toki turned to him and presented one of her arms, giving him a lopsided smile as she folded the second pair sloppily in her lap. She had given him one of the longer ones, leaving the smaller ones curled in her lap. "The nausea aid would be nice... I'm sorry about my comment earlier. I'm just... Not quite all there. I'm not usually that harsh. And, ah, yeah... Needles always hurt."

"It's quite alright, my dear. All is forgiven." He purred gently as he took her arm, "I'll do this real quick, then I'll leave you be, if you'd like."

Toki lifted the smaller arm that was on the same side that he was going to inject into, and used it to cover a cough. Her other arms kept the blanket up around her chest so she didn't flash him. "I... Would not mind company. As I said before, I don’t mind if you ask some questions. You don't have to ask them all at once... You're kind of entitled to them, helping a stranger who's name you don't even know."

He hesitated as he saw her second pair of arms, as they had now made themselves more prominent, before he shook his head and turned back to the task on hand, he found a vein in her arm after long enough, and began to push the needle in...
Only...

It didn't break the skin....

"What the..."

The thick white skin of her arm simply flexed under the needle, but didn't give way. In fact, the needle seemed close to bending from the pressure he was exerting on it to slide it into her arm.

Toki glanced at him as his befuddlement reached her. She cleared her throat. "What's wrong?" She didn't look at the needle- no one in their right mind could look at a needle sticking out of themselves. He was right though. It was completely painless. Which... It shouldn't have been.

Her eyes flicked down. ".... Oh. Ah... Shit, sorry. I forgot about that." That was probably her defense. She'd never had to deal with needles being hooked up as a skeleton, since she hadn’t had flesh. But this... Oh goodness. She took a shaky moment to focus, and lowered her defenses.

The slightly bent needle sunk into her flesh, making her wince. "Painless huh...?"

"I'm sorry, I had not realized you had such a powerful epidermal layer." He apologized, "I would have prepared a stronger needle."

"Ah... It's not my skin that's the problem. I forgot to drop my defense for you. It... Toughens my skin." She pulled that right out of her suddenly very fleshy ass, and she’s proud to say that it sounded like the damn truth. Toki exhales through her teeth and gives him a shaky smile. The painkiller was already numbing her arm, a coolness that was spreading through her veins like heavenly ice. Well, except that it made her feel chilled. Her magic churned, trying to warm her in response. "No harm, no foul. Its okay."

"I understand, it's a good asset... should I be fighting you." He chuckled quietly, "I'll make sure to use thicker needles next time you need a shot, you're only getting away with this once, my dear." His chuckle ended with a soft snort.

She laughed just faintly at that, her soul panging with quiet longing for her Tenebris back home. For her mate. For her children. They surely were not here... And who knew if she would ever get to see them again? She would... She would have to see about opening the void again- about going back. If she was... if she was stable now, she could probably make it back. She just needed to access the magic, and use it to force her way to the void. "We'll see, Tenebris, we'll see." She shifted a bit and laid down, her arm bleeding only a little from the needle mark. For the most part, she was starting to hurt less. Now only her soul hurt.

"Mmh... Before I forget... How do you know my name?" His tail rattled with agitation as he spoke to her. "Please answer me honestly... I really haven't the patience for playing hard-to-get with this topic." His arms folded behind his back, and his shoulders squared and straightened as his gaze darkened.

"Playing hard to get is my favorite game." She rasps, the familiar tease falling instinctively from her throat before she could stop it. She swallowed however and closed her eyes for a moment, taking a deep breath. This wasn't her Tenebris. She needed to remember that. Teasing him like she knew him would probably make him hostile. Toki took a few deep breaths to collect herself, and give her a moment to think of what to say. If only she could slip off into sleep and leave this as a conversation for after dreaming. Dreaming. Dreams. Wait... "Dreams." She answers, lying to him through her teeth. She couldn’t exactly tell him she was from another world where she married his son and had two beautiful children. "I've had dreams. I've seen... Things. A lot of things. Many, many things and
places and people. One of those was..." She coughed. "You, Tenebris."

He growled as she sasssed him, not taking it as well as his counterpart might and his tail gave an angered shutter, but as she explained himself his gaze shifted, and from fading aggression came a gleam of curiosity, "Dreams...?" he questioned, before his shoulders lowered from their stance, and his head rose once more, "What kind of Dreams?" He inquired.

"You're going to have to get used to the teasing. I do it to everyone that I'm familiar with." She'd seen him bristling at her like a cat that had been dropped in water, and had sent him a singularly unimpressed look at his visible threat. For once, Toki was pretty sure she could handle herself if she pissed him off. A hacking cough had her trembling, and she cleared her dry mouth as best she could. "Dreams. I see things. People, places. Other worlds, mostly." She answers. "I've seen you before. That's why I know your name."

"My pack-born name..." He corrected her. "Since I lost my pack, I've lived with the name 'Tenne'. I do not share this information lightly, and I must ask you keep it secret, as I have done for this long."

He then sighed, "Speaking of pack... what caused you to be separated from yours? Such terrible damage... Do Insectis not aid their kin as Drake or Avari would?" The tall purple eyed monster inquired.

"I'm Tokiko... Nara." It physically hurt to slip back into using her old name. She had been a Gaster since she had gotten married, and had loved being one. But... Listing herself as one would probably be bad, depending on his last name here. "Just call me Toki though." She sighs. "I'll keep your pack name quiet."

His question makes her flinch, and her wings draw tight to her. What excuse could she give...? He obviously knew more about his kind than she did, but... Well... She wasn't sure. Pack... Pack... Hive stood out more to her. "My... Hive and I. We were... In a big battle. I... I took damage to save my hive, and I was... Successful in doing so. However, I was sent here as a result. There... There is no way back to them that I know of." She murmurs softly, a soft, sad buzzing droning on low in her throat. That was the sound of a broken Queen who had lost more than just her hive.

"Sent here...?" he questioned, "What do you mean by that...?" though he did notice her sounds and detected the sorrow of it, and he slowly came closer, his posture fading as he came to offer her consolation with a hand on her shoulder.

"I was... Taken." She said. "I am not from here. I was taken through somewhere dark." The hand on her shoulder receives a gentle pat of thanks. She wants to let her touch linger, to savor the comforting feelings it could give- but she doesn't. She is lying to him. She doesn't deserve them, despite her very real grief. "It was dark and so heavy, seemingly empty but so full. It just... The darkness just was." She can't explain the Void better than that. "And then it dropped me here. It was... A long fall. Our wings are slow to respond if we are stunned, and... Well... I didn't have enough time to recover before I hit the ground." Once more pulled out of her ass- but she had seen enough stunned bees to assume she might be the same. Who knew.

He listened to the clever lie and tilted his head slowly, taking her words to mind and seeming to believe them, "I see... how... strange..." he sighed, before he looked to her wings, "thankfully you did not crush them when you landed." He mentioned.

"I landed on my face." She grimaced, wings twitching under his gaze. She could see belief starting to take root in his gaze, and felt guilt twisting her belly. If not for the anti-nausea agent in the painkiller, she probably would have vomited. "If not for my absurd defense, I probably would be a pile of broken bones and flesh bits."
"A good thing indeed... it kept you alive long enough for me to find you." he chuckled as he patted her shoulder gently, before moving away to give her personal space once more. "I've already started a medical dossier, if that's alright. just to have this... interesting disease down."

"Very true." She agrees lightly. Toki glanced at him as he stepped away, and sighed softly. "You shouldn't see any more cases of it popping up." Not... Not if she was still in possession of the save and load button that Cruelty had taken from Frisk. She had no intention of hurting anyone- so there was that. "But... If it does, I don't mind helping you with them." She had experience with the 'disease', after all. Toki swallowed thickly and felt like her mouth was full of iron filled sand. "Is there anything you need to add to my dossier while I'm coherent?"

"I suppose..." he collected a pen and paper and set up the paper on a clipboard, "You said your name was Tokiko Nara? Is there any special way of spelling it?"

She did suppose her name was definitely foreign to him, given the strict English he was speaking. "T-o-k-i-k-o N-a-r-a." She spells out easily for him. "It's spelled exactly how it sounds like it's pronounced." Toki shifts, and carefully turns onto her side. The blanket shifts, exposing a bruised but milky expanse of her hip and thigh from the strange shape to her legs. She needed to practice walking when she was strong enough... Or he was going to find out her lie right off the bat. "You can just call me Toki though, Tenne."

"N-a-r-a. Okay." He then moved his pen to the next part of the page, "How old are you?"

Her first instinct was to fire off the fact that she was thirty four- but then she remembered that blaster beasts and boss monsters aged differently. She swallowed and couldn't recall the exact age lineup, but... She'd just wing it. "Three hundred and forty." She says lightly, hoping she hadn't just said she was an old hag, or that she was a young sprout. "What about you, Tenne? How old are you?"

"... I am Three-hundred ninety four." He answered, jotting her answer down on the paper

Older than her, which was to be expected. She shifts her arms, and grunts as the blanket falls. Her hands scrabble for it, urging it back up to hide under the warmth again. "I see. Not much older than me then."

"Indeed so, only half a century." he replied, before he looked at her, "I... need not guess your species. Though if you don't mind I'd like a look at your stats, i had only checked your HP when i brought you in."

"I guess it's pretty obvious what I am." He'd called her an Insectis, which was obviously a subtype of blaster beast. She swallowed faintly. "Sure. Here." She eased her soul from her chest, the massive and full two toned shape warm and bright. All save for the new crack glancing along the upper curve of the darker side of the. The crack was new, obviously fresh. She winced, know in where that was from. Losing ones mate was a traumatic experience, as was losing ones children.

He came closer and gently took her soul into his left hand. He began to write down some things, bouncing the soul as to weigh it, though the entire time the crack was avoided.

Though he then wrote something down and underlined it

'Condition?'

He then proceeded to check over her stats and wrote down his findings

LV: Undetectable.
"So what's the verdict, doc? Everything look good?" She asks quietly. The bouncing of her soul had been an... Odd experience to feel, and she wasn't sure how to process it. She simply watched him handle the soul that filled his hand easily with some to spare.

"I'm not going to lie to you, my dear... I've been a doctor for almost a hundred and fifty years and never once did I see a soul as... unique as yours..." He seemed uncertain about using that as a description for her soul. "You're missing quite a lot of stat indicators, and your LV is unreadable, not to mention the weight of your soul... Almost feels like the weight of two souls, if not more. The unique color and shape is also... concerning."

'Gee, I fucking wonder why that would be.' She grumbled to herself and her slumbering companion-who paid her no mind. Toki simply nodded quietly. "It's a consequence of my actions to save my hive. What I did was... Risky." She grimaces. "Though the... Missing stats are new. Last I checked, my defense should be resting closer to two hundred. Not... Whatever you have right now. Attack too." She'd gotten Cruelty's stat alongside hers when they had become the Franken version of Balance. Toki choked again, and had to clear her mouth before she could continue to talk. She was missing that about being a skeleton. She had been able to talk while she did things with her mouth. Now she couldn’t. 'I think a lot of my stats might have been... I dunno. Messed up when I came here? The dark place- the Void- did things to me when I passed through it. Maybe it... Muddled things?"

"Two hundred... impressive." He rumbled as he jotted that beside his notes. More like outstandingly high. "Perhaps it did, it seems that time is our most valuable asset in your indicators righting themselves once more."

"We'll have to see indeed." She nods slowly. "And yeah. I had some... Fairly high stats among my hive." She comments softly. "Everyone else was strong, but so... Fragile." She sighs, and watches him handling her soul. "I wouldn't touch the crack." She advises. "I've got experience with them. You'll feel the cause of it, and it's not pretty." Heart break, losing your mate and children... They were hard, hard things to witness and experience. Idly, she coughed and flexed one of her slightly aching wrists, taking in the stinger that flexed out from the incurve of her arm. All of her arms had them, it seemed. They seemed able to be withdrawn though, so that as a good thing.

"Noted." he replied, looking at her soul and letting it turn a few times in his hand before he held it back to her, "Here." he rumbled, "Even if it was not as unpleasant as you claim, I really would not want to put that much stress on you. Especially now." He rumbled, before he sighed, "I'm proud of you for lasting this long. If all that you speak of is truly as awful as I imagine..."

She looks up at him as she takes her soul, and lets it slide back into her chest. Blood trickles from her eye again, mimicking the trail of a tear drop. “It’s honestly probably worse.” She admits quietly. “But… I am strong. I have to be strong. If I am not…” Her fingers tighten on the blanket, claws trembling over the surfaces as she slowly eases herself down into laying down. “If I allow myself to crack and break… I don’t know if I would recover.” She murmurs tiredly. She can feel the painkiller starting to make her drowsy, and it’s helping her pain levels a lot. All the same, she’s still coughing and bleeding from everywhere- but she hurts less.

It is a small mercy.
He nodded in understanding. "I'm proud of you." He repeated, "You are a strong soul and as long as you are given the help your body needs, you'll stay strong enough to fight this disease."

She smiles slightly, just the smallest quirk of her teeth. It didn’t matter if he wasn’t her Tenebris… His voice was similar, though… different in it’s own way. It was soothing. Her eyes closed, and she took a shaky, wet breath, before glancing up to him again. “All I need is to stay hydrated,” she rasped, “and warm. My body will recover in due time. The first few days are the roughest.” She whispers.

"And hydration will not be a problem," He replied quietly, “we have running water and the river water that gets piped from the caverns is pure and rich in minerals."

“Mmm,” she closes her eyes again, “The… The water that…” She couldn’t name the place- she wasn’t supposed to know everything. “The water that glows. It… it helps ease Death’s Rebound. But… thank you, again.” She shifts a bit and sighs. “Can I ask where we are…? Everything is so… white.” It looked like a medical facility to her, but she only knew of one at the castle.

"My new research facility in the burning lands." He answered, "As well as our second-most progressed medical center." Though he lifted a brow at the 'glowing water' she spoke of. He hadn't any idea what that was just yet...

Burning lands…? Hotland? She blinked her eyes slowly open at him, and buzzes gently. “Burning lands…? Huh… Sounds like it’s really hot.” She sleepily closes her eyes, though they jerk open again as she’s hit with a coughing fit. Once it subsides, she curls up, and peers at him quietly from under the heated blanket. She shivers a bit. “Mm… I hate to be a bother, Tenne, but… can I get some water, please…?"

Tenne nodded. He was quick to leave, and even quicker to come back. Upon his return, he had a few bottles of water, all of them showing to have chilled the air about them, promising a very cooling effect on her throat.

She gave him a thankful smile, and extended one of her arms out to him. They weren’t all that hard to move, honestly- there was something in her head, a secondary instinct helping to guide her along, and keeping her from accidentally hauling off and punching herself in the face by accident- but she was sticking to simple tasks so far. Toki took the bottle. She fiddled with the cap for a moment, trying to figure out how to get it undone with her claws.

She’d never had these before- and these were… definitely a hindrance. She missed having just bones. Her bones might have had pointed tips to them forming ‘claws’ of their own, but these… these were actual claws. Between the claws and the general weakness in her limbs, she was having a hell of a time getting it open.

She got it eventually though, and took a small sip, both relishing in the cold that chilled and soothed her throat, and hating the cold because it made her feel chilled. “Mm… Thank you.” She sounded less raspy, voice it’s usual warm tone now.

"You sound better already." He chuckled gently, setting the bottles where she could reach them, though he went ahead and loosened the caps a little for her for later. "Is there any questions you have for me?" The doctor then inquired.

“A little water goes a long way for a dry mouth.” She responds lightly. She coughs again, but there’s nothing to be done for it. “Well, one wet with blood, anyways.” Toki licks her teeth, and then nods slowly. “… Yeah.” She nods again. She needed to figure out how she was going to survive in this world- if she was going to figure out a way to try and get home… Well… she needed to know how
to survive. She knew gold was the currency underground- Papyrus had still been paid in it from the
king for his services, and she was quite up to date on the conversion rates of gold to cash- but she
knew little of this world’s economy or… well, anything. “Can you tell me about this world? What I
need to know? My dreams do not cover… well, the finite details.”

"Heh... a world... if only we were so lucky..." He chuckled quietly, a frown growing on his face,
"We're trapped under a great, vast mountain, our prison, and our punishment."

She frowned slowly, but nodded quietly. “I... I see.” She was supposed to play clueless- somewhat
clueless- so she tilted her head as she choked and coughed. She leaned over to spit blood into the
bucket. “Can you not simply dig out?”

"Unfortunately is it not the earth that seals us in." He replied gently. "Rather the magic of
humanity..." He murmured, before he growled lowly. "They punish us for existing, and sealed us
here."

She grimaces at his growl, and simply nods. “I... I see.” She makes a note to ask Cruelty if there’s a
way for them to help the monsters get out. “Where... Where I came from,” She says softly, “I was
outside. Outside of... this... this Barrier.” She recalls the name for the prison that kept the monsters
caged. “If I can help get you free, I will.” She promises quietly.

Boss hearts were supposed to be horrendously powerful- even in her own universe. Maybe she could
do something now that she's Balance.

"A valuable promise, but I do not expect you to follow through with it, so do not worry." He
chuckled gently, "It is a task impossible..."

“It’s not,” She protests, coughing weakly. “Nothing is impossible if you’re stubborn as hell and try
hard enough. You’ll see. When... When I’m back in good health,” she rasps, “I’ll see if I can figure
something out. I’m no scientist, but... sometimes you don’t have to be.”

"We will see." He had no hope for escape, but if she was so sure.

“We will.” She promises. Toki gives a soft sound, and closes her eyes again. “I... think I’ll rest now,
Doctor. The painkiller is making me drowsy. Good painkiller, by the way. Other than my breathing,
I don’t feel anything.”

He nodded slowly and smiled to her gently. "Your prognosis is looking good, my dear... you deserve
that rest."

She nodded at him shakily and smiled faintly. “Yeah... Thanks, doc.”

When he left, she turned over onto her side and cuddled up under the blanket. When she was sure
she was alone, Toki quietly wept. The tears mixed with her blood, the same, sticky green fluid, just
like her Tenebris used to do. He bled black, cried black, slobbered black- everything with her was
just... green.

She wanted to go home. She wanted her mate, she wanted her babies, she wanted her mother, her
father, her brothers, her Papa- she wanted her family and her people. She... She hoped they were
okay.

Toki fell into a fitful sleep, plunged deep into dreams dark and twisted- dreams not wholly her own,
but those of the soul she’d taken into her own.
Chapter 92

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Now we get a bit of a skip- and now Toki has been in this new world for about eight and a half weeks. 8) Read along and see what happens.

It took Toki two and a half weeks to fully recover to the point where Tenne felt comfortable in releasing her from his care. He had plans of taking her home with him, and slowly introducing her to his world. The problem with this idea was, Toki needed to get more sure of her body- she needed to learn it more. She could manage walking- she practiced in the hours he was away, and she was now a pro at pacing the halls. But flying, and finite management of her arms was beyond her- and she needed to get better at it.

He’d given her a turtleneck with holes ripped in the bottoms of the arms underneath, so she’d be able to use both sets. It was a little chilly on her lower arms, but she made do. They were small enough to tuck inside her shirt- they just gave her weird lumps and looked sort of like tumors. On top of that, he had given her a pair of pants to wear, when she had stepped off the table and very neatly flashed him.

He’d turned a bright hue of purple and scurried for clothing.

Tenne was sweet at times- in strange, strange ways that not all of Toki really understood.

But it didn’t matter- Toki… Toki had needed time. So she’d taken time. The last night that she was supposed to stay at the facility, Tenne had ended up falling asleep at his desk. She’d crept up to it, and wrote him a note stating that she was sorry for leaving on such short notice- but that it was necessary. She needed to see the world for herself, and experience it first hand, and that she needed time to work through her losses. She told him that they would see each other again soon.

The tall once-skeleton hadn’t specified how soon- because she wasn’t… She wasn’t sure how long she needed.

She’d left the lab that night, taking only the clothes that she wore and wiggling her way out of one of the windows, using her new claws to slide slowly down the wall. It didn’t take her all that long for her to reach the bottom of the surprisingly tall building- and then Toki was making her way off into the magma lit brightness of Hotland. Or… The burning lands, as Tenebris- Tenne- called them.

Toki left Hotland shortly, and took to the massive cavern between Waterfall and Hotland, where… Well, it looked like the castle and surrounding city was under construction. If it was this early… She had to wonder what time it was above the ground.

It didn’t matter.

It ultimately didn’t matter.

Not to Toki- Toki needed first a safe place to hunker down. She just needed time… She first tried the void again. She gathered her power in her hands- and she grabbed through space and time, digging deeper and deeper down to that empty black void that was not nearly as empty as it wanted her to
think and tried to pull it open.

It seemed to laugh at her- muttering something vague about her purpose not having been fulfilled yet- and instead it ricocheted her back through the layers of fabric and space, and instead she tore open a space full of hellfire and brimstone, and got a lapful of wingless flaming hell hornet that was bound and determined to lick her face clean of the new layer of strange bony-skin she had.

Toki had not lost it all- but she’d lost what she held most dear to her. Her family, her friends, her husband, her babies- everything that gave her strength… And now that she had the strength to bend the magic to try and get back, the void simply laughed at her and threw her away.

The bee beast gave her summons the attention they needed. They were still decked out in their armor from the battle, though they did not seem worn, if only a little singed from the hellfire. Toki didn’t divest them of it- it was her last link to her world. She wanted it kept safe where nothing would get to it- and where better a place than in the realm of her summons?

Once her summons had been given ample time for the love and affection that they so desperately craved from her, Toki took time to herself. She… She needed time. She needed time to grieve.

And grieve she did. Tucked away from everyone and anything living, she curled up in the dark with only her own glow to provide her light, and she wept. The only one she had for company was Cruelty- and he was, as suspected, no help.

He made her feel worse.

It took her two weeks- two weeks of soul crushing grieving, where everything crashed down onto her and made it feel like the crack on her soul was simply growing larger and larger- to drag herself out of the darkness where she neither ate nor drank anything. She might have been right when she told Tenne that she was holding together because breaking meant she might not come back together- she broke only enough to grieve not being with her mate and her children and her family, and it took entirely too much effort to slip into waterfall and clean herself up in the semi-warm water when she managed to barely piece herself back together again to do such actions.

She wondered briefly if that was what Falling felt like.

Toki had to claw and drag herself out from a pit of despair that Cruelty seemed hell-bound on helping her throw herself in with carefully aimed jibes and painfully thrown memories. He raged through her mind like a wildfire- but Toki just… took it. He burnt himself out after long enough, and when she stopped responding to him, he seemed to stop trying to goad her into responding even faster. It seemed he didn’t know what to do with himself when she didn’t acknowledge him.

The bee beast cleaned with her clothes on, and just used her magic to dry her clothes and her fur. She came out of the water pearly white again- but vastly thinner than she should have been. Her body had never been the thickest- and it didn’t seem that her post-baby body had came with her with the change over- so there hadn’t been much stores saved up. After two weeks of being horribly, horribly sick with Death’s Rebound, and two weeks of being unresponsive to her body’s needs, Toki was… underweight, to put it simply.

She didn’t feel the hunger though- and that, she’s quite sure, was not a good sign. Either way, Toki re-hydrated her dehydrated self with the glowing rivers of Waterfall and then set out to explore and learn and see. The glowing water helped more than any regular water would- and she made sure to drink plenty of it while she was in the area.

But for the most part, once she had recovered enough of herself that she could think about moving,
Toki wandered. She explored. She tried out her new body, and taught herself how it worked. She tested her limits, traversing some days on two legs, some days scuttling around on her back legs and larger set of arms. Her smaller set curled up tight to her chest, and she could use them to carry things or to do whatever tasks she needed.

Having four arms was as pesky as it was rewarding. The same with her new horns- she got everything caught on the new curly ram like horns that made up the ones along the side of her head. But she learned. She learned and she grew.

There was success in teaching herself to fly- not without her own errors, though. There were new dents in the stone that weren’t there before. But, three weeks past the time she had grieved, Toki was proficient in flying. She had felt natural up in the air on Clover’s back before- but this… This felt even more so.

She explored and she found out many things. She found the dump, for one. It seemed untouched so far- there were so many things. Many, many things. She found old, old swords, old armor, and things only got newer from there. The most recent things she could find was a Super NES that was cracked in half with a ‘NEW’ sticker still on it, and an old, old phone. She remembered these things, and when they came out. Except there were a few… Things, like music, that were quite out of their time. Phillip Phillips, for one, wasn’t a singer until well past 2010- but there were CD’s down here from him, labeled for ‘top hit of the 90’s’ or something.

The woman could only guess the time upstairs was around 1990- but she honestly wasn’t sure with the fact that there were things that definitely were not from the 90’s down here. Honestly, this world was… weird.

It was not her world- and this was becoming ever more clear. This wasn’t even some time in the past- this just… was not her world.

She managed to loot a couple of decent blankets, and dried them with her magic. They were necessary, as she worked her way slowly, so slowly, towards Snowdin.

Toki came across… Well, she could only call them small bands of settlers; small groups of monsters trying to make homes in parts of the cave that they didn’t know and didn’t understand. They were spooked by anything and everything to do with Waterfall, from the glowing water to the echo flowers that whispered hushed murmurs and babbles from the brooks and streams in the caves.

Toki took days to help get them acclimated- she had spooked them too, dropping from the ceiling like some sort of demon- and directed them to head to the warmer side of Waterfall. The more she said the name, the more it seemed to stick- and Toki realized that she might be in charge of the goofy names these places had.

Oh well.

She helped them get settled in an open cavern, where she’d found an abundance of snails and salt- an odd combination, given snails fragility when it came to salt- and left them to getting settled.

She’d continued from there.

She finally made her way out of the glow of Waterfall and into the icy chill of Snowdin nearly a month since she’d managed to push through what she was very certain was her close call with Falling.

Toki regretted having eaten as little as she did over the time she’d been out and about. With as little
as she’d eaten, she’d gained no weight back, and the sheer wind and snow of Snowdin blew right through her. Hunger wasn’t something she felt much- and she attributed that to the pain ever-present in her soul. If Cruelty didn’t rudely nudge her or remind her to eat, she usually forgot to rummage around to find something, be it a snail or something she could roast black with magic and consume.

Toki survived though.

She pushed through the snow and the ice and made her way through the thick trees, following the river on the familiar path that she’d walked several times with Papyrus while she’d been in Snowdin with him. The town was… bigger now, than it had been when she’d been here. She attributed that to the fact that there were more monsters in one area, and they were less spread out than they had been before.

The one thing she did notice, however, was the lack of electricity. There was none- none at all. However, each house seemed to be lit by candles, or lanterns, and seemed to be well insulated against the cold. The people bundled up in layers upon layers to keep warm.

Toki only had one, and she was missing shoes, and gloves, and a coat. She did, however, have two thick blankets draped over her shoulders, pinning her wings to her back as they radiated warmth.

The town as abuzz with activity, and Toki wasn’t quite ready to handle the curious gazes of people yet. So she skirted the edge. She spotted Grillby’s as she did, but mused that since she didn’t have any gold to speak of, that it would be a moot point for her to go inside of there. She didn’t know this Grillby- and she wasn’t about to start a tab that she couldn’t pay back. It wasn’t like she had a job here. What use did they have for a writer or a beekeeper? Technically she could be considered a recruit for the guard, but… being a soldier wasn’t for her. She… she couldn’t.

Not with it having been Papyrus’ profession. It hit too close to home.

Likewise, her lack of income meant that she didn’t have the coins to stay at the inn- and the number of houses and their different shapes and sizes made it hard for her to try and recognize which one was Tenne’s.

If he even lived here.

Either way, Toki skirted the town and made her way into the woods. She located herself a good thicket well out of the way of everyone else, and well off the beaten path, and then… dipped a little into her instincts.

Whatever the void had done to her, it had set a whole slew of instincts into her that proved to be incredibly helpful at the time being. She was sure there would come a time when they wouldn’t be so helpful- but this was not one of those times. Her instincts had kept her alive thus far- they helped her survive in this world that wasn’t her own.

Guided by what her body knew best, she used the world around her, and constructed what she could only call a den of some sort. Brambles covered the top, painted white by snow that she had been careful not to disturb. It created a near invisible shell from the outside- just another pile of snow-covered branches out in the woods. Nothing to see, nothing to investigate.

Inside, she’d dug it out, shoving the cold snow up and packing it into the ceiling, sort of… well, like a reverse igloo. The ice stuck- and soon, her makeshift home was air tight, safe for the entrance. She sacrificed one of her blankets to cover it, half folding the massive quilt one over the floor and then using the other half as a cover.
It was small and cramped- but it was warmer than outside. It was warm- and most importantly, it was safe.

There were a lot of smaller monsters that made attempts to pick fights with her from time to time. She didn’t know what they were, but she wasn’t sure if they had the same intelligence as the larger monsters seemed to have.

They didn’t seem to bother her new den- and she could cover the front when she left. She slept soundly that night, the wind whipping and howling around her shelter, while she was as snug and as warm as a woman sleeping on ice, in ice, and around ice could be.

Still, come the next morning of being in Snowdin, Toki finally gathered herself and headed into town. She skirted the edges again, keeping well out of reaches of large groups, and instead headed for the only familiar place that she knew. She couldn’t buy anything- but she had bets that it would be warm inside. Her magic was heating her up, yes, but that didn’t mean a chill couldn’t set into her bones.

Being seven-foot tall now- a lovely new addition to her new body- meant that Toki couldn’t exactly blend in with crowds anymore. She could, however, duck behind some very large dog monsters that came panting into the bar. They blocked her gaze from the bar itself, but she still got in unobtrusively, before scooting to one of the booths in the back corner.

It was dark inside, lit by candles and lanterns instead of electrical lights- but it was warm. Blessedly warm.

Toki slid to the back of the booth, trying to keep herself out of sight of the harried looking fire elemental as he bustled out from behind the counter, carrying order trays with him. Grillby looked so young… Well, much younger. Less haunted too. She wondered where Fuku was, briefly, before closing her eyes and resting her head on her arms. The table was cold, but everything else was simply divine.

She listened to the sounds of the guests and their flaming bartender and server flitting around with a quiet sound. It was warm and… well, about as peaceful as her pained soul would get. It smelled good too. She could smell whatever he was cooking, and it was amazing. Hunger briefly tingled through her, before it was gone just as quick.

Toki could nearly doze- probably not a good idea. It meant she wasn’t paying attention to who was nearing her table.

Not that she could see him anyways. The form that approached was small, shorter than the table, and failed to get her attention until he began to pat the soft leather of the seat beside her. "Nyeh! Nyeh!" His voice was soft and squeaky.

The soft sound was painful to hear, and her soul twinged at the familiar verbal tick from her husband- coming out of the tiny form of a very small child. Her soul felt like it cracked just a bit more, but she knew it hadn’t. She’d checked her soul multiple times when she’d felt that sensation before- the crack was no deeper or no wider. It just… hurt.

Toki sucked in a breath under her loose turtleneck, and turned to peer at him. Green irises glimmered from black sclera, and it took little effort to bend down to his height. She was face to face with a miniature Papyrus. But, knowing this world… That was likely not his name. So, she simply put a soft smile on her face, finding it stretching her teeth automatically, even if it was not an honest smile anymore. It was easier to smile- or to fake an earnest smile- than it was to scare a child. No matter what child it was. “Hello there.” Toki murmured softly. “Can I help you with something, little one?”
"Nyeh!" He reached up at her, before he gripped the seating and hefted himself up a tiny bit, giving effort-laced 'nyeh's as he tried to pull himself up. "Nyeh! Nyeh!"

A softer smile curled at her teeth, and her smaller arms uncurled from her chest where they had been wrapped. Her larger arms braced on the table and the backrest of the booth, and used them to keep herself braced as she hefted him up into the seat with her. He wasn’t heavy- not at all- and she probably didn’t need to brace, but it was more out of habit than anything. She sot him settled gently on the seat next to her. “There you go, kiddo. You got a name, little one?”

"Nyeh!" He threw his hands up with a giggle as he was seated.

There was another voice that answered her, however. "All he says is 'nyeh'." It was another small boy, this one more rounded looking, bright blue eyes looking up at the both of them. "His name is Quinn."

Quinn- she’d called Pap that too, on account of his middle name. Aliquam- Luna had called him Uncle Quinn, and Quinn had stuck. Something felt lodged in her throat, but she swallowed around it. Her voice was surprisingly steady as she spoke, smiling to the other boy- who looked so much like Sans that it wasn’t funny.

“It’s adorable.” She says softly. “It’s nice to meet you, Quinn. And you too, kiddo.” Her gaze flicks to the kid whose name she doesn’t know, but she knows it isn’t Sans or Caeruleus. Her teeth quirk up into a warmer smile. “I’m Toki. You need a boost into the booth too?”

"Nah.” He went to the other side and climbed up, sitting with just the top of his head and his eyes showing. He peered at her curiously. "Nice to meet you, Toki. I'm Kai."

Kai, huh...? Sounded a lot like Cae but with a much more American ring to it... She took a breath and shook those thoughts off. These were different people, even if they looked similar. Different world, different circumstances, it all made for different people. She offered Kai a smile. "That's a nice name, Kai." She scooted a little over in the booth to give Quinn space, and adjusted her wings as she watched the boys lightly. "So what are you doing here, kiddos?"

"Auntie Saph told us to come sit down and she'd get us something to eat." Kai replied, watching Quinn find himself entertained by getting to his feet and running his hands through Toki's neck fur.

Toki looped one of her arms behind him instinctively to keep him from losing his balance and falling. She had no idea how old Quinn was- but obviously not very old, if all he said was ‘Nyeh’. “Auntie Saph, huh? Well, sounds like a good plan for you two. Is this your usual booth you two sit in then?” Her luck, she’d probably taken the booth the kids usually sat in, in an effort to keep out of peoples way.

The hands running through the fur around her neck tickled a little bit, but it was soothing in it’s own way. Her fur had tangles in it, but she didn’t have access to a brush or grooming appliances. Claws only did so much- so she was pretty much permanently wild haired. At least her fur was warm- like her wings, the fur around her neck and wrists tended to be warm from her magic.

"Yup."

"Nyeh!"

Kai chuckled at his brother's outburst, but he then tilted his head, peering at her curiously once more. "So... is it okay if I ask... What are you?"

“I don’t mind answering.” Toki smiled quietly, and gently rubbed her hand over Quinn’s skull while
he ruffled his fingers through her fur. She willed it to fluff up for him, and then rested one of her elbows on the table. Her chin came to rest on her palm, and she hummed, watching him lightly. “I suppose I’m a bit strange to look at. I’m a… blaster beast. Insectis, to be exact.” She answered lightly.

Toki wasn’t sure what she was anymore. She had been human, she had been skeleton- and now she was this. She was still human at her core- but… was she? She had a human soul shape, but… after all she had been through… was she still…? Was she still even her?

She shook her head lightly, and quirked a gentle smile to him. “We’re not exactly common from what I can gather.” Her gaze flicked over to Quinn, and she hummed. “Are you enjoying my fur, little one?”

"Nyeh heh heh!” Quinn beamed at her.

She’d take that as a yes, he was enjoying her fur.

"You mean like Daddy? Have you met him yet? He might really, really like you!” Kai asked with a big grin.

“If your Daddy’s name is Tenne, then yes, I have.” She nods lightly. A thin arm extends, and she gently taps Kai’s nasal ridge. “He helped me get better when I was very, very sick. I haven’t seen him in a while though. I had some adult stuff to take care of, and I wanted to see the Underground for myself.”

"Oooh, you're the patient!” His eyes brightened as he seemed to realize whom he was talking to. "He told us about you! Yup! He really liked you!”

“Oh? He did, did he?” She quirked a soft smile again. It had been six weeks since she’d seen Tenne- she wondered how he was doing while she had been wandering and… well, taking time. She wasn’t fully recovered, but… She wasn’t sure she ever fully would be. “I liked him too. He was very nice, and very polite.” She smiled slightly. “He actually gave me this turtleneck, and helped me modify it for my arms.” Hence why only her upper most large arms had sleeves, and her little ones did not.

“Doctor Tenne is a good man.” A warm voice responds lightly.

A blue glow takes over Toki’s line of sight, though the glow is dim and not precisely healthy. Toki glances to it, and spots a quite pregnant fire elemental carrying two plates- and two booster seats. One of the seats is set next to Toki on the bench, while the other is set next to Kai, with a nod for the boy to take a seat in it instead of on the bench itself.

The plates are set in front of the boys, piled high with good smelling food. She carefully cuts the burgers into quarters for the boys to have an easier time eating, and then gives them both fond pats on the head, and then runs her hands up over her head, between the horns curling between her flames.

“I take it you’re ‘Auntie Saph’?” Toki queries lightly, peering up at the fire monster with a kind, though hesitant smile. She wasn’t honestly sure how this world would work- but not a lot of places in hers appreciated people coming inside just to warm up some.

“I am.” She nods. “I’m Sapphire Fyrus. I’m Grillby’s wife.” She hummed. She rested a hand on her swollen middle, and looked her over with a critical eye. Her dim flames flickered slightly, and she wobbled on her feet. “And you must be Tokiko Nara. Tenne came in here a couple weeks back quite distraught over you disappearing and leaving just a note.”
Toki gave her a sheepish smile. “Mrs. Fyrus then. You can call me Toki; and yeah, I sorta knew he would be. But I knew he wouldn’t have let me go off on my own if I asked, so…” She shrugged lightly, and rubbed her hands over her smaller arms. She tucked them to her chest again to keep them warm. “I just needed some time to myself. Anyways…” She gave her a concerned look. “Are you alright? Your flames look dim, Mrs. Fyrus.”

“Sapphire, please, Toki.” She waves a hand. “I understand it fully. Tenne is a good man, but he frets. He hasn’t let me back in the lab since I found out I was pregnant. Anyways, I’m fine. A little under the weather, but… fine enough.”

Toki wasn’t entirely sure about that. She looked at her belly, and then up at the flickering blue flames. Concern knitted her brows together. “That does sound like something he would do. Why don’t you sit down, Sapphire? Rest your legs a little bit? I can help out in your stead while you get some rest, if you’d like.”

"I must admit I need to sit down, but really, I wouldn’t ask you to just up and take my place. You need not feel like you must.” Sapphire replied, slowly taking a seat beside Kai, who was fist deep in fries soaked to the bone in what looked like ketchup of some kind.

Toki watched Kai gobbling down his food, and gave the boy a gentle amused sound. She gently scooped up Quinn, and traded places with him, so he sat on the inside of the bench and not on the outside. She settled him in his booster seat, and scooted his plate closer for him to eat from, before giving Sapphire a smile. “I don’t mind helping. You need your rest.” She glanced up to the bar, and flicked her wings as she slid out of the booth and got to her feet. “Your husband was Grillby, right? I’m assuming he’s the red-orange one behind the bar?”

"Yes, That’s right." She answered, before she shifted to get up herself. "But really, I only just met you and I’d hate to- ooooooh." She winced and slowly lowered back to her seat as she reached up to cradle her head.

“Sapphire?” Grillby’s voice carried over the din of the bar, and everything went quiet.

It was much the same as Toki remembered it to be.

Toki was quick to crouch down in front of her, and gently rested one of her hands on leg. “Easy, easy,” she murmured gently to the pregnant elemental. “You need to rest, Sapphire. You’ve got a baby on the way and your flames don’t look so hot.”

An orange glow appeared over her shoulder as Grillby quickly came around the bar to his mate’s side. The big monster had Toki shuffling over so he could crouch down. He gave her a concerned look, looking nearly as tired as she did, though much brighter with his flames. He was keeping the bar warm, yes, but he wasn’t growing their baby. That took far more magic. “Sapphire? My dear, I knew you needed to take the day to rest…”

“You both look exhausted,” Toki murmurs softly to them. She shifts the toes of her paws, claws working faintly on the floors of the bar, and gives them both a concerned look. “I’m… I’m not a healer, but… I might be able to help?”

Sapphire slowly smiled up at Grillby to reassure him. "It's just a headache, my dear." She told him gently, before looking to Toki, "I would appreciate some help... I haven’t been able to see James or Tenne as I would have liked to, to see about curing this simple illness.”

Toki nodded softly. She lifted her smaller set of hands, and rested them on Sapphire’s legs. She went slowly, watching Grillby eye her many limbs with trepidation. “I’ll do what I can.” She promises
softly. She takes a deep breath, and channels her magic up through her smaller arms, letting the heat pool in her wrists, and then in her palms. It brightens the fur around her wrist for a moment, before fire magic spools from her and into Sapphire.

But that’s not all. The stingers on her wrists deploy, and sting into the flesh under her legs- and molten heat floods Sapphire- who’s flesh brightens visibly under her clothes. Toki nearly goes to jerk back- but she recalls bees who sting, and try to yank out their stingers, and know she’s likely to rip her wrists apart of she tries.

Instead, she keeps her calm forcibly, and plays it off that she meant to do that. The molten venom seems to be doing her some good- a whole lot of good, actually. Toki watches her fires brighten with the help of her magic too, and knows, whatever she’s doing, is helping. Or appears to be.

Grillby frowns at the stingers, but seems pleased as her color improves. “How are you feeling?” He smoothes a hand gently over her head, brushing his fingers gently over the horns curling through Sapphire’s flaming hair.

Her eyes had widened at the prick of the stingers, flinching a little at the pinch and bite of them, but the sudden flood of heat and magic rushing through her body had her donning a smile and a deep sigh of relief. “Oh goodness…” She murmurs. “I feel so much better, my dear husband.”

He cupped her face gently, and stroked her cheek. “Truly?” He queried warmly. “You do? You’ve been so sick…"

Toki swallowed and took gentle care to ease her stingers out of her leg. She rubbed fire magic over the holes she’d left, for her stingers were not small things, and felt them seal up under her magic. She smiled softly, watching color slowly flood back into her as her venom worked it’s way through her. “You’re going to be okay.” One of her larger hands came to rest on Grillby- and he too got a dose of magic. No venom for him though- but magic yes. Once he was brighter and more vibrant, Toki straightened and gave them a quiet smile. “You still need to rest though, Sapphire. Why don’t you keep Kai and Quinn company? I can help Grillby. I know my way around a kitchen.”

Grillby stood as well, rolling his broad shoulders. He was still a foot taller than Toki was, even with her new height. He rolled his shoulders again and stretched his neck. “Wow,” He murmurs. “I feel better than I have in a long time. I wouldn’t mind you helping me, miss…?”

“Toki.” She supplies quietly.

“I wouldn’t mind you helping me.” He nods. “I’ll pay what wages I can. Sapphire… I want you to rest.”

"Alright, my darling, alright...You win." Sapphire chuckled quietly as she leaned back in the booth. “I’ll take some time to rest... and keep an eye on the boys.” She then looked at Toki, and gave a warm smile, "Bless you, child. You have my gratitude.”

He chuckles gently, and leans down to kiss her head. His hand smoothes over her belly, and gently feels for the kicks of their baby within.

“It’s no problem at all, Sapphire.” She smiled back to her. “I really don’t mind- you need to rest, as far along as you are-” Toki lost her train of thought as there was a soft tug on her wing. It wasn’t a pleasant sensation, no matter how gentle the motion was, but she didn’t start. Those were tiny baby hands on her body- one didn’t startle with tiny baby hands grabbing onto you. She turned and gently swept Quinn into her arms, booping his nasal ridge gently with one of her fingers. “Hey there, Quinn. You be good for your Auntie Sapphire, yeah?”
“Nyeh!” He chirped at her, orange eyes wide and innocent. His fingers buried themselves in her ruff of fur, and he made a soft noise at her.

She laughed softly, and set him back in his seat. “Finish your food, little one.” Her gaze flicked back over to Grillby. “Alright. How would you like me to assist you?”

“I can handle cooking.” He hums. He straightens after kissing Sapphire gently- making Kai make obnoxious noises at the sight- and turns to peer at her. “Lets get you an apron. You can run orders to the tables, and help me in the kitchen between running orders.”

Toki gives him a cheery salute and nods. “Yes, sir.”

He grabs her arm lightly, and gives her a faint look. “And I’ll be sending you home with a meal as a thank you. If you are like Doctor Tenne, then you are far too thin for your species.”

Toki gives him a sheepish smile. “Yeahhh, I haven’t been eating that well.” For various reasons that she wouldn’t be sharing with the fiery bartender. “But thank you. Alright- lets go. I know how to make an interesting drink if you’d like to add it to your menu.”

“Oh?”

“Mhm. Death Shot.” She smiles faintly. “I wouldn’t advise giving it to lightweights though. All the same- it’s alcoholic.”

Grillby chuckles. “We’ll see. Come- we have work to do.”
Chapter 93

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So, Toki is working at Grillby’s. A four armed barmaid- what an interesting sight. Also, if any of you recall my munster picture, that’s what Sapphire looks like. Ish. She’s a prettier blue. XD She also has horns.

Toki ended up picking up Sapphire’s work shifts- at least for the time being. The fire elemental was still under the weather, but she was improving. Daily doses of Toki’s venom seemed to be improving her health bit by bit, but both Toki and Grillby were in agreement on her resting.

That didn’t mean that Toki let Grillby pay her full wages. Yes, on the normal days she did enough work to warrant earning them- but at every turn, he was trying to feed her. She usually ended up sharing it with the boys- who followed her like adorable ducklings- and refused to take more than she felt she had earned. So she took half wages, and let him send her home with a burger after shift, from which she would retreat to her den and curl up under her blanket and pick at the burger.

Several weeks of eating very little had left her with a small appetite even when she did have it. Cruelty nitpicked at her though until she ate- and he could be one hell of a nag when he wanted to be. SO by the end of the night she had usually consumed the whole thing, and could sleep soundly.

She had been working for only three days for him when she detected a thin film of grease developing in her fur- and found herself moderately repulsed. Quinn had a habit of cuddling into her mane when she was working, or taking a break- and the boy did not need to be cuddling into a mop of greasy, grimy fur. Not only that, but Toki had always been a very, very clean person. She didn’t have a problem getting dirty- so long as she could get clean again.

So Toki had crawled out of her den early in the morning, and flown off for Waterfall again since she didn’t have access to running water or a shower. She’d heard rumors of there being a bathhouse in the Capitol, but she had no interest in traveling there. She didn’t go deep into Waterfall- she worked at Grillby’s from morning until night, so traveling far was out of the question- but she went just far enough off the beaten path that she was pretty sure no one would bother her.

Toki then stripped off her clothes, and scrubbed them against some rocks, using the abrasive surfaces and the clean nature of the running water to make sure that her clothes got clean. Once they no longer smelled like a burger joint- though she was longing quietly for laundry soap of some kind, or just some sort of soap in general- she pulled them from the rapids and draped them over a dry rock, before clamoring into the water herself. She began scrubbing her skin until it was pearly white again, her long claws making it a slow, slow task so she didn’t cut herself.

Working the grit and grime out of her ankle fur was a nightmare- as was preventing her from stabbing herself on the stinger hidden inside of that when she accidentally triggered it to come out. She had stingers on all of her limbs, it would appear- which was better than having one on her butt. All the same, her claws worked at detangling the burs and snags from the fur of her ankles, before working up towards her shins. It was a long task- but hopefully one she wouldn’t have to do for another couple of days.

She could hear voices approaching, however, and did her best to cover herself with her partially
translucent wings. Not that it did much to help, but she tried. Either way, she simply tucked her head and tried to pretend that she wasn’t hearing someone closing in on her. She remained half submerged and seated on the little rock in the shallows, working at scrubbing herself clean.

“Mom? What’s that green light up there? That’s not the color of the water.”

"Luminescence I guess. Nothing compared to the stars but hey, it's better than nothing, isn't that right, Undyne?” An older voice replied to the younger. The forms that soon appeared had matching features, deep red hair, bluish scales, though for the younger of the two the scales were more pale, and sharp-pointed teeth and claws on their hands, with webbed fins along the sides of their heads.

Toki was sure for half a second that she was seeing Undyne and a Mini Undyne- but they both had eyes, and the big one had called the little one Undyne, so that couldn’t be.

She blinked, hard, and very nearly cooed. The big fish monster who usually terrorized her a little bit in her world was… fuck, adorable to put it bluntly.

It took a moment to keep her cool, for that train of thought brought a pang of longing that made the glow of her wings briefly dim. She instead turned on her rock, not bothering to hide her breasts. They were all women anyways- and she was supposed to play the role of blaster beast- they were not typically body shy. At least Tenebris had never been. Shit, he’d gone swimming practically naked, save for swimming gloves before.

Of course, he had no visible genitals, and she most certainly did… but no matter.

“Whoa! Mom look! A naked winged lady!” The miniature fish monster practically bounced at her mother’s heels.

Toki lifted a hand awkwardly and waved it, the fur along her neck ruffling lightly at being called a naked winged lady. How… typically Undyne. “Ah… Hello.” She murmurs lightly, and swishes her legs through the water. Her magic was permeating the part of the stream she was in, so it was starting to heat up and steam just a little bit.

"Well hey there." The mother of the adorably blunt guppy gave a light smile, "I was expecting to see someone sooner or later, the water here does wonders for one's scales." She chuckled, "Name's Ariel. This is my little guppy, Undyne. Nice to meet you miss...."

Ariel. As in the little mermaid. Oh golly- Toki was learning so many things. Well, Ariel had the red hair to fit. She wondered if Ariel, who had spoken of seeing the stars, was responsible for the old stories of mermaids.

Toki tilted her head to her lightly and offered a soft smile. “The water here has good healing properties. You’re welcome to join me- I’ve warmed this part of the river, so it’s… well, a little less chilly.” She rubs her arms, and shifts to sit a little lower in the water. Her secondary set of hands work over her body while her main set keep herself above the water. “I’m Tokiko- but you can call me Toki. It’s nice to meet the both of you.”

Undyne gave her a sharp toothed grin, and immediately began to strip out of her clothes. “A warm bath? Are you kidding? I’m not turning that down. The bath houses in the Capital are warm but everyone uses them and they’re always super, super busy.” It didn’t take long before there was a very naked fish child making a dash for the water, and aiming to belly flop into it.

Toki simply gave the child a fond look, and glanced back at Ariel. “Not a lot of people know that Waterfall has good water here.” She continues. “I’ve been trying to spread the word though. I’ve
caught some people in Snowdin trying to bathe in the Snowdin river, and… well, that’s just painfully cold.” She barely managed to live in the ice and chill in her little den, let alone take a bath in water that habitually had ice chunks floating in it.

Ariel snorted as she resisted a joke and after collecting Undyne's clothing on a nearby rock to keep them clean, she undressed as well to join them, "I don't complain. It’s good to have a personal little spot where you can bathe to your heart's content." She chuckled, sitting in the water with a comfortable exhale. "Won't catch me swimming in snowfall waters, huh-uh, nope." She huffed, before she looked up at her, having sunk to her chin in the warm water. "You're calling the regions these names like you grew up knowin’ em... and yet I can't help but realize they do indeed fit well."

Undyne swam back towards her mother, keeping under the water, and made a grab for her feet with a mischievous burble of bubbles from her gills.

Toki watched the blur of the child under the water, and tucked her feet close to her. She couldn’t guarantee her stingers wouldn’t deploy if they were grabbed. As Ariel continued to talk to her, she hummed and nodded. “I live in Snowdin right now. It’s… really cold there. Hotland is nicer, but no one lives there, and I really don’t like eating magma slugs.” She admits. “My den is decent enough though. But you’re right. Anyways… I just have different names for different places. Hotland is… I think I heard it called the burning lands?” She shrugs. “Hotland is nicer. Short and descriptive. Anyways- it’s also a long ways from where I work, so the commute would be he-ck.”

"I mean, hell, my legs still get a bit sore when I have to make trips from one end of the caverns to the other." Ariel chuckled quietly, stretching said legs before folding one over the other as she relaxed in the water, lightly shooing her guppy away from her with practiced ease.

Undyne, foiled, huffed and went to go bother the fish- and stalk her mother’s companion.

Toki chuckled, and eased further under the water. “Trust me, I know. I spent several weeks just exploring everything there was to see. It’s… bigger than a lot of monsters realize. There’s a lot left to be colonized and built upon.” She took a moment and dipped fully under water, so she could scrub her mane clean. She scrubbed it roughly for a time, along with the rest of her body, until her lungs burned for air.

When she needed air, she came up once more, and shook herself off slightly. “Agh. What I wouldn’t give for some soap and a brush.” She combs her claws through her mane a little bit, and sighs, before brushing the wet mop of fur and hair out of her face, baring the long scar down around her left horn to the world.

"We have both if you need." Ariel offered, knowing she wouldn't be able to wash her daughter's hair until the guppy burnt herself out by swimming.

“Yeah?” Toki tilted her head to peer at her, and gave her a slightly chipper buzz. “I’d actually really appreciate that, if you wouldn’t mind me borrowing it. It’s been ages since I got to properly wash my hair.” Brush it too. She hadn’t had hair since she lost it all before she’d lost her humanity.

Undyne burst from the water like a particularly aggressive piranha, and latched onto Toki’s shoulder like a limpet. “Why do you have fur anyways? It’s on your hands and feet too, which is super weird. What even are you anyways? You’ve got super, super sharp teeth, whoa.”

Being right up in Toki’s face would definitely give Undyne an up close and personal view of her teeth, definitely. Toki simply chuffed lightly, and flicked her tongue out at Undyne. “I’m an Insectis- a Queen Bee Insectis to be exact. Bees are furry- so I’m furry. And the teeth… Well, I don’t exactly have lips to hide them, do I?” She lightly tickles the child with the smooth sides of her claws, and
ushers her back out into the water. “Off with you, you little piranha. Swim off your energy so your mother can shampoo you.”

Toki gets splashed for her efforts, and she sputters in amusement, before turning to glance at Ariel. “She’s a spitfire, isn’t she?”

"A spitfire, a whirlwind, whatever disaster, you name it, I can name an instance." Ariel sighed, though she had reached back to the shore and picked out from their belongings a bottle and a brush, offering them to Toki. Her smile was lighthearted and humorous despite her sigh.

Toki accepted the bottle and the brush lightly, offering her a faint smile. She tucked the brush onto a rock, and then set to shampooing her hair. “I know how you feel.” She laughs softly. Her throat tightens for a moment, and she’s glad they’re alone on top of the water. She has to take a moment and clear her throat against the knot that builds up in it and threatens to choke her. “I know all too well how you feel.” Despite the light hearted smile she’s given, there’s something sad in the one that Toki gives back. She soaps up her wrist fur and leg fur, and makes sure they’re nice and frothed up, before plunging them under the water to rinse. Her mane could soak up the soap a little bit first.

Ariel caught wind and she tilted her head, before she sighed and leaned against the rock she had claimed. Her red hair floated around her. “I’ve got a question for you... If you don’t mind me asking.” She started slowly.

“I don’t mind.” Toki hummed softly, and swallowed to clear the lump in her throat. A couple of deep breaths later, and she was in control again. “What did you want to ask, Ariel?” She took the brush to her wrists, starting to work the tangles out slowly and carefully.

"Well... I’m... actually a first-time mother with Undyne... Her... ah... her dad died not long b’fore we were... cast underground." She continued slowly, watching Toki for her response. "Do you have any... well... pointers?"

“I’m sorry for your loss.” She murmured softly. Toki rubbed her arms lightly against her legs, and sighed. “My... My children were smaller than Undyne when I lost them,” She said softly, “But I did help raise my brothers. So... yeah. Just... Love her. Unconditionally. Back her up if things get rough- if someone tries to hurt her, don’t let them. She’s going to learn from example- she’s going to look to you, see how you do things and how you handle things, and learn how to do it. Of course, she’s going to be her own little person too, so they might be done differently. Don’t yell at her- if she makes you upset, take time to cool down and explain yourself. It might be easier to yell at first, but trust me, she’ll remember and it’ll teach her that it’s okay to yell at her children when she has them.” She sighs softly. “A lot of parenting is... Is learning on your own. If you feel you’ve done something wrong, don’t feel afraid to apologize- and then change your methods so you don’t do it again.” Her smaller hands come up to rest against her chest, where the twins liked to be cradled, and she sucked in a soft breath, before humming and resuming grooming her wrists. “Parenting is trial and error, Ariel. You look like you’re doing alright with Undyne though.”

"I'm really sorry about your loss..." She mentioned quietly, before she smiled at her slightly. "That's great advice. Thanks a lot."

Toki gave her a weak smile, and took a steadying breath. “It’s no problem.” She swallowed slightly, and then shifted on the shore. She ducked under the water, and began to scrub her mane clean, her wings slipping under as well.

Once her mane was clear of soap, Toki slid back to the surface, and shook her mane free of water, before working the brush through the tangles and snarls. Four arms made quick work of it, and soon it was slicked back and out of the way. Well, as much as it could be considering the nature of how it
grew around her neck. She cleared her fur from the brush, let the glowing green hairs rest in a pile on
the shore, and then offered the items back to her. “Thank you again.” She quirks a smile. “I’ll be
going into work looking less like a tornado blew through my mane.”

Undyne surfaced not far from them, and huffed, before paddling closer. “Water’s colder further out,”
she complains slightly, and then bustles into her mother’s lap. “It’s warmer here though. How can
she make the water warmer, Mom?”

Ariel wrapped her arms around her daughter’s form and gave her a tender hug, before looking to
Toki. "That is a good question. Magic I suppose, might be the cause of it." She chuckled gently.

“Fire magic.” Toki agrees lightly, and chuckles softly. She runs some through the fur on one of her
wrists, and the water evaporates into steam as she dries it. “See? It’s a handy trick for drying off.”

“Ooo! That’s really cool!” She perks up and chirps, before grinning up at her mother and cuddling
close. “The Queen and the King can do fire Magic, can’t they? And the Prince?”

… The prince…? Toki’s attention was grabbed almost immediately, and her eyes focused on the
child curiously. That was Asriel, she knew- but wasn’t he dead…?

"That’s right, they can indeed." The older fish monster replied to her daughter, though she did notice
Toki's sudden perk of interest. "Hm? What's with that look?" Ariel inquired curiously.

Toki shook her head lightly and simply smiled. The lie fell from her teeth almost too easily- she’d
been covering for her mistakes for weeks with people she’d run across Underground. “I just wasn’t
aware the Prince was able to use fire magic, that’s all. It’s a rare talent outside of elementals.”

"They’re boss Monsters, I guess it’s just sorta their special ability, or whatever you want to call it."
Ariel replied with a grin, "Every boss monster has their own special capability that makes them
especially cool, right Undyne?"

"Yeah!" The Guppy replied with gusto, "But nothing's cooler than Mom's spears!"

Toki laughed softly. “I’m sure your Mom’s spears are amazing.” She offers a toothy grin to both fish
monsters. “My special abilities aren’t anywhere near that cool. I can’t summon a physical weapon. I
can, however…” Toki took a moment to crook one of her teeth to the side, creating a gap in her
usually perfect crocodile grin. She tilted her head away from them, and focused her magic up into her
mouth. She exhaled a small puff of flame. “Do that, among summoning other things.” She didn’t
really want to bring her summons out near water, since they were particularly susceptible to it, but
fire breathing near water was damn near the safest place to do it.

‘Aim a little further over, and you could have deep fried fish sticks.’

‘No, Cruelty.’

Undyne’s gold eyes glistened at her eagerly. “Oh my GOSH MOM! SHE JUST BREATHED
FIRE!”

"She did. Wow." Ariel was gawking a little, "That was pretty cool." She then laughed, "Never seen
someone do that. I've seen the Prince summon from his hands, but never seen anyone do it from their
mouth."

Toki smiled wryly and corrected the placement of her tooth. “I’m not good at doing it through my
hands.” She says. “But through my mouth I can do. I can channel warmth through my hands though-
but not fire itself. I can actually channel warmth out of all of me- that’s how I’m keeping the water
warm around us right now.” She sighs pleasantly, and finishes scrubbing herself clean. Toki lifts a little out of the water, leaving her lower legs in so she can keep it warm, and then dries herself off with her magic. She’s still an unhealthy sort of thin- but it’s only been a couple days of eating semi-normally, and even monster food isn’t enough to fix that. Her elbow brushes her ribs. “Anyways, the only weapons I have are on my body.” She rolls a wrist over to show one of her stingers. “I’ve got them on my feet too,” She warns, “So you might not want to grab my ankles, you little shark.”

Undyne grins. “I was gonna do it, too, but you tucked your feet out of where I can reach them.” She doesn’t quite understand the concept of what ‘too thin’ is, but thinks that the white monster could do with more meat on her bones. As her mane dries though, she grins. “Wow. Your hair is almost fluffier than Mom’s hair is!”

”Very nice, I know one little boy who would love that fluff of yours.” Ariel chuckled gently, before she took this chance to pull Undyne back and start washing her hair. She wasn’t daft- she saw how thin the other was. It was not, however, any of her business.

“I already know one who does.” Toki laughs gently, watching Undyne sputtering as her mother starts to shampoo her hair. “Speaking of, I need to get going. I have work soon- and I’m supposed to watch him and his brother for Sapphire while she gets rest.” Toki shifts, and stands fully. She steps out of the water to go grab and flash dry her clothes, giving them a sheepish look as the aura of warmth begins to fade a little. “It will linger a little while longer, but it wont stay long. Enjoy it while you can- and maybe we’ll see each other again here for a bath soon, yes?”

“Totally! AUGHGHPPHHHTHTHPBB IT’S IN MY MOUTH!” Undyne scooped water into her mouth to chase out errant soap bubbles.

Toki laughed gently. “I think that’s up to your mother and her work schedule, little one.”

Ariel chuckled and had her take a mouthful of water to rinse out her mouth, before tilting her head back as to reposition the effect of gravity. "It was very nice to meet you, Toki, and thank you.” The red haired buff fish lady gave her a smile. “Hope to see you again!”

Toki adjusted her clothes as she tugged them on, and nodded. “I’m sure we will. If you want to see me again, just stop by Grillby’s Bar.” She quirks a smile. “That’s where I’m working for now.”

With that said, she waved to the mother and her daughter, and turned, fluttering her wings. Magic had dried them too, so she lifted off without issue, a buzz overtaking the cavern briefly as she took to the air and headed out of Waterfall and back into the icy chill of Snowdin.

Immediately her toes practically froze off, as did her secondary arms. She tucked them close to her and pulsed her magic into her limbs to keep them warm, and headed for the familiar shape of Grillby’s bar and grill, spotting the sign just getting flipped to open as she buzzed overhead.

The town itself was just waking up- but Grillby’s was always busy. There were morning regulars, afternoon regulars, night time regulars, and then there were the all-day drunkards, who got a kick out of her Death Shot.

She dropped down at the door, and opened it as it unlocked. She slid in, grabbing her apron from the coat rack, and busied herself with tying it on. She turned her gaze to Grillby and smiled. “Hey, Grillby. How’s today looking?”

“Sapphire is feeling much better.” He responds lightly. “She is tired, but I think that is just our emberling taking more magic from her. It is good that the boys father is returning for a time- James is taking over shift for a while. Quinn was beginning to miss his father.”
“Oh?” Trepidation tingled through her belly. She was ready to face Tenne- but she wasn’t sure if she
was ready to face whatever he had to say in regards to her leaving, or her current physical state. He
was a doctor- he was sure to pitch a hell of a fit about her current state. She swallowed. “That’s
good. Quinn was really clingy yesterday when it came time for me to get off shift, and Kai stuck
pretty close to me all day yesterday too. I think I remind them of their dad- probably all the white
skin.” She laughs lightly.

“Perhaps so.” Grillby chuckles quietly. “Still, come in and warm up for a minute or two, and take a
moment with the boys. Tenne should be along shortly, so they’ll be out from underfoot before long.
You’ll have full use of your arms and legs today without stepping on any teeny tiny feet.”

“I felt really bad for stepping on Kai’s toe.” Toki frowns a bit, but chuckles all the same. She comes
inside, and heads for the bar, keeping a lookout for any wayward kids that she knows are soon to be
coming once they heard her down below the house above the bar.

It didn’t take long indeed before there were two small limpets on her legs, one slightly larger than the
other. They both peered up at her happily, and Toki was helpless but to heft them up into her arms,
and on her back, for a proper cuddle until their dad came to pick them up and take them home.

Only Tenne didn’t show up.

Hours crept past, with Toki eventually settling into work with the kids alternating between clinging
to her, peering out the windows impatiently, or helping her take orders like the adorable little
skeletons they were.

The morning rolled past, well into noon- and noon rolled by into late day, and from late day into late
at night- and still no Tenne. Cruelty spent the day filling Toki’s head with all sorts of horrible
scenarios about what could have happened to the doctor, and she steadfast ignored him until he tired
himself out and went back to sleep again.

Grillby offered to take the boys upstairs again for the night, to which Kai vehemently refused, and
Quinn nearly had a small fit. They were quite certain that Tenne was coming, and Toki was sure he
would too. He wouldn’t just abandon his sons- and she was sure he was a monster of his word, even
across the worlds.

Toki had waved the fire monster off, and sent him upstairs, telling him that she’d lock up the bar for
him once Tenne had come to get his kids- and if all else failed, she’d stay with the boys all night, so
he could have a night with his wife.

It was easier said than done- as time rolled closer and closer to midnight, Quinn got crankier and
crankier, fussing with the saddest sounding ‘Nyehs’ that simply broke her heart. Kai was less verbal,
but he seemed to droop the longer it took for Tenne to come get his kids.

So Toki had hefted both boys up against her shoulders, looping her arms gently around them. Four
arms were useful in this instance, letting her cradle them to her shoulder without much issue. She
might not have been as plush and padded as she used to be, but she was still a nice thing to cuddle
with the plush and freshly washed ruff of fur acting like a pillow.

With them in her arms, she began to sway gently, a familiar motion that she used when Skylar and
Honey were tired and needed to sleep.

The boys were fussy about it, of course, resisting her attempts at getting them to sleep- so Toki
resorted to her next thing. Singing.
“When life leaves you high and dry, I'll be at your door tonight, if you need help, if you need help. I'll shut down the city lights, I'll lie, cheat, I'll beg and bribe, to make you well, to make you well.” She wasn’t necessarily quiet, but she wasn’t necessarily loud either. The song came unbidden- and she recognized it. A pang of loss hit her soul- and it very nearly choked her up.

For their sake, she forced her way through the knot in her throat. “When enemies are at your door, I'll carry you away from war, if you need help, if you need help. Your hope dangling by a string, I'll share in your suffering, to make you well, to make you well. Give me reasons to believe, that you would do the same for me… And I would do it for you, for you.”

Toki both loved and hated the next part of the lyrics to the song, because that throbbing emptiness in her soul, and in her arms, only felt deeper. Here she was, singing to baby Papyrus and Sans- and they weren’t hers. The void had spat her back and told her no- and she couldn’t go home. She couldn’t… She couldn’t see her mate and babies. “Baby, I'm not moving on, I'll love you long after you're gone. For you, for you, you will never sleep alone; I'll love you long after you’re gone… And long after you're gone, gone, gone.”

She faded off into soft humming, listening as Quinn began to settle down finally. “When you fall like a statue, I'm gon' be there to catch you, put you on your feet, you on your feet. And if your well is empty, not a thing will prevent me; tell me what you need, what do you need? I surrender honestly. You've always done the same for me. So I would do it for you, for you.”

Toki stroked her fingers gently over Kai’s back as the boy made a fussy sound, and he stilled. “Baby, I'm not moving on, I'll love you long after you're gone. For you, for you, you will never sleep alone; I'll love you long after you're gone… And long after you're gone, gone, gone.”

Toki felt lightheaded- and her eyes were misting, fogging up with luminescent green tears. Grief was present in her voice- very, very present. Thankfully, the children didn’t seem to notice, nor notice the glowing tracks of tears beading from her eyes. “You're my back bone, you're my cornerstone, you're my crutch when my legs stop moving. You're my head start, you're my rugged heart, you're the pulse that I've always needed. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, my heart never stops beating…”

A quick breath in, and Toki continued. “For you, for you. Baby, I'm not moving on. I'll love you long after you're gone. For you, for you. You will never sleep alone. I'll love you long after you're gone. For you, for you. Baby, I'm not moving on, I'll love you long after you're gone. For you, for you. You will never sleep alone. I'll love you long, long after you're gone.”

There was a soft snore from her left shoulder, where Quinn had fallen asleep. Kai wasn’t out yet, but he was starting to doze. Toki’s voice softened automatically, so as not to wake him. It fell in time with the ending of the song. “Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum, baby, don't stop beating. Like a drum my heart never stops beating for you. And long after you're gone, gone, gone. I'll love you long after you're gone… gone… gone…”

Toki was left standing there, with no way to mop the tears on her face, as she cradled the two children she clutched to the empty voids where her own should be.

Tenne had shown up partway into her singing, his breathing rough with how quickly he had sprinted to pick up his children. He had a massive list of apologies to give to Grillby and his mate, but he had frozen at seeing Toki cradling his children.

To say the least, he was surprised to see her there, but even more so with his children in her arms.

He watched her, heard her song, and watched the tears well in her eyes before running down her
cheeks, staining them with her pain. "..." He couldn't see the pain of just losing a pack- He saw more... so much more. If she was in this much pain...

She should have fallen by now, it not long ago.

But to have so much strength...

He slowly entered, and approached her. He didn't know what to say, and was not sure how to get her attention.

Choosing a method he best thought would work, he purposely put weight into his footsteps to make them heard in the gentle silence. He came around to her front and examined his children, long-gone Quinn, and newly surrendered Kai... They were so comfortable... A smile came to his lips before he reached out and cupped her cheeks gently with his hands, wiping her tears away with his thumbs, before pulling her into a tight hug.

Toki heard his footsteps in the silence that followed, but wasn’t sure what to do. Here she was, green tears staining the snowy white skin of her face, with his children pillowing their heads on the ruff of her neck. She half expected anger for her disappearance- for having simply left a letter and nothing else, for having said naught a word to him in... In weeks. What she didn’t expect was for him to gently wipe her tears, and then tug her into a hug.

Toki was much thinner in his arms than she was when she left all those weeks ago. She’d been in the world for nearly nine weeks now- and that meant it had been close to... Close to two months, since he had last seen her. That was a lot of time to be suffering and not eating right. She was under weight, under fed, and it seemed like she was still trying to handle her grief.

A handle on which she did not have a very good grip on. There was a sound, like a wounded animal, that was muffled by his shoulder, as she hid a choked sob so she didn’t wake the children. She shuddered faintly, her wings trembling on her back, as she tried to gather herself. It took several long minutes, before she managed to reconstruct the mask that the song had broken down. The tears had left faint stains along her face, but nothing a good scrub in the snow wouldn’t remove. She would have sniffled if she had nostrils- instead she made the oral equivalent, which was a strange whiffing noise between her teeth. “Thank you,” She murmurs softly against his shoulder. Her arms shift with his children in them, and she looks up at him from tired eyes in thin cheeks. Toki manages to give him a smile despite it all. “Your boys have missed you.” She could see a couple of singe marks, making her wonder what had happened to the doctor.

He held her tightly until she recovered, and he smiled at her gently as they withdrew from one another. Listening and giving a small nod she spoke, Tenne simply gave her a gentle smile. "Of course... and yes, I know... I hate doing this to them... " He sighed, stroking Quinn's head, "My dear boys...” he purred, before he looked to her once more. "You deserve a good bed to rest in... The least I owe you is an offering of a bed to rest your head on...” He offered to her, "I do not think the pups will let go as easily either... Please. Let me make me make up to you the time you have been so kind to my pups..."

She shifted slightly, the lure of a warm bed out of the cold and ice quite strong against the desire to be independent on her own and not mooch off of someone else like she had when she’d lost her home the first time. “I... don’t want to be a burden,” She murmurs softly, gently rubbing her fingers along Kai’s back. In truth, she doesn’t want to let the children go either. Toki inhales quietly, and then sighs. “If you’re sure, then... okay.”

There was a creak from the stairs, and Grillby’s glow appears. He peers at Toki and Tenne, and
gives Tenne a stern frown for his tardiness, before holding up a bag to Toki. “Don’t think you can
forget this,” He murmurs softly so as to not wake the children. “Don’t worry about your apron
tonight- you can bring it back tomorrow,” He continues as he pats close. He pulls a clip from his
pocket, and clips the sandwich to her apron, with a quiet murmur of, ‘maybe it’ll help keep you
warmer’, and then hums softly. “Your wages and burger are in there. I’m going to be very upset if
you don’t eat it.”

“As will I. This emotional pain is no excuse to let our body waste away into nothingness.”

“I’ll make sure to eat it, Grillby.” She sighs at the double insistence, and glances to Tenne.

Tenne definitely had a kicked puppy look at Grillby's look, but he smiled at him after a moment
nonetheless. "Thanks for everything, Grillby. How’s Sapphire?" He asked.

Grillby tilted his head slightly. “Still sick, but better. Toki has been helping. Her venom is
surprisingly good for fire elemental health, as is her magic- she has also stepped in to fill in for
Sapphire, so she can rest. Toki’s been very helpful in watching the boys these last couple of days as
well.” He eyes the white bee blaster lightly. “With Toki’s help, Sapphire has been improving. I’d still
appreciate you taking a look at her, however, when you get the chance. For now, Toki’s venom
seems to be helping.”

Toki nods quietly, and adjusts her grasp on the children. “She’ll probably need a dose tomorrow.”

She murmurs. “You’ll have to let me know or not when I come in, alright?”

“Will do.” Grillby nods. “Now, get somewhere warm, both of you. It’s supposed to storm the next
couple of days. Toki- you have enough gold by now. Please, stay at the Inn if you’ve nowhere else
to go. Anywhere but that… little twigs and snow den you call a house.”

“Well… I’ll be staying with Tenne for a little bit… If I over stay my welcome, I’ll see about the Inn.
No promises though.” Toki shuffles quietly. “I would have rather you didn’t tell everyone where I
live, Grillby.”

“You live in twigs and snow in a snowy forest.” The fire elemental raises a brow. “That’s such a
pinpoint location.” He snorts. “Now off with you, shoo, shoo, you have children who need their
father just as much as they need their bed.”

"I'll definitely take a look at Sapphire on the morrow.” He nods. “James took over the lab for the
next few days as the projects we were working on are now wrapped up. It'll give me a chance to
catch up to my duties." Tenne replied with a light smile, before he looked at Toki. "If you would, my
lady." He rumbled lightly, walking to the door and pulling it open to hold it for her.

She gave him a faint smile, and moved to the door. It was cold as the air blew in, and she shivered
roughly, wings trembling. She tucked the boys closer to her as her fur ruffled in response, and puffed
her magic into the air, heating the air around her and creating a buffer against the chill. The boys
might be made mostly of bone, but that didn’t mean they couldn’t still be bothered. They were
children, after all. Toki rubbed their backs as she stepped out into the snow, her bare feet crunching
lightly on the ice. Her paws were perpetually cold- but it was a cold she was growing used to.

“Thank you, Tenne.”

Grillby took the door for Tenne, and waved the taller monster out. The lankier beast and the smaller
bee based one made an odd pair, stepping out of his bar. Either way, Grillby waited until they were
both out, before shutting the door and locking it behind them.

Toki glanced up to Tenne, and adjusted her grip on Kai and Quinn as she shuffles her toes to keep
them from getting too cold. “I don’t know where you live here.” She admits quietly. “So… Lead the way…?”

He removed his long-coat and draped it around her, keeping her and his sons warm. "This way, my dear." He replied as he led her down the path of Snowdin, past the patch that had been where Cae and Quinn's home resided.

A little while of walking later and he revealed to her a path between two greatly grown trees, their branches hiding the opening that laid between them.

Breaking off onto this once-hidden path, Tenne led her to a great home built just out of reach of Snowdin's hustle and bustle.

"Now... I know it's not much... but it's home..." He told her gently.

Toki smiled slightly as the house came into view. It was a log cabin style house, like most of the houses built in this part of the Underground seemed to be, and had little unlit lanterns decorating the outsides of it. She shivered a bit under his coat as a cold breeze stole the cloud of heat from her.

“It’s beautiful.” She smiles softly. Definitely better than what she had been staying in. Toki continues to pad for the house, and strokes her fingers gently along the boys backs. “I can get the fire place lit, if you've got firewood, Tenne.”

"Of course." He got ahead of her and unlocked the door, pushing it open until it stuck and getting a head start on lighting the lanterns around the home.

"Go ahead and get comfy while I get everything ready." He told her once she was inside, gesturing to a couch with his tail.

She tilted her head at his fussing, and quietly hummed. She shook her head at him, and carefully lifted a thin and long-clawed hand from behind Kai, who was firmly clinging to her without much assistance. She tugged on her magic, and around them her bees formed, filling the house with warm, green light as they clung to the walls and buzzed faintly. She directed them with a simple thought to go light the lanterns, and then gave him a smile. “Please, allow me. It’s the least I can do, since you are sharing your home. Allow me to help warm it. What else is fire magic good for?”

That done, she went to carefully disentangle the children from her, attempting to carefully ease them down onto the couch so she could cover them in their father’s jacket. While she did, the familiar form of Toki’s favorite single striped Queen drifted down to Tenne, gave him a quizzical buzz, and then made to land on his shoulder. She was marked differently than the other bees by the harness that she wore.

He saw the bees and paused with awe, but had definitely flinched upon Stripe growing close. Though as she landed harmlessly, he settled some and smiled. "Oh... how lovely..." He cooed gently, "Hello big girl... A pretty queen, aren't you?" He purred, reaching up and slowly rubbing her head with a finger. "A pleasure to meet you, your highness~"

Stripe let out a pleased buzzing noise and rubbed his finger with her head. She was very small compared to him, but all the same, she let out a pleased sound. She turned on his shoulder, and then made a piping sound at Toki, while spreading her wings and twitching her thorax at her.

Toki spotted the motion, and the corresponding thought that came with it, and sent her a venomous look out of the corner of her eye. “Her name is Stripe,” She says with an even tone of voice. “She’s one of the things I can summon- and she’d got a bit of a personality of her own, for being a lesser
summons. She’s sassing me.” Her own wings flick slightly on her back, glimmering surfaces glowing brighter for a moment as she manages to get both boys nestled together and settled on the couch. Once they’re down, she curls their father’s coat around them, and then carefully takes off her apron.

She’s left in the slightly tattered turtleneck he gave her when she left, and the pants he had as well. She adjusts her waistband, and then heads over to the fireplace, where she grabs several logs and piles them on. Like with the river, she lets her magic build, and exhales a small plume of fire onto the wood. The dry wood catches, and the flames consume it hungrily.

"Impressive." He commented, though whether it was on Stripe or what she had just done, it wasn't clear. He came over and looked at his boys with a sweet smile, before he glanced over at Toki. "She's very lovely, matches her summoner..."

A faint smile crawled up her teeth at his compliment, and she couldn’t stop the dusting of green that crossed her cheeks. Compliments were always nice, no matter what body you were in. “She is fitting, isn’t she?” She hums softly. A soft laugh leaves the bee blaster beast as she stands however, momentarily warming her chilled toes by the flames as she relaxes some in the glow of the firelight. She shivers faintly still, her thin body chilled despite her magic working to warm her. “If you think she’s impressive, you should meet Clover.”

"I bet she's as wonderful as this lovely little one here." He purred as he slowly coaxed Stripe onto his hand, now able to pet her with the length of his hand instead of just a finger.

Stripe let out pleased buzzes, and leans into his hand as he pets her.

Toki chuckles softly. “Clover can be a grump, and she’s big enough that if she gets too grumpy, it could be a problem.” She glances to the ceiling as her swarm returns, and they flood the room in soft green light once more. They settle on the ceiling, and all at once begin to buzz and emit heat, working to raise the ambient temperature of the house. Toki sighs pleasantly, and rolled up her sleeves a little bit. “Much better.” The bag of food Grillby sent home is fetched, and she wiggles it at him lightly. “Did you eat anything at your work today?”

'A 'grump.' Cruelty scoffed, 'More like frenzied hornet, moody or not.'

"Well, ah." Almost immediately Tenne's stomach growled loudly at the mention of food, "I... had a snack... yesterday?"

Toki snorted, and then padded to him. She plopped the bag in his hand, “Eat this then.” She then hesitated. “If you like, I could cook something. It might be late, but it doesn’t take long with me. Please, accompany me to your kitchen? I don’t want to snoop into things that I’m not allowed to.”

He chattered quietly before he smiled and shook his head. "Nonono, please, keep this! This is your food. I can easily make the pups and myself something to eat. You have that, eat, and get comfortable, please, my lady."

“You’ve obviously been working all day,” As had she, but she wasn’t going to point that out, “And you ran late, so you worked over your hours.” She shakes her head slightly, and gives him a smile. “I made sure the pups were fed, by the way. I kept them fed all day- they ate a little bit before you came to get them. I don’t mind cooking, Tenne. I’m actually not bad at it, I promise. It would be something normal for me. And, ah, well... I don’t have much of an appetite myself.” She admits quietly. “So the burger is a little much for me. I’m good for... maybe half of it.” If that. She rubs her arms lightly and sighs softly.
"I couldn't possibly ask you to make me food, Miss Toki... After you took care of my pups so kindly... I'm so sorry about that, I honestly... I mean... I should be a better father than that." He sighed as he sat down on a chair, putting his face in his hands. "I'm shocked my pups still love me as much as they do..."

She moved closer and rested one of her hands on his shoulder. “Tenne,” she said softly, “You work hard to provide for your boys. You are, from what I can tell, a single parent trying to do the best he can for his sons. They’re smart boys- they know this. They miss you- they miss you a lot. But they have nothing but praise for you.” She gives him a smile. “Why don’t you go wake them up and cuddle them for a bit, okay? I’ll make the three of you something warm to eat and drink, and you can spend some time with your sons. I’m sure they’d appreciate some attention from their dad.”

Look at her- giving parenting advice to two different parents in one day. Well, in less than twenty-four hours. Go her.

He looked up at her, his pupils a little wider as she spoke, before he smiled shakily. "You're too kind, Toki... Thank you." He purred quietly.

'Ugh, you mean to tell me I had him tortured for hours to break that mind of his, and what, twenty years earlier all I had to do was tell him his boys didn't love him?' Cruelty hissed in frustration.

'You’re never going to get the chance to torture him again, so I guess that’s information you can just rot on for eternity, hm?’ She bites back sourly.

To Tenne, however, she only smiled softly. “I’ve been told that before.” She pats his shoulder again, and then gently brushes past him. One of her wings brushes against his knees. “You’ve done a good job with your sons so far, Tenne. I was serious though. Wake them up and cuddle them a bit- or just pull them to you and let them cling.” She turns back to tap where her nose would be if she had it. “They recognize your scent- let them know you’re back. They’ll smell you in their sleep. You can keep me company in the kitchen with them that way, if you like.”

Her wings flick, and with that, she pads quietly into the kitchen to make him and his children something to eat. If they didn’t eat the burger, she supposed. Remembering that Tenebris liked meat, she went to what looked like a freezer, and opened it, only to find it was… an ice box? With a direct line to the snow and ice outside. Well, that was one way of keeping everything chilly.

She quietly collected what looked like decent meat, and moved over to the sink, and began to thaw it slowly with her magic, so she didn’t just flash cook it in the package.

As she went to prepare the food, Tenne did as he was told, and collected his pups in his arms. He was happy to have a nearly-instant reaction from them as they grew active in his arms for but a moment to get comfortable.

He kissed their heads gently, and then leaned back with a gentle sigh of what could have only been relief. "My beautiful baby boys..." he purred gently, before he whispered to them both, "Nec sine te nihil sum." He whispered.

Once the pups were comfortable, and their grasp on their father was locked, he slowly got up to his feet and made his way into the kitchen to keep Toki company.

By the time he got into the kitchen, Toki had the meat setting in a cast iron pan, and was heating it up in one of her hands. It was sizzling away. The other hand had a pot full of water in it, and a vegetable boiling inside. She leaned against his stove, which remained unlit and dark. Her final two
hands were working on heating up a pot of tea for him. She looked up as he came in, and slid the pot of tea to one hand, before waving with her now free one. She poked at the steaks lightly, and flipped them over to brown the other side. “Just seared, right?”

"Yes, precisely." he rumbled, a smile on his face as he leaned against the counter. "There's seasonings on the rack by the stove." He pointed them out with his tail, before he realized she was starting the kettle.

“Thank you.” She hummed with a nod. She braced the hot kettle against her chest, her flesh thankfully still impervious to fire and all things hot, and scooted over to collect spices. She thumbs through them, picks out a few, and then rubs them gently into the meat as it cooks. A flash of fire magic cleans her hands better than any hand sanitizer ever could, and she gently flips the steaks again, before scooting to rifle for mugs. She pulls one down initially, and thinks better of it, before grabbing a second one for her. A warm cup of tea sounded good about now, she mused.

She huffed through her mouth, scenting out the familiar taste of orange blossom, before collecting the tea. She put some into each mug, and then poured the hot water over it to let it steep. The hot kettle was set on the stove, which freed up her upper most hands, so she could continue to work with the boiling broccoli and the searing steak. Once it was browned on both sides, she set it off to the side, and then glanced to him. “How do the kids eat theirs?”

"Rare." He answered for the steaks, before he chuckled quietly. "Well... Orange Blossom huh?" He asked.

She nodded to the children’s steaks, and took theirs off when the pan was done. She hadn’t cooked any more than three- the largest of the cuts for the biggest monster. She glanced up at him, and then moved to drain the broccoli. “Ah... yeah.” Her wings flick, and she tucks her head down self-consciously into the fluff of her neck. “It’s the tea I’m most familiar with. Plus it... It reminds me of home.” She murmurs quietly. Her throat tightens, and she huffs in a soft breath, before shaking off anything that might be building. She instead goes to the fridge and gets butter for the broccoli, before mixing it in and melting it, and then dishing it up onto the plates. There’s a little itty bit left over, and she scoops that onto a fourth plate for her to nibble at, before setting the pots and pans into the sinks.

The kids get glasses of ice water, before she quietly sets them all at the table in the kitchen. She goes hunting for silverware next, procuring them and then bringing Tenne his tea. She shuffles awkwardly, and collects the bag from Grillby’s that had been set there, before taking it to the counter. “Well, ah... Your dinner is served?” She picks up her plate of broccoli and nibbles at it lightly. It tasted good, soaked in butter. Definitely a change from cave critters and fried food. Her mouth thanked her.

The smell is heavenly to Tenne and he let out a hungry keen, before he looked to his boys, nuzzling and bouncing them gently to see if they’ll stir for their probably second dinner. "Quinn, Kai." He cooed to them gently, "Time for food."

As if the F-word were magic, Kai’s eyes opened and he let out a quiet grumble, before he yawned and stretched in his dad’s arms.

Toki gave Kai a smile and took a moment to sip her tea. It smelled and tasted heavenly, and warmed her from the inside out. Speaking of warm... The living room went dark as she willed her bees away, and Stripe disappeared from where she had been lingering around the kitchen. “Hey there, kiddo. I told you your dad would come for you,” She smiled, “He was running a little late, but here he is. And look- he’s even got dinner for you and Quinn. Think you can help your dad and get your little brother up for us?”
Kai opened his eyes a little more, and then hugged his father's neck tightly, "Papa!" he chirped happily. He then leaned back and turned to his brother, gently shaking his brother who whined and squeaked until he consciously realized who it was he was clinging to.

Quinn’s orange eyes lit up with joy, and he flailed against him happily. "Da!"

"Hello my boys~" He cooed happily to them.

Toki’s soul both warmed and ached, and there was a torn expression that crossed her face, before she covered it with her mug and closed her eyes to steel herself. So much for Quinn only saying ‘nyeh’. Still, it was a cute sight, even if it made her long for her own children. She wanted her babies clutched to her so badly… So badly that it almost physically hurt. “It looks like someone’s learned more than just ‘Nyeh.” She smiles, and then goes closer to scoot their plates all to one side of the table, so the boys don’t have to leave Tenne’s lap. She gives him a lopsided but knowing smile, and then eases herself down across from them to nurse her tea and pick at her broccoli. Hardly a meal for a predator monster, but she could nibble the Grillby’s burger later if Kai didn’t eat it. He seemed to enjoy Grillby’s food often.

He let the two have at the meat on their plates while they settled on his lap, though even with how quickly he downed his broccoli, Quinn had his eye on Toki… He gave a small noise and squirmed in Tenne’s lap. He was gently let loose, and Quinn waddled over to Toki.

"Quinn, what are you doing?" Tenne asked, arching a befuddled brow.

"Nyeh!" he reached up and patted Toki's lap, before looking up at her. "Nyeh!" he demanded again.

Toki blinked down at him, before laughing gently. She knew his demands by now. “Up?” She supplies for the child, and gently lifts him into her lap. She settles him there, and smiles at him. “Wanting to sit with me, kiddo? Or just want to steal my broccoli?” She’d seen how fast he’d scarfed the veggies on his plate. She wouldn’t deny him her broccoli if he wanted it- a growing boy needed his greens, after all.

"Nyeh!" He claimed her lap, and then reached over towards his plate, until Tenne got the message and pushed it over.

Quinn, for a moment, looked proud of himself, and he took her smaller plate of broccoli as he hopped right out of her lap and returned to his father's side, putting the plate on the table before getting his father to help him back onto his lap.

Now he looked even more proud of himself, having successfully switcheroo'ed his plate with Toki's.

Toki for her part could only blink and stare for a moment. She then laughed lightly, and rubbed her palm against her cheek. “Well, I guess someone likes how I do my broccoli.” She simply gave the boy an amused look, and glanced down at the untouched steak now sitting on what was now her plate. She could probably eat it- it certainly smelled good, and it made her stomach clench hungrily. She didn’t usually like her meat to be… well, so bloody, with the exception of when she was pregnant. But it looked damn good. She glanced up at Tenne to see what he thought of his son’s shenanigans and his apparent lack of desire to eat his meat.

"I think it's less that and more he'd be happier if you ate such good quality meat while he enjoyed your broccoli." Tenne chuckled gently, "Don't worry though, Kai doesn't mind sharing, does he?"

Kai looked up from where he was chewing a mouthful, before he blinked, and swallowed, before he stuck his fork into his meat and somehow managed to lift some of it over onto Quinn's plate.
"Thank you, Kai~"

Toki chuckled gently, and smiled slightly. "Well, thank you then, Quinn. You’re a growing boy though—meat will help make you grow big and strong. And thank you, Kai, for sharing with your brother. That was very sweet of you.” Since the boys were sharing their steak though—which was probably fine, given the size of the steaks that Tenne had in the packages—she simply sighed and gave in. She worked slowly into it, nibbling bites with her fork between sips of tea. It tasted good—very good—and the semi-raw nature of it settled well with something inside of her.

Probably the blaster beast nature, she assumed.

Either way, it prompted a soft, pleased buzzing to thrum from her in a low, continual tone. Toki was graceful in the way she ate. Lacking lips, her external teeth worked as a sort of flexible grabbing lip, pulling the small bits back into the teeth she used for proper chewing. She ate without mess too, managing to keep the dripping steak from getting into her plush fur, or on her shirt. Since she only had one shirt she’d practiced at keeping it clean. It was a hassle to have to keep cleaning it because it got dirty.

Toki was still done before they were, with most of the steak finished. She slid the plate across the way, offering the last quarter of it to the whichever of the boys wanted it, while she leaned back in her seat, reheated her tea some more, and sipped at it pleasantly. “Mmm…” She was almost uncomfortably full, but in a good way. She would sleep well tonight.

"If you'll go ahead and relax for a little, I’m going to clean the boys off and get them to bed. After that, the bathroom is yours." Tenne told her, finishing the last of his dinner before he scooped up his boys. "Don't sweat the mess, I'll get it after they're in bed, you've already done too much for me, Toki."

“I’ve already had a wash today, Tenne.” She gave him a faint smile. She smelled of Ariel’s shampoo, though faintly. She mostly smelled of the river water in Waterfall. “Thank you though. I’ll see you when you come back?” She relaxes in her seat, looking for all intents and purposes like she’s content to finish off her tea right there.

"I don’t go to bed for a while, you'll have company for a while before I call it a night." He chuckled as he started for upstairs.

In the time he took upstairs, Toki finished her tea, and did the dishes. He might have told her not to, but that didn’t mean she was necessarily going to listen. When they were done and dried, she put them away, and then returned to the couch, where she curled up and quietly played with the bottom of her shirt. Her eyes were drooping a bit, wings flicking behind her as they pressed against the couch. She was glad they were flexible—or they would be impossible to handle.

Toki nearly dozed off as she relaxed in place, eyes closing as she listened for the sounds of Tenebris coming down from having finished bathing the boys. She quietly basked in the lingering warmth of the room. It was leeching to the rest of the house, making the living room cold, but near the fire was still warm, and still good enough for her to feel comfortable in.

He came downstairs after the boys were successfully put to bed, but upon seeing the mess cleaned up, he made a small flurry of gestures with his arms before he scooped them and sighed. "You are persistent."

"I'm stubborn." She quirked a smile up at him and patted the couch next to her for Tenne to join her. "It's a trait many find frustrating. But my stubbornness has kept me going this far." She said softly. She sighs, and listens as the wind starts to kick up outside. It would have been cold outside. She's
definitely glad for a warm room to stay in tonight, that's for sure.

He chuckled quietly and came over, revealing a blanket he had tucked under his arm. Said blanket was then held out to her. "Here. Why don't you get comfy?"

She smiled to him and accepted the blanket. It was tucked around her, leaving her wings free so they didn't get squished. She cuddled into the arm of the couch, curling up for space. "Thank you, Tenne. Mm... Its much warmer inside." She sighs pleasantly. "Easier to keep warm too." She nuzzles into the blanket. The fire light gleams off her eyes, making her pupils shine at him.

"Well I couldn't imagine maintaining a very high heat in an igloo, well made or not. When it gets cold, it gets cold." He chuffed, "And as a personal loather of said cold, I find myself content in the safe warmth of my cabin." He chuckled.

She chuckles dryly. "It wasn't so much of an igloo so much as it is a den. It works well enough. I have blankets." She snuggles the one he's given her, and hums slightly. "I don’t mind the cold so long as I'm properly dressed for it. I've only got sleeves on one set of my arms and my paws are forever cold." She laughs gently. "My den isn't the best, but it works. I only sleep there, and I’ve only got blankets, so storage isn't an issue." And it pleased some primal part of her to have made her own little den. She theorized that it was part of being a blaster beast. She was having to learn a whole new set of instincts, just like when she became a skeleton.

"Once this blizzard passes I’ll see about making you some proper footwear." He rumbled gently, "My own keeps my pads safe from the thermal terrain and are rather easy to replace when they've been worn out."

Her mouth pinches a little bit, and she rubs her arms lightly. "I couldn't ask you to do that for me," she says softly. "You've done so much for me already, Tenne. You really have. I'll be okay." Her wings flick, and adjust against the couch, tucking against her back.

"I said the same thing to you not twenty minutes ago." He chuffed, "I'm going to make it fair, the least I can do."

"That was doing dishes and cooking." She rolls her eyes. "This is getting shoes custom made. That's... I don't even make enough gold to pay you back for that, Tenne. I don't even know how much it would cost, but I know I don't make nearly enough. Its okay." She smiles at him lightly. "I'll be out of your way after the blizzard anyways. So its okay."

At this point he thumped a foot, a habit that seemed to be shared across the verses, even if her Tenebris had picked it up from Thumper. "Out of the question. You're..." his voice started sharp, if not slightly frantic, before he paused for a moment. His stance softened, and he sighed. "You're the only other Blaster Beast I’ve met since I lost my pack... I cherish knowing you exist... And if I had the chance to protect you... E-Even if there was nothing meant by it..." he trailed off slowly, his gaze lowering to the floor.

Toki sucked in a soft breath and sighed. Part of her was torn. She wanted to tell him about Papyrus, about her mate, about Honey and Skylar and the children she had lost and the family she had been deprived of... But she didn't. She couldn’t bring herself to break that fragile hope she could see lingering in his eyes. There was no excuse in the book that she could use. There were no other fish in the sea- as far as he knew, she was the only other blaster beast that existed in his world. The hope in his eyes... It was the same hope she had seen dashed from Tenebris' own. Maybe it was influence from Cruelty, but... But she couldn’t bring herself to tell him. It might have been kinder to tell him. But... Toki couldn’t. She just... She couldn't.
She lets out a soft sound, almost a choked sound, and rubs her palm against one of her eyes. "I... I understand." She sighs softly. "I... I understand." She swallows again, and finally glances up to him. "Okay... If... You're sure it's not a bother... I don't mind hijacking your couch." Just like old times, when she lived on their couch until her house was rebuilt.

His eyes gleamed gently and he smiled, "It would not be any trouble at all, miss Toki" he purred happily, "We are family, our blood runs true, and winged, feathered, or scaled, we are kin."

There was almost a sour taste in her mouth as she forced a faint smile onto her teeth. "Yeah..." She agrees lightly. "Our blood runs true." That was about the only thing that did. "And please. Just... Call me Toki. If I'm going to be staying with you, then you're welcome to call me by my name, no additives to it."

"It will be a hard habit to drop, my dear," he replied with a soft laugh, "But as you wish, M-... Toki."

"Thank you, Tenne." She smiles quietly. "Is there anything you would prefer that I call you?" She's done very well not to call him Tenebris by accident, but she's wanted to a few times. It was easy to forget... Even though he looked so much younger than her Papa back home.

"Tenne is fine when we're in public. But here, I care not if you designate me by my nest-name."

She nods slowly. "Alright. I... Can handle that." There was no guarantee of her calling him Tenebris at the house though. She was more likely to call him Tenne. They were... They were different people. "T... Thanks, Tenne." Toki offers him a faint smile. "Really. For sharing your home, for helping me when I was sick, for the clothes... Just... Thank you. I'm... Sorry I disappeared for as long as I did."

"I was upset when you disappeared, but I was not about to try and hunt you down. You're a grown woman.” He sighs. “But I’m thankful that you didn't leave until you were healthy enough to survive."

She nods lightly. "You'll find that I am... A fairly independent woman. I took time to explore, and see things, and... Grieve my losses, honestly. I'm still not... Over them. But..." She shrugs faintly. "Some wounds only time can heal." It was partly why she looked too thin to be healthy for a blaster beast. She still gives him a smile all the same. "I did tell you that I would find you again though. Here I am?"

Jazz hands with four hands is twice as effective, she decides.

The snort and laugh that accompanied his smile was pure, and due with what previously marked his face

"Hahahaha!"

His laugh is rich and pure, and it makes her own bubble up to join his. She settles down on the couch, long since past longing for the comforts of her own bed, and simply laughs. It’s a surprisingly relieving motion, making something tightly balled in her chest begins to loosen up.

She could do this. She could... She could survive somehow. It wouldn’t be so bad. Toki needed to get past the pain and the hurt first, but... It was something she was fairly certain she could do. She was human at her core. Humans were built to survive.
Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Toki’s trying to survive in a world where she pretty much got told ‘no, you can’t see your kids or your husband anymore, get used to it because you have work to do’. So she’s trying to find as much light as she can in a dark, dark situation. Tenne on the other hand, seems to fancy her a little bit. But, as the only other member of his species… Why wouldn’t he? It’s also why she’s not utterly shattering his heart- because she doesn’t want to wreck his fragile little shreds of hope. Maybe it’s crueler, maybe it’s kinder- but remember… She’s not alone in her soul anymore. ;)

It took four days for the blizzard to pass, and that was four days that the boys got to spend with their father. Toki worked during the day, leaving a small swath of fire bees in the house with them to keep them warm while she was gone, and then would return by evening to help get dinner going for them. It gave the boys and their father some private time to bond and enjoy each other’s company while she was gone- along with time for him to get some of his work done, as he did come to work with her once to tend to Sapphire- since Tenne was so insistent on her staying with them. It was… It was almost a painful normalcy for her- but… it was a good sense of normalcy.

This wasn’t her family, but it helped soothe the pain in her soul any time Kai or Quinn would run up and cling onto her legs. They weren’t her children, but it helped fill the ache in the core of her being just a little bit each time. It was… sort of like a therapy for her soul. It was slow going… but it helped. She… She missed Papyrus and her children every day, and the pain always felt like it was growing worse. But… it was a little less with the distraction.

Of course, Cruelty was an asshole about it the whole time, about her replacing her family so soon, but she was good at ignoring him. Toki didn’t let his words rankle at her.

Well… too much.

Eventually Tenne had to go back to work though. The day after the blizzard ended, he got a call, and he said his goodbyes, and Toki was left in charge of the boys. She didn’t have a cell phone to make calls, but she did heft the boys up onto her back and make the trek over to Grillby’s to let him know she was going to take the day off to spend with the boys.

He was alright with that, and Sapphire, who was doing much better after Tenne tended to her, stepped up to take Toki’s place again.

That left Toki with the two melancholy boys, who were missing their father already. She packed them up onto her shoulders, which were now covered by an old but modified jacket from Tenne, and then paid for a couple to-go lunches from Grillby with what meager gold she had before setting out into the snow. But she didn’t return to the house- instead she lifted off into the air, and buzzed off across the trees.

“Alright, kiddos. Lets go on an adventure today.” Her magic created a buffer around them, letting her speak to them as she zipped through the air. “But, where would you like to go today?”

Quinn trilled as he held onto Toki, looking around excitedly, while Kai shrugged, "I dun care, where
do you wanna go?"

She hummed as she zipped around, looking across the skies. "Well... Do you want to go explore Waterfall? I'm not comfortable taking you to Hotland. Too much lava around you both." Quinn was too little to be around it, surely. She hummed thoughtfully. "Do you want to see the Capitol? I haven’t been there yet."

"Waterfall?" Kai questioned quietly as he blinked once, "You mean the caverns!" he corrected.

"If it has glowing water that falls, yes." She nods, and chuckles. "So we've got Waterfall or the Capitol." She could suggest the new castle that was being built... But that was probably going to get them in trouble, so best to just not.

"Waterfall, then." Kai replied, nuzzling her shoulder with a happy sound.

She nuzzled him with a soft sound and then turned her angle away, heading back towards Waterfall. It didn't take long for her to reach the cave, and she dipped down, darting inside. Her wings made a racket as she buzzed through the corridors, and she flung herself amused at the echoes it made. She made her way deeper, quite familiar with the tunnels by now. Once they were a decent way in where no one else ever seemed to go, she touched down and set the boys carefully down on the marshy ground. She grinned to them. "Alright, little ones. Pick a direction, and lets explore. We might even come across a couple of settlers while we're out here. Who knows?"

"Go anywhere" Kai suggested, while Quinn giggled, "NYEH!" he would announce, patting her arm gently.

Toki laughed and straightened, patting the boys heads. She offered them her hands on her longer arms, and held their lunches in her smaller ones. "Alright. Hm... How about... We go see the echo flowers? They're very neat." She gently tugged on their little hands, and then was guiding them off through the not so dark cave. "They echo what you say." She grins. "And each other. It can get a little silly when it distorts."

"Echo flowers?" Kai piped up, before he smiled, "those sound cool"

"They are!" She smiles. "Maybe we can bring back one for your dad with a little message for him on it?" She laughs cheerily, and flicks her wings happily. He walls glow with bioluminescent moss, and it is a beautiful sight to witness. The echo flower cave isn't far off, actually. She'd brought them out this way for a reason.

The boys were enjoying the show, but were surprised to see guards standing point, before one stepped forward to stop Toki

Toki paused at the sight of the guards as well. "Those are new." She said lightly, gingerly tucking the children closer to her. She offered them a light smile. These weren't the guards from her world. There was no telling what these ones were like. "Hello," she greets lightly. "Can I ask why we're being stopped? I just wanted to show the kids the echo flowers just beyond your... Barrier there."

"This area is under investigation to ensure safety for civilian inhabittance." The guard spoke, "If you wish to get to the burning lands, please use the marked detour just back down the cave a bit."

"We're not headed for the burning lands. We did want to see the echo flowers, but I guess thats not happening." She rolls her eyes a little bit. "And this area is plenty safe. I survived here for a couple of weeks on my own, and there should be some settlers making homes some where in here. If you're worried about the echo flowers, dont be." She flicks her wings slightly, and stoops to scoop up the
children. "So long as you don't eat the... I think it's the stems... Yeah, the stems, you'll be fine. The petals make a great tea."

"Your advice is noted, and will aid the conclusion of our investigation, but i must insist, Madame."

"Aren't those doctor Tenne's sons on her back?" the other guard spoke up.

"Fine, fine." She sighed. She turned her gaze to the boys clinging to her. "Looks like the echo flowers will have to wait, little ones."

The comment on the kids, and something in the tone of voice the guard took, however, made her tense, her neck fur bristling a bit. She glanced at him and lifted a brow. "They are." She said, voice deceptively even, "What of it?"

"We were not informed there was a new guardian of the children."

"On a different note, I don't believe I have scented you before." The first guard spoke, folding his arms and giving her a suspicious look. "Do you have ID?" he asked, which was most commonly possessed by those in the Capitol.

“Uh…” Shit, she didn’t have ID. She hadn’t even considered that- Grillby hadn’t asked for ID when she went to work for him. Her neck fur bristled slightly, and she cuddled the children closer to her. “I’ve only recently started looking after them while their father is at work. Very recently.” She answers. Well, that just sounds sketchy as hell, and she sounds like a kidnapper. Do monsters even have those? Toki swallows. “And no. I don’t have an ID.”

The guards exchanged looks, and then turned back to her, before the one who had been talking stepped forward. "You're going to have to come with us, Miss."

"To protect the citizens of the underground, we were ordered to ensure any and all are known and accounted for in the underground. If you are truly Doctor Tenne's sitter for his children, then he will be able to vouch." The first wolf guard said. His eyes narrowed at her. "However, failure to discover your identity will lead to incarceration."

Incarceration. Shit. Well. ‘Failure to discover her identity’ was bound to happen. She didn’t have one. There was a moment of instinctive fight or flight within Toki- the fight wanted her to let magic build up in the back of her throat, into something decidedly not flames, while the flames wanted her to bolt and flee.

Toki took a hard moment to stamp these out, forcing her narrowed pupils to widen once more. She forcibly relaxed her shoulders, and took slow breaths. “Alright. Fine. Where are the kids and I going to be taken to while you get verification?"

"A sentry point not far from here, we will be able to contact the doctor and have him verify. Please come with me." The ‘please’ at this point was more or less just a pleasantry, because the rest of it was clearly an order. Gesturing for her to follow, he began walking to the detour road.

Toki heaved a sigh through her teeth, and turned to plod after the wolf monster. She hefted the kids up a little higher and nuzzled their shoulders. "I'm sorry about this, kids. Your dad will get it all sorted out though." She reassured them gently, keeping them tucked close to her. She kept an eye on the guard, and made sure not to step in any holes in the cave floor as she went along. A rolled ankle
wouldn't serve her well at all.

Quinn let out a confused whine, while Kai grumbled and huffed as he rested his head on Toki's shoulder.

The guard led her to the sentry point as he had told her, and approached a phone that had been wired and tucked under the desk.

Toki nuzzled Quinn gently to reassure him, and came to a stop just outside of the sentry point. She bounced them both gently, and looked at the old ass phone wired into the booth. Good lord, that was a ground line. Who even used those anymore? She knew Tenne had a cell phone. A brick of a cell phone, but a cell phone all the same. "I don’t know his number, if you need it." She warns the guard lightly.

"That wont be necessary." The guard responded. He picked up the phone, and dialed Tenne's number, before holding it up to his ear and waiting for the doctor to answer. Everyone had Tenne's number. When there were few doctors, you kept the doctors you had in close contact.

After a few rings, the phone picked up, "Gaster speaking."

"Doctor Gaster," The guard greeted lightly, keeping his eye on the beastly woman who stared at him flatly, "I have in my custody a woman who claims to be babysitting your children. However, when questioned, she was unable to provide identification. Do you have a new babysitter we didn't know about, or do I need to appropriate your children from her and take her to incarceration?"

"Her name is Toki Nara," Tenne spoke evenly, “ and she is to be trusted. However, I apologize for her lack of ID. It slipped my mind that she needed to be registered with the guard with her presence now in the rural section. Would you please run her through the verification process? I will be there soon to meet you and collect her myself to take her to his majesty for the final step."

"Of course, Doctor. Miss Nara and myself are out at outpost b-12. We'll see you soon." With that done, the guard said his goodbyes to the doctor. He then turned to collect the start of the paperwork from one of the boxes under the outpost. "Doctor Tenne will be here soon. I'm going to help you get started with the verification process, Miss Nara."

Toki blinked and stared. "Oh... Okay." He changed his tune quick. But she supposed being vouched for was one of those things... "What do I need to do?" She questioned, and quietly gave herself a mental shake for having been so hostile and snarky with the guards.

"Simply some paperwork." He replied, and handed her a stack. “It's a swift process and we will complete the first step by the time Doctor Tenne has shown up.”

Toki nods slowly. She shifts the boys so they can cling to her back and braces them there with her larger set of arms. Her smaller pair come to her front, and she pads to the outpost to collect a pencil from him. She looks over the paperwork, and begins to fill out what she knows.

Quinn wrapped his arms around Toki's neck and closed his eyes as he settled for a nap, while Kai huffed and stretched with boredom against her back.

It didn't take long to fill out the paperwork, given her experience with doing loads and loads of it back before the Monsters had their own rights in her world, and soon she had it done. Toki set down the pencil, and twitched her wings, looking back at the kids with a faint sigh. "Your dad is slower than a frozen grease trap at Grillby’s." She tells them with a mock forlorn tone, hoping to get some giggles while they waited.
Quinn was already dozing, while Kai grumbled against quietly against her shoulder, before squealing as he was suddenly plucked off her back.

"Ye of so little faith, my lady." Tenne laughed gently.

The squeal initially had her bristling, fur rising and fluffing out, and she was all fangs as she turned around to reclaim Kai back from whoever had taken him unceremoniously from her back. Tenne's voice and familiar face stopped her from... Well, probably doing something not very nice. She still had to take a moment to pat the fluff on her neck down, as it was still bristled and on edge. "Pardon me for not having expected to have to wait to get cleared." She rolls her eyes in good humor. "So... Sounds like I apparently needed ID to get around." She lifts a brow at him. "Sorry for making you come all the way out here and interrupting your work, by the way."

Kai swatted at his father but surrendered when Tenne simply pecked his head before resting him on his shoulder, "I completely forgot to have you registered while i was taking care of you the first time. But we have the IDs to ensure no imposters."

She was one huge imposter. "Imposters?" She inquires lightly, hands folding faintly across her chest. She leaves Quinn where he's at, dozing on her shoulder, and tilts her head at him. Her horn brushes her shoulder. "It's alright, Tenne. You were a bit... Overwhelmed at first, I think. We can take care of this now, and ensure I don't end up locked up or something. So what does it take to get an ID besides this small stack of paperwork?"

"A simple recognition of the king and his signature on the paper." he answered, but also didn’t answer. Picking one of the paper sheets up, pointing to the one spot left unsigned, he nodded to where the signature would go.

"Oh, I see. That makes sense." She nods slowly. She then makes a face and sighs. "Ugh. It's going to be a long walk back through Waterfall and Snowdin to get to the Capitol. You can't fly." And walking was so slow...

"You are new, you do not yet know." He chuckled lightly, "There is one who will get us to the castle easily." He ruffled the fur on top of her head lightly.

"We're gonna see River?" Kai asked eagerly, grinning when Tenne nodded

Holy shit, River was old then. Toki played clueless easily enough, but simply nodded. "Okay... Lead the way then. If we can even reach this River, through the blockades these guys have set up." Toki chuffs slightly. The patting of her head had prompted her fur to fluff on the grown of her head, and she ran a hand over it lightly. "Hey now. I don't have a brush to untangle it."

"You're with me now, you'll get your clearance." He rumbled to her, "They were just doing their jobs, my dear."

"I wasn't aware I needed clearance to see flowers, but I understand, I do." She adjusts Quinn a little bit, and gives Tenne a glance before looking at Kai. "They spoke in tones that... Triggered my desires to keep them safe, so I am a bit on edge. I'm sorry if I'm snappy." Given that he knew she had lost her 'pack', it was fairly understandable for her to be a bit edgy after having it hinted at having her charges taken from her. Toki sighs, rolls her shoulders, and forces her fur flat. "Lets go see this 'River', and head to the Capitol then. It's one of the only places I haven't been yet."

"The flowers?" He blinked once, before he smiled with a slightly thoughtful tinge to it. "I see. Come along then, my dear." He rumbled to her, starting away from the checkpoint.
"Mhm. I was going to show the boys the echo flowers. They're beautiful." She followed after him dutifully, larger arms remaining locked behind her to keep Quinn from falling off her back. It wasn’t the most comfortable of positions, but it worked. And it wasn’t like she didn’t have hands—though her spare hands currently held fast to her paperwork and the lunches from Grillby's bar that she’d bought for the kids. She sighed, keeping pace with him easily. Toki glanced up at him lightly. "Sorry for causing trouble, Tenne. If I'd have known I'd need ID to do things, I'd have waited on taking the kids on an 'adventure'."

"It's alright, it's my fault," he assured her as he led her past the guard's barricade, waving to the guard as he passed

Toki also waved at the guard, who waved at them lightly and then went back to his duties. Toki glanced up at Tenne, and bumped him lightly with her elbow. "Accidents happen, Tenne. Its alright."

"I’m just glad things didn't get any worse." He sighed, "I'll admit, I’m shocked. Not many people here know of the flora that we had closed off for studying. I feel like there's something you know that I don’t."

"I've seen it before...?" She shuffled awkwardly because hoo boy, there was a lot that she knew that he didn’t. "When I was on my own. I wasn't... In the best of places, so I wandered. I probably went into a lot of illegal areas, now that I think on it. But I found the echo flowers, and the room that looks like it's covered in stars. I've seen lots of things, Tenne." She murmurs softly.

"Don't let the guards catch you saying that. You might have gotten off lucky this time but you're still a civilian with civilian clearance." He gave her a sharp glance.

"I didn't even realize the areas were blocked off." She rolls her eyes. "I never came across any blockades. There are more paths than just the foot paths though." Her wings twitch for emphasis, and she points to several of the caves on the 'ceiling' of the cave they were walking on. "So nothing was intentional. I'm not a rule breaker by nature." Cruelty on the other hand was a genocidal terrorist, so breaking rules was pretty much his cup of tea. She was a civilian beekeeper. Breaking the law was not on her list of things to do. Toki sighed slightly and hummed a soft sound. "I don't plan to hang around many guards. Maybe Ariel and her kid, but only if I see them during bath trips."

'A chip off the ol' block, eh Kindness?' Cruelty teased with a low chuckle

'You're a bad influence that I can't ever get rid of.' She informs Cruelty with a sigh.

'Heh heh heh heh heh...'

"Ah, Miss Ariel, a darling woman, and her daughter, Undyne.... hahaha, what a spitfire."

"Indeed. Ariel is a sweet woman. Undyne is a little terror, but she's a good kid." Toki nods lightly. "Ariel let me borrow her shampoo and hairbrush. It was very kind of her."

"I recognize the shampoo... and how did it go for you? It was pleasant, no doubt." He rumbled. "The running waters are very nice, but perhaps a bit of a cold shock initially."

"I can heat the water that I step into, so cold water isn't an issue for me." Toki chuckles softly. "Fire magic has its perks. You and the boys should join me one of these days. A hot bath in the glowing waters is amazing. Its also good for you." She nudges his arm. "It's good for health."

"Only if you are comfortable with it." He chuckled at her nudge, "I would not mind a hot bath in the rivers of the caverns." He murmured, before he looked ahead and stopped. "Well. Here we are." He
purred, sounding pleased. "The flowers, as you wanted." He announced quietly, not allowing himself to disturb the gentle silence of the echo flower field.

"I would not have offered if I minded." She'd long since gotten used to Tenebris running around basically nude. His genitals were hidden. Hers? Not so much. But after having kids... She didn’t have much pride left, so it honestly didn’t matter much. Toki was quiet for a moment, before she smiled at the flowers. She hadn’t expected him to take her here.

She moved closer, brushing her wing to Tenne's shoulder in thanks as she went, and keeping quiet. She leaned down to one of the flowers, and brushed a petal, before reaching back and nudging Quinn to wake him up so he could see the flowers. "Quinn," she spoke quietly, "little one, look. Echo flowers."

Quinn whined but slowly opened his eyes, rubbing one tiredly, "Nyeh?" he squeaked out softly, before stretching and kneading his hands on her horn. As his hands tucked back in, he lifted his head and looked around before he saw the flower. He tilted his head then made another sound as he began to make grabby hands for it

Toki laughed quietly as his hands kneaded one of her horns. She leaned down to pluck one- for there were many upon many in the field, and they would not miss one flower that would make a little boys day- and lifted it up. Before she gave it to Quinn, she pressed it to her mouth and whispered softly to it. She was then quick to hand it back.

As it was handed over her shoulder to the eager little boy, Toki's voice echoed out of the flower. "You're adorable, Quinn."

Toki glanced back to Tenne and gave him a lopsided grin.

Seeing Quinn's thrilled reaction to what it said, Tenne relaxed, and gave a gentle laugh, "I'm glad to see they're harmless..."

“Only the stems are toxic,” Toki agrees as she chuckles, “and that’s only if you eat them. The petals make good tea.” Like some of the things she spouts off, that’s bound to be a mystery to him. She smiles, and moves back over towards Tenne now that Quinn has his flower. “He’s probably going to play with the flower all day.” She laughs lightly.

"I might as well hire you as a scribe for our work at this rate." Tenne chuckled lightly, watching Quinn play with the flower as it sustained a little life left after being picked.

Toki quirked a faint smile. “I might have four arms for faster scribing, but I doubt I have the smarts to work in a lab. I just know flowers.” She motions to herself. She was a literal insect based blaster beast. “Besides, I’m better as a waitress. Doesn’t require credentials.” Toki hums slightly with amusement. She shifts the load of things she seems to be carrying, and then manages to free one of her arms. “Think we can stop back at your house so I can drop these lunches off? I bought them for the kids,” with what gold she had earned thus far, “but I don’t think they’re going to get to eat them while we’re out here. They can eat them later though- but my arms are a little full, and I have four of them, which is saying something.” Bagged lunches, a decent sized stack of loose-leaf paperwork, and a child. Very full arms indeed.

He rumbled softly, "Of course, we don’t mind stopping while you run things back to the house. It would give me a moment to leave the children in Grillby’s care."

"Aww." Kai pouted gently.
Toki groaned lightly at Kai’s pout. He was surprisingly adorable. “I just don’t really fancy carrying bagged lunches all the way up to the King and Queen- so thank you.” She had no intention of making a habit of seeing royalty- not in this strange, different world- but she didn’t want to make a bad impression to start. “So, where do we find River?”

"You speak as if they're delivered food on silver platters." He snorted, before he made a gesture with his head, "This way, we're almost there."

She rolls her eyes at him and buzzes at him. “For all I know, they are.” She reminds him lightly that she’s never met these monsters. Her Asgore did in fact have a set of silver platters- it had been used to help haul paperwork from time to time when she’d been at meetings at the castle before. Very handy, the platters were. Very pretty too. Still, Toki flicks her wings and heads off in the direction he gestures, her claws clicking lightly on the stone.

She knows these tunnels well enough by now- she just doesn’t know where exactly to find River at here.

He led her to the dock, and started to whistle gently. He continued to whistle until he heard someone whistling with him. He chuckled lightly then looked out to the river as the boat with the cloaked form approached the dock, slowing to a stop by the ledge.

"Doctor." River greeted quietly,

"Hello, River." Tenne greeted with a smile, "We would like to go to the castle."

"You are fortunate to meet me, then. I will take you there." River gestured to the rest of the boat-space for them to board.

"Ladies first, Miss Toki." Tenne hummed softly, watching River offer one end of their staff to her.

Toki chuckled softly and smiled to River. “Hello, River.” She greeted lightly. Her free hand accepted the end of the staff, and she eased onto the boat. Getting onto the boat was easier as a skeleton, she mused. Her legs wobbled, and her wings flicked up to help her balance. Still, she was quick to take a seat at the end of the boat, where her wings wouldn’t get in the way.

They did, however, stick out past the boat and brush the water a little bit. Unfortunately, they only folded up so small against her back.

She shifted Quinn, so the boy was in her lap instead of behind her, and sighed as she shuffled her load of things to her other arms. What she wouldn’t give for a backpack about now. She glanced up to the cloaked driver of the boat. “Thanks for the help.”

River nodded to her.

Quinn got comfy in her lap and cooed gently as he leaned into her stomach while he watched his father climb into the boat. Quinn cuddled his flower happily.

Tenne was a bit unstable as well, but it wasn’t long before he was sitting down comfortably with Kai settled in his lap.

"And so we are off." River spoke quietly, before pushing off the dock to start down the river.

Toki’s wings idly flitted along the surface of the water, and she found herself glad that her wings weren’t designed like actual insect wings. The water wouldn’t bother them. She hummed as she held Quinn, letting the boy nestle to her chest and fluff comfortably as she did so.
She idly glanced across the boat, and smiled to Tenne, before flicking her gaze curiously up to the cloaked form of River. She studied them for a moment, before humming gently. “So, how long do you think it’ll take to get to the Capitol?”

"Not long. Not long at all." River replied quietly, before humming quietly. "A cruel mind and a kind heart; previously existing as two, are now as one somewhere... A task they were given, a task they must complete. I wonder who they are, and where they are..."

‘WAIT, WHAT?!’ Cruelty’s unsettled voice boomed in her head. ‘River… Tends to spout off things. This though… This is a little creepy. And a little too all knowing.’ She responds, just as equally unsettled.

The only sign that River’s words unsettled her, however, is the faint narrowing of her pupils as she looks up at them. Toki swallows slightly, and inhales, before exhaling again. She cuddles Quinn closer to her to keep her cool, and simply tilts her head. “Cruel mind and a kind heart, hm? I wonder indeed.” She settles back against the backing of the boat, and is thankful for the fluff of her neck that she can hide her mouth in as her teeth twitch with nervous worry. “Mhm. I’m glad it’s not too long of a jaunt.”

“How very interesting, River. What brought this concept to you?” Tenne asked, looking back to the hooded being.

"A disturbance amongst threads of space... tut tut..." River replied softly, before going quiet again.

Toki’s head slid further into the fluff of her neck, and she did a very good impression of a turtle, because she was very, very sure that she was the disturbance among the ‘threads of space’. Her pupils thinned further. Oh yes, she knew indeed that she was the disturbance. Rather than incriminate herself, she simply changed the subject, and focused instead on petting Quinn, and simply letting the boy play with the flower on her lap.

“So,” She murmurs, “What’s the Capitol like?”

"It's the most developed area we have managed so far... though it's not nearly as much as it sounds to be..." Tenne answered as he leaned back and sighed.

“It’s still better than a lot of the places I’ve seen, I imagine.” She murmurs softly. Toki sighs. “Things will be better once the new Castle is up and running, I know it.” She’d seen the kingdom at it’s prime in her world- and there had been lots, and lots of houses, with markets and venders and all sorts of things. It was… well, frankly, quite neat.

The insect woman sighed slightly, and scrubbed one set of her fingers lightly through her mane. Her claws were sharp and ungodly long, but they still caught on the gnarls and tangles her mane always seemed to get. “… Hey, Tenne? Do you think they’d sell a comb in the Capitol?”

"Perhaps. Though I’m sure I have a spare still tucked away somewhere I can give you.” Tenne hummed in thought.

Her eyes flicked to him, and her mouth pinched. What. Why would… “Why do you have a comb?” She blinks at him owlishly. “You don’t have fur…?” Not anywhere that she could see, and she’d seen her Tenebris naked. Completely naked. He had no hair in sight. Anywhere.

‘Somehow I don’t think I’m going to like this answer.’ Cruelty grumbles in her mind.

"I shave, my dear... My mane is not nearly long enough to require combing."
“Wait, what?” Her eyes go wider, and rake over him again. She peers at him closely, and then buzzes in utter bewilderment. “Where the heck do you even have to shave at? I haven’t seen any stubble around your neck to show hair growth.”

‘He might not be referring to a mane that we can see.’ Cruelty sounds disgusted. ‘He’s probably trying to give you some sort of… genital comb or something otherwise beastly.’

‘Shut up, Cruelty, Tenne wouldn’t offer me something like that. That’s just… Gross. Genital combs are just gross, and you get to go to the shame corner of my mind for even uttering those words to me. Now get.’

"Since I began work in the lab, I’ve kept it short, and I think I look silly with stubble so I shave my face every morning." He answered, reaching up to cup his chin, running his fingers over where said facial hair supposedly grew.

She followed the motion of his fingers, and openly stared. Her teeth parted for a moment, before closing with a soft ‘snk’ sound and a small flick of sparks. “I’m not going to believe it until I see it.” She shakes her head. “A mane and beard. Good gracious. I can’t even imagine you with it.” She snorts softly, and then grunts as she tangles one of her claws in her mane. She works to free it. “I doubt whatever comb you’ve got could get through the knots in my mane. My mane is long and thick- it tangles up with pretty much anything. I wish I could shorten them,” She mutters the last part with a huff. “It would probably break your comb.”

"You'd be surprised. I had quite the mane growing up." He grinned to himself before he chuckled, "The comb I own was made to survive the thickness of my fur. Rest assured, it will certainly conquer whatever mess your fur has to offer."

“I don’t believe it,” She laughs lightly. “But anyways, you say that now, but you’re not the one who has to try and tame it. You should see it before you get downstairs in the morning. It’s worse than what it usually is. It’s just… Really, really easy to tangle, and horrendously fluffy.” Toki gives him a lopsided smile. “I guess we’ll see though.”

He laughed gently, "I take that as a challenge, my dear" he teased

'Ugh if you two keep flirting I'm going to retch........ no, no better yet... I'll make YOU retch.'

'You can't control this body, so try as you might, you can't. We're not flirting though. It’s just... It’s just teasing. It’s just teasing between friends.' Toki snorted to her mental menace.

"Challenge accepted then. We might want to pick up an extra comb just in case you can't find yours." She chuckles quietly at his tease. "If all else fails, and yours breaks, then we'll have a spare." She probably had enough gold to cover it. A brush couldn't be more than twenty gold, right?

'I'll pull it off sooner than you think, Kindness.'

He laughed at that, and turned away again, "Indeed so..." He purred gently.

'And what is that supposed to mean?’ She inquired with waspish curiosity to her mental menace.

Toki gave him a smile that he didn't see, and settled in to wait out the rest of the ride, and grill Cruelty as best she could about what exactly he meant.

No response. Cruelty just chuckled and went silent, retreating back in her mind.

The rest of the ride was quiet, save for River's quiet humming, and soon they pulled to a stop at
Snowdin dock. "Here we are."

Toki gave River a pleasant smile, and hopped off the boat with Quinn in her arms. She gingerly set the boy on his feet in the snow, and shivered violently as the icy chill that permanently made Snowdin well, Snowdin, once more assaulted her toes and the bottoms of her paws. “Alright, Quinn.” She nudged the boy gently. “Go with your daddy- I’m going to go drop these off at your house.” Her eyes flicked up to Tenne, and Toki gave him a lopsided smile. “I’ll meet you outside of Grillby’s?”

Quinn cooed gently and waddled over to his father once everyone had disembarked from River’s ship. Tenne scooped his pup up and kissed his head. “Sounds like a plan,” he replied, giving a smile to her, “See you there.”

Toki nodded and gave him a smile in return. She shifted the lunches in her arms, and held her paperwork more securely, before flicking her wings and taking off with a noisy buzz.

It didn’t take her all that long to locate the house from the air- and even less time to dip down and slip inside to drop everything off. Once she’d dropped off all of her packages, Toki had adjusted her paperwork and then took off into the sky once more.

Honestly, flight had its perks. By ground, there were so many obstacles you had to go around, and strict paths you had to follow. The only paths she had to follow here were the strange air currents that the massive cave system seemed to have, but her wings were strong enough that she could mostly ignore all but the strongest of the currents.

Flight was freedom. Now Toki knew how Clover felt- and felt even more sorry for poor, sweet Sugar, who no longer had wings.

Grillby’s came back into sight shortly, and she came to land on the top of the bar, waiting for Tenne to come back outside. She could see his footprints in the snow- meaning he’d taken the kids inside. So she lurked on the roof, amusement curling at her mouth as her smaller arms kept her papers flush to her chest. Her larger pair supported her as she adjusted along the roof, dangling slightly so she could look for him easier, and drop down when he came out.

"Alright, I’ll come back later. Thanks again, Sapphire!” Tenne was just coming out, a smile on his face as he waved back to his sons and their sitter. Once the door was closed, his shoulders slumped, and he sighed gently.

Toki noticed the slump to his shoulders, and tilted her head slightly. What could have caused that, she wondered...? Though she mused it was likely having to leave behind his sons. Toki shifted on the roof, and wiggled her rear a little bit. Her paws were cold from the snow, but they rocked forward and let her drop down in front of him with a lopsided smile. "Why the long look, Tenne?" She inquired, fur ruffling against the cold.

He leaped backwards with a yelp and winced as he crashed into the door, falling to the snowy ground with a *pompf!*

And at this moment, Cruelty roared with laughter at the sight, filling Toki’s mind with the sound.

The sound in her head made her wince, and she struggled to tune him out for the force of it. Still, she managed enough to give Tenne a concerned look, and to offer him one of her longer arms. “Oh goodness- Are you alright? I didn’t mean to startle you like that, Tenne. Maybe make you jump, but definitely not like that.”
He sat up slowly and shook his head, before he took her offered hand.

At this moment, the door opened and Grillby looked outside, "Are you alright?" he asked Tenne.

The doctor smiled at him gently, "Yes, yes I'm fine!" He assured him.

"Good." Grillby then looked at the door, before shooting Tenne a look.

Toki gave Grillby a wince. “It’s my fault. I’ll work on paying for the damages to the door, Grillby, I promise.” It wasn’t much, but it looked like the wood was cracked in a couple of spots, and one of the handles might have been dented inwards. This Tenne might have been built leaner and thinner than Tenebris was, but it was obvious he still had the strength and force in his frame that her quite buff Papa did. “I’m glad you’re not hurt though, Tenne.” She gusts him off once he’s upright, making sure to get the snow off of his back, before washing her magic over his clothes to quick dry and warm them for him.

"Well I’ll be fine, but I do indeed apologize for the door." He started, before he cooed and purred as he nuzzled into his turtleneck as it was dried and warmed. "Ooh... Oh I’m going to have to have you do that more often~ It feels fresh from the drier~"

She’d heard that before- many, many times. It made her laugh lightly, and she patted his arm. They might be two separate people, but they had a lot of things in common. “Fire magic has it’s perks. Now come on- let’s get to the Capitol so we can get this signed, and get me an ID.” She waved at Grillby, and then set off in the direction that she was pretty sure the Capitol was in. “If you get too cold, I can warm your clothes again, Tenne.”

"Yes, of course!" He looked at her, and then straightened and began to lead her through Snowdin. "By the way, how do your pads feel? I plan to make your shoes but I just need to know if there is urgency."

“I dunno? They’re pretty cold.” She answers with a loose shrug. “I don’t feel much in my pads, honestly. They hurt for a while when they’re thawing, and then they don’t hurt all that much when they’re thawed out. I manage. You don’t need to worry about shoes for me, Tenne. It’s okay.” Her wings fan out a little bit, and with them warmth fans into the air. Toki might be cold all the time here, but she exudes warmth like a flame. She glances back at him with a warm smile. “I don’t do a whole lot of walking when I’m outside normally anyways. I’m usually in the air- except, I don’t know where I’m going, so I can’t just race you there. I would probably win though,” She grins playfully at him.

"Tut tut, if anything, that told me exactly what I needed to hear." The doctor murmured lightly, waving a finger at her, before he shook his head. "You underestimate me, silly woman." He hummed.

Toki rolled her eyes, and put a little pep in her step. Her paws had ice sticking to the bottom of them as she jogged lightly to help keep her warmer. “So says you.” She sticks her tongue out at him, and the dark green appendage glimmers at him wetly for a moment, before she tucks it away. “I underestimate you? I dunno, doctor. You spend an awful lot of time up in that lab of yours- maybe you’re a little out of shape?” She gives him a teasing look.

"You say that and yet I commute daily back and forth." He snorted. "I am a prime example of fit and physique."

“Most days,” she corrects with a grin. “Well, at least that I know of. You might do it daily on the norm, but recently you’ve been staying at the lab with your current project and working in shifts.”
Her wings twitch with an amused sound, and she hums lightly. The papers pressed to her chest help distract from the sudden pang from her soul. Papyrus had done the ‘daily commute’ by foot. “I suppose I have to admit you look quite good- so you must manage to stay fit somehow.” She quirks a smile. His build was closer to Papyrus own, actually, now that she thought about it. Tenebris was much, much more bulky.

Tenne had more of a runners build that she could see- a lot like her husband’s ecto body had been. He was probably fast as hell.

He chortled proudly and grinned as he straightened and began to walk with more of a strut, his tail held high behind him. "Indeed so, my dear." He hummed pleasantly.

She watched him strut past her like a peacock, minus the tail fronds, and she found herself guffawing. “Careful, Tenne, or your tail will get stuck like that.” She teases. As they leave town and head into the woods, she muses that it’s a lovely walk this way, and that the path itself is very well worn. She hums to herself. “I could be in better shape. Not physical shape, mind, but… health, I suppose.” She muses to herself. Physically, she was very fit. The Void had upgraded not only her body, but her muscle mass and muscle tone as well. She had the body mass to fit with what she needed it for. She was, however, underweight. “I didn’t take as good care of myself as I should have when I was off on my own for that long while.”

He turned to her and gave her a sweet smile, "Well, don't worry about that. If you're staying with me, I'll be sure to do my damndest to make sure you improve."

Toki watches him as he half walks backwards, and makes sure that he doesn’t trip over any errant twigs and the like. The bee beast monster gives him a lopsided smile all the same. “Tenne, I doubt you’d let me out on my own anyways. Besides,” her neck fur ruffles pleasantly, “the couch is more comfortable than a blanket over ice, I can assure you that.” She gives him a cheerful look, and reaches out to steer him around a branch, lest he fall flat on his back. Her hand remains curled around his upper arm for a moment to make sure she can keep him from tripping. “I'll improve in time as I eat more.”

The only reason she was doing as well as she was health wise was because of her absurd amount of magic that was pooled in her soul because of what Cruelty had done. It was keeping her going and healthy- and she could probably stop eating in general, and it would probably just keep her running. But Toki liked food- even if she didn’t necessarily feel hungry all the time. Grief was a funny thing like that.

Upon almost tripping, he turned and resumed walking forward, but he seemed a bit happier with her arm around his, as he had slightly tightened his grip around her arm. As he did so, a happy purr began rising from him as he walked. "I do have a spare room. I could see about building you a bed.”

Toki found her arm fairly firmly stuck against his. There would be no discreetly slipping her arm from his- but that was fine. He was warm, and her hand was cold, despite the heat that she put out. Her body seemed forever cold, as if the weight of the energy inside of her was forcing the heat out of her instead of retaining it where she would like to keep it. “It’s alright.” She smiles to him. “The couch works. You’ve already done a lot for me, Tenne. I honestly couldn’t ask you to do more. I really could not. The couch and the couple of blankets works. Besides, it lets me keep the house warmer easier.”

"Hrm.” He gave a stubborn pout, but didn't look ready to give up the fight just yet, though he did go quiet as they walked.

They eventually came to a doorway, after having crossed over a couple of bridges and several large
gaps. The door was pinned open, and was now simply a guard checkpoint.

"Afternoon, gentlemen." He greeted casually.

The guards gave respectful nods and stepped aside for him as he walked past with Toki.

"Thank you very much~" He rumbled as he passed them.

Toki gave them nods in turn, and shuffled after Tenne. Once they stepped inside the door, it was much, much warmer. She hopped to the side and shook off her feet, giving a soft displeased sound at all the ice so tightly packed between her toes. She shuffled after him as she went, hopping occasionally as she tried to shake impacted ice from between her toes. "So the Capitol is through this way?" She asked, using his grip on her arm to keep her steady as she shook out her feet. Her magic was melting the ice, slowly, but it was a process.

"That's right." He answered. He too stepped to the side and tapped his feet off, stretching one of them and letting his toes reach out, curling in to pop quietly before returning to the ground. "It's not much farther to the throne room." He rumbled, "That's as far as we really need to go."

"Oh really? Huh. That's handy." She blinks. Well, she supposed she wouldn’t be buying a comb then. That was fine though- she needed to save up to pay for the damages to Grillby’s door.

Toki’s toes are still partially frozen by the time that they resume walking, but there’s not much that she can do for them. All the same, she continues towards the throne room once they’re both ready, and hums a soft sound. “So we just… drop in and get these signed, and we can go back to your house?”

"Easy at that. Of course unless he asks us to tea… I can never not feel bad about declining a cuppa tea." He keened quietly before he sighed. "Oh well…The king makes a real good cuppa so who am I but a fool to decline?" Tenne chuckled.

Toki chuckled. “I bet he does make a good cup of tea. But,” She hummed, “I’m sure he’d understand you wanting to get back to your sons.” She quirks a grin at him, and then bumps him lightly with her hip. “We do have an unbearably long walk back at your slow land-walking speeds.” She teased lightly.

"Oh whatever, I’m just slow so you can keep up." He bumps her back with his hip. "Then again, I think his tea has finally met its match, now that you’ve come around." He chuckled.

“One of these days, we’re going to have to test who is faster.” She guffaws in good humor, and then gives him a happy grin at his compliment. She’d had Asgore’s tea before- and the king, at least hers, made very good tea. To get a compliment to compare hers to his was definitely a high honor. “Well, thank you, Tenne. That’s really, really sweet of you. I would think he’d be better at it than me. He’s had more practice than me.”

"And yet you knew just how long to boil the water, how long to steep the tea, and flavor to it; down to the very grains of sugar. It was the most divine cup of tea I’ve had in a long time." He sighed wistfully.

Toki flushed a little, a bit embarrassed by his ornate praise of her skills, and her pale white skin turned a lovely green shade. She’d learned how to make his tea in her world- and while Tenebris originally liked his unsweetened, a little, tiny bit of sweetener in it made it just a little bit better. Honey was best- but sugar was the only thing they had on hand here. “Well, if you want, I can make you a cup of tea when we return to your home. I wouldn’t mind one myself.”
"Hhhhhh yes please." Yes, he made the dragged out, quiet exhale before he spoke, his tail wagging behind him happily.

'You're flirting with your father-in-law from another timeline, Kindness. How do you sleep at night?'

‘I- I’m not flirting with him!’ She snapped. Was she? If she was, it wasn’t intentional. It’s just how she was. ‘I’m just being as much of me as I can be, Cruelty. And I sleep just fine, thanks.’

No she didn’t. Toki had nightmares of all sorts when she slept. Lots and lots nightmares- about the things she’d done, and the things that Cruelty had done.

Toki managed a soft laugh for Tenne though, and gave the happy monster a smile. “Well then, some tea for us both, and hot chocolate for the kids it is.” She lets out a soft, pleased buzz, as they reach the end of the corridor. She heads up the stairs, Tenne in tow.

'Liar~'

For the life of her, Toki had nothing to say back.

Tenne chittered happily as he followed and as they made it to the top of the stairs, there was a fluffy form approaching them, a bright smile on her face. "I knew I heard you coming up the corridor, Doctor."

"My Queen, how good to see you again." Tenne respectfully bowed to the boss monster, "You look full of life, as per the usual."

"Oh you flatter me." She chuckled, waving a fluffy paw lightly, before looking to Toki. "And who's this lovely young woman?"

'Ah. The goat.'

‘One of them, at least.’

Toki took a quick moment to observe Toriel. This one was still the same apparent age as the one she knew- but there was something… Off about her. Different. This one carried herself differently- as if she had less of a burden on her soul. Toki wondered if it came from having not lost her children.

Toki’s hesitance lasted only a second, before she tightly clutched her papers and bowed to the other boss monster. Her magic flicked nervously over her fur, thick and powerful. “Tokiko Nara, Ma’am. I’m, ah, coming to register for my ID.” She wiggles the papers quietly, and flicks her wings.

"Well met, Miss Nara." Toriel replied, before she chuckled. "Alright, Asgore's out in the garden. I'm sure we need not the formalities to take care of this." She then leaned in, "He's wearing his 'Sunday best'." she giggled, before she leaned back and turned, starting for outside.

"Oh boy. Sunday best." Tenne laughed as he followed Toriel.

“Sunday best?” Toki gave a quizzical buzz, but followed along, her wings tucking behind her lightly.

As they reached the garden, it became apparent what it was. While the king was in long pants, his Sunday best appeared to be a hideously neon pink shirt, with bright orange, yellow, and white hibiscus flowers printed on it. He was elbow deep in dirt, churning the dirt with his paws as he prepared to spread out and plant several of the beautiful golden flowers he had growing in his garden.
He looked up as Toriel entered, followed by Tenne and Toki, and gave them all a jolly wave. Standing and dusting off his paws, he gave them a jovial grin. "My beautiful wife, my dear friend, welcome. Welcome to you too, miss…?"

"Tokiko Nara."

"Welcome to you then, Toki." Asgore nods. "What brings you here- ah, paperwork. Coming into the rural district, are you?" He glances to Tenne. "I’m assuming you’re here to vouch for her?"

"Yes, sir." Tenne replied. The doctor leaned over and rifled briefly through the stack of papers in Toki’s arms, before pulling out and offering him the paper he would need to sign.

Asgore nods, and takes the paper. He looks it over lightly, and then flicks his gaze up to Tenne. "She's an Insectis?" He inquires, surprise coloring his tone. "That would mean she's a subspecies of your kind, isn't she?"

One could hear Tenne's excited chittering sounds from where he stood beside Toki in the moment he answered. "Yes, sir!"

Asgore beamed at Tenne and at Toki, and signed the paper swiftly. It was handed back to Tenne. "Congratulations on finding more of your kind then, my friend. Does she have a place to stay? I’m sure we could make accommodations for both of you and your children, Doctor, up at the lab where it would be warmer if you would be happier there. She could help with your research?"

"I’m not a scientist." She adds lightly, awkwardly flicking her wings and giving the King and Queen a sheepish smile. "What a way to burst your bubble that Toki isn’t nearly as smart as Tenne is. She’s average at best. "I’m a waitress at a bar- and keep an eye on Tenne’s boys when he’s not home. It’s enough for me.” She shrugs lightly. "You don’t exactly have my chosen profession here. So doing what I do now works, I assure you."

He reached out and gripped Toki's shoulders, smiling happily as his tail wagged behind him. He slipped the paper into her stack of paperwork. "She claims she's not as smart as I think she is, but I believe she's full of potential, Asgore. And yes, she is currently staying with me. She's absolutely wonderful with my sons!" He chirped happily.

"They’re wonderful boys." Toki squeaks, keeping her grip on the papers as the signed paper is added to her stack, and Tenne’s hands fall on her shoulders. She struggles not to bop him with her wings as he pretty much stands behind her. She leans a little into his hands, and warms them with her magic. "Besides, I like kids, and they seem to like me, so it works…? Quinn really likes my fluff and Kai is happy if Quinn is happy." Or if he’s given a burger loaded in ketchup.

The position pleased some foreign instinct inside of Toki that she didn’t understand, and she was stuck puzzling over what exactly it was as her wings twitched lightly against him. His words, however, made her chuckle, and she nestled her head lightly down into the thick fur around her neck. "I was the eldest and only girl among nine children- I had eight younger brothers. I helped my mother keep them in line- so I’ve got the 'mom tone’ down pat, and I’ve got experience with little
The mom tone keeps anyone in check.” Asgore barks a laugh. “Toriel uses it on misbehaving
guardsmen and it works like a charm.”

“I use it on you too,” The Queen laughs, “And it works just as well.”

Tenne chirped gently as he nodded in agreement. "Very impressive." He purred, before looking to
Asgore, "Thank you much for your time, my friend." He chirped happily.

Asgore gave Tenne a smile. “Of course, Tenne. Anything for you and your lady companion here.”
The king dusted off his hands, and rocked on his heels faintly. “I’d offer you a cup of tea, but I’m
afraid it would be more dirt than tea at this point,” he shortles. “It’s going to take me ages to clean the
dirt from my fur.”

“I know your struggle, trust me,” Toki quirked a faint smile. “Anything and everything gets tangled
in my mane. Anyways… We’ll let you go now, King Asgore, Queen Toriel. It was lovely to meet
you both.” She wiggles a little away from Tenne so she can properly dip her head and bow her
goodbyes.

He does let her go, and gives a small bow to Asgore and Toriel, before he chuckled. "Have you
thought about a short cut length of fur?” He suggested, "I found it much easier for me when I cut my
mane short."

Asgore chuckles. “I have,” he nods, “But it’s much, much harder to do when your entire body is
covered in hair. I get it regularly trimmed, but there is only so much you can do for it at any rate.” He
offers a lopsided shrug, and an equally lopsided smile. “Besides, Toriel likes my mane long.”

“I do,” Toriel admits with a laugh. “It is fun to run my fingers through. Chara and Asriel also like to
braid flowers into it, when the time permits them to do it.”

Toki had no idea who they were, but she simply gives a faint smile all the same and simply nods.
“Quinn likes to play with mine.” She says by way of agreement.

He chuckled lightly. "So I'm the odd one out?" He put a hand over his chest, looking hurt for a
moment before he cackled, "Perhaps once I retire, I let my fur grow out, and I’ll end up looking like
King 'Fluffybuns' here."

Toki snorts a neat plume of unintentional fire, and startles the King and Queen with it. “Tenne, I
highly doubt you could get as fluffy as King Asgore.” Her neck fluff ruffles lightly, and she lifts one
of her hands to lightly fiddle with one of the curls. The fur on her wrists is shorter than around her
neck, thankfully. “But you’re welcome to try.”

Asgore blinked at the fire. “You use fire magic? I hadn’t read that far down on your page.”

“Yeahhh…?” She glances at him uncertainly.

“It’s just uncommon, that’s all.” The king responds lightly. “Rare outside of certain species.”

"He's talking about himself. Boss species all have unique capabilities. His species harnesses fire,
while I myself harness a plasmatic, almost laser-esque energy." Tenne explained.

“Oh.” Toki blinked. These were things she hadn’t quite learned in her world. The more one knew,
she supposed. She pursed her teeth, and then glanced at Tenne. “My summons can do the laser
thing.” She said. “I don’t know if I can. But my summons can. Not the little ones that you’ve seen,
though. You haven’t met my bigger ones.”

Asgore sighs. “I really should have read the whole page, shouldn’t I…?”

“It might be helpful for future references, dear.” Toriel pats his arm lightly. “You were excited
though. Only two blaster beasts in existence so far- it’s an exciting find. No one would blame you for
getting a little too excited.”

Tenne smiled at Toriel. ”You must understand how overjoyed I was to discover I was no longer
alone, am I right, dear Tori?” He rumbled happily.

Toriel laughed gently at the scientist’s seemingly childish excitement. It often reminded her of her
dear children, "Indeed, Tenne. Indeed."

“Speaking of your summons,” Asgore jumped back a bit, and glanced to Toki, “Would you show
us?” He questioned curiously. “Your larger ones, that is.”

Toki gave him a sheepish smile. “I’d rather not. One is… Definitely not an indoor beast, and is
generally grumpy, and the other can fit inside, but has the energy of a puppy. Everything would be in
shambles, and I would feel very bad about wrecking the throne room.” Her wings flick lightly, and
she glances up to Tenne. “Speaking of things- you probably need to get back to work, since you left
erly to take me here for my paperwork.” She hefts it up, and offers it out to him. “Your turn to carry
the stack, by the way. My hands are falling asleep from carrying it.”

Asgore stares a bit. “Four arms must be very handy.” He sent a sly look to Tenne, that Toki
completely missed as she was trying to hand over the paperwork. “And it’s quite alright, Miss Nara-
I fully understand pesky summons. A few of my guards have summons of their own, and they have
gotten out of hand a few times.”

"Where did you pick half of this up? This shouldn't all be the bloody paperwork for an ID..." he
murmured, before he huffed. "Well, best take care of this before I forget!” His eyes glowed and the
stack in his hands compressed into a card. He cradled it gently and blew on it gently before he smiled
at Toki and held it out to her, "Here we are."

Toki shrugged initially. “I was handed a stack, so I just filled it out.” She’d honestly done more.
Tenebris’ file had been many, many times thicker than that. She did pause, however, watching
Tenne compress the papers down into a card. She blinked, and took it. “Uh… What.”

"Isn't it quite impressive?" Tenne rumbled happily. "Oddly enough, Asgore's signature is a core
factor in performing what you just saw. Without it, it does not work. Oh, by the way… There's one
last thing to take care of."

At that, Toki looked up at Tenne with slight confusion, before feeling a slight wave of discomfort
overwhelm her as he leaned in, and took the card in one hand, before taking her hand in the other.
He faced her palm up as he looked it over before he chuckled quietly. "Eenie, meenie, miney,
moe…” He then swiped it across her palm, making her gasp in pain and attempt to pull back.

He held her firmly as blood beaded in her palm, before he slowly ran the card through it again. The
blood was absorbed into the card, and she watched with shock and awe as the outline of the card
turned green, before a bust-image appeared in one section, a perfect ID picture, as if she had posed
for a picture in a camera.

"All done.” He rumbled, gently waving the ID card to dry as he lifted her palm again. "Tsk, I always
hate having to shed blood, but at least this was for a good cause...” he sighed, before he smiled at her
gently, "Allow me to soothe any pain that might linger." The doctor rumbled, before he leaned in and gently ran his tongue over her wound, cleaning it of blood and sealing it with his thicker-concentrated saliva.

For a moment, she just watched him. The licking of the wounds wasn’t all that unfamiliar- Tenebris had licked the twins when they had been born, and she suspected it was something unique to blaster beasts and their more animalistic nature. She opened her mouth, intending to ask him just what on earth he had been doing and why he didn’t just ask her before hand.

"I’ll admit it," He then spoke quietly, rendering her quiet as he interrupted her, "I didn’t expect that to work, my dear Toki, what with your defense as it is." He told her, definitely catching her by surprise.

Toki blinked at him owlishly. "You half expected me not to bleed?"

"Indeed." He agreed.

Toki just snorted, and lightly flexed her hand. The black saliva coating her palm wasn’t really necessary- she’d have made due with a bandage or something of that ilk. “Well, I guess if you catch me off guard, you can slice me.” She hadn’t really been preparing to brace for it- and her defenses... Well, they hadn’t exactly been at their highest around him. “For the record, you could have just pricked my finger and got blood that way instead of opening up my palm.” She gives him a faint smile. “Hopefully it doesn’t scar up like my head, ne?"

Asgore simply chuckles slightly. “It shouldn’t. At any rate, your ID card is fully functional and realized now- you’ll have no problems with access to civilian areas on your own. Tenne- take good care of her, and take the day off. The projects are not going to go to ruin if you take one more day off to spend with your sons.”

"As you wish, Sire." Tenne smiled up at him, and handing Toki her ID, he gave one last bow to Asgore, before he looked to his companion, "Shall we?"

Toki nodded, to both the king and the queen, and then grabbed Tenne’s arm lightly. She tugged him back for the stairs as she tucked her ID into her pocket, where she hoped it wouldn’t fall out. “We shall. Come on- Quinn and Kai are going to be excited to hear that you get one more night with them.” She smiles crookedly at him. “I can probably stop in and pick up my shift at Grillby’s, if you’d like some time alone with the boys.”

She did have damages on the door to pay off, after all.

He followed her with pleased chitters, his tail wagging as he followed her cheerfully. "Right behind you, Miss Toki~"

Toki laughs lightly and gives him a smile as she trots down the stairs, making great progress as she goes. “Tenne,” she scolds lightly, “Haven’t I told you to just call me Toki?”

"Old habits never die, I suppose." He chuckled quietly, "I am a gentleman, after all..."

“That you are.” She does have to agree.

The walk back out of the Capitol and Castle entrance doesn’t take nearly as long, and soon they’re back out in the ice and chill.

Toki gives the icy ground a glare as she steps out into it, and then huffs. Her toes pang with the chill, and she dances slightly in it with an irritable buzz that makes the wolf guards swat at their ears.
Her wings twitch and flex, and the desire to take off and fly home is very strong. However her land bound companion poses a problem. She glances to the larger monster and tilts her head. “So… I don’t want to walk to your home. It’s cold, my feet hurt, and I’m ready to go back to your home. So… you up for a little bit of flying?”

The doctor adjusted his coat, and had just been about to offer it to her when her words bade him pause. He turned, eying her lightly in time with the curious guards at the doorway. “I beg your pardon?” He queried. “What?”

“Are you up for a bit of flying? It’s faster than walking, and my feet are cold and would really like to go warm up by the fire.” Toki shuffled on her toes, and flicked her wings. They fully spread out, brushing the massive lengths against the snow and a few trees that lurked not far behind her. “You keep your coat, Tenne. You get cold too, you silly man.”

The doctor snorted at her gentle chiding, and fixed his coat as demanded. “My dear, I hardly think you could lift me. I’m not exactly a light weight, and you’re not…” His eyes trailed over the thin qualities of her arms.

She rubbed them lightly, and gave him a faint smile. “I know, I don’t look it, but I’m surprisingly strong. So, is that a yes?”

“It’s not a no.” He chuffs. He looks at her for a time, purple eyes glancing over her critically, before he nods slowly. “I suppose, if you think you can. Don’t strain yourself for me, my dear. If you can’t, then we’ll walk.”

Toki rolls her eyes at him. “If I can’t, I have someone who can.” She snorts. All the same, she slips around behind him. Her wings flick and flutter and buzz, and as she lifts off, she slips her largest set of arms around the underside of his arms. She grasps him firmly around the barrel of his chest.

Her fingers lock firmly around the broad and strong shield of bone that makes up his chest. Toki gives her wings a quick, experimental flap, and then grunts, before managing to haul him up and into the air.

His back legs kick and churn the air for a moment, a startled noise leaving him, before he curls into himself and dangles from her grasp like naughty pup.

Toki barks a laugh, and heads off in the direction of his home.
Chapter 95

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So we finally get to see a little bit more of what happened to Tenebris. Well- Toki does. 8) Hehehe.

The feeling of floating washed over her, but there was not a drop of water in sight... a wave of shadow however, was more than prominent. Toki knew she was dreaming again... Just... what was going on? Normally she would have started to see something by now...

As if on command, a door appeared, and the dimension steadily shifted and rotated to put her on her feet. She touched a solid ground, but to her shock, she began to move towards the door without thinking to do so.

'Another dream where I simply get to sit and watch...' She just hoped it wasn't as unpleasant as the dream she had back at the campsite...

She reached out and gripped the doorknob, but contrary to her hesitation, the door was opened without a wasted moment.

Behind the door was a large room, walls a dull white with hard tile covering the floor. Inside the room were cages, and she could swear some creatures that she recognized occupied a few of them, and some that she didn't.

A... A few of them, she thought, looked like some of the missing HTM's that had cropped up back on the surface of her world.

She wanted to look around further, but she was forced to look forward, off to where two HAM agents stood at attention.

"Well?" The first voice broke the silence... coming from Toki- no...

Coming from Cruelty's mouth.

"Captured successfully and transferred to cage. We're waiting for its awakening, Sir." One of the agents responded flatly.

"Force it to wake up." Cruelty commanded.

Is this a dream? Or a memory... At this point, Toki didn't want to find out.

One of the HAM agents grabbed an electric prod, and approached the larger cage that sat in one corner of the room. It was occupied.

Toki could feel a pit in her stomach... if this was a memory.... Then the one in that cage...!

The HAM agent pushed the prod into the form lying within the cage. The body within lurched upright, screeching in pain as it was electrified. Bright purple eyes flashed with pain as they opened, their worn out form pushing up onto his hands and feet to pull away from the electric assault.
"Well... didn't take much to wake him, now did it..." A chuckle slowly washed over the room, a sound that was heard over the ragged breathing and growls from the rudely awakened Tenebris.

Cruelty approached the cage, and took a look at the blaster beast inside. "I do hope you're uncomfortable. We wouldn't be doing our job if you were anything less." He spoke calmly and evenly, as if talking about the weather.

"Tch." Tenebris scoffed, slowly moving to sit up, though he had to stop and reach up, gripping at a chain that led to a clamp around his neck. "You mock me, you vermin." He hissed.

"Oh no, no mocking. I'm simply putting a beast in his place and keeping him in proper chains where he belongs." Cruelty replied smoothly.

"Remind me never to pay admission at any zoo you open." Tenebris sneered.

Such an attitude, that was her Papa... It made her want to smile, but she could feel Cruelty's face pull into a displeased frown.

"Such a foul attitude. I almost feel sorry for your 'family' to have to put up such disgusting behavior."

"I'm an old man. I'm allowed to possess a bit of attitude to my every day life. You on the other hand are a bit too young to be such an impolite little snot. So if you'd please, get this damn thing off of me and perhaps we still have a chance to communicate like civilized men."

"Oh, but you're no man are you. You're a monster. A filthy monster that is a blight upon this world." Cruelty spoke sharply. The beast's confidence even in this predicament was proving to be a bit annoying to Cruelty, and Toki could feel the emotion curling inside of her from the dream.

Though of course this was expected, such was the disgusting sense of spirit in monsterkind, one that peeved Cruelty, but made Toki proud.

"In the sense of a situation such as this, I would think it more logical for one to deduce that you're the 'monster' in this world." Tenebris retorted flatly. "I'm a scientist for my king, a doctor for my people and a father to my children, nothing of this would propose I've got the monstrous reputation among the other beings in this room."

It was good to hear Tenebris' confident voice again, his deep resonating tone without compare in the world. Even as he mocked the one in front of him, Toki could feel a sense of safety in his presence alone. Though more properly, right now it was dangerous.

Cruelty of course wasn't going to have any of it; he snatched the prod from his underling and pushed it between the bars of the cage, sinking it into Tenebris' collarbone, watching with satisfaction as Tenebris could only resist the pain for a few seconds. He held the prod against Tenebris' skin for what felt like forever before pulling away, watching the beast collapse against the wall, his breathing rough as a hand reached up to cover the burn marks against his neck.

"Hf... hf..."

Cruelty chuckled lowly, "Your words are only that, beast, simple words. You have no power here, and I'm not afraid to say that your time here is going to be painful and unpleasant." He told the stunned beast, tossing the prod back to one of his henchmen. "We're going to make you regret ever being born a disgusting monster."

"Hn... G-Good luck with that... I've survived fire, getting hit by a truck, and your barrages, Cruelty. What's another week of torture after retirement?" Tenebris chuckled lowly.
"Oh, you'll see. I have plans for you, beast." The look on Tenebris' face at that statement brought a feeling of pride in Cruelty's mind.

"Plans for you indeed~"

The scene went dark, and Toki hoped that it was the end of the scene... she didn't want to see what came next...

Unfortunately... Cruelty wasn't finished. So she was rendered to be a captive audience.

When Toki could make out her surroundings once more, they were in a larger room. Almost immediately, she could detect the sound of someone's breathing picking up. She did not need to see to know it belonged to her Papa. Toki didn't want to look... she really didn't... But Cruelty looked upon their victim, and Toki was forced to look with him.

What she saw made her stomach sink and twist with a nauseated feeling.

He was bound to a table, his limbs all pinned down with powerful clamps. His clothes were in tatters, and where they were torn, she could see damage that had never been mentioned by Grillby or Asgore after Tenebris was put under recovery watch.

Electrical and fire burn marks, slash marks, blunt-force bruises decorated the pale white canvas of his body where it was visible. Tenebris looked absolutely exhausted. The bags under his eyes told her that he hadn't been sleeping, and she wasn't sure if that was on his part or on HAM's. It didn't matter- he obviously hadn't been sleeping in days, and exhaustion seemed to be catching up with him.

She wished she could help him- to reach through time and space and undo the clamps that bound him and burn everything else around them to the ground- but all that came from her mouth was malice and hate, and the voice of the man who lived inside of her head and soul.

"Comfortable, you filthy beast?" Cruelty spoke to Tenebris with the casual nonchalance of someone talking to their favored dog, before chuckling as the monster gave no answer. It was not like he could anyway; there was a belt going under his jaw to keep it from being able to open, though he was at least able to open his mouth a crack to breathe.

His gaze however told all that she needed to know; under the underlying hatred was exhaustion. He could barely stay sharp enough to remind Cruelty just how much he loathed him at this moment. His look, however, still spoke measures to the man who’s body she was hitching an unwilling ride upon.

"Oh don't give me that look." Cruelty chuckled, "We've only just now gotten to preparing the best part of your visit... Do you not remember what we intended?" He leaned in, peering horribly, horribly close to Tenebris' face. Toki could see the minute flexes of her Papa’s pupils. "Make you regret being born... We're going to break you, beast, and I'm going to enjoy watching the spirit fade from your eyes." Cruelty's voice hissed out pleasantly.

Tenebris gave no reply.

Cruelty chuckled before he turned to glance back at one of the doors. "Bring it in." He ordered aloud, making Toki’s soul flutter with something burgeoning on panic.

Toki watched in horror as they brought in a large machine. She might not know machines, but Kohaku did- and she’d Googled a few to know what he was talking about.

Cruelty had brought in a hydraulic press.
"Do you know what this is, beast?" Cruelty chuckled lowly, watching a wave of horror fill Tenebris’ eyes. "Oh you do, don’t you. Did you think I was kidding?"

Toki felt new wave of horror wash over her as one of amusement ran over Cruelty's mind, and a chuckle came from him. "Let me repeat myself. We're going to break you."

As the device was brought closer, Tenebris was shadowed, and Toki watched with dismay as her papa, her brave, often unbreakable Papa, began to tremble in terror at the sight of the device. His fists clenched tightly and he began to strain against his binds, his efforts bearing no fruit as they held too well.

"Which limb do you enjoy the least?" Cruelty looked back at Tenebris, chuckling at the terrified look on his face.

No, no, no, no! She didn’t want to see this! Please!

“How about we start with your hand? I like your hands. They’re lovely and sculpted- pity about the holes through them though. Such strange, strange holes. I don’t remember hearing reports of them back before you were all sealed away under the mountain.”

Tenebris didn’t seem to hear Cruelty’s taunt, his eyes locked onto the press that was moved above his hand. It was slowly lowered down, and Tenebris unclenched his hand, trying to flatten it out and keep his hand from being crushed for as long as possible.

It was inevitable though. The press came down on his hand, and Cruelty leaned down to watch as Tenebris knuckles slowly gave in and crumpled under the pressure from the press. One by one with sickening pops, his fingers were broken and ruined.

Tenebris whimpered.

“Oh come now, that’s all you can give me? A pathetic whimper? Surely a beast like you can give me more than just that. Was your hand not enough? I can do more, I assure you. How about... We move to your shoulder? That’s a nice, easy spot to access.”

As the press was lifted, Cruelty patted his crushed and bleeding hand, where the tough white skin had split in a few locations, and reveled in the pained sounds that pulled past Tenebris’ gritted teeth.

Toki felt her soul speed up. She couldn’t watch that again- she couldn’t, she couldn’t, she couldn’t. She couldn’t watch her Papa being tortured before her very eyes- she couldn’t bear witness to that which he had told no one about. He hadn’t even told Asgore about what happened to him.

The press was rolled upwards, and Toki fought every step of the way, her panic growing tighter and tighter and harder in her chest.

Cruelty leaned down to watch as the press was lowered, so she got to bear witness as it took his shoulder, and one corner of his shield, into it’s grasp. The press began to bear down- and for one, hopeful moment, Toki hoped that the shield over his chest would hold. She hoped that the tough, skeletal like structure over his skin would keep the press from going down.

It didn’t.

The corner of his shield cracked and bent away with a horrible noise, and the press lurched downwards, bone and meat crushing under it’s pressure.

Cruelty laughed.
Tenebris screamed.

And Toki had to bear witness to more and more- the press was brought down over and over again, on his chest and on his arms, his legs, his tail- he broke his toes, he broke his femurs- he broke everything that could be broken, and made sure that it was broken good.

Every time a bone broke, Tenebris screamed.

He screamed, and screamed, until the press lifted, and he could take shuddering, gasping breaths that broke her soul, twisted her stomach, and made her panic worse- she couldn’t make it stop!

“We’ve got one more thing left to break,” Cruelty purred,” And then I’ve got someone coming in with scalpels and some monster food to heal you up. We can’t have you dying on us yet, beast.”

The press was exchanged out for a larger one- and it was settled firmly over his shield. The full shield spanned the full length of his chest and ribs, and it moved up and down with the panicked fluttering breaths clawing from his mouth.

The press lowered slowly, so slowly, down to his chest- where it clamped over his shield. The hydraulics groaned above them, but began to bear down- and the shield began to crack.

The scream that he let out was nothing unlike anything she had ever heard- and she echoed it as she lurch ed forcibly in her mind.

Her body forcibly woke itself as her back hit the floor with a noisy thump, sending pain up her back as the joints of her wings too the brunt of her landing. It wasn’t a hard fall, but she wasn’t made of just bone anymore, and the joints were sensitive to the touch. Being crushed under her back and between the floor was not a pleasant sensation- particularly not since she had been slowly putting back weight on while staying with Tenne and his sons.

Toki flailed incoherently, mind lost in the haze of panic and revulsion from her dream. The pain was a shock, and not a shock that helped. She managed to roll over, her four arms clawing at the carpet as she shook, her mind reeling at what she’d seen, at what she’d experienced doing through the hands of Cruelty.

Watching what he’d done to Tenebris… What she had done to Tenebris through his hands… It made her stomach sick, and made her soul hurt, and she felt a fresh wave of anger for the being that was now half of her soul. Cruelty was dead and they weren’t even in her world anymore- he could never hurt Tenebris again. But Toki could never escape Cruelty- he was apart of her now, a permanent fixture on her being, because she had been stupid and thought this was the kinder option than sealing him away for all eternity inside of a what amounted to her to be a glass preserving jar.

The memories rolled over her again, and her wings hinged up, thumping hard onto the roof of the second floor above her. She scrabbled for a minute, trying to calm the magic pulsing in rapid waves over her bones, and barely managed to keep her body from throwing up as she retched at the memories. She’d heated the room up, she notice, to an almost unbearably hot degree to anyone who wasn’t immune to fire. Toki panted, steam and smoke curling from her mouth, and tried not to hurl on the floor.

A shaky sob left her without her permission, and she curled her smaller hands around her horns and cradled her head.
She couldn’t get Tenebris’ cries out of her head- his sobs and his screams and his howls of agony, they echoed inside of her thoughts and inside of her brain like someone had left them on a feedback loop. It was a sound she never, ever wanted to hear from her Papa- it wasn’t a sound she had ever, ever wanted to hear period.

She could hear his screams echoing- even over Cruelty’s attempts to talk to her. Probably to taunt her- she couldn’t… She couldn’t listen to him right now.

There was a creak on the stairs, and her panic fresh mind reacted with the instinctive defensiveness of a wounded animal. Her fur bristled, and her mouth opened in a snarl, the light of a blast not unlike that which Clover could use building in the back of her throat, bringing with it a horrible screeching buzz that echoed in a sort of hellish, ghastly sound. Narrowly slit pupils locked on the massive white form standing on the stairs and her wings raised as high as they could above her, trying to make herself appear bigger to ward him away from her frightened self.

Tenne was rubbing one of his eyes, obviously having been woken by the ruckus she’d been making downstairs. He looked down at her with concern as he fanned a hand through the air. It was hot- he liked the heat, but this was a little much even for him. “Toki?” He rumbled sleepily. “Are you alright?” Concern colored his tone, though he warily watched the bright green laser light that budded in the back of her throat. He raised his hands gently, as if to pacify her. “Easy, Toki. Easy. It’s alright- It’s just me. It’s Tenne- It’s Tenebris.”

The sight of his form and voice and the use of his ‘pack-name’ as he called it, happened to be too much too soon for Toki. She hadn’t had enough time to properly calm down and to force the memories back, to get her mask back in place.

He might not be the exact same as Tenebris- Tenebris was broader, stockier, and had a certain age about him that made him entirely different from Tenne the more that she was spending time with the younger version of him- but the visage was too much.

Her mouth clamped shut, the horrid noise and light dissipating in a puff of smoke that curled towards the ceiling. She turned instead and bolted, body switching from fight to flight in an instant. She turned, and the door was only an obstacle as her thin form crashed into it.

It was knocked open in the direction that the hinges definitely were not supposed to bend, and her face hurt though she couldn’t recognize why. It was dark, the ‘night’ in the underground, and Toki bolted, her legs and arms pulling her from the house as fast as she could on all fours.

Her wings spread once she was out in the snow, and she took off, her instincts driving her to the one place she knew she could calm down- where she knew she could be ‘safe’.

The shabby little den she’d made back when she’d first made it to Snowdin.

Toki didn’t recall any of the flight there, only that she’d flown like the devil himself was on her heels- and then she’d landed, and had crawled her way back inside of the den. It was still in the same shape it had been, albeit a little bit more snow covered, but she’d managed to wiggle inside.

There were no longer any blankets to help pad it from the cold- Tenne had come to get them for her at some point- but it didn’t matter.

She didn’t feel the cold or the ice that threatened to nip at her body. The heat that she was putting off was leached up by the night air, and the den did little to keep much of it. Toki was shivering for an entirely different reason- and she was trying very, very hard not to throw up as she sobbed. She curled up into a tight ball and simply wept- she didn’t know any other way to make it stop but to let it
run it’s course.

The time she was alone was unknown. Whether it was minutes or hours, she had no idea. But she had been left alone for a time, before there was a soft ‘plap plap’ of small shoes on the snow that formed the entrance. "Nyeh?" Could be heard just out of sight from outside.

By the time that the soft ‘Nyeh’ was heard, Toki was no longer sobbing as hard. Her eyes still leaked the sticky, slightly luminescent green fluid that was her tears, but she was no longer loudly sobbing and scaring off all the lesser monsters for miles. She was curled up on her side in the snow, her body chilled but lacking the enthusiasm to do anything about it.

She sat up a little bit at the soft sound, however. Her eyes were blurry with tears and exhaustion. “Q-Quinn?” She croaked shakily. Maternal instincts kicked in, and concern for the child outweighed her fear and her panic- and her instincts drove her to draw the child inside of her den where she could keep him safe from anything outside. Her cold limbs creaked as she sat up. Toki didn’t leave her den- but she knew her voice would reach him all the same. “What a-are you doing out o-of bed?’”

"Nyeh!” He announced proudly.

Tenne appeared close by, kneeling down beside his son with a smile so he could peer into the den to look at her. "He refused to stay in his sachet when he realized we were looking for you." He explained with a light chuckle.

She exhaled shakily when Tenne appeared in her line of sight, and hunched up slightly. She’d had enough time to calm down, however- he didn’t bring up too many memories of what she’d seen. Toki was able to stuff them back and away like she did with everything else, even if more tears fell.

They landed on the ice below her, and froze to the surface.

“I didn’t mean t-to wake you all up.” She murmured, arms crossing together as she shivered and glanced away from him and the child. Her sides still trembled with shaky breaths, the remnants and painful and obvious proof of her sobs remaining for all to see. “I… I would have come back. Y-you didn’t… have to come looking f-for me.” Toki sniffles quietly. “I just needed… A moment to calm down.” She whispers softly.

"We needed to clear house anyways... I had to vent the front room.” He explained, while Quinn crawled into the small igloo.

He snuggled up to her quickly and reached up, gripping her neck fur tightly in his little hands. "N-Nyeh... Moaahh..." He mumbled into her fur.

“You’re a good boy, Quinn.” Toki sniffled quietly, and tucked Quinn tightly to her. Her arms looped around him, shielding him from the cold as best she could against her chest as her fur fluffed up instinctively to help keep him insulated and warm. She nuzzled her chin atop his skull, and glanced up to Tenne quietly. Toki had no idea what Quinn had tried to murmur against her neck.

“I’m… Sorry about the front room.” She cleared her throat quietly, and swiped at her eyes. They still watered mutinously- but she hadn’t… She hadn’t cried in a long while. With everything pent up, she was overdue. Green eyes glimmered at him damply from inside the refraction lit din of her den. “I… told you that I… saw you, before I came here, yeah? Well… I… see other places too.” Which was true. She still had dreams of other worlds. Not hers, sadly. Not the one she wanted to see. “And… not all of these… other places are nice.” She whispers. Her world was a good and honest place- but there were people in it who were not so good. “I was seeing into one of these not so good places. It… It made me panic. I’m sorry I overheated the house.”
He knew she was distressed over what she saw... but with little knowledge of what this nightmare was, he could only offer his emotional support.

"Not at all, it's quite alright, my dear..." Tenne assured her as he reached in, offering her a hand, "But if we want to save some of that heat, we must return home soon and close the windows and doors. I didn't bust my tail to ensure good insulation for nothing." He laughed gently.

Toki watched his hand for a moment before sniffling quietly. Her smaller set of arms tightly clutched Quinn to her chest, taking comfort in having the small child clinging to her mane, and she used her larger set of arms to rotate her body. She took his hand with one of her larger ones, and eased her way out of the den.

Her hand was cold against his- she hadn’t been working on her own insulation, so she was a bit chilly to the touch. “I can just heat your house again.” She reminds quietly, as she lets him ease her out of the den. Toki sniffs quietly again, and carefully gets to her feet. She’s cold and shivering and her magic is radiating warmth, but none of it seems to be reaching her.

She doesn’t offer up an elaboration on what the dream was though. Not with a child curled in her arms.

And he didn't ask her to. Rather, he pulled her into a gentle embrace as soon as she was cleared of the igloo. Quinn of course squealed in complaint at being between them, but it only took a small wiggle to adjust and grow quiet once more as Tenne held Toki. "You've already been through enough tonight. I wasn't going to ask you to." He rumbled quietly.

Being held was… Was nice. It felt good to be surrounded by a frame larger than her. Toki closed her eyes, and just inhaled quietly. Tenne smelled similar to Tenebris, but… only in a base sort of way that she could recall. It was still a comfort to be able to look at unblemished pale skin- or what she could see of it- and put the memories from Cruelty behind her.

She relaxed slowly, with each slow breath that reminded her that she was not witnessing Cruelty torture him- or Tenebris- and that Cruelty could never hurt anyone ever again. Quinn in her arms was a major help- but just being surrounded and feeling safe… It did wonders.

He had a good embrace, she decided. Very securing.

“I don’t mind.” She murmurs. “Heating the house doesn’t take all that long or all that much energy to do, honestly.” She mutters into his chest.

Tenne smiled sweetly to Toki, and rested his head on hers. "I know, but still... I'm not going to ask anything of you like that... not right now. All I ask is that you come with me, come back to your home. I'll get you wrapped up... Get you something to eat..." he spoke into her fur.

“…” She knew it was useless to argue. She didn’t have it in her to argue tonight anyways. She was too rattled, too unsettled- Toki didn’t even point out that it wasn’t her home. It was his. “Okay…” She murmurs quietly against him. “Okay. Lets… Lets get back to the house before all the heat escapes then.”

He smiled at her, and gently led her back to his home. Quinn, all the while, stayed clinging in her fur, mumbling to himself with the occasional 'nyeh' that arose from him.

Once they arrived, he sat her down on the couch and went around to close up, before going to the kitchen to start on something for her to eat.

Toki winced as he had to force the door back into its proper path for opening and closing. She’d
apparently forced it open the wrong way- she just hoped she hadn’t ruined it. It didn’t appear so, but all the same.

She sighed, and kept Quinn tucked to her chest like a small bony security blanket. She relaxed into the couch, enjoying the faint warmth that it exuded still, and found herself too awake to doze. She was always awake to doze after bad dreams- and she… she really wanted to think of the memory from Cruelty as a horrible, horrible bad dream. She shook her head, and petted Quinn. “Are you comfortable, little one?” She murmured softly, listening to the sounds of Tenne in the kitchen area.

"Moaaaah.” He replied quietly, nuzzling her tiredly before looking up at her, blinking slowly before closing his eyes and nuzzling her again.

She smiled softly, and stroked her smaller hands gently over his skull. “You must be very tired,” She coos softly. “Such a strong boy though- so strong and so very good. Thank you for coming to get me, little one.” She brushes her teeth gently to the top of his skull. “Why don’t you get some sleep, Quinn? I won’t go anywhere, I promise. You can practice your words tomorrow when you’re not as sleepy.” Nyeh and Daddy seemed to be his only words- and whatever Moaaaah turned out to be.

"Moaaam..." he mumbled, before he yawned widely and settled in her fur, holding fistfuls to keep her to her promise.

It had been a long time since she’d had to discern toddler babbling of this sort. Her children had sort of hoarded their knowledge until they were ready to try- and then jumbled words together to form frankinwords. Toki still had no idea what he said- but whatever it was, it was surely endearing. So she simply crooned, and nuzzled her teeth to his skull again, letting him nestle down against her chest and cling to the fistfuls of fur he’d grabbed hold of.

When he was out, she sighed and closed her eyes, settling down to wait for Tenne to reappear while she kept an eye on Quinn.

Tenne returned to the living room not long after Quinn fell asleep. "Toki, I forgot to ask... how do you like your steak?" He asked gently.

She glanced up at him from the couch, eyes tired and covered in the dried remnants of the nights trauma. “Ah…” Her first response was lightly pink. However something deeper inside of her made her stomach twist at the idea of such ‘burnt’ meat. Her pupils narrowed in thought, and she chuffed softly through her teeth. “Blue is fine.” The last thing she wanted was blood- but she needed… well, something iron and soft, according to her riled instincts. “Or… Or whatever really.” She flushes and looks away. “I’m not picky.”

"You sound unsure." He mentioned gently, before he nodded, "Very well." he returned to the kitchen, and after a few more minutes, came out with two plates and a tea tray. "Here we are."

Toki sat up carefully with Quinn sprawled out on her chest. She supported him with her smaller arms, and slid to the edge of the couch, offering him a faint smile, motioning for him to sit. “I’m… Not a picky eater,” She says softly. “So I usually just eat whatever.” She was eating more and more now- not what she should be, but better than she was. It took time to build ones self back up to where they were before. “I’m used to taking cooking orders, not giving them.” She chuckles quietly.

Either way, she reached up and took the tea tray from him, settling it on the table so he could actually shuffle the plates on his hands and take a seat with her. She spotted Kai on his back as he moved around, and smiled faintly. “Didn’t even wake up, did he…?”

"Stirred long enough to fuss about being put in the sachet, but oddly enough when he's on my back
he doesn't really get bothered by anything."

"It might be that instinctive response to being close to you." Her children, unless they had wanted
down very, very badly, usually were hard to disturb when they had fallen asleep against her.
Particularly her son. He slept like a log, her little Skylar did. Had. He had. Her fur ruffled faintly at
the mental reminder, and she nuzzled Quinn slightly as her chest panged silently with longing.
"Quinn likes to sleep on my chest. I think he really likes my fur though. He can sleep anywhere so
long as he has a hold of my fur."

"How sweet." Tenebris gave her a smile, but chuckled shortly after. "Perhaps that means he takes
you as a parental figure, or perhaps it's because when he was young, I still had my mane so it brings
him a sense of comfort... though yours is definitely fuller than mine was." He rumbled happily,
setting the two plates of meat down on the coffee table. One of them was barely seared as she had
asked, but the other looked more cooked, medium, if not medium well.

Her stomach twisted some at the thought- torn between delight at the idea and something that was
more torn over the thought of 'replacing' her children. She shunted the thought off so she didn't stress
herself more, because they weren't her children and would not be replacing the hole in her heart
where her babies should be, and simply gave him a smile. "Maybe indeed. I think it might be the
mane thing. The first thing he did upon meeting me was stuff his little hands right into my fur, so its
probably the fluffiness."

She noticed that her steak was very much more raw than his. Strangely enough, while her mind was
more attracted to the thought of the medium well steak, her body was very eager for the blue one.
She hummed a soft noise, and reached out for her plate. Oh well. You only lived once. "Thank you
for cooking, Tenne." She murmurs softly.

"He'd do that... It's absolutely adorable.” He chuckled lightly, before nodding gently as she took her
plate. "It was my pleasure." He rumbled as he collected the other plate of meat, having cooked it that
much just to make sure she was sure of herself. Not that he minded eating the more medium one- it
was just as good as blue. "Enjoy, then. I've also made some tea for when you're thirsty."

“Thank you.” She said again. “Quinn is adorable. Kai too- Quinn is a bit more clingy to me,
however. I think he misses your mane.” She collected her utensils, and then quietly set into her steak.
It was warm all the way through, thankfully, and though her mind was thoroughly disgusted, her
body seemed pleased. It occurred then to Toki that some subspecies of bees, like wasps and hornets,
were very, very carnivorous. She looked fairly similar to her Hell Hornets- so it was not out of the
realm of belief to think that she was, perhaps, very much a carnivore, despite the fact that she still
enjoyed her leafy greens.

A soft, pleasant buzzing filled the front room, originating from Toki. Other than the sound that meant
she was quite pleased with her meal, despite her mental revulsion, she ate quietly, until she was full,
and then offered out the rest to Tenne since Quinn was sound asleep in her fur.

He took the leftovers and set them aside, not quite done with his own yet as he ate slowly in her
company. But the sound of her buzzing had him feeling happier, and accomplished, so he settled
down and ate at a more regular pace.

It wasn’t so much that Toki ate quickly- it was the fact that she didn’t eat much. It took more time to
build an appetite back up than it did to shrink one’s stomach in size. She watched him quietly for a
time, and then rubbed her fingers gently along Quinn’s skull, before smiling to herself. “You
know… There’s one question that’s been bothering me for a little while.” She murmurs. “If we’re all
trapped underground with no way to the surface… What is the meat made of…?”
He hesitated, and then he swallowed his mouthful before he chuckled. "There's a common species of deer in the snowy forest. They are not the brightest, but are plentiful due to what must have been centuries unbothered before." He explained, "They're fun to hunt, easy to kill, and their meat is very good quality."

“That would make sense.” She nods lightly, glancing over at his plate with a thoughtful hum. “Subterranean cave deer. Huh. Well, better than grilled up cave snails or something. Pretty sure Grillby sells a snailburger. But the venison is definitely good.” She nestles back into her neck fluff, and hums quietly, passing her tongue over her teeth to carefully clean them. She takes a moment to flex them out, pressing them apart so she can run her tongue between each of the flexible teeth and make sure nothing is caught. She might have teeth like a crocodile, but that didn't mean she wanted to keep bits of flesh between her teeth like one too.

Of course, it didn't keep him from staring, not making a face or anything in the process, but just watched curiously. "Your teeth are very fascinating." He mentioned.

Her old reaction would have been to flush brightly, clamp them tightly back into place, and sputter an apology for just doing that out in the open. However, in light of the fact she was exhausted, she simply flushed a bright green in embarrassment anyways and crooked one of them at him and wiggled it cheekily. “They’re pretty weird.” She agrees. “But they work. It certainly makes drinking fun, though.”

He laughed at the sight. "Makes me wonder if I should invest in some straws for you, my dear.” He teased lightheartedly.

She laughs quietly at that, letting her teeth fall back into their usual place. “Straws wouldn’t go amiss. You’ll go through a lot though. My teeth aren’t just for show.” She chomps them lightly- and they do, indeed, still spark. “Very sharp. I'll bite through a lot of them by accident.” To prove that she didn’t need straws, she leaned down for her cup of tea and lifted it, bringing it to her mouth. She’d been drinking this long without straws- she was honestly well practiced. It was very easy for her to take a drink, though she did it slow so as not to spill on Quinn.

He chuckled quietly, and leaned back in his seat, sighing gently. "I see. You're well off without them. It was a silly idea anyhow.” He rumbled, finishing the last bite of his steak.

“Most of the time I manage. After all, I’ve had these teeth for a long time.” She winks playfully. “Sometimes though, I do end up with spills. Straws are nice with certain cups.” Most of the mugs for tea were fine. Some glasses though, she dealt with constant spills. As he finished, she hummed and tucked her feet up. Her wings twitched lightly where they were pinned, and she grimaced a little bit, adjusting herself. They still hurt from where they’d been slammed into the floor.

"It's still rather early, so if you need to get some rest I can loan you my room for the rest of the night." Tenne offered to her quietly.

"Thank you for the offer, but I don't sleep well alone after...after what I’ve seen." Toki murmurs softly. She didn't have Papyrus to chase away her fears, to make the nightmarish memories and dreams go away. He wasn't... He wasn't there when she needed him to be. Or rather, she wasn't there when she needed to be with him. She couldn't be, because the Void had pretty much told her no.

Toki swallowed, and closed her eyes with a sigh. She then glanced up to Tenne. "It's... Probably confusing to you- my... my dreams. But... I saw you. Another... Another version of you, from another world." Her fur ruffles slightly. She was being truthful within a lie. She was so tired of lying. "I... Watched you- him, perhaps- get... Captured and held by a terrible, horrible human. This... This human and his associates did terrible things to him. I can't un-see and un-hear his screams as his
shield," she motions to her chest, to show him that she knew about the bone plate that she had never seen on Tenne, "and limbs were broken. That’s why I panicked. It... Was very distressing."

He reached up when she mentioned his shield, free hand brushing his chest briefly in surprise as she mentioned something she should have no way of knowing about, and he hesitated to speak, before he sighed, and smiled gently. It was another one of her mysteries, he supposed.

He then moved Kai off his chest, tucking him in the cradle of one arm, before he looked to Toki and lifted his arm, offering his side to her. "Then we will rest together."

"So you will know every moment that I’m right here, that no one has me, no one will hurt me here. Especially some human."

'Heh heh heh, we’ll see about that, beast.'

'If I have to spend every moment of the rest of our lives acting as your prison, I will make sure that you never, ever hurt another living being.' The queen bee monster responded to her soul companion tiredly.

Toki hesitated as he lifted his arm, and her fur ruffled and settled a few times as she debated accepting his offer. Eventually she exhaled softly, and then scooted over to his side and carefully settled against him, her wings awkwardly flexing and moving as she cuddled up. She tried to angle her head as best she could so her horns didn't stab at him or tear holes in his clothes. "One on one, I know you could take a human. But humans... They come in numbers." They way she spoke, she spoke like she knew from experience. Toki gave a tired mumble. "They came in numbers when they took him..."

He smiled as she joined him, and he gave her a soft squeeze before he sighed at her words, "Indeed so, my dear... it would be an ugly fight..." he agreed, before he rested his head on hers, "If he is me. Then I know... He would be broken... but he would not stay shattered for long. We are a Blaster beast.... we must be strong, for our family... for our friends..." his grip then tightened a little, "for our kin."

She settled a little as his arm draped over her shoulders. Her wings flexed a little bit, and she exhaled with a soft, sleepy sigh. Toki gave him a lopsided and faint smile. "He was broken," she murmured, "for a long while... But his pack and his family were there for him. I have... I have seen a lot of his world." Her voice thickened a little bit as longing washed over her. She had seen a lot of his world indeed. She came from it and wanted to go home... Toki sighed, and turned her face into his chest. She still had tear tracks on her face. She did not need more fresh ones. "You are strong. You are always strong..."

He smiled and gently brought his hand up to wipe her eyes, "And so are you, but you must find your strength within." He told her.

She glanced up at him as he wiped her eyes. She blinked slowly and sighed gently. "I use more of it than you know." She responds honestly, her arms tightening on Quinn as the boy cuddled to her chest. She used a lot of inner strength... If Toki didn't, she would shatter and break over her losses, and Cruelty would be free to have rein over her body.

"All the more reason to encourage you to stay strong..." He purred warmly, "You're a wonderful woman, Toki... and I already love knowing you... you've great potential here, you know...

"Just because I've got my... Damages... Doesn’t mean that people don't deserve as much kindness as I can give them." She murmurs softly. "Sometimes it's the only thing that can distract me from... Well... Everything." Toki sighs, and then flicks her wings. "I love knowing you too. You and Kai
and Quinn..." They helped. They really helped in many, many ways. "You help make it hurt just a little less sometimes." She hums. "Potential...? I... I don’t know what potential a beekeeper turned barmaid has, honestly."

He smiled and kissed her head, "More than you give yourself credit for. You are very intelligent, you know things, and this gift you have..." He purred softly, "Imagine if we harnessed it to develop our home further. Perhaps make it that much better to live here."

She hummed softly at the kiss to her head. Her fur ruffled, shifting and baring the deep scar that wasn't always visible thanks to how her mane rested. "My... gift," she tested the word, obviously not seeing it for one with the nightmares she tended to get, "is not something I can control. I only know things that I've seen. And I've seen a lot of things... We could make life better down here." She agrees quietly. "Or... Or we could get to the surface. I don't... Know how to break the barrier. But I know it can be done. The other you... He was on the surface."

"We have been theorizing..." He admits softly, "but we are not sure yet what it would take to destroy the barrier..."

"What sort of theories do you have right now?" She asks curiously.

'Cruelty? Do you know what it takes to destroy the Barrier?'

' Wouldn't you like to know. Of course I know what it would take!'

'And you're not going to tell me, are you...?'

'Give me a good fucking reason, Kindness.'

'Because he looked at our soul, and didn't immediately ask why we have both the colors for kindness and cruelty. I don't think they have a spectrum like our world did, Cruelty. You could choose for once in your life- or lack there of- to do the right thing.'

'This is the old beast's counterpart? He's an idiot!' Cruelty sneered, before he huffed, 'why would I help them... as soon as they find out they're going to kill humans and take their souls.'

'So it does require human souls. Thank you, Cruelty.' She murmured softly, her brow furrowing at the fact the humans would have to die.

"Not many... Monster magic itself is not strong enough... But we have started the possibility that it would take the power of a human soul..." Tenne explained.

Toki frowns at that, and feels her soul speed up in her chest. "I see... And... Have you had any way to test your theories yet?" She wondered if he knew her soul was human.

"No... Not yet... The only human down here is His Majesty's child... and I could never ask such a thing of them." Tenne replied with a grim sigh.

She shakes her head vehemently with a sharp buzz. "No harming or experimenting on children." She says firmly. "Human children are still children. Just... No." She sighs. Toki grinds her teeth nervously for a time. "What sort of... Things would you need to do with the soul? Would it harm the host?" She asks quietly. Hers was... Damaged. There were the cracked scars lining Cruelty's side, and the wide one from losing her family on the other. There was no telling if the soul dwelling on her body would hold up to testing or not.

"We believe perhaps there is an attribute within the human soul that allows them some... extra asset
of power, not magic like we possess but... something..."

Her brows knit tighter, and she can feel a building headache in her head. She lifts one of her hands and rubs the bridge where her nose would be. "Mmm..." She groans softly. "Its called Determination. And... It's something human souls have." Hers had it in spades, given the fact she was still in control of the save and load buttons, though obviously for this world. The reset button was not broken. Toki had only used the save button so far. "It makes them resilient." She responds softly with a quiet sigh against Quinn's skull.

"I see..." Tenne leaned his head back, thinking about it as he tightened his grip on her once more, "How did you know this?" He asked.

Wordlessly, Toki lifts a hand and taps her head. Then she explains. "I've heard it used before in one of my... What are we going to call them? Dreams? Seeings? Either way, I've heard it used there. It was utterly useless information to me until you needed it."

"Visions, perhaps will do" he rumbled, before he smiled and reached up to gently comb her mane between his fingers, "Indeed, it's useful to me... but i have no reason to act upon what I've learned unless I know that you are sound in body and mind..." he rumbled, "Sleep, Toki..."

"Visions works." Her eyes start to droop as soon as his fingers settle into her mane. That... That was a feeling she hadn’t had in a long time. It was different with Quinn playing with her mane- but someone combing their fingers through her hair... She hadn’t had a sensation like that since Papyrus had braided her hair before it had all fallen out. Gods, she had missed this feeling. It was one of the most relaxing feelings in the world. Her head tingled pleasantly, and she slowly slumped against him. "S'not fair. You have sssssleepy fingers..." Her voice slurs into his shirt. "Playing dirty, Tenne."

He chuckled gently and began to purr as to further dull her senses from the ache of reality, "Sleep." He told her again.

The purring was probably overkill. Toki fell asleep curled next to Tenne, with Quinn in her arms and Kai in his father's grasp. She hardly made a sound- and for once, she didn't dream.
Chapter 96

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Bath time for the blaster beasts. A whole new set of instincts helps move things along- also clothes are a thing. And we learn a new quirk about Toki's venom. 8) Don't let it touch things that aren't fire elementals. Just. Don't. It could be very bad.

Silverwing Notes: So, I think so far Toki's doing well, don'tcha think? Welp, time for more shenanigans!
Enjoy the chapter!

Additional note, dear readers. I am currently in the process of a rather large move from a house to a home of lesser proportion the next city over. I have a lot to pack, and not enough days to pack it, not to mention what I have to do for the sake of my cats.

Since this started, I have not touched my laptop. My only media access is Netflix and all else on my tablet. This has limited how much writing has been completed since it started, and I can only hope I adjust quickly to my new residence, and be able to quickly pick back up where we left off.

Also I am very excited! I am turning 20 in less than 24 hours Eeeeee

Right, update over. Enjoy the chapter!

It was time for a bath, Toki decided. The boys had picked up a bunch of grits and grime from every day running around with her between her job at the bar and taking care of Tenne's house. While being made of bone meant they did not technically get an odor about them, it didn't mean they did not pick up odors from their surroundings, and both boys definitely stunk.

And so did Tenne, Toki noticed. Whatever they were working on at the lab, he had obviously gotten some on him somewhere. Whatever compound it was, it stunk to high hell. He was used to its stench- or his tongue was scent blind from it now, she couldn't honestly tell- but either way, Toki had scentless soap and she had full intentions of scrubbing everyone and everything down.

She had every intention of scrubbing them down- but definitely not in Snowdin. They had very little running water, and the bath tub that they had was, quite frankly, not built to house someone with wings. Not even with wings her size, but wings period. She couldn't even angle them to try and wash them. So the river was her best bet, and the river in Snowdin was too cold for her to even attempt to try.

One morning, after breakfast, Toki smiled at Tenne and the boys and tossed four towels over her arm, and clutched in her hands her comb Tenne had given her, and the scentless soap and conditioner that she had gotten from the general store once she had paid for the damages to Grillby's door frame. "Bath time," she announces to the three of them, planting two of her hands on her hips. "And laundry day too. Bring any clothes you want washed, and I'll get them cleaned after we wash up."

Tenne blinked once as he looked up at her from where he was having a cup of tea, while Kai
grumbled about not wanting a bath.

Quinn on the other hand gave a coo and giggled happily to her. "Nyeh!" Such the optimist, he was.

Toki cocked her hip and twitched one of her wings. She ruffled her mane at Kai. "Don't even give me lip, mister. Go get your clothes, Kai. Grab your brothers as well, please." She lifts a hand and points it towards the stairs. She then glanced at Tenne. "You're not excused either, Tenne. I don't know what you're doing in the lab, but you smell... awful. Clothes, and we're off for a bath. Right Quinn?"

"NYEH!" The youngest chirped happily.

Kai groaned, and huffed, before going up the stairs.

Tenne chuckled, and only stuck around long enough to finish his tea. Once it was done, he stood, and began to go collect his laundry. "Alright, alright. I admit that last experiment did leave a bit of a stench on my tongue," he admitted, "I was considering a bath regardless."

Toki chuckled slightly and watched Tenne go up to fetch his clothes. "Considering is not the same as actually doing. This way you actually get a warm bath, and actually get clean. I can't even get fully clean in that tub you have." Her wings flick. And she leans down to pat Quinn's head. "C'mon, kiddo. Think you'll help me get all the clothes scrubbed up while your sleepy brother no doubt naps on your Daddy?" She inquires playfully to the youngest skeleton.

"Nyeh!" He reached up and grabbed hold of her hand, nuzzling it before giving a playful, "Nyeh heh heh!"

His laugh still hurt her heart a little bit, but she drove it away as she bent down to pick him up. She propped him on her hip, glad the change hadn't gotten rid of her 'childbearing' hips, as her mother had called them. They made a good seat for the stinky skeleton kid she had successfully nabbed. "Of course you will," She smiles. "You're a good boy, Quinn." She presses her teeth to his forehead, and then moves to the living room. She still only owned her one pair of clothes- but that was fine. It was less she had to wash. She washed religiously anyways, because of all the grease she got on her regularly. The boys? Not as regularly. That was going to change though. "Now we just need to wait for your Daddy and your big brother to come downstairs. Who do you think will be faster?" She coos softly.

"Dadda!" he squealed, looking at the staircase as Tenne started down, carrying a small laundry bag. Kai was right behind him, empty-handed

"Don't think I plan on making you do all this laundry by yourself, Toki." Tenne spoke with determination in his tone.

"Looks like you were right, Quinn." She smiled lightly. She glanced to Kai, and arched a brow.

The boy rolled his eyes and shrugged, before he pointed at the bag Tenne had. "Dad has it."

"Indeed." She sighs. She flicks her gaze to Tenne and smiles lightly. "I don't mind doing laundry. I have four arms, so scrubbing is easy. I've even gotten good at not tearing holes in the fabric." She had a couple holes in the bottoms of the legs of her pants that she was not going to talk about.

"Anyways, let's be off." She nuzzles Quinn again, and then gently adjusts him on her hip. "It's a bit of a jaunt over to where I like to bathe, so we're going to fly."

Kai stares at her, blue eye lights doubtful. "You can't carry us all... Can you?"
"Nope. But I've got a friend who can." She chirps cheerfully. Toki winks at Tenne, and then bounces to the door. Bath time was one of her favorite times. She could relax and soak and get the stresses of the week out of her muscles.

That statement had Tenne curious and he tilted his head, "A friend?" He had forgotten a few of the details from when they saw the king, so at the moment he had no idea of what was coming.

"A friend!" She chirps again, and then she's out the door and into the snow. She goes a little ways out into the snow and ice, where she can have plenty of space to call her out, and then lifts her free hand to the sky once the Gaster family had followed her out to the deck.

A twist of her magic, and the air in front of her ripples, before tearing open. Burning green hellfire bursts forth, spilling smoke and brimstone into the air with a ghastly noise and scent. Toki perks up, her wings flicking, and waits.

Her wings tense, however, when the wrong hornet answers her call. "Sugar, no!"

The massive bee bursts forth and slams into her like an overly zealous puppy. The towels and the soap are barely held as Toki is flattened in the snow, the wingless hornet pinning her down with aggressive licks to her face and what amounted to a full body cuddle. Toki noticed immediately that Sugar didn’t have her armor on- or it likely would have actually hurt. She wondered where it was- and with a quick thought from the hornet, was swiftly informed that it was safely stored in their world, but that it got uncomfortable after a while.

Toki could understand that.

The kisses, however, she could not.

"Sugar!" Toki nearly shrieked a laugh. "Get off! No kisses! Ack!"

Quinn, also pinned under the hornet, gave a loud squeal as well as he found more fluff to hold onto. "NYEH! NYEH!"

Tenne had tensed up in surprise while Kai gawked. "Whoa, giant bee!" He laughed.

A giant bee that was missing two very key factors in what made it a bee, and not some sort of stinging ant. There were two scarred holes on the back where the others could see, where the creature had lost her wings.

The sudden noise made Sugar startle, and she bounced off of Toki with her new leech firmly attached. She buzzed in befuddlement and tried to see past her mane to the lump clinging to her.

Toki laughed and got to her feet. "That is Sugar. She's not the one that I was calling." She turns to the hole again, and plants her hands on her hips, now that Quinn is latched onto her smaller summons. Sugar still dwarfs her all the same. "Come on out, big girl."

There was a grouchy grumble from within the portal, and then a massive hornet slid out. If Sugar was large, this one was larger yet- dwarfing even the doctor standing on the stairs, and the king far, far up in his castle. Clover leered down at Toki with a grouchy look, and then pointedly lifted her foot, now coated in snow, before shaking it off. She huffed, massive wings lifting as she shook her horns at the much smaller monster standing calmly in front of her.

"I know, I know, the location is terrible, but I need you to give Tenne and his boys a ride to Waterfall with me." She gives her larger summons a smile. "Your saddle still works, so... Yeah. Fitting Tenne and the boys shouldn't be an issue. Speaking of... Tenne! This is Clover, my other
summons!" She motions to the saddled hell hornet with a smile.

Kai didn't have a comment for the larger hornet. The boy just gawked, slack-jawed at the sight

Tenne was more or less the same as his son, looking up at the giant hornet, "By the ancestors..." He spoke quietly, before he looked at Toki. "It's not going to... hurt us, us it?" He asked.

"What?" She blinked over at him, and vehemently shook her head. "No, no, never. I wouldn’t have summoned something that would hurt any of you. Sugar is as sweet as they come, and Clover might be grumpy, but she's well behaved." She says. Toki pats her summons, and gets nudged in turn. She motions the bigger hornet closer. And then goes over to steal Quinn from Sugar, before motioning the smaller hornet back towards the portal to her own personal hell. "You're actually going to be riding Clover." She explains.

Quinn was giggling madly as he held onto Sugar's fur, but was just as happy to return to Toki's fluff.

Kai admittedly shifted closer to his father, who was still standing where he started, looking up at Clover like looking away was going to get him killed.

Toki chuckled and hefted Quinn closer as Sugar sulked back into the portal. She padded for Tenne, with Clover lumbering right behind her. The massive hornet took care not to step on her wings as the portal closed behind the smaller hornet.

She came to a stop at the bottom of the stairs, and looked up at Tenne. "Come on down, you two. Lets get you saddled up so we can go take a bath."

Clover locked eyes with Tenne and peered at him flatly. Intelligent eyes roved over him from head to foot, and she took him in slowly, before cocking one of her mandibles like one would a brow. She buzzed faintly, a tiny sound from something so massive, and ruffled her mane at him pointedly as if pleased by the hesitance his other self had never shown her properly, before laying down in the snow so he and his sons could mount up.

He took a slow breath, and then sighed as Clover flattened into the snow, coming closer at a slow pace as he examined her. "Such a miraculous creature..." He commented, running a hand over Clover's side before making his way to the saddle, climbing up before securing Kai in his lap.

Clover just sighed and rolled her eyes as he got seated.

"She is, isn't she?" Once she was sure he was secure, and that so was Kai, Toki secured the laundry bag to Clovers saddle, and then glanced to Quinn. "You want to ride with me, or ride on Clover, little one?"

"Nyeeehhh..." He was looking around now. If he had the option to choose, where did the fluffy bee go?

Clover leaned her head down curiously to him, her mane ruffling lightly. She chuffed at the child in her mistress's arms, and tilted her head, buzzing at him faintly.

"I had to send Sugar home, sweetie. She can't fly. So the water in Waterfall would have hurt her badly." She bounces him gently. "Clover is fluffy if you want to ride with her, Quinn. She's got even more fur than I do, and you can reach it from the saddle, but you have to be very gentle. She doesn't like to have it tugged."

He blinked, then let out a pouty 'Nyeh' and nuzzled Toki, happy with staying with her.
"So..." Tenne started slowly, "You'll stay close by, right?"

Toki smiled, and smooched his skull. She tucked him close to her, securing him with her smaller arms as she turned to face Tenne and Kai. She nodded to them. "Of course. I'm not going to just leave you alone with Clover. You have no idea how to fly her, and she has no idea where she's going." Toki gives him a warm smile all the same, and then lifts her wings. She takes off first, and spirals up where she's out of Clovers way.

Once Toki is up in the air, Clover's massive wings lift up. They don't hesitate to start beating, and she lifts off with a faint wobble, before heading straight up in a slow hover. Her flight is not as strained as Toki's was when she had carried Tenne, but it's also not as smooth either. She bumps and wobbles, a much larger being to get battered by the breeze. Still, she makes it up near Toki, and then the duo head off towards the cave into Waterfall at decent speeds.

Toki is close enough for Tenne to talk to, however, particularly as she extends her magic out to blanket him and Kai and keep them warm from the chill wind that comes with riding a flying hornet.

Thankfully the underground had high ceilings, and the caverns were at least long enough to allow Clover to pass, though Tenne was still understandably tense as he sat upon the hornet.

"How is this possible, I’ve summoned forth my blasters and they've only showed up as skulls... am I not putting enough magic into my summoning or..." He was mostly talking to himself.

'I can practically HEAR the gears in his head grinding to figure this out.' Cruelty laughed.

'Of course he's trying to figure this out. I'm not exactly a normal blaster beast. Shit, I wasn't even a normal skeleton when I was one. I've always been fucking weird.'

'So you admit to being a freak of nature. Good.' the anti-heart drawled.

'I was the only six foot tall half Asian who frequently hung out in the middle of an apiary in my high school. I was a freak of nature before I met the monsters.'

"I have too much magic maybe." She comments lightly to his chatter at himself. "They've always shown up like this ever since I first summoned them. I think it's the summons choice maybe. They're... More vulnerable like this. Stronger too, as they have more they can physically do. But... Sugar lost her wings, and there's no sign of them growing back."

"Oh... I saw that... I'm very sorry to hear that..." Tenne mentioned in a quieter tone.

"It happened a while ago. She's still a little... Flighty after it, so if she flinches around you or the boys, it’s not your fault." Toki responds gently. "But please don’t try and compare to me, Tenne. I'm a bit of a freak, if you recall my medical records."

"You're no freak." He looked at her almost immediately after she said that, head snapping up so fast he nearly gave himself whiplash. "Don't call yourself anything like that." He told her sternly.

Toki gives him a flat look as she adjusts Quinn a little, tucking him closer to her chest. Her worn turtleneck flaps in the wind. "Tenne, how many monsters do you know that don't have visible attack and defense stats? I'm the definition of freak." She states in a matter of fact tone, fur ruffling with the breeze. "Unless an anomaly is better. I'm definitely not normal, Tenne. I accepted this a long time ago. I was different even in my pack."

He went quiet after she said her part, and sighed as he simply focused on holding onto his son.
Toki sighs, and buzzed ahead to take the lead so Clover doesn't take a wrong turn.

Clover bucked a little under him as they reached the caves, and then it was single file with Toki leading the pair of them through the winding glowing caves. Toki guided her with her mind, and the duo buzzed through the caverns, making a horrible racket as they went. There wasn’t as much of a breeze here for them to deal with, so flight went smoother and faster.

Kai glances up at his dad once Toki is out of earshot, and elbows him lightly. "She's kinda right, Dad. She's kinda a freak. But she's our freak... right?"

Tenne straightened at that, before he chuckled and gave his boy a squeeze, "That's right, Kai... My clever boy." He chuckled softly, running a hand over the pup's head.

Kai grinned happily. "I have my moments. Dunno where I got it from though." He comments cheekily, fisting his fingers lightly in the fluffy mane of the hornet they were riding.

He chuckled and gave his son a gentle noogie. "That's my boy!" He snorted lightly.

Kai squawked, and swatted at his father's hands. His tiny mane ruffled at him. "Hey! Stop that!" He laughs.

Clover huffs at the two of them on her back, and then carefully starts to descend as Toki comes in for a landing.

Toki and the big bee land next to Toki's preferred bathing spot. It's a bit more private than the one she had shared with Ariel, and had a small waterfall off to one side that she liked to use for rinsing her mane out. It had a rocky pool, with a stream that ran out of it that kept the water fresh, so she didn’t have to worry about using soap.

Toki hums slightly, and goes to get the bag of clothes off the saddle, so Tenne can get down without jostling it or anything. She keeps her head tucked though, and doesn't look at him, aware she had upset him with her comments about herself. She sets down Quinn once she has the clothes, and gives the boy an affectionate ruffle to his skull, before scooting to the edge of the water.

Kai scrambled off of the hornet, and lazily began to strip out of his clothes. Once he was naked, he balled them up and flung them to Toki, who caught them without a fuss. He stretched, tail unfurling from its position around his leg. He wagged it lightly, and looked at Quinn. "C'mon, little bro. Naked time!"

Quinn perked up and giggled at his brother's announcement, "NYEH!" he squealed, before wiggling out of his clothing, freeing his own tail and dropping down to run after his brother on all fours.

Kai crouched down as well and took off, tail kiting high to the sky as he laughed. His mane was coming in, fur sprouting along his usually hidden neck bones. It was short still, but filling out. He rolled along the banks, playfully tossing glowing moss at Quinn.

Toki blinked as she spotted the tails. Something inside of her eased some. These were not... Not the same as her Sans and Papyrus. Neither of hers had tails. She had seen the intimate parts of both, as awkward as it was to say that about her engaged brother in law, and there had been no tail nor any sign of there having been one ever. A soft sigh left her, and she had a few smaller summons collect Quinn's clothes and bring them over to her pile that she was sorting on the bank.

Clover shook herself and rumbled up at Tenne, a sharp reminder for him to get his tail moving before she unseated him herself. She was a ride, not a personal lounge. The big hornet sprawled on the
ground, massive legs spreading out as she sighed grumpily.

Tenne realized exactly what the massive hornet wanted, and he dismounted swiftly before he could be forcibly removed. He patted Clover gently. "Thank you for the ride." He told her, before he stepped to the side and focused his magic, opening a small rift to summon his own blasters.

The three came out quickly. In this realm, they looked as different as their master did from Tenebris. One had blue streaks on his mandible, another had red, and the last had silver. It looked like they had part of their spine attached to the back of their head, but only a few small vertebrae. Nothing compared to the greatness of Toki's summoning, which would make sense to Tenne's befuddlement.

The sound of the rift opening drew Toki's gaze, and she blinked as she watched the summons come forth. How... How odd. She supposed it made sense however that they too were different- though now that she thought about it, Papyrus had summoned his summons with their full bodies. Maybe with how this world worked, things worked differently and it equated to how much magic you put into it. With how... How odd this world was, she wouldn't be surprised. Toki could hardly expect to see Garrus himself come waltzing out of the rift like it was nothing. At least, the Garrus she was familiar with.

She gave Tenne a hesitant smile, hoping he wasn't upset by her comments about herself, and fingers the edge of her shirt while the boys romp. "They're impressive. I like the colors." She says softly.

Clover lifts her head to look at them after having ignored his touch and words. She buzzes at them, and then sprawls out better, content to ignore them as best she can and sleep.

"Thank you." He replied proudly, before setting them off to keep the boys safe while they romped, before he turned to speak to Toki. Though even as his mouth opened, no words came out as he watched her.

As he had gone to set his blasters to watch the boys, Toki had worked her pants off of her legs. With how they were shaped, it was a time consuming process, working the legs down and over her paws until she was free without getting anything tangled up. She got them off, and then carefully shimmed her shirt up and over her head, disentangling all four arms with careful motions. The bottom two tugged at the worn holes that had been torn in the armpits of one of his old shirts, but thankfully didn't rip them any wider. Her upper most arms took some work to ease out, as did her wings. She was honestly glad her wings were flexible, or she wouldn't be able to wear anything that didn't button in the back. Buttons might be easier anyways.

Soon she dropped her worn shirt down with her pants, and shook her mane out so it spread across her shoulders better. She hummed lightly, shifting on her legs and flexing her wings. "I may need to borrow your sewing kit soon. I have another hole in my pants." She muses lightly to Tenne as she bends down to collect the clothes and toss them into a small rocked off pool of water that worked for a wash bin. A bit of soap, and she stirs it with her arm before its frothy then flash boils the water. "Tenne? I need your clothes. I'm going to let these soak with some soap so they smell better."

He didn't want to stop staring, but while her back was turned he smacked his cheeks repeatedly and snapped out of his daze. He scooped up a handful of clothes for her and handed them over. "R-right! Here!" Now all that was left to do was not look too eager to undress as well.

"I meant the ones you're wearing." She laughs gently, but accepts the armload he hands to her. She stuffs them into the bubbling froth and stirs them up, the glowing water churning and boiling against the rough stones. Toki glances up to him and rocks into her toes, angling around to see him better. "You don't have a problem with me borrowing your sewing kit later, right...?" She inquires lightly, realizing she had just assumed and not asked. She scuffed her toes and looked down at her chest,
arms crossing as she looked away to give him some privacy to undress.

"O-Oh no, not at all!" He replied, before he cleared his throat quietly. It was unintentional, and more to actually clear his throat. He started to undress, starting with sweater, and then tugging his shirt off from under his sweater, before unbuttoning the strap over his tail and freeing his pants to let them drop to the floor.

She listened to the sound of his pants pooling on the ground, and then held out her hands for him to set his clothes into. Toki hummed patiently, waiting quietly. "Thanks, Tenne. I'm going to have to actually invest in some clothes eventually. The pair you gave me are starting to wear out from being washed so often." Buying clothes meant... Her stay was more permanent though. That... That she couldn't ever go home. That she... She was accepting this fact.

Her throat felt tight, and she had to swallow to clear it of the knot lodging itself in it.

He handed them over, then noticed the tense look to her, "Are you alright?" he asked gently.

Toki swallowed again and shook her head. "Its..." She wanted to say nothing. She really did. She wanted to write it off with another lie, to just... Brush it off. She didn’t.

She eventually sighed, and tossed his clothes carefully into the wash after making sure his pockets were empty of anything important. She stirred the sudsy water for a moment, before straightening and shaking her arms off. "Just... Getting clothes and... And other stuff is sort of cementing that I'm... In here." She murmurs. "That... That there's no... No going home, you know...?" She glanced to him, eyes flicking over the bare expanse of his frame. He was just like Tenebris, but much more lanky and less bulky- though he was missing the abdominal cavity that Tenebris had. In it’s place was a smooth and well muscled plane of his abdomen, and it was quite nice to look at in her opinion. Though that was a thought she probably shouldn’t have. Toki sighed. "It's fine, Tenne. I'm just... Being stupid. Let me go hop in the water and get it warmed up, alright?"

He watched her for a moment, and then he ran a hand over his head and sighed quietly, giving a slow nod of defeat before he whistled to his boys and moved to enter the water as well.

Toki had glanced away, and missed the defeated look he had. While he and his boys went to get into the water, she slipped in as well, and flicked her wings. Her magic suffused the water, making it feel thicker, heavier, as it began to heat.

She honestly had too much of it- she had far, far too much of it because of what Cruelty with the souls- so expunging it wasn’t hard. She focused on heating the water, bracing herself as she worked on heating the big pool so they weren’t limited to a small area for romping.

While Toki missed the look, Kai had not. He might be young, but he was smart, and he was observant- and he wanted them to be happy. He bustled for the water, and flung himself around his Dad’s shoulders, leaving Quinn to splash in after them. He hooked his arms around his neck, and latched on like a limpet. “Don’t give up, Dad.” He nuzzles him softly. “It takes time for grief to go away. And girls are soft, you know that. They get their feelings hurt and they can hurt for aaaages.”

He sticks out his tongue and makes a face.

Kai definitely gave Tenne a small start, but his words were wise. He chuckled as he turned and gave his son a gentle kiss on the head. "So very true, my bright young man." He praised quietly. "Time is the most valuable asset for one to heal with, but that does not mean I won't offer what I can to help her.” He chuckled gently.

Kai licked his dad’s face in return, and smiled at him. “I think we all help.” He nods, keeping his
voice very quiet so their feminine bath mate didn’t hear. “She’s… she’s really hurt inside. I don’t really know how much, but she used to look at me and Quinn and you could see the hurt. It’s not as bad now.” Kai was a very, very observant child. “I think you help lots by listening when she chooses to talk. But just don’t give up, okay Daddy?”

The water begins to steam around Toki, and she sighs, before sinking up to her ruff in the water. Her wings flick, before sinking below the surface. She slowly works lower, until only the top of her head is visible, and then she closes her eyes, looking reminiscent of a crocodile lurking on the surface. She had to have air now- so sitting at the bottom of the water was not what she was able to do, despite what she wanted to do.

“You're going to make someone a very happy mate when you're older.” He purred, pulling Kai into his lap to groom and wash him.

“A mate? Ew, no!” He sputtered, squirming initially as he was groomed. “Mates are gross! I don’t need one of those. Blegh!”

Quinn on the other hand, with his freedom, chattered and giggled as he ran over to Toki, before tackling her with a trill, before starting to lick and groom her fluff.

Toki grunted as she suddenly found herself with a small skeleton child clinging awkwardly to her as he groomed her. She ruffled her fluff at him, and then gently shifted him around to her front and lifted herself some out of the water. She laughed gently as he groomed her fluff, his tongue getting tangled in the damp green strands. Her tongue flicks out before she can stop it, and rasps over the faint puff of fluff she can see trying to- somehow- grow from his neck bones.

She hesitates only a moment- because where the heck had that come from?- before deciding that it was just a quirk to her new body. After all, she was, out of the corner of her eye, watching Kai being groomed by Tenne. She simply gave in, and groomed him gently, her spare hands fetching her soap and getting some to scrub into his bones while she cleaned his tiny puffs of fur that were usually hidden by his clothes. As she set to cleaning him off for the first time- as Tenne usually handled cleaning the boys since he was their dad- Toki realized something very important.

They might look like they had some spots of bone- but they had bodies like Tenne. She hadn’t noticed when she’d glanced at them the first time- tails were distracting, very distracting, particularly when they were kiting high in the sky while the kids romped around like the mostly hairless puppies they apparently were- but now that she was getting him cleaned up, she could see that he was actually very much not like her Papyrus. Where her husband was more skeleton than blaster beast, these boys were more blaster than they were skeleton.

Wow- she had been classifying them entirely wrong. She felt really, really stupid.

Tenne laughed gently and just continued to groom Kai, before letting him go to swim around.

Kai floats off and settles on one of the rocks that had heated up from Toki’s magic. He rumbles happily and sprawls against it, pleasantly basking in the warmth.

Quinn trilled when she groomed him like his papa did, but this new secondary method, with soap and water, had him curious and he chattered as he splatted his hand against the occasional ball of suds on his skin, though other than that he was happy lump of purring puppy in Toki’s hands.

Toki groomed him until he was squeaky clean, and then soaped up his mane too. She rinsed him after that, and then cuddled him close to her, tickling his chin gently with a soft laugh. “Enjoying yourself, Quinn?” She smiles, glancing over to Tenne and shifts on her back a little bit. One of her
legs lifts out of the water, the toes on her paws splaying, and she lightly kicks the water.

Her free arms collected soap, and she leans her larger arms back to scrub it into her mane, taking the time to also shine up her horns, before working her fur into a big, foamy lather. Soon she’s got an afro of bubbles, and she sighs, letting the shampoo strip the grease and grime from her fur.

"Nyeh!" Was Quinn's response to her question, before he squealed happily at the sight of her foamy mane, pushing his hands into it as he would when it was dry, "Nyeh heh heh!"

"How precious." Tenne laughed gently, before scooting closer, "May I borrow that soap?" he asked.

Toki shifted Quinn so he could be better balanced against her chest, settling her against one of her shoulders so he could play with the bubbles in her mane. “Watch my horn, sweet one. It’s hidden in the bubbles, and you could hurt yourself on it.” She says softly.” She shifted as Tenne came closer and nodded, holding out the shampoo and the soap to him with both of her left arms for him to choose from. “I’ll help you condition your mane after you shampoo, if you would like.” She offers lightly.

"I'd be silly to decline such a nice offer." He rumbled happily and selected his soaps. "Thank you very much, my dear Toki."

Toki smiled and drew her hands back once he had his soaps. “Of course, Tenne. I don’t mind at all.” She lifts a brow lightly at Quinn, and then huffs in soft amusement, before lifting him gently away and settling him on a rock. “Sit right here for just a second, Quinn. I need to rinse, and there’s a lot of fur to rinse. I don’t want to jostle you.”

Quinn giggled and happily wagged his tail as he watched her rinse off, before lifting his gaze to his father to watch him massage the shampoo into his semi-short mane around his neck and collarbone.

Toki popped free of the water moments later, her mane unusually flat against her back. It lacked the volume it usually did when it was wet, and it streamed down her back and shoulders. She flicked it back, brushing it up and away from her breasts as best she could. She snuffles lightly, and then huffs, before glancing to Tenne. “Think I can convince you to help me condition my mane? It’s gotten longer since I got here.” She liked it long- it was really nice. It was just a bitch to keep it conditioned.

"It would be my pleasure." He replied with a smile, rinsing his mane quickly before coming over and gently making a ‘turn around’ gesture with his hand.

Toki smiled at him and turned around. She bared her back to him, wings lifting up and over his head so she could nestle him between them. They glistened with the water, and flickered faintly as she handed the conditioner back over her shoulder towards him. “Thanks Tenne.”

He chirped happily and his tail wagged behind him as he gave a small nod, "It's my pleasure!" he piped warmly.

“You say that now. Just wait until you’re actually conditioning it.” She laughed lightly, and settled down to wait. She reached out to tug Quinn back into her lap, cuddling him to her chest.

He tutted stubbornly, his tail swaying behind him as he poured the conditioner into her fur, before bringing his hands to gently knead it in, noting how many times his claws got snagged.

His claws got snagged a lot initially at first- until the conditioner began to seep into her fur, and it began to soften. Soon it was silky and smooth in his hands, and he could freely work it deeper into the mass of her mane. Toki’s eyes half lidded a little bit as he set to work on her mane, and she leaned a little back into him with a pleased buzz. “There’s something very relaxing about having
someone else playing with your mane,” She murmurs softly. “Very relaxing.”

Kai snorts, and makes his way over to join the group of monsters in the water. “Unless it’s being licked.” He huffs, and eyes his father as he paddles along.

“I wouldn’t know.” She chuckles softly. “I wasn’t groomed in my hive- not like how your father groomed you, at least.”

"Nyeh!" Quinn giggled, going to lean up and start to groom Toki's collar fluff- at least until she blocked him with her hand.

"That's not a good idea, Quinn." She tutted to him with a gentle tone, "at least not while it has soap in it."

Quinn whined but gently suckled on the base of her thumb, stirring a lighthearted chuckle out of her and a rumble of amusement from Tenne.

"Well we here enjoy grooming one another. It's a very healthy social exercise for us." Tenne explained.

Toki didn’t mind Quinn sucking on her thumb, and simply just rubbed his skull lightly with the pads of her fingers, angling her claws away from him as best she could. She rumbles a soft, pleased sound in her chest, and then runs her fingers gently through Kai’s fur. The boy melts, and lets her drag him into her lap alongside his brother. “I can see that,” She murmurs softly to Tenne. “It’s a very relaxing experience. I don’t mind joining in more often- but you’ll all need to be careful if you’re grooming me.” She lifts a hand, far out of reach of the children, and flexes her wrist. Out of the soft fluff that cuffs her hand slides her stinger. “It’s got some touch triggered reflexes, and it would hurt to get stuck with it.”

“That’s what you used to help Auntie Saph, wasn’t it?” Kai murmurs lazily. “And… whatever came out of it.”

“Indeed.” She murmurs slowly, a soft, relaxed sound coming out of her as her arm relaxes and the stinger draws back.

"Speaking of, their rejuvenated energy after you gave them that… sting I suppose, is very fascinating." Tenne commented. “I do hope you’ll allow me to borrow some of that venom for study.”

She blinked slowly and then hummed. “Sure,” she says slowly, and then laughed. “You can’t borrow it. But you can have some. I can give you a vial or two when we get back to your house later. I certainly don’t want it back.” She glances back at him with a soft thrum as her hair soaks in the conditioner, and then turns to face him a little bit. She adjusts the boys over her shoulders so they can enjoy her body heat and the heat of the water as she remains close to Tenne. “Are your vials resistant to heat?”

"Well of course." He answered, smiling warmly as she turned her head to look at him. "And you're right, borrow might not have been the right word." He chuckled gently.

Her eyes twinkled at him merrily. “Definitely not the right word.” She laughs gently. “But don’t worry. We’ll get you some samples before you go into work next. Though I think I need to swing into town before I return to the house with you.” She had something she needed to get- or look into getting. Toki takes a moment to heft up the boys and offer them out. “Here- can you take them for a moment so I can rinse?”
"But of course." he rumbled as he reached and scooped up his boys, giving them an appreciative squeeze, getting a whine from Kai and a giggle from Quinn.

She chuckled, and dunked under the water once she was clear of children. It took a quick, but thorough, scrub with all four of her arms to get all of the conditioner out of her hair. But once it was out, her mane was silky smooth, and she surfaced once more with a pleased sound. Toki ran her fingers through her mane, and got no tangles and snarls with her claws. “There’s something to be said for conditioner. A little bit goes a long way when concerning tangle-happy manes.” She muses.

“It does look softer than before.” Kai nods lightly from his dad’s grasp.

"Beautiful." Tenne purred quietly, a subtle awestruck look in his half-lidded eyes as he got a small smile across his face.

She gives them both a closed eye smile, and rolls her magic up through her mane. The damp and silky strands proceed to fluff up with her magic, drying as heat turns the water to steam. Her mane settles into messy curls across her neck and back. “Thanks, Tenne.” She shifts a little in the water, then scoots closer to him. She collects the conditioner, and then reaches up to his neck. She starts at the front, where his mane is thinnest, and massages conditioner into it there, slowly working it towards the back of his neck. She’d have to get him to turn around for that, because she was still a lot shorter than him and reaching was impossible when all of your arm length went into making up the distance in heights. Toki’s hands were gentle all the same, and she was very careful not to deploy her stingers as her palms worked the conditioner through his hair.

When the front was done, she scooted back, and motioned for him to turn around.

He let out a thrilled coo as her hands came to massage into his mane, and purred all the while as she scrubbed. When asked to turn around, he accidentally forgot to hide the happy, goofy look on his face as he smiled down at her.

Toki simply gave him a goofy grin in return, though it certainly probably was not nearly as charming as his. Crocodile teeth did not translate to a nice smile. Fangs and lips however, usually did. Her hands returned to his neck, and she worked more conditioner into the back of it. His mane was short- he was only growing it out, she knew, to mostly prove to her that he could. Also partly because he was the odd one out without a mane- now that she knew the boys apparently were in the various stages of growing their own.

It felt strange to have him purring right under her hands- she hadn’t had that since she’d cuddled with her Papa in what felt like ages ago. Toki simply smiled and found herself buzzing happily in response, a low thrum filling the cave. When his hair was sufficiently soaped up, she pulled her hands back and rinsed them in the water. “There we go.” She smiles. “Let that soak in for a little bit, and you’ll be as soft as me. Kai? Did you want some conditioner too?”

“Nahhh,” the boy snorts, “No one touches mine, so I don’t need it to be soft.”

"Thank you, dear." Tenne purred without thinking, before he smiled at Kai, "Oh come now, boy." he tutted, "A little soap won’t hurt.”

Being called ‘dear’ simply made her smile lightly. He called her ‘my dear’ often enough that it was just a simply endearment.

She shifted to lean over his shoulder, pressing her chest against his back so she could peer down at Kai. She reached down over Tenne’s shoulder and booped his nasal ridge. “Your dad is right there- soap’s just going to get all the gross stuff out of your fur and make it that much nicer.”
Kai snorted at her and nipped her finger. “Yeah, but it’s so much effort to wash it out. Gotta soap up, rinse it out, condition it... too much work.”

Feeling her perky, semi-firm mounds against her back brought a blush to his cheeks and a quiet chattering rumble deep in his chest. Tenne had to clear his throat to get it to stop. "Now, now, Kai. Just give it a try."

Kai saw the dark black color dusting his father’s cheeks, and grinned up at him. “Fiiiiine. Only if you wash it for me though. Too much effort otherwise.”

Toki laughs, and grins down at the boy. “Your dad can wash it for you.” She chuckles. “I need to go finish the laundry, and get it dried so we can bring it back to your house.”

Kai made a fussy noise. “Or Daddy could help you after.”

“I actually enjoy doing menial house chores, despite what you all seem to think about me doing them on my own.” She chortles to the young... skeleton blaster beast monster- to the young boy. “Besides, that will give you three some time to spend together.” She tried to give them as much time together as she could- parents needed time with their children, after all, and Tenne worked so often and for so long... Time was precious.

Tenne chuckled quietly at Kai’s attempts to spite him getting shot down, and he grinned as he held up the soap, "Nice try, Kai."

Kai huffed and rolled over with a sulky sound so Tenne could tend to his mane.

Toki laughed and leaned away. She worked her way to the edge of the water, and then carefully clamors out. Her magic quick dries her wrist and ankle fur, and her flesh dries off as well. Her wings fan out to help them dry off as she scoots over to the little ‘bowl’ in the rocks, where the clothing had finally settled into a non-boiling state. She crouched down, and moved a couple of rocks, letting the soapy water wash out with a swift current as she set to scrubbing the soap and grime away from the clothing. “Hey, Tenne?” She calls lightly. “I think I’m going to run into town for a little bit when we get back to your house, alright?”

"Sounds good." He replied lightly.

Toki nods and hums a soft tune as she settles into simply cleaning. It was a moot point to dry her wrists, since she’d have to do it again, but all the same.

By the time Tenne had his mane scrubbed clean of the conditioner, and had wrangled Kai through both a shampooing and a conditioning, Toki had gotten the soap washed out, and was flash drying clothes as she hung them over her many arms. She sorted the clothing by owner- Tenne’s clothing went on her upper most arm, while the boys clothes went on her smaller arms, given the size differences.

Once she had it all sorted, she stood up, collected the bag, and stuffed all but a fresh pair of clothing for each of them back into the pack. She got herself dressed in her pair of clothes, and then kept their clothing tucked close to her, keeping them warm as she waited for them to finish washing up and enjoying the last dredges of warmth her magic was leaving in the glowing waters.

Gosh, the glowing water did amazing things. Toki’s muscles felt more relaxed after that. Her wing muscles could get sore from flying, she’d found. Given how much fun flying was, they were sore fairly often.

Quinn had long since taken one of the hot rocks for a nap, even while Kai got his washing. He only
stirred once Tenne gently scooped him up, giving quiet squeaks before he yawned widely and nuzzled his papa, who set Kai on the shore before pulling himself out of the water.

Toki scooted closer to them, and offered towels initially. She draped one over Kai, who began to briskly dry himself off, before carefully kidnapping Quinn into a towel. Tenne’s towel was then held out to him as she ruffled up the sleepy child, and worked to get him dry. Many arms were very… handy.

“Quinn,” She coos, “you’ve got to wake up fully so you can get dressed, little one.”

Quinn gave a soft 'Nyeh' but did as told and shook his head to stir further before taking his towel to start drying off.

Tenne took his towel with a rumble of thanks before he began to dry off.

She set Quinn down so he could finish drying, and then carefully sorted out and re-warmed their clothing.

Kai was the first to dive into his, and he wiggled back into his clothing and coat, and happily chirped as he nestled into its warmth. “Mmm, fire magic is awesome. It feels like it’s been sitting by the fire place all night.”

Toki laughs. “It has its perks.”

"A perk I find myself absolutely adoring." Tenne admitted, drying his form off before dressing in his warm clothes with a pleased purr.

“Glad to be of service.” She smiled. Once Tenne had his clothes, she helped Quinn get into his, and then scooped up the boy, and plopped him right in her arms. “Alright- I just need to get the bag of clothes secured to the saddle, and then we can get going.”

“I call shotgun on the giant bee!” Kai grinned. He booked it for the big grumpy insect, and made an attempt to scramble up the side of her saddle- but alas, he was too short.

Clover sleepily rumbled at him, and crooked one of her legs to give him a boost.

"Sounds like a plan." Tenne agreed, chuckling as he came over to Kai. He scooped his older son up, climbed aboard the hornet with a bit more confidence, before getting settled, putting Kai in front of him. "There we go..."

Kai grinned and wiggled in place, before cuddling back against his dad. He took handfuls of the fluffy green fur, and got himself comfortable. “It’s weird how Toki is fluffy like her big hornets.”

Toki laughs, hearing this. “Clover and I might not be that far off in genus.” She tucks Quinn closer to her, and then secures the laundry to the saddle once they’re in place. Loose items are tucked into the bag. Once it was secure, she lifted off, her wings buzzing noisily as she hovered in place.

Clover rolled to her feet, massive form hauling upright with a disgruntled grunt. She shook herself off from dirt clinging to her, flicking each of her legs pointedly, before lifting off as well. She took off after Toki, letting her mistress lead the way out of the tunnels. Clover projected warmth this time around, knowing that the blaster beasts were easily chilled, and that their damp manes would make them colder easier once they reached the chillier parts of the air. She might be a grump- but she was not completely heartless.

The trip out of the tunnels didn’t take long, and Toki and Clover made haste once they reached the
cold air. They could only do so much— and it appeared to have dropped some degrees since they had entered the caves, making it even colder.

Monsters looked up at them as they traveled, guards eying them and civilians gaping at the duo as they buzzed over the Snowdin forest. The town came into sight shortly, and Toki buzzed over the town once to orient herself, also to take a quick gander at the shop she wanted to visit and to make sure it was actually there, and then made a straight line back towards Tenne’s house.

The house was much the same as they left it, cold, covered in snow, and lit faintly from within from the dying embers of lanterns. Toki banked down, and came in for a landing. As soon as her paws touched the snow, she began to do the ‘cold, cold, cold’ dance, prancing in place.

Clover was much less finicky. When she landed, her heavy feet simply sunk into the ice, and she gave her mistress a miserable look and an irritable buzz, before crooking one of her legs and offering Tenne and his son a step down. No way she was laying on her belly again. Nope.

Toki danced over for the laundry bag, waiting until the cold feeling in her paws numbed, before she took the bag and draped it over her shoulder across from Quinn. “It’s gotten colder,” She pouts. “Oh well.” It would make her pondered task definitely a good idea.

“It has indeed.” Tenne agrees as he dismounts, carefully hefting Kai with him. He bundles his son close to him, and then usher’s Toki towards the house.

Toki pauses only long enough to let Clover back into the hell verse, before letting Tenne guide her inside. Once indoors, she sets her bees to lighting the fires and the lanterns again, and warming the house, while she detangles Quinn from her arms and settles him on the couch. She tucks him in with her sleeping blankets, so he can settle in for a nap, and then rummages under the couch for her pouch of gold.

She draws it out, and gives Tenne a smile. “Alright. I’m going to head out. I’ll be back in a little bit, Tenne. I’ll see you soon.” She promises.

He frowns at her as he settles Kai on his feet, letting his son scramble up to join Quinn under the blankets on the couch. The doctor faces her and gives her a firm but concerned look. “Are you sure you wish to? It’s awfully cold, Toki, and you don’t have a coat or shoes.”

“I do.” She nods. “If I get too cold, I’ll stop in at Grillby’s and warm up before coming back here, I promise.” Toki gives him a smile. “I won’t be too long, Tenne. Keep warm, and see about putting the laundry away for me?”

The doctor sighs, but nods. “I can do that.”

The bag of clothes is traded over as she heads for the front door, and Toki ruffles her fur, before stepping out into the cold again. She shuts the door behind her, leaving her bees to keep the house warm, and then takes off into the sky with every intent of reaching the shop before it got too cold.

For all of her bluff and guff about getting back in a short amount of time, it was nearly five hours later when Toki managed to get home again, and well past noon. She might have missed lunch, but she returned with a new bag on her back, a spring in her step- and a new wardrobe.

In as much as seven pairs of clothing could be considered a wardrobe. It was a far cry better than the one set of clothes that she had been wearing since she’d been given them, nearly three months back.
She was now dressed in a brown turtleneck that actually covered all four arms, and had a semi-open style backing for her wings to fit through. Cold it might have been, but it also made for a much easier time trying to get her clothing on. Part of the reason she had been gone for so long was because of how awkward and hard it was for someone who had never done something for someone with four arms to try and make something for someone with four arms. There had been one failed attempt before they got it right- but now, the brown turtleneck, edged in black, had six other companions in various other colors.

Toki had managed to afford five pairs of pants total- including the one she was wearing now- and two skirts with deep pockets for storing things. She wasn’t a huge fan of skirts- but they were free moving and comfortable, and so long as she flew with her undergarments on, it didn’t really matter if she had a skirt or pants on, really.

Toki crept back to the house, the cheery pep in her step not fading. She’d found good company in the Vestimoves. Lana was still a child- just a little older than Quinn- but her mother and her father were lovely people, and had the most interesting difference between here and her world. It was a difference that, for once, Toki was glad of.

Easing the door open, she stepped into the main room, claws clicking slightly. The long and billowing sleeves of her shirt flapped in the wind as she shut the door behind her. “Hey, Tenne?” She calls, not seeing him or the boys in the living room. “I’m back.”

There was silence, then a quiet clatter, and Tenne’s head peered out from the kitchen. "Ah, welcome home To-” he stopped however, and his face lit up. "Toki! Your clothing!” He exclaimed with joy, “It looks wonderful! Absolutely perfect on you!” He seemed to cheer up as he exited the kitchen and made his way to her, examining her new outfit with a strangely overjoyed glow in his eyes.

‘For what it’s worth, the beast is right. The clothing is… fitting.’ Cruelty grudgingly chimes in from inside of her, before tucking away again.

"Thank you.” She gives him a lopsided smile, and twirls for him, careful not to hit him with her wings. Her back is mostly exposed, so it’s going to be even chillier, but there’s not much she can do for it. She spent all of her gold on what she had now. Custom clothes were expensive. At least they were warm, however. When her twirl comes to an end, Toki gives him a small smile and scuffs her feet on the floor. Her eyes glow a warm green color. “I figured it was time. I’ve been here for a little over three months now.” Obviously she wasn’t going anywhere any time soon- and Papyrus would disapprove so much of how she was taking care of herself if he could see her now. That thought was fueling in it’s own right. “So,” She shifts her bag, and jiggles it. “It’s not much to start, but seven pairs of clothes means I won’t have to wash them as often. I’ve still got the pair you gave me though, so technically eight.”

She intended to sleep in those, though. They might not be as warm given how worn they were, but they’d make good pajamas.

His tail wagged happily and he trilled- yes, the young beast gave an overjoyed trill- before speaking once more. 'I'll have to build you a wardrobe, or at least make you a closet to use for your clothes!” He chirped happily, tail flicking. "You look absolutely lovely in this clothing. Typical performance of Madame Vestimoves to make clothing that was born to be worn by you and you alone.”

Toki gave him a soft laugh. “You’re on your own for building a wardrobe. My brother was the one better suited for construction, not me.” Hence the shoddily built den out in the snow. She was not good at construction. She just tended bees. Tenne’s words of praise had her mane ruffling with pride, and she beamed. “She really is something else. It took some tries to get it right, but we managed to get a working pattern fitted for someone with four arms- so she’s got my sizes down and
everything.” She chirps. “Though- a wardrobe might be a little bit big, Tenne. I live on your couch, and all of my clothes fit in this bag.” She jiggles what amounted to a backpack with a light grin. “Maybe a small dresser to slide under the table or something would be nice. Something small would work.” She nods slowly.

"Ooh, then perhaps let's think on this.” As quickly as he came, he was off, looking at the coffee table that sat by her couch-turned-bed.

"Could you imagine perhaps integrating a drawer system here? Or would it be better perhaps to simply implicate shelves? I was never sure which of them were more efficient, drawers or shelves... bah.” He snorted and thumped his foot lightly on the ground, before he looked at her with a smile. "Toki, what say you?"

“What say me, hm?” Toki had watched him bustle off with a smile upon her teeth. She padded closer to the couch, and set the bag onto the arm as she watched him fuss over the coffee table with a renewed energy that was very refreshing to see. However, she was not entirely sure on how he got the sudden burst of energy. “Hm... Well... I don’t know about which one is more efficient, but drawers are nicer because I can store my personal things in them without it looking obviously like I live on your couch, perchance you do have some visitors over.” She quirks a soft and amused smile at him. “But shelves work just as fine too, and are much less work than doing drawers. Whatever works the easiest for you, Tenne, I’ll be alright with either or.”

"Well, perhaps I could work out a drawer system. It would be more beneficial." He rumbled happily. "Have a key for them or some sort of special tab that permits you to access them without fear of peepers."

She rolls her eyes with light amusement. “I don’t have anything that’s really all that private besides my undergarments now, Tenne. I mean, I doubt the boys are going to go rifling through my panties. Though…” She recalled her brothers doing that to her once, when they were little, and found herself nodding. “It might not be a bad idea.” She admits. “Though maybe not a key. Things tend to melt with me by accident, and it’s a waste of resources to make it Toki-proof.”

He tutted at her lightly in response to that. “A woman deserves a little bit of privacy.” A smile followed his words as he glanced to her.

She laughs. "I had eight brothers, Tenne. I haven't had privacy since I was a small child." She still smiles at him though, and offers him a pat on the shoulder. "Thank you though. It's a kind thought, and I wouldn't mind whatever you could manage for me. So...what were you doing in the kitchen?”

"Just having a cuppa tea." He answered. "Would you like me to make you some tea as well?" Tenne then asked.

“I’d like that.” Toki nods and flexes her bare toes. “If you’d like, I can help you with it. The kitchen tile always helps my toes warm up better after I get back inside, when I can get it properly heated.” With her bees in the house, the tile was sure to be warm- because the hardwood flooring was warm too.

"I suppose there's no harm in that, now is there." Tenne purred softly, "Alright. Let's go then.” He rumbled as he got to his feet, stretching a little before starting for the kitchen.

Toki trailed after him once she’d made sure her bag wasn’t going to fall off the couch. She hummed softly, bare paws clicking over the floor as she made her way to the kitchen. The tile was warm, as she had hoped, and her wings spread briefly to fan the warmth over herself. “Mmm… Only thing my outfit is missing is the backing. It gets a little cold along my wings and shoulders, but a coat modified
enough to be easy for use with wings like mine was not on my budget list.” She chuckles. “The air in here feels really nice though.” She sighs pleasantly, before starting over to the stuff he had set out for tea, so she could get it whipped up real quick instead of using his ghastly fire-operated stove.

"I wonder just how we could make something of that sort work." He rumbled quietly. "Perhaps a magnetic system to permit openings for your wings when necessary alone."

She glanced back at him with a perplexed look as she hauled the teapot into her arms to begin heating it. Toki was used to being financially stable- she’d been financially stable since she’d been young, and since her royalties had really started to roll in with her books alongside profits from her apiaries- so being not so stable was slightly unfamiliar territory. Not wholly though- every family has had its tight times. Hers is- was, rather- no different despite it’s massive size as a large clan. “I can’t afford a coat,” she says slowly, “let alone the sort of gold that sort of modifications would cost. That’s probably more than I would make in… forever. I only take half wages- and I’m only working at Grillby’s probably until Sapphire has the baby.”

She expected to get laid off after that, honestly. No need to pay for an extra worker when you didn't need them. It was bad business- and Grillby was anything but a bad businessman.

He looked at her without an immediate response to what she said, and simply set up another teacup for her while giving a slow nod, "I see..."

“Speaking of;” Toki hums, changing topic easily, “Sapphire is due soon. Like… I think she’s got another month left.” She glanced to him, and juggles the warming pot for the tea. “Her scent has changed. Grillby’s had me keeping an eye on her when I’m on shift. I mean… I’ve assisted in a birth before,” Sans birth had been a nightmare, and she’d helped with her mother’s ages ago, “but I’m not a doctor. Maybe because I’ll smell it before she notices, and be able to call you.” She shrugs.

"That’s very good to have on hand, someone who can detect subtle things like that..." He agreed, "and your element will help with rousing the child safely."

She quirs a faint grin. Well, she did know how to rouse a fire elemental child safely indeed. Not that she could tell him that- though she knew her eyes had to have twinkled knowingly. “Considering that my venom helped her health wise, I figured pretty much anything to do with my magic is good for fire elementals.” She chuckles merrily, and lifts the now steaming pot to fill the mugs and let them steep. She adds the usual sweetener to his, and a little extra to hers. She’d been craving sweet things- and part of that, she figured, was her nature as a bee monster.

"Mnhmm... Speaking of; is now a good time to extract some venom?" The doctor inquired. "I do indeed wish to study it further." He rumbled.

Toki nodded lightly. “Sure. I’ve got plenty to give- if you’ve got your vials, I don’t mind filling several for you while we wait for the tea to steep.” She gives him a smile. “Go ahead and bring several- there’s six separate stingers that you can take from. It’s not really doing anything else besides sitting in me anyways.”

"That would be fantastic." He chirped happily, "Thank you, my dear." He got up while she waited and came back after a couple of minutes with a handful vials that had a rubber-like cap on the top. As he put them down, he revealed to have six. "Perfect.” He sounded pleased. “One for each stinger then.”

Toki smiled at him. “You might have to help me with two of them. They’re down on my ankles- I might be flexible, but I don’t want to drop the vials if I lose my balance.” She takes one of them, and examines the rubber-like tops. She lightly nudges it, and hums. It reminded her of how they milked
snakes. “So, do I take the cap off, or push my stinger into it?” She questioned lightly.

"Push into it, much like one would milk a snake." He replied as he came closer. Tenne knelt down by her feet, holding two vials to her to take care of herself while he got her lower stingers.

“Alright.” She nods. Toki pops her lower stingers out for him first before she fiddles with her wrist, and turns it over after a moment. She hums, and flexes, before her stinger on her largest inside wrist slides out. She eases it through the cap of the first one, and then pauses, trying to figure out how to trigger her venom. She’d done it by instinct last time- this time it was intentional. She hummed for a moment, and then lightly massaged her wrist.

After a few moments, her arm tingled, and a thin fluid eased out of her stinger. It was clear, faintly glowing, and slowly filling the vial. She eased her stinger out bit by bit as the tube filled, and then popped her stinger out once it was at the top. The liquid seemed to be thickening a little bit, but not a whole lot as she held it. It was a little warm in her hands. She shuffled it to her other hand, and then repeated the process with her second arm.

The second larger arm was, much like the first, fairly easy to ‘milk’ the venom from. Once she had two very full vials, she held them firmly to her, and turned her attention down to Tenne to see how he was doing with trying to get her legs to work. She had gotten her stingers out for him, so he didn’t have to do that. She was attempting to will herself to release the venom as best she could, but it wasn’t an easy process. Yes she had practice- but it had been instinctive practice- and she’d never tried to do it from just one limb at a time.

“What’s going on down there?” She questions gently.

"Well enough." His hands were gentle on her feet. Within moments the vials were full, but he seemed to be stuck on her feet, his hands simply holding her left foot in a cradle. He was curious... or... perhaps entranced by the feeling of touching another of his kind; such a factor would never get old for him... it'd always be an amazing reality for him.

She watched him cradle her foot, and arched a brow at him curiously. She still needed to fill two more vials- but he seemed to be entranced by touching her. She supposed, however, that spending a lifetime of believing that you were the only one of your kind would make you… well, want to see and know as much as you could about another one if you found them.

Toki spread her toes, claws flexing slightly in his hold. Her paw pads were soft, despite all the barefoot walking she did, and warm to the touch thanks to being on the kitchen floor.

“Enjoying my foot?” She teases gently, toes splaying for him to examine to his soul’s content.

He purred loudly as her toes spread, and he gently rubbed the softer skin that rested under the pads. "Even your feet are beautiful..." He spoke quietly, before he leaned down and placed a gentle kiss onto the top of her foot.

Well, that just made her flush a little bit. Toki awkwardly rubbed the back of her head, ruffling her mane. “Really?” She questioned lightly, toes twitching and flexing wider as he rubbed the soft skin between them. It tickled a little bit, and she couldn’t help the soft giggle that escaped her. “I always liked yours better. I mean… I’ve got three toes. It’s kinda… awkward. You’ve got four though- it’s a really nice number.” He also didn’t seem to lose his balance when he tried to balance on one foot- though that might have had to do with his tail. She only had her wings- and they made her top-heavy.

He chuckled quietly at that. "It's harder than it looks, my dear... I still must put effort to maintain my
balance." He murmured, "I suppose I have good feet, but yours are rather lovely as well."

Toki simply smiled down to him and murred gently into her mane. "Thank you." She said honestly. She still wasn’t sure how to feel about her feet- but it was nice that someone else thought they were nice. They were different, that’s for sure. But… It was a good sort of different, perhaps. "So… Did you want to help me with my smaller arms?" She questions gently, toes wiggling again at his ticklish touch. "The larger ones are easier to do, but the smaller ones are a bit more… delicate." Her wrists were much thinner on her secondary pair- and she really didn’t want to accidentally break them or something while trying to get him the venom samples. "Ah… Tenne, that tickles." She admits bashfully after a moment. Her ankles were tingling with the ticklish feeling, and it was hard to restrain the urge to wiggle.

He chuckled quietly, and he slowly let her foot down, before he picked up the last two vials. "Of course I will lend a hand..." He purred gently, "I apologize... I didn't realize they were ticklish."

She wiggled her foot a little bit, and set it down. "It’s alright, Tenne. I didn’t know either.” She gives him a lopsided smile. "I haven’t really had a lot of folks touching my feet. The pads themselves aren’t ticklish, but the skin between the toes is.” Toki offers out her smaller arms to him, turning her wrists up. Her stingers slide out from their sheathes in her wrists. Unlike the upper ones and the ones down on her legs, these ones are smaller, much more fragile looking. While the other four look like fighting stingers, these look like anything but.

He looked at the stingers and carefully lined up the bottle membranes. Once sure they would penetrate the lining, he pushed them into it and rumbled in satisfaction at the two pops he heard of the stingers breaking the lining.

She let out a soft, pleased noise as her stingers popped the lining. Her wings twitched, and her wrists warmed and tingled. Her fingers flexed lightly as she followed the flow of the sensation, and venom began to drip without much prompting- it wasn’t a steady stream or a fast one, but it was better than nothing. "You might have to rub a little bit to get a better stream.” Toki chuckled lightly. "It worked with my primary arms. And please, be careful. The glass heats up really quickly.”

"Yes, of course.” He responded. He carefully angled the vials, and then reached up and gently rubbed the base of her stingers.

His thumbs working over her wrists helped to make the venom come quicker- and the vials began to fill faster.

Toki watched with interest as they filled up, and hummed a curious sound. “It looks like my venom thickens as it cools.” She observes curiously. “How odd.”

The vials on her smaller stingers topped off faster than the ones on her larger ones did. Her smaller ones gave venom faster when prompted correctly, it seemed.

"It's almost like working with honey... albeit... a no doubt dangerous one should it get into your blood stream." He laughed gently.

“Probably.” She laughs. "The exception being the elementals. They could probably bathe in it and be fine.” She chuckles. Her hands flex again, and she draws her stingers slowly back as the vials filled. Once they reached the top, her stingers popped out, given the lack of space with which to deposit more venom.

A few droplets leaked out of her stingers before she could stop it.
He noticed the drops and kept his hands back from it, putting down the vials before he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and moved to wipe up the droplets.

She kept her hands still. The venom sat on her skin and did nothing harmful to her—however, upon touching the handkerchief, it began to steam, the fabric sizzling as the liquid burnt at it. She blinked, staring as the corners began to smolder. “I wouldn’t let this touch anything not fireproof.” She warns warily, realizing just what sort of bad stuff she has literally bubbling inside of her wrists. Fucking lovely.

Toki needed to be even more careful now.

"Oh dear." He looked at the smoldering handkerchief, before he skirted around her to quickly put it out.

Toki assisted him by gingerly dumping the rest of the un-used water from the tea pot on it, and watched as the burnt flakes of the handkerchief floated down the sink. She hummed softly. “Well… I owe you a new handkerchief. I am so, so sorry about that.” Her stingers withdrew, and she sighed, before offering out the last two vials she held. “Well… Please don’t break them. We may have a problem if it gets everywhere. I really don’t want to go through another fire.”

He took them and chuckled, offering the handkerchief to her. "I suppose if it's already got a few scorched marks, what would be a few more... would you like to keep this one?"

Toki smiled lightly and took the kerchief, tucking it carefully into her pocket. “Sure. Might as well- it will make more sense me carrying something singed than you.” She chuckles softly. She turns then, and collects their tea, before carefully cradling them. “You go put your vials up, and I’ll meet you in the living room with the tea.”

Toki could vaguely hear Quinn babbling to himself, and figured the boy was playing with his action figures up in his room again. What a cute kid.

She gives Tenne a smile, and heads off to the living room, toting the tea with her and keeping it warm while he went about storing the venom for the day he went back to work.
Chapter 97

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Well, I was not planning angst and then this happened. This is what happens when you hurt your characters deeply. 8) Toki is a very, very wounded woman. Very wounded.

Also I’m sorry this chapter was late. I’ve been feverish since pretty much Friday, and I had to go to Urgent Care today to get an IV bag of fluids put into me because I got too dehydrated in my sleep.

Silverwing Notes: let’s see. What did we cover. Oh yeah.

SOME FUCKIN FEELS.

ENJOY THE CHAPTER, DEAR READERS.

True to word- not three weeks later, Toki got to play her hand at midwife once more when Sapphire went into labor several hours into Toki’s work shift. Tenne was at work again- so it wasn’t like she could send her bees to get him, and she still didn’t have a phone of some sort. Either way, Toki had to go about it on her own, with Grillby to assist.

Sapphire was a doll about it though. The fire elemental put Grillby in charge of Kai and Quinn, and had him run the bar through out the morning while Toki kept her company while she labored. Fire elemental births, Toki learned rather quickly, were horrendously fast. And very, very messy. Very messy.

Sapphire’s labor was considered ‘long’ for being four hours long, and the delivery was considered even ‘longer’ for taking nearly an hour to push. Apparently twenty minutes was supposed to be a long birth- Fire elementals, because of their relative fragility, were very, very easily killed when they were in the stages of labor and delivery, as were their young. It was very easy for a mother to dust during a delivery too, if they got too stressed or distressed over something. Hence Sapphire sending the worrying Grillby downstairs until the last minute to occupy the children, while Toki kept her energy up with jolts of venom to her system.

‘Better than coffee’, Sapphire would tell her each time.

All the same, Fuku Fyrus was born shortly after eight at night- and ignited just a hair after her delivery. The squalling, green infant had her mother’s horns, and her father’s size, which likely accounted for her mother’s struggles in delivering her. Toki had cradled the muck covered baby to her equally muck covered clothes, and was glad she hadn’t ignited with her, unlike with Solstice.

Once Sapphire and Grillby had cuddled and assured each other that she was alright, despite the dimming of her flames and general fatigue, Fuku had been passed over, and the new parents had proceeded to remain upstairs for the rest of the evening.

Toki had strapped on an apron over her shirt after turning it inside out, and then gone back to work to finish up the rush, before closing up the bar. She and the boys made a slow way home.
Toki was beat—honestly exhausted—by the day. She had been beyond paranoid about Sapphire getting hurt or dusting once the blue elemental had explained the fragility of fire elementals in labor to her, and Toki had dumped a lot of her energy into her. Her magic wasn’t even nearly depleted—no, she’d basically taken a spoonful out of an ocean; an ocean behind a dam with a leaky faucet on it, but a spoonful all the same.

The delivery had reminded her quite frankly that her children’s birthdays had come… and gone. She’d been so lost in this new world that she had completely forgotten the date—and her twins, her beautiful, amazing twin babies… they were a year old now— or should be a year old now. It made her soul hurt inside, and made her feel old. Old and worn and hollowed out, and it made her feel very, very tired, instead of happy like she should be.

Kai and Quinn helped to some extent—but not completely. The balm was there, but… not enough. Not enough to soothe the ache of loss that the birth of a new life brought on.

She was just tired, and her feet were dragging through the snow, and it took every ounce of her being to build up her walls and mask so that the boys didn’t notice the chip in her facade.

The boys seemed to have boundless energy—even if they were actively keeping up-wind of her. Even Quinn seemed to keep ahead of her.

She smelled something god-awful, according to Kai. Toki honestly couldn’t smell anything—she was coated from her chest to her knees in viscera from Sapphire’s delivery, and she couldn’t smell anything past the taste of grease from the fryers on her tongue. She was, effectively, scent blind.

It didn’t matter, honestly. She’d go wash off in the morning—she was too tired to make the trip during the night. Though… She might just anyways. She may just need the time alone, to think and to ponder her children.

Though pondering might not be the best idea, she knew. Cruelty had been making snide comments all day—they were grating on her slowly, and being alone wouldn’t help. Being with others gave her something else to focus on besides his hateful words and tone.

As they reached the house, Toki trudged up to the door and let the kids rush in. They headed up to their rooms in a whirlwind of motion to go change their clothes, and left Toki standing in the doorway, haggard and tired from the day’s activities, and the ever present and pesky wound to her soul.

She scrubbed a hand down her face, and stepped inside. Her shirt was pretty ruined—the blue was not going to come out of the white, she knew that much. She didn’t have the materials to do her mother’s old concoction to get stains out—so she was going to be down one shirt out of her available seven. At least it was her white one—she didn’t look her best in it anyways. Like she had told Papyrus, white tended to wash out those who had white skin, and she was no different. Toki looked better in her earthy tones of browns, blues, and greens. Blacks too, now that she thought about it.

Toki shut the door and plodded for the couch. She eased her bag off her back, and set her daily gold down next to it on the coffee table. Her tired wings flexed, and she rolled her ankles, trying to coax the feeling back into her toes before she went to go cook. As she breathed, she could vaguely scent something on the air—and she wasn’t sure what it was. The grease was too thickly coated on her tongue. She needed a good drink of something to wash it away, so she could properly inhale.

"Sounds like you had a long day." There was a gentle rumble of a voice that came accompanied by a tall glass of water for her to drink. "And by the smell of things... We've got a new Fyrus to welcome to the world."
Toki quirked a smile as she turned to the voice, and her eyes flicked up to Tenne. It took effort to move her frame, and she made her way to him quietly. “Yes to both things, though that’s not all.” The glass of water was accepted, and she savored it as she used it to clear her mouth. “Mmm… Little miss Fuku was born about eight-o-clock tonight. Ah- are you cooking?” Now that her mouth was clearing itself out, she could detect the smell of food- and of her shirt. She glanced down at it and sighed. “Ah… I’m sorry about the smell. I’ll dispose of my shirt and go wash my pants and myself in the morning.”

"No need, just put them in the side-sink and I’ll take care of them myself." He told her gently. "But for now, I don’t want you to sweat anything. I made you dinner, and I want you to enjoy it before you get some much deserved rest.”

Toki didn’t have it in her to argue. She simply sighed, and gave him a soft, grateful look. “Thank you.” She says softly. “I wish you the best of luck getting my shirt white again, but… Thank you. For dinner, and everything. Let me quick change, before I offend the boys even more with my ‘stench’. ” She chuckles gently. The glass of water is set down, and Toki heads out to the living room.

She doesn’t bother going elsewhere to change- her wings make more than enough of a barrier to keep others from seeing, and she’s swift anyways about removing her shirt, and slipping a new, clean one on, along with her pants. She foregoes her pants, however, for a loose skirt, and balls up the gross clothes into a wad that she brings back into the kitchen. They’re stuffed into the side of the sink as requested.

Quinn and Kai are back downstairs about this time, and she waves to the boys as she comes to take a seat at the table. Her wings droop over the back of her chair.

Kai sniffs as he comes in. His face scrunches. “Still stinky, but not as bad.” He decides, and slides into his own chair. He tugs Quinn’s out for him, and settles down to look up at his father.

Toki chuckles. “Alas, I’m too tired to go to the river tonight. You’ll have to deal with the smell until tomorrow, kiddo.” She yawns. She glances up to Tenne. “Speaking of tired… How was work?” They were waiting on results from her venom, she knew.

"It might not be as warm, but I have a bucket and rag in the back for emergencies that you could use after dinner." Tenne chuckled gently as he set about moving around the kitchen. "Work was fine. Your venom is still being studied. However one of the caps was loose and the venom inside cooled down. I discovered that once it's cooled, the enzymes break down and what results is a very rich, albeit green, honey."

Toki blinked at that. “… So what you’re saying,” she says slowly, “Is I apparently make honey once the venom cools.” That… that was just… Hilarious. She laughed lightly, a hand sliding tiredly up to her face. Who needed a hive or an apiary when you could literally make your own honey? Toki scrubbed her face a little bit. “Is it safe for consumption?” She wondered. She could probably give it away as a treat in gift baskets if it was. Well. Once it had cooled and become non-toxic.

"Well it tasted pretty good in my tea." He chuckled. "And I'm still standing, as you can see."

“You tested it on yourself?” She asked him incredulously, eying him lightly. “You are… probably the craziest man I know, good lord.” Toki huffs and runs her claws through her mane.

Kai blinked at her. “Well, better daddy than someone else, I guess. Daddy’s tough.” He nods. Then he grins. “So can you make more of this ‘honey’ stuff if it’s so good? I bet it’s really tasty, right Quinn?”
“Nyeh!” Quinn beamed, patting the table excitedly as he glanced at Toki, and then at his dad.

Toki chuckles. “I suppose I could, if you’ve got some jars.” She might have used some of it today, but Toki had the feeling that her venom was tied to her magic- and thusly, was going to be never-ending until she got rid of the massive ocean inside of her.

“I have a few put away. They’re still clean inside, so you could start draining immediately. It would be beneficial if you have a build-up of magic in you, though don’t overdo it, alright?” Tenne gave her a smile.

'\textit{Drain all you want, you have a mass of magic within you that will never fade until the day I detonate us.}' Cruelty grumbled, voice sliding into her mind like hot oil.

‘I’ve got a tight rein on the magic, Cruelty. It’s locked behind a nice little dam- and you’re not going to break it.’ Sure the dam had it’s leaky spots- hence her never-ending flow of magic- but he wasn’t going to burst it.

Toki gave Tenne a smile. “I can work on draining after we have dinner.” She says. “Because I do have a small overabundance of magic, and I can drain and relax at the same time.”

"Sounds like a plan." He chuckled, "In the mean time, I can start to fill the pail with some water for you, so you can at least freshen up a little bit without going to waterfall. But first, your dinner." he announced, scooting around the kitchen as he collected it.

Toki laughed as she shifted at the kitchen table. The boys shifted with her, and watched Tenne flit around the kitchen. She hummed, and smiled to him. “Thank you again for doing dinner, Tenne.” She says softly.

“We already had ‘dinner’ of sorts,” Kai chirps. He still eyes Toki all the same.

Toki eyes him back and chuckles. “I’ll share mine with you both,” She smiles obligingly.

"Nyeh!” Quinn then proceeded to pat her leg stubbornly, pouting up at her.

"I don't think Quinn wants you to share."

"Probably because Pops told him how he- Mmh!" Kai was suddenly cut off by a napkin flying into his face.

Tenne quietly put Toki’s dinner down in front of her, though without a napkin, that was no doubt what had been used to pelt Kai.

Toki simply arched a brow at all three of them and chuckled, wondering what the boy had been trying to say. “If you’re hungry, I don’t mind sharing.”

Kai spits out the napkin. “Not really,” he sputters, wiping bits of paper off of his tongue.

She chuckles, and glances down to her meal, carefully picking up her utensils. She shoots Tenne a thankful look, and begins to eat, an appreciative buzzing rising from her. “So… told him how he what…?” She inquires lightly, curiosity glimmering in her eyes. The distraction from her internal thoughts was nice.

Tenne smiled at the thoughtful look, though at her question he flushed and turned his head away. "M-Made sure to cook it the way you liked."
His stutter was, she decided, adorable. Toki chuckled softly, and smiled to him. “It’s perfect.” She purred softly.

Toki was back up to nearly her usual eating habits. She ate slowly and diligently, so as not to overwhelm her body, and gave him a lopsided smile as she slowly cleaned her plate. When she was full, she set her utensils down, and did a quick cleaning of her external teeth, before smiling up at him with a sated sort of tiredness. “It was very good,” she praises. “Very… fresh.” She purrs.

It tasted like he had gotten it fresh from the butcher’s shop—not from his freezer.

Quinn chirped and giggled quietly, before disappearing from view under the table, only to run out the other side with a bone in his teeth.

"Fresh, you say… I’m glad." Tenner rumbled gently.

Toki watched him run off with an amused glance. There was a bone still on her plate, and she contemplated wanting to chew on it, before deciding that she would rather not have a mouthful of splinters. She hummed, and flexed her teeth slightly, before humming up at Tenner. "Indeed."

"Hey, Toki? I’ve been meaning to ask, but… How did you get your scar?" Kai asked curiously, motioning to the mark partially hidden by her mane. His dad had some too, but he knew how those came about.

Toki blinked, and realized she’d exposed it when she’d ruffled her mane earlier. "I caught a burning beam with my head." She gives him a lopsided smile. "It caught me pretty good. It goes further back, but my mane covers it."

"That’s very impressive.” The doctor nods. “No doubt you were saving a life when it hit you."

Toki laughed. "You know me too well. I was, yes. A pup. Thumper— a wily little male, who often got into all sorts of mischief. He got himself into trees, or others into trees, and wouldn’t know how to get down, so I’d have to go get him." Her soul panged again, and she clenched one of her secondary hands with a soft sigh. Shaking her head, Toki continued. "He had gotten trapped in the house, along with several other ones I was babysitting at the time, and there was… Well, the start of the conflict that ended up with me coming here. The house was burnt around us, and Thumper and I were the last ones out when the house started to collapse." She hums. She shakes her head with a soft sigh. "No one died though. Several got singed, and we contained the fire before it spread." Her wings flick slightly, and she sighs, before hauling herself up out of her seat. She collects her empty plate to take it to the sink, and makes her way there slowly.

"My hero." He laughed gently, following her to rest a hand on her shoulder. "And I bet he was alive and well when you departed." He rumbled.

"He was." She nods. "He… Lost his mother and father to those who we were fighting." Her secondary hand came up to rest gently on his, her fingers so dainty compared to his. "Thumper found a new family though, within the circle of my pack. He was family." She smiles softly. Her fingers tighten on his, and Toki sighs. She missed him. She missed them all. "He was alive… As were the rest of my pack, thanks to my… My sacrifices."

Becoming a living prison for Cruelty had not been her intention. She hadn’t known he could control her… But she paid the price for her lack of knowledge and her ignorance. She would handle her consequences as they came.

He smiled, and as his hand stayed firm on her shoulder, the other came around and gave her a tight
hug, his head coming to rest on hers. "Every time you tell me this, it just reminds me of how I’m looking into the face of a brave, selfless hero~" He purred sweetly.

Unheard to Tenne, Cruelty snorted loudly for Toki to hear, 'Oh please! Don't make me laugh.'

As his chin nestled against her fluff, Toki folded her wings so he could properly hug her. It felt... It felt honestly nice to be hugged. She was so tired and hurting inside... Just being held was nice, even for a little while. She leaned into him faintly. "I'm anything but brave, Tenne." She smiles awkwardly. "But... I'm kind. And my drive towards being kind lends me a sort of false bravery sometimes. Sometimes it works and sometimes it comes around to bite me in the arse."

'I'm not brave. But I was selfless enough to try and think of a more merciful way to keep you from reincarnating. And rather than seal you in a genie lamp for the rest of eternity with no one to talk too... At least I'm more fun than solitude, eh Cruelty?'

At her words of denial, Tenne chuffed stubbornly as he shook his head into her mane, "Your effort to get to where you are now shows bravery in its purest form." He murmured softly, 'I see it, even if you are struggling to."

'I'm starting to wonder...' Cruelty replied sharply.

"I don't feel brave all the time." She smiles quietly, mane ruffling against his touch. "But... Thank you. I try to be brave. I... I knew a bravery soul quite well within my pack. He was an inspiration for everyone." She smiles faintly. Her Papyrus had been her... He had been her will to fight, her will to protect, her titanium, her everything. He made her feel invincible. But... She wasn't. Well... She sort of was now, to some extent. But not completely. "He inspired me to try and be more than what I am." She glanced back at him and gave him a slightly lost smile. "I know I probably confuse the heck out of you sometimes, and for that I am sorry."

'You have fun flinging salt in my wounds and you know it.' She replied tiredly. 'You know... You could choose to be a decent person and try to change, Cruelty. I know I'm picking up habits from you.' Toki had never been able to lie well in her life. Not until now. And that, she knew, was from Cruelty's side of their soul. She could feel the bleed over from their merged beings. 'Are you not getting anything from me?'

"Heh heh heh... Indeed I admit I'm a tad confused in what you mean by a 'bravery soul', but I will inquire more about that later. I've other things to do right now." Tenne chuckled gently as he gave her a soft squeeze before he let her go

'Not likely...' Cruelty scoffed, 'Even if I did, it's not like you'd let me take control to find out for myself.' He sneered.

"Confused-? Oh... Oh right." She glanced back at him, wings ruffling. "This place doesn't have titles for the colors and natures of souls." She muses softly. A soft laugh escapes her, and Toki shakes her head vehemently. "Don't bother, Tenne. This is one bit of information I think I will keep to myself. It has brought nothing but bad to my home, and has brought conflict and strife and prejudice over specific colors and natures. No." She shakes her head one more, her stance on this firm. He already knew she was a kindness soul- she'd mentioned it prior, though he might not have taken her at her word for it. He might recall it now, but who knew. Toki gives him a sad smile. "I don't want to see what happened to my world repeat in this one. So... No. Anyways... You have something I can use to sponge bathe?"

'Not while I can feel hate curling in your being, and filling your every thought. When you can let something other than cruel and hateful feelings rule your thoughts and actions... Maybe.' Toki
murmurs with a soft sigh to her prisoner. She mused that she was once more a gilded cage— but this time, for a real monster.

Cruelty scoffed at her words, and settled down in her mind, going quiet once more.

Tenne's gaze changed for a moment, glimmering thoughtfully at her, but at the mention of the sponge bath, he let his thoughts be distracted away for the time being. The doctor nodded to her and turned to head upstairs. "Right- I was getting that ready for you. Please, excuse me."

"Thank you." She nods softly. She watches him go, and then sighs. Her shoulders slump, and she rubs her cheeks quietly as she turns back to the sink to lean against it, momentarily forgetting that she wasn't alone in the kitchen. She sagged a little in her joints.

She was so, so tired. Part of her was glad Cruelty had gone to 'sleep' of sorts, because she wasn't sure she had enough in her to banter wits with him again at this moment. She felt hollowed out inside, the reminder of the hate and the prejudice weighing heavy on her soul. If she delved back, she could feel the utter heartbreak and betrayal Cruelty had felt when she— when Kindness— had failed for the first time to back him up against the monsters. When, for the first time, the boss-hearts made the mistake of allowing the anti-hearts to be treated so unjustly just because of their colors.

If everything had been done different... Maybe...maybe she wouldn’t be here now. She wouldn’t have missed her babies first birthdays; her husband’s birthday, her family. Her everything.

Toki sucks in a soft breath, and curls her hands tightly over the edge of the sink. Her wings tremble, and she has to take a moment to rein herself in, lest she crack and break. She missed her children. God, she missed her children. She... She wanted to hold them, and bump her horns to Honey's and cuddle her son close to her chest.

The ache was very real and very deep, and she struggled to bury it again.

Kai and Quinn had been sitting there observing her with worry as she had her moment, and as she made to regain her calm demeanor, both boys got up.

Kai went for the stairs, while Quinn came up to Toki and began to pull on her shirt, giving soft and distressed 'Nyeh!'s as he did. Once she finally turned to him, he reached up and made grabby hands, releasing another "Nyeeeee!" to emphasize his desperation for up.

It's with a slow sort of motion that she turns, like dragging her limbs through cold honey. Quinn's desperation to get into her arms didn’t make much sense to her, at least not at the start, but it didn't stop her primary arms from reaching down and lifting him up.

He felt heavy in her arms, like she was trying to lift the world. He didn't weigh all that much—even being more blaster beast than he was Skeleton, the small child was willow and spry. She tucked him to her chest with a quiet, defeated sort of look in her eyes.

"Yes, Quinn?" Toki says softly. She can't scramble fast enough to put up her mask— it's moving at the speed of chilled molasses, and is going nowhere. "... Where did Kai go?" She murmurs a moment later as her eyes scan the kitchen for the elder child.

He gave one last 'Nyeh' and hugged her around the neck with a newfound strength, and held tight to her as he whined and mumbled into her fur.

She now had a little pup attached to her chest, and had very little chance of getting him off anytime soon.
Toki simply sighed, and tucked him close to her as he whined and mumbled into her mane. She curled her arms gently around him and nuzzled her chin to the top of his skull. "I'm sorry you had to see that." She murmurs gently to the boy. Of course. Him and Kai had probably seen her almost-meltdown. She was still struggling- she knew she probably smelled like it too. Well, what they could smell above the pheromones coating her. "I'll... I'll be okay, Quinn." She murmurs softly to the boy, voice soft and shaky.

"Mweeh... Maah..." He whined quietly, before his grip repositioned, now holding handfuls of her soft fur. "Maamah!"

Toki froze, throat tightening and a soft, choked noise left her initially until she managed to swallow past the massive lump in her throat. Her chest throbbed tightly, soul clenching in her chest like someone had snared it in a vice grip, and she felt her eyes prickling. "W-what?"

"Maaam... Mah... Mama!" Quinn practically yelped into her fur.

The timing was impeccable, as Tenne had just returned with Kai. Tenne had been worried at hearing his yelp, but the word was recognized and it rendered him stiff, purple eyes blowing wide.

There was no hiding now- no hiding what had been lost. The word shattered the fragile control she was trying to gather for herself, and Toki's vision fogged over with green tears as Tenne and Kai returned. Her shoulders trembled, wings shivering, and her arms tightened around Quinn.

The sound that came from her was not loud, nor was it scary. But there was a low, bubbling keen that warbled up from inside of her chest, and it escaped her mouth in sob as her eyes flinched closed. It wasn’t just a sound of loss- no. That was a mother who had lost her children- and who still mourned their loss.

Her children might have been alive and well back in her world- but she would never know. She wouldn’t know how they were doing, she wouldn’t see them grow, hear their stories, watch them change and mature- she had nothing to assure her that nothing hadn’t happened in the wake of her leaving, to either her children or Papyrus.

All she had was the empty holes in her soul where the bonds to her children had been torn away. Forty two weeks she had carried them- forty two weeks, and then almost a year in her arms, and she had been ripped away from them.

Being called Mama hurt. It hurt in so, so many ways.

Toki's stiffness melted away into heartbreaking sobs as she clutched one of the only small balms she had to the endless ache the missing soul bonds her children had left behind.

Large tears grew from Quinn's eyes and ran down his cheeks as he nuzzled her, and it wasn't long until Kai had his head lowered, his strange bone-like lip between his teeth.

Tenne was no longer tense as he listened to the sounds of her sorrow. With one hand he slowly scooped up Kai, hiding his son's face in his shoulder, before slowly coming over to Toki. He remained watching for a moment, as if hesitant to interrupt that which she was cherishing with Quinn.

After a bit, he reached out and rested his hand on her shoulder. “Toki…” He murmured softly.

The touch to her shoulder grounded her faster than a blow to the wings mid flight would. Her eyes popped open, shoulders still trembling woefully, and Toki very nearly flinched from his touch. It was supposed to be a happy night. A good night. There was a new life born underground, her venom
could make honey, and he'd been very sweet to make her dinner since she'd been late home from work. And... Well, she'd just ruined it by bursting into tears. She had also probably just confused the hell out of him.

"I... I'm sorry." The apology fell from her mouth before she could stop it, and she hiccupped helplessly, wings giving a distressed flutter. One of her hands lifted away from Quinn so she could scrub at her eyes. The tears didn't stop, and neither did her shaking. "I'm... I'm a b-broken mess." She sniffles quietly. "I... I'm sorry..." She couldn't make the tears stop. All she could do was hold onto Quinn and just plead for the pain in her soul to ease long enough for her to block it up once more.

"Toki... If you feel like you need to cry... There's nothing stopping you... I encourage it." He told her gently, reaching his hand to cup her cheek now as he lowered his forehead to hers. Now that she was a bit more attached to reality, he felt a bit more comfortable getting close to her in this state. Blaster beasts were an unknown entity- particularly females, and he had no desire to be on the opposite end of her stingers if he moved too quickly and she got defensive. "It's not healthy to bottle things away..."

"Crying... Crying doesn't help. It never helps." She whispers softly. Her eyes close again as his forehead comes to rest against hers, and she can't stop the shaky sob that bubbles forth. Her hand latches onto his shirt, clinging shakily to him. "I cry and I cry... I cried for days after I left and I tried to get home and it doesn't... It doesn't change a fucking thing. It... It wont give my babies back to me." Her whisper is just as heartbreaking as her sobs.

Her whispers hit him as if she had screamed them... and with the power of the words that escaped her, she might as well have done just that.

Kai gave a small squirm, and Tenne put him down, allowing him to embrace Toki around the waist, hugging her tightly as Tenne ended up doing the same.

'T-Tch...' That wasn't the normal scoff that would come from Cruelty. It almost sounded like there was a lump in his throat.

Toki had no comment or reply for Cruelty this time either. Her consciousness simply brushed his, and then left him be. But she would remember this.

Her arms were everywhere, a tangled mess as she clutched Kai to her, and Tenne to her as well, as if they were helping to keep her grounded and from being blown away on the winds of her internal agony. Quinn was shifted and tightly held to her chest, but where he wouldn’t be crushed- and Toki simply let the kind family that had taken her in bring her back down from the waves of pain she had been lost to. Her sobs took time to pass, and she had stained Tenne's shirt a garish green color by the time her tears, and subsequent shakes, came to pass.

When she felt less easily shattered by something as simple as a light wind, her arms loosened around them just a tad, and she sniffled softly. Toki wasn’t... Better or fixed. Not by a long shot. But... But it helped. Just... Being held, and holding someone while she let go of her tears. She felt hollow, but not in the same way as before.

Where there had been only loss and pain, there was now something else. She had friends here- this might not have been her world, or her home... But these were her friends too, and Quinn... Sweet, sweet Quinn, he loved her like she was his mother, and he didn’t know any better. He hadn’t known any other- and Toki was always one to take care of children.

And she... She was not afraid to say she loved both boys. She had been helping care for them- and Toki... Toki always loved very easily.
Part of that might have been one of her flaws—she loved too easily. She was also so easily hurt by it.

So she was... Hollow. But more of an exhausted hollow than the empty hollow that she was before.

"Thank you." She rasps softly, shakily leaning into Tenne. Her limbs felt like they were made of pudding.

"Of course..." He purred gently. A soft chuckle left him as he glanced at his youngest, who was still firmly clinging onto Toki’s fur, with no intention of letting her go. "It looks like you're going to have Quinn stuck to you for the night... I will see if he will let you go long enough to bathe, but tonight, you deserve a bit more than a night's sleep on the sofa. You've deserved it longer than that, from what I’ve come to learn tonight..." His voice trailed off, to a small, sort of bitter note.

"I... I'm okay on the sofa. I doubt I'll be alone, so... It's okay." Quinn likely wasn't going to let her sleep alone tonight. Probably not Kai either, based on how tightly the boy was holding onto her leg. Toki leaned back enough to scrub her eyes, and huffed softly through her mouth. She had made a mess out of his shirt, she realized. Toki knew she had tear tracks on her face still. "I... I still do need a wash though. Especially after crying like that. Ah... Kai? Are you okay, sweetie...?"

The boy simply sniffled and nodded into her hip. He didn’t let her go either.

Toki had two limpets it seemed. Though the one with his hands in her fur would be far harder to remove.

"Toki, please. I insist. It will allow Quinn to stay close to you tonight as well." Tenne told her gently. "I'll sleep in my chair tonight. It's comfortable, so you don't need to worry about me."

“I’m going to worry anyways.” Toki murmurs softly, and rubs Quinn’s back with one of her hands. She bounces him gently, hoping to get his little tears to stop. “You’re not used to sleeping on something that’s not your bed. You’re going to get a crick in your back.” She was used to the couch. She’d been sleeping on it for months now— it was practically as familiar to her as her bed back home was.

“Why don’t we all just sleep in your room?” Kai’s muffled voice comes from her hip. His hands tighten on her skirt. “Your bed is big enough, Daddy, to hold the whole pack. And it... seems like it would be one of those nights where we should all be together...”

Tenne reached out and tenderly set a hand on Kai’s head, "It is indeed big enough, my son..." He then sighed. "Emotionally compromised beings, especially mourning mothers, only risk falling deeper into despair if they seclude themselves. As a father, I would feel the same were I to lose that which I cherished, and I know a few faces that would refuse to leave me alone in such a state. I will not force you, but I plead you will reconsider."

Quinn looked up at Toki, and gave a quiet whimper as he reached up and cupped her cheeks. "N-neh...” He hiccupped. “Nyeh..."

‘G-God damn it... Kindness! Just accept his fucking offer! Do you really think you're strong enough to get through this yourself? Just say yes!’ Was a sudden snarl from Cruelty, 'He's as fucking hardheaded as you are! So just take the offer!' Cruelty’s sudden snarl was not expected, and it took a lot of control not to flinch. ‘I didn’t think you cared enough about me to tell me to do anything for my own good.’ She comments quietly. ‘... Thank you, though.’ She murmurs softly.

‘T-ch.’
Toki nuzzles the small hands touching her tear-stained cheeks, and leans forth to kiss Quinn’s brow gently. She held him gently, sighed softly to the three of them. “Okay.” She murmurs. “Okay… Once I get cleaned up, I wouldn’t mind if we all crashed together for the night.” She rubs Quinn’s cheeks with hers, purring soothingly and rubbing her hand along Kai’s skull.

Kai sniffles into her leg and nods. “Good. I’ll go get the bed all ready. Daddy can help you get cleaned up. And see if he can get Quinn to let go.” He nuzzles her leg once more, and then his Dad’s hand, and runs off up the stairs.

Tenne smiled a little, and watched Kai go. ”That’s my boy.” He purred, before he reached out and gently rubbed Quinn’s back. ”No more tears, my pup. It’s going to be okay…”

”N-Nyeh!” Quinn shook his head stubbornly, and then reached up and rubbed his eyes with his fists, hiccupping from how hard he had been crying into Toki’s mane.

Toki crooned gently and bounced him, her hands tenderly stroking his lower back. ”It’s okay Quinn… It might not be okay now, but… in time… it will be, I promise.” She soothed softly. One of her hands came up and stroked over his cheeks, gently brushing his tears away. ”Can you go to your daddy for me?” Her voice remains soft and gentle, despite the rough undertone from her sobs that it retained. ”I need to get washed up, sweetie…”

The child gave another hiccup that seemed to interrupt a ’nyeh’ before he looked back at his father with watery eyes.

Tenne gently scooped him into his arms, and propped him up against his shoulder. ”Oh Quinn, my sweet pup.” He purred softly as he cuddled him close to his chest. ”I’ve got you.”

Quinn didn’t fight his father’s hold, but he was whimpering a bit as he looked back at Toki. He was clearly eager for her to go and wash off and be done with it; the sooner the better.

Toki lifted a hand to give Quinn’s head a gentle pet, before smiling up at Tenne. ”I’ll meet you at your room.” She murmurs softly. She skirts around him, moving sluggishly, and makes her way up the stairs and towards the ‘bathroom’ of sorts. Running water wasn’t applicable until the core was functional enough to run power lines out here, but… Well, that just wasn’t going to be a thing for a long while.

All the same, Toki made quick work scrubbing herself up in the bathroom. The water bucket was heated up and sanitized, and she cleaned and dried herself off, before doing the same to her clothes.

When she left the bathroom, she was cleaner and more refreshed, and she smelled less terrible. She still looked exhausted and spent though, her wings drooping and dragging along the floor instead of folding up neatly like they usually did. She made it to his room and hesitated, before quietly knocking on the door.

”Come on in.” Tenne’s voice called out to her from inside, followed by an excited ‘NYEH!’ from Quinn.

Toki smiled at the ‘Nyeh’, and trudged inside. She very nearly shut one of her wings in the door, and had to actually expend the effort to move it out of the way, instead of her body instinctively just shuffling it for her.

Once her wayward limbs were out of the way, she did a quick scan of his room, before her eyes settled on his bed.

Kai had done a very good job of turning it into a nest. There were pillows- obviously from his and
Quinn’s bed, based on the childish prints covering the cases on the outside-lining most of the edges, and blankets strewn everywhere. The pudgy child was stubbornly trying to weave a blanket into the edge of a pillow casing so it wouldn’t fall off the edge of the bed, effectively tying the whole thing together into one smooth ring. He was making small frustrated sounds as it refused to obey.

The whole nest was not unlike the ones she and Papyrus used to make on the living room floor when the weather was bad- and they’d usually find the nest filled with Tenebris, Sans, and pretty much the whole ‘pack’ as it was.

Tenne and his children had obviously done the nesting thing several times before, if Kai had this much practice.

Toki smiled faintly, feeling a little like she was intruding upon private family time, and shuffled on her paws. “… Where do you want me to settle?”

“Well, if you're in your sleepwear, simply climb in and get comfortable. I usually take the outer ring, but there will be room for your wings if you face inward.” Tenne explained, now in more comfortable sleepwear, plus his sweater.

Toki glanced at her skirt and shirt. The skirt would be a little pesky, but she didn’t have the desire or energy to go down the stairs to go fetch pants. “… I don’t really have sleepwear.” She comments softly. “So yeah, I’m good to go.”

Toki approached the edge of the bed, gently brushing Kai’s fingers away. She gingerly tucked the blanket into the pillow casing and secured it, and then smiled as the boy huffed and flopped over to land on his father. She settled in on that side, opposite on the outer ring from Tenne, and stretched out on her side.

Her wings flopped limply over the edge of the bed, draping like sad rice paper with bones.

His bed was comfortable, she had to admit. Toki settled down, and with her settling, the ambient temperature of his bedroom rose as she warmed it instinctively. “Is here alright?” She was just across from him- facing him, actually- which left the center of the nest for the boys to curl up or sprawl out in. Her feet brushed Tenne’s tail, as well as the loose pleats of her skirt.

Tenne grunted as he was landed on and he chuckled, giving him a squeeze before letting him go once more, as Toki got comfy. He watched her to make sure she adjusted well enough, but as her feet brushed his, he rumbled and responded as his feet extended and gently hooked on hers. A loud purr resonated from him at this point and he smiled happily. "Absolutely perfect." He replied.

Once she was settled, his tail came around and slowly formed another ring along the exterior of the nest for as long as it could reach.

She glanced at his tail as it curled around the length of the nest. One of her fingers came up and brushed the edge of it, trailing over it lightly. She hummed a soft sound, toes flexing against his. She stretched her legs, and let them tangle more with his and simply savoring touch in general. Toki gave Tenne a tired smile.

“Hey, Toki? Can I see one of your wings?” Kai asks quietly as he settles against Tenne’s side. He poked Quinn, and got him to shift so he wasn’t sitting on his tail.

Toki nodded. Her closest wing lifted with great effort, and extended over the nest as she shifted her shoulder. For the lack of energy to hold it up, she simply plopped it down lightly on Tenne.

It was thin and gossamer like- and felt like it weighed nothing as it touched down against him. Her
wings were so delicate, the thin membrane glowing, but also translucent.

Kai pressed his fingers to her wings and petted them gently, and was rewarded with a soft, relaxed buzz from Toki. "Whoa." He blinks. "Daddy, you've got to feel these. They feel so weird!"

His tail shuttered under her hand and Tenne gave a soft exhale, a smile on his face. At the beckoning from his son, he tilted his head and chuckled, "If Toki has no problem with it."

"I don’t mind. You won’t hurt me.” Toki smiled faintly. Given the fact that her wing was touching him, it was only fair he could touch it back. She sighed softly, and glanced to Quinn. “Are you going to stay over there all night?” She questions teasingly to the smaller monster.

As soon as he was spoken to, Quinn happily scrambled underneath her form, getting comfortable in her mane.

Tenne had waited for Quinn to get comfy, as it would no doubt result in Toki moving, but once it was clear, he gently set the wing in the palm of one hand, using the other to gently stroke the wing. "How lovely.” He purred.

Toki nestled Quinn up into her mane, and tucked him close with a content sigh. Her fur fluffed and settled in waves as Tenne started to stroke her wing. It felt not unlike a silky paper-like his claws could break through at any moment. However, it wouldn’t give, even if he pushed on it.

Toki murmured contently, and closed her eyes, a soft sound leaving her. Her joint relaxed, letting her wing go boneless in his grasp. “That feels nice.” She murmurs gently.

He rumbled quietly as he continued to stroke the thin yet strong wing in his hands, and steadily his hands wandered higher, towards the base of her wings on her back. "They do too... such an intricate and unique texture.” He mumbled in reply.

Kai sat back against his father, his hands returning to his lap with a pleased smirk growing on his face as he relaxed. His feet stretched out, draping over Toki’s hips, and he settled down to relax and watch.

Toki shifted closer bit by bit as his hands worked towards the base of her wings. Her wings could get so sore when she flew for too long- the muscles could get tired and overworked. It was an unpleasant sensation, but the higher he worked, the more she could feel the flesh loosening and relaxing. Her shoulder rotated towards him a little bit, arms bracing so she didn’t squish Quinn, and she did buzzed softly. Her fingers stroked Quinn’s skull. “Insect wings are definitely different,” She mused. Hers weren’t like normal bug wings- but she wasn’t a normal bug. “I’m glad you like feel of them though… Mmm…”

There was a complaint growing from Quinn as Toki moved, but he went quiet again as he realized she was just adjusting.

"They are very nice, I’m not quite sure what I could compare them to, though..." Tenne mused.

“There’s nothing really that you would know of.” She chuckles with a wry amusement. Rice paper was definitely not something English-speaking monsters would use habitually. Toki sighed gently, and opened her eyes to look at him again. “But that’s okay. You don’t have to compare them to anything.” She quirks a smile. “So long as bug wings don’t bother you, that’s alright with me.”

"I think they're beautiful.” He had a sweet look waiting for her when she looked up at his face, though soon he returned her wing to her and nestled into the bedding with a sigh.
“Thank you.” She smiled. Toki wondered if Papyrus would think they were beautiful. She shook her head, and tucked her skull down gently, curling her arm through her horn so she could pillow her head on her bicep. Toki gave him a faint smile as she shifted back onto her side again, her wing simply dropping down to rest against her back.

She radiated warmth in the nest, and soon, Kai squirmed away from Tenne to settle against her stomach, curling up into a ball against her with a soft, pleased sigh. He stretched his legs out to his dad, trying to tug him closer with his heels.

He didn't need the pulling from his son. He was unconsciously lured closer by the warmth, his tail coming over the rim of the nest to coil around her a little tighter.

As the warmth better washed over Tenne, he gave an appreciate chuff and his toes curled, before relaxing once more.

Toki, for all her tiredness, didn’t quite settle to sleep as soon as Quinn or Kai did. It took her some time, so she was fully aware as Tenne started to ease in closer to her. Her warmth was a hard lure to resist, after all.

She didn’t settle until he had eased closer to her. The familiar feel of having a larger body near hers, even if it wasn’t wrapped around her, was comforting, as well as having the boys pressed to her. It wasn’t a replacement for what she had been taken from… but it helped make it hurt less in that particular moment. She sighed softly and nestled closer to him, air passing between her teeth as she curled up just slightly around the boys.

Nothing could replace what she had. But one could suppose the family she lived with now took this as a message. That though she had lost much, it did not mean that she would be forced to be with left without.
A particularly nasty cold snap hit in the Underground only two weeks later, and it made walking to and from work unbearable. The winds were rough though, and Toki didn’t feel like braving them to try and fly through the worst of them.

She wasn’t the only one suffering though- everyone was struggling to keep warm, and the fireplaces were constantly belching out smoke, making it more unpleasant to fly.

She wasn’t coming home from work though- Toki had just gotten back from her now-usual run to the market, where she was selling her jars of honey. The jars were always returned- Toki always bought the jars back from people who had paid for them and she would refill them, and begin the ‘honey making’ process again.

It was… fun in a way. Very relaxing and just… familiar, even if it was a completely alien sort of process in how they did it. The venom had to be cooled, where in it thickened and turned inert and harmless. It was pretty cool to watch. It wasn’t all that lucrative a process for making money though- but Toki just didn’t feel right about charging high prices to the monsters Underground.

The only reason she was selling it in the first place was because they refused to just accept it for free. So she was selling the large jars for no more than fifteen gold, and the smaller for ten. She felt that was fair enough- it helped her get by, and she ended up only paying two or three gold per jar to get them back, if the people would even let her buy them.

Her honey was a fairly big hit too- ever since she took it to market a week back. She was getting lots of gifted jars from folks who didn’t need them anymore, apparently. She suspected some of the gifted jars were ones she had sold- but given that she had no way to make labels… well, there was no proof.
That was a ‘hint hint’ if she ever saw it.

She’d need to fill up more jars, once she got inside and warmed up. She’d been standing in the snow and ice for more than just a couple hours, and her paw pads were so numb that she couldn’t feel them.

She made her way up to the house, and got inside, shaking the snow and ice off her clothes with a gust of magic.

The jars in her backpack rattled, announcing her return home as she settled them on the couch. She’d need to wash them before refilling them, but it wasn’t something that she minded doing. A bit of snow in a bucket with some fire magic worked wonders.

Toki hummed and plodded for the kitchen, intending to make herself some tea and honey to help warm up.

She hummed a merry tune, and fluttered her wings as she collected down some extra mugs. The kids liked her tea- particularly with extra doses of honey in it. The smell of it brewing would bring them running, no doubt. It would bring Tenne down from where the trio were no doubt spending time together while he was off work.

Indeed there was the sound of the upstairs doors opening, as well as footsteps of eager pups coming down the stairs.

They stopped short, however, and silence was thick for a few moment.

Without warning, a scream pierced the air before erupting into wails.

The teapot was nearly dropped and shattered. Toki scrambled to put it down, her fur fluffing at the shriek and wails that followed, and she was out of the kitchen and into the living room swiftly. Her eyes scanned the room for the kids, and found them by the stairs. She zeroed in on the distressed children. “Boys?” She calls, concerned, and makes a beeline for them. “Boys, what’s wrong?”

Kai was holding Quinn but looked very happy to see Toki, "Oh thank goodness, you're okay..." he spoke.

His words caught Quinn's attention and he looked up at her, reaching up and making desperate grabby hands for her. "Mama! Mama!" He wailed.

"BOYS!" There was then a roar from upstairs before Tenne leapt over the banister of the stairs, landing on the bottom floor on his feet. His tail swished, blade scraping the floor, before he stood tall and looked at his boys worriedly. For a moment relief was present on his face as he realized that they were okay and unharmed. It faded away to panic the moment that he saw the blood tracks leading right towards the winged woman standing before them. "T-Toki! Oh my god! What happened?!"

Toki had stooped to scoop up Quinn, her soul flinching a bit at being called ‘Mama’. She wasn’t going to deny him, however, and simply cuddled the distressed child to her neck, and tucked Kai gently to her side. Tenne’s arrival was expected- but it did draw her attention.

His words, and those of the children, only confused her. She gave him a blank look. “... What?” She glanced down at herself. She looked otherwise fine- except for the small green stains around her otherwise usually snow white feet, and the not so small stains on the floor.

Oh. Oh. That’s what they were panicking over.
As she walked, she had left bloody green paw prints on the floor from the lacerated spots on her paws that she couldn’t feel. Like Tenne’s trick with the card, her body hadn’t expected to need to defend- and apparently the ice did more than enough to open her feet up nicely.

She lifted one of her feet, and looked at the deep oozing cuts on the bottoms of her usually soft pads. She had rocks and all other sorts of stuff stuck in there. She made a face. “… Apparently I cut my feet while I was down at the market.” She supplies, sounding unsure. “I don’t really… know. I didn’t notice until you all said something.” Her feet were effectively blocks of ice still. “I’ll be okay if I can just get a wet cloth to scrub the stuff out with, I promise.”

At that, Tenne thumped a foot and gave her a stubborn look. "No. Absolutely out of the question, Toki." He growled, before he pointed to the couch. "Sit your thorax down on the couch right now." He ordered, before going to the kitchen and avoiding the tracks she had made to grab a towel and a tub, which he then proceeded to bring out to the front room.

Was that his dad voice he was using on her?

"The only work I want you doing right now is heating the water to get the feeling back in your feet. And after that, I am taking you to get some shoes for your pads, young lady." He was definitely using his dad voice.

Toki sighed, and made her way over to the couch. Not alone, however. Kai helped her over, seeming concerned about her possibly limping, and Quinn was attached to her neck tight enough that they might never pry him off.

Toki really just needed to buy a sling for Quinn, honestly, and just let him cling onto her ruff all the time without her needing to use her hands.

She made it to the couch, and rolled her eyes at the dad voice he gave her. “Yes Daddy.” She replies teasingly, using Kai’s name for him, and then gives him a dry smile. “I am many years too old for you to take the dad tone with me, Tenne.” She hums. “Go get some snow, and I’ll melt and heat it, alright? Not a big deal. And, ah… Really with the shoes? I haven’t earned that much from honey sales yet.”

Kai huffs. “If you can’t, Daddy can help pay for them.” He head-butts her shoulder irritably. “Right, Daddy?”

Though his cheeks tinged a shade of gray at being called 'Daddy' with that tone of voice, he gave a nod. "There's no 'if' about it. I'm going to pay for them myself, and she can keep her money." He told him, before grabbing the tub and going outside to scoop up some clean snow.

Kai nodded after his father with a pleased look. “Good. See Toki? Daddy’s going to get you shoes, and you wont have bleeding feet anymore.”

Toki sighed, letting her head thump back onto the couch again. “I can’t win between the both of you, can I?”

“Nope.” Kai shakes his head, and then nudges Quinn. “Quinn. Quinn. Toki’s gonna be okay. We’re gonna get her some shoes, and she’s not going to hurt her feet anymore.”

Quinn whimpered in reply and looked up at his brother, sniffling softly. "Momma." It was unclear if he was answering his brother or correcting him.

Toki tilted her head down and peppered Quinn’s face with soft kisses. “No more tears, Quinn. I’m gonna be okay.” She smiled for him. “Your Daddy’s going to use his doctor skills and fix me up,
and I’ll be all better.” Her feet would probably ache, unless he healed up the cuts instead of just bandaging them.

She might have a small fit if he tried to seal them with his healing saliva. She had her limits.

Toki smooshed Quinn’s little cheeks in her secondary hands, and wiggled them. “It’s gonna be okay, squirt.”

Kai grins. “Yup. Like she said, it’s gonna be okay.” He pats her arm, and glances back at the door as Tenne comes back.

Tenne returned with what looked like a fire in his eyes as he toted in the tub full of snow before he put it down in front of Toki. "There. Now you can work your magic." He told her, before he gave a small smile, "Literally."

Quinn whined as he was smooshed but rubbed his eyes and seemed to recover well enough with this reassurance.

Toki offered him a smile, and rubbed Quinn’s cheeks, before leaning forwards. She set a hand on the tub, and pushed her magic into it. It steamed a little bit, but the snow rapidly began to melt inwards, turning from a thick pile into a puddle of slush- and from slush into cold water. The cold water, after a few minutes and a bit more magic, began to heat up a bit. As it began to warm, Toki lifted her hand away, and replaced it with her feet.

She made a small face, and grimaced as her frozen toes slid into the warm water. “Well, that’s uncomfortable.” She grumps.

'I'm going to especially hate you when the feeling comes back to our feet, Toki.' Cruelty growled.

As her feet soaked, Tenne went around and collected some things he'd need to wrap her feet up.

‘Cruelty, I'm pretty sure I'm going to hate myself more than you will. At least you get muffled feelings instead of the full ones most times.’

Indeed she would. As her frozen feet started to thaw, the water started to stain more of a green color as her frozen veins started to really open up. Her nerves, however, started to go off, and it took everything she had to not shred the arm of the couch. She hummed a pained tune, and tried to keep herself as distracted as she could.

As soon as her feet showed signs of proper blood flow, Tenne stepped in to help. He gently took one of her feet in his hands to clear the wounds of debris before bundling them in soft towels, and then set the first on his large thighs as he tended to the other, "With defense as high as you claim I am disappointed, Toki..." Tenne huffed.

She looked at him and rolled her eyes. “I’m not a god, Tenne. You cut me with a card. Even my defense has its weak moments. I got too cold, and my defense couldn’t compensate, I guess.” She shrugs. She still pulls faces at him as he cleans and bandages her feet, because damn does that hurt.

He gave her a look, but continued to wrap her feet. "As soon as your feet have healed, you're getting a pair of shoes." He muttered sourly, "Such damage..."

Toki wiggled her fingers lightly. “Too bad I have no idea how to heal.” She pouts. “I’m only good at burning things.” Toki waits until he’s finished one foot, and has started on the other, before giving him a cheeky grin. “But I’ll be okay to make the walk down to the clothing store. See? I’ve got shoes on.” She wiggles the bandages binding her foot.
Kai giggles.

She winks at him. At least someone found her funny.

Tenne chuckled weakly, before he sighed and shook his head, "I don’t want this happening again."

"Then we’ll make sure it wont.” Toki sighs. “I can walk down to the Vestimoves, Tenne. It’s not that long of a walk.” And the cold would re-numb the pain from her soles anyways.

He looked at her for a short while, as if contemplating this, before he sighed and nodded. "Alright. It should take some of the pain from your feet." He rumbled quietly, before he stood to go and get his own shoes. "Kai, get you and your brother's boots and coats please."

"Okay, Daddy."

As Kai scrambled up to go get the boots and coats for him and his brother, Toki shifted and gently extracted Quinn from her fur. She turned him around so he was sitting in her lap, and then played with his little feet while she waited.

Quinn snuffled quietly as he rubbed his eyes before hugging Toki's arm, nuzzling her gently with a sniffle.

She let him cling to her arm, and simply cuddled him gently. Her toes twitched in their bandages, and she sighed gently, before leaning down to make a soft tooty noise against his skull. She didn’t really have lips to do a raspberry, but she made due with what she had. “Awww, c’mon, Quinn. Perk up a bit- I’m okay, I promise. A little bit of sore feet isn’t going to slow me down.”

Quinn giggled quietly, reaching up to hug her face lovingly, "Mweh~" he purred gently.

Tenne returned moments later, adjusting his coat. The doctor smiled to Toki. "Are you ready?"

“As I’ll ever be.” She smiled up to Tenne, and peppered Quinn’s face in small kisses first. She carefully set Quinn on the couch, and then got to her feet.

Her face twisted at the unpleasant stabs of pain shooting up her legs.

Kai returned, bouncing down the stairs. He was fully dressed. He headed over to Quinn, and got his little brother’s feet into his boots, before holding his coat out. “C’mon, Quinn. Time for your coat!”

Quinn chirped and accepted his coat, sliding it on before watching as Tenne knelt and proceeded to scoop Toki off her feet and into his arms. "Up we go." He rumbled.

Toki flailed a bit, her wings spasming and briefly buzzing as she was scooped up and into his arms. "Ah! Tenne, really? I can walk!" She protests, four hands latching onto his coat as she clings to him reflexively.

Kai snorts and takes Quinn's hand, helping him off the couch and moving to stand by his dad.

"I'm not listening!" He sang cheerfully, giving her a gentle squeeze as he gave his tail to his boys, letting them trail behind him as he out the front door, and then for town.

Kai, tiny lazy genius that he tended to be at times, proceeded to use Tenne’s tail blade for a sled, seating himself on it and letting his father pull him along across the surface of the snow. He tugged Quinn down with him, and together they rode along behind their father.

Toki watched the boys over his shoulder and smiled faintly to herself, before huffing up at him. "If
you throw out your back carrying me, I’m going to laugh at you.” And then probably give him a rub down because she would feel terrible. Toki wasn’t as light weight as she once was she was putting on weight again, and she was no longer a skeleton, so… That accounted for some extra pounds, even if her wings weighed practically nothing. Her legs were thick.

"I'm not that old!"

Quinn gave a giggle and a squeal as he held onto his brother as they slid over the snow, and though Tenne gave Toki a stiff look, he soon recovered to smile at the sound of his children’s happiness.

Toki reached up and poked his cheek, sticking her tongue out at him. The dark green organ flicked at him, wiggling in a prehensile way. “I wasn’t calling you old, Tenne,” she rolls her eyes, “You’re not that much older than me. I’m not a light monster to be just sweeping into your arms, however, and it’s not a short ten-foot walk or something to the Vestimoves. You could hurt yourself if you slip on the ice.”

Kai giggled with Quinn, keeping his little brother balanced. He leaned a little to the side, directing his tail from side to side. It didn’t work very well because of the shape of the blade, but it worked well enough that they were leaving very strange lines in the snow.

He pouted at her for a moment, before he chuckled lightheartedly and smiled back over his shoulder at his children trailing behind him. "Having fun, my pups?" He cooed to them.

Kai grinned up at his dad. “Uhuh! Almost as fun as flying. It’s like walking, but without the effort.”

Quinn was simply giggling.

Toki snorted. “Sledding is fun.” She laughs lightly, shifting in Tenne’s arms. One of her arms curled around his neck, and she coiled up and over his other shoulder so she could see better behind him. It brushed her horn against his neck. “Maybe once we get me some shoes, your dad and I can go pile up some snow and make you a little hill to sled on.” Most of Snowdin was flat, after all- but they could make an artificial hill.

He chittered quietly as the horn grazed his neck and he shifted, adjusting so that she could watch his sons comfortably from the grip of one arm. "Indeed so. I could see about getting the snow off the roof.” He offered.

“The snow off the roof would work wonders.” She beams to Tenne, and tickles her horn against his cheek in thanks. She hums, and grins down to the boys. “What do you think?”

“Yeah!” Kai beams. “After shoes- and after your feet are better.”

"Heh heh heh, you can't get anything past that boy." Tenne chuckled to himself as he walked, "He's impressive, isn't he? Going to grow up a young genius, he is."

"He's already a little genius." Toki beams proudly. "He just needs motivation sometimes. I am very good at motivation."

"What you call motivation, I call nagging." Kai blows a raspberry at her.

Toki blows one right back. "First off, I'm a big sister to eight little brothers. I am very, very good at encouraging others to do the things they need to do."

"So... Nagging." He grins at her.
She rolls her eyes. "Lets ask your father. Tenne? Do I nag?" She gives him a teasing grin. Whatever his answer, she's not going to be upset.

He looked at her for a moment before turning his head away with a wry smirk. "You don’t want me to answer that." He chuckled.

Toki laughed with him. "Probably not."

"Good choice, Daddy." Kai grinned to his dad. "Gotta be nice to Toki."

Toki chuckled and nudged Tenne with her horn as she settled back into his arms again. Her paws flexed.

'Hey, Cruelty? If I have combat magic, wouldn't you have had healing magic? Now that we're Balance... Or Franken-Balance, rather, shouldn't I be able to heal if you... Well, helped me learn how?' She could delve into his mind and take the info, but... She didn't want to do that just to learn to heal herself. Though counting on Cruelty to help her with something was probably moot and she had no idea why she was trying.

Maybe it was the small bit of softness she had seen in him when she had her meltdown.

What Toki didn't expect was how calm Cruelty was when he answered ‘... I would have imagined any potential magic I possessed would be passed on to you, and frankly hoped you had a point in learning how to harness it.' he seemed to pause, as if he needed to take a deep breath. 'Unfortunately, we Anti-hearts lost many attributes that you and the other Boss-hearts have come to inherit through your countless incarnations... If I ever possessed magic such as what you speak... I haven't a clue how to use it. I would be learning with you.'

‘Drats.’ Toki sighs. ‘I had kind of hoped… Since we’re two halves of a whole, and green magic is best known for healing more so than combat, that you had inherited the healing aspect. Oh well. I guess we’re both learning together, ne?’

Toki nestles into Tenne, and hums a soft thoughtful tune as she contemplates how she could practice. ‘Thank you for telling me, Cruelty.’

Tenne rumbled as he was nestled and promptly nuzzled her in return.

'Yes, Kindness...’ After a moment, though, Cruelty spoke up again, 'I think... I would like that. Regardless of having a choice or not.'

‘You always have an option.’ Toki answers as she sort of gives up and just relaxes again. ‘I’m not going to steal into your memories just to help me learn how to escape a few bruises.’

'I never would have thought... You caught a few things from me, I wouldn't have seen it past you to follow that lead as well...'

‘Well… I’ve already done it to you once. That’s how we found the Void- but… I was sort of desperate at the time. I’m not going to do it now. It’s a violation of privacy.’ Toki replies lightly. Her eyes shift, and she glances up, staring off into space. Well, not so much off into space as staring at Tenne with a thousand yard stare while he carried her along. ‘I’m not going to apologize for doing what I did to save my family and friends.’ Even if it resulted in them coming here- she knew her family was alive and not dead by her hands.

Even if she couldn’t see and couldn’t hold them… It was better to not know what they were doing, than it was to know that she had killed them because she had exploded.
Cruelty sighed, but went quiet in her mind.

Tenne spoke up. "We're here." He lowered Toki to the simplest carry in one arm against his chest as he approached the door to the clothing store.

Toki smiled and opened the door for Tenne, holding it open for him to step through- and for the boys too, as they scrambled off his tail and slid around his legs to duck inside the shop.

The shopkeeper had been singing a quiet tune to herself as she tucked away rolls of fabric in a shelf, and threads of different strength in a nearby drawer. However upon hearing the jingle of the door opening, her ears wiggled and she turned, her wooly coat giving a soft bounce as she turned to face the front door.

"Konbaaaaaanwa!" Came a friendly bleat from the lovely sheep woman behind the main counter.

The woman behind the counter was not Lana- Toki had figured this out on her first visit here. Her name was Hitsu Vestimoves- and she was Lana’s mother. Lana was about Quinn’s age, and spent a lot of time with her father. Hitsu was the sweetest thing, however- and it was easy to see where Lana had gotten it from.

Toki squirmed in Tenne’s arms, her wings perking up as she beamed at her from her place as a ‘captive. Hearing her familiar language always made her soul thump happily in her chest. She didn’t even stop before she replied to her, switching fluidly from English to her native tongue.

“Kon'nichiwa Mrs. Vestimoves! Hisashiburidesu ne. Watashi wa saishūtekini ikutsu ka no tekitetsuna kutsu o tsukuru tame ni kite iru- Tenne wa watashi ga kutsu nashi de iku jūbun'na motte ita. Watashi wa kōri de chīsana jiken o keiken shite iru kamo shiremasen. Kare wa... U’ n, jūbun ni motte imasu.”

Kai paused inside the shop, and his head whipped around on his neck. He gave Toki a strange look, sockets wide. His blue eye lights were huge as they looked at her.

Tenne tilted his head and brought Toki closer to the counter.

The sheep gave a thrilled bleat, happy to hear her guest once more speak a more familiar tongue compared to what they normally spoke, though her happiness quickly faded to worry. "Tokiko, dārin! Ā, anata no mazushī ashi! Watashi wa anata no ashi ga kizutsuite shimatta koto o taihen zan'nen ni omete imasu. Watashi wa anata ni nanjūnen mo tsudzuku kutsu o te ni ireyou!" She came around the counter and gently took one of Toki's feet into her hands, looking it over tenderly while tutting quietly. "Watashi no mazushī hito..."

Toki beamed to her, and twitched her toes as the sheep seamstress came to look over her paws. Her touch was light, and it didn’t hurt all that badly. “Mrs. Vestimoves, hontōni, watashi wa daijōbudeshou. Watashi wa sukoshi itaidesugata, watashi wa hayaku iyasudeshou, watashi wa yakusoku shimasu. Kutsu no pea wa machigainaku tasuke ni narudeshou. Tenne wa karera ni shiharu no o tasureu tsumoridesu. Kare wa toidoki sono yōna gankona hitodesuga, sore wa yoi kotoda to omoimasu. Tonikaku... Don'na shurui no kutsu ga giku to omoimasu ka? Umaku ikeba, watashi no ashikubi ni amarini mo toku ni iku mono wa arimasen. Watashi wa soko ni sasu yōna koto ga arimasu, soshite, sore o osu to, mono goto wa sore ni karamitsuku koto ga arimasu.”

Kai tugged on Tenne’s pants. “Daddy?” He whispers. “Why is Toki speaking gibberish with Mrs. Vestimoves?”

Toki flushes slightly. “Oh my gosh, I’m so sorry. I spaced that you guys wouldn’t understand.”
The sheep chuckled gently at the comment of Tenne's stubbornness, while the male carrying Toki had completely befuddled look on his face. When she spoke in English once more, he smiled lightly. "Ah, it's quite alright, Toki. You two seemed happy to speak together, though I don't suppose you'll share what you said that mentioned me?" He reached up and chuckled as he gently poked her cheek.

She turned to nip at his claw, since her teeth couldn't harm the sharp surface. Her eyes glimmered merrily at him. "Oh you know, just the usual." She explained, without explaining anything at all. Her wings flicked happily against her shoulder.

"Oh, yes." The sheep piped up with a mischievous smile. "Toki was just talking about how the gentleman to carry her in his arms is just so breathtakingly handsome~"

And with that his cheeks darkened and he sputtered slightly, "Wha-... R-really?"

Toki sputtered, her cheeks flooding a green color. "M-Mrs. Vestimoves!" She says in a flustered but scolding tone to the mischievous sheep woman smiling at them. Her secondary arms flail slightly. "Ohmygod."

Kai grins up at Toki. "Do you really think Daddy is handsome?"

Toki swallows and glances down at Kai. "W-well yes, he is handsome, but tha-"

"Ha! I knew it!" He beams cheerfully, and glances down at Quinn. "See? She thinks Daddy is handsome. I told you so."

Toki buzzes and buries her face in her palms, flustered and embarrassed. Oh good gods, what on earth were the children up to?

"Oh goodness." Tenne couldn't hide his face due to holding Toki, so Tenne had to do the next best thing...

And he proceeded to hide his face in Toki's mane.

Toki squeaked as he burrowed his face into her mane, and her fur fluffed slightly, eyes popping wide. "Tenne! You cheater! That's not fair!" Her hands only covered so much, even if she had four of them.

Kai grinned. "Aww look at Daddy cuddling her." He gave a shit eating grin to his little brother and then beamed up to the lady running the shop. "Hehehe. So, you're going to make Mo- I mean, Toki, some shoes?"

"Mama!" Quinn corrected his brother.

"Hai, of course I will. Tenne need not even let go of her." Hitsu giggled gently.

Despite Toki's fluster, Cruelty... chuckled?

'Are you... Are you laughing at me?' Toki accused faintly, huffing sourly at her mental companion.

'No... Not at all.'

She peeked out of her hands and huffed at the sheep woman. "Hitsu," She pouted, using the seamstress's first name, "Why are you so mean? It's apparently tease Toki and Tenne day." She huffs. "So... shoes?"

Kai had simply patted Quinn, and then grinned. He leaned up to tug on his dad's coat. "Daddy likes
holding her, so he’s alright to just keep doing that.” He gives his dad a shit-eating grin.

The sheep smiled innocently and giggled, "Of course, darling, I’ll set started once I’ve properly bandaged your feet. Towels and medical tape are a good short-notice bandage, but proper bandaging will allow you to better use your feet.” She told her.

Tenne bristled a little as he shot his son a look, but as sour as it looked, both boys knew though as much flustered malice as it would carry, there wasn’t actually any anger behind it. It was mostly just bluff and guff- absolute fluster, nothing more.

Kai looked absolutely unapologetic. “Don’t look at me like that, Daddy. I’m not the one who was using that as an excuse to sniff her mane.” He tickles Quinn a little bit. “Quinn and I know it smells really good, huh? Kinda like her honey and… Smoke? It’s weird.”

“I smell like smoke and honey. That just doesn’t sound like an appetizing mix to smell.” Toki snorts faintly. “Maybe I should go to scented shampoos so you kids can smell something besides my apparent ‘smoke and honey’ scent. And ah… Well, would it be easier if Tenne sat me down?” She looked down at the shorter sheep. “So my feet aren’t like… in your face?”

"Smoke and honey is actually a wonderful smell. Like a barbeque.” Hitsu giggled as she replaced Toki’s wrappings with better bandaging. "And no, not at all, this is rather comfortable for me to work like this."

“So I smell like a barbeque. I guess that’s why Quinn always drools in my fur.” She hums. Toki glances back at Tenne. "If you drool in my fur, we’ll have problems.” She quirks a grin at him and wiggles her toes slightly as Hitsu changes her bandages. “Watch my ankles, Hitsu. I’ve got a stinger down there, and it’ll eject if you press on my ankles.”

He chuffed in reply, but stayed quiet.

Hitsu nodded in reply, "Of course, dear.” she murmured, being careful with said stingers as she wrapped the bandages around the new soft gauze. Once it was done, she smiled. "There. Now, let's get to work on those shoes."

Toki nodded and smiled, and fluttered her wings slightly against Tenne’s coat. “Alright.” She hummed slightly. She glanced up at Tenne again. “You can probably put me down so your arm doesn’t get tired, Tenne.”

Tenne rumbled quietly before he smiled and half did as suggested. He put her down; but right into his lap, as he himself took a seat on the counter top. Otherwise, his arms stayed firm around her, his tail wagging behind him as he purred faintly into her mane.

"Nyeh heh heh heh.” Quinn giggled quietly.

Quinn wasn’t alone in his laughter. Kai’s was much more mischievous and plotting, however.

Toki squeaked and huffed slightly, her fur fluffing at him as he kept her captive. “Tenne,” she pouts and rolls her eyes in amusement. All the same, she doesn’t fuss. His lap is more comfortable than the counter is anyways, and if he wants to bruise his backside on it in her stead, than he was more than welcome to do so.

‘He’s... rather warm isn’t he.’ Cruelty spoke up quietly.

As Toki watched Hitsu putting together her shoes, she replied silently to her companion. ‘He is, yeah. Why do you… say so?’
'You should ask him to do this more often...' It was so quiet, it was almost unheard if it weren't in her head.

Toki had to pause to make sure that she actually did hear it, and that she hadn’t imagined it. Her befuddlement almost made it onto her face. ‘... Uh... I’m... I’m technically a married woman, Cruelty. Even... Even if I can’t be with my husband here.’ She does the mental equivalent of tapping her fingers on her knees. ‘It is nice though, being held. There’s no shame in enjoying it.’

'Mmh. Don’t think this is me accepting him though... he's still a filthy monster.'

'We’re a filthy monster, if you do recall.’ She mentally snorts at him. ‘Tenne’s a good guy, despite what you might think. And you’re enjoying being cuddled. I can feel it. You can’t hide it from me.’ As weird as it was, the mass-murderer was... enjoying it.

Tenne hadn’t a clue what went on in her head so he simply watched over Toki’s shoulder as Hitsu worked on her shoes. Magic made it an effortless task so it seemed close to completion.

Toki also watched the shoes being made, and relaxed quietly back into Tenne. She idly toyed with the edge of his coat, and hummed a soft, thoughtful sound.

Kai tugged on Tenne’s coat. “Daddy, are we going to get Toki a coat too?”

"A conversation for another time, my son.” He purred in reply, winking to Kai where Toki wouldn't see.

Toki rolled her eyes nonetheless. “Shoes are enough. A coat is too much.” She huffs at them both. Her gaze remains on the shoes, which are rapidly being finished in front of her eyes.

Kai grins up at his father and mimes zipping his lips and locking away the key, despite Toki’s fussing.

He chuckled gently and rumbled. "Look at those! Those are very nice." He rumbled.

Toki smiled faintly. They were... odd to look at, that’s for sure. But they were definitely nice, and well constructed around her paws. The shoes were made out of some sort of black leather, and were very thick and well insulated. They were super, super comfortable. “They feel very, very nice.” She nods with a bright look. “I’m excited to try them out... Am I going to get to walk in them to go home?” She queries, looking up at him with an amused glance.

"Of course you can walk in them." Tenne purred gently.

Toki chuckled. “I dunno. You’re pretty keen on not letting me go.”

"... Mrh..." He hid his face again.

And right back into her mane he went. Toki heaved a sigh, and then intentionally flattened her mane just to see what he would do.

"Not fair." He'd pout, but he wouldn't just drop her, that wouldn't be fair.

“Says the man holding me and hiding his face in my mane.” She rolls her eyes, and lets her mane fluff out again. “You and the boys all seem to enjoy my relative fluffiness. Is that an issue you deal with too, Hitsu?”

"Hai! Not that I mind it; my wool is especially soft!” She laughed, watching Tenne's face disappear
once more into the plush green mane he’d been presented with.

Toki rolled her eyes, and then rolled her ankles as Hitsu finished the final touches on her shoes. “I’m sure your wool is very, very soft.” She agrees. “My fur is very soft and very warm. It’s always getting cuddled.” Or held onto, or clung to, or a whole slew of other things that involved touching her mane in some various way.

Kai chuckled. “None of us have such plush manes, Toki. You can’t expect us not to want to touch it when you’ve got all of that fluff.”

She chuckles. “I suppose not. That would be asking the impossible. Speaking of.” She squirmed a bit. “My shoes are done, Tenne. Lemme down- I want to try walking to see if they fit well over my toes.”

"Of course, Toki." He rumbled as he let her go. "Be free, my beauty." He joked lightheartedly.

“Why thank you, handsome.” She teased him back, giving him a flash of a charming grin over her shoulder as she eased out of his lap. Her feet hurt as she touched the floor of the shop, but it was a tolerable pain as far as she was concerned. She rocked on her feet, bouncing and bobbing and testing her shoes, before taking a few careful steps.

The steps were unpleasant, but the shoes felt good. Toki perks up and smiles. “They feel good.”

Hitsu clapped her hands together with a pleased smile, "I'm so glad to hear it!" She laughed happily.

“So am I.” Toki beams to the seamstress. “They’re very comfortable and very warm. It’s going to be a lot better than barefoot, despite all of my earlier huffing about me getting shoes for my feet. Thank you, to both of you, for doing this.”

"It's my pleasure!" Hitsu replied.

Tenne nodded in agreement. "I couldn't find myself allowing you to suffer any longer bare footed." He rumbled quietly.

“Meaning you got tired of my stubbornness and just decided to out-stubborn me.” She gave him a smile and lightly pinched his cheek. “Thank you, all the same.” Toki said sincerely to the larger monster. “I’d have gotten shoes… eventually.”

"After how much more abuse would your feet have taken?" Tenne chuffed as his cheek was pinched, retaliating by doing the same.

Toki retaliated by flexing her teeth at him and wiggling them like a prehensile set of crab legs. She then licked his fingers. “I dunno. Probably a lot? I can handle a lot of stuff though, you know that.”

"But you can't handle walking through the snow without cutting your feet." He countered.

“Almost four months I made it without cutting the pads of my feet.” She argues lightly, and then shifts to poke his lip. “I only got them cut because I got too cold to boost my defense.” She wiggles it like the mature adult she is. Man. She missed playing with folks who had skin-bits. Tenebris usually chomped off her hand if she got too playful, and Papyrus and Sans just had bones- Tenne was… a lot less of a grump than her Papa was. Probably lack of age and experience. “So there.” She wiggles her brows lightly at him.

“You’re both silly.” Kai giggles.
He chuffed and stuck his tongue out at her, which was saying something given it was rather long. It stuck a few inches out of his mouth as he blew a raspberry at her.

"Already like a married couple." Hitsu whispered to the boys, offering them both a small lollipop.

The boys eagerly took the candies, and Kai grinned to her. "Uuh." 

Toki fluffed at Tenne, and then blew a raspberry right back at him. While his tongue was longer than her own was, hers was a lovely shade of green, and her raspberry was blown between horrendously sharp teeth, which made it all that more impressive. "Pppphhhbbbllttt." Half of it was a real noise, half of it fabricated with her nifty mimicry skill.

Tenne laughed at the sight as he released Toki from his cheek-pinch-of-doom, leaning back as his tongue returned to his mouth. "Miss Hitsu," he spoke up, making the sheep look over to him, "Do you think you would be able to make me a pair as well? My pad-guards are getting a little worn out." He requested, lifting one of his feet up to display the worn out nature of his shoes.

"Oh, yes of course, Tenne! That would not be a problem at all" The sheep replied with a smile.

Toki chuckled and got out of the way so the sheep could work on his shoes as well. She instead went over to scoop up the boys, and peppered their cheeks in kisses, much to Kai’s ‘ire’.

The boy sputtered and shoved his hand against her face. "Augh no! No kisses!"

"Awww, c’mon," She grins, "Who can turn down Toki-kisses?"

Quinn on the other hand loved Toki's kisses and gave an overjoyed squeal.

Tenne removed what he revealed to be simple pad-protectors, which were rather pathetic looking at their state, having only been bits of leather held together by thin, nearly snapped, leather straps.

Hitsu let out a furious bleat, taking them and pelting him on the head with it a few times. "Is this what you made of those leather scraps you asked me for?!"

"Hitsu, ow! Not in front of the children! Come on!" Tenne ducked his head and shielded it with his hands as the harmless pelting continued.

Toki snorted. "His shoes have been in a sorry state for a while now." She continues to pepper the boys with kisses, until Kai just gives up and goes limp in her arms like a particularly petulant ragdoll. Quinn is cuddled up to her shoulder, and she bounces Kai to see when he’ll respond. “Bit of a hypocrite, aren’t you Tenne? Telling me to get shoes, when yours are falling apart under your feet.” She quirks a grin at his back, and nudges him with her wing. “What would you have done if the straps broke and you were stuck walking barefoot?"

Kai groaned and shifted to flop across her shoulder like a lump. It put his rump near her head, and he thwapped her in the forehead with his tail. “Probably sent me to get more straps.”

He grumbled as he let the pelting continue until Hitsu was satisfied that he had learned his lesson.

She tossed away the old leather and started measuring his feet to make him some shoes.

Toki chuckled, and lifted herself up to sit next to Tenne. Her wings shifted and draped over the table, making a tent between her back and the edge.

Kai scrambled off of her and onto the counter, before wedging between her back and her wings. He
made a pleased noise, and peeked up at his dad with a smug grin, before cuddling close to Toki’s backside. “You can’t win between Toki and Hitsu, Daddy.”

He let out a frustrated noise, folding his arms and puffing his cheeks out a little bit as Hitsu worked. Though when she came to complete the new, much better looking shoes that fit comfortably around his feet, he donned a more content look.

"There.” She sounded pleased. “Now no more simple leather protectors, Tenne. They might have protected your pads from the cold, but that doesn't mean they were the best for your feet.” Hitsu scolded gently.

Tenne nodded, a sheepish look on his face. "Yes, Ma'am." 

Toki beamed. “They look good on you.” She offers lightly. Her wings twitch and flutter, and she shifts on her seated spot. “Should hold up to the general wear and tear you put them up to, yeah?”

"Indeed, they should last much longer." He rumbled, before he smiled at Hitsu. "I suppose there's just one last thing to take care of." He rumbled as he stood up.

"Indeed so, my dear Tenne." She chuckled gently.

Toki hopped off the counter and scooped up Kai before he could fuss. He was returned to her hip opposite from Quinn, and she relaxed a little bit as she watched Tenne and Hitsu. “How much?” She inquires lightly, wings fluttering faintly. There was some small part of her that was very pleased at him getting her shoes- but another part of her still worried about the costs.

"For you, nothing at all." She told her, gently shooing her and the children away from the register as Tenne approached, pulling his wallet from his pocket.

Toki puffed her cheeks at her and huffed, but willingly waited a little ways away from the register with the children in her arms. Her wings flitted in agitation, and it took careful work to keep them from knocking into things.

When Tenne had finished paying, she gave him a faint smile, and adjusted the boys. Her paws ached a bit, but not too horribly thanks to the new and proper wrapping they had with the bandages on. She hummed, and shifted on her paws. “I suppose we’re good to return back to your house now…?”

“To our home, yep!” Kai chirped against her shoulder. “You and Daddy have shoes, so we’re good to go.”

She smiled faintly. “Yes, that’s true, we do have shoes. Anyways, thank you, Hitsu. And thank you, Tenne, for my shoes.”

"The pleasure was ours." Tenne laughed warmly.

Hitsu put away the gold and gave a pleased smile to Toki, "I will always be here to make you yet another pair whenever you need it, darling!"

Tenni seemed to carry the same reaction as she did, though his was far more calm, and his tail
slowly bounced in the snow behind him as he walked. No longer was it being used- or rather, was it
needed to be used- so desperately to maintain his balance in the snow.

"Nor are mine." He purred gently, "The warmth is so very welcoming, even if it is just my feet
affected by this gift."

“Yeah. My feet are thanking me something fierce, and it’s definitely nice. The rest of me is easier to
warm up, but my feet always take the longest.” Toki gives him a warm grin. She might have been
less calm, but Toki was a playful being at heart. Always had been, always would be. Speaking of…
Toki’s fur ruffled mischievously and she flicked her wings, and managed to splatter him in snow
using the tips of them like small shovels. She gave him a cheeky grin, pupils expanding playfully as
she clutched the pups more tightly to her. She gently set them down so they could join in on the

Toki then took off in a playful lope, bouncing in the wake of his old footprints as she leapt through
the snow and back towards the house. Her laugh, and the children’s, rang back at him, enticing him
to play her game of chase as the children took off after her.

He grunted as he was pelted with the snow, before he chuckled quietly.

So, it was going to be a game of chase. Very well.

He lowered a little in the snow, shifted on his legs, and took after her on all fours. He was swift in
snatching up his children; it was effortless to heft them up so they could cling to his back while he
ran. It was then he let his bark-like chuckle resonate loud enough to be heard by the retreating hornet.

‘Who let the dogs out?’ Cruelty comments with dry amusement in her mind as Tenne’s laughter
reached them.

Toki can’t help the amused snort that is lost to the wind at his comment. Tenne’s laughter was
reminiscent of the baying of a hound in pursuit, and it made her fur ruffle with instinctive nervous
anticipation. She remained bipedal to start, bouncing from foot hole to foot hole as she glanced
behind her from time to time.

He began to gain ground on her, however, and her wings twitched as if to fly. Instead, she too
dropped down onto all fours, dodging past monsters laughing at the playing blaster beasts as they
wove their way down the streets of town and made their way out of the main city. Her transition was
smooth, and she didn’t require time to stop- simply falling forth onto her primary arms which carried
her forwards with ease as her secondary arms tucked up to her chest, well out of the way of her fast
moving limbs.

Toki’s laugh was laced with a teasing sort of buzzing that trailed back to the blaster beast giving
chase with his sons hooting and hollering on his back, rooting for him to catch her.

At the sight of Toki lowering to her hands, the sight of kin filled his vision, everything else simply a
blur as he ran past. He could hear the sound of the snow under his feet, the hollers of his pups egging
him on in this chase.

His eyes widened, but his pupils grew to disks in his indigo irises. Tenne’s heart rate picked up,
sending his black blood shooting through his body faster than he could’ve sworn it ever had before.

The doctor’s mind came to life and filled his body with magic, and for a moment, time seemed to
stop. But only for a short, short moment.

As his feet met the snow, he bound forward, but this time with much more energy, sending him
flying over the footsteps he left behind on the way there.

He caught up to Toki in a matter of strides, and yet he kept going. But, it was not before he hooked her torso in his grasp. With her flush to his chest, he shifted to two legs and ran through the town, skidded and leapt into the path between the trees, and came to a powerful stop in front of their doorstep.

The snow was almost melting around his feet from the energy resonating from the beast, coming off of him in thick waves as his sides heaved with his breath.

And for a moment, he simply stood there, his body coming off it's high, the pups clinging to his back, laughing and cheering while blissfully unaware, and Toki, who Tenne held to his chest, refusing to let go in his current state.

Toki had hardly expected to get snatched right off her feet, let alone carried by swift strides all the way back to the house. She clung to Tenne the whole way, feeling the swirl of his magic as it raked over her skin in a palpable warmth. It was dark and familiar- but it was missing a certain… depth of darkness that she was used to. She wondered what caused that depth to Tenebris’ own.

All the same, she laughed the whole rise back to the house, and took a moment to catch her breath when they got to his house. Her fingers had latched onto his jacket and turtleneck, the tips of her claws curling over to latch onto the shield under his shirt, and when she’d caught her breath, she glanced up at him slightly. “Heh… I guess you caught me.” She grins.

“Daddy gets a prize then!” Kai beams. “He caught you, so he gets a prize, right? Isn’t that how the game of chase works?”

Toki chuckles. “I suppose so.” She glances up at Tenne, face flushed from the wind and from her happy laughter. Her pupils were still slightly dilated, but she looked, overall, happy and amused. She had fun. “I what sort of prize would you like…?”

He looked down at her with his pupils dilated to their fullest, and he reached up, gently gripping her chin. He stared down for a moment, and then he leaned in and pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead. He then smiled, and pulled her close. "I already have claimed my prize." He whispered.

For half a second, Toki was sure he was going to kiss her, and she wasn’t… she wasn’t sure what she would have done. She was not… Not ready for that. Not at all. But the kiss on the forehead… that was acceptable. Her eyes blinked shut, and then opened again, and she gave him a lopsided but radiant smile. “Oh yeah? What’s your prize then?” She asks curiously up to him.

Kai leans over his dad’s shoulder, hauling Quinn with him so his little brother didn’t slide off. “Yeah, Daddy. What’s your prize?”

"I have not felt so alive in these many centuries that have passed." He purred gently into her fur, before he let her go, carefully setting her on her feet. Once she was balanced, he headed inside. "Come along, boys, it's time for a snack, and then it will be time for your nap."

“I’m glad I made you feel alive, then.” She smiled to him.

Kai made a happy noise on his Dad’s shoulder. “Snacks and naps sound good.”

Toki chuckled and followed them in. She eyed the bloodstains still on the floor, and went to go clean them up while Tenne got the boys their snacks, and then off to their rooms for their naps.

Tenne made his boys some sandwiches and let them down it with a cup of a milk. He toted his boys
upstairs and came down with a few rags, as well as some peroxide. "Toki, would you please melt some snow for me?" he requested as he came down the stairs, "We'll need to take care of those blood stains before they stain any further."

"Already ahead of you." Toki had the tub from earlier drained out in the time he’d been feeding the boys, and had hot water boiling away. She’d gotten a dishtowel from the kitchen while he’d been upstairs, and was currently on her hands and knees working at some of the stains near the kitchen entrance. She tsks gently. "I really got it everywhere, didn’t I…?"

He rumbled a soft chuckle and steadily made his way along the bloodstains, carefully saturating each puddle with peroxide.

Toki hummed a soft sound as she worked, toiling away as the peroxide fizzled and bubbled. “You know… You’re a scientist, right…? How is it, you haven’t managed to make a super ultra floor cleaner? Or something similar? Everyone who has to clean a house at any point in their life would thank you.”

"I'm more a scientific engineer, not a chemist." He laughed gently, "Besides, peroxide works just fine."

"Peroxide works just fine, he says,” She huffs. "For most things, yes. Not all things.” Still, it works well enough to get the blood out, and she makes swift work of the drops after that. She makes her way into the kitchen slowly but surely. “Anyways, how are things going at the lab?”

"Oh just fine. I do need you to come by so I can take some more of the venom samples I need, but I will have to see to the paperwork before we can do any of that.” He rumbled.

Toki nodded as she scrubbed, answering without looking at him. “I don’t mind giving you more venom. Though… Why do I need paperwork? Wasn’t I there when I was sick? Or was I in a different sector than where I need to go to drop off more venom?”

"You were in the medical bay.” He clarified. “You need proper clearance for the research and development area.”

“Ooh.” She nods slowly and glances up to him as she scrubs. “I suppose that makes sense. Wouldn’t want too many people wandering around in R’n’D on their own without clearance.” She nods again. Toki shifts and sits up, straightening her back with a soft hum. “How long do you think it’ll take to get clearance? I’ll need to have the boys stay with Grillby and Sapphire. Kai won’t mind- he likes little Fuku.”

"Not long at all. Verification will be done by the end of tomorrow, I’d wager." He answered.

“Then if you get the paperwork done tonight, I’ll call and make arrangements for tomorrow with Grillby and Sapphire.” Toki nods lightly. She gives him a chipper look, and then turns to focus on her task.

It doesn’t take her overly long before the floors are spotless. Four arms and peroxide do wonders for making the floors spotless. When it’s clean, she hauls herself upright and stretches her back with a soft, pleased sound. “There. Spotless.”

"Perfection." He rumbled happily as he gave Toki a pleased smile. "Thank you for your help with cleaning up. I’ll go ahead and get the paperwork going while you go make those plans, okay?"

Toki nods. “Alright.” She gives Tenne a smile, and then heads off to go make the plans necessary for their excursion tomorrow.
She honestly didn’t mind giving them more venom to study. If they could find various health benefits for it, or uses for it outside of cooling it and turning it into oddly green but delicious and nutritious honey, then she was all for it. Toki didn’t mind at all. The more she knew about her new body, the better.

Chapter End Notes

Translations in order of which they appear:

“Good evening!” Though stretched out because of the aaaa tic.

“Hello Mrs. Vestimoves! It's good to see you again. I'm finally coming in to get some proper shoes made- Tenne has had enough of me going without shoes. I might have had a small incident with some ice and he's... well, he's had enough.”

“Tokiko, Darling! Oh, your poor feet! I'm so sorry your feet got hurt, my dear... But worry not! I'll have you a pair of shoes that will last you decades to come!”

“My poor dear...”

“Mrs. Vestimoves, really, I'll be okay. I'm just a bit sore, but I'll heal fast, I promise. The pair of shoes would definitely be helpful. Tenne is going to help pay for them. He's such a stubborn man sometimes, but I suppose that's a good thing. Anyways... What sort of shoe do you think will work? Hopefully nothing that goes too far up my ankle. I've got a stinger up there, and things can get tangled with it if it presses on it.”
Chapter 99

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And so continues a surprisingly big continuity of sorts. This is the day after the last chapter. We haven’t done one of these in a while. OWO HUEHUEHUE.

Silverwing Notes: So, i put in a reference in this chapter that dates back to a old book series i used to read, serious points to anyone who recognizes it, also if anyone recognizes it, do not be shy or hesitate to tell us ;D

Enjoy the chapter, and happy hunting!

Update comes a few hours later: HAHAHA! I’m TRASH! THERES MORE REFERENCES!

Toki had slept exceptionally well after getting her new shoes- even if her feet were sore as hell- of course, that was partly because of the lack of jibes she got from Cruelty that night, and the cuddles she got from Tenne’s boys come night time. Honestly… they really were such pure little beacons of light in her life, and they helped keep her going when she needed the boost. Them and Tenne both, really they did.

She could smell breakfast wafting through the air. Was Tenne cooking? She could hear the sound of pancakes cooking on the griddle.

Wait... That was a quiet sound. She would have to be in the kitchen to hear that, but she hadn't even gotten out of her bed on the couch yet.

Toki opened her eyes, and she discovered why things felt so off, and Toki felt nothing but deep, unending horror.

She was standing in front of the stove, flipping pancakes. Her body was moving without her commanding it to, flipping the pancakes and letting them brown and putting them on a plate before moving to where some bacon was skillfully being sizzled over an open flame on the stove.

Toki never cooked with the stove- she had always used her magic for cooking, as it was faster and more reliable than the method of stoking the fire on the old fire-lit grill. She wasn’t used to it and had no desire to learn. Magic was just as good for it.

Had... Had Cruelty finally taken over like he wanted? Had she failed to protect her new charges?

The questions swam in her head only to be cut short as her controlled body reached up and scooped up the plate with pancakes and bacon on it, turning to reveal Tenne and his boys enjoying breakfast at the table.

"Who’s ready for seconds?" Her voice came from her throat- but not by her command. Cruelty was speaking through her voice- or was unable to use his. He might not know how to use her mimicry skill, so that was entirely possible.

"I am!" Kai replied happily, shoving a chunk of bacon into his mouth and then wiggling his fingers at her eagerly.
"NYEH!" Quinn squealed.

Tenne didn't answer, simply lifted his hand. "Might there be any more coffee?" He asked.

"Oh yes." Cruelty in Toki's body nodded to Tenne. "There's plenty."

‘Cruelty?’ Her voice edged in as she watched him serving Tenne and the children. She discretely checked the air that Cruelty was breathing. Nothing smelled off with the food… Since Tenne was an engineer and not a chemist, it was probably safe to say that there were little to absolutely no poisons within the food. Tenne was good, but he wasn't good enough to make them. Scentless and tasteless poisons weren’t likely his forte given his lack of expertise with them. ‘What… What are you doing with my body? And… And why?’

She knew Cruelty had been getting ‘unpleasant’ back feed from her, and had been… well… softening, might be too harsh a word yet. Reforming, definitely not. She wasn’t sure what was going on and what he was up to, honestly, but it was disturbing her. But If Toki kicked up too much of a fuss, he’d be unable to ignore her which could result in that their cover being… well, blown.

‘… How long have you been able to do this?’ She then inquired, and settled down to wait while he answered her slew of questions.

'I would think you could see through your eyes as I could in your position...' He was a smart ass this morning now wasn't he...?

Despite his moment of sass regarding her question as to what he was doing, he proceeded to answer her questions, 'I felt like making breakfast... As for how long I've been able to, I haven't a clue. But I had a schedule before you trapped me in your body and had me adhere to your schedule, you know... I woke up before you did and wanted something to eat. Something to eat that I got to experience on my own.' he explained, putting pancakes on the young pups' plate before doubling back to take the bacon off the flames and onto a plate to cool a little. The pancakes were set down and the coffee pot was picked up and taken to Tenne, refilling his mug with practiced ease that spoke of perhaps a lifetime where Cruelty had waited tables.

'But why are you feeding them too?' She then questioned, suspicion tingling through her tone.

'The younger child is an early riser, as is the beast. They smelled what I was cooking and I decided to hell with it.' Cruelty hummed nonchalantly.

'I... I see.' Toki watched him serve the children and Tenne, and nervously fidgeted inside of her body. This was... This was strange and alien and definitely not what she had expected to wake up to in the morning. Toki shifted inside of her mind, and mentally eyed Cruelty. ‘... I don’t… I don’t mind, if you want to take control from time to time for small things. Stretching your metaphorical legs is probably really, really nice. But... But the first time you try and do something bad. The first and only time you try and hurt someone with words or physically- you’ll never take control again. Ever.’ She warns. She’d figure out some way to make sure he never did.

'Of course.' His answer didn't help at all in making it clear whether he was simply agreeing to her demands or blowing her off.

'I'm serious, Cruelty.' She huffed. She watched him work and cook with interest, and then sighed softly. 'So how do you plan to change control over...?' She inquired lightly. Monsters didn’t need to use the bathroom, so that wasn't an excuse they could use, and she had no idea if switching control would be flawless.
'Uh... I'll get back to you on that.' He murmured in reply. 'I had yet to figure that out.'

'We need to figure something out soon. Quinn likes cuddles after he eats and I doubt you can keep up this charade as me well enough to cuddle him.' Toki comments slightly. She draws his attention to Quinn, who was rapidly working through his breakfast. 'Maybe intentionally spill something on my shirt? If you make the excuse to go change, we can do the switch then.'

'Hm... You wish I were that subtle.' He grumbled. He grunted as he accidentally dropped the bowl he had used to mix the batter. It landed on the counter and remained intact but they did get splashed with a bit of batter. "Dang it..." He then spoke aloud.

"Are you alright, Toki?" Tenne spoke up, glancing up to her with concern.

"Oh yes, I’m fine. I just had a little spill, that’s all." Was his- her?- reply. "I’ll clean up, and then go change my shirt." She even managed a smile as she replied to him.

"No need.” He shook his head. “I’ve finished my breakfast. I’ll clean up, and you can go ahead and go get cleaned up.” Tenne spoke up as he stood.

"I would appreciate that. Thank you." And with that, Toki and Cruelty were able to make their getaway to the upstairs bathroom. Which, hilariously enough, lacked a toilet.

Toki had seen the bathroom many times, and the lack of toilet both surprised and did not surprise her. They didn’t have running water, after all. But at the same time, they didn’t have any sort of disposal system to run to if someone got sick. Toki had never needed the toilets in her old house after she changed, but her brothers did. And she’d used them a lot when morning sickness hit hard.

She shifted inside of their shared mindscape, and pressed forwards. 'All right... Try and relinquish control. Oh... Are our wings a different color?' They looked to be a lighter shade in the mirror that the bathroom had, but she couldn't be sure.

"They are, yes." He replied quietly, before he closed his eyes and tried to figure out what to think of that would allow her back into control.

Toki did much the same, and pressed her consciousness up against his. She slid against him, slowly trying to ooze around him and get back into control. Her mind reached out, trying to connect with her limbs, trying to take control of the body what had once been solely hers and hers alone.

Eventually it succeeded, and one could compare the feeling to feeling their ears pop as Cruelty relinquished control and allowed Toki control once more

She rushed back into full control, and swayed a little on her feet. Her hands came up to catch herself on the sink, and Toki got a front row view of her wings visibly changing colors back to the usual tones that they rested in.

She swallowed, shook herself out, and then set to changing her shirt as she needed to.

'That was a singularly disorienting feeling and I definitely do not enjoy switching over when I am conscious.' Toki informs Cruelty as soon as she's not so dizzy and is out of her food stained shirt and into a clean one. 'We also need to be careful or they'll catch on that something is up. My wings don't switch colors normally, and they're usually pretty observant monsters. At least Tenne and Kai are sometimes.'

Mostly Kai.
'Good thing I don't have your gag reflex...' Cruelty sounded a little worse for wear as he settled down in what was honorably deemed his little spot inside her head, like a damn parasite that could wrap itself around her brain and possess her.

'I wonder how much of that time was spent by the beast looking at our rear end.'

'With the exception of a few times, and the time that I was pregnant, I actually have a very... Well, strong gag reflex, I think is the term. A little dizziness isn’t going to make me wear those pancakes again.' She informs him. Slowly she makes her way out of the bathroom and down the stairs, after tossing her soiled shirt into the laundry bag for later. She continued to chat to her nasty little parasitic companion as she made her way back towards the kitchen. 'Tenne wasn't looking at our ass, good gods. He has some class, I'm sure. He was probably too busy eating to be doing that.' She snorts to Cruelty, before pausing and doubling back to get her shoes from beside the couch.

She steals one of the kitchen chairs once she’s in there to put the shoes on, humming a merry tune as she does, her wings twitching slightly.

'Feh...'

As soon as she was seated in the chair, Quinn scampered over and hugged her legs, squealing happily.

Toki laughed and scooped him up, tucking him gently into her lap for his after breakfast cuddles. While he got his snuggles, she worked on getting her shoes into place. She glanced up, watching Tenne cleaning the kitchen. His back was broad as it faced her, and she nudged Cruelty lightly, smug mischief tingling through her. 'So, you like how warm he is. Have you been ogling the doctor?'

'Why would I even make a second glance at that damn monster!?' Aaaand there was the Cruelty she knew and hated... Or was it his typical aggression accompanied by a little something else, something Toki would no doubt teasingly call him out on.

'I dunno, sometimes I feel like you're lurking there in the back of my mind when I'm talking with him. Maybe you're ogling him from afar. He's not bad to look at either. Broad shoulders, strong back, strong arms... very much eye candy. There's no shame in admitting that, Cruelty.' She's glad she has Quinn, because the smile on her face has some explanation. Maybe Cruelty got something from her after all. If she got his skill at lying... Maybe he was getting her love for monsters in general. 'It certainly doesn't feel like you're disgusted by him.' She hides a chuckle by smooching Quinn's skull.

He growled loudly at that, but stopped when Quinn squealed again.

The boy laughed and giggled as he hugged her face, nuzzling her lovingly as his little tail wagged behind him. He didn't look back as Tenne approached, a warm smile on his face.

The doctor was quiet for a moment, simply watching them for a short time, before he finally opened his mouth to speak. "Thank you for breakfast, Toki. Every bit of it was phenomenal, like usual. You even made my coffee how I like it."

'For a hard bastard like he is, he sure likes his coffee light.' Cruelty snorted quietly under his non-existent breath.

'Not everyone enjoys their coffee as black as their souls aught to be,' She retorted sarcastically to Cruelty.

'Ouch.'
'You walked in to that one, Cruelty.' She replies lightly.

To Tenne, Toki smiled warmly. "Well, I tend to make your tea just how you like it too." She winks. "One of my gifts, I suppose." She hums. Her wings twitch again at the lie that falls forth so easily, and she buries her face against Quinn and nuzzles him affectionately. "Did you get enough to eat?"

"Oh indeed I did." He rumbled, "Just like when you made that fine dinner when you first came."

Toki quirks a faint grin to him. "That was just me whipping up meat and veggies. A fine dinner is much more extravagant than that." But they lacked... Well, a lot of the things necessary to do one. Spices, for one. There were some, but not the kind she needed. Salt was about the only thing plentiful down in the Underground. "Maybe I'll go hunting for some herbs in the various parts of the Underground and see if I can make you a real feast." She hums faintly to him. "Though not today." She laughs. "We have a date at the lab today to get you and the other scientists more of my venom. Though... Mostly them, since you're an engineer and not a chemist."

"To a wild beast it's a luxury alone to have meat cooked." Tenne tutted gently, before a lighthearted chuckle escaped him as he flashed a warm smile to her. "Oh indeed so. I cannot wait to see how this goes." He chirped happily. "I bet they'll absolutely adore you!"

"That's true. Fire magic ensures nothing has to be raw or cold though." She quirked a smile up at him and then gently set Quinn down once her shoes were secured. Toki carefully got to her feet and stretched. "I hope they like me. I mean, I'm no scientist so I'm going to be confused as heck at some of the doodads and gadgets you've got at the lab, but... Yeah." Toki gives him a sheepish look. "It'd be good if they at least tolerate me. They're more likely to be fascinated to see another blaster beast though. I'm expecting all sorts of probably invasive questions." She chuckles. Scientists would be scientists, and she went through all of them with Tenebris when she was learning about being a Skeleton. "Females often differ from males. Anyways... If you and the boys are ready, we can head out. We need to drop them off anyways."

"Of course, I'll get them dressed-- you can get a head start if you'd like." He rumbled pleasantly.

"I'm not just going to leave you guys to catch up." She laughs lightly. "I'll wait for you outside."

Kai nods and bounces up for the stairs. "You can help Quinn get dressed, Daddy!" He calls back down to them. "I'm fine on my own."

Toki simply grins. "He's only excited because he wants unlimited access to all that ketchup and Grillby's burgers and fries."

Tenne laughed at that, "Even after your miraculous breakfast? Really, Kai?" He gave his son a hard time, rubbing a hand over his own head with an amused sigh before picking up Quinn and taking him upstairs to his room to get him ready.

Kai's laughter rang down to them both. "There is always room for ketchup and burgers."

Toki simply snorted and went out to wait on the front deck. She had little wonder as to why Caeruleus had ended up being such a pudgy fellow in his adulthood, now that she was literally basically raising one of his child counterparts.

Toki ruffled her fur as she eased out into the cold, and gave a pleased sound. The air was cold, but it was considered a 'warmer' day in Snowdin. Her wings flickered, and she stuffed her hands up the loose ends of her sleeves, using them as a sort of pseudo kimono sleeve. It helped keep her fingers warm while she waited for Tenne and the boys to come back down the stairs.
It wasn't long the boys joined her, Quinn hopping from his father's arms to claim his place in Toki's grasp. "NYEH!"

Toki swung him up into her arms and laughed. "I feel like Quinn has a favorite fluffy lady that he likes to be carried by." She comments to Tenne with a quiet grin. She didn’t say favored parent, because she wasn’t his real mother for all that he called her as such, and she didn't want to step on any toes. She smooched Quinn's skull.

Kai was content to lean against Tenne. "Everyone has their favorites." He chirps knowledgably. He was a daddy's boy, obviously.

And a hand that warmly plopped itself on his head made it that much more obvious as Tenne gave a soft laugh, "That's no problem at all. Let's go, if we're all ready."

Kai beams happily.

Toki just laughs at the blue-eyed boy. "Alright. Let's go." She has pep in her step as she bounces down the steps. She doesn't quite look, but her steps are not slow as she bounces her way down the path and towards town.

He nodded and practically had the same hop, skip, n' jump to his own walk as he took off after her.

Her wings flick and flit from time to time, and kick up puffs of fresh snow. Toki grins over at Tenne. "So, you really think your co-workers will like me?"

"Well you've already met Sapphire, and I’ve got no doubt James will like you. I don’t think he's capable of really hating someone." Tenne rumbled thoughtfully. "I've heard of James from Sapphire. Isn’t he a lizard of some kind?" She blinks at him curiously.

"Indeed so." Tenne nods. "He's a brilliant man. He and his wife, Catherine, work in the hydro-division. That daring duo have made plans for this miraculous water purifier. It would take any contamination in the water that we have running through the underground- toxins, bacteria, radiation, you name it- and absolutely eradicate them. It would be ensuring the water would be completely safe and clean to drink." He rumbled happily, before he chuckled a little deeper now.

"But I smelled a potential pregnancy, so the project is on a temporary hold until they know for sure it’s viable or not. Those two must have been getting cheeky in one of the study rooms again while my back was turned." The doctor chuffed slightly in amusement.

Toki snorts a laugh, and grins up at Tenne. "Husbands and wives will do the silliest of things, won't they?" She couldn't count the number of times her and Papyrus had sex in the weirdest places. She chuckles gently and bounces her wings. "So I assume he has a baby on the way?"

"I can only suppose it. It’s hard to tell with egg bearing species- the smell is very different, and it hasn’t fully settled yet." He rumbled happily, "Not that I mind. It would be fun to have more little ones to keep around, keeps up charisma."

"Little ones do bring hope." She smiled slightly. Her wings drooped a little but, but she didn't let her thoughts wander to her kids. She spotted the town shortly, and then grinned. She elbowed Tenne. "I'm honestly surprised you don't have more than just Kai and Quinn."

He grunted, and then chuckled. "I only have two palms. Any more holes in me and I'd have more air in my soul than I would soul matter. Besides," he then scooped up Kai and gave him a squeeze, "I'm perfectly happy with my two boys~"
Kai laughed and smooched his dad's cheek. "We're happy with you too, Daddy. But siblings wouldn't be all that baaaad." He gave him a pointed grin and nipped his cheek.

Toki nearly trips on her feet, and color rises to her cheeks as she realized what Kai just said. "Well then. But I understand that. You don't have nearly the amount of hands that I do." Or soul matter.

The monsters on the street wave to the group as they walk, and clear the way for the much larger beasts.

Though the crowd indeed parted to the size of the duo, Tenne made sure to smile and look thankful as he walked, but the blush was undeniable on his cheeks as he seemed to catch on to what Kai was saying. As a result, he more or less pulled on Kai's cheek, and wiggled the boy's head in a scolding manner. "Hahaha I'm not entirely sure what the silly boy had meant by such things, but I assure you, I would never ask something like that of you, my dear Toki!" Tenne gave a faint laugh.

"Ah! Daddy, ow!" Kai protested, flapping his hands at his dad and trying to yank his cheek away.

Toki had to simply scrub a hand against her face to try and remove the flustered flush Kai had landed there and nod. "Mhm."

Thankfully she was spared from much more of a reply by Grillby's appearing. Grillby himself was outside, and he spotted the group. He offered them a merry wave. "I'll take the children so you both can get back early." He says by way of greeting. "I don't want you getting the doctors habits of running late, Toki."

"I won't, I won't. Goodness me, I wouldn't be late to pick up the boys unless something major happened." She shakes her head vehemently.

"You make it sound like I was the source of this habit, Grillbert." Tenne stuck his tongue out at Grillby as he set his son down.

"... Grillbert?" Toki couldn't help her face puckering at the laugh trying to escape.

Grillby's flames flickered with brief but very deep irritation at his full and very much detested name being used twice, and he shot them both a look as he scooped Quinn into his arms. "My full name. Use it, and we will have problems." He informs her waspishly. His gaze turns to Tenne. "You're more addicted to your work than I am, twinkle-toes." He fired back.

"Twinkle-toes?" Kai blinked in confusion.

He got scooped up too. "I have stories for you, kid, about the first time I ever saw your dad set foot in the snow."

Toki couldn't help but laugh now, her fur fluffing faintly. "I bet that's a story for the ages. But Tenne and I have a date at the lab, where there's no snow for his toes to be twinkling in."

Tenne bristled a little at the name before he growled, "Tell them that and I will do something unpleasant to you, Fyrus." He warned with a growl.

Grillby just cracks a grin. "Well... You were young, and Asgore was just a young buck of a Prince back then... He did throw you an impressive distance for one so scrawny. What was impressive was how fast you made it back to snow-free ground. And that cry..."

Toki's interest perks. "Oh my god, he really did earn the nickname twinkle-toes, didn't he?"
His brows furrowed a little before he grinned. He then drew back his fist and punched the frame of the building. There was a quiet rumble, and Tenne hip checked Toki to send her to where she would proceed to get piled by snow.

Toki was thoroughly buried, however, and went down with a yelp as she was covered. Her arms failed as she tried to dig her way out.

"And since I know doing the same would probably kill you…" He then took a small pinch of snow and flicked it at Grillby, nailing him in the forehead. "There."

Grillby sputtered at the snow that puffed in his face, and huffed at Tenne. "Mature, Tenne, real mature. Flick snow at me while I'm holding your kids." He rolls his eyes, and then looks at Toki. "... Aren't your kind susceptible to cold temperatures?"

"My boys know how to be good distractions." Tenne grinned, before he chuckled. "It's not pleasant, but we can withstand it for a little while." He then pushed his arm into the pile of snow, grabbed Toki, and pulled her out and into the warmth of his coat. Once she was secured to his chest, he closed the coat around her so all that could be seen of her were her legs coming out the bottom and her horns and the fluff of her mane poking out the top.

Which left Toki face to face with Tenne's chest, and she was left inhaling the warmth of his body... And... His musk? Yes. His musk. He... Well, he certainly did not smell bad, and some part of her felt guilty for thinking that. She shifted and squirmed in his grasp. "Hey." Her voice was muffled against him. "I know you smell nice and all, but I'm not too overly chilled. I wasn’t I'm there long enough and my clothes are nice and thick." Her back was cold though, but that was nothing new, given the fact her shirts had no backings so her wings could be more easily maneuvered into her clothing.

Grillby chuckled. "Alright, alright. Take Toki and go enjoy your day, you two."

Kai waved. "Bye bye!"

"See you later, boys. Thanks again Grillby!" He chuckled, and then reached down to open his coat for her. "Fly away, Stanley, be free" He joked faintly.

Toki was again struck with a wondering thought of when the hell this timeline was, because that quote was from a movie that was very much from the late two thousands, and she was seeing all sorts of stuff from pretty much everywhere. She wondered what the hell sort of timeline this was.

She leaned out of his coat as Grillby took the boys inside and chuckled up at Tenne. "I could fly away, but it’s been a long time since I sought out the lab. No idea where we're going." She laughs, casually taking one more wiff of his scent, before stepping out of his coat. Her wings shake out and her mane fluffs up again. "Alright. Lead on, good sir~"

He chuckled quietly and offered her his arm, "Shall we then, my lady~?"

Toki smiled and laced her primary arm through his offered one. Her secondary arms folded under her breasts, tucking into her sleeves to keep the smaller hands warm. "We shall." She chirped. She headed off, pants swishing faintly as she walked with him.

He chittered happily and as they started out, his tail could be heard rattling behind him.

Toki glanced back at his rattling tail and then laughed as they made their way swiftly through and out of the town. She was familiar with this path, after all. "You can always tell when you're in a good mood. Your tail rattles." She smiles. "It's kind of adorable."
"Nothing I do could prevent it from rattling, I'll be honest." He laughed faintly, before he tilted his head down to look at her better. "It has its momentary annoyances as it also seems to display a few other emotions I possess. Frankly, that's my only quarrel I have with it."

"Really? I couldn't imagine having a tail. The emotions thing wouldn't bother me, but I'm a fairly open lady most of the time." Unless she was hiding things. "I imagine people would step on your tail, or you'd sit on it funny or all other sorts of things. Or trying to sleep on your back. It would get so kinked up." She hums. "Its adorable all the same. Just like..."

"I think it's the tail blade that does the worst for me." He mentioned, bringing his tail around and taking a look at the small blade. "This thing can get so sharp... I've been keeping it dull because of my boys, and this isn't even how long it'll get. I'm still growing!" Though he then looked at her as her final words registered, and raised a brow at her lightly. "Liiiiike?" He drawled faintly.

"Keeping it dull around children is for the best." She nods slowly. "Unless you would get a pad that you could wear on it? Then it could grow and be sharp all it wanted without issue." At his prompting, Toki grinned and light green dusted her cheeks. "Adorable... just like... twinkle-toes." She couldn't resist.

It was too cute not to, and Toki was not known for making wise choices regarding smart-mouthing folks. Or egging them on.

He hesitated at that, before his brows furrowed and he sighed heavily. "Alright, let's do this." He stopped walking and withdrew his arm from her. He raised his arms to tuck them behind his head as she stared at him in confusion, before he swung his hip to the side and knocked her into some nearby trees.

Trees that were covered in thick layers of snow- or had been, until she'd collided with them.

Said snow now piled onto her once more with her impact

From under the snow echoed buzzing laughter. The knock into the trees had stung some, but not enough to hurt her too badly. "Twiirririrriiinkle-toereeess." She croons from under her snowy cover. She doesn’t even try and get out immediately. If she can lure him close enough, she can drag him in. It was good for him to cut loose and relax. She had to do the same thing to Tenebris too, but much less playful like this. Toki waited to see if her taunt would work.

She didn't even need to drag him in. He came close, and then dead-man fell into the pile, landing with a WHOMPf, and a puff of snow up into the air.

He landed right on top of her and she squeaked, flailing under him as he squished her, forcing snow down the front of her shirt. The second the icy slush brushed her breasts, Toki gave a full body spasm and a sharp buzz of alarm. "AH! THATS COLD!"

Satisfaction. Tenne gave a quiet, dark chuckle as his tail rattled again.

The dark chuckle prompted a rumbling buzz from her, and one of her arms popped out of the snow to loop around the back of his head. She squished him face first into the snow above her chest, effectively making him 'eat snow', and then hooked her leg over his hip. Having an extra pair of arms meant she got to use them to roll them over, and suddenly all the snow that was trapped between them was now pouring down onto Tenne.

She laughed and used her secondary arms to shake the snow out of her boobs once she was seated semi-upright.
Where she was seated right now...

Tenne's fine with this.

He doesn't squirm much, but she could hear a quiet munching from within the pile of snow covering his face.

Toki squirms a little bit on his hips, and peers down at the munching sounds coming from his face area. The little shit was eating the snow. What a dork. She grinned, her wings giving an ominous buzzing sound as she grabbed a handful of snow from beside them... And then stuffed it right down the front of his pants where she was sitting perched on him. He might not have any visible genitals, but that didn’t mean the skin down there wasn’t likely just as sensitive as her breasts were.

And that got the flailing she wanted as he let out the most unholy of noises from under the snow and he made to sit up.

And she proceeded to lay on him like a rug to keep him flat, just like he did to her. Though he was much larger than she was, so his rug was more effective than her attempt at being one was. She grinned. "Paybacks a bitch, huh Tenne?" She teases affectionately.

He pouted at her, "You are awful." He grumbled.

'Aannd yet, he's got his hands on your hips~'

'Probably debating tossing me off. Ice on my genitals would have me launching anyone off of me as soon as I could.' She replied.

"I am the worst." She agreed with a laugh, and then squirmed off of him to let him up. Her wings took a moment to straighten out, and she had to shake them and the snow out from her clothing. "Alright, alright. Go ahead and get your snow out. I'd say we don't want you freezing your balls off, but there's nothing visible, so it wouldn't really be a valid point." She laughs lightly.

He huffed and got up, turning his back on her as he did just that, scooping it out of his undergarments before shaking it out of his pant legs. “Damn near froze my slit closed.... Gonna need a heat pack soon as we get to damn Hotland, we will." He could be heard grumbling.

Toki chuckled at his grumbles, before quietly sliding up behind him. It amused her to some extent that her names for things were sticking a little bit- he wasn’t the only one calling Hotland… well, Hotland, now. She slid her hand just up under the back of his shirt. Truthfully, she initially felt like a small ice cube sliding up under his jacket and into his shirt- but then she quietly pulsed her fire magic over him, and redirected it to his frozen nether bits. "Poor baby," she cooed, "I'm not that cruel. I 'froze' it, I'll thaw it." Applying her hand directly to the affected area was the best method, but she was not palming his slit. Nope. Nuh uh.

'I can think a few ways you can thaw him out, Toki~' Cruelty teased.

'You're the one with the hots for the doctor. Are you sure you wouldn't rather do it, Cruelty?' She teased him right back.

Tenne shuttered hard at her interjecting, before he sighed at the wash over of warmth, "hhhhmmn..."

Well that moan was definitely sexual sounding. She flushed. "Well then. Didn't know my magic felt that good." It fell out before she could stop it, and she flushed brighter. Good god, her tongue was out of control today.
'Says the one who just wrought a moan out of the bastard.'

'Oh my god, don't remind me.'

‘Oh no, I plan to.’

'Oh come on, don't be a dick.' She pouts to her mental pest.

He only chuckled much like Tenne had when he thought he had won.

"Warm~" was all Tenne could squeak out, making sounds not unlike cougar squeaks as he enjoyed the newfound heat.

"Well yes." She coughs slightly. She keeps up the heat for a short time, until she's sure he's thawed, and then she draws her hand back to her chest and tucks it close to her. She blinks at him slowly. "...Well, those are sounds I cannot un-hear. I think squeakers is more fitting than twinkle-toes."

He was pouting when she recoiled, but he sighed and gave a nod as he regained his composure. "RIGHT. Let's be off."

"Right." She nods. She shakes herself off, and then bounds a few steps forwards. "We're going to run late if we dally much longer."
Chapter 100

Tenne and Toki arrived at the lab without too much delay. Toki had been stopped for ID and authorization at multiple checkpoints along the way, and Tenne had vouched for her at every one of them, as well as providing the necessary paperwork needed to get her inside of the laboratory.

When the lab came into view, it was still a sight for sore eyes. It was a long, long jaunt from Snowdin up to the lab in Hotland. She was more than ready to rest her feet by the time they made it inside.

In all honestly, it was mostly because she hadn’t had the chance to break in her new shoes yet. One did not go for long walks until they had adjusted to their new shoes. She was sure she would have blisters when she took them off of her feet.

Inside of the lab was cool and air-conditioned, and felt good after the intense heat the magma filled cavern had outside. The Core, still in construction, loomed in the distance. It obviously had enough power for the lab, however, so Toki was thankful.

"Mmm... I'm pretty sure I'm going to get a blister." She chuckles, enjoying the cool air. "Mmm... Alright, mister scientist. Where are you taking me?"

Tenne had removed his black coat once they entered the lab, and hung it up, before pulling out a lab coat and pulling it's white sleeves on over his shoulders, "There we go." He rumbled. The doctor then lifted one flap from his side to reveal the back had a long slice that went up to his where his tailbone began. His tail swung around and he gently grabbed it, hooking the vertebrae on a clip that secured his tail blade at his side. His tail gave a few tugs, but the clip did it's job in allowing him to travel around within the lab without worrying about his tail lashing and hitting anything.

After checking to make sure he had his clearance card, he began towards one of the many hallways within the lab. "This way, my dear."

The white coat was definitely different than the black coat. She followed obediently. "Hm... I think you look better in the black." She comments lightly. The white washed him out. But white was a doctor’s color. Though she never understood why, given the fact white stained like a motherfucker.
Either way, Toki followed closely, her wings carried high as she looked at everything there was to see.

"I do like my black, but I like my white robe as much as I do the other one." He replied with a chuckle. Leading her down the hallway, he walked for a short while until they came to some sets of doors. He stopped, however, when he heard noises behind one of them. His head shifted slightly before his eyes narrowed and he barked at one of the closed doors. "JAMES! I better not be hearing you getting busy with your wife in there! That's expensive equipment you're rutting on!" He snarled loudly.

There was yelp and a crash. "SORRY, DOCTOR GASTER!" Was no doubt James' call from inside.

Tenne chuckled quietly. "Were I mated, I would worry that I'd be no better." He rumbled before he continued on, "I wonder how long it'll be before Sapphire comes back to work. She's our geothermal genius, and I need her for our latest project. Of course I wouldn't have the gall to demand she work while pregnant, and have had her risk darling little Fuku. She was worth the wait." He rumbled softly.

"And here we are in my office, where I expect everything to be in order, as I..." The door opened, and immediately Tenne's gaze turned sour upon spotting a monster in his large chair, as if a lackey upon the CEO's throne. How annoying.

"Galloway. We discussed this. Skilled or not, you are a temp, and this is my office. You have your own temporary lab, and you do not have the clearance for the projects I possess in my data records."

His voice grew venomous and a bit more aggressive as he walked closer to his desk. "So tell me. What are you doing in my office?" His voice was sharp, and edged with a tinge of a growl.

Galloway was a shrewd looking monster who looked much like an otter. Toki, however, thought he looked more like a rat, and wondered if he was a hybrid of some sort.

Shrewd eyes leered up at Tenne. "It's not my fault you're too busy to be doing your proper job, Doctor Gaster." He sneers, voice deeper than one would think. Galloway made no motion to move from his seat. He continued to type up his report rapidly. "As a temp, I'm limited in what I'm capable of doing from my own desk, and since you're never here doing your job in the shifts that you should be doing, I figured one of us needs to actually work towards getting us our freedom to the surface."

Galloway sniffs and sneers at Toki with great disdain. "You might have found your happiness in your female, but the rest of us are not content to live down here like savage troglodytes like you are, apparently. You have slacked off since she appeared. So I'm picking up where you are failing."

Toki blinked, startled. "... I wasn't aware that I was impeding Tenne's work."

"Your mere existence is a hindrance." Galloway huffs. "You come along, and now he has us running tests on your venom? What purpose towards breaking the barrier could that possibly serve? Absolutely none. His children were bad enough from the moment he took time and resources from our facility to create their hybrid bodies, but now adding you to the mix..." He tsks in a short-tempered manner, and then hits send. "There. That's done and sent to Asgore for approval."

Toki frowned and rubbed her arm awkwardly. "First off, you're a dick. His children aren't a hindrance. Your attitude is. I might be, but they definitely aren't. Call them that again, and I might make you wish you had an antivenin to my venom."
Tenne's conversation about his tail came into great relevance at this moment, as Tenne was absolutely furious with Galloway's words. His tail was rattling up a storm behind him, his tail blade pulling repeatedly on its clip in yearning to slice his tongue out.

"First, do not forget that while we seek our escape, we also aim at making ways of living a little less painful for the civilians. I'd be as eager to escape as anyone else, but miracles do not fall out of the sky!" He rumbled, a snarl trailing up the inside of his throat. "Second, how dare you speak so lowly of not only my kind, but my pups, and my guest?" His eyes were practically glowing with fury at this point,

"And third of all, you are supposed to wait for me to overlook a report BEFORE you submit it to His Majesty!" He snarled, storming over to his desk before he slammed his hands down, leering down at the temporary scientist with unhindered rage. "I will not tolerate this disrespect, especially from a insufferable self-entitled capitol pencil-pusher who thinks he has permission to do anything he wants just because his higher-up is out of the building!" He snarled. "Get out of my office, and get to work in your own goddamn area!" He ordered in what might as well have been a furious roar at this point.

Toki even fluffed at the furious sound, shrinking back a bit instinctively from the harsh roar. Her mane had bristled and she did her best to try not to show how nervous it made her. Not afraid- she had mostly worked past her fear at this point- but nervous. Very nervous.

Galloway was even more so, with all of his fur standing on end and a rancid stink of fear on him. He swallowed all the same, and sneered up at Tenne with the same haughty attitude from before. "At least I didn't get here by bending over and taking it up the ass from the king. I got here on talent." He sniffs. He hops out if the chair, revealing that he was sitting on a stack of Tenne's textbooks in order to be able to access everything, and made a swift waddle for the exit.

Toki watched him go with a flat gaze.

He paused, and then stared up at her. "I'll see you in the bio-science division for your samples of venom. I expect that you will not be late, or give me any trouble, civilian."

Toki arched a brow and then glanced to Tenne questioningly. Was she going to end up letting this guy take her venom?

Tenne waited until the other scientist was gone before he walked over to a wall that had a few stab marks in it. He reached to his hip and freed his tail, before he slammed his head into the wall, denting it as his tail lashed violently, sinking into the wall and floor repeatedly until he seemed to burn himself out.

Once done with that, he tucked his tail back on his hip and trudged back to his desk, picking up his textbooks and dropping them on his desk before collapsing into his chair, rubbing his temples. "Ugh..." he groaned quietly "Not even ten minutes and I already feel that fucking migraine coming back." He hissed to himself. "I hate that parasite. Who the hell even gave him his goddamn certification?" It was almost as if he had forgotten that Toki was there; that her light was gone and he was back to the way things were before.

Toki hesitated near the door, having watched Tenne work himself over on the wall. When he was done and slumped into his chair, she approached. Gingerly laying her secondary hands on his temples and brushing his own away, Toki massaged lightly with a bit of fire magic in her fingers.
Her fur was still ruffled and she was unsteady from the roar. It was too much like the one that Tenebris had done when he had nearly mauled her, and it had her on edge. She was trying to calm though. The nerves in her scent wouldn't help. She swallows, and hums softly. "Obviously an utter moron gave him one. Or he sucked a lot of dicks to get it." She commented queerly. "He's gone now, Tenne. It's okay."

"I am not a wild beast... I am not a wild beast, I am his majesty's royal scientist..." He murmurred to himself before he sighed gently as her hands came to his head. As the head radiated into his skull, he grew visibly relaxed as he closed his eyes and leaned back, "God I love you." He whispered quietly without realizing, seeming to feel a lot better after her short though tender treatment.

Her fingers continued to rub soothing circles, even as his quiet whispers reached her ears. She swallowed and closed her eyes. She knew he did. She cared for him too. But... It was only close to four months since she had been ripped from her husband. She couldn’t... Say that she loved him. Not like he wanted. It was too soon. So she simply smiled to him, that warm affectionate smile that she always had, and brushed her fingers gently along the cracks in his skull. "Do you feel better, Tenne?" She asks gently.

"Mmh... I do... You're wonderful, Toki." He purred happily as he smiled up at her.

After a moment to regain his proper composure, Tenne sat up and took a deep breath, and began returning things to how he had them. He saved the reports he hadn't had on his computer before to an external drive, and then rolled back his computer as to return it to his settings. Once the files were reloaded, he began to look through them, grumbling about how many there were that he had not yet seen.

Oh right. The reason she was there...

"Toki... I really don't want to send you to him..." He groaned quietly.

"Then why don’t you just do it?" She questioned lightly, offering him a faint smile. "I would be more comfortable with someone else doing it, honestly. We can even do it in a different division, if you would prefer. Though that might cause some hiccups, I'm sure..." She pauses, and smoothes her mane down. "You've done it before, so maybe you can show the others how to do it right?" She could eject on her own, yes, but she did not have the finite control to stop immediately in filling a tiny vial and keeping it from overflowing. She was not that good yet, despite all the practice she'd had with the honey she had been selling.

"I know, yes, but there's so many reports here, I need to make sure none of them are flawed or delivering the wrong message because if something misinterpreted is approved or denied, this could set us back."

"Oh." She nods softly. She then pauses and worries at her shirt. "... Do you have a map then? Because I don’t know my way around here and this place is pretty big. Reports are important and I don't want to interrupt those, so I don’t mind going on my own. I just... Don't know where I'm going."

He nodded, and pulled out a quick map given to new workers. "Here's my office, and the Bio-Division is down here... I'm sorry again, Toki, but I thank you for understanding."

Toki gave him a smile and took the map. "It's okay, Tenne. I'll see you later, okay?" She gives him a small wave and then ducks out of the office. Once she's out, she sighs softly, and sets her course to that which the map marks for her to go. It doesn’t look to be a long jaunt, so she makes her way there slowly but surely.
When Toki finally arrived, Galloway was waiting as if she had taken an hour to get there instead of the fifteen or so minutes that she actually had instead.

"About time! If there was anything slower than your beast minds, it was your goddamn feet." The otter monster hissed as he folded his arms. "You've already wasted so much of my time… let's just get this over with so you can get back to your incompetent stud."

Toki bristled immediately at him, something prickling and rousing inside of her. Something that wasn’t Cruelty, either.

She rumbled at him initially, and then she sighed, before taking a seat across from him. “Mister Galloway, your language and treatment of your peers, and of a guest visiting the lab, are not acceptable.” She says softly, giving him a firm look. “When I return to Tenne, I’m going to ask him how I can put in a complaint, and then I’m going to file one. I understand that you want to get to the surface- I really do. But being a dick about it is just going to slow everything else down and is not conductive for a working environment. That being said- Tenne is anything but incompetent as I am very sure he has proved time and time again, and neither is he my ‘stud’ as you so put it- neither are our minds slow. Racism, I don’t imagine, will go over well if mentioned to Asgore.” She gives him a flat, firm look, and smooths out her fur. Toki had played games with bureaucrats back when she’d been a skeleton. There had been all sorts of slander she’d gotten- all sorts.

His words didn’t faze her any, and rolled off of her like oil on water. It was visible as such too.

Toki then offers her smaller secondary wrists, since they’re smaller for his much, much smaller hands to practice with first. “Now… I have six stingers to choose from. You’re welcome to take from them all. There’s a spot you can press on my wrists that will cause my venom to release. Please don’t get it on yourself- it’s very toxic and it will hurt you if it touches you.”

"Tch." He scowled as he set up the sample bottles, using a thumb behind the stinger on her left hand to locate it before he pushed it out a little to line up the opening of the vial. "What would you know? You’re just a damn civilian. I bet you’ve never even met his majesty." He scoffed, before he pushed on the spot with a little more pressure than what was necessary, watching with little interest as her venom filled the vial.

She visibly winced as he put extra pressure onto her thinner wrists. The more fragile limb already started to bruise a bit in the shape of his hand where his fingers pressed in, until she reinforced her defenses around it so he couldn’t hurt her intentionally. “Oh I’ve met him, yeah, when I got my ID. He and the queen are quite lovely people.” She gives him a flat look. "He seemed quite interested in my summons, as well as my ability to wield fire magic, much like he can."

"Blah blah blah," he mocked, “showing off gets you no where. I got where I am today by working for it, unlike that damn beast who calls himself head scientist. HA!" He removed the vial when it was full and moved to the other hand to do the same as the first. "Bastard didn't even need to go to school to learn, he just somehow had it all swirling in that bald head of his!"

Toki tilted her head as she listened to him rant, and sighed through her teeth. “Everyone is different, Mister Galloway. It’s in our best interest to accept everyone for who they are- just because someone has something that appeared easier, doesn’t mean that it was necessarily easier for them. Everyone goes through the same trials, just in different ways.”

Her second wrist is already reinforced by the time he gets it, and she lets him fill the second vial as she sits patiently before him. “A world full of hate is not a good one. Mister Galloway. Your hateful words and cruel actions do nothing but create more of the same- and it is something that we sorely need to do without.” She watches him for a moment while she grinds her teeth a little. “Is there
perhaps something going on in your home life that has you so on edge with everyone? Sometimes the littlest things can set people off, but it’s not fair to redirect it and take it out on others if this is the case.” She’d like to give him the benefit of the doubt, but from Tenne’s reaction, this was something that had been occurring for a long, long time.

“How every monster has to be full of vim and vigor and be a pleasant person to be around.” Galloway sneers at her as he stoppers off that vial and grabs one of her primary arms to drain that one. “My home life is none of your concern. Keep your nonexistent nose out of my business—”

Toki tuned him out after that as he struggles to get her primary arms to let off the venom that he needs. He doesn’t quite have the hand size or strength needed to get her stinger to let off at the rate that it needs to, so it’s a slower fill than with the smaller ones, and he bitches about it the entire time that he has to keep adjusting her wrist or his hand.

She’d made an effort of kindness, and he’d pretty much told her to fuck off, though in a much more proper way about it, and was continuing to do so with every word uttered from his mouth.

So she zoned out, staring off into space between faint nods to let him know she was ‘listening’. She discovered that his eyebrows got very, very animated when he was ranting about this and that, and any time he called her anything close to beast or savage or simple, they would shoot almost straight up on his face. It was fascinating in a horribly morbid way, but provided a small bit of entertainment to her as she sat and let her stinger casually fill the vial with venom.

There was, however, a loud thud and a roar that rattled the walls of the lab and made him rapidly release her arm as he fumbled not to drop the half full vial. “W-what?” He spooked, his fur standing on end.

Toki lurched onto her feet nervously, her wrist arching from the rough extraction of venom from her stinger. She aches something nasty, and she can’t stop the faint tingle of irritation at the doctor—however a secondary roar has her bolting out of the bioscience division. She didn’t even hesitate to wait- she didn’t need to hesitate when the sound of that roar was the only reason she needed to bolt out of there even with Galloway complaining and sputtering behind her.

The roar sounded like Asgore- and she had heard his roar on the battlefield. She knew it quite well. It was unforgettable, that roar.

Also equally unforgettable was the bristling, massive titan that was the king, holding Tenne up by the throat with him pinned to the wall in the hallway and snarling in his face with a set of very sharp teeth that were usually not on display beyond the ones he usually smiled with. His sharper molars were being bared as he snarled, in quite the impressive display.

The hallway roiled in heat, the fire magic flooding the area so densely that beads of sweat were gathering at the temple of the one held captive in Asgore’s hand. Asgore’s oppressive magic bore down on Tenne like hellfire.

“This is one too many reports and insistent demands Tenne, that you’ve sent in about using Charas’ soul to break the barrier. You might be my friend, but she is my daughter, and I’m not going to let any of you do anything to her to hurt her.” His eyes glinted, hand tightening around Tenne’s neck as if he were going to bruise the pale flesh under the prickly mane the doctor wore. “You and this damn lab will burn before you get her soul.”

With his grip, Tenne might as well have the bruises now rather than later.

"Y-Your majesty! Please!” Tenne was gasping from both from the heat and the tight grip around his
neck. His hands were grabbing desperately, his legs pushing in vain against the bulk of the king’s powerful body.

"I-I didn’t send those in!” He gasped, "I wouldn’t..." The squeeze made him wince, fear-induced tears welling in his eyes. "I-I’d never c-consider the child!” His brain was running out of air, and he was losing his fight to keep conscious. "A-Asgore... p-please...!

What came from Tenne next was weak, desperate, a whimper. "I only j-just... got back..."

Between one breath and the next, there was a different magic flooding the halls, and Toki’s washed over Asgore’s with frightening ease. Her primary hands reached up and took hold of the King’s massive wrist between one breath and the next, where in she hadn’t even realized she had moved, and she felt her stingers slide forth and press through his fur. The pointed tips bit into his flesh as her hands flexed, applying counter pressure to his massive forearms to make his grip loosen.

Temper or not, justified or not, Toki wasn’t going to stand by and watch him strangle Tenne. She wasn’t going to watch the black tears welling in the white beast’s eyes fall, or watch him lose consciousness.

Toki was not going to stand idly by while someone was hurt again. Not like the guard back in her home. She wasn’t going to listen to that whimper from Tenne, and do nothing.

The beastly feeling lurking deep inside of her wouldn’t allow her to, even if she had wanted to in the first place.

"Let him go.” Her voice is not the friendly tone it usually took. “Now.” Narrow and slightly feral pupils are nestled in her green eyes as she peers up at Asgore, as her teeth stretch into a the beginnings of a truly frightening snarl to ward the King away from her and the closest thing she had to a family here in this world that wasn’t her own. “Or we get to see what happens when my venom meets flesh. Drop him. Now.” Her magic bears down on the king, and her claws bite into his forearm like sharp needles.

He hissed at the initial assault to his arm and his furious gaze moved to Toki. "I understand you are defending another of your kind, Toki, but I cannot allow this treasonous behavior and blatant disrespect to continue. I could have you sent to the dungeon in chains for threatening to assault me.” He warned her. "Tenne has sent countless reports considering the use of my child's soul to counter the barrier. That's where I draw the line in what I’m permitting him to pursue in his research.” His grip tightened a little more and Tenne could only squeak out a shaky gasp.

The shaky gasp from Tenne had her eyes flicking to him briefly, her pupils constricting tighter as the rumbling feeling in her mind grew closer, before she was shoving herself between the king and the pale monster. She shoved with her arms, bracing Tenne on the wall with her back so he didn’t move with Asgore’s arm, and physically tried to shove Asgore’s arm back so Tenne could breathe. “I said let him go. I will do more than threaten you, Asgore. No chains of yours could hold me.” Her voice dropped an octave, a threatening buzz rising from her. Her stingers pressed further into his arms, and the tip pierced his skin, though she held her venom back from automatically injecting.

Her eyes glinted at him flatly as she recalled a conversation that she and Tenne had about using children’s souls for the barrier- they had both agreed not to. “You are lost to your anger, Asgore. You are strangling one of your people- one of your friends- because you’re not thinking clearly enough to realize that Tenne would never, ever consider doing that. He’s a father too. He would never- let me rephrase that. He could not ever use your daughter’s soul. He’s not the one that’s been sending reports. He’s been at his home more and more with me and his children. In fact, he’s more pressing for bettering life underground than anything else, but you’re not looking at what he has been
doing—only what is happening now. Let him go. Last warning.” Her mouth opens. She’s shorter than him—
but a bite from her would be nearly as bad as a sting. Her teeth have already torn out one throat-
ripping through the fur lined arm above her horned head would be easy.

A deep chuckle resonated from within Toki’s mind. Cruelty was savoring the pure rage coming from
her. Oh it was delicious to him—though that looming presence suddenly joining him in his little
home… not quite as delicious.

Asgore gave a growl as he felt the stingers pierce him under his fur and he glared down at her with
fury, though as the fire faded in his eyes, it was replaced by anger blanketed in confusion. "Then...
Who's been sending them...?" He spoke again, voice a little more calmed down, before he slowly
lifted his grip from Tenne’s neck only to watch him hang limply from it, barely conscious.

Toki’s back pressing to the doctor’s chest kept him from slumping flat to the floor, as did Asgore’s
faintly remaining grip. As his hand loosened, however, she took the opportunity to throw his hand
back with surprising force, and whirl around to catch Tenne under the arms so he didn’t slump and
hit his head. She cradled his head gently to her shoulder, her massive wings flaring out and making a
barrier between the king and the semi-conscious doctor in her grasp.

Her mane was still bristled, but she answered him neutrally. “The same man who bruised my wrist
when I gave what few venom samples I managed before you interrupted us. Galloway down in the
bioscience division is the only one I know of that has the driven desire to break the barrier, and that
has been actively in Tenne’s office without his permission. There was a fiasco today when I came in,
and he sent something to you. Obviously something bad.” Toki stroked her magic gently along the
bruising on Tenne’s neck, wishing desperately that she could heal him. The heat would just have to
help as best it could. “But Tenne would not have done that. And shame. Shame, shame, shame on
you for thinking your dearest friend capable of such a thing. You should have came to him when you
first started getting those.”

The look he gets from her is decidedly waspish and still hostile.

Asgore's eyes gleamed in recognition as he realized the source of that name, and he growled, turning
to some guards who had scrambled to accompany the king. They looked a little winded in the effort
to keep up with him. "Find him." He ordered with a growl.

The soldiers nodded and began down the hallway, leaving the three alone.

Tenne, to say the least, seemed thankful enough to be able to breathe again. Though he did not stir
from his state, he took a few thankful gasps of air. They came a lot easier to him as he was now
submerged in Toki's heat, which was the heat that would constantly fill his home and keep him and
his sons snug while they slept.

His mouth slowly closed and if one looked close enough they could see some shifting on his face
where hidden nostrils either lingered or were simulated by the muscle as his breathing slowed once
more. One could look to his neck and see that his mane had definitely been scorched short once
more, and his black blood was quickly rising to the surface, marking the presence of a first-degree
burn and bruise in the shape of the King’s hand.

Asgore watched Tenne, and he grew ashamed of his thoughtless rage, fearing what could have
happened if Toki had not been there to stop him.

Toki’s wings flexed on her back, the gossamer surfaces a nearly translucent barrier between Tenne’s
would-be aggressor and himself. She adjusted him to make sure she wasn’t smothering him in her
mane, and gently skirted her fingers over his neck, and brushed the warmth of her magic over his
Deep, deep in her being, Toki truly wished she had the power to heal, so things like this didn’t have to happen. Despite her wishing, she didn’t get to see the first-degree burn lessen any, or the dark bruising begin to fade at all. All she could do was offer some warmth of comfort and she wasn’t even sure the warmth was a comfort at all at this point.

Her gaze slid back over her shoulder, and she turned one poisonous green eye to Asgore. “When he’s fully conscious, you have a lot to apologize for.” She says shortly. It showed this Asgore’s relative youth in comparison to the one that Toki knew—the one that she knew… Well, she’d never seen him really, truly angry, but she did not think he would ever raise a hand to his subjects, no matter what they did. “I understand your rage. A threat to one’s child is something to be angry over.” She had killed to protect hers. She had ripped a man’s throat out with her teeth. “But you should have stopped and considered what you knew about the man you thought was sending you those requests, and spoke with him before you lost your cool.”

Asgore had handled it very, very badly for a leader. Very badly.

And he seemed to know it too. He wilted before her, his fur deflating under the scolding tone she took. “I… I realize my folly.” He murmured softly. He looked at his hand, which carried singe marks from Tenne’s mane, and clenched it into a fist. Asgore met her gaze, and lowered his arm. His fur had a few stains from his blood, where her claws and stingers had punctured him. “I’m sor-”

“No. I don’t want your apology. It’s not me who deserves it. Tenne does. He’s the one who got strangled and burnt for the misdeeds of another. Misdeeds… Misdeeds all because of that god damned barrier.” Her wings shifted, canting higher. The presence in her mind, lurking like a looming horror alongside Cruelty, agreed with her anger. Toki wanted to call that presence her beast, perhaps—and her beast had been roused.

“The barrier is a source of anger and irritation for many.” Asgore shrinks a little under her short reply. Their second meeting was not how he had hoped it to be—but he could understand her ire with him. “There are… many who think human souls are required to break the barrier. Nothing else we have tried so far has worked. My daughter… Chara, she… she is human. Many hate all humanity for locking us down here, and for those who have started to fall because of it, so they… target her aggressively. I feared that Tenne had become one of them.”

“So they want her soul to try and break the barrier?”

“Yes.” Asgore continues uncomfortably, listening as the sound of someone yelling kicks up. No doubt Galloway had been secured by the guards, and he was very displeased about it.

Toki’s hand nearly tightens on Tenne, but she forcibly smoothes it out over his coat instead, and tries to breathe through the surge of rage that floods her from the presence in her mind. Her own anger builds with it, but the beast, oh, she is a creature of anger and she does not like the thought of a pup threatened just for her soul.

“All of this,” her lip curls, “Is because hate is a never-ending cycle. Humans hate monsters, and put monsters down here, so monsters hate humans, and kill them for their souls.” It occurred to her, back in her world, that there was likely a reason why her Asgore had soul containers to capture Cruelty.

‘He would have needed to hold the souls somehow until he had enough.’ Cruelty murmurs quietly.

Her magic pulses through the hall again, and Galloway chokes on his angry shout as the guards carry him down the hall. The guards stagger under the pressure and very nearly drop the otter they have
secured in their grasps.

For all of her talk about not being as smart as Tenne or any of the other scientists, Toki is not a daft person. She is, sometimes, a little thick, as any human can be, but she is also perceptive at the best of times. This is one of those times.

It takes all of Toki’s control not to burn the lab down in that instant, because she realizes what was in those containers, and where those containers had to have been developed.

Disgust burns through her faster than her fire would burn through a forest. Rage and disgust, because she knows what will happen here should the paths of fate continue, as they seem to be doing.

Humans- men, women, most likely and quite possibly children- would die, and their souls would be harvested and used to break the barrier. Something would happen- the death of Asgore’s children, perhaps- and it would trigger the shift in the man who was so against this plan, and he would be all for it.

Perhaps, she muses, perhaps that was why her Toriel and her Asgore were no longer together and so, so in love like these two were. Toriel was not the kind of woman to watch the man she loved go on a rampage, even after the loss of his children.

“When Tenne is recovered…” She finally speaks, her voice piercing the gasping breaths that had filled the silence. Tenne was not the only one gasping now- Galloway and the guards were struggling for breath under the weight of her magic. “When he can stand. I want you to take me to the barrier.” She glances to Asgore, giving him a sharp gaze.

‘We’re getting out of here, Cruelty. You’re going to help me break the barrier.’
It took Tenne longer than Toki would have liked to come back around, but she’d had time to calm down by the time he was fully aware. She was going to be taken to the barrier once Tenne was up and walking around- once she knew he was going to be okay. The pressure from her magic likely didn’t help him in rousing- ultimately, it had even Asgore sweating, and he was giving her wary looks every so often.

Galloway had been stripped of his credentials and sent back to lockup to await trial on counts of treason. The counts of treason came from the very obvious threats and pressures from within the reports he had been sending to Asgore under Tenne’s name. It also didn’t help his case that he opened his mouth and spouted off all sorts of slander at her and at Tenne, and then at Asgore himself for harboring a human and raising her instead of killing her like he should have.

The scary thought came from the fact that there were more monsters out there that were anti-human, just like Galloway.

It was for the best that he was being put into jail though. Crimes against the royal family were not to be excused. It honestly surprised Toki that she wasn’t being hauled off too, for essentially assaulting and threatening Asgore.

Though… The wary look the guards had shot her, and the fact the King kept looking at her tense form with intense apprehension, was probably the only reason she wasn’t being hauled off in chains.

Not that the chains could hold her, like she had told him. She had too much magic bubbling in her veins for anything to hold her.

She brushed her fingers gently over Tenne’s shoulder, and eased the ice pack off his neck again to check the bruise around his throat. He was currently laid down on a medical bed in the medical ward- Asgore had taken him there upon her request- and she was icing his neck as gently as she could to make sure his esophagus didn’t swell. It also would help with the pain from the burn. He was to be bandaged soon- but they wanted to make sure he didn’t swell.

Toki’s face was still pinched and tense, along with her wings, and any time her fur ruffled with an agitated thought, Asgore would tense up on the other side of the room. Now that he had calmed down, and the actual culprit had been caught, he was almost… a little afraid of her, in a sense. Only he and his guards had really been aware enough to witness the full extent of her power, and she wasn’t sure how much Tenne would remember of it.
“How are you feeling?” Her voice is gentle despite the lingering agitation that taints her scent, making the usual honey and smoke smell have an added pepper tinge to it.

"Were it not for the pain in my throat," He sounded hoarse, "I would've thought I died 'nd gone t' heaven." He purred as he slowly smiled up at her.

Toki smiled back down to him, though hers was tighter and more stressed. “I’m glad you’re okay.” She adjusted the icepack over his neck again, and then fetched a bottle of water from next to her for him. It had a straw in it- and she held it to his lips. “Take a sip, Tenne. It’ll help a little bit with the hoarseness… When you’re okay to move, you should go get some rest at home.” She stroked a hand gently over his head.

He took a few drinks, and then sighed, "Asgore...?" He then questioned as he peered back up at her.

"He is here. He has something to say." Her eyes tightened irritably, and she huffed out a rumbling sigh. Her eyes flicked over to the king, and she motioned with a tilt of her horns. “He is here. He has something to say.”

The king stepped forward once she leaned back, and he swallowed awkwardly. He sighed, and rubbed his arm where her claws had dug into him, and then glanced to Tenne. “I… I do not have an acceptable apology, Tenne… I... I... I acted reprehensibly.” He murmured softly. “I did not stop to think- I did not stop to think about how the reports were starting to sound less and less like the man that I know, and have known for many years. I just… got so angry, and I acted. And I hurt you- I would have done more, if not for Tokiko.” The king pursed his lips, and then closed his eyes.

And then Asgore did something surprising. With only the three of them in the room, he settled down onto one knee next to the medical bed, and bowed his head to Tenne. “I do not deserve your forgiveness… but I would beg for it, if you would be willing to grant it it.”

Tenne blinked once, before he chuckled quietly. "Oh Asgore..." He reached out and gently tilted Asgore's chin up with the tip of his fingers, before he used the bottom of his palm to push against Asgore's snout, mentally hearing a quiet 'honk' when he did. "Get up, old friend." He told him. "You're too big to be on your knees." He chuckled.

Asgore glanced up at him, eyes large and remorseful, and glanced at the hand that pushed against his nose. It tickled him, and he had to lean back as it made him sneeze, his mane fluffing up in response. “I might be too big to get on my knees, but even a king can admit when he is wrong. I hurt you, old friend. I bruised your neck and seared off your mane- and you were just growing it back out again.” Still, he did as requested, and eased back onto his feet.

"You do it again,” She says, “and I’ll do worse than scratch you and lightly sting you.”

Asgore ducked his chin as he looked back at her, and huffed faintly. “Threatening a king is a high offense.”

She levels him a flat stare and her mane bristled at him.

Asgore wisely looks away.

"Toki..." Tenebris tutted to her gently, then set a hand on the ice pack on his throat and sat up, taking a breath before he looked up at Asgore. “It will heal.” He assured him, reaching out to set a hand on his arm.

She glanced away, and huffed a rough sound, before trying to shove the beast in her mind back so Cruelty could deal with it- with her, rather.
Asgore nodded slowly. “I know. Get some rest, old friend. I know you will heal, but you need to take your time and rest for you to do so. Take some time off work to do so… In the mean time, Miss Nara…” He glances to her. “Are you ready to go?”

She shifts and stands. “He’s not standing, but… Yes. The sooner we do this, the better. I’m ready to go.”

"Nonsense, I took too much time off work and look what happened." He snorted, before he gave Toki a glance, "And just... where are you going?"

“Asgore is taking me to the barrier.” Toki says softly. “What happened was not your fault- it was the fault of someone who was too lost in his hatred for humans, and in his desire and greed to get to the surface.”

“I don’t know what she’s going to do there.” The king comments softly, running his fingers through his mane with a sigh. “But she demanded I take her there once you were up. I’m not going to tell her no.”

Toki’s eyes glint, and she glances to Tenne, because she wonders if he knows what she is planning. She says nothing though, even with the kings casual prompting for her to speak of her plans. “You’ll see when I get there.” Her fur ruffles and settles, magic flexing over her skin. The ocean behind the dam was beating against it in anticipation, the leaks from the faucet coming faster and filling her veins quicker.

He reached up and took her hand tightly upon hearing she was going to the barrier, and a distressed look coming to his eyes. "Toki, I can't let you. It's dangerous..."

She squeezes his hand very gently, and meets his distressed eyes. “You can’t stop me, either.” She says gently. “I’m doing it with or without your blessing, Tenne.” She lifts his hand and pets his knuckles gently, and exhales a soft breath. She gives his hand one more squeeze, before drawing away from his hospital bed.

“I would say you could join us, old friend, but…” Asgore shuffled faintly. “I am not sure you’re in any condition to be making that trip.”

He whined for a split second before it faded into a growl, and kept one hand on his neck and the ice pack, the other planting behind him to push him off the bed while his tail extended to wrap around her.

"N-Not going to hear it!" He hissed, "No... I refuse... t-to let you go there!"

The tail ensnaring her about her hips put a stopper on her movements. She turned to look at him, and Toki frowned at him. "I have never let anyone forbid me from doing anything.” She says. “And I’m not going to start now.” Her hands are gentle as they come to his tail, and she grasps it by the blade to start unwrapping it from him with slow but gentle motions. “Tenne… I’m going to break it. I’m not just going there to sight see. I’m going to shatter it and break it and turn it to dust in the breeze.”

Asgore blinked slowly. “So that’s what you’re planning… you know… None of us can do it. I get that you are strong, Tokiko, but you’re not going to be able to break it- no monster can.”

“I’m stronger than you might think.” She responds softly. She glances to Tenne. “… You’re not going to stop me, Tenne. But if you can walk… you can come with.”

"Toki... please... I can't lose you." His voice rasped a little as he spoke, "Please... Don't do this..."
“You’re not going to lose me.” She says softly. “Nara are tough, and I’m no exception.” It’s words she’s said to Tenebris a thousand times over- in a world a million, billion, probably unknown number of cosmic miles away. She pets his tail as she gets it fully unwound, and then offers her hands to him. “If you’re worried, come with me. But it’s time, Tenne. It’s time.”

He whined quietly, but quickly took her hand when it was offered.

She shifted to help him to his feet, and support his weight while he got his feet. Toki gave him a faint smile. “It’s going to be fine, Tenne…” She murmured.

He whined quietly as he followed, but by flipping the ice pack, it was a little clearer that he needed to rest his voice if he wanted to get it back.

Toki let him cling to her fingers as she moved to join Asgore, and together the three of them set out for the new castle being constructed. It was the closest source of the barrier- the only other entrance was in the sky, back down in the Capitol according to the king.

It was a long and slow walk back to the castle- but at least they had an elevator. Though… a primitive one instead of a high tech one like the ones that she was used to. It fit all of them, but it was more like a rickety lift instead of a safe, enclosed elevator that she would have preferred.

She was anxious the whole ride up, and clung to the side, and to Tenne’s fingers. She’d rather have flown, in all honesty, but that wasn’t a choice, given the fact that Tenne had her in a death grip, and kept tugging her fingers and giving her pitiful pleading looks every so often.

The castle was beautiful though- it was grand and gorgeous, and it wasn’t even finished yet. It really would be a work of art once they got it done- with stained glass windows, a courtyard, and a small trickle of artificial light from some lamps they had hooked up. It was set up to be a promising sight for all of monsterkind all of the same.

At the castle, Toriel waited outside with two children clinging to her skirt. One of them was a small goat, just like her- the other was a rosy cheeked human who peered at them quietly.

Toriel gave Tenne a concerned look, and healing magic gathered in her palm. “Oh dear- Tenne! Come here, dear one- let me see your neck.”

Asgore ruffles faintly. “Ah… Tori… There was a misunderstanding when I charged from here. I… hurt the wrong person.”

The small goat clinging to the back of Toriel’s skirts blinked up at him. “It’s okay, Father. I’m sure you didn’t mean to- and if you apologized, it’ll make it okay. Right Chara?”

“Right.” The little girl looked scarily like Frisk, but with more reddish brown eyes instead of chocolate brown. She peered up at Toki curiously, but ultimately didn’t say anything to her. She instead looked at Tenne. “Are you okay, doctor Gaster?”

“He will be when your mother is done with him.” Toriel mutters.

He stepped forward to Toriel’s beckoning hands and lowered the ice pack as he leaned his neck back, allowing her full access to his neck, and the damage that became of the misunderstanding.

He did not speak, though his gaze moved to the children and with his free hand he gave a thumbs up that accompanied a wink and a smile.

The children gave him weak smiles in turn as Toriel set into healing his neck. She eased the bruising
out of his flesh first, along with the damage to his esophagus and vocal cords, before she began to work the burns out of his flesh. “There… keep the ice pack close at hand. You'll still ache for some time, but you should be okay to talk, Tenne.” She checks along his singed fur for a moment. “I can’t help your fur, but it will grow back, I’m sure.” She nods.

Toki shuffles as the kids look at her, and she waves faintly, offering a faint lopsided smile to them. Her fingers gentle wiggle free of Tenne’s, and then she pads a little deeper into the courtyard, her eyes wandering over it. Her wings flick and twitch, and she hums thoughtfully. “Soon we’ll be free…” She murmurs more to herself than anyone else.

"You're a miracle worker, Tori dear." Tenne purred appreciatively. His voice sounded less rough, after her magic had soothed and healed them.

'And pray tell how you think you plan on pulling this off, Toki.' Cruelty spoke up in her mind.

'I have the equivalent of what amounts to probably several magical nukes trapped behind a dam in my soul. I’m sure we can figure out something.' Toki glanced back at the group that was chatting, and then began padding silently away from them. She knew the way to the barrier from here- the castle seemed to be shaping up into a similar shape to the one she had grown familiar with, so it the way to the barrier was no doubt the same.

She headed off while Asgore started to talk to Toriel, only to find a small set of curious feet shadowing her. The soft tapping of shoes over the unfinished granite courtyard was unmistakable.

“Where are you going? Dad says we’re not supposed to go that way.” Chara was following her, and reached up with curious hands to touch her wing. “Hey, lady- that way has dangerous stuff down there. We’re not supposed to go that way.”

“I know, little one.” Toki said softly. “But that’s where I must go. Why don’t you go back to your dad, hm?” She turned to look at her, hoping to redirect the girl in the striped sweater. “I’ll be alright.”

Chara gave her a skeptical look. “The last monster who went to the barrier alone got dusted.” She says. “So… No.” Her hair swishes when she shakes her head.

“Chara, dear,” Asgore calls, “It’s alright. She is… dead set on going to the barrier. It’s best just to let her go, my daughter. Come here.”

The girl’s hand tightens on her wings, and then she skulks back over to her dad once she lets Toki go. “But… Dad, she’s going to get dusted.”

“She’s not going alone.” Asgore shakes his head gently, and lifts her up and peppers her cheeks with kisses. “I will accompany her. Now go with your mother, sweet one.”

‘I’m not going to die.’ Toki murmurs to Cruelty. ‘I might not have much to live for anymore, but I’m not going to die.’

Tenne made a move while Asgore comforted his child, and he quickly stepped in front of Toki. Avoiding her wings, he reached out and wrapped his arms around her before pulling her close.

"You're not going to change my mind, Tenne." She warned him.

"I know..." His words were trembling "I just... I wanted to do this... just one last time." He whispered.

“It’s not going to be the last time, Tenne.” She hugged him back gently as well. “The next time will
be outside and under the sun… or under the moon, depending on what time it is outside.” Toki gave him a soft smile, and then wiggled from his arms. She looked up at him gently, and reached up to pat his face with one of her secondary arms. “It’s going to be okay.”

“I don’t know about that, Miss Nara.” Toriel murmured softly. “We’ve had… We’ve had monsters dusted in there. I think you can understand Tenne’s fear. Could you… perhaps heed the plea of a Queen and not attempt this…?”

“No.” Toki shakes her head. “If the barrier has dusted monsters before, then it is all the more reason for me to do this.” She steps back, and gives them all a confident smile that she certainly doesn’t feel inside, before turning and marching for the barrier.

Toriel steps up, and she rests a hand on Tenne’s shoulder. “Go with her, Tenne. If… If anything happens, a doctor is going to be her saving grace. I will come too. Between the both of us…” Her voice drops low. “Between the both of us, we can keep that crazy woman alive, alright?”

He looked at Toki as she walked down the corridor to the barrier, before he looked up at Tori, and gave a shaky smile. "She's crazier than you were in your youth." He chuckled quietly. "I just hope you and I can protect her like Asgore and I did for you in your reckless age."

“You and me both, Tenne… You and me both.” Toriel sighed. She left Asgore watching the children, before taking Tenne’s arm, and leading him after the fast walking blaster beast.

Toki only stopped when she reached the rainbow of lights that were the barrier. She blinked at it slowly, and then prodded at Cruelty, planting a hand on her chin as she looked at it so she would look like she was pondering and thinking instead of staring off into space while she had a conversation with her mental companion.

‘Cruelty?’ She nudges him. ‘Take a look at this and tell me what you think. I never got to see the one you erected- not up close. Do you think this one is of similar quality and of similar power?’

‘If it means anything… I just got a massive headache accompanied by a wave of nostalgia…’ Cruelty’s murmured reply to her was quiet against the thrum of the barrier. He gave a dry snort. ‘It’s the same Magic- or perhaps the Void is a better name for it now- that we sealed away in our world. Though… I have to say, this is the shittiest construct of a barrier that I have ever seen. Comparatively, I’ve seen children put up better barrier’s back when I was still teaching classes for young mages when we were still together and at peace.’

‘So… would you say it’s going to be easy to break this barrier then?’ She questioned lightly, giving him an amused nudge. ‘You as a teacher is an amusing thought. All the same… How do I break the barrier? Any tips, oh great teacher you?’

‘Abso-fucking-lutely not.’ He answered, ‘Where this thing lacks in quality…’ After a moment, there was a prodding in her mind. ‘Do you mind?’

Toki hesitates and glances behind her out of the corner of her eye. ‘We’re being observed, Cruelty. We don’t have a good place to switch- and you recall how disorienting that is.’ Otherwise she would go for it, if he knew how to break the barrier.

‘Tch. It was only disorienting when you took over again! You have a weaker willpower than I do, idiot!’

Toki gives him a mental thump, and steps closer to the barrier, inspecting it thoughtfully. ‘All the same- they’re watching me like a hawk. They’re going
to notice any change in behavior and probably make us leave. It’s going to be safer just to stay as we are. Besides- you make a decent back seat driver. And you’re not quite that good at working four arms. Don’t think I didn’t notice you focusing extra hard to work all four of my arms this morning.’

‘Am I usually this nosy, Toki?’ He hissed quietly.

‘Not unless something really has your interest, no, or you’re hounding me over something.’ She tilts her head, and regards him lightly. ‘Is something worrying you, Cruelty?’

‘Yes! Just... can I at least borrow an arm?’ He grumbled, prodding at a mental nerve in her arm.

She slid out of her arm like trading a glove, finding it easier than a full switch over, and found it numb and unresponsive as she guided him into control of one of her secondary arms. ‘Of course.’ She says softly. ‘Of course. Just try not to act too strangely. God- this is definitely weird.’

He flexed the hand a few times to grasp control of it and he mentally scowled, before he extended a hand, only to immediately retract it and he hissed into her skull.

‘The Ward of Draining Life...’

‘The fact that you phrased that like it’s said in all capitals is definitely alarming.’ Her teeth purse together, and her wings flick tensely for a moment, before she sighs. ‘I’m going to guess that it drains the life from anyone that tries to break it then… Well… Shit… Alright. Since Monsters are made of magic, and magic is life, does that mean it’s designed to drain magic? Because if that’s the case… I’m pretty sure we can still tank it.’

‘... I can’t even believe I’m gonna say this... But... what if we utilize the detonation... On the barrier?’

‘That might be an idea of warrant.’ She agrees. ‘Though… maybe not blowing ourselves up. I quite like living… But… I think if we shatter the dam holding back our power, we should be able to put all of that power into breaking the barrier. I can shoot… shit, mouth lasers, I guess. Think a super charged one of those would blow a hole in the barrier, Cruelty?’

‘Well it depends. Is our definition of the word ’super charged’ the same?’

‘I’m thinking enough power to potentially blow my teeth out of my mouth, if not more- how much power were you thinking?’

‘Coughing out that soul ball while managing to stay connected to it to be the trigger mechanism. I’d wager putting it against this barrier would overload the fuckin’ thing.’

Toki is glad the others can’t see the face she suddenly pulls. ‘You make it sound like all of those people’s soul traits and magic are one big hairball to hack out. That’s just… ugh, that’s so gross. I don’t even know if I can do that- I don’t know how much exploring of our system you’ve done while you’ve been floating around inside my head, but I think the magic ball is pretty integrated into our system by now. Also- detonating that is basically like setting off a nuclear explosion- and we’re going to collapse the entire Underground if we do that. I mean, yeah, it would totally do it- but we’re also going to kill everyone and us too, probably.’

‘I mean... we still could.’

Aannnd typical Cruelty at it again with that terrorist bullshit.

‘Bad Cruelty. Bad. You’ve been doing so good until now. No- we’re not going to blow up the underground. I can’t believe you.’ She huffs to him. She shakes her head.
Toki squares her shoulders, and walks a few paces away from the barrier. She glances to Tenne and Toriel, and tilts her head. “You may want to stand back.” She advises gently, as she reaches deep within her to the dam inside of their soul. She digs her claws into the foundation, and she grabs hold. “This might get a little… Messy.”

Tenne took an uneasy step back, whining quietly. “Be careful...”

Cruelty relinquished control and murmured a soft ‘sorry’ before he helped her focus to find the pent up energy within. ‘I don’t know what will happen after this is released... so... good luck.’

‘Thank you, Cruelty. I’m going to need it.’

“Yes, please do.” Toriel nods. She too takes a step back, but she watches her carefully and readies her magic.

The barrier crackles eagerly, sensing magic use.

Toki glances at it, and then puffs softly. “I will.” She nods to Tenne and Toriel.

She turns to face the barrier, and rolls her shoulders. She can do this. She can do this. Well... She hopes she can do this. Toki takes a deep breath in, her ribs expanding below her flesh, and then exhales roughly. Her fingers in the dam inside of her soul tug once, twice, and thrice- and the dam cracks.

The weakness in the dam holding back an ocean is more than enough. The weight of the power behind it pushes against the crack and forces it open, starting with a fast trickle, into a steady stream, until finally the ocean is just pouring into her without any form of restraint.

The power floods her limbs, making the air around her turn heavy. The weight of the magic hits her again in ways she hadn’t expected it to- and it washes over her with agonizing quickness as it fills her past the point of full, and then just keeps going.

Some of it leaks out of her skin, rolling out of her in a sickly black ooze that wafts into the air like a toxic mist. Toki lifts her arms and beckons it back to her, knowing she will need every ounce of it that she can get. She gathers it up in front of her, mashing it into a ball like she had seen Cruelty do.

She funnels the escaping magical smoke back up into her grasp, and compresses it all into a ball so heavy that the rocks around her began to rattle.

Once smoke stopped rolling from her body, Toki compressed the massive ball of smoke as tight as it would go- and then ate it.

And immediately regretted it.

Her body had tried to bleed out the power that it wasn’t meant to hold- and she had basically told it no and where to shove it.

She hit her knees as the rest of the dam shattered, and the ocean did it’s best to drown her. Her body visibly warped under the weight of the magic, making the stone sink in under her, and she struggled for breath as she tried to gain control of the bomb she had just wrought upon herself and the other monsters.

Her magic took on a beating pulse that was increasing into a rapid crescendo, like the rapid ticking of a bomb, and she couldn’t stop the pained cry as the magic tried to melt down and reform one of her arms. It was unable to- but the sensation of it attempting to do so was no less unpleasant.
Watching her body surge and warp under the pulsing of heavy magic beyond even them must not have been a pleasant sight- and Toki spared her companions a glance as she tried to gain control over herself.

Toriel was watching with horror, having sunk to her knees under the weight and pressure of the magic that Toki was putting out. Her chest was heaving for breath, and she was struggling to stay on her hands and knees as Toki labored to control the power of the magic she had unleashed.

The sheer force of the magic would have put Tenebris on his hands and feet. Tenne buckled to the knees.

But in his stubbornness and refusal to lose her, he began to crawl closer, or at least make an effort to. With each shaking pull he felt himself skid back an inch for every two he managed. "T-Toki!" His words couldn't leave his throat; he felt as if the energy pushed the very air he breathed back down his throat. It didn't make things easier.

He finally got an idea that sort of worked when he used his tail as one would use an ice pick, ever so slowly attempting to pull himself closer.

As the pressure of her magic seemed to just keep growing and increasing, however, he couldn't get close. He tried to shout to her, but his words were lost in the thundering pressure of her magic.

"You... you better survive this, Nara!" Cruelty sounded strained as she proceeded. 'If you die, I'll kill you!'

Tenne’s actions warmed her soul as well as confused her, for she couldn’t hear what he had shouted at her over the ringing in her ears. She coughed, and used Cruelty’s voice to center her focus. ‘If I manage to die from this, I’d definitely want to kill me too.’

She gather’s the power, and lets it build in her mouth and throat, and she can feel it scorching at her and burning like no fire ever should. She can’t even breathe past the heat of the light building in her throat.

The noise that comes from her is something between nails on a chalk-board into an amplified megaphone, and the ringing of one of those glowing root things from that game Papyrus had dabbled in playing before deciding he didn’t like slaying skeletons. It deafened her, and only grew worse as the light in her mouth became solid, and forced her jaws open.

Her wings straightened up behind her as she lifted her head, her mane bristling with the pain from the magic inside of her. She drew more and more of it from where it was bruising the pale flesh of her limbs and ruining her clothing, and funneled it straight up into her throat.

The light grew and grew, a bright, horrible green color that crackled with power beyond what should be earthly possible. She wasn’t a god- only a god should have this much power.

It was time to put it to use- and get rid of it.

Her whole body lurched as the laser went off. The sound of it striking against the barrier was horrible indeed, and the barrier visibly rippled, bending against the force of the blast. Thick, black spikes shot out from the barrier, and they pierced through her wings as if her high defense were nothing- and Toki screamed around the light as the Barrier’s defensive ward fought back.

It pinned her wings to the floor like she was an insect on display, and then began to suck the magic from her to try and repair the damage that was being done to it. It was repairing the damage as fast as she could cause it, initially.
‘Fuck it all,’ Toki thought, ‘Fuck it all.’

Instead of reinforcing her defenses, she threw it straight into her attack, and watched as her precious teeth cracked under the force that skirted past them and scoured the roof of her mouth. The ocean in her was thrashing, seeking freedom, and she pumped more and more of it into her throat and mouth, until her mouth felt like it was nearly splitting in half for the force of the magic that she was throwing into it. Between her mouth and what the barrier was taking, the ocean was rapidly draining, turning from an ocean to a lake, and from a lake to a pond.

The light grew brighter, more intense, and the beam hyper focused at the initial point of contact. Slowly but surely, she was causing more damage than the barrier could heal. Eventually, the barrier warped and under the force of the beam, the massive barrier gave an ear-shattering crack and a hole was blown straight through it.

Her laser shot straight through, and she carved a furrow in the barrier as she lost her fight with saying upright. She carved it from the ceiling to the floor- and made the first door to the outside, a door large enough that the barrier struggled to seal.

Her magic was running out though- it and herself had chewed through the massive stores that Cruelty had given her. The barrier was wobbling, warping, and pulsing like the bomb she used to be. Her limbs no longer pulsed, no longer hurt- but her insides hurt, for the magic had blasted through her and burnt her from the inside out like a worn out light bulb.

The barrier was working through her magic, and Toki collapsed as it began to take from her private stores rapidly, trying to knit the barrier together from the point of impact down to the last spot of damage.

The magic was too unstable, even for the barrier to properly use- so it went after hers. And, acting like a mosquito, it did it’s best to drain her dry.

Toki began to wilt before their eyes, crumpling from her hands and knees down onto her belly, and being unable to move as the magic invigorating her body and keeping her healthy began to be drawn from her. She’d done as she had promised, and blown them a hole to freedom- and she was paying the price, as she always did. The barrier still had her pinned, with the thick black spikes stabbed through her wings like spears.

She did it. Tenne couldn't believe she did it. Tenne had felt as the barrier gave and he looked up to praise Toki, only to watch with horror as she began to lose the fight. "NO!" He screeched.

Now with the energy released, it was easier for him to get to Toki and his throat glowed before his mouth opened and he released a blast of his own to strike the spikes impaling her wings. Successfully breaking the spikes just above her wings, he pulled her off the stumps carefully and pulled her close before he looked up to the damaged barrier. She had damaged it, blown it wide open with the blast from her throat, but it was healing fast- far too fast.

He held her tighter. "I'm not losing you." He hissed, before he unhinged his jaw to unleash a blast of energy at the Barrier.

His boys were going to see the sunlight; his king was going to bring his people to freedom, and he'd be damned before he let her blessing go to waste!

The barrier gave a mighty pulse as his blast hit it, and it wavered visibly under the hit. The conflicting types of magic, and the sheer amount of it that it had absorbed from the fallen woman that lay sprawled in the great beast’s arms, did not mix well within the barrier.
It shuddered, and made a shrill sound, like glass cracking- before it sucked in on itself. The healing edges pulled away, ripping wider, and there was almost a vacuum effect as it sucked air inwards towards them, blowing over them like a sharp, sharp breeze.

The barrier unceremoniously fell, bringing with it a tremulous silence in the wake of its absence.

The shaky rasp of Toki’s breathing filled the silence, echoed by the winded ones from Tenne.
Chapter 102

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Lots of stuff is happening in these consecutive chapters, ne? 8) Kinda nice, ain’t it. Bet ya’ll are anxious for the usual skippy chapters where stuff is much less traumatic. HEH.

Also sorry for being later in the day with this chapter. Taking care of everything for my mom after her surgery has proven exhausting, so I’m in bed earlier than I normally Am. On a side note- we’re running out of stockpiled chapters. Once we’re out, updates will go to a ‘when chapters are finished’ basis, because both Silver and I are at a hectic point in our lives, and real life must come first, sadly.

Translations: “This... This is not my home. This isn't where I came from. I... I'm really never going to see it again, am I...?”

Silverwing Notes: The only other time I’ve heard this much Freedom in the air is during the 4th of July, but baby is it good for our babies to be free! Whee!

Enjoy the Chapter!

She looked worse for the wear. Her teeth were cracked, the skin holding them in place having cracked and split from the force of the power that had come from her. The inside of her mouth was burnt and raw.

Her body had shriveled some, the mass amount of magic supporting and sustaining her no longer there, her once bright pale skin a now unhealthy shade. She was lighter, almost scarily light compared to what she was before. She was also limp in his grasp, though her eyes were open. She looked at where sunlight streamed in through where the barrier had been.

She could have sworn there was a cave there- but now it looked like there was a massive tunnel straight to the outside that had been carved in a straight line. The stone looked like it had been worn smooth by something. It let the sunlight in though. And the sunlight… It was so blessedly beautiful. Her eyes began to drift closed, exhaustion washing over her.

“D-did it…” Her voice is so wrecked- but she manages words all the same. “D-did… It…”

As the sunlight came, so did the fresh air. It washed over them and Tenne could only sit for a moment as his lungs took in the pure air, flooding his body with fresh oxygen and the energy that came with it. "Toki… You did it..." He carefully collected her in his arms and brought her over to Toriel, shaking slightly as he went. One short blast took a lot out of him- he could not imagine sustaining the sort of attack that she had done. "That took a lot of magic... I’m surprised you didn't buckle sooner." He murmured to the bee based blaster beast.

“It’s g-gon-ne no-ow.” She manages to say as she wilts in his grasp. Her mane is flat and limp against her chest. “S-spent it. Now I j-just have m-my magic…” She rasps. “Feel… Feel lighter… Was s-so heavy… So f-full…”
Toriel stirs from her daze as Tenne brings the fallen woman to her. Her gaze lands on the massive holes in her wings, and the sorry state of her body in general. “Oh! Oh you poor, brave dear…” Healing magic lights up her hands, and she closes them over Toki’s wings. It’s quick work to seal up the weeping punctures in the glowing surfaces, and from there she works up to her face. She can’t fix it all, but would do what she could. She frowns, and does a quick scan down from her throat down to her chest and belly. “Oh… My stars… It’s like you’re burnt from the inside out, Toki.”

“It’s no-”

“No.” She shushes her gently. “Quiet. Let me heal you first, and then you can talk.” She focuses her magic into Toki’s chest, and starts with the worst of the wounds inside of her.

Toki doesn’t even move when Toriel starts healing- and things turn painful. Her eyes just close, and she lets Toriel work.

The Queen works with swift practice, and then makes her way back to her face. She brushes her hands up along her throat, and then begins to work on that as well, though she’s sweating bullets by that point.

As she’s healed, Toki regains some color, but her body doesn’t regain mass. She’d still been drained- and it had literally sucked away what progress she had made towards being healthy again. Her breath comes easier now that her insides aren’t cooked, and soon her voice no longer throbs as badly.

Toriel manages to seal the wounds around her mouth, and a little bit of the cracks on her teeth, before she had to stop. “I’m sorry… I must rest.”

Toki swallows and nods. Not everything is fully healed- but it’s no longer as painful. “Thank you.” She murmurs softly, and takes a deep breath of fresh, fresh air. She then turns her head, accidentally putting one of her horns through Tenne’s doctor’s coat, and presses her face against his chest. “I told you,” She whispers, “I told you… I would give you and the boys freedom… everyone freedom…and you… you helped too, Tenne.”

Holes in his coat were the least of his problems, and he smiled as he stroked her head. ”You're a miracle to us, Toki..." He whispered, "Thank you, Toki... Thank you..."

Toki gave him a shaky smile, and glanced up at him. “You're welcome…” She breathes softly. “Do you… Do you want to go get the boys? So they can see… See the outside world for the first time?”

Toriel glanced to Tenne. “I can watch Toki, Tenne. Moving her now might not be wise. I want to watch her and make sure I’ve got her healed… You should tell Asgore as well that… That the barrier is gone.” She smiles. “You and Toki both will be honored as heroes.”

Tenne nodded a few times and he slowly put Toki down beside Toriel. He then stood up and headed back to the unfinished throne room, looking for the king and his children. "Asgore?"

Asgore was waiting in the throne room, sitting on the finished throne with Chara and Asriel in his lap. He glanced up as Tenne came out, and his ears perked. “Old friend? What happened? We heard quite the commotion…”

Asriel whimpered and buried his face into Asgore’s coat.

Chara patted his back. “Azzy,” She admonishes, “Don’t be such a crybaby. I’m sure no one died this time, okay?”

"She did it, Asgore." He told him, "She did it... It's destroyed. We're free."
His fur ruffled and the king stared at his best friend, his mouth slacking open. “… Truly? Are we truly free? This is no jest?”

"I dare you, Asgore. Step into that room. You will feel the sun on your mane; you'll take in real oxygen, taste the winds that have crossed the oceans! She... She's a miracle to our species!" He laughed, trying not to sound too overwhelmed.

Asgore stood, hefting his children into his arms. His eyes went wide. “She’s... certainly something.” Frightening more like- but a miracle as well. “A miracle yes. Is she... all right? The barrier did not harm her too badly?”

"You should have seen it, old friend! She summoned power I’ve never seen before! A-As if she faced a human army and harnessed every last soul within her! But... It did take a lot out of her. I had to intervene to free her from it, and land the final blow to the barrier myself, but Toriel's with her now... I...” The doctor hesitates, and then scuffles his shoe. “I'll be honest... another blaster beast appears in the underground with the power to free us from our prison... My sons love her, and I love being around her...” He gave a shaky laugh and rubbed his head. "When she recovers, I find myself the undeniable need to court her fully... such a miracle to our kind... I cannot lose her..."

“She is... frightening in her power, for sure.” Asgore nods faintly. He swallows, and listens to his friend. “Just... be careful, old friend. Do not court a being of this power just because she saved us and is a miracle to us- court her because you love her. You obviously do- you talk about her often enough for me and Toriel to see it.” He smiles. “… Speaking of your sons- go get them. You have a long run- but they should see the outside world, before there is a stampede from everyone to get out. Gather your essentials while you are there, Tenne- I doubt you will wish to go that far underground again to get them.”

"Yes, of course!" He gave his old friend a hug around the midsection before he turned and ran out of the castle with a bright smile on his face.

Asgore, with his children in arms, toddled his way to the barrier room, which was now more of a tunnel than a room, to see for himself their freedom. The fresh air that filled his lungs almost beckoned tears from his eyes.

It was true... They were free...

"Toriel, how is Toki?” He then looked to his wife, coming over to her side.

“She is weakened but seems to be resting.” Toriel answers. She had shifted Toki so her head rested on her lap, and gently rubbed her hands over the weakened monster’s head. “I’m out of magic for healing her though. I did my best to heal the worst of it- the magic that she used… While powerful… it tore her up inside. It was like… it was like it was weaponizing her, turning her into a living… explosive of some sort.” Toriel frowns, and brushes Toki’s mane back from her forehead. “She must have been hurting so much…”

Toki blinked open her eyes and exhaled softly. She wasn’t nearly as asleep as Toriel seemed to think she was. “It did hurt.” She murmured. “It was… designed to turn me into an explosion. I… I used it for something different. Rerouting it was… not easy.” She murmured.

"Do not over exert yourself, my love. You've done everything you could.” He kissed Toriel’s head, and then smiled to Toki. "We owe you so much, Tokiko. You will be knighted for your bravery.” He rumbled.

A soft laugh left Toki, and her face pinched in pain at doing so. “You don’t need to knight me,
Asgore. I’m no knight- I’m just… nnn… I’m just a bee keeper.”

“Try not to laugh, dear.” Toriel smoothed a hand over her mane to help calm her. “Knighted or no, you will be honored.”

“I don’t need to be.” She shakes her head faintly, and exhales softly. She looks up at Asgore. “I just… I don’t need fame and glory. I’m a barmaid and ex bee-keeper- I’m no hero. Hah… Mm…”

Toki swallows. “You and Toriel can take your kids to see the outside… I’m not going anywhere.”

"But neither are we, Toki. We’re not leaving you alone." Asgore announced adamantly.

She gives him a faint smile from cracked teeth. “Ah… Alright. Well, I’m not going to complain. You’re all good company.” She shifts some, wings twitching under her. She winces. “Ugh…”

Toriel flicks her forehead. “Stop moving, darn it. None of that is going to help you now.” She huffs irritably at the woman. “I know the floor is uncomfortable, but there’s not much to be done.” She unclasped her cloak, however, and draped it over her as she noticed a small bit of breast showing through her tattered shirt. She glanced up to Asgore. “It will be an hour or more before Tenne returns… Why don’t you sit down with the children? We can all wait here for him to return. The kingdom and the guards can man themselves until you’re ready to announce the barrier being down.”

"I'm not going anywhere." Asgore chortled as he sat down beside Toki, putting the children in his lap. "Knowing Tenne, though, he's going to be a lot faster than an hour or so." He chortled.

“Unless he teleports,” Like her Tenebris could, “He’s going to take at least half an hour. I’ve walked this place, and I’ve flown it- flying is faster than running.” Toki murmurs faintly.

Asriel shifts in his father’s lap, and reaches out to touch one of her horns. “Dad? Is she gonna be okay…? She didn’t look this… skinny… when we saw her outside.” He looks up at Asgore with a worried frown on his face.

“Anyone who breaks the barrier has to be tough.” Chara comments, though she too looks concerned by Toki’s state.

"She had to fight quite a fight, but Tenne will take good care of her, don't worry." He gave his children a squeeze, glancing to Toki for a moment.

Toki met his gaze and tilted her head. “I’ll be okay, kids. I promise. This isn’t my first rodeo being underweight. I’ll get better.” She smiles to them. “Nara are tough.”

“Really tough.” Asriel nods, and pats her horn gently. He glances up at his dad. “Dad? If we’re gonna be on the surface, how are we gonna make sure she’s okay? Are there doctors out there?”

“Not any good ones.” Chara mutters.

“There are some.” Toki corrects gently. “Not all of them are good- and none of them are going to know how to treat a monster. I just need rest to replenish my magic, and food to restore my body. It will take time- nothing that a doctor wouldn’t prescribe.”

“Speaking of… Are you going to regain all of that power once more?” Toriel inquires gently.

“No.” The pale beast exhales. “That was sort of a… one time use sort of deal. I wont ever have that much power again. Not if I can help it.”

'I don’t think I can handle another outburst like that.' A groan from Cruelty floated up, who literally
sounded facedown in something in her mind as he said that.

‘Neither can I.’ Toki replied tiredly to Cruelty. She idly wondered how he did his mental sound effects.

Toki had called it. It took nearly an hour, in which time Toki rested and was healed a little bit more, before the quick footsteps and breathless sound of winded lungs heralded Tenne returning, his boys in his arms and a pack on his back.

"I-I'm here!" He sounded a little winded as he set down his boys.

Asgore blinked up at Tenne, and shifted to stand once more. “Old friend, did you run the entire way?” One of his ears cocks at him slightly.

“He probably did.” Toki chimes tiredly from the ground. She waves at the boys, knowing they were bound to panic and squirm in Tenne’s arms any moment. “Hey, boys. Look what your dad and I did?”

Kai’s eyes were primarily on the sunshine at first- but they flicked right over to Toki as she spoke. His eye lights faded, and he flailed where he stood. He reached for her, but seemed hesitant to approach the battered form, as if he would hurt her. “Mama! Oh my god- Dad, dad, she doesn’t look okay, Dad-”

And there it was- it took him longer, but she had to have expected it to come sometime. Toki gave Kai a shaky smile, and sat up with Toriel’s help. She adjusted the borrowed cloak the Queen had loaned her, and made to try and stand. “I’m okay, Kai. I’m okay. Or… I will be okay, honest.”

"I know, I know." Tenne scooted over to Toki and slowly scooped her up to pull her close to his chest.

Quinn followed him and whined loudly as he hugged her arm. "Mama!” The pup whimpered.

Toki gathered Quinn to her, and tugged Kai to her gently when the boy finally wandered close enough. She leaned against Tenne, and cuddled them to her. Broken teeth peppered Quinn’s skull in tender kisses. “Oh boys… I’m okay.” She crooned softly. “I’m okay…” She glanced up to Tenne with a small smile. “Well… Shall we go outside, Tenne? I don’t know about you… But I’ve missed the sun.”

“Screw the sun!” Kai exclaimed as he clung to her as best he could without hurting her. “I don’t want it if you’re going to get hurt to get it!”

"Kai!” Tenne scolded sharply.

“I already got it for you though, Kai.” She smooched his face next, to which he made a face. “Your dad and I both did. So… let’s go enjoy it, yeah?”

Divested of her charge, Toriel got to her feet as well. “I’m all for seeing the sun. I want to make sure the surrounding area is safe before our people go charging out into it.”

“A sound idea, my dear.” Asgore nods. He glances to Tenne and his armload of the sickly looking woman, and both of his sons. “If you think you can walk and carry so many, would you and your family like to be the first outside?” The king says softly to his oldest friend.

Tenne sighed and smiled to Toki, nuzzling her gently. "Of course, Asgore." He then spoke up, lifting his gaze to the King with a happy smile. "But only if my king and queen are at my side.”
As he spoke this, he scooped his boys up to plop them down into Toki's lap, holding them all close before slowly starting the ascension to freedom. "Toki... None of this could have happened if it weren't for you..." He told her as he walked, a quiet rumble that vibrated through his chest carrying his words to her, carrying his praise and happiness.

Asgore and Toriel were not far behind him. They gave just enough distance, however, to give the doctor and Toki some privacy as they walked.

Toki was thankful for it as she used her arms to secure the boys as they cuddled into her chest. She exhaled softly, and curled her head into his chest, letting the hardness of his shield press against her horn and her temple. “I wouldn’t be alive if you hadn’t have saved me,” She said softly to him.

“So… We did it together. It was a group effort… But,” She glances up at him through one eye, “I did tell you I could do it, couldn’t I?”

Kai nipped her hand and glared at her. “Don’t sound smug for almost dying.” He scolds, voice thick.

She croons and nuzzles him gently as Tenne makes the climb to the outside world. The sunshine grows brighter, and the fresh air tinged with the smell of the trees.

"There it is, boys... the surface." Tenne rumbled, before laughing happily and giving the three of them a slightly tighter embrace. "We're free..."

Quinn giggled slightly through his upset sniffles over Toki’s state of being, but was quickly enraptured by the green of the sunlight over the trees, which was much like his Mama’s mane.

Kai glanced to the sky, looking at the cloudless expanse of blue that seemed to go on forever. “It’s… It’s so big…” He said, voice awed.

Toki, however, found her gaze drifting out- and to a city that should not have even been visible. Her mane tensed a bit, before she forcibly relaxed it, and she inhaled softly. These weren’t the trees that were native to home- no, these… These smelled like Christmas trees? Thousands and thousands of Christmas trees, intermingled with hundreds of other scents that were slightly overwhelming. The ground smelled damp and slightly like moss and mildew, like this place was somewhere that rained or snowed perpetually and the ground was always soggy and cold.

In the short distance, however, was a city with tall, towering buildings. It was built up along a massive river, with a big bridge crossing over onto the other side.

Toki’s brows furrowed, and she took a deep breath in, before exhaling.

She’d been here before. This… This wasn’t her home.

This was America. No wonder the monsters spoke English.

She was… She was even farther from home than she thought.

Her native tongue fell from her mouth without her meaning for it to. “Koreha... Watashinoiede wa arimasen. Kore wa watashi ga doko kara kita monode wa arimasen. Watashi wa... Hontōni mōichido sore o miru tsumori wanai, watashi wa... ?” Her voice was soft, sad, and with a sort of bitter acceptance as she closed her eyes and sighed.

Tenne looked down to Toki and gave her another squeeze before he nuzzled her. "Toki… It's okay." He murmured gently.

She gave him a faint smile as she heard Asgore and Toriel gasp, as well as a sound of surprise from
Asriel. Her eyes slid open, and she looked up at him quietly. “I’m sorry… I suppose part of me was expecting- no… hoping, to see my family home just down the mountain.” It wasn’t visible- but if she could have seen the familiar trees… she’d have known it was there. Her eyes closed again, and she curled her face into his chest, and stopped looking out at the world that wasn’t her own.

She was so tired of fighting and fighting only to get nowhere… She didn’t even know what the void wanted, besides for her to ‘make her peace’, whatever that meant.

Kai squirmed in her arms, and her grip loosened around him. “Daddy! Put me down! I want to go see the trees! Is that a city in the distance? Whoa! The buildings are so tall!”

Toki took a moment to gather herself against his chest, and when she leaned back, she had affixed a mask into place, not unlike the time before she had confessed about her children. “They are.” She says gently to Kai. “They’re very tall. Humans live and work in them, and they’ve built towering buildings straight up into the stars rods of metal and glass. It’s really fascinating.”

"Can't put you down yet, okay?" Tenne tutted to his boy, nipping his head gently. "In time we will venture out... but first." He held them a little tighter and looked up as he heard the distant blades of helicopter blades. "Well... looks like we drew a bit of attention to ourselves..."

“Probably when the barrier broke…” Toki murmured softly. She took a few deep breaths, and then mustered enough magic to launch one of her little bees up into the sky. It was small and glowing green- but it would be enough to alert the helicopter that there were people- of sorts- down on the ground.

Once the bee had gone high enough, she let it de-summon itself, and then slumped into Tenne with a tired sound. “We should… Probably wait… Until we make sure everything is safe with the humans before we bring everyone from underground.” She murmurs.

“A good idea.” The king murmurs. All the same, he hands his children to Toriel, and then glances to Tenne. “Step off into the trees, old friend. Rest with Toki- let me do my duty as king and negotiate with these humans.”

“I’ll help.” Chara chimes from next to Toriel.

"If it means the same to you, Asgore, I’ll surrender the lead, but I’m not going very far." He rumbled as he slowly backed up.

“I did not think you would, old friend.” Asgore nods. He waves to him, and then proceeds to settle down and wait for the helicopter to come in for a landing.

Toki is content to cling to Tenne and hold the boys as the helicopter thumps overhead. She tucks her face into his neck, and sighs. “Be prepared.” She says softly. “For a lack of true freedom at first... It will come, but it will take time.” She wondered how much time. Between her, Asgore, and all of the others who had fostered monsters, they had gotten the monsters their rights in less than a year.

She had a feeling it would not be so quick here without a boss heart to be fueling the movement from the human’s side of things to get the monsters their rights.

The chopper didn't land for a while; it saw the small group of monsters and seemed to hold there in place until there were the sounds of sirens from down below near the bottom of the mountain.

The sirens had Toki's wings instinctively tensing, and she rattled softly. The instinctive beast at her core was growing anxious- she wasn't in top shape for defending the pups cradled in her arms, or the male holding her, and that was a source of stress for her. Toki breathed through it as best she could-
she would need to learn how to handle her beast successfully.

"What are those... Wailing noises?" Kai asks, rubbing a hand over his skull.

"Police sirens." She says. "They might be... Slightly hostile at first. Just... Don't be aggressive. They're going to be scared and not know how to handle us. Getting shot is not what you want to have happen. Do you hear me, Asgore?"

"I hear you." The king nods, a grim look crossing his face for a moment, before he plasters a pleasant smile on his face.

Tenne lowered to a position that he'd be able to better support Toki, and gave her a gentle squeeze as the helicopter turned and started for where the sirens were blaring.

"No doubt that machine will be bringing them to us rather than them ascending on foot." He growled quietly.

Toki glanced at him with a soft sigh, and nudged him faintly. “Perhaps… there might still be officers that come on foot.” She says. “They will likely be armed- and very wary. We’re going to be very scary to them- I mean, I don’t exactly have a friendly looking smile. Just… don’t bare teeth, or you’ll probably get hit by a taser or worse.”

She shifts in his arms, and then squirms lightly. “It might be better if I try to stand…” The beast inside didn’t want to look weak in front of all of these people. She already looked sickly-thin and gaunt with watered clothes peeking out from under the cloak she had been loaned from Toriel. No need to make an even worse impression. First impressions were everything.

"Don't force yourself if you're not strong enough, Tokiko." Asgore told her, turning back to her for a moment, "But by having women and children, I hope to think they do not think we are out here with malicious intent."

Toki sighs, and kicks her feet slightly. “I can probably try…” She squirms a bit, and sighs. “But I don’t think I can stand and hold the children… So… maybe it’s just best I just… sit.” Even though her scent was twisting with anxious agitation. She hadn’t been here for the emergence of the other monsters- and they had never really talked about how it had gone, so Toki had no idea what to expect.

The unknown was terrifying- and she had no idea how these humans, these people, would react.

As the helicopter blades came back into hearing range she hid her face in Tenne’s chest and tried to calm herself with his scent.

Kai’s eyes were wide with awe, and his mouth popped open as he watched as not one, but three helicopters, laden with people, came into view. “Wow… The humans really can fly in their machines. That’s really neat. But Mama can fly better than they can.” He sounds proud, and cuddles into Toki and Quinn stubbornly.

Toki manages a faint smile as the helicopters come in for landing, but keeps her cracked crocodile teeth out of sight. They were alarming on the best of days- probably horrifying now.

Tenne had quickly taken the chance to make sure his tail was secured in its hook and tucked behind his coat as the helicopter came to land.

Asgore straightens, and affixes a smile on his face. As the whirring of the blades fades as the machines are powered down, he slowly raises his hand and offers a jolly wave. “Howdy!”
A few humans emerged from the copter in military fatigues; all carrying a weapon that looked like it would damn well hurt to get shot with. But as they got into position, none of them drew their weapons; rather they all looked a little surprised when he gave such a pleasant greeting.

Another officer in fatigues got out, but it was clear he was of higher experience with a rank to accompany. He too looked a little surprised at the friendliness of the greeting, but did not falter. "Hello." He greeted in return, managing not to sound too out of sorts.

Asgore tilted his head in greeting, massive horns gleaming in the light. He keeps his posture open and friendly, and his hands loose and relaxed. He gestures lightly to himself and his companions. “I am King Asgore- and this is my wife, Queen Toriel, my son, Prince Asriel, and my daughter, Princess Chara. My companions are my royal scientist, Doctor Tenne Gaster, his two sons, Kai and Quinn, and his companion, Tokiko Nara.” It was best to have names out there, so there were no misunderstandings. “We mean you and yours no harm- and we are very sorry if we scared you with our emergence.”

Kai offered a cheery wave from Toki’s arms.

Asriel drops into a formal bow, as does Chara, while Toriel curtsies pleasantly.

With Toki in his arms, Tenne couldn't bow properly but gave a small nod.

Quinn whined and hid his face in Toki’s fur.

"I'm Sergeant Nate Adams of the Mt. Hood Military base. We were mostly surprised when you did whatever it was to break out of the mountain." Nate gave a calm nod to them. “Though we hadn't realized you would be emerging from it, many stories of the past that mentioned monsterkind were skeptical at best, and not considered as I imagine it should have been."

Asgore nods. “I figured some form of military or guard would come.” He flicked his ear, and tilted his head. “I imagine that I will need to do more conversing with one of your leaders, yes? There are more than just us, I can assure you. The bulk of my people do not know that the barrier is down- and once they do, they are going to want to be on the surface. Perhaps we can work something out- I know it will be a long process to work something out for integration, but perhaps we can work on setting up a camp here at the mouth of the cave for all of my people to see the sky. Who would I need to speak with to negotiate this?"

"As long as you are within the perimeter of the Mt. hood base, you're in protected ground. We need only to inform the commander." The Sergeant answered, before looking past him at, presumably, Toki. "She doesn't look too good. We have medics back at the base if her condition is one to be concerned about."

“Toki and Tenne were the ones to break the barrier- and Toki unfortunately took the brunt of the barrier’s backlash for us.” Asgore comments softly. “Though… It is up to her if she would like your medical care.”

Kai’s smile faded in an instant and he puffed up defensively in Toki’s arms. He bore his little teeth at them. “You’re not taking my Mama nowhere.”

Toki shifted and exhaled, turning her head to face the humans where they stood. She watched a few of them stiffen at the sight of her teeth, and offered a smile that did not seem to make them relax. Well- cracked teeth, even mildly healed, were bound to be a sight to see. Particularly ones like hers. “Kai, it’s alright.” She soothed the defensive pup bristling in her lap. “Thank you for the offer,” She says to the soldiers, “but at this point I just need to rest and to heal. I can do that best where I have a
“If she wants to stay here instead, I have no qualms. I'll see about bringing up a first aid kit when we come back up with the Commander.” Nate commented.

“That would be useful, thank you.” Tenne rumbled with a smile.

“Alright then. I'll leave you all to get a feel for your surroundings. If the stories really are true, then I guess it's appropriate to say ‘Welcome back to the surface’."

Asgore nods. “Thank you- and that would be appreciated. We’ll likely need to down a few trees to make space for all of us,” he comments. “There are close to thirty five hundred of my people underground currently.”

“Three thousand, two hundred and sixty nine, to be exact.” Toriel chime, and strokes her fingers through Chara’s hair.

“Mom reminds when Dad forgets.” The human child standing next to Toriel chimes lightly, tugging on her striped sweater.

"And to this day I have no idea how she does that." Tenne whispered to his armful, snickering quietly.

Toki simply smiled.

“Ah, yes, thank you dear.” Asgore nods. “Like I said, there are many of us- we will need space to spread out. Will it be a problem if we cut down a few trees to make space for shelters? We will replant the forest when we are able to leave the mountain.”

"Well once again, we will talk to the commander, as well as a representative from the local Nature Reserves and the Fish and Wildlife." Adams answered. "So if I may, your Majesty. I will see about having them on the next chopper over."

Asgore nods. “Of course. We will be here, though there may be more of us depending on what occurs between now and then. None of us will hurt any of you, so long as you extend the same courtesy to us, of course.” He dips his chin, and motions to the chopper, which has started to fire up again. “Please- have a safe flight, Sergeant Adams, you and your soldiers.”

Toki sucks in a soft breath and brushes her horn against his chin. “We may want to choose our location for where we’ll be settling when the soldiers are gone.” Voice kept very, very quiet, Toki speaks against Tenne’s neck as he cradles her. “When we get everyone up here, it's going to be a mad scramble to get locations for everyone to camp at…” She murmurs softly.

"It would be wise." He nodded slowly, watching the copter take off before he looked to Asgore. "Toki suggests we get a head start in making ourselves a location where we shall stay. After all, there's going to be thirty two hundred and sixty nine other monsters who will want to find the same before each other.”

"It would be wise.” The king agrees. “However, I don’t have supplies on me for putting up a tent. You and Toki are welcome to go find your location, however. Toriel and myself will need to retrieve proper supplies from the Underground, first, before we can begin to put up a tent.”

“Can we scout a location though, Dad?” Chara tugs on his cape, and looks up at him with big, nearly crimson eyes. “Please?”
He chuckles. “Of course. You and Asriel can go with your mother. I will arrange the guards, and have things brought up. In the mean time… I would suggest getting your location, old friend. Once the guards know, gossip is bound to happen- the whole underground is bound to know.”

Toki nods. “Yeah.” She says softly. She squirms. “Let me down… I’ll help find a spot for your tent, Tenne…”

"I’ll handle the terrain, once we’re on more level ground I’ll put you down, Toki, you’re drained and probably don’t have the best balance." He told her, pecking her cheek.

Toki puffed her cheeks at him and huffed. “Well I won’t know if I have balance until I try to walk.” She says pointedly. She puffs her cheeks at him again all the same, and then just slumps in his arms. “Alright… Well… Lead the way then, Tenne.” She inhales lightly.

Kai chuffs and leans up to peer at his dad. “C’mon, Daddy. Let’s find a spot to settle down. I wanna get a comfortable spot and get our tent up. And a view! Gotta have a view. And I want a tree so I can nap in it.”

"Alright, alright! I’m going!” He laughed as he started the trek to find a place for them to sleep.

Toki kept Kai from tumbling right off her lap as Tenne made his way through the unsteady and unruly terrain, and tucked him against her with a put upon sigh. “Boy, you are going to fall on your face if you’re not careful. Then you’ll get snaggly teeth like me.”

“You don’t have snaggly teeth. You have cracked teeth.” Kai chirps. Then he frowns. “… How are you gonna eat like that? Your mouth is gonna hurt real bad. Maybe we can just do soups…?”

“I do have more teeth than just my external ones, you dork.” She nuzzles him gently. “I just can’t bite through anything right now, or they’ll break off. Besides- soup is boring after a while, and I don’t want to have to cook two separate dinners. I’ll figure out how to feed myself, Kai, don’t worry.” She boops his nasal ridge gently with hers.

He puffs at her.

Tenne chuckled and stopped for a moment, kneeling and resting Toki on his leg to free his tail, "There. Now this won’t be an issue of balance." He rumbled as he rose again, already feeling a lot more centered as he continued down the slope.

Toki’s wings flexed, and she chuckled up at him. “Oh ye tailed critters, can’t balance without your tails.” She gives him a tired but cheeky grin. She shifts, and glances around at the trees. “There might be a clearing just ahead. I see more light between the trees. Should we go check it out?”

“Would be easier from the air.” Kai chirrs.

“I can’t fly right now, kiddo.” She admonishes gently.

“… But Clover can? And I’m big enough to ride Clover.” He puffs his tiny chest.

Toki snorts, and buries his face in her neck next to Quinn. “Nope. When you’re tall enough to reach my shoulder, you can ride Clover on your own.”

His reaction was a little delayed, but at her remark, Tenne tuck his tongue out at her and gave a stubborn raspberry, but he indeed started for the clearing.

Toki’s fingers snaked up and grabbed the tip of his tongue between her digits. She arched a brow at
him, and lightly held his tongue, before blowing a raspberry back at him. “You’re such a dork, Tenne.” She lightly tugged on his tongue before letting him go and wiping his black slobber on his white coat, further ruining it. “So… you actually brought a tent, right? Or are we roughing it?”

"We're blaster beasts!" He announced, "The trees are our tents!"

After a moment of deliberation, Tenne then continued. "But yes. I did pack our tent."

Toki laughed. “Tough words from someone who shivers if he gets ice down his pants, eh twinkletoes?” Her words are teasing all the same.

The clearing they arrive in is decent sized, and completely and utterly overrun with blackberries. All the same, it is sheltered on most sides, and has a decent view on one side from a very, very steep cliff that drops off for quite some ways. There is plenty of space for a tent, and the ground seems fairly flat and clear.

"I will drop you." He hissed warningly, setting them down before he swung his tail around to grab it. He then proceeded to go on ahead, using his tail to slice the brambles.

Toki couldn’t help but laugh. Once she was set down, she urged the children gently off her lap, and tried to get onto her own two feet. And then proceeded to do a spectacular face plant, and eat some grass while she was at it. “Well, that was a mistake. I think I’ll just lay here. This is nice grass. I like this grass.”

The sarcasm was thick in her voice, as she made an attempt to instead get onto all fours. That was doable, but not exactly a way for her to move, given the thick cloak covering her. “So… Is there any chance you managed to snare a change of clothes? The only thing I didn’t ruin was the new shoes.”

"I've still got my coat to spare, but yes, I went ahead and packed your clothes." He rumbled, doubling back long enough to drop off the pack on his back.

“Great- thanks, Tenne.” The pack was accepted, and Toki enlisted the boys in holding Toriel’s cloak up so she could use it for a curtain to change behind, just perchance Toriel and her children wandered over. Once the ruined clothes were gone, Toki sighed and slumped into the slightly damp grass. She settled onto her side and watched Tenne, before humming softly. “You know,” She says gently, “as much as I would have appreciated using your coat, I don’t think I would have liked the possibility of human soldiers getting to peek at what I would be hiding under it.”

Kai chuckles and eases gently into her side to watch Tenne work at clearing back brambles. “Nope. Daddy wouldn’t have liked it either, right Daddy?”

"Not a bit." He replied without thinking twice about just what he was answering, hissing at the occasional poke of the bramble.

Toki blinked at his answer, and then chuckled faintly. “Well I’m glad you agree- no strange humans or monsters ogling my private parts. Also, Tenne? I think that’s enough brambles cut. There’s plenty of space for you to put up your tent. Speaking of… You still want me to stay with you…? A tent is smaller quarters than a house. I’d understand if you wanted me to bug off- no pun intended.”

“Yes.” Kai answers immediately, and headbutts her ribs. When she makes a faint pained noise, he whines a soft apology, and cuddles her instead. “Stay.”

"It is out of the question, Toki. Not after so long..." He gave a final slice, before he sighed and tucked his tail at his hip. Tenne returned to her side and grabbed his pack to disconnect the tent, before opening it and starting to unravel it.
Toki sat up as he returned, and wiggled away from both children. She shimmied over on all fours to help him unroll the tent and get it set up, using her wings to help her stay balanced. “Alright, Tenne, alright. Just be aware, wings go everywhere in small quarters. You’re going to probably get bopped at least once.” She hummed.

Kai rounded up Quinn, and went to go investigate one of the berry bushes to see what it was.

"I didn't care in the nest, did I?” He chuckled as he looked at her for a moment.

“Nope. But that was only for a night.” Her wings twitch slightly. “This would be more than one night. I’m not that wiggly, but my wings do weird things when I sleep on my front.” Which might be a thing. Toki shifted and stretched out the material, humming faintly and then easing the spikes in for keeping the tent material in place. Crawling around on the ground wasn’t all that comfortable, as it made her breasts hang, but it wasn’t the worst feeling in the world. At least she wasn’t falling on her face. Her teeth couldn’t take more hits.

He snorted and used his tail blade to slam the spikes into the ground, securing them. Soon the tent was completed in whole, revealing to be a bit larger than Toki no doubt expected.

The tent was larger than expected, probably easily able to hold her, Tenne, and probably two more monsters of their size. Toki tilted her head as she looked up at it. “… Why did I expect something smaller? Just… why.” She shakes her head with a soft sigh, and then flicks her wings. She shifts, and crouches shakily on her haunches. “It’s a nice tent though. Mmm… And we’re fairly secluded- so we should be alright out here.”

Exhaling softly, Toki makes to stand- and manages it with wobbly efficiency. She has to brace on the tent- but she’s upright. She glances to Tenne and buzzes her wings faintly. “Alright… Well, we have other things we need to prepare, along with the inside of the tent. Boys?” She calls. “Think you can hunt up some dried twigs?”

“Sure!” Kai nods. He takes Quinn’s hand, and sets off into the underbrush to get dried twigs as requested.

Toki glances at Tenne. “Alright. We can split forces.” Even if she doesn’t look like she could split a muffin, let alone forces, she’d try. “You want to take the inside of the tent, while I prepare the fire pit?”

Tenne chuckled and stretched with a sigh. "I'll go pick blackberries.” He chortled as he then turned to the pile of brambles.

Toki puffed her cheeks at him. “That wasn’t an option I had in mind- but might as well see if they’re still in season.” It felt like it was nearing the end of summer- however it could be middle of the summer though based on the colors of the leaves- so they should still be, from the times she remembered summers at her grandparent’s house. Her grandparent’s on her biological father’s side, that was.

Toki sighed, and ended up back down on her hands and legs as she grabbed the bag and scuttled into the tent. She was quick in spreading out the sleeping bags that she could find, and rolling up the blankets for pillows, before setting the bag in the corner where it wouldn’t get in the way. Once the interior of the tent was good enough, she scampered out.

She chose a spot that was ample distance away from the tent, and ample distance away from any brambles or grass, before she started to dig the fire pit.
Quinn watched his brother go around collecting firewood, having abandoned him to his task when his older brother’s legs proved faster than his own, and his father going to harvest berries. However, when he saw Toki start digging, he chattered happily and bound over to join her—because this was something he could do to help. "NYEH!" He squealed, taking her hands’ place as he started to dig.

She blinked as he took her place, and then chuckled softly. She let her hands pull back, and motioned to the places where the exuberant pup should widen or deepen the pit while he churned the dirt and kicked out small rocks and clumps of roots. “Good job, Quinn.” She cooed softly. “Very good job.” She sat back to avoid being spattered in dirt, and used her primary arms to keep herself balanced while her secondary set applauded him gently.

His tail wagged happily behind him as he continued to dig until the hole was wide enough, as well as deep enough.

Once it was perfect enough, she scooped him up and peppered him with very, very, very gentle kisses so as not to hurt her teeth more. Her secondary arms cradled him to her chest as she leaned her weight on one arm, and rifled through the dirt to find stones to line the side of the pit with the other arm. “Thank you for helping me, Quinn.” She buzzes softly to the youngest.

"NYEH!" He squealed happily, hugging her face when she gave him his kisses.

The hug just makes her smile, and she nuzzles him again, before finishing the pit. When she’s done, she shifts and rolls onto her back, leaving Quinn perched on her chest as she just takes a moment to close her eyes and rest under him. “You cutie pie,” She croons softly. She glances over to Tenne’s back, where she can see him picking berries. “How goes the berries, Tenne? Pricked your fingers yet?”

"Marvelous! Not a single thorn has jabbed me!" He answered proudly.

“Good job.” She chuckles. “The thorns suck.” She probably wouldn’t have an issue with it thanks to her defense stat. Though… come to think of it, what were her stats like now…? That was a thought for later tonight however. Toki hummed softly and stretched out on the ground. “Mmm…” Her eyes start to drift closed a little bit without her meaning to. She was exhausted— and the grass, while slightly chilly in the shade and slightly damp, was so soft and so much nicer than the snow she had gotten used to in Snowdin…

Kai proceeded to drop an armload of sticks and small branches into her lap, and then flop across her legs like a loaf of bread. “Maaaaan, camping is such hard work,” he groaned faintly.

Toki grunted, and shifted to sit upright again. She eased the sticks next to her instead of on her, and then patted his skull. “You’ll be doing your fair share of hard work, Kai.” She chuckled. “At least until I’m on my feet again. Once I’m no longer half dead, I’ll be good to go as far as taking over the rest of the work. Though I think finding dried twigs is an acceptable chore for someone of your age. What do you think, Tenne?”

"Of course, when I was your age I would've had to help scrape the dens and replace the elder's moss." Tenne replied, bringing over large handfuls of blackberries, cradling them in his gloves.

Kai stuck his tongue out at his dad. "You're like a billion years old, Daddy. You don't count." Blowing a raspberry at his father, Kai sprawls out in the grass like a little child sized bearskin rug. "I don't mind doing twigs. We're not gonna be sleeping in moss anyways. I don't want fleas."
Toki can't stop the little laugh that bubbles up. "No caves with moss for us, little one. We're beasts but we're civilized beasts. We have caves with blankets." She teases.

"I am not a billion years old." He huffed at his son, before he folded his arms. "And moss is a lot more comfortable than you think. It doesn't have fleas in it."

Like the mature child that he was, Kai stuck his tongue out at his dad and blew the biggest, wettest raspberry he could. "Ick no, I'll pass, thanks."

"Kids huh? That's the differences in generations, I suppose." Toki muses faintly, and tickles her fingers gently against Quinn's side. "They're all new aged and technologically smart. To be fair though, most of the outside world has fleas in it. So... Moss out here probably has fleas. Most of the animals do." She would need to pretty much flash boil anything if they got fleas. Ick.

Quinn giggled when she ticked him and gave a squeal that seemed to diffuse Tenne from being cranky towards his son.

Though he still sulked towards Toki. "I thought you were on my side." He gave her a sulky look.

Toki gave Tenne a crack-toothed smile. "I am on your side. But I'm also on the side most vested in not getting fleas. You're all short-haired critters- if I get fleas, I will be very cross." Her luscious mane ruffles and then settles flat when she doesn't have the energy to keep it fluffed. Toki gives him a tired smile, and lifts a hand to tap her fingers to her head. "I also know stuff, and fleas are a very big problem. Ticks too. Those with fur will need to be watchful or they'll be feasted on. And I, for one, hurt too badly right now to be anything’s feast."

"Mmh... You best take refuge in the tent then, my dear." He chuckled, shooing her away.

"That requires effort to move, and I have to light the fire later this evening." She puffs her cheeks at him from where she's sprawled in the grass with Quinn hanging on her. There is also the high chance that she can't walk with a child clinging to her- she could barely manage without one. Crawling... Maybe. "Besides... There is still stuff I can help do, yeah?"

Kai sits up and then frowns at her. "You broke the barrier. You... You really need to rest, Mama. You're not... You're not indestructible."

"He is VERY right." Tenne scooted closer and patted his hands clean, before leaning down and squatting behind her. He gingerly took his time in wrapping his arms around her to pick her up carefully, doing his best to support her back where necessary.

Toki squawked as she and Quinn were scooped, but she dangled limply for the most part. "Tenne really, I feel fi- ah... Ow... Careful, careful please that hurts when you bend me that way." She flinched a little as he bent her abdomen, and the recently fried and mostly healed up organs inside complained by throbbing painfully. Her breathing hitched and she curled up a little bit around the boy nestled in her mane.

Kai arched his brows at her from the ground in a look that was very decidedly one that she tended to give to someone when she was right about something.

"Okay, okay, maybe I do need some rest..." Toki admits quietly. "I've never been one to just sit idly though. I can't. It gives me time to think and sometimes that's not a good thing."

He murmured some apologies and set her down within the walls of the tent, nuzzling her and chirping gently. "I'm sorry, my dear..." he cooed gently, nuzzling her gently as he wrapped his arms around her.
At least the floor of the tent was plush thanks to the sleeping bags she had stretched out. Toki managed a faint smile for Tenne, and lifted an arm to hug him around the neck. "It's okay, Tenne. You didn't mean to hurt me." She says softly. "I'm just sore inside. I'll heal." It was mostly like the sensation of having a very large and very nasty sunburn inside of her body. She didn't notice until something moved and rubbed together. And then everything connecting to it hurt rapidly. "I'll get some rest as best I can with the helicopters sure to be coming in and out. Get me if anyone needs me for anything, please?"

He chittered quietly and gave a soft kiss to her cheek. "Of course~" He let her get comfy and slipped out as he set the berries aside for the boys to munch on as he started up a fire.

Toki ended up falling asleep, and only woke up when the sky was dark and the air was chilly. Her body had needed the rest. She had fallen asleep with Quinn on her chest, but woke up without him.

She also woke up with marginally less cracks covering her face, and less pain in her insides. She was alone in the tent, but she could hear the Gaster family outside of the tent. Kai was laughing about something or other- she didn't really know.

Toki shifted inside of the tent and got into all fours, her secondary arms curling up towards her chest. She inhaled quietly, and then flicked her wings as she carefully crawled from the tent. The firefight wasn't the only one lighting the air. No trees had been cut down, but there were hundreds upon hundreds of other campsites, where fires blazed and monsters sat in the distance. Not far from them. Actually, was Asgore's massive tent, with a rather exhausted looking Toriel nearly sleeping against his shoulder.

It would appear that Toki had slept through the mass chaos that was the great migration of the Underground population. All the better, really- Papyrus had practice with crowd control, not her. Still... It was good to see do many happy monsters just sitting, enraptured by the sky and the stars above.

Toki finally glanced down to Tenne and his sons, and then slowly crawled the rest of the way out of the tent. She gave him a faint smile, her teeth no longer hurting like they were.

Kai spotted her and beams. "You're awake! Good. Queen Toriel didn't know when you would wake up when she healed you again. That's why you're all better by the way. She didn't want to leave a job unfinished, so she came by not too long ago and healed you up more. How do you feel?" His blue eyes twinkled hopefully at her.

Toki still looked thin, but there was no way to magically put weight on. "Better." She answers softly. "I feel... Better. Still a little sore, but vastly better. How are you three doing?" She asks, her mouth opening to taste the air and make sure they had gotten something besides berries to eat. Berries were not a suitable food by themselves.

Quinn trilled at her reply and came over to nuzzle into her fluff with a quiet but happy sound. "Mama!"

"Better. After King Asgore got here, Papa went out and came back with a big buck. We're makin' dinner, though I think a lot of the other monsters brought their own food, no one's come hungry." Kai mentioned.

Tenne looked tired as he peered over and gave a smile, though he turned away again to groom
himself while watching what appeared to be chunks of meat speared on sticks over the fire. There was a promising smell wafting from the cooking meat, no doubt due to Tenne packing what was most likely just a small handful of random spices out of the cabinet in his adrenaline-fueled rush to get back to Toki.

Toki gave Quinn's tiny sparse mane a gentle grooming as she nuzzled him, and she scooped him up so he could lay between her wings as she remained on all fours. She scooted closer to the fire, inhaling the scent of fresh kill. Unflavored meat, however, was usually not very tasty. She hummed thoughtfully, and then opened her mouth.

She huffed in a few breaths, before gently wiggling Quinn off her back. She moved him near Tenne, as she found herself compelled by another instinct to go and get the items that she could scent and present them to Tenne - particularly since he had done the obvious hunting.

"I see that your dad brought back a deer." She thrums to Kai. "Which is good. I was worried all you had eaten was berries... Speaking of." She glances to Tenne. "I will be right back."

It's obvious she's feeling better than she was before she had gone to rest, because she buzzes off swiftly to track down the scents she had picked up. They weren't far - just down the steep cliff side they had made their home on, but definitely far out of reach of anyone who wasn't able to fly. She made her way down, and rooted around for a moment, before finding what she was after.

It took her maybe three minutes before she returned, claws slightly dirtier, with a large, gnarled root in her hand, and several long sprigs of a plant she was familiar with.

She landed again, reclaimed Quinn, and held out her hand to Tenne. "I can go hunting for better herbs tomorrow. These were just down the cliff and I could smell them from here. Ginger and yarrow. They're both safe to eat, I promise." She chirrs to him. "Since you did the hard work of hunting, I could at least do something to help contribute to your catch?"

Tenne yawned as he had minded the meat, but upon the offerings by Toki, he let out a pleased sound like one would call a cougar's 'squeak' and he took them, taking in their scents, "These smell wonderful, Toki. Thank you~" he purred happily.

Toki beamed at him, pleased. "Of course. You look tired, Tenne. Why don't you turn in for the night after dinner?"

"I wanna go look at the stars!" Kai chirps. "I cant really see with all the trees since those fish and wildlife guys told us we can't cut them down since this is considered a... Whatever this is." Kai shrugs. "Can we do that while Dad sleeps? See the stars, that is?"

"Sure, sweetheart." Toki nodded with a smile to Kai. She was still tired, but taking the boys for a quick trip up above the trees was doable. "So what did I miss concerning fish and wildlife?" She glanced to Tenne questioningly. Obviously they hadn't needed her, but something had indeed occurred and she had no idea what it was.

"For the more primal consumers we've been granted temporary permission to hunt and fish, with rules of course. Spare the Does, Velvets, and young prongs, release anything under seven inches and all breeding season fish." He answered, before rifling through his coat and procuring a small book. He waved it at her. "Even gave me a pamphlet telling me the area's fish seasons."

Toki tilted her head and hummed. "I see. Well, that's good. We're not allowed to cut down trees, so I can assume that we're not in a permanent location?" She inquired gently. "Fishing is good though. Deer are good, but you can only eat one thing for so long before everything becomes bland. Any
chance you got a book on all local herbs?” Her eyes flicked over him thoughtfully, and Toki gave a soft pleased buzz. She had never hunted- and she wasn’t exactly sure what she was supposed to tell Tenne if he ever asked her to go hunting with him. With her wings and stingers, she was probably an aerial drop predator, verses a pursuit predator, but she still had no idea how to go about doing any of that.

"This is indeed temporary.” He nodded, before he looked towards his pack, "It might be a bit outdated but I have a book of that sort in my bag." He answered.

"I figured." She takes a look at the trees around them and sighs. "Do you know where they're going to let us stay?” Toki wasn’t familiar with all of the areas of Oregon. But she did recognize the smell of the trees and the sort of scenery in the surrounding area. She thought that might be Portland up ahead, but she might have been wrong. She didn't think there was a military base near there. "Out dated or not, it might help. The ecosystem cant have changed that drastically in... Uh... Well, I don't know how long you all were sealed." She flicks her wings awkwardly- she’d only been down there a few months, and there was no telling how long they had been down there. "It might just be better to ask for a book on local flora the next time one of the wildlife guys is up. If you see them before I do, will you ask for me?"

"From what I heard, we are not being forced to stay here, but the human officials heavily recommended we stay with the nature reserve until the world has been introduced to our return. As for residence, many have come out to see the sky, but have returned to the underground for temporary refuge while they figure out housing for us. His Majesty will have audience with more human officials come tomorrow. However, I do not know if he will ask us to accompany him. I'm not going to complain either way.” He rubbed his head.

"Though, if he asks for us to accompany, I may end up needing to tote the pups in their satchel to keep them close while we work."

Toki nods and sighs. "It's possible they might just set up a small town for us all to reside in to start. It wouldn't be bad... As for monsters staying topside, there seems to be quite a lot that plan to do just what we are." Toki glances around them pointedly to the mass amount of tents visible via the faint glowing of lights from campfires. "I've had my fair share of politics. I know how to handle officials and the like. I don't like to do it, but I know how." She'd done it a lot back in her world, frankly.

Kai makes a face and groans. "Ugh. I'm big enough not to get into any trouble, Dad."

"I don't mind watching the boys.” She chimes. "Trouble finds you anyways, brat.” She tugs his cheek affectionately.

"I have no doubt that mischief will find it's way to you, Kai" Tenne snorted as he patted his son's head, "Alright, I can see about fitting the satchel to have it mostly centered on your back as it would on mine, make it easier to tote them around without hampering your capability of flight." He offered to Toki.

"It's not like I try t' find it, though.” Kai puffed his cheeks at Tenne, but relented to the head pats.

Toki hummed, and lightly groomed the top of Quinn's skull. "That would be good. It would sure free up my arms when it comes to flying with the kids, that's for sure.” Gaze landing on the meat, she quietly inhaled through her mouth and then licked her teeth with a soft sigh. "Mmm... The meat smells amazing."

"It'll taste better next time when I rub in this ginger and yarrow." He told her with a smile, reaching to take a kebab off the fire and offer it to her. "Would you do the honors?” He requested.
"When in doubt, you can rub berries into things. Though I think you'd have a problem with the holes in your hands." She gestures to her palms to pantomime where his holes were. Toki did lean out to accept the first kebab, and took it in hand. She was glad her mouth was mostly, as she sampled it gingerly. The cracks held up to the soft meat, and once she could get it past her external teeth and back into her molars, she could make quick work of it. It wasn't as good as it was when they had their entire range of spices to choose from, as she expected, but it still tasted good. "It's good." She smiles. "Thank you, Tenne." She adjusts Quinn so the boy can get down and get a kebab of his own as well.

"I'm... steadily finding myself a solution for these...." He murmured as he looked at the holes in his hands, before smiling up at Toki. "I'm glad you like it." He rumbled, sounding deeply pleased.

"Maybe try gloves?" She suggests lightly. "Perhaps fingerless gloves? But yes. Its very good." She smiled to him and nibbled some more. "The rest of the kebabs are done, correct?"

"They smell done to me." Kai chirps, and makes grabby hands for one.

"Oh, that's an idea... and yes, I’d say so." Tenne carefully plucked the rest of the skewers from the fire and blew on them gently, he handed one to Kai and held Quinn's out to him so he could eat from it.

"Fingerless gloves would still allow you to properly touch and feel things and allow your palms to be covered." She hums. "Just don't pick white, for the love of all that is sacred. I don't have the right materials to keep them clean out here." Her mane ruffles, and she works carefully through her kebab. She hums faintly and glances at him. "Is this... Back-strap?" She'd had it once before. It was considered the best 'meat' of the deer, the tastiest and tenderest of the cuts.

Kai started to work through his kebab, pleased noises coming from him as he feasted. Likewise, Quinn made small happy sounds as he ate, holding his kebab in both hands as he leaned back into Toki and chewed through the meat.

"I think I’ve a better idea, now that I need not worry about the barrier. I've had some bits and equipment I’ve had laying around since before the boys. A few trips to my lab while we work out living out here and I could make something work indeed." He rumbled, before he chuckled, "That's right! The boys have the other one, and I’ve got some of the tougher meat. It'll give me something to chew on for a while." He pulled the last skewer from the fire, only to reveal it wasn't a skewer at all. It was a leg bone with all the meat still attached, "Been a while since I've had surface marrow." He purred happily to himself.

Toki was very glad she was used to seeing her Papa chew bones, because watching Tenne set into a whole deer leg was… kind of gross. But not as gross as it would have been months and months ago. She was acclimating and changing to her environment- and apparently to being around this family and their more bestial habits.

The queen bee woman only laughed gently, and slid a chunk of meat off of her stick. She ate it swiftly, before nodding to him. "You do like to tinker in your lab. I think I’ll stick with the surface for now though. Anyways, I also think I’ll stick with the skewer." It wasn’t as meat heavy, since back-strap didn’t come with a lot of meat, but that was fine. "Given the fact my teeth just got healed, I’d really rather not test them on anything hard anyways." She chuckles. “I would probably be even scarier.”

“You’re not scary though.” Kai chirps. “Right Quinn?”

“Nyeh!” The boy cuddles against her leg as he works on his meat.
“You haven’t seen me when I’m angry, little ones. And hopefully you never will.” She hummed softly.

"Angry hornets I already like to avoid in general... though I wonder if you'd make it look good~" Tenne flirted shamelessly before taking a bite of his meal.

"There is a definite line between pretty and horrifying." She flushes a pretty green all the same at his flirt, and brushes her fingers up through her mane. Her tongue flicks out to run over her teeth. "Pretty sure I cross from moderately acceptable looking right over into nightmare worthy. It works pretty good to get my point across though. That's not even counting what my venom does." And if it was anything like Clover and Sugar's venom... Well, she recalled what happened to that man when Han died.

"Oh but there you go, flushing green as a leaf." He chuckled, "A lively color that does you justice. Terrifying or not, all I would see is the green, and your pleasant smile that accompanied close behind."

She blushed brighter and then fluffed at him. "You might not think that if you ever get to see me angry." She finished her skewer and then carefully ran her tongue between her teeth to clean them. Her usual flex and clean routine began as normal. "I love how you say I have a pleasant smile, and then I start cleaning my teeth." She laughs in good humor. "All the same, Tenne, I'm a very easy going lady on the norm. I never used to be easy to anger. Hopefully you'll never have to see me angry."

"I dunno, I think it'd be neat to see ya do a mom smash on someone." Kai grins at her.

Kai makes Toki snort and roll her eyes. "Mom smash. That's one way to put it."

Tenne snorted at that gently from behind the meat, hiding his chortle with a crack of the bone as it gave in his teeth.

Toki chuckled and then carefully took Quinn’s skewer when he finished. She took a moment to clean up his face with the edge of her shirt, and then glanced to Kai.

Kai cleaned his own face, and tossed the makeshift skewer into the fire. Then he flopped back and patted his belly with a pleased sigh. "Mmm, nice and full." He purrs. “When Daddy’s done, we can go see the stars?"

“If he wants to come with.” Toki nods. “He seems fairly tired.”

"Nah, nah, you guys go on ahead. I've got a bit more belly to fill." Tenne dismissed them with a gentle wave. "Go on and have your fun!"

A soft laugh rolls from her, and the green haired woman nods. “Alright- I don’t imagine it’ll be hard to find us, o’ mighty hunter you.” She scoops up Quinn, and then rolls Kai into her arms. Standing is easy, and she hums, glancing up the mountainside. “Though... You might not be able to reach us, since you can’t fly.” She glances back at him. “Enjoy your dinner, Tenne. We’ll be back in a little bit.” She promises.

“Yep!” The elder boy in her arms nods and clings to her. “We’ll be back when we’ve seen all the stars we can.”

Toki chuckled and nodded, before lifting off gently from the ground. Her wings made a loud noise as she headed up the mountainside. Toki could see fairly well in the dark thanks to her new body, and it didn’t take her all that long to locate a cliff just far enough out of range of the trees.
They had a clear shot of the cloudless sky, and the deep, endless abyss of darkness that was the sky as it was speckled with white flecks of starlight.

Toki settled as far from the edge as she could, and cuddled the boys in her lap, leaning back against the uncomfortable surface so they could recline on her and look up at the stars. “There you go, boys. Full view of the stars.”

"Wow." Kai cooed quietly, a smile on his face as he looked up at the sky. "This is so beautiful…” He made a soft happy noise.

Toki smiled warmly and kissed the top of his skull. “The stars are beautiful.” She agreed gently. “When we’re settled, and the humans are more adjusted, I can see about getting you a telescope if you would like? Gold to paper money translation rates need to be worked out first, I think.” She mused.

"Oooh, yes please!” Kai lit up at the offer, while Quinn cooed quietly and giggled, hugging his brother happily.

Toki smiled and nodded. “Then I’ll start saving up for that.” She smooched the top of his head again, and then sighed as she relaxed. Her wings perked. “Oh! Look, Kai. A shooting star!”

That got a sound of awe from them both.

Toki smiled. “Make a wish, boys.”

The boys looked at her for a moment, and then closed their eyes and seemed to make wishes, before looking back up at her again with happy smiles.

She smiled and nuzzled them. “Good boys- what did you wish for?”

"Will it still come true if we tell you?” Kai asked lightly.

Toki pondered that lightly, and then nodded. “Of course. It comes true if you confide it to someone who you trust. Do you trust me?” She hums gently to the boy, running her fingers through his stubby mane.

"Always." He purred happily as his tail wiggled against her. "I wished for you to always stay with us." He chirped gently. "We might not be the same as what you lost... but we love you anyways..."

"Mama!" Quinn giggled.

Toki felt her eyes water a little bit, and she cuddled them closer. “Oh boys… You’re not a replacement for the two I lost- but no child should ever be a replacement for anything. You’ve taken up your own spots in my soul- not replaced others.” She noses them gently. “I love you both too. I’m not going anywhere any time soon.” The words of admission slide from her finally, and she sighs. She’d been mothering these two for months- and finally telling them that she loved them…

It was sort of cementing it even more that she was here to stay. But for once… it didn’t hurt as badly to think about it.

They held tight to her and Quinn chirped happily as he held on, while Kai simply smiled and nuzzled into her neck.

"Promise?”
Toki nuzzled him back and smiled tenderly. “I promise.”

The two of them held firm to her, both clinging to the hornet like the mother she was.

Feeling the loving hold they held, a gentle whisper resonated from within Toki's mind.

'I promise.'
Chapter 103

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Lots of stuff happens here. We get some character development with Cruelty, and we get to see Tenne being a sweet bean. :3

Silverwing Notes: hehehe this chapter was gonna be shorter but we couldn't find a good midpoint, oh well, more for you lovely fans to read <3

And yes, development and cute beans. Tis a satisfying chapter.

Enjoy the chapter!

It had been calm... for only a small time. Humans- non-military humans, that was- were informed of their existence.

And so came their reaction.

First it was confusion- disbelief, fear, anger, and then curiosity- and then they came.

Reporters.

Lots of them.

It had started out simple, with the reporters simply bothering the higher-ups of the military camp. But they spoke naught of the monsters, not without permission.

So the reporters decided to take this matter into their own hands, and began to sneak up the mountain and into the camp in search for the king, or whoever ruled the new race upon the surface.

It was only after Toki was interrupted during a bath in the river that Asgore and Tenne, the latter who was more so upset about the river bathing incident, went to the camp at the base of the mountain to give answers.

The swarm of reporters that were stuck outside the gate flashed cameras and let out a cacophony of voices as they all tried to ask questions at once. Tenne didn't take well to the flashes, and hissed as he moved to Asgore's other side, his tail rattling loudly with irritation.

"Damned Flashes... Too damn bright..." He hissed bitterly.

"Easy, old friend.” Asgore patted his shoulder, and managed a friendly smile to the reporters.

"Now,” He opens his arms to them and lifts a brow. “I understand you have some questions- however, what you did, sneaking up into our temporary settlement like that, was very wrong. You walked in on a woman washing in the river- and took pictures no less.”

"She crushed our camera, so we didn’t even get to keep the pictures!” One of the reporters cried with mild upset.

Asgore lifted his brow higher. “Would you not have done the same had you been in her position?
Strange men and women snapping photos of her while she bathed, and then refusing to scrap said photos—tell me, what is right about that? It is a violation of much privacy.”

“I would have, yes— but is she really considered a ‘woman’ to even have rights of privacy?” One of the reporters waved another microphone at the king, hoping to pick up more of his voice through the locked gate. The woman continued to speak. “Our station has had some leaks from private contacts—we know that she, along with several other monsters, are considered ‘beast’ types, and are allowed to hunt on federally protected property instead of being required to retreat underground to find food, as they are more in tune with their animal nature than you non-beast types. Isn’t taking pictures of her basically just like going to a nature reserve to take pictures of the deer? Deer don’t have rights of privacy. Though the deer don’t crush multi-hundred dollar cameras in their hands.”

Despite the displeasure at the flashes, Tenne's attention was full as he heard the topic immediately go to Toki.

At the reporter's words, he bristled with rage and bared his fangs as he moved in front of Asgore, almost pushing the larger male as he immediately took to his infamous stance of his head held high, and his shoulders squared. His tail rattled with rage behind him as his pupils thinned to slits. His jaw loosened, nearly unhinging.

"How dare you!" He snarled. "She possesses the voice and capability to give consent to such parasitic photography! If she told you to dispose the photos you better damn believe she means that you utterly eradicate them!" Despite his rage, it was good to see Tenne defending Toki's rights as a woman. "It's no different than if you took pictures of your own women! She deserves as much right as the next pink-skin who relies on nature's assets!"

The reporter withdrew her microphone as Tenne stepped forward. Flat eyes looked him up and down. “...Right. She’s as much of a woman as you are a man— which you barely are, obviously. You look like you want to be rabid at me. You’re that beast one that they got pictures of savaging that poor deer. Not a good image you painted—monsters murdering Bambi’s mother—"

Asgore set a hand on Tenne's shoulder, and stepped around him. “Enough.” He said to the woman. “He is defending the rights of the only female of his kind. Tenne and Tokiko are very... special— and she is very, very precious to both of us and to our kind. I would suggest you speak of her— and of Tenne— respectfully, if you wish to continue getting questions answered.” The king tilts his head flatly, giving no option on that.

The woman sniffs and then huffs. However, another steps up and glances at Tenne, and then waves the microphone in her hand, before extending it slightly towards Tenne. “What do you mean the only female? Are you and this Tokiko considered an endangered species within an already endangered species of people?”

Of all the voices, of all the questions, he had detected the less aggressive microphone first, and decided for a moment to zero in immediately on the reporter who asked this question.

She was less of a gaudy image compared to the rest of the female reporters, her clothes were not flashy, and that which stood out the most was her auburn hair, which was a lovely color. Though her question, he took to mind over all the other banter, and like a hunter, he zoomed in.

He set a hand on Asgore's arm as he slowly stepped around again, his shoulders slack as he pulled on a pair of fingerless gloves that Hitsu had made for him. Toki had been right—fingerless gloves had been the right idea.

A simple glance to the king assured him of his calm state of mind compared to a moment ago, and he
slowly stepped closer to the gate, gesturing to the guards that all was well. "You, with the auburn hair." He then spoke up.

Immediately there was a wave of silence, some were surprised at the sudden change of behavior; others wanted to hear what he had to say.

The reporter in question straightened up and held her microphone a little higher. "Are you and Tokiko part of an endangered species?" She asked again.

He approached her and leaned down to speak to the microphone a little better.

"Toki is what she would rather be called. If you wish to designate her, please, use that instead." He started, "As for your question, please understand I have distrust towards reporters and am reluctant to explain the status of my species given the comments of your fellow reporters. But I will tell you this."

He could feel the weight of the reporters leaning in to hear his words... But at the same time he felt smug. So much for being almost rabid- his calm tone having just silenced an entire swarm of reporters was practically a slap in the first woman’s face.

"'The only female in my company’ is what my old friend and king meant to say. I would defend her because it is her right for privacy, as I would for any woman who felt violated in a time she thought she had privacy.” He spoke.

The reporter blinked, and nodded. “If your words are true, then it sounds like you’re a good man.” She comments. “I don’t mean to be pushy, Mister Gaster, but my station does have some leads from reputable sources as to some of the population numbers- Monsters such as rabbits, wolves, dogs, and lizard folk seem to be quite high. Skeletons- which old history reports show existed way back before you were all sealed away- seem to have gone extinct, as have lots of other species. Elementals are in decline as well- even King Asgore’s family species seems to be limited to three and one human child. Our sources also show that… well, only you, Miss Toki, and two small boys, which are often around you and Miss Toki, seem to be in existence.”

She looks troubled. “Despite the outcry of hate and fear from a lot of channels, there are a lot of our viewers who have displayed concern for monsters and their population. Do you have any comments on that?”

The silence around them is still strong, as other newscasters’ listen and record Tenne’s conversation with the woman.

"Indeed. However first I must consult my friend. I will answer your questions, as you seem to speak for the right cause, but first I wish to see if he wishes me to speak naught of a certain topic." He told her. "I will be right back." He rumbled.

He turned, and then walked to Asgore who had retreated some to give Tenne privacy for his talk. "I want to answer that one's questions. She speaks to answer concerns of people who seem to feel more than fear and hatred towards us. As your royal scientist, may I have your permission?"

Asgore nods to Tenne. “You may. I trust you to use your discretion about what you do and do not say.” The king motions for him to return to the woman, who was waiting patiently at the gate.

"Thank you, Asgore.” He rumbled, before walking back to the gate. "As the Royal Scientist, I am willing to answer questions as His Majesty's representative on this matter." He announced. Tenne’s gaze slid back up to the armed guards at the gates. "Perhaps might we be able to invite her just within the gate? And perhaps offer her a seat. I would suppose that humanity has many, many questions."
His words were a carefully poised request.

The guards hesitated and nodded. Within a few minutes, they had the auburn haired woman and her crew inside of the gate, and a chair and rickety card table for both her and Tenne to be seated at.

The guards kept watch to make sure she didn’t wander.

She politely kept seated, and her crewman stayed right behind her, holding his camera at the ready and recording all the while. She had a smile for Tenne. “Thank you for the interview, Mister Gaster. You’re the Royal Scientist? That’s fascinating! Please, sit down. I’m Nikki Foster- and we’re ready to begin whenever you are.”

"Please, call me Doctor Gaster." He rumbled as he sat down as well. "I am ready, now, your last question, would you kindly repeat it?” He requested.

“Of course, Doctor Gaster.” Nikki nods. She sets her microphone down, and gets situated, before tilting her head toward him. “We have sources that show that several species of monsters are in decline, and that there are some monsters that have species that number in the single digits- including your species and King Asgore’s personal family. We have viewers concerned for your population numbers- what are your comments or any information you can provide on this?”

"Our population has indeed been decimated in the long time during which we were sealed underground. But we are only so few within the numbers of our own realm- Monsterkind were once as frequent on the planet Earth as humans are to this day."

Tenne continued lightly. "Perhaps we were the only who made it to Mount Hood, but I have faith. There are more of us out there, we simply need the chance to seek out and find our kin... Which we can achieve by humanity understanding our story, and helping us grow to live in this world that we thought we would never again see."

The woman gave him a solemn nod as she listened. "Well, for your sake, and everyone else's, I know I speak for my producers as well as myself when I say that I surely hope that there are more Monsters out there. It would be good to see the return of the populations and... Well, frankly, to make sure none of you could be considered 'endangered.'" Nikki gave him a faint smile. "Though that does raise some questions- the one that everyone has been asking, but that no one has been able to answer. How did you get out? From what old history records show, the very last of the mages sacrificed their lives to erect the barrier and seal you all underground. The power of sacrifice is particularly potent, particularly self-sacrifice. How did you all manage to get free? Is this a process that can be recreated to free other monsters should any other barriers be located?"

"We made it to freedom by a miracle; a miracle I fear that may not be repeated for any others we may find." He sighed quietly, before he smiled again. "But this miracle... Because of her, my sons get to see the sun, the sky... the moon and the stars."

Nikki picked up on that. “Miracle... Her... Hm... The moon and the stars are really beautiful- I’ve heard the view from where your temporary settlement is located is... well, to die for, frankly. Now, Doctor Gaster, I’m going to take an intuitive leap here, but by chance, would you be talking about miss Toki? She’s the only one that I’ve heard murmurs of from the other newscasts that uses magic frequently- and at a much higher potency than the other monsters. Are you saying that she’s the one who broke the barrier?"

He straightened a little, and then he sighed again. "Yes. She's our miracle." He answered, a faint smile tugging at his lips. "None of us were prepared for the power she possessed, but she insists it was a build up that had needed to be released. I am thankful she recovered as well as she did, even if
“it was but a single dose of power.”

His words brought a loud murmur to the crowd at the gate, but they fell silent to listen to Nikki’s response.

Nikki swallowed faintly at that and rubbed her fingers lightly on the table. “I see. Never in recorded history has there been a monster with that sort of power— it’s always been recorded that humans had more power in their souls than monsters did. It’s… frighteningly impressive that one monster managed to break what many human mages gave their souls to make. It must have taken years upon years to build that sort of power.”

“Who’s to say she couldn’t do it again and turn it on us?” Someone shouted from behind the gates.

One of Nikki’s brow’s twitched in thinly veiled irritation, but she kept a schooled smile on her face. “Please, disregard the people outside the gate. Anyways- I did notice in reports that her health did seem to be less than stellar- and in fact, that she was unable to stand and seemed… ‘tattered’ was what we got from the soldiers who first saw her. Her health has improved? Or is she still very ill?”

"She indeed was in very poor condition after the barrier's destruction, but she's doing a bit better now... I've given her good food, made sure she's gotten plenty of rest, and my boys are there to keep an eye on her when I am needed elsewhere." He rumbled. "She listens to them as much as she listens to me." He laughed gently.

“As a woman myself, I take it that it means ‘not much’, am I right?” She laughs gently with him. “I’m sure once you’ve had more than just a week up top, she’ll get more of a chance to recover. Now… Speaking of more time topside- I’ve heard whispers that the government is thinking of setting up a settlement for everyone somewhere in the rolling hills and canyons between Maupin and the Dalles? Do you have any confirmation on that? And if so, are you excited? I’ve heard there’s good hunting out there. More than just deer, that is. Elk herds are common.”

"Alas, she is a woman, not an animal. I do not control her; I can command, but it's up to her if she actually wishes to follow through." He chuckled, before he tilted his head at the news of the settlement. "Actually this is the first I've heard of this. I am, however, rather excited to hear about it. The diversity of the species that can be hunted will be beneficial." He rumbled.

“I’m sure.” She laughs lightly. “Well, I’m sure King Asgore might know more- or perhaps the government officials. You can probably ask them later. But yes- the diversity of hunted species would be good. We’ve got a good informant- they’re going to give you guys farmable land. They’re talking about…” She makes a faint face. “Giving the ‘bestly’ monsters animals to farm. Honestly, that turn of phrase makes it sound… very racist.” The way Nikki says it shows her obvious displeasure at such a phrase. “Because apparently seeing a sheep monster farming sheep would be too weird for them.”

"That’s fantastic, I’m very pleased indeed to hear about this." He rumbled, "When one describes me, or, at least, my appearance, one would call parts of me more beastly, or of bestial origins, and I believe it would be an accurate enough term." The doctor then explained. "It becomes a bit of a rude jab if you use it to describe one's behavior unless they really are acting so impolite. Perhaps ‘carnivorous Monsters’ is a better way to describe we who enjoy eating meat?" The suggestion slipped out easily. "It insults no one, the term itself simply stating a dietary fact."

“Carnivorous Monsters is a better term.” Nikki agreed immediately. “My network will work on spreading and trying to coin the term and getting it to stick.” Something past his shoulder caught her eye, and she squinted for a second, before blinking. “Ah, Doctor Gaster, I do believe your-”
Kai, followed by Quinn, slid between the King’s legs and then barreled into Tenne’s side like a tiny bullet. He latched onto his father’s coat with a happy bark of laughter, and grinned at his little brother. “See? I told you I could find Daddy.”

“Nyeh!” Quinn went for his father’s leg instead, and latched onto it eagerly. “Da!”

Nikki blinked. “Oh my- those are your children. They’re simply precious! Gary- Gary, get this on film.”

“Ahead of you, Nikki.” Gary, the man behind her, had the camera aimed towards the pups cuddling into their dad’s leg.

Tenne laughed happily as he wrapped his arms around his pups, pulling them into a tight hug, ”My boys, my precious sons.” He laughed happily as he nuzzled into them, ”Hello my boys~” he cooed gently. “You two were looking for me, you say?” He chuckled as he gave the two several kisses on the head and cheeks.

“Daddy!” Kai grins. “We tracked you here. All the way down the mountain! It was lots of fun. We scared a deer, and then Quinn chased a bunny but it got into its hole.”

“Buh-nyeh!” Quinn chirped, and nuzzled his father happily.

Kai positively beams. “Yeah, Quinn. Buh-nyeh. It was loads of fun though, Daddy. I wanna do it again sometime.’”

Cameras were flashing from the front gate as other news crews tried to capture pictures of the family reuniting in the recorded interview.

Nikki smiles. “They are positively darling, Tenne. Did you two come here alone?”

Kai’s smile faltered and he gave a sheepish look. “Well… We uh… Kinda… forgot to tell Toki we were following you.”

“Mama!” Quinn perks happily.

“Mama?” Nikki’s gaze slides to Tenne curiously.

Tenne chuckled gently as he set his boys down, ”Don't worry, Quinn... You'll get the next bunny.” He encouraged him, before he looked to Kai, ”You do realize she'll be wondering where you went off to, and not in the good way. She'll be very worried.” He tutted. Though he heard Nikki speak and he looked up at her, ”My pups love Toki as much as I do, and greatly consider her their mother. I haven't the heart to tell them otherwise. With how wonderful she's been to them, she might as well be their carrier.”

Kai’s sheepish look didn’t go away, though he did look a tad ashamed, since they knew Toki wasn’t really in the condition to be stressed. “I know Daddy. It’s just so boring up in camp all the time. Undyne is fun to hang out with, but she’s always ‘SPEARS ARE AWESOME, FIRE IS AWESOME, LETS GO STAB TREES’ and I don’t want to stab trees all the time, and neither does Asriel or Chara or Lana.” He pouts.

“Eees.” Quinn blinks and looks up.

“Trees?” Nikki guesses gently, and nods to Tenne. “So Toki isn’t their mother then- but acts like it? That’s really sweet.”
“Neh.” Quinn shakes his head. “Eees.” He points to the sky.

The air above the forest is wreathed in a sea of glowing green— and the glowing green was growing closer to them at a rapid pace. As it grows closer, there was a heavy sound in the air— and the sound registers as the buzzing of thousands upon thousands of glowing green fire bees. They converge towards the compound, sweeping the forest like a tidal wave.

Several of the reporters start running in the opposite direction from the gates— while others began snapping pictures.

“Mama!” Quinn chirps happily.

"Oh dear." He got up with the pups and moved to where he was visible. "Toki! Hello! We're over here!" He called as he began to wave at the swarm with one arm.

The swarm converged towards their location, seemed to confirm something within themselves, and then buzzed over the compound like a deafening thundercloud. The guards raised their guns warily, but the bees did nothing but circle, until all at once— they were gone.

In their place, Toki appeared out of the trees, looking harried and mildly tired from her frantic flight down the mountains. Her mane was ruffled, and her eyes were wide and frantic. Seeing the boys safe however, soothed something in her, and as she came in for a landing, she looked less terrified of them possibly being dead.

That didn’t stop her from flicking them both lightly on the head as she hurried up to Tenne and looked them both over with a critical eye. “Shame on both of you for not telling me where you were going. You could have died and I wouldn’t have known!” Her mane fluffs at them. Then it smooths out and she leans out to press a kiss to their heads. “I’m just glad you’re okay. But good gods, if you do that to me again, you’re both grounded.”

Tenne eased an arm around her, hushing her gently as he stroked her head. "It's okay, Toki. These boys are Gasters! Do you really think they’d die that easily?" He chuckled as he then nuzzled her and gave a few sweet kisses to her head and cheeks, "Gasters never die." He cooed gently, "And from what you've endured, apparently neither do Naras." He purred gently.

Toki would not be so easily soothed- her fur ruffled again even under his soothing pets and kisses to her cheeks and the top of her head. Her mane fluffed at him, and she puffed her cheeks. “Nara are tough. Believe it or not, I’ve been through worse than what you’ve seen.” She sniffs. “But it doesn’t matter. They are children- pups. They don’t need to go wandering off into the wilds without an adult until they’re at least able to defend themselves. The coyote’s out here are bigger than Quinn!” Her pupils slit faintly as she huffs at him, very much the protective mother bear, for all that she was a hornet.

Toki had already lost two- she didn’t want to lose two more.

He cooed gently and pulled her to his chest, stroking her head as he transferred the pups to her arms. "There, there, darling matriarch. Your pups are safe and sound in your arms now. They're safe with their mama." He purred gently as he wagged his tail where she can hear it. "At peace my dear." He rumbled as he set his head down between her horns as he tightened his hold.

She chuffed softly to him, but it did soothe some part of her instincts when she could nestle both pups within her arms. Toki nuzzled them and scented them carefully, checking for any wounds on them. Finding none, the woman relaxed, and sighed. “Thank you, Tenne.” She didn’t even comment on him calling her the matriarch- or on him calling them her pups.
The boys both called her Mama- Kai more in private or around other monsters than around a lot of
humans- so that’s what she was.

“Matriarch?” Nikki inquired curiously to Tenne. “Pardon my interruption. I’m Nikki Foster.”

Toki flushed a bit, and hid it with Kai’s head and part of her mane. “Ah… Tokiko Nara. Call me
Toki, please.” She leaned a bit into Tenne. Calling so many hornets had left her tired- she hadn’t had
enough time to fully recover from the barrier falling before she was off dumping mass amounts of
magic into trying to find the boys.

Tenne gently pecked her head before he turned to face Nikki. "This woman has questions from a
concerned public; people who are worried about us and how we are doing." He explained with a
smile, "And I’ve been answering her questions.”

“It sounds like she’s got another one for you.” Toki prompts him gently, and then gives Nikki
another shy smile.

“I did, yes.” Nikki nods. “What do you mean by matriarch, if you don’t mind my asking?”

"It's a pack term. Properly used, it is defined as 'Mother of Mothers'. A nanny I suppose is another
word one would use." He rumbled gently, "But Toki; she's so wonderful. She took upon her the love
and nurturing a mother would offer to a child, and she gave it to both my boys. If that's not a deed
worth the honoring name of a matriarch, I honestly do not know what is." Tenne rumbled another
purr and nuzzled his face into the top of her head. His mouth pressed another soft peck to her fur.

Toki simply flushed. Praise was something that she was not very good at taking and never had been.
“Tenne,” She fussed, “I’m hardly worth anything like that. I’m just… Me.” She puffs her cheeks,
cuddles the boys, and does her best to hide her face and pretend that there was not a swarm of people
snapping photos of her as she blushed a bright green. Her wings twitched against him in sudden
nerves- she never handled press well. They made her nervous- she wasn’t particularly fond of them
snapping photos of her and the boys either.

“That’s fascinating.” Nikki blinks. “And very sweet. I can see that she loves your boys very much-
and that you care for her a lot too.” She smiles.

“ARE THERE GOING TO BE MORE BABY BEASTS IN THE FUTURE?” Someone in the
back of the crowd shouted.

Toki did her very best to disappear into her neck fur just then. Nope. Intrusive questions and
paparazzi were not her thing.

Tenne went black and he turned his back on the people, hiding Toki and his children as well. "N-No
more questioning." He murmured, before he looked at Nikki over his shoulder. "Thank you for your
time, but I believe there was a reason my boys came to find me." He chuckled quietly. "We best be
on our way."

Nikki offered him a faint smile. “Maybe next time we’ll be able to do an interview without everyone
else chiming in.” She hums. She gives him a cheery salute as soldiers come to her side, and stands
from her chair. “Alright- Thank you for your time, Doctor Gaster. You and Toki have a wonderful
day.”

“You too, Miss Foster.” Toki manages a smile over her shoulders, but it doesn’t stop her face from
burning. She buzzes softly and hides it against the boys. Ugh.

"Let's go home, shall we?” He patted Toki's back gently. “Get you some food, find some
entertainment for the pups, and decide amongst ourselves what to do next.”

Toki nodded. “I’d like that.” She said to Tenne. “I’d like that a lot. Though… You were here on business with Asgore- to figure out why the reporters kept coming up…”

Asgore waved over at her. “I can handle myself, Miss Toki. Please- take the boys and Tenne and head back up the mountain. See if you can’t wrangle him into catching another deer for you. You do need to put back on some weight.”

Toki rolls her eyes. “Everyone trying to fatten me up. Alright… Alright. You’re released from duty, so… let’s go.” Her wings twitch. “… I dunno if I wanna summon Clover where all these reporters can see her.”

"Just wait a little until we're out of range." Tenne suggested, before he looked over to Asgore. "I will see you later, old friend. I’ll put the teapot on!"

“You mean I’ll put the teapot on- you haven’t quite gotten it down for the ‘over the open flame’ style of doing tea.” Toki chuffs.

"I'm working on it." Tenne pouted at Toki.

Asgore chuckles. “I’ll see you later, Tenne.” He waves him off and then goes to find an official.

Toki sighs, and then glances back at the mountain. She lifts her wings, and flutters them once against Tenne, before passing Kai and Quinn to Tenne. “I don’t want to risk dropping them. Summoning the bees tired me out.” Her arms were quivering slightly, betraying the fact that she needed to replace the magic that she had spent.

Kai didn’t have an issue switching over. “Okay. I don’t mind hanging on to Daddy anyways.” He smiles. “It’s a long walk back and my legs are tired.”

The doctor took his boys into his arms without issue. "Anyhow, if you're that tired, don't even bother trying to summon them. I'll admit that was quite the awful spook the pups must have given you." he sighed, "I understand how you would go all out to find them."

“I already lost two, Tenne.” Toki gives him a sad smile. “They… they weren’t even done nursing yet.” She admits quietly. That was a little tidbit she hadn’t told him prior. She’d only just begun starting to wean them when… Well, she was taken from them. “I don’t want to lose Kai and Quinn. You’ll have to forgive me if I’m a little flighty over them disappearing suddenly. Anyways… I can manage Clover. It was the swarm that was draining, and having them so far from me to scout and scan the mountainside.” The woman motions to Tenne and his sons, and then heads away from the gates and back towards the back wooded area of the base.

Her words however, had Tenne stop for a moment, his eyes having gone wide... After long enough, his feet moved again and he caught up to her.

It wasn't until they made it to camp that Tenne then acted again. He set his boys loose to play, and then approached Toki once the boys had scampered off on their own. "Toki..." He started hesitantly.

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Once they were back in camp, Toki could relax. Mostly relax that was. Her wings dropped once the boys bolted off after a squirrel, and she sighed and scrubbed her hands against her thighs. There was safety in being surrounded by numbers of those like you and yours- but she knew that was the bee blaster instincts speaking. Her beast inside wanted her to be surrounded by blaster beasts, or by give, and for her to eventually build a nice around them for them to live in. Her instincts were weird.
When Tenne spoke to her, she glanced to him, one of her horns brushing her shoulder and slightly tangling with her mane as she craned her neck around to look at him. "Yes...?" She murmured softly, green eyes dark and even as she peered at him. "What's up, Tenne?"

"I... I hate to bring it up... but had you really been torn from your pups so soon?" He asked quietly, a hand extending to rest on her shoulder.

She hesitated at his question, a sore pang running through her soul at the reminder. Toki sighed softly, and lifted a hand to gently touch his. "Yes." She says softly. "I was. My pups... They hadn't even seen their first year yet." She glances back at him. "I had a little boy and a little girl. Skylar was my son, and Honey my daughter. Honey had horns like me- Skylar had my teeth." She gives him a sad smile. "It's okay to bring them up, Tenne. It... it helps it hurt less, oddly enough. Exposure therapy, maybe."

"I am glad you believe that you are healing, that's always good." He purred quietly, before he gave her shoulder a squeeze. "I bet they were wonderful."

“They were.” Toki gave him a slightly watery lopsided smile. “Skylar was a mama’s boy. He was my shadow, and didn’t like to be away from me. Honey was more adventurous. I’m never... Going to heal from losing them. It’s going to only hurt less. Mothers are not made to lose their children, Tenne. It’s not how we were created.” The woman takes a deep breath, and then sighs, before lifting one of her legs.

Quinn darts under it, hot on the heels of a squirrel.

She sets her leg back down when Quinn is out of range. “But... You and your boys help. You don’t... You don’t replace what I lost- the family I lost. You’ll never replace it. But... you’re something different- something completely different, in a good way. And it helps, if that makes any sense.”

"I never want to replace what you lost. A wound never re-grows the skin it lost..." He murmured as he set his head on hers, pulling her close as he did. "The least I can offer is to bring you happiness.” He said softly to her.

“Happiness is hard-won for me. Every time I seem to find it... It seems to get taken from me...” She murmurs softly and leans into him with a tired sigh. “Here isn’t my home.” She admits finally. “This area... This is not the area that I came from. That is... why I was so sad when we came out of the mountain. I had hoped to maybe... At least be in a familiar area, if not familiar world.”

He leaned his head to one side as he listened to her, before he sighed. "I see..." He murmured.

"We're both lost here, we don't know what we will learn while we're here..." He then had an idea and he smiled, "Toki... Come with me." He purred as he moved away from her, before he reached and took her hand.

“Alright.” She nodded gently. She paused, and looked behind her. “Boys!” She called.

“Yes?” Kai’s head poked from the brush.

“You stay near the camp, or no night time flights for a week.”

“Yes, Mama!” Kai chirps.

That done, Toki turns and lets her hand relax into Tenne’s hand, and gives him a faint smile. “Lead the way, Tenne.”
"Wait, night time flights?"

“To see the stars.” Toki nods. “Sometimes they badger me after you’ve gone to sleep.”

He chuckled at that, but didn't comment further as he led her into the trees from their camp.

It took definitely longer than Toki thought it was going to take. He took her back down the mountain, through the trees, and after nearly half an hour of silence, he began to hum.

His words carried to her shortly after. "Hold onto me as we go... As we roll down this unfamiliar road." His grip tightened a little bit as they seemed to near a break in the trees. "And although this wave, wave is stringing us along... Just know you're not alone."

They made it to the break of the trees and with a push of the branches, Tenne revealed a clearing that had been left empty. It was large and open, with plenty of space.

"Cause I'm gonna make this place your home~"

He was singing to her- honestly singing to her. Toki’s throat closed a little bit, a knot forming thick with emotions, and she felt her breath hitch. She let him tow her along, and had to shield her eyes as the sunlight nearly blinded her in the clearing. It was a beautiful clearing though, bright and open and warm... But still on the reservation. They hadn’t walked nearly far enough. So... As much as she hated to, she would have to burst his bubble.

"Settle down, it'll all be clear. Don't pay no mind to the demons," He took her other hand and slowly pulled her to the grass where the sky was most clear, "They fill you with fear. The trouble... it might drag you down, if you get lost you can always be found." He sat beside her and reached up, cupping her cheek. "Just know you're not alone," He smiled at her happily. "Cause I'm gonna make this place your home~"

Toki smiled as the little song concluded, and sighed. She relaxed in the clearing all the same, and gave him a warm look. “I understand what you mean.” She says softly. “This place… This place could be my home too. Not literally though.” She lifts a brow at him. “As sweet as the notion is, this is still the reserve- we can’t cut trees or build permanent lodging here.” She shakes her head. “We have to wait until we can get land elsewhere… And hopefully own it. But... I know what you mean.” A lopsided and warm smile is graced to him. “And... It… It’s becoming home for me.”

He pouted a little bit before smiling, "This may not be our permanent home, but at least I know you've caught on." He chuckled quietly, pecking her head.

Toki smiled faintly in return. “Indeed. It’s a little separated from the rest of the monster population though. Are you going to move your tent here? Er... Our tent, I suppose.” It had always been his house, his home, his tent- now it was their tent. At least... a little bit. It was a little slice of home for her- something for her to turn to when times got rough, and her demons weighed heavy on her soul.

"Would you like to?" He asked, arching an inquisitive brow at her. "It's much more clear out here. I suppose it would give the boys more room to play where we can watch them." He rumbled gently.

“It would.” She agrees. “But we’d be fairly isolated. It’s a forty-minute walk back to the camp, if not more. Faster by flying or running, yes, but if something happened, and they needed our help, we’d still be a long ways out.” The bee woman turns to face him slightly, and reclines a bit in the grass.
The sun plays over the hollows in her cheeks, highlighting her cheekbones. All of their previous work in getting her healthy and well was undone— but all of it undone to get them outside into the sunshine. It was worth it in Toki’s book. “It is away from that cliff edge though. The way that the boys race around, I’m afraid one of them is going to topple over. So… maybe? Do you think it’d be a good idea?”

"Well now when you put it that way…" Tenne then nodded in agreement. "I’d say this place is a wonderful idea for our temporary residence."

Toki smiled faintly. “Sounds good to me. It just means that I have to walk a bit further than one tent over to talk with Sapphire and see little Fuku. But I don’t mind. Walking keeps me healthy.” She opens her mouth and inhales contently. “Mmm… I can smell herbs here. I’ll have plenty to do while you’re doing whatever it is you and Asgore do for most of the day. Well… Shall we get moved, then?"

He chirped happily and his tail wagged behind him. "Yes of course! I'll get started right away!" He agreed with a happy tone to his voice.

“We’ll get started.” She corrects cheerfully. “I wasn’t in any shape when we came out here to help. I barely got the inside set up. Let me… let me at least do something this time besides be a lump. I’m strong enough to move, even if I used magic today.”

"Sounds like a plan.” The doctor nods. “You mentioned smelling herbs. Perhaps you can look around and keep an eye out before anyone else thinks to claim this spot, yes?"

“I could do that, yes.” She nods. “If you’ll get the tent and the boys, I’ll do some herb hunting while you’re out. Ah… Let Sapphire and Grillby know where we are, yes? If Fuku gets the sniffles again from the change in weather conditions, my venom helps her a lot.” She’d had to help the baby the first day when she got the flame elemental version of colic. A little bit of venom, and she’d perked right up. Toki was basically a cure-all for fire elementals.

“I smell spear mint and thyme.” She chirrs happily. “We can have delicious something good with that tonight if I can find it.” She rolls onto all fours and shakes herself out slightly.

"Oh yes, of course. I'll make sure to let them, and Asgore know that we'll be heading out here.”

“Maybe just Toriel. Asgore is probably still down at the government camp.” Toki chuckles quietly. She stretches, and gains her feet, and then offers the hand of her primary arm out to help him up.

"As long as one of them knows this is good enough.” He said, taking her hand and getting up, before brushing himself off. He perked up at hearing her speak, however. "Spearmint you said? Would you save me a few leaves?"

“I’ll bring several sprigs if I can find it.” She nods. “Go ahead and get the boys though. I’ll see you back here, Tenne.” She waves him off, and then heads off for the underbrush, following the scent of herbs.

"Sure thing, Toki!" And with that, he left her to be.

'Toki... Can we talk?' Though she wasn't alone for long.

Toki blinked as Cruelty’s voice floated to her. His voice sounded… Different. More feminine, verses the masculine voice that she was used to. Maybe it was just because she hadn’t heard it in so long. It had been shifting for a while, now she that she thought about it. Weird.
She inhaled softly, and continued her hunt. ‘It’s not like I can run away and escape you, Cruelty. Of course we can talk. What did you want to talk about?’

‘I... I think my head's cleared up since you purged that magic... I just kind of want to... Talk.’

‘Then lets talk, Cruelty.’ Toki says softly to him. She sniffs harder, and locates the first treat. She crouches down to begin uprooting a few stalks to replant near the tent, and collects the spearmint like it’s a trophy. ‘What did you want to talk about? You haven’t said a word since the barrier fell. Have you been okay?’

‘I suffered as much as you did when that happened... What's worse is... I think I’ve felt that pain before... I've been remembering more parts about my past since we played jailbreak.'

‘What do you mean felt that pain before?’ She paused, curious. ‘I’m glad you’re remembering more though, Cruelty. That’s surely a good sign.’

‘The pain of loss, feeling like you had a mission in life and you weren't able to keep to it... How many times I lost... My lovers, my friends, my own life... My children...’

That made her really pause, and she lowered onto her hands and knees. Her secondary arms worked at picking the mint sprigs as she listened. ‘I can only imagine what that much loss and that many lives had done to you.’ She murmured to him gently. ‘I… My children aren’t… hopefully aren’t dead. But they’re not here- and there’s no guarantee of us ever going home. I feel their loss just as keenly- and it’s nearly driven me crazy at times. I have to wonder how many you’ve gone through… And it sort of makes more sense as to why you… You sort of went crazy like you did.’

‘None of them are dead... You made sure of that. Everyone who lived was left alive when we plummeted into darkness...’ After a moment, there was a quiet chuckle. ‘The love of a mother... I weaponized it. I used it to strike fear where it would count... And lo and behold, it came back and bit me on the ass.’

‘With teeth like mine, what did you really expect to have happen, Cruelty?’ She sent him the feeling of arching a brow, and then chuckled quietly. ‘I know… I just… We don’t know what all happened when we left. For all we know… Well, more bad stuff could have happened. It’s nearing five months since we came here, I think… It feels like longer, sometimes.’ She sighs. ‘Five months is a long time to live with someone sharing the same headspace though. Hey… I have to ask, but… Does it… bother you that I still call you Cruelty?’

She hadn’t switched back to Simmons… because honestly, Simmons and Cruelty were not even the same people to her. The Simmons she knew… Well, thought she knew… He wasn’t capable of the mass genocide that Cruelty had attempted and been foiled. It was just easier to mentally keep them as separate entities. As far as she was concerned, her sweet Simmons had died the day Cruelty was reborn.

‘It's not the worst name I've been called... Do as you like, Toki.’

‘No… but you’ve had other names. Surely there’s another one that you would like to be called instead…?’

‘There was one name I liked more than the rest. Sequoia.’

‘Isn’t that a woman’s name?’ She asked curiously. ‘Sequoia is beautiful though. It sounds… Almost Native American?’ Though Simmons had been of some foreign descent- he hadn’t been native to where she lived, for all that he spoke her tongue like he had been born to it. ‘I can use that one if you
would prefer it.'

'I always think about that name... I believe sometimes that I was happiest when I was Sequoia...'

'Then you can be Sequoia again. And... and maybe make new happy memories again.' She says softly. 'But... But taking a name means no more cruel thoughts, okay? You can't pop off with something cruel. Be saucy and salty with me if you must, but be kind to the monsters and the people. They haven't done anything wrong.'

There was a moment of silence, before there was a quiet chuckle. 'I wish it could be that easy, you know...'

'It's not going to be easy. But... Anyone can change. If you catch yourself thinking something, just... stop for a moment, and let the thought pass. Nothing is ever easy, Sequoia. Nothing ever is.' She pauses, and then nudges him with her thoughts. '... Would you prefer to be referred to as a her...?'

'That's not weird is it?' Cruelty, now going by Sequoia, then asked. 'Wanting to just change pronouns like that?'

'Not at all. Thousands of people do it.' Toki gathered the mint sprigs close, and then headed off after the scent of the thyme. 'You've probably been back and forth so many times... I probably have too, but this is the only body that I know. Well... only gender that I know.' She trundled through the brush, mouth open as she huffed the air like a bloodhound. 'It will take me some time to adjust- so if I accidentally misgender you, just please gently remind me. I will do my best though to make sure I don’t.'

'You're doing this much for me, do you think I'll have a problem if you goof it on accident?' Sequoia chuckled quietly, 'Though... I’m wondering... Do you think there's there a way we'll be able to separate to be our own once more? I... I know how you feel about mourning for your young, but Tenne... He's young, but he's also incredibly determined... Almost like your hell-and-back Father-in-law.'

'I don’t think you would, but still, a reminder is good.' She hums softly to her counterpart. ‘... I know he’s wonderful. I... care for him too. I’m just... I dunno. I love Papyrus still. I... I still mourn my husband. I only had him for a short time, but... I love easy. Sometimes I love too easy...’ She sighs softly. She cared deeply for Tenne too, as much as she was ashamed to admit it. ‘As for splitting us... Maybe if I had the power from those souls, I could have, but... I don’t know. I can’t form your body again, Sequoia. So... I honestly don’t know. Once my magic is in full form again, and our body is in top condition... We can try to split. What do you think of that?'

'I... I'd like to try, yes...' She agreed quietly.

'Then just give me until I've healed and recovered enough that we'll both survive it. It was easy to merge together. Something tells me that it's not going to be quite as easy to separate us again.' Toki sighed softly. Once she located the thyme, she began to pick that too, stuffing it into her arms as she glanced around at the trees.

A thought slid through her mind as she watched the trees, coming more from her beast than from herself. The trees would be very nice to stretch a comb between and form a hive around. They were tall and strong and away from others and surrounded by plenty of things that could become food to make honey.

The thought made her pause, and her wings flicked at the oddness of the thought process of her
'Did you feel that urge to make a hive too?' Sequoia then asked.

'Yes. That was... That was really, really weird.' She shivers. 'I'm not even sure what it meant. But, uh... Well, my beast, in a sense, is very pleased with this location.' She murmurs to her. 'I'm not even sure I want to know how I would go about making a hive.'

'Well... you're a wasp... hornet... thing. So I'd imagine perhaps it'd look like that round papery sort of nest.'

'I have never seen a wasp or a hornet with nearly as much fluff as I have. I'm more like... Shit, I don't know. A weird hybrid between a honey bee or a bumblebee and a hornet of some kind.' Her palms itched with the need to make a hive, and she hummed sharply, before glancing away from the trees. She focused on the Thyme, gathered a lot of it, and then scented for more herbs.

'It wont effect your honey production will it~?' Her mind-mate teased.

She couldn't stop a snort from escaping her, or amusement from tingling through her insides. 'I doubt it. I don't think I'm going to quite be the endless tap that I was before the barrier went down, but once I'm stronger I should be fine. As for affecting production, I doubt it. It's just a silly urge to make a hive. It'll go away in a little bit, I'm sure.'

'Do bees ever feel like they need to resist this urge?'

'... No, no they do not. But I'm not a bee. I'm a person inside of a bee monster's body.' She huffs and takes off briefly. She comes back down on the other side of some blackberry gnarls, and unearths a hidden ginger root.

'Mmhm. Ooh... These blackberries look plump. I bet Tenne would like them.'

The blackberries caught her eye when Sequoia mentioned them, and Toki nodded, even though she couldn't see her. 'They do. However, I can't pick fast enough on my own for me, him, and two hungry boys. So...' A quick twist of her already low magic, and there was a small battalion of bees at her side. They swarmed the brambles, and began to pluck the berries. 'I'm going to cheat.'

Toki used one hand to ready her shirt to be used for a basket, and let the bees begin to fill the front of it with berries.

'Oh you cheeky thing, heh heh heh~' Sequoia cackled.

'Cheeky and lazy. I am a Nara, after all.' Toki chuckled quietly. Once the bush was mostly devoid of berries, she dismissed her swarm and took to the skies, tiredly buzzing back towards the clearing that Tenne had taken them to. 'So when we get separated, you think you'll want to pursue Tenne? Does that count as cradle robbing since you're technically older than all of us?' She teased lightly.

'Your soul is just as old as mine, Toki.' She snorted at that, but didn’t answer.

'We're basically twins. But there is always one twin older than the other. So which of us is the older twin?' She poised the mildly mind bending question to her mental companion, but didn’t press for an answer to her previously poised question.

'Heh heh heh...' That had Sequoia chuckling quietly as Toki headed back towards the clearing.

Toki chuckled with her in faint humor, and then came in for a landing as her wings grew tired.
'Jeeze. Magic bolsters everything, even my stamina. I'm already tired. Ugh. Gonna walk the rest of the way back. Anyways... Did you ever think we would be teasing each other like this...?' Nearly five months of having her- formerly him- in her head was definitely a forcefully bonding experience.

'Back in the void, I would have called you out of your bloody goddamn monster mind.' Sequoia spoke with sharp tone, before chuckling. 'But lo and behold... looks like we're out of our minds together... and bickering pleasantly as if we were long-time friends.'

'Yeah. Funny how things work.' She chuckles gently. The clearing loomed ahead. She could smell the flowers and the fresh grass, and Tenne's lingering scent on the wind. 'Everyone deserves a second chance. Even you.' Toki nudges her gently. 'Everyone probably thought I was out of my mind when I rejoined us instead of just stuffing you into the genie lamp for eternity.'

'Yeah, I was going to ask about that... Why did you do it?'

'... Because two wrongs don't make a right.' She says softly. 'And imprisoning you to an eternity in isolation... Just isn’t right. At least this way, you had a way to see things. To experience things.' Toki swallowed. 'Maybe I'm just too kind, but I couldn't leave you there to rot, despite you being responsible for all of the deaths since the barrier fell.'

'You are very strange, Tokiko... But... I cannot find myself the will to go without thanking you.'

'You're welcome, Sequoia.' She responded gently as she arrived back at the clearing.

She was still alone, save for the voice in her head, Tenne not yet having returned from his last errand.

With the clearing still empty as Tenne ran to get both the boys and the tent and supplies, Toki brought her cache of items closer. A long strip of bark was rent from a tree, and did well to act as a serving platter for the blackberries. Bushels of spearmint and thyme were set next to them, along with the ginger root. The rest of the mint and thyme were taken to the edges of the clearing. And Toki set to the task of replanting both. She had all intentions of taking these with her when they finally got to move to their permanent home.

'Mint always smells so nice. I love the smell. It tastes good in water too. It's very good for calming stomachs. I had to use it when my morning sickness was really bad with my children.' She hummed to Sequoia.

'You too, huh? I always enjoyed boiling some mint and making tea of it. It was a lovely treat that's lasted through the ages.'

'Indeed. I vomited spaghetti. Well... Magic that had used to be spaghetti. It still tasted of spaghetti. Couldn't eat spaghetti or drink hot cocoa until I was nearly due. Speaking of... Damn. I really miss hot chocolate. That's basically my drug of choice.' She sighs softly. 'Add a little mint, and you've got minty hot chocolate. Mm...'

Sequoia quietly 'mmmm'ed as Toki did.

'Chocolate is the world's drug, honestly.' She chuckled. Once she got the last of the plants planted, Toki huffed and flicked her wings slightly. '... Think I should try hunting...?'

'Would you be able to with your wings? Not to mention your condition overall.'

'Spoilsport.' She pouts. 'I eventually need to learn. Tenne is no doubt going to want to take me hunting, and if I look like an utter buffoon, he's going to know something is fishy... Speaking of fishy. When we get you a body, how are we going to explain you...? A sibling? Or...?'
'A counterpart from another dimension?'

'I am pretty sure we'd confuse the fuck out of him, and he'd expect your name to be Toki too, and for you to come with several nuclear bombs worth of power inside of you. In reality, we're both going to be weaker.' She snorts. 'I think... Maybe a hive mate might be better. More neutral ground.'

'Have him believe not only was there another subspecies of blaster beast out there, but two of that same genus?'

'He already knows I'm not from this world. Who's to say that the void didn't spit you out after me for trying to find me?' She hummed lightly in response.

'Mmmh... True.' One could hear her nod in Toki's head, 'True enough... though we've already lied enough to the poor sap... which is ridiculous coming from me.'

'I never wanted to lie to him, but... It just sort of snowballed out of control. How exactly do you meet an unfamiliar monster, who is desperate for human souls, and tell him that you have not one, not two, but the equivalent of well over a thousand human souls smashed into two fused franken-souls? He'd have either institutionalized us, or killed is for our soul.' She sighs. 'It's better this way. He thinks we are just a mildly mutated blaster beast, like him, and it makes him happy... Also I never used to be able to lie before you. You're a bad influence on me sometimes. Though... Maybe I could actually win at poker now.'

'I've got a killer poker face, but on the other side of the coin I always lost.' She joked.

'I've got a shitty poker face, but my brothers were bad at reading it when they were shit-faced and we were playing strip poker.' She laughs gently. Her wings spread, and she stretches, lightly soaking up some of the sunshine across her membranes. 'Strip poker was always fun. Han always lost first. Kon came next. I... I miss my brothers.'

'I wish I could have gotten to know them better.' Sequoia admitted.

'You only knew them a little. You did more dealings with me and my parents.' She admits with a soft sigh. 'My brothers were great though. Kon was obnoxious. Do you know he boinked Tenebris? He walked funny for a while. That was... Interesting come the time I got married.'

'With his stature... His anatomical design is scary to try and imagine.' And the second voice responded with a nervous laugh

'I honestly don't even know what to expect, other than for anything it touches to be stained black. Asgore had to come to me once to get the stains out of his fur when he was in town. That was... Awkward. Given that his genitals, unlike mine, are hidden behind a slit, we have no idea what could be there. A rubber chicken could pop out for all we know.' She has the barest mental image of Tenne standing nude, his slit opening and a bright yellow rubber chicken popping out with a sad honking noise. It is very promptly sent to Sequoia.

'Oh good lord!' She wasn’t digging that mental image.

Toki bursts out into laughter, physical and mental. 'I had to share. Now we both need brain bleach.'

'Aaaarrggghhh...'

'I'm not even sorry.' Toki laughed. She shifted in the grass and sprawled out for a moment to relax her limbs.
'You are a very strange woman.'

'Not the weirdest I've heard.'

'Which explains why you never stop being strange and getting stranger.'

'That's true. Life is just too boring without a bit of weirdness.'

And the noise of despair echoed once more from the voice in Toki's head. 'Toki whyyyyy.'

'Because you need your feathers ruffled. It's good for you.' She laughed happily. She shifted in place, and rubbed her hands over her eyes. 'Oh god. Alright, alright, I'll stop teasing you, I promise. Heh.'

'Mmh. You think if I was born a monster I'd have feathers?' she asked.

'I dunno, Sequoia. I wouldn't want to be born with feathers. One word as to why.' Toki chuckled. 'Molting.'

'Ooooh ho ho ho... Point very much made.'

'Yep. Feathers are pretty in theory, but not so much in practice.'

'Fair enough.' Was murmured from Sequoia as she slowly went quiet once more.

'Getting tired?' Toki questioned gently. 'You've been very active. You can go rest some if you'd like.'

'Yes... little tired...' She replied, before she chuckled quietly. 'Toki... Thanks a lot...'

'It's no problem, Sequoia. Rest well.' She sighed, and settled down to wait for Tenne and the children. Perhaps napping would be good too while she waited, if she had the time.

It didn't take all that long for Toki to doze off either in all honesty. She was a Nara- she was practically asleep as soon as her mind decided it was naptime. Between one breath and the next, she was settling into a doze in the grass, surrounded by freshly replanted mint and thyme.

Toki was left alone- but not for long. Or seemingly for long.

As she stirred, the scent of mint and thyme was accompanied by warmth and the faintest scent of sweat, as well as the new weight on her chest. She took a moment to listen, and it brought a sound to a her ears, much to her bestial sides pleasure.

A deep resonating purr sounded right beside her ear, as well as two more coming from her chest. Her eyes slowly lulled open and she slowly looked around. Much to her pleasure was what she found.

On her chest was the pups, curled up together as if otters taking a nap on the warm, furry chest of their mother. Curled up around her, from his head on her shoulder to his tail around her where his legs could not reach, was the young but promising Blaster Beast that was Tenne, who's purring was like a steadily vibrating metronome to offer her a comforting white noise. It was unclear whether he was awake or not, though the pups were clearly lost in slumber at this time.
The faintest of smiles crossed her teeth, and she took a slightly deeper breath to indicate the change in her current status of awareness. Her arms lifted, and she stretched against Tenne and under the boys. Mouth opening in a faint yawn, Toki let off a tiny sleepy squeak without meaning to, and then rubbed her secondary palms against her eyes. “Mmm…”

The rumbling grew quiet, and a strong arm revealed to be tucked under her first set gently gave her a squeeze as he hugged her a little closer. "Mmm… Evening." Was the male's gentle purr.

The arm under her first set squished her boobs a little bit, but it wasn’t that bad. She yawned again, a soft stuttering purr coming from her in response, and tried to turn her head to look at him. All she managed to do was boop him in the cheek with one of her curling horns, which made her puff and pout some. “Mmm… It’s evening already?” A quick glance to the sky showed that sure enough, her quick nap had apparently turned into several hours of sleeping. It was already getting dark. “Why didn’t you wake me when you got here?” She scrubs her eyes again with a soft sound, and enjoys the warmth of being cuddled under so many monsters.

Well… One monster's grasp and two children, but it was still a cuddle pile. She’d grown fond of them from her world.

"Because I didn't want you doing any more work with everything you have done so far for us." He purred as he nuzzled her gently. "Did you enjoy your nap?"

"I like to keep busy, Tenne. I'm an independent woman- I don’t need to be babied." He gets the full force of her pout, which isn’t nearly as adorable as it would be if she had lips. "I enjoyed it a lot. I'm still tired, but more hungry than tired." Her wings were also super cramped and squished between her back and the dirt. Part of her was missing his couch already, but that was just the side of her that preferred nesting and sleeping in soft things. "What about you? Did you rest well?"

"Oh yes, I enjoyed napping with you greatly," He kissed her head a few times before letting her go and stretching, going over to a fire that was currently cooking their dinner, which was a lot more aromatic than the last time he had roasted kebabs.

"So you leave me trapped under sleeping pups. How cruel." She laughs gently. She manages to sit up with the boys against her chest, and then smiled to Tenne. Her wings stretched, and made unholy popping sounds as the joints cracked and crunched. She followed it up by cracking her neck, and giving a pleased buzz. "Oh yes... Mmm. Much better. I'm glad you enjoyed your nap too”

The pups whined quietly as they were moved before they both quieted again.

Tenne quietly was rotating the meat on the fire, purring happily as he smelled the meat, "Mmmhhh~" Though he heard the popping and he blinked once as he turned to look at her. "Huh?"

His questioning sound prompted her to turn, and she rolled onto all fours. Her secondary arms supported the boys, while her primary arms supported her upper torso. She stretched up her legs, and sort of like a cat getting the base of it's tail rubbed, stuck her butt right up in the air. She arched her back and was rewarded with a sickening series of popping crunches that rolled from the base of her spine up to her shoulder blades. "Ohhh yes~" She groaned. "Ahh... My back gets so sore when I lay flat on it on the ground sometimes. There we go. Mm... Anyways, the meat smells good, Tenne. What did you use on it?" She stretched a leg, rolling her ankle and popping it. Her toes splayed as she tried to pop those too.

Oh by the stars. "Uh... um..." He had focused on her as she stretched and he flushed a dark black. "Uhhhhhhmmmmmm..."
One of her toes popped. "Tenne?" She glanced up at him. Another toe popped- and then the rest followed. "What did you use on- are you alright?"

His mouth opened and closed a few times before he cleared his throat and smiled "Ye-Es!" His voice cracked as he replied and he flushed further before he turned away, "Hhhhhhhhhhhhh.

"Wha- oh! Oh gosh, I'm so sorry. I forgot for a moment that non Insectis don’t pop their joints like that." A small lie, but it was a good one. "I usually do it when you and the boys are off doing other things. I'm so sorry."

"Hhhhh- I'm okay." He managed words after a short while of sputtering and blushing. "That sounds just really... oh goodness." He let out another nervous chuckle, before he cleared his throat and proceeded to turn back to the fire, which proceeded to perfectly illuminate his flushed cheeks.

"... You're blushing." She grins slowly, as she prowls closer on all fours. Part of her feels a little predatory doing it, but she doesn't stop. "You're blushing a bright shade of black. Does the popping bother you...?" One of her elbows pops as she stalks closer, scooting playfully around the fire with the pups in her arms. She gently nestles them down in a soft patch of grass so the movements don’t wake them.

"Nnnnnot at all." He replied as he cleared his throat again. "I don’t have any problem." He gave her a soft smile, "It's just a little something I should adjust to. I mean... I’m already adjusted to the sound coming from my tail, but when it's your, uh... bones, mine don’t nearly pop as much as that." He chuckled hesitantly.

"Mine pop because I do it a lot. They hurt if I don't." She gives him a thoughtful look from across the fire, and then scoots around it, leaving boys to snooze in an adorable pile in the grass. She comes to sit next to him and huffs in a soft breath of air. "I'll try to be more courteous for you." She lightly bumps her head to his shoulder, and then leans out to sniff the meat in the flames. The flames lick harmlessly at the long hairs of her mane. "Mm... It smells good. You used the thyme and a hint of mint? Or is the mint coming from elsewhere?"

"Ah, that's coming from me." He admitted as he wrapped an arm around her in response to her butting her head against his shoulder. For an insect based creature, she carried a lot of odd habits. "I chewed a few leaves earlier while I set up the tent and fire. The pups helped, which is why they're so darned exhausted." He explained.

"It is, huh?" She leaned towards his face and took a sniff. "Yup, it is. Huh. Well, it smells good. Not sure why you would chew the leaves though. You don't exactly have the teeth for grazing." She eyes him curiously. "But... Thank you for all for getting everything set up. I moved some mint and thyme here, but there are plenty of herbs out in the forest for me to go collect. You and the pups did good with the tent and the fire though." She praises gently.

"I have molars." He chuckled. "They're just a little pointed, but I think that's a result of my evolution being so... off course." He explained. Letting her go for a moment, he turned and picked up a tin cup of water that had been sitting nearby, giving his mouth a swish before he spat the water into the nearby grass. "Forgive me for that," He then spoke to her, "I hadn't washed my mouth out yet and I would look awfully silly with plant matter stuck on my teeth." He settled back against her once more as he explained.

“No worse than I do when I get anything stuck in my teeth.” She gave him a lopsided smile, and settled into his side with a sigh. She opened her mouth, and flexed her teeth. “I’ve got my external teeth, and then I’ve got a set of molars in the back too. Mine are probably more flat than yours are.” Her teeth wiggled at him, and then she closed her mouth up once more. “I don’t really have lips like
you do though. I’m not really sure how my mouth works, to be honest. It’s a weird process. I probably couldn’t chew leaves like you can though.”

“Well with your teeth as flexible as they are, I indeed wonder sometimes. Though I would not about to be so rude as to blatantly ask about it as if I were a common gawker.” He chuffed.

She pats his arm. “I know you wouldn’t. To be frank, I don’t know how my mouth works at all. It just sort of… does what it does. I know I have decent jaw strength though.” She recalls ripping out a man’s throat back when she was a skeleton. Part of her skin briefly goes paler, and she swallows thickly. She’d chipped off chunks of bone. “My teeth don’t have a problem going through human bone.”

“I wonder...” He murmured quietly. "Perhaps these outer teeth are simply for decoration, and you’ve more functional teeth behind them?”

“Maybe?” She sat up and opened her mouth again. Her teeth flexed open again, and she slid a finger into her mouth. Sliding it around her gums, Toki checked around and felt for teeth. “I don’t feel anything besides my gums. I think it’s just external teeth. I mean, they’re fully functional for what they need to do. They just suck for like… soup.”

"Perhaps, it lets you get away with straight pouring it into your mouth though." He joked lightheartedly.

“True.” She chuckles. “And I can do… This.” It doesn’t take much magic to churn fire up into her mouth. Her teeth part just a little into small cracks, and she exhales enough to make small flames come out, creating an effect similar to several very tiny much weaker blow-torches.

He watched with a curious ‘oooh’ sounds. "Fascinating." He rumbled as he looked over her teeth.

She grinned and cut off the flame. Smoke trailed from her mouth, and she opened her mouth fully to let it roll out. “I’m basically living flint and stone.” She says. Rubbing two teeth together does indeed still produce a spark after all. That said, she proceeds to stick her tongue out at him and blow a raspberry. “Insectis are weird.”

"I think you're wonderful." He rumbled sweetly. "It's a very interesting method of self defense, having such a capability at your disposal."

“It definitely means we’re not without fire and heat when it gets cold.” She says in a cheerful tone. That said, she glances to the meat, and reaches out to poke it with a claw. “I think it’s done enough. Any more and you’ll start to over-cook it.” She hums.

"Of course!" He reached out and carefully took the meat off the fire.

She inhaled gently and gave a soft hum. Sliding away from him, she went to go rouse the boys. “Kai,” She crooned, brushing her fingers gently over their skulls. “Quinn. It’s dinner time. C’mon-wake up. You can sleep again once you’ve gotten something in your belly.”

Quinn chattered and whined quietly before stretching and sitting up, yawning widely before he chirped excitedly and scooted over to his father.

While Quinn went to Tenne to get his dinner, Toki flopped down and put her chin lightly on Kai’s chest. She proceeded to lightly blow air in his face to stir the boy with playful mischief. “Kaiiiiii. Wakey-wakey~”

He whined at the air and swatted at the air, papping her cheek harmlessly.
“Kaiiii.” She crooned again, laughing at the smack. She wiggled down a little bit, and then puffed her cheeks, before blowing a raspberry right onto his belly, and tickling the smooth sides of her claws against his ribs. “Up and at ‘m, big guy~”

"Mamaaaa,” He whined as he rolled over and stretched. "Mmmhh... I'm up, I'm up!"

“Good,” She laughed gently. “Or you’d be missing out on dinner. C’mon, kiddo. Up you go.” She lets him up, and stretches herself, before scooping him up and languidly scooting back over to the fire.

She sits him down next to her, and beams at Tenne. “Pups have been fetched~” She chirps, neck fur ruffling chipperly.

"Well done, Toki." Tenne laughed gently, collecting the pups in his lap before carefully doling out the meat to them and Toki. "Enjoy, everyone." He rumbled.

Toki took her serving and gave him a lopsided smile, before setting in. The boys did as well, but with much sleepier finesse than Toki did. Kai was more aware than his little brother, but all the same, both were going to make an absolute mess of Tenne’s lap.

Toki was much less messy, and ate slowly. “Mm… It’s very good, Tenne. Thyme is good on venison. I wish I had some garlic. I bet it would go good with it, don’t you?”

“Mmm…” Kai sleepily agreed.

Tenne nodded in agreement, helping Quinn eat before taking care of his own meal.

Once Quinn was finished, the boy nestled in Toki’s lap like it was his nest, and was right back to sleep again.

She didn’t mind one bit- she finished her meal slowly, taking time to savor it, and then sighed once she did finish it. “I did have that platter of berries I gathered, but we can eat those tomorrow. We just want to put them away, or the raccoons will get them.” She gives a soft, pleased thrum, feeling warmth curling inside of her as her meal settled in her belly. She looked at the trees, and again felt that itch to make a hive.

"I'd like to see them try." He chuffed stubbornly, before taking a bite of his meat.

“Fine then.” She gives him a slow smirk. “One word then. Bears. I might be a powerhouse, but I really don’t want to attract a bear near here, and have to deal with one causing problems with the pups.” They’d all been warned of the wildlife that could be an issue- and while black bears weren’t aggressive, they were still bears and still animals and she didn’t want to tangle with one. “I’m sure my defense could hold up to a swipe from one if I braced for it, but I’d rather not test it if it’s all the same.”

"Mmhm... I suppose you're right... perhaps we'll have them for desert?” He chuckled.

Toki glanced down at the sleeping pup in her lap and smiled. “I think someone’s already fallen asleep, and someone else is going to fall asleep with his food half finished.” She eyed Kai, who jolted awake to finish gnawing on his food. “I was thinking maybe using them with breakfast tomorrow.” She hums. “I think I’ll wake up early and catch some fish from the stream, and maybe do something with the fish and the berries for breakfast. Sound good?”

"Sounds perfect." He agreed, making sure Kai didn't fall asleep and accidentally choke on his mouthful, letting him call it good after swallowing and scooping him into the cradle of one arm.
"Poor pups are exhausted~" He chuckled.

“They had a busy day.” She smiles. “Followed you all the way down the mountain, and then helped us move out here. They’ve been busy- it’s good for them, but they’re going to sleep hard tonight.” She strokes her fingers through Quinn’s tiny fluffy mane, and finishes her meal. Relaxing back, Toki sighs and contemplates the sky. It was turning black rapidly, stars beginning to gleam brightly. Her wings and fur glowed faintly in the darkness. “You’ve had a busy day too.” She hums. “I’m sure you’ll be crashing here soon.”

"Nonsense... I've honed my ability of running on fumes since the lab." He spoke as if he was announcing something he was proud of, when that sort of activity isn't really healthy. "But if it's going to be right next to you, I don’t think I’d mind getting a few winks." Especially if he was next to her. The tired fool was trying to be charming.

His attempt at charming her brought a small and unwanted flush to her cheeks, just as compliments in general always did, and Toki chuckled softly. “Well, you’re going to get on a better sleeping schedule out here, so if I have to settle down with you to get you to sleep, then I’ll do it.” She gives him a lopsided smile. “It’s a bigger world out here. More to do, more to see- you’ll need your energy to keep up with everything. Fumes,” she pokes him in the arm, “Aren’t going to cut it, cutie.”

He gave her a small pout as he rubbed his arm before his sweet expression returned. "Cutie, you say?" He chittered happily as his tail wagged behind him. "As long as it's with you, I don’t care if I sleep on a cold hard floor every night.” His rattling tail then extended and wrapped around her form where it met the ground. "I would be your pillow if that's what it took.” He purred sweetly.

She chuckled. “That’s awfully sweet of you.” Toki smiled at him. “I may take you up on that.” The tent floor was as padded as it was going to get, but it wasn’t super comfortable to her. Particularly her head, with how her horns curled. She had a harder time sleeping on her side now.

Kai yawned, and then scrubbed his eyes. “I’m gonna do it too. M’ tired, Daddy.”

"If you say so, Kai." He purred to his son. He kicked a little dirt on the fire, and then got up, offering Toki a hand. "Come on, let's put the pups to bed and see about getting some sleep ourselves."
Chapter 104

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Toki has sort of given up on going home. She’s strong- but she’s not impervious. Shit happens in this chapter that Toki doesn’t plan on- and isn’t entirely willing at first. Her beast on the other hand... Well, she's gung-ho for it. ;) ON THAT NOTE IT IS SEVERELY NSFW AND YA’LL WHO AREN’T 18 NEED TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT NON-NSFW CHAPTER. The NSFW starts after the page break.

Silverwing Notes: indeed it's NSFW fam, please protect your minor eyes and we wont have any problemas <3 But yes! a NSFW Chapter after so long of the pure ^^

Enjoy the chapter!

Two weeks rolled by on the surface, and the urge to build a hive only grew stronger and stronger for Toki. Sequoia teased her a little bit about it, but it wasn’t something that either of them could get to go away. Toki’s beast was starting to lurk in the back of her mind, disturbing both of them with the closeness that she loomed.

Despite Toki’s inner turmoil, she did good to keep it out of her visible actions.

Two weeks did good for her health. She filled out a little bit with Tenne regularly feeding her high protein foods, and her magic was once more back at full.

With her magic back at full, however, there was a growing itch in the back of her skull. It had started just a day ago, around the time that Toki’s beast started to really become active in trying to direct Toki’s thoughts and actions through her bestial instincts. The itch was like a blanket of warmth that was nestled in her head, and it was growing more and more pesky- and the warmth of it was spreading.

She’d woken this morning feeling like she was running a fever- except that she was roasting, and not cold. The pups had even moved away from her in her sleep, thanks to her warmth and the heat of the summer.

Toki had crept from the tent while the pups and Tenne were sleeping, and proceeded to go down to the river to wash up and get the sweat off of her body. Her skin felt sensitive to the touch- she was wondering if she was coming down with something.

Washing was both fun and not fun- as cleaning up made her… well, she certainly was craving the touch of her husband. Once she was cleaned off, though not cooler, she had returned to the camp.

Toki still had breakfast to make, and get it done before the kids were up and running around and causing all sorts of mischief and mayhem. They’d likely want to go play in the river with as warm as it was outside, so she’d take the chance and do laundry as well.

'So.' It seemed Sequoia was awake. 'Is it just me, or do you have that feeling like it's summer out. Like... especially summer-hot today?'
'It’s not just you.’ Toki groaned to her. ‘It’s hot as fuckin’ hell out here. The water felt great until I had to get out. It’s like I can’t even cool down my body- the water was heating around me no matter what I did with my magic. Just like… Oh… Oh shit.’

'Uuuggghhhhh...' Sequoia let out a loud groan before there was a soft 'thunk' in the back of her ears, no doubt the voice in her head head-desking. ‘I feel like I need to fuck...’

‘That’s because… Shit, we do. We’re going into heat. I’m pretty sure. It’s not like… Like when I was a skeleton. But it’s not going to be pleasant, Sequoia.’ Toki grimaces and rubs her arms as she pushes aside the brush. ‘Shit. Shit, shit, shit, and Papyrus isn’t here.’

'Heat.' She repeated quietly, before groaning loudly. ‘TOKIII, I DIDNT SIGN UP FOR THIS SHIT.’

‘Well neither did I! I didn’t ask to get HTM genetics.’ She huffed to her. The beast rumbled through her mind, echoing her words. ‘But I ended up getting them regardless.’ She sighs. ‘It’s… We’ll just have to deal with it, Sequoia. They don’t come often like women’s bleeds.’

'Ugh... so... how do you plan on tackling this?'

‘Ignoring it for the most part. Monsters can bring other monsters into heat if they’re compatible for breeding though… So I think I’ll slip away from Tenne and the boys for a few days. I don’t want to risk finding out of he and I have compatible genetics.’ Toki chews her teeth, and then sighs. ‘Tenne’s been around me so far though. I’ll leave tonight and leave a note for him and the boys so they don’t worry. We can last a couple of days out in the woods by ourselves.’

'Remember last time you just bailed with only a note? He freaked.'

‘The last time I went into heat, I had half the compound going into heat with me.’ It was an exaggeration- but Sequoia didn’t need to know that. ‘I don’t need to risk sending him into heat too. Tenebris once warned me that I “couldn’t handle him” when he was in heat, to use his words. Tenne might be scrawnier, but I really don’t want to test him when my own beast is basically barking at my heels. A note is going to have to work.’

She made it back to camp, feeling the heat growing under her collar. Her mouth opened and she panted, tugging lightly at her clothing. God, her clothes were so freaking hot… Toki wanted nothing to do with them. She grimaced, and made her way over to the fire pit, settling down in front of it and fanning her wings to let off warmth. A quick spark, and she had a blaze going, and meat sizzling in carved stone bowl with some blackberries added in.

The smoke caught the attention of Tenne who was doing small hunting lessons with his boys. They never really had fires going unless it was for cooking a meal, and it was no where near lunch time, barely past breakfast.

Thankfully Quinn had just scored his mole and both were able to come back with their father to the camp, their heads held high with pride.

Tenne’s head was high as well, mostly to find out what was going on, but as he broke the tree line and took in air, he smelled it. Her attempt to disperse the heat ended up spreading its scent among their clearing.

And Tenne’s sense of smell was strong enough to detect it, as if a shark detecting a droplet of blood in millions of gallons of water. In but an instant his pupils widened a little, though barely perceptible unless one was looking directly at them, as he came closer. "Toki." He spoke to get her attention.
Tenne and the boy’s returning prompted her to wave at them. Her wings fanned again, glowing surfaces brighter than normal and seeming to pulse with patterns of light. She was nearly perspiring over the fire as she bathed the meat in the sweet sauces the berries gave off when cooked, and found her mouth falling open as she panted against the heat. Good god it was hot.

When she was spoken to, she swallowed, and glanced up at him. Her pupils were dilated in her irises, a sign of her heat, though she thankfully was retaining her lucid mind. Not that her beast really wished for that- she was raging against her mind, demanding her put this ‘male’ to the test, to find a ‘replacement for the one she lost’. Irritated at her inner beast, Toki forcefully caged her, and managed a smile for Tenne. “Welcome back. I thought you three would still be sleeping.”

"No, The pups wanted to go out and practice their skills." He chuckled as he came over, playing it cool as much as she tried to, though it wasn't easy. Not only does the air smell of her, but the area near her is even worse. It’s thick and rich, smoke and honey and hot like fire and enticing all the same, and he found himself nearly choking in it.

"I caught a mouse!" Kai announced proudly, while Quinn held up his mole with a proud 'NYEH!'

Both pups seemed blind to the smell, either that or none the wiser. Either way, it was a good thing. Toki was thankful that they seemed blind to it.

Her wings flapped, making a faint buzzing sound, and she continued to stir the meal in her little stone cook set. She really just needed to go back to Snowdin and get all of their dishes, but she was loathe to go back underground. “I see that.” Toki smiled to Kai, and nodded to Quinn. “You both did very good. Maybe next time you'll be able to catch those pesky squirrels that seem to keep dropping nuts on our tent in the wee hours of the morning.” She winks at them lightly.

Both brothers seemed to light up at the idea, before Quinn waddled forward and offered his mole to her. "Mama!" He giggled.

Toki… had no idea what to do with the mole. Though the lack of know-how on what she was supposed to do with such a tiny morsel of a critter flashed across her eyes, she accepted it all the same, and leaned down to nuzzle her face to his and press kisses to his cheeks. “You adorable little cutie you. You did a good job.”

Kai grinned. “He did. Daddy’s real’ proud of both of us, aren’t you?”

"You're already growing into fine young hunters, I couldn't be more proud." Tenne rumbled in agreement.

Quinn cooed, then chirped happily and held the mole to her face.

"We Blaster Beasts always found a full kill to be good for the body, bones, organs and all. He seems adamant that you get your fill." Tenne rumbled with amusement.

'Oh no. Wait, wait, wait a second he doesn't mean…!

‘Oh, but he does. And… And we’re going to do it. Hold on to your stomach, Sequoia. It’s going to get… mousy in here.’

Oh god, she was going to do it. She had to keep up her cover as a blaster beast- and not only that, but she wasn’t about to break little Quinn’s heart over a mole. She couldn’t exactly say he needed it more- not when she was still clearly under weight and the pups both knew it.
She could do it. She’d eaten worse things before. Hell, she’d eaten magic-cooked fungus off the cave walls in Waterfall before. She could handle a little mole.

Toki opened her mouth and accepted the mole, hiding the disgusted twisting her stomach did. Her beast purred from inside of her cage and she stoutly ignored the mole as she proceeded to eat it to please Quinn. “Well,” she said when she’d managed to swallow it, “Thank you, little one.” She nuzzles his face and then noses him against her. “I have breakfast almost done for you, Kai, and your Daddy, since you already provided mine.” She purred. Too hot to eat anything else, and too mentally nauseated by her body’s happiness at consuming it. Yuck. Yuck, yuck, yuck.

‘Uuuugghhhh I can hear the bones and the organs getting crushed…'

‘Dear god Sequoia, don’t remind me. I’m trying to keep the mole in, not back out again. Hghgh.’

Tenne smiled happily while Kai, Daddy's boy he was, offered his mouse to his father, who rumbled in appreciation but declined, "She needs it more than I do, my boy." He chuckled.

Kai looked at him for a moment, faintly pouting at being turned down, and then walked over to Toki and offered his mouse to her. "Here."

“Shame on you for hurting your son’s feelings, Tenne. I’m alright enough.” Toki tilted her head to look at him and cocked her head towards the mouse. Two rejections would probably be too hard on the boy.

Her stomach churned with the thought, but Toki leaned down and opened her mouth for him, her hands busy with breakfast and Quinn. “Thank you, Kai.” She praised gently.

He smiled warmly in reply and plopped the mouse into her mouth. "I don’t feel upset. It's okay. I saw Papa take down a rabbit earlier."

Toki ate the mouse just like she had the mole. It settled in her stomach nicely, her body thanking her, while her mind reeled in disgust. Her internal heat killed any parasites she might have gotten from it, she knew, but it was just… Ghhhh. Gross. All the same, Kai got a smile. “Oh did he now?” She glances to him slyly. “I guess he’s probably not hungry for my cooking then, is he.” Speaking of, it was done.

She served up plates for the boys first, and carefully set the berry-coated goodness into their hands.

That had Tenne hesitate before he whined. "I mean... It probably wasn't as good as your cooking..." One could see metaphorical ears on his head droop at the idea of not enjoying something of her creation.

Toki couldn’t help but laugh lightly. She scooped a third plate, heaping the last of breakfast onto it, and then held it out to him. She wasn’t very hungry with… well, the rodents in her belly, and the heat blazing through her. “I’m not going to deny you my cooking, Tenne. Here- go ahead and eat up.”

He took the offered bowl and purred happily, "Thank you~"

"Are you not gonna eat with us, Mama?" Kai asked.

Toki shook her head and kissed his brow gently. “Both you and Quinn already gave me my breakfast.” She purred softly. “I’m alright for now, little one. Besides, I’m a little too hot for a full meal right now.”
"Are you sick?" Kai piped up with worry.

"NYEH!" Was Quinn's following whines moments after.

“I’m not sick, I promise.” She laughed gently, and smoothed her hands over their skulls. “I’m alright. It’s just a little heat that’s getting to me, that’s all. It’s a very warm morning. I’ll go soak down at the river and cool off again in a little bit, I promise.” Even though she’d just come from there not too long ago.

Both boys had their worried faces on, but they were hungry too, so they both dug into their breakfast.

Tenne enjoyed his as well, but at a slower pace, watching Toki with a calm expression, though there was everything but calmness in his eyes. They were locked on her, and the taste of her hands on the berries further influenced the flare of co-responding instinct that came with her scent.

Her wings fanned again, blowing a cool breeze over Tenne and the boys while Toki used some water from a nearby bucket to quick rinse the makeshift pan. Once that was done, she straightened up, and fanned her shirt, groaning faintly. She wished she could just strip it off- but she wasn’t at home alone and covered with bones- she was a flesh creature now and she had boobs.

And she never knew where humans with cameras lurked, to be honest. They were everywhere.

She stretched, her mane ruffling, and then settled down onto all fours again. She glanced to Tenne and the boys. “Do you want to join me for a soak in the river?”

"Yeah!"

"Nyeh!" Well, the boys seemed excited.

Tenne shuttered as another wave of her scent washed over him and a low rumble resonated from him before he gave a simple nod, unable to muster up his voice to speak out loud to her.

The rumble drew her attention, and one of her wings cricked, making a soft, sweet buzz in instinctive reply. She harshly flapped her wings and gave them a rough shake, before tucking them tightly to her back. Misbehaving little things. “When you’ve all finished, we can go swimming. Maybe we can catch some fish while we’re down there, hm?”

"We can try fishing for Lunch!” Kai announced proudly, before he finished his breakfast and went to get his towel and a change of clothes, his brother soon following to do the same.

While the two rummaged around in the tent, Tenne slowly set down his empty bowl and rested his hands in his lap, his tail rattling behind him as he seemed to just watch her.

Simply being stared at was definitely creepy and Toki was not sure she was entirely fond of it. She found herself staring back however, and tilted her head. Her wings buzzed against her back as he rattled. Her beast chuffed in her head, and seemed to lose interest with him simply staring at her, and she hummed, before fluffing and glancing away from him, her attention diverting to the tent and the boys inside of it as she waited for them to come out.

His pupils thinned and he let out a quiet rumble, before he slowly rose and brushed off as if nothing happened, walking over to the tent to knock on it gently, "You two ready to go?” he chuckled, before the two bowled out with their armful of items.

"Got the soap!” Kai announced.
"That’s good. We can wash up you, Quinn, and your daddy before you become too stinky in this heat." She teases gently, her humor taking any sting out of the words that might have occurred. She was quick in stooping down to tickle Kai, and then offering her arms to whichever child wanted to hitch a ride. It wasn’t a long jaunt, but a five-minute walk could be done faster with longer legs.

Quinn took her arms eagerly while Kai hooked onto his father’s leg.

Tenne snorted at her words. She says before ‘they’ get too stinky and yet the smells of her pheromones were practically drowning him.

Toki scooped Quinn, and then grinned to Tenne. “Race you?” She chirps. Without waiting for an answer, she bolts off, her legs carrying her swiftly down the same path she’d taken before.

Kai crows from his father’s leg. “Don’t let her win, Daddy! You’re faster!”

Tenne rumbled loudly and chuckled. "Hold on tight, Kai.” He purred, before he lowered his form and bolted to catch up with her, an effortless feat as his legs were long indeed and it allowed him to easily catch up.

Toki laughed, her wings trailing behind her as she ran. She wasn’t going as fast as she could, but she didn’t want to roll her ankle on the uneven terrain. Toki remained upright, up until she reached the river, where in she crouched on all fours to let Quinn down.

She was panting, heat having gathered under her clothing. Tenne had made it there before her, but all the same, she’d had fun. Once Quinn was on his own two feet, Toki began the task of removing her clothing.

Tenne was already undressing as well, his shirt cast to the side and soon accompanied by his pants, "So... We won." He purred, looking to Toki.

Toki shrugged out of her shirt, her breasts falling free from their confines and bouncing with her heaving ribs. “You did,” She agreed, grunting as she had to work at detangling her shirt from her horn. This set of horns tangled with things going on and going off- and it was even peskier than when she had straight horns. Curling horns were… aggravating. “So,” She asks once she’s free, standing in just her pants and facing him. “What did you want for a prize?”

Her fingers hooked on her hips, and worked her pants and undergarments down her legs. Embarrassingly, her undergarments were damp with slick. It was easy to forget that she wasn’t a skeleton- her parts were always there. So that throbbing desire curled in her belly that fed arousal to her nether bits… Well, it wasn’t going to go away, and it was going to be messy.

Toki was swift in balling up her pants and flinging them onto a rock to be washed later, standing bare before him and the pups. The boys were working on getting out of their clothes, so they could dash into the cold water. Toki looked expectantly at Tenne though, tilting her head at him questioningly.

"Well... I can think of one thing." He growled happily in reply, his pants and boxers now discarded.

“Well, you can’t get it if you don’t tell me.” Toki quirked a faint smile at him. Her wings twitched. “But... you can tell me after we’re in the water.” She grinned at him, and then proceeded to splash into the river, naked body glistening as the water splashed up and dripped down her. Once she reached a certain point, she pretty much flopped in, fanning her wings to help keep her aloft. “Ahhh. It feels so good~” she practically moaned.

He rumbled and followed her into the water before he grinned and bent down, scooping her up.
Toki squeaked as he scooped her out of the water, not like a fish caught in a net. She squirmed, and her wings flapped faintly, before she buzzed at him in amusement. “Really Tenne? C’mon, it’s hot out here.” She whines a little bit.

He chuckled and gave her a little heft, before he waded into the deeper water, before turning and falling backwards into the bath with a splash.

She shrieked noisily, though it faded into gurgling as they ducked under water. She squirmed against him, and then tickled her fingers against his chest as her wings flailed on the surface of the water. Amusement bubbled in her all the same, and she drove her fingers for his ribs, aiming to tickle him to her freedom as she squirmed against his grasp.

He grinned and gently blew air bubbles into her face before surfacing with a gasp. Though he quickly nuzzled into her neck with a pleased purr, and kept her trapped right there in his arms.

Toki squeaked as she was allowed access to air. As he snuggled his face to her sopping mane, Toki huffed and blew air over his scalp with a playful laugh. “You butt.” She chuffs. “You’re lucky my stingers didn’t automatically deploy.” She drapes across him with a faint puff, and then pokes his chest. His skin is cooler than hers, and for that she’s thankful as she’s pressed to him. “You gonna let me go?”

"No." He replied simply.

Toki squirmed against him, her legs bumping between his as she wiggled briefly in his grasp. She pouts up at him. “But Tenne,” she flutters her eyes at him, glad she sort of has lashes to do this with now, “it’s too hot to be held captive.”

"Not in the water~" He purred, before nuzzling her. "You smell so good today, Toki..." He cooed softly, before his legs shifted and squeezed one of hers between his. "Mm... heh, heh... Frisky.”

She squeaked and squirmed harder as he captured one of her legs between his. “Oh, um, ah, hah, I do? Well, this does mark my second bath of the day, s-so I suppose I’m just extra clean. As for the ah, other thing," There were children about, she didn’t want Quinn knowing what Frisky meant, "I didn’t mean to bump you-"

Kai bobbed up not far from his dad’s shoulder. “What does frisky mean, Daddy?”

Toki’s face brightens with a blush, and she shoots Tenne a look that equates to ‘you said it, you get to explain it’.

He hesitated, and then he smiled at Kai. "I'll tell you when you're a little older, okay Kai?"

“Okay.” Kai waited exactly six seconds before grinning at him. “I’m a little older now, Daddy.”

Toki buried her face against Tenne’s chest and made a flustered buzzing sound. The children were far too young to be corrupted.

"A few years, Kai."

“A few years?” Kai pouts at him. “But that suuuucks. Is it like when Grillby stuck his fire stick in Auntie Saph and made her make happy screams when he didn’t know i was up? Are you gonna make Mama do happy screams? Is it called ‘Frisky’?”

Toki turned the brightest shade of green that she had managed yet, and then went completely and unexpectedly boneless, before using Tenne’s surprise at the sudden shift in her posture to wiggle out
of hid arms and into the water. Nope. Nope, nope, nope. The things that children would say and this was not one that she was going to humor while she was in heat.

Not while her beast was purring at the idea.

"... Oh my god." That had Tenne sinking as well. "Why, my son... Why do you know this...?" He spoke grimly as he sank into the water.

Kai watched him sink and leaned down to lick his head affectionately. "I wasn’t tired when Auntie Saph put us to bed before Mama came, and I got up to get a drink and heard funny noises. So is that called a frisky? Are you going to do a frisky with Mama and make more pups?"

The water, thankfully, muffled Toki from hearing anything Kai said. But watching Tenne sink… Well, she had to wonder just what the curious boy was saying. In the mean time, she put some distance between them and herself, and then just basked under the water and let it cool her off and wash her sweat down the stream.

One could practically see his soul leaving his body. "Kai... Kai why..."

“Daddy!” Kai huffs. “Because I wanna know, and you said a good scientist asks all the questions, even th’ awkward ones.”

"..." Well fuck, he was right. Tenne sat up and took a deep breath. "I’ll explain things to you when you are old enough, but you must promise me that you will not discuss this with your brother."

Kai nods and holds out his pinky. “I pinky promise, Daddy.”

He swam over and took his pinky, "Atta boy." He rumbled.

Kai beamed at him and shook his pinky to seal the deal. “So where did Mama go?”

"..." He then turned and dove under the water to collect the hornet.

Toki spotted him coming, her eyes popping wide under the water, and knew he was going to capture her again. She made to escape, swimming up stream with the help of her wings, using them like flippers.

He watched her retreat, but his gaze ran by her ass and he grinned a little. Fuckin’ nice. He surfaced after a little and sighed. "She's having some Toki time."

Toki popped up when he did, and blew a raspberry at him. “Hardly. I’m just enjoying the cold water. You, dear Tenne, are not conductive to dropping my body temperature.”

Kai laughed. “Daddy’s just hot like that.”

“Yes, yes he is...’ Sequoia agreed lightly.

‘Oh my god! Shush!’ Toki squeaked to her.

Tenne laughed at his son's words and swam over to him and Quinn, taking both boys into his arms before flopping backwards into the water again.

The boys laughed and squealed contently, and splashed water up at Tenne with excited noises.

Toki snorted, and went to lounge on the rocks. She stretched out with a soft groan, and rested her head on her primary set of arms. Her whole body throbbed.
'You know... He's starting to look pretty appetizing at this point, Toki...' Sequoia purred quietly.

'That's just hormones talking, Sequoia.' Toki groaned to her, finding her hips wanting to sway against the rock she was clutching to. But her eyes did stray, even if her mind wrangled tightly with guilt, and she ogled him from her position on the rocks. 'He, uh... Does have a nice posterior.' He was built a lot like Papyrus was, come to think of it. 'Ugh, I can't be thinking like that. That's just the heat and my beast and you and me and it's not... Right. His alternate self is like a father to me.' Even though she didn't see Tenne even in the same similar lighting.

'Look, if your beast is anything like he was, it's not going to give up until it gets what it wants. I understand things have been hard, but lingering in the past makes it so that you can't pave the way of your future...' After a moment though, the woman in her head heaved a massive sigh. 'Fucking hell, I am such a hypocrite.'

'A little bit of one, yeah.' She heaved a sigh, and glanced away from Tenne. She tucked her face into her arm to keep the others from noticing her expression. 'I'm just... I'm not ready to consciously make that step, Sequoia. I'm not. It's... it hasn't even been a year. I know... I know if I can't go back... if I never manage to do what the Void- what Magic- wants me to do... Papyrus wouldn't want me to be alone forever. But... I just... I don't know what to do. I've never... lost someone like that before. I know I care for Tenne, more than I feel like I should, but... I feel guilty about it. Because I still love Papyrus with all of my being too.' She sighs again and slips further under the water. It laps at her neck, and the cool liquid slides through her mane. 'I'm... I'm going to slip away for this heat. Before my beast makes me do something I don't feel like I'm ready for.'

'He's just going to come after you. He's infatuated and now riled up because he caught our scent...'

'He has his boys. He can't leave them on their own for five or more days- which is what my heats usually run. Or used to run.' Toki murmurs softly.

'Come night time though.' She mentioned next. 'I've been a sneaky teenager a thousand lifetimes over, i know what an infatuated young man is clever enough to come up with.'

'You've never experienced a heat though, Sequoia. Once you start, you don't want to stop. The urge to sate it is overpowering. Once Tenne and I... well... Y'know... We'd be stuck doing just that until my heat, and his when I inevitably bring him into it, both wear out.' She shifts on the rock, and rubs her hands lightly together. Her eyes close as she just enjoys the cool water. 'You know what... If Tenne tracks me down, we'll see what happens. But he wont- because he has his sons.'

'I suppose you're right.' Sequoia sighed. 'I don't know what it's like... But I guess I'll find out. Either way... I suppose we'll see what happens.'

'Indeed.' Toki agreed quietly.
Toki managed to get settled in the tent, but it was too hot, and the space too enclosed for her to be comfortable. Once the pups were asleep, and Tenne presumably out as well, Toki managed to clamor out. She scrawled a shaky note in the dirt for him, before the beast broke her chains- and Toki was whisked away into the night on a whirlwind of silent wings.

The beast knew where she was going- and she took Toki further down the mountain than Toki would have liked. She took her down, down, towards the government camp and then away because people were not a good thing to have around her and what she was trying to do.

The beast located a small closely woven grove of trees, and directed Toki’s actions roughly. Something began to leak from her wrists and down into her hands as she latched onto one of the trees. Toki realized in the dim lighting from the moon that it was a waxy substance, not unlike that which a bee would make her hive out of. It would appear that her wax glands were on her wrists, around the same location as her stingers.

And for the next four hours of darkness, Toki worked with a swiftness that surprised even her. The beast guided her actions, forcing her to work even through the waves of heat that damn near blinded her. She built a conical shape around the trees, building from the top to the bottom and leaving a hole in the base about eight feet off the ground. The branches that were in the way were broken off- and once the outside shell was formed, she began to make combs.

Many, many combs lined the inside of the hive, and each one Toki injected with her venom and then capped, before fanning her wings to rapidly cool. The beast was nesting, using her body to create the perfect hive for insectis children.

‘For eggs,’ Her beast supplies her gruffly, before ignoring her pleading for her to stop once more. ‘No. Need to mate. Must mate. Lost first. Must find another. Have grieved long enough.’

Another several hours went into fortifying the hive, putting layers upon layers on the papery and waxy outside so that it could support the weight that it needed to.

But once it was done… Once it was done, it was massive, and filled to the brim with honey. The beast hadn’t bothered to get rid of Toki’s clothes, and the clothing frustrated her some- but not enough to make her rip it. No- the beast had more important work to do.

She crawled down to the entrance of the hive, which had a special cover over it to keep things from falling out, and then opened the cover. Toki’s body didn’t leave the hive- but instead, she latched onto the side of it, and her body made a high pitched noise that echoed through the hive, and out the hole, amplifying the sound.

The piping sound echoed for miles, broadcasting through the forest for all to hear that the beast, and Toki, were more than ready to finally mate. Her pheromones had already spread for miles- now it was just a waiting game to see when the males would come running.

The piping was heard by nearly everyone who was still awake, And those closer to them when her scent was released were lured closer by the co-responding piping.

Many grew closer and their eyes could be seen through the forest, but before they could come close enough, there was a growl and a loud rattling that scattered many of them.

Through the trees, bright purple eyes glowed and Tenne stalked through. He was on all fours, yet held himself high as he walked to under the hive. He was undressed save for his tank top and a pair of boxers that was his normal sleepwear, but that was the only normal thing about him. His form was adorned with spiky bone-like plating that jutted out of his skin, framing his head like a pointed
helmet. He looked more like a blaster beast now.

He held in his teeth a large dead raccoon, no doubt his offering of kill for her.

Tenne put his kill down and rattled loudly to her, before he turned and bared his fangs with a fierce snarl, scattering the rest of the monsters that had gathered. Once the two were alone, he turned and lifted his head, before he reared back and nudged the hive with a rattle.

The nudging of the hive definitely got her attention, and the piping cut off almost immediately. The beast lowered down to the entrance, and stuck her head out the bottom to peer at him. Her eyes glowed green, and she parted her jaw to huff in his scent. Ahh yes, the beast knew this creature.

Terror initially hit Toki’s consciousness hard- because she knew that form. That was similar to the form that had broken her leg and arm, and very nearly caused her to lose both of her children.

The beast, however, soothed her fear, and gave Tenne an appraising look. She hummed a soft buzzing sound and eying the raccoon that he had brought as an offering. It would do. The other scents she could smell did not smell as good as the male that the she-beast wanted.

So she gave a softer, quieter piping, just for Tenne to hear, and then retreated up into the hive again. One of the cooled combs of honey was extracted from the hive wall, and she crawled back down again to peer at him. She dropped down out of the hive, her clothing still in place if a little mussed and ruffled, and landed on all fours. The comb of honey was clutched in her secondary hands, and she remained crouched as she rolled it over to him- a return offering of his courting, and acceptance into the hive for mating.

Sharp green eyes watched him to see what he would do with the sweeter smelling honey.

He rumbled happily at her sounds, his tail wagging behind him slowly. As the honeycomb was offered, he slowly extended his neck and put down her gift, before he sat back and took her offering. Taking in the scent, Tenne gave a pleased chitter before he opened his mouth, jaw splitting wide to engulf the gift in one bite.

Him taking the entire gift was surprising to the beast, but she let out a very, very pleased rumble despite the shock on her face. He was going to be in for the long haul then. She took the raccoon in her secondary hands, flitting back up to the hive to store it up there for safe keeping, and then returned down to him while he finished his gift.

Her wings flexed and fluttered, showing off their dazzling green colors for him as the beast waited for the honey to take effect.

Toki and Sequoia were left puzzling over what sort of effect the honey was supposed to take- up until the beast supplied them with a swift answer. An aphrodisiac at it’s finest, her honey when she was in heat was designed to stir and arouse him so he would have the stamina to keep going. Males never lasted long enough, after all, and the beast wanted one thing- for the fire of heat in her belly to be sated.

As his mighty jaws reduced the comb to a messy pulp, he savored the taste of the honey, but as he swallowed his mind went blank and his body got hot. He slumped and let out a dominant, though needy growl, and his head lifted to look at her, before he advanced and started to nip her where he could, head butting her hips insistently.

The urgent nudging of her hips made the beast purr, and she fumbled to try and get her clothing off. When she couldn’t figure it out, she let out a flustered sound, and shoved Toki up long enough to
make her counterpart help her strip bare.

Toki, now in control, had steadier hands for removing clothing, even with Tenne butting his head roughly against her hips. Her shirt was shunted off, her pants and undergarments following. There was no point in fighting it, as much as her conscious mind wanted to. Her body was too hot, he was too frantic… it was honestly easier to just go with the flow.

Besides… There was part of her that was ready to… Well, ‘mingle’, as it was. Nearly half a year without her husband… She didn’t feel like she should be ready, but… Toki did love too easy.

Soon she was bare before him, and she turned, of her accord and of her beasts’ accord, and tugged at his clothing. Her chest dropped low to the ground, giving him access to her posterior as she fanned her wings, wafting her scent over him like a fan.

He got out of his clothes rather quickly, and he gave her a few more nips before mounting her from behind. His arms wrapped around her waist and his face buried into her fur in his search for her scruff, a feature often found on his breed, though less likely to appear on hers.

This was a position that Toki was familiar with. It was one she and Papyrus were fond of- and it amused her a little bit inside to realize why he was fond of it. That amusement quickly faded as his hips, devoid of any parts that she could initially feel, pressed up against her bare backside. That’s right- he didn’t have any visible parts. So she wondered how that was going to exactly work…

His mouth searching through her fur located the insect equivalent of a scruff- which was mostly just where her mane was the thickest along the back of her neck. Toki and her beast grunted when his mouth found purchase there, and her primary set of arms sunk her claws into the soil as she growled at him. The beast pressed her hips back into him with a demanding piping sound.

He snarled and lifted his leg, hooking it on her hip as his slit came to be prodded open by his anatomy. A long black cock slid out, and it prodded against her lips for a short time before his hips shifted and pressed more firmly into her. It took him only a few rocks, before he shoved his girth into her, and gave a pleased rumble as he nearly hilted himself in her.

Toki hadn’t expected him to nearly freaking hilt himself inside of her without much warning- or for him to be that large. Papyrus had been large for her, and she hadn’t been constrained by actual flesh then. Tenne… Tenne was easily the size of Papyrus and then some. Like a Papyrus and a half. He speared her wide enough that a stab of pain slid through her walls, and they fluttered as they struggled to adjust to the sudden and not gentle intrusion. She cried out, wings fluttering under his body weight, and her secondary set of arms came down to cling to his arms as they wrapped around her waist.

Her beast purred inside of her, oddly pleased despite the uncomfortable pain stretching her wide-wider than even her children had, most certainly.

He growled as she reacted and put a little more weight on her to warn her that this behavior wasn't going to do her any good, and began to rut his hips against her, barely pulling out between his hilting thrusts as he moaned and growled quietly in her ear.

Each thrust forced his length deeper into her, and Toki yelped as he hit deeper and deeper, until he could go no further. He hit the end of her passage, stopped only by what she could guess was what connected to the end of her passage. The harder he pressed on her back, the more her torso sunk towards the ground, until she was just barely held up by hey primary arms. Her breasts rocked with every thrust, bountiful swells brushing the soil and stimulating her nipples.
Her mouth fell open with a pant, and the more he rutted, the less it began to hurt. Her body began to acclimate, adjusting to his girth and massive size as he not only blanketed her body with his, but filled her from the inside. As it started to hurt less and feel more pleasurable, the beast began to pipe again, soft and cloying and urging him ever onward as she moaned and panted, mouth falling open.

The beast that was the man that felt so strongly for her gave a pleased grumble like noise as he nibbled her shoulder in praise.

His tail made a bit of ruckus behind him with how loud it was rattling, but no doubt it was a sound of joy or great enjoyment in their current situation. His grip tightened a little more and his nips gave way to a few nuzzles as his strides seem to grow longer as he no longer made to dominate, no doubt the conscious mind of the young man turning this into what he hoped to have as a more passionate moment.

Toki could tell when it was Tenne who was taking control again. The motions took on a much gentler approach, his thrusts softer as his cock slid in and out of her. His hips and armored plating were no longer doing their best to bruise her backside. Likewise, her beast backed out further, leaving Toki in her stead- and Toki found herself simply closing her eyes and enjoying the feel of him within her.

He wasn’t… he wasn’t Papyrus. They weren’t the same man- not even the same sort of animal. This was two entirely different sorts of sex. She knew she’d feel guilty about it later- but each stroke of him within her… it helped to soothe the burning agony of the heat inside of her belly.

Her hips rolled back against him, a distinctly conscious move, and she threaded her smaller fingers through his as he clutched her. His hands were big enough that he could hold her securely with one- and spare the second one. She laced her fingers once she had it free, and enjoyed the intimacy with the man who had been trying to court her broken heart.

Toki could do passion. Passion and fire went hand in hand, after all- and she was a being of fire.

‘Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice. From what I've tasted of desire, I hold with those who favor fire.’ She mused to herself. Her Papyrus… he had been like the sun to her. He was her fire… ‘But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate to say that for destruction, ice is also great.’ And Tenne… Tenne might just be her ice.

‘You’re seriously quoting poetry while taking the biggest dick that I’ve ever even considered to have ever existed? What even are you, Toki?’ Sequoia groaned.

‘What can I say? There’s no one else out there quite like me.’ Toki took a deep breath, and then bucked her hips gently into him, giving a full body buzz that vibrated down to where his cock joined her body.

As she seemed to give a conscious reply, he gave a happy sound and his hand clenched around her threaded fingers, not tightly, but tenderly, almost lovingly.

The buck and following buzz around his cock did give make him give a shudder and a loud gasp of pleasure, followed by a few thrusts that were stronger than the others. Though the new pace that followed was only a little slower than before, it definitely got him going.

He pressed his face into what he had been biting but a moment before and began to chatter and trill. Her beast side would eventually recognize it as a sister tongue of blaster beast kind, speaking of his praise of how wonderful she felt, how happy and honored he was to be in this with her, and how he prayed he was good to her like this.
The tender and loving embrace of his fingers felt nice, and her thumbs rubbed over the backs of his hand while he drove her nearly face down into the ground. Toki rolled her hips against him again, listening as he began to chatter and grill to her.

Neither she nor Sequoia knew what he was saying, but her beast did and jovially translated it for both of the women inside of Toki's head. The string of praise and compliments to her was flattering, and the green flush on her cheeks began to spread all along her face and down her neck.

Her beast chimed in again, and she returned the string of praises, telling him through Toki's throat just how good of a male he was, and how amazing everything was- fluffing his ego and his pride.

Her praise was heard but in this moment, it affected neither his pride nor his ego, rather it encouraged him that he was performing well for her. He moaned quietly into her neck and his hold on her tightened. "T-Tojiko."

The use of her full name was unexpected, and the beast wasn't sure how to process this. She hadn't prepared for this. However, Toki knew. She rocked forwards on her elbows, her back bowing under the weight of his body. Her mouth fell open in a ragged gasp, crocodilian teeth parting with a spray of sparks. "Ah... Tenebris~" His full name- pack name- slid from her maw before she could stop it. The heat made warmth pool in her pool in her belly faster, her slick covering his shaft and the front of his pelvis as he rocked into her roughly. "Tenebris~!"

He had known that she would no doubt return the favor, and hearing his name through the lips of the beautiful female he loved so dearly gave him a surge of excitement and happiness.

His grip tightened and he gave a mewling moan into her ear, "Oh T-Toki..." he whispered, "Y-you... you feel so good~" He moaned between thrusts as he began to pick back up on his rhythm of thrusts.

Toki mewled as his pace quickened, and she offered her shoulder to him to hold on to. Her wings trembled frantically beneath his chest, her breathing nearly at a rate of hyperventilating. She was already balls deep in this- or rather he was balls deep in her- so there was no point in trying to fight it. She continued to speak. "S-so big," she panted, her walls fluttering and squeezing around him in rapid waves timed with the beat of her conjoined soul. "So big and thick and hhhh, filling... Mmm... Ah~"

He took the offered shoulder, using one hand now to hold her against his form as he moved back onto his knees, now holding her by one of her legs and her chest, moving her a bit faster as his mouth fell open to release louder, more needy moans for the forest around them to hear.

With his hand now on her shoulder instead of the mouth she had intended, that left his very large forearm now fully pressing against both of her breasts. One of them slipped against the curve of his arm, and she shuddered pleasantly at the feel of his skin scraping over her sensitive nipples. The new position was nice in many ways. It offered her a way to go bounce deeper into his cock, forcing him deeper into her core. It was pleasant, almost with a painful edge. She loved it.

'I didn't know you were a masochist.'

'It's the normal ones you never suspect. And I'm only a tiny little bit of one. I don't mind some aches and pains, but not too much of it spoils the mood. I mostly like being bitten. There's something satisfying about being bitten and held- and I wonder if my inner beast has always liked it, and has always been there, if only dormant. But shush. You're interrupting.'

'My apologies.' Sequoia snorts sarcastically.
Toki groans and bounces against him, before piping again, urging him just a little faster, a little deeper. She was chasing that edge of heat, that end that she knew would bring a little bit of relief from the burning ache in her body.

The heat was creeping up on them both like pressure before an explosion, and as it built, Tenne keened and shifted before his lips pressed to her skin on the shoulder of the side not occupied by his hand.

Seems she was going to get her bite after all as he opened his mouth and sank his fangs into the exposed skin of her shoulder, his teeth digging deeply into tender hot flesh. His teeth sunk deep, threatening her life as his canines neared her jugular, and yet he knew exactly when to stop to preserve the life of his lover.

His bite slid through her defenses like hot butter, encountering resistance only for a second as her magic instinctively tried to brace for it. She panted against the sharp pain in her shoulder, the green of her blood flooding his mouth and tasting exactly as she smelled- smoke and honey. She bucked against his cock with a wild cry, body piping harder.

It wasn’t long before she came, magic washing over him like a flash fire. Toki’s eyes glowed brightly as she cried out, mind going blank as her walls clamped around him and milked him tightly.

As she lost herself to orgasm, he felt a surge of overwhelming energy as he picked up on his thrusts, which was encouraged by the blood that covered his tongue.

When her high of bliss reached it’s peak, he pushed her down to the ground once more, the hand previously wrapped around her now on her shoulders as he moaned and growled louder, his pace picked up to what it was when he began. Though this time it came accompanied with a bit more of a pressure with each push

It felt like there was more to him with each thrust, like he was growing thicker and thicker inside of her with every shove of his cock. Toki was in a helpless spiral as he stimulated her further, her fingers clawing helplessly at the dirt as he drove her into the ground again. Each shove inwards pulled a mewl from her, her wings twitching and body completely at his mercy.

His thrusts lasted not long, and he gave a final hard thrust before there was a sharp pop like sensation from her abused pussy and he screeched out, before she was filled up with hot fluids, "Hhhhhnnn....!" He held her tighter and his jaw clenched beside her wound as he filled her with his cum, resisting hard to bite once more, as he was remembering that she didn’t have the same protection as his kin would.

The second that his jaw flexed more around her wound, her defenses surged to life and the flesh under his teeth became nearly like stone. Stone that bled and trembled and gasped as she nearly thrashed because that was a knot and that was not something that she had expected to feel. Her claws raked furrows in the ground as he thoroughly ravished her, and she ended up going nearly limp in his grasp, panting as her trembling arms gave out.

Steadily, Tenne came off his high, his head leaned back as his mouth hung open, his fangs covered in her blood. "Hhhahhhh..." He stayed perfectly still, his cock left stuck inside of her for the time that his knot stayed swollen.

Toki slumped a little bit, up until it pulled on that knot wedged deep inside of her. When it did, she nearly yelped and bolted up onto all fours again. Her wings twitched, aching from being pinned so roughly initially, and she panted. With the rush of her orgasm and the knot still splitting her wide, her heat had temporarily abated like it always did. It would come back though- like it always did. But...
Wow. She was already exhausted and her shoulder hurt like hell. Blood rolled down her arm and chest in thick streams, and she had to guess that he had bitten hellishly deep with those massive chompers of his. "H-hah... Mmm... Tenn-"

There was a rustle in the brush that interrupted her, and a human poked his head over. The man was flushed a bit, and held a camera in one hand. He raised it, and snapped a photo of them with a nearly silent click.

He pulled her close and was about to reply, but he was not pleased to hear that sound. At first, he thought it was a mouse, but no, it was too mechanical.

Then he realized why he recognized it.

A camera shutter clicking.

Tenne turned before he growled loudly and screeched at where the sound originated.

The man in the brush startled at the screech, and snapped a photo of him with his mouth open and bloody. He fell out of the brush with a crash. And then scrambled to his fear, before racing away.

Toki buzzed in mortification and covered her face with her forearms.

Humans! They had no respect for the monsters and their right of privacy! Tenne snarled angrily and turned to pursue the fleeing human in the split second he had forgotten that he was tied to Toki.

And that tie tugged in the most horribly painful way that Toki had ever experienced. She cried out, making a distressed buzzing sound with her wings. With one hand she sent a small fleet of her bees after the man's camera with express orders not to hurt him- the rest of her arms tried to keep her from not being ripped off balance as she desperately buzzed to try and call Tenne off.

Her sounds quickly called him back and he began to chirp and whimper in apology, licking her wound gently as he pulled her close, carefully making sure he didn't pull again, "Forgive me." he murmured gently.

"It's okay, it's okay," she murmured in reply as he cuddled her to his frame. Her lower bits throbbed painfully. She just hoped she wasn't bleeding. That had... Hurt. A lot. She sucked in a soft breath and shuddered lightly. "It happens. Hah... Just don't tug again please?"

He chattered quietly and nodded slowly, "Yes, of course... I'm sorry..."

"It's okay, Tenne, really. You were going to go after that guy which is understandable. You just, ah... Forgot a not-so-little something." She nuzzled her head up against his chin, and shivered.

The bees returned moments later with the camera strung between them. The man was now screaming in the distance and growing farther away. Presumably he was being chased by angry glowing hornets. However could that have happened.

Tenne turned his head and he chuckled gently, reaching for the camera with one hand while the other kept Toki close, "Many thanks." He told the bees as it came to rest in his hand, "Mmh... Now I can return my attention to you, my mate." He purred as he nuzzled her no-longer-bleeding wound.

To Toki's credit, her mental freak out happened swiftly and she buried it even faster before Tenne could notice. Mate. He called her his mate. She... She already had a mate- a mate that she had been unfaithful too, even if she likely... Likely wouldn't ever get to see him again. What small shreds of hope she had in her soul were fading fast. She wouldn't get to go home.
This... This was her world now. It was just... It was easier to accept this than try to fight it.

He couldn’t see the wounded smile on her face, or the briefly dead look in her eyes, before she locked it all deep, deep inside of herself and threw away the key. "Mmm, I suppose you can." She said, voice never missing a beat. "Though... Lets ruin the film please. I don't want those photos getting out by accident."

He smiled as he did not hear a denial from her of being his own and he nuzzled her appreciatively with a few more happy purrs and chirps. But as she began to plea for the destruction of the film, he nodded slowly, "They will be eradicated... but I am going to spare the camera, at least this time." He rumbled. "Can you rest on your own arms, my dear? I will extract the film and leave the camera unharmed."

"Pretty sure I can." She took her weight on her arms. They trembled, particularly the shoulder that he had bitten, but she managed to make them hold when she added her secondary set of arms to help stabilize her. Her bees stayed summoned, leaving the area blanketed in a gentle glowing green light. "Just try and do it fast. I want to lay down a little bit before the heat surges again. Mine lasts... A long time normally. I hope you can keep up."

He nodded gently and once she was safe, opened the hatch of the film and grasped it, pulling it from the spool. He offered it to her, "Here you go. To burn to nothing more."

"Thank you, Tenne." She took the spool, and held it in her hand. A bit of fire magic had it melting into a lump of black goop, which she liberally smeared on a rock and then threw as far away from them as she could. That done, Toki gave a soft tired groan. "You're gonna want to get as much rest as you can, Tenne. If you're here, you're in for the long haul."

"I know... my cock hasn't softened since I came." He murmured with a small flush. "I do not think I will go flaccid any time soon."

"That's not all that I meant." She laughs faintly, and shifts under him. She eases down onto her chest, and urges him to move slowly with her so they can spoon in the leaf litter, instead of remaining standing on their hands and knees while waiting for his knot to deflate. "Though, ah... That is partially my fault. The honey you consumed... it was an aphrodisiac. It's... Different when I'm in heat. Which, uh... Usually lasts at least five days at the minimum."

Tenne settled down behind her and took her into his hold once more, nuzzling her, though he stopped when she admitted the... new facts... "O-Oh... Ah... I see." He murmured as his cheeks grew hot against her skin.

"I didn't... Count on you eating the whole thing. And uh... If you're not up for the whole time, just tell me, okay? It's no big deal." She said, fingers finding one of his hands and gently playing with it. She stroked her digits over the hole, and then finally voiced the question she had been dying to ask for ages. "How do you manage to hold stuff without things falling out of the holes...?"

He blinked at that, and then he rolled his eyes and chuckled, "Questions for another time, Toki." He tutted, giving her a few kisses before settling down behind her to let his knot deflate before their next go.

'He should have heard your mental conversations in the middle of sex.' Sequoia muttered dryly.

"You'll learn that I have plenty pf questions for plenty of awkward times." She chuckled faintly, and sighed, simply letting the wash of his kisses over her skin warm her body as they lay together.
He chuckled at that, and then he sighed and nuzzled her, "Toki... I've... felt like this for a while now... the yearning to be yours..." He started slowly, careful with his words, "You're beautiful, you're amazing... you're... you're a perfect mother to my sons... I'm sorry I did it like I did, but I wanted so badly to propose to you regardless..."

... Propose? Propose? With a dead critter and a dick as thick as her lower leg? That... How was that a proposition? Toki's mind whirled, utterly confused and bamboozled. She was... Engaged- or shit, probably married because he had called her his mate- because of a huge cultural misunderstanding apparently, and she wasn't sure how to handle this.

So Toki did what she did best. She rolled with it. "I know you have. Honestly... I wasn’t sure I was ready." She said gently. "For another mate. But... My beast is done mourning- and I am left to follow her path." She shifts to glance back at him. "I am... I am not a perfect creature, Tenne. I am not perfect by far. I am... I am broken and damaged by things that I'm not even sure how to tell you about. But... But if I can make you happy... Then that is what matters most. You and the boys."

He nuzzled and kissed her gently as he whined in apology, "I'm sorry, Toki... I hope I didn't force you into this... I would never forgive myself..." He whined, nuzzling her back gently before looking up at her. "I just wanted to make you happy... And..." He was trailing off into insecure mutters.

She sometimes forgot how relatively young he was. Toki twisted some, turning her upper torso so she could look at him. She lifted a hand to cup his jaw. "Tenne." She interrupted his insecure mumbling. "Honestly... It's me who should be sorry. You... You care for someone who is so... So very, very damaged." She brushes a hand to her chest. Her soul half had the deep wound in it still. And Sequoia's half, while some of the cracks were slowly healing, was still covered in a vast amount of old wounds and scar tissue. Toki's core was damaged- and he had seen that for himself when they had first met. "Though... I suppose you knew what you were getting into when you saw the cracks in my soul." She sighed softly.

Her eyes closed briefly, before opening again to look back at him once more. "It was not... Entirely willing on my part, at least at the start. But... Neither was my first one. We sort of had an... Accident while we flirted and fooled around. I ended up pregnant." Toki wasn’t sure if Tenne really understood the concept of boyfriends and girlfriends, so ‘flirted and fooled around’ best described her instance with Papyrus. "I didn't... Love him as deeply then as I did when I lost him. But our love grew day by day. And us... You and me, Tenne... We can be happy." She swallows quietly. "You already brighten my day every time I get to see you. Without you and both of the boys... I don't know if I would still be here by now." She admits gently to him.

She certainly had been to a point where just nothingness would have been better than the pain she felt.

He looked up at her with slightly widened eyes, before they closed and he nuzzled into her hand. "I'm sorry, Toki." He murmured, giving her a squeeze. "I couldn't leave you to suffer on your own... I... I was probably insistent... but I wanted to preserve the life of something I never thought I would witness again... I couldn't leave you behind...”

"The knowledge that someone cared for me kept me going a lot of the time. That there was someone I could turn to, that I wasn’t... I wasn’t alone here." She said softly to him. Her eyes closed slightly. "You were insistent, a little bit. But... It wasn't anything I hadn’t experienced before. You're hardly the first strapping young male I've had vying for my attention." Though she'd more had human suitors flooding her when she had been younger, but the point still stood. She sighed and rubbed his cheek gently, brushing her fingers down to the fur that was growing back slowly around the nape of his neck. She slid her hands past the armor plating he had sprouting from him, to brush over his skin
instead. "You and the boys kept me going... You still keep me going. I don't... I don't know where I would be without you. Probably... Probably fallen, to be honest with you." She sighs gently. "But I'm not. I'm here... And I'm... I'm yours." Her beast was very firm in that fact. Tenne had claimed her - taken her for a mate. She had accepted him. She was his now.

The beast had finished mourning, and the beast had found them a mate again. Toki just... had to deal with the consequences.

He hugged her a little tighter, not wanting to ever think about her Falling, and began to chirp and whine happily to distract her and himself from the bad line of thoughts. "Thank you Toki... Thank you..." He repeated his thanks a few times into her fluff, a sound of pure joy as his words trailed off into chirps and whines.

The animalistic noises that came from him were adorable at best, and cute at worst. Toki simply smiled faintly and shifted, giving a soft, surprised "Oh!" As his knot shifted inside of her and slid loose just a little bit. Her abused bits warmed again, and she shivered against him, before twitching and moving her hips to try and adjust him a little bit. "Mm... I think your knot is going down a little bit."

He noticed as well and he slowly disconnected, rolling over to pull her to his chest as he pulled her hips to his lap once more. "This means I can do this now. At least until the beast takes over again and demand I breed my beautiful, wonderful, miraculous mate."

The new position left his erection pressed to her leg, which was definitely an interesting position. Toki shifted and instead turned to straddle his lap. "My heat will hold back for a little bit more," She purrs softly. "But you still have a not so little problem here. Don't you? Maybe I can play with it and try to help." Toki glances down then to see what his dick looked like.

His cock was impressive to match the rest of him. It was long, perhaps nine or ten inches if not bigger, with a bulbous inch and a half of it having swollen with his knot. Her primary hand could fit around his cock's shaft, but the same can't be said about his knot when it would finally come around to being swollen once again.

He squeaked quietly, though gave her a sheepish and flustered smile as his cheeks heated. "I-I suppose you could if you wanted to." He purred softly.

Toki could not honestly believe that was inside of her. Her Papyrus had been... Well, a lot smaller than that. She blinked at it for a time, and then rubbed a hand over her neck for half a second, before it descended down to his cock. Her smaller, secondary hands wrapped around it as it bobbed between them, and she stroked his slick mass from base to tip, while her primary fingers slid up and began to trace along the ribs of his shielding, wondering if they were sensitive.

That was the biggest, blackest dick she had ever seen. It looked like it was literally made from the void. No wonder Tenne blushed black and why black was staining the inside of her thighs. Goodness. She had been right in her teasing speculation with Tenebris, back in her world. All of his body fluid was black.

No wonder it had been so hard to get out of his damn white shirts.
Chapter 105

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Well. That happened. Toki regrets it a lot, but also does not. She has mixed feelings on the whole situation, just like I’m sure a lot of you do too.

The night of passion between Toki and Tenne ended with the latter being thoroughly exhausted, though it seemed Toki never tapped out. Not that her heat would let her.

Not that night.

Nor the five more nights that followed.

Each night, after the boys were put to bed, Tenne and Toki would meet in their place below her hive. He’d partake of her honey, and be lost in need and pleasure as his body was overwhelmed by the need of his mate.

That wasn’t to say that they didn’t steal away for quickies in the day. Well- at least once or twice at the start. After Quinn nearly found them, they stopped attempting quickies. If not for a quickly summoned Sugar, Toki and Tenne would have been found.

As dawn stretched on the sixth morning, Toki yawned, feeling the heat abate finally. She stretched her back against him, and flexed her wings, popping her toes with a sleepy murr.

Tenne had been sleeping deeper since their jaunts would leave him thoroughly exhausted. He continued to snore. Quinn, however, was the early riser, stretching as he yawned and gave a whining coo.

With the lack of heat pouring off of her, the tent was no less than twenty degrees cooler, and it was a sheer relief for her to get to relax and enjoy the coolness of it in the early morning. She was pleasantly sore- and she was certain to be walking funny for a while- but it was a pleasant feeling. As Quinn stirred, Toki roused, and gently tugged him to her chest so she could cuddle and groom him gently. “Hey there, Quinn.” She murmured softly. “How are you doing?”

He mewed in reply and stretched again before cuddling himself closer.

She laughed and nuzzled him again. “Oh baby boy, you’re really sleepy, aren’t you?” She shifts, looking back at Tenne. He’s still asleep, and so is Kai- so she carefully bundles Quinn to her chest, and eases out of the tent with a slightly tired yawn. “Think you can cling to me while I work on breakfast, kiddo?” She hums gently to him.

He mewed again but purred happily as she was very quickly clung to by the sleepy pup and he hid his face in her fur with a purr.

Toki smiled as she got settled, and snuggled the boy cuddling her fur. While he clung to her, she got started on breakfast, working in mostly silence while she mulled over some things.
She was... she was mated now, she supposed. She would own up to it. This wasn’t... her world, originally. It was now, though. One didn’t move to Russia from Madagascar, break one of their laws, and then tell the police that they couldn’t be punished because they weren’t from Russia, after all. She would own up to it- because this world was... it was hers now too. She had to assimilate to it, like they would have had to assimilate to hers.

Which meant that these boys were... well, they really were her boys now.

Toki smiled to herself and sighed. It was a bittersweet double-edged sword. She felt like she was betraying her family back home- but... but her family here made her hurt less. She wondered if it was so bad to let love heal some of her pain. “So...” She says softly as she sprinkles a little bit of dried thyme on some sliced fish as it sizzles over the fire. “Your daddy and I... we mated.” She says softly to Quinn. “So... that really does make me your Mama now- if you still want me to be.”

"Mama.” he replied simply as he nuzzled her. "Mah mama~" He purred again quietly.

“Yes.” She smiled softly. “Your Mama.” She smooshed his little cheeks, and then spooned up a seared piece of fish, before offering it to him to nibble on.

Tired or not, he was happy to take the offered fish, munching it with a happy sound.

Toki let off a soft thrum. “If you’re still sleepy, you can keep sleeping on me, Quinn.” She soothed softly as he munched the fish bits.

"Mmmhm..." He mumbled before nuzzling her gently.

“Rest well, little one.” She murmured softly to him, before focusing on cooking.

Once everything was done, she covered the pan and nestled it in the warm dirt next to the hot coals, before simply sighing and relaxing as she fluttered her wings. Her shoulder ached from where Tenne had bitten her- repeatedly, over and over in the same spot and only deepening his mark- and she lifted a hand to lightly finger over the healing scabs that flecked her skin under her shirt. Goodness, those were tender.

Quinn happily clung to his mother, his grip only loosening slightly when he began to knead into her mane. "Mmm.” He was mumbling in his sleep. It was absolutely adorable to hear him, especially since one could hear the rare 'momma' in the mess.

He was absolutely adorable. Toki wondered if Skylar would have been like Quinn... But she supposed she’d never get to know what her son would have been like.

Rather than dwell on that melancholy thought, she adjusted herself and quick checked over the camp. There wasn’t much that needed to be done- but they did have a small abundance of the aphrodisiac honey that they really needed to do something with. Toki wasn’t even sure what to do with it- she could take it up to Grillby’s tent- not his house tent, but the tent he’d set up outside as a sort of 'restaurant' for the community at large, where large game animals that had been hunted were usually caught and brought to him to be cooked. He did still serve alcohol, of course- so perhaps he could do something with the honey with that.

Speaking of honey... She supposed she could make her own jars now. So, while everyone slept, Toki sat down and began to figure out how to make her own little wax containers for her venom to cool in.

She had been left to her own devices for about an hour before Tenne crawled from his tent, a snoring Kai attached to his back like a baby koala.
"Mmmh..." He yawned widely, and then stretched and smiled towards Toki. "Good morning, my darling." He rumbled happily.

An hour was a long time for Toki to have to herself. By the time he came out, she was surrounded by blobs of half collapsed and failed containers of wax that had been discarded off to the left side of her to be disposed of later, with Quinn playing in some of the blobs. At her right side, however, was a small and growing pile of carefully crafted wax jars that resembled honeycombs, but that had a top that screwed off and on like an actual jar.

Her wings were fanning them and rapidly cooling the jars of honey as they sat at her side. She glanced up as Tenne came out, and gave him a wave as she worked on filling her next jar, milking one of her primary wrists into it. "Good morning, sleepy head." She chuckles. "You and Kai rest well?" She knew he would smell her lack of heat pheromones when he came out, and wondered if he’d be relieved. He was probably a little sore from last night’s session.

She’d gotten a little mouthy. He now sported a nasty bite along his bicep that needed to heal.

Well he was limping for a reason wasn’t he, weak and subtle but limping in the same.

Tenne wasn't as pleased as his anatomy was relieved at knowing his new mate's heat was passed. It gave him another reason to smile at her, "Like pups." He replied with a lighthearted chuckle, "And yourself, Early bee?"

"I didn’t sleep all that well until a couple hours before I got up. I could probably use more sleep, to be honest- but I’m not completely tired.” She’d gotten restful sleep when the heat had fully abated, that was. Toki gave him a smile, and finished filling the jar, before leaning over to grab the cap to screw onto the jar. It was set at the back of the pile of jars being fanned by her wings. She eyed his limp and gave him a faint smirk. “Want some honey to help with that limp?” She teased lightly.

"Only if it's not the same honey you've been feeding me over the last few days.” He replied with a soft laugh. "I don’t need another reason to limp."

Toki snorted, and pulled one of the cooled jars out. She tossed it up to him with a cheeky look, and then mimicked the sound of a chicken clucking. “Aww, Tenne, don’t you trust me? I wouldn’t do that to you,” She purrs. “Besides, all of the… Well, the special honey is still stacked in it’s combs over by the tree.” She answered lightly.

He caught it and shot her a look, before he knelt back on his hind legs and popped open the jar, before holding over his opened mouth. It took a moment, but a glob of bright green honey dropped into his mouth and he chewed around it as he screwed the lid back on, tossing it back to her.

"Mmh..."

Toki caught the jar, and topped it off, before snorting lightly as she set it back to re-cool once more. "You’re so silly. All of you guys love my honey.” She shakes her head with an amused sound. “... Speaking of the honey, what are we going to do with the aphrodisiac honey?"

"Hm... I suppose for now, simply preserve it.” He answered once his mouthful of honey was swallowed, which did take a lot of chewing to dilute the thickness of the honey with saliva. "I know not what we can do with it with our current situation. We may be out here for a while before we have our homes. Were we more better equipped, I could imagine perhaps utilizing them for a mead recipe..."

She blinks and looks up at him. "Honey itself keeps if its stored- it's one of the few foods on earth that never goes bad. Three thousand years from now, the honey would still be good. But these are
biodegradable containers. I think. I'm not really sure." Toki tilts her head and sighs. "I have no idea how to make alcohol, or we could mix the honey into some and do like... 'Love Potion' shots or something at Grillby's temporary bar. I'm not exactly hopeful for the government getting us off this mountain any time soon. There might be murmurs, but humans take months to get anything done." She taps her fingers lightly. "If you know how to make it, I can probably figure out how to make the containers you'd need to make the mead or something. I never thought of using my wax for containers until now, really."

She'd never known she'd had wax until she'd gone into heat, period.

He rumbled in thought, and then heard a squeal and looked towards where Quinn had been sitting with a ball of his own wax, he then held it up, revealing he had shaped it into what looked like a bee. It became confirmed, however, when a familiar bee climbed over his shoulder and piped pleasantly.

"BWEEEE!" Quinn squealed happily.

Toki chuckled and smiled. "That's right, Quinn. A bee. Good job." She praised. She glanced up at Tenne and grinned. "My wax makes a good art project for eager little ones." Particularly when it was easy to warm and mold, and before she mixed in the curing agent. It left it soft and pliable, like a melted candle wax before it turned solid again.

"I can tell, and it looks like he had a perfect little model for the job" he chuckled warmly, pointing to Stripe who buzzed and piped happily as she crawled under his chin.

"Stripe is a good girl." Toki chirped. "She's sort of like a potato. If you'll let her stay still, she'll roll up like a loaf and not move unless she has to."

She got indignant buzzing for her words, even if they were true.

"Oh that's precious." Tenne laughed gently. "I wonder if there's a way we can make paint so Quinn could give his creations color."

“I can probably work something out. Berries make great dye, if I can get enough- and so do flowers that have color.” She taps her fingers on one of the pots of honey, and hums. “Problem is, they would possibly be toxic as there’s lots of toxic plants out here that give good dyes. If he ate them or got them in his mouth, there would be a problem. But, I can make a really pretty purple from blackberries, and a yellow from some marigolds. I could do green with grass and various leaf litter.”

He nodded in understanding. "I have an old book on botany, and his majesty is very wise in the same." He explained.

“I’m good with botany too, but I’m not all that familiar with the stuff here. Maybe conferring with the king and your book might not be bad though.” Her wings fluttered. “I end up watching the kids often enough that having an art project for them to do would not go amiss by far.”

"They'd love the chance to be creative, especially at this age." Tenne agrees.

Toki chuckles, and shifts, before carefully checking the jars of honey. “Anyways- I thought I’d make some honey for everyone. Y’know… now that I’m feeling a little better, a sort of a welcome to the surface sort of thing. I’ve got a couple more jars to fill before I need to make more of them.”

"Well as long as it doesn't send them into an uncontrollable heat like what I encountered, it should be quite alright."
Toki snorts. "Can you imagine slipping a little bit of the honey into the community supply of drinks, and just watching the mayhem happen?" Mischief made her mane fluff. "Best prank. Who's going to complain about getting laid? Well..." She eyes him. "You might, at this point. So... You gonna be ready for my heat next month now that I'm back on my cycles?"

He shot her a look before he choked up. "NEXT MONTH!?" He managed.

She managed a straight face for all of three seconds, before busting up into hearty guffaws. "Oh god no, I’d die if it happened every month. It’s every three or four months ish, so it’s not so bad.” She laughed heartily.

His shoulders dropped as he sighed in relief. "Hhh... Thank goodness..."

Toki swiped her eyes free of her laughter-induced tears. “Oh god. Heh. So I’m guessing you weren’t expecting a marathon to break your dry spell, huh? Hopefully I didn’t make you dislike it from that, ah, rough round. Heat makes me mouthy.” She glances at where she’d bitten him on his bicep.

He wheezed quietly before he leaned his head back. "Ah, no problem.” He waved it off gently with a nonchalant smile.

“Uuhh. Matches the one you gave me.” She quirked a grin to him. “Anyways... What’s on the agenda for today, Tenne? Aside from breakfast.”

"Probably more business with the humans, I think..." He chuffed as he leaned his head back.

“Oh don’t sound so excited.” She rolls her eyes. “If not for the fact that I don’t have much standing in the community,” She wasn’t a scientist or an authority figure, and other than being the ‘barrier breaker’, she wasn’t really all that important, “I’d help you with the humans. But, as it is the government officials won’t respect what I have to say.”

He bristled in the slightest at that. "You're more important than that, Toki."

“Not to the humans.” She says softly, and lightly plucks the grass. “Other than being an oddity and something to… photograph… They don’t necessarily take me seriously.”

That made him grumble. "I'll see about taking care of that too then." He growled quietly.

“Tenne,” She looked up at him with an exasperated sigh. “You can’t just get me a reputation. I’m not a scientist, or anyone important by the government officials standards- I’m a civilian. A barmaid- I’m pretty much low-class working class by their standards. You can’t just fix that. It’s okay. Someone has to be here to be a parent to the boys.” She tickles Quinn’s chin.

He chuffed stubbornly. "I'm not going to let them talk down to you.” He grumbled irritably.

“They’re human and they’re politicians- they’re not going to be nice to me.” She tells him gently. “And getting in a snit over it isn’t going to change it. What I’m going to do is ignore them, and prove that they’re not worth my attention. I have more important things to handle. While you, Asgore, Toriel, and the guards are off doing... Well, your things, I manage the children.” Sickly she might be, as her body was still healing, she had nominated herself as basically the babysitter for the children. So she would get a mob of them, and they would go play for hours on end- it was essentially what she did when the compound was first being put up in her world.

It was something familiar to her- something that reminded her of home.

He sighed and slowly rose, coming over and wrapping his arms around her. "You do more than that,
Toki, never think yourself of any less.” He tutted.

“Where I came from, I did more.” She admits quietly, wings locking up as he looped his arms around her. She didn’t want to smack him, or pinch something with her wings. Toki hesitantly leaned into him. “Here… Here I just babysit. And for the most part, I’m okay with that. Where I came from, I had standing with the humans. These are not my humans- I have no standing or sway with them. So I do what I can- and if watching the kids is what I do best, then I don’t mind doing it.”

He nuzzled her with a quiet murmur and a purr before he sighed and let her go. "That is not all you are to us, we who know the truth, Tokiko..." He told her, before kissing her head. "You could be the greatest thing that happened to all of monsterkind... and honestly... you are."

“I know you think so.” She leaned up and slowly smooched his cheek. “Most folks know I broke it- but not everyone needs to know that I broke the barrier, Tenne. And it’s… It’s okay that I’m not renown for it.”

"Fine.” He chuffed, giving her a few tender kisses before letting her go.

“Just… consider it this way. If you keep pushing that I broke the barrier- something that humans erected on their own- and the government starts to take you seriously… they might try to take me away. To… figure out how I got such power and try to replicate it.” Toki nods hesitantly.

He hesitated, and then he growled quietly. "You're right... Of course... I will... keep that less mentioned then..." He murmured.

She nodded quietly, and sighed, before relaxing in the dirt. “Anyways… I made breakfast. You and the boys eat. I’m not really all that hungry.”

"Have you eaten already?" The doctor asked.

"... Nooo?" She gave a guilty shift of her wings and glanced up at Tenne.

His eyes narrowed slightly and his tail twitched behind him, "Tookiiii.... I'm not letting you go without eating." Tenne snorted, folding his arms as he peered at her. “I'll give you my own meal if that will ensure you've eaten.” He arched a brow.

"Tennnee," She huffed at him. Toki sighed before getting up. She crawled over to the pan of breakfast, and simply served up the plates. She gave Quinn his, and handed Tenne his, before carefully prying Kai off his dad's back so he could eat too.

The boy roused with a yawn, and took his food to eat it eagerly.

Toki pouted up at Tenne. "Fine, fine. I'll eat. Then I'm gonna take some honey to the center of the commune, and see if anyone wants some."

"You can come with me then. I will help you carry some jars.”

"That would be helpful." She nods. "I have a limited number of arms." She hums.

He nodded and smiled, "I can make us something to better carry a larger quantity.” he then offered, looking around, "Perhaps a bag out of spare fabric and string... perhaps i have some in my pack" he then got up and headed for the tent to rummage for what he spoke of.

"And my backpack is back in your house underground." And none of them were eager to go back underground. Though, Toki did miss her washes in the glowing Rivers of Waterfall. She watches
him go, and huffs. "Don't forget to eat your breakfast!" She calls after him, and then sets into her own
before he grumped at her again. She wasn't really hungry, but she devoured it all the same, and then
set the plate aside and worked on cleaning her teeth.

He was in the tent for a few minutes before coming out again with a small armful of things, and he
set them down before he plopped down to eat some of Toki's wonderful breakfast, purring happily in
thanks as he ate.

Toki was already quite done by the time he returned, and had sprawled out to continue cooling the
jars of honey once more. Her wings created a fan that made sure everything would be cold, and non-
lethal for anyone who would consume it. "So you're going to try and make a pack out of all of
that...?"

"Not just that, I know I will." He answered with a smile. He cleared things out, then set down and
opened up what appeared to be an old shirt. He then looked at Toki, glancing over to her and then
the jars that she was cooling. "You have some jars already cooled down, yes?"

"I do." She nods. She turned around and separated the cooled ones from the one's that still needed to
cool off, and then carefully set them near him so he could see them or pack them up if he needed to.

He took them and set them all on the shirt. He carefully folded the shirt up around the jars and used
thick looking thread to tie it into a supportive bundle that could be carried by one hand alone, "Ta-
da!" He announced proudly.

Toki snorts lightly. "If the shirt slips out and the jars break, you're going to have a heck of a time
getting the honey out of your shirt." She informs him lightly. "But good job. That will make carrying
them a lot easier. It will hold, right?"

He gave a confident nod, "That's right, it's a good shirt so the threads are secure, and I know that the
string will not give, it's secure."

"What about if the shirt slips out of the string?" She hums, tapping her claws lightly on her leg. She
pauses and lifts them up, before chewing idly on them to shorten them to a more manageable length.

"Nope, the remaining fabric is tied in with the handle of the carry, you need to hold the shirt where
the string ties it up here." he told her

"Alright then." She nods. "That will do perfectly then." She would still probably need to just make
the trip back down to Snowdin and suck it up. There were things she need from down there. Well...
They needed. Her bag was down there. The one that Hitsu had made her, that was.

Tenne gave her a sweet smile and chirped softly as he came over, holding the makeshift pack out to
her, "Here you are." He chirped gently. "I can carry the rest, and perhaps the pups can carry one
each in their satchel pack."

Toki stood to collect it, and held it easily with her primary set of arms. The secondary set were just as
strong, but not designed for long distance. "Thank you, Tenne." She smiled to him, giving him a
grateful look. "And they probably can. Kai and Quinn were going to go play with Undyne today."

"Undyne!" Kai piped up happily.

"That's right." Toki smiles. "And you better not let her bully you into mischief this time, Kai. I had to
get you both out of a tree last time."

"That wasn't my fault." He puffed as he pouted at her. "I had to protect my baby brother!" Great
“Uhuh.” Toki rolls her eyes. “That makes no sense, Kai, and you know it. Undyne doesn’t pick on Quinn.” Quinn mostly liked to play with her hair when he had the chance. He seemed to have a thing for fur of any kind. The rowdy fish seemed to only settle when her hair was being played with, so it was amusing to watch her go from dialed up to one hundred, down to a mellow twenty or close to it as soon as Quinn’s little fingers sank into her hair. It was adorable as far as Toki was concerned.

He pouted, "Mama... Come on, I’m supposed to be the brave one...” He huffed.

Toki reached out and ruffled his little mane. “You are brave. But, there is a fine line between bravery and stupidity- and climbing one of these trees when you can’t fly crosses that line quite clearly. Just be careful, okay? I can’t heal you if you get hurt.”

He sighed and nuzzled her hand with a small nod. "Okay Mama.”

“Good boy.” She smiled softly. “You and your brother are my precious little boys.”

Kai smiled up at her happily while Quinn trilled happily wagged his tail.

Toki smiled, and then glanced to Tenne. “Alright, big daddy.” She quirks a grin to him, and wiggles a brow. “You good to go?”

Tenne sputtered at that, before he cleared his throat, "Yes I am. Come on, Pups!” he then called.

Both boys trilled and went over to their father, Kai climbed up to wiggle into his satchel to hang onto his Father's back, while Quinn was lifted and put into the satchel against Tenne's left shoulder.

"We can take a few jars now, Toki”. Tenne rumbled.

Toki nodded, and collected a few more. She carefully passed them up, and packed them in around Kai and Quinn. It still left quite a few jars left down below, and she paused and pursed her teeth. “I didn’t realize I had made so many… Hrm. Alright.” She stooped to load up her arms with jars of honey- which were slightly larger than the standard jar of honey.

Quinn gave two of the honey jars a bear hug, while Kai held a big one between him and his father's back. Tenne came over and took a few jars in his free arm. "Shall we?” He asked with a light grin.

“Of course.” She quirked a slow grin, tempted to tease him again. Ultimately, she resisted and then simply headed off and left him to follow. She used her wings to clear a path through the brush for him to follow, so he didn’t jostle the children while trying to work his way through brambles and thickets.

Tenn rumble with a smile as he walked behind her, humming a tune to his boys that had Quinn chirping along happily, holding the jar of honey in his charge protectively. They were all such reliable young men for the job.

Toki listened to their humming, and smiled slightly. She joined in after a moment, her voice not so much designed for musical harmonics as it was for singing. All the same, she did sound pretty decent, and it made the trip through the forest that much more tolerable.

The collection of tents was abuzz with life when they got there. Monsters were out and about, trading goods and supplies as they came and went from in the forest. There were a few humans there too, dressed in suits and ties as they talked with a few monsters here and there, stopping them occasionally in their tracks to have words with them.
Toki mostly ignored the humans, and headed for the ‘town center’, which was a big open space near the open area in front of the barrier. It was set up as sort of a meeting place and trading center for goods and supplies. “Well, everyone’s busy today.”

"Oh indeed so." Tenne agreed with a soft laugh. "It's so good to see everyone developing into their newfound freedom. Isn't it?" He chirped happily as he gave a wave to some folks who waved at them.

Toki waved as well. As best she could, anyway. “It is nice. Though… True freedom would be a little better.” She mused. She didn’t quite like being ‘caged’ up on the mountain. They weren’t being technically kept up there- but if they left the mountain and the preserve and went past the base, there was no guarantee of their safety. Not yet- not until there was a place for them to call home.

"Well we're almost there aren't we? We're making the best of what we have." He rumbled gently. "Do you have a place in mind to sell your honey?" He asked.

“I suppose so.” She sighs. “So long as no delays happen to keep stuff from moving on.” Toki glances back at him. “As for places… Not really. Anywhere will do. Monsters find me either way- I’m big and fluffy and mostly white. Very easy to spot.”

"And what's not fluffy and white is green and stands taller than his majesty." He chuckled, gently gesturing to her wings.

That made Toki laugh. She flexed her shoulders, wings briefly lifting sky high like large beacons. They towered over the King’s height by far. “So they do.” She laughs.

Her motion draws the attention of everyone in center ‘plaza’ area. Toki comes to a stop as she and Tenne are crowded around, and she glances to him again with a wry smile. “I suppose here works as well as any for selling my goods.” She hums. She shifts her hips tenderly, and gave a soft, slightly painful twitch as she stoops down to set down the pack. Her backside still hurt from the number of times they’d gone at it- and from the size of the shaft that had split her wide. Tenne was not a small monster- and he was a far cry larger than Papyrus. Plus the knot… That was something different entirely.

She still couldn’t believe she was… well, ‘mated’ now, apparently. But she was- and she would own up to it. This wasn’t her world, after all. It was theirs, and she had to adapt to it.

Toki gave a faint hum, and greeted her usual patrons with a smile.

Tenne smiled warmly to the crowd that began to gather, but a noise caught his attention, and after glancing down, he chuckled and reached down, touching Toki’s shoulder to get her attention. "If I may, my love. Allow me to be your first purchase of the day.” He announced, before he pulled out his coin bag and handed her a handful of coins. It totaled twenty gold.

Toki blinked down at the small handful of gold in her grasps. Really? He didn’t need to buy it from her- it wasn’t like her money didn’t end up tending to the children anyway, so there wasn’t much point in him paying for honey. He was welcome to it any time, really. Same with the boys- however… “Ah- Tenne, this is far more than my usual prices.” She plucks several coins from the pile, and makes an attempt to slip them into Quinn’s satchel and return the non-necessary gold that he hadn’t needed to spend- only to be distracted by Quinn himself inside.

Tenne had slightly flinched backwards to prevent her from tucking the coins into the satchel, but it failed to bother Quinn, who had a green-soaked fist in his mouth. The ring of his mouth was covered in the green honey that was Toki's recipe as he sucked his hand clean. The source of the honey was
the jar that he had held in his other hand, clever pup that he was, he had used his claws to break the rim of the cap to get it out of the way from his feast.

Toki blinked at the adorable sight of Quinn essentially going to town on the pot of honey. She snorted gently, and then quirked a grin up at Tenne. She held the gold out stubbornly. “The boys don’t have to pay for their honey when it comes from me, Tenne. That’s now how being a Mom works.” She chuckles. “He’s adorable. I do so wonder just where he gets it from though.”

"I do not feign my innocence, my dear, but I will not pay so little for something that could be considered a fine delicacy. It’s worth this much to me." He told her gently, cupping her chin with a tender smile. "Please, Toki, will you accept this as a woman of business?"

“As a woman of business, I could.” She’d accepted more than this for honey in her world. She’d been a very lucrative business woman- hence being able to help the monsters like she had. Toki still puffs her cheeks and pouts at him. “You realize if you pay this much, then everyone else is going to want to do the same?” She was the one who tried to enforce lower prices- people had a tendency to pay up. It was a little more tiring to make the honey now- she did feel some tiredness from making these jars, but not as much. So… she supposed it might be a bit more fair- she was mostly up in arms last time because she had stamina for days and could probably have kept up an unlimited supply of venom. Not so much now though.

"You deserve it, Toki." Tenne's hand lifted to rest on her cheek as he spoke once more. "You go through so much effort, even to make a single jar. These people are not made of greed. They cherish your effort, and a small raise to the price no doubt means little to them." He then chuckled. "I just hope Kai had a little more restraint."

"Don’t let Quinn eat it all.” Was a whine from his back as the jars Kai carried were offered to his father.

Toki took the jars and settled them next to the rest of her wares. She gave him a faint smile. “I know none of these people are. But I’m not either- and I was perfectly okay undercharging for something back when I could produce it almost unlimitedly.” She was referring to before the barrier broke. Now she had an inkling that, while her pool was still deeper and more vast than most, it too had a limit. “Don’t worry, Kai. If Quinn eats it all, you can have a jar to yourself later.”

Kai gave a happy chirp at that.

Tenne rumbled at her words. "Indeed, but now that you've only so much to offer at one time, you do see the wisdom of my words, yes?"

“I do see them, yes.” Toki nods. Someone presses more gold into her hands, and she doesn’t really bother to stop and count the amount as she passes over the jar. A quick glance down shows twenty gold, and she heaves a sigh, before pocketing it into her gold pouch. Twenty gold was mostly pocket money for a lot of folks- but it added up over time. “Well… I suppose a more steady income wouldn’t be bad.” She rubs a hand over her mane, and hums as another monster waves a small pouch of gold at her to make a transaction.

“And what all is going on here?” It was one of the sharply dressed humans who had been heckling the monsters passing through the market place. She had finally made her way over to Toki’s side of the market, and was now giving the taller bee woman a shrewd look. Her gaze slid to Tenebris, and she seemed to recognize him more than she did Toki. She completely disregarded Toki once she spotted the doctor. “Ah, Doctor Gaster. I’m Dolores Doto. I’ve been meaning to speak with you or with King Asgore. Do your people not require a permit to sell their goods? Or can any common Joe come to hawk their goods on the ‘market’, such as this place is?”
Tenne didn't seem to like her tone and it was clear the way he lifted his head and squared his shoulders. "Miss Doto. We monsterkind are a secure community, and the trust of our kind is a natural strength that made us strong as a whole." He lifted up one of the jars of vibrant green honey.

"There is no such thing as a 'Common Joe' among our kind. Every face has a name, and every cart of offered goods holds a promise to those who are interested. It is worth its price, and it is worth the trust that is put on the line between seller and customer. Something that humans have not recognized as strongly as we." The jar is held out to a monster that requested it. The monster accepted it and traded it for the coins owed.

"And as you can see," He then stood straight and gestured to Quinn, who had already managed down almost half of the jar in his arms, "It is safe enough for me to trust to let my infant son consume. It's reassurance upon an already assured promise."

He then chuckled and gently coaxed his son to release it. "Though someone's going to get a stomach ache if he keeps eating it. It's his brother's turn." He purred to Quinn. "Catch, Kai." He then spoke, looking over his shoulder as two eager paws grabbed hold of the jar, which disappeared behind his back as Kai dug in.

"I see." The woman nods, satisfied with his answer. "All of you monsters are unique. No two of you look alike, save the less sentient ones. It makes it easier to identify you individually. Now, however… I do have one question for the little merchant here."

Toki lifts a brow as she makes another sale. “I’ll answer any question you have about me and my honey, Miss Doto.”

“Good answer.” Dolores hums. “How did you come across this… unusual colored honey? How do you know it is safe to consume?”

“Simple answers, actually. I produce it.” Toki displays her wrist, and flashes the stinger hidden along the bottom. “It starts out as a highly toxic, highly caustic venom that melts and burns the things it touches, and is generally something you really don’t want to touch. It comes out of my body at a temperature that is hot enough to burn most people, except for fire elementals, which it’s actually good for them. I can put my venom in a jar, and I can cool it, and it turns into honey. As for safe, yes. Our royal scientist,” she bumps her hip to Tenne’s, “ran extensive tests on it to make sure it was safe for consumption. It's perfectly safe- it’s actually very, very good for monsters.”

“What about for humans?” She inquires curiously. “Could it be turned back from honey into a toxic venom?”

“I don’t know for either.” Toki replied lightly, “And I’m not eager to find out for the last one. I haven’t sold any to any humans, because there isn’t a conversion for gold to human currency in place yet. I’m sure it’s fine for human consumption. It’s just green magic honey.”

"Ah." Tenne then spoke up, "I actually just did that test just a little bit before we left the Underground." He told her. "I forgot to mention it sooner due to the most... recent events." The doctor cleared his throat. "I indeed reheated the honey and tested it for the enzymes and proteins found present in the venom that is fresh from your stingers." He started. "The moment the venom has cooled enough, everything deadly will break down and disappear into the sugars of the honey. It's completely harmless. Though now I could imagine a lukewarm half-honey we could offer to Grillby and his kin." He rumbled in thought. "It'd be sweet, but still retain the proteins that seem to give them good health." He suggested.

“It wouldn’t be a bad idea.” She agrees. “We’d need to be careful though, about letting it get on
anything out here, or we’ll have a mess to clean up.” She didn’t want to know what her venom, even ‘diluted’ by being half cooled, would do to the environment.

That just spelled disaster.

Apparently to the human too. “I wouldn’t try that until you have access to a proper facility to be handling what could be considered toxic and poisonous material.” Dolores replied lightly.

Tenne’s colder demeanor returned and he growled lowly in his throat. "Contrary to what you think, I do have access to the proper facilities. I am the head scientist of the underground Laboratory. Once again, you show to underestimate our kind. And on this instant... You undermine my ability as the Royal Scientist. I don’t take kindly to that." He rumbled irritably. "I'm afraid with that, our conversation is over. Please be on your way, Miss Doto. We have business to attend to."

Quinn turned his head from where he was sucking on his fist, and he pulled it out of his mouth to hiss at the human, having sensed his father's distain through the close contact to his soul.

Dolores gave Quinn a disdainful look. "If that wasn't a child, I would say to muzzle it. As it is, teach your boy some manners. It's hard to underestimate things that act like savage animals." She huffs, and turns to walk away.

Toki hands Tenne the jars of honey. "Watch the shop please. Miss Doto." She caught the woman's attention. "That was very, very rude- and not acceptable within our community. Screw the repercussions, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave, before I escort you out."

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me. What you said was not acceptable within our society. We would be punished if we essentially told a human that muzzling their child might have been an option. So, leave. Go back down the mountain, and back to your city."

"I still have business to conduct here." She sniffs haughtily.

"I don't even know what your business is besides harassing us. So..." Toki flexes her fingers. "We're going to take a little flight it seems."

Tenne's eyes had glowed at the words she spoke, but the pushing of the jars of honey in his arms held him back as his mate took over the situation. In the same moment, as his arms tightened around the jars he had been asked to hold, he rumbled, assured that indeed his mate had this handled.


““I do.” Toki’s wings buzzed, and she lifted off swiftly. The woman tried to take off, but Toki was swift in snatching her by the arms. She was sick and tired of these people doing whatever they thought they just could, and irritably took off with the shrieking woman through the skies. She took her down the mountain, not to the base, but to the military waypoint that the government people used to mark the halfway point up and down the mountain. Dolores beat at Toki’s arms the whole way, even going so far as to sink her teeth into Toki’s forearm and bite down to make her let go.

She stopped just outside of it, and dropped her lightly on her feet. She looked at one of the bewildered guards. “Escort her off the mountain, and don’t allow her back up please. She was inappropriate towards one of our children.” The use of the word ‘inappropriate’ was very vague- and it was intentionally so. Toki didn’t elaborate as the bewildered guard’s eyes widened and then hardened.
Inappropriate could mean a whole world of things, even in this world.

“Yes Ma’am.” He nods. “We’ll make sure she doesn’t bother anyone up the mountain again.”

Toki gives him a grateful nod, and then returned up the mountain. It took maybe twenty minutes round trip, and she buzzed back in swiftly, drawing the attention of the non-flight oriented monsters as she circled the ‘market’ to relocate Tenne. When she did, she made a beeline for him.

It seemed that he had done well enough without her, and there were a large portion of the jars missing, as well as a large bag of coins that were their earnings from her effort.

Upon seeing her return, he smiled in greeting, and gave a wave. "Welcome back, Toki!" He greeted warmly.

"Mama!" Quinn squealed.

"Hey, sweetie." Toki greeted Quinn with a warm smile as she landed. She stretched her wings, and gave Tenne a soft smile as she rubbed her arm where the Dolores had bitten her angrily. “Looks like you were busy while I was gone.”

"These people weren't here for sightseeing my dear." He joked lightly, "But yes indeed, we've made a good portion of sales already, and we're just getting started." He then piped up happily.

Toki chuckled softly. “I’m wondering if I should work on making some more jars of honey and cooling them while you do sales. I still have a fair amount of magic that I could use for making honey.”

"The cooling process doesn't take too long, does it?"

"Roughly twenty minutes.” Toki shakes her head. “Not long at all. It'll take even less time since the air here is cooler than in our glade. I just need space to be able to fan my wings and cool it.”

"If you're sure, alright. But did we bring any spare jars?"

“Nope.” She hums. “But I got pretty good at making them earlier.” She grins. She lifts her hands, and activates her wax glands, and carefully begins to work on crafting up more jars while Tenne handles sales. “Everything is all natural, made from magic. I’m just going to sleep really good tonight.”

That got a rumble of laughter from Tenne, though Quinn squealed as he realized she was going to be making more wax.

Toki chuckled, and used her smaller hands to form a blob of soft wax. She didn’t add the hardening agent, and blew on it to cool it, before offering it up to Quinn while her larger hands continued to shape and form jars. “Here, baby boy. Make sure to get your Daddy covered in wax for me, yeah?” She smiled. “And make something pretty for me~”

Quinn squealed again and took the wax happily, already starting to pat it down into something that had yet to be distinguishable.

Toki chuckled and left him to it. In the mean time, she worked on whipping out jars. She started to fill them as she finished and sealed them, and then sat down to cool them. The monsters gave her space to cool them off while she worked.

Soon there was a snaggle toothed redheaded child peering at her, and then bouncing over to Tenne.
“Hiya Mister Gaster. How are you doing?”

"Well hello Undyne." He greeted with a smile. "I'm quite alright, and yourself?" He asked, reaching to ruffle her hair.

“I’m okay!” She nipped at his fingers when he ruffled her hair. “Whatcha doin’? Why are you selling honey?”

"Well it's because we have too much for ourselves, and so we want to share it with everyone else while earning money from it."

“Ohhhh.” She nods. “That’s smart. But why are you doing the selling? Don’t you do sciency stuff instead of selling stuff?”

"Because I already did all of my sciency stuff so it's just perfect to sell.” He laughed.

She giggles. “I suppose so. It’s really yummy too. Mom bought one from the market back when we were all underground. How do ya keep from just eating it all up though? It’s super yummy on everything. I even put it on my noodles and it was nummy.”

"Really? That’s interesting, honey on noodles." He chuckled gently. "It's okay, we eat plenty.” He told her as he patted her head. "We just have enough to share."

“Ohhh.” She tilts her head and grins up at him. “If I could, I’d eat it all the time. It’s super yummy. But, Mom says I can’t because just honey isn’t good for you.”

"Indeed, I just told Quinn the same thing, he'd get a stomachache." He laughed gently. "Oh but don’t worry, once in a while batches of honey is okay."

“I know that.” Undyne grins at him with her sharp little teeth. “I think that Mama just doesn’t like me eating all of that sugar. She says it makes me un-roooool-eee. Whatever that’s supposed to mean.” She guffaws.

"Hyper is another name for it.” He told her with a light chuckle, "And your Momma is too gentle. You know you must be good to her and take her lessons well."

“Ughhhh yeah I knowwww.” She groaned. “Mom’s really gentle and squishy and so soft, and I have to listen and be nice and just... Blegh. I wanna crush things and fight and do all the things!” She cackled.

“But she is also very wise, and only wants the best for her little girl.” He hummed.

“Yeahhh,” she stuck out her tongue. “But wise is old and old is wise. Mom is Mom.”

“Moms are Moms.” Toki chuckles faintly. “They sometimes do irrational things for their children.”

"But it's always for their good, because to a mother, their child is their world."

“That’s very true.” Toki nods solemnly. “I know that very well.” She caps more jars, and sets them to cool, while also rotating a few around so they would cool faster.

He chuckled quietly and smiled to Undyne. "Where is Ariel by the way?" He asked her.

“Not far.” Another voice interrupts. Steps from the crowd, bedecked in full armor, and ruffles her daughter’s hair. “I caught wind of a disturbance in the market, and Asgore sent me over to patrol the area and make sure no more problems crop up. My guppy here followed me.”
Toki hummed. "Mhm. I handled the disturbance this time- but you might want to be wary of some of the humans heckling the monsters. The woman came to heckle me, and I don’t take kindly to being told a muzzle is an option for my boy."

"She was very professional in seeing to the woman's exit." Tenne agreed, stroking Quinn's head, before he smiled and held a hand out to Ariel. "You look good in your armor, Ariel..." He purred to her, "It's good to see you're doing well."

Sequoia’s attention sharpened, along with Toki’s beast, at the purr that Tenne gave to Ariel. Toki corralled them with a swift mental kick. Jealousy was not her thing- and they had better not force it onto her.

Ariel shook his hand and gave him a crooked grin, not unlike her daughter’s. “I’m sure she gave her the what for. Toki’s a bit of a force of nature, no?” She side-eyed the barrier-breaker, and then nodded to Tenne. “Thanks, Tenne. I’m doing better up top. The fresh air is amazing out here, and it feels so... awesome.” She sighs pleasantly.

"Oh indeed." He nodded proudly, giving her hand a firm hand shake before it was released. "Awesome, you say?" He laughed, "You're learning words from your daughter now, but you are right. This fresh air is doing good to us all, Ariel, and everyone definitely seems more full of life now that we've the sunlight above us."

“Sunlight does a lot of healthy things for people that get it. Monsters too.” Toki comments lightly.

Ariel gave him a smile and ruffled Undyne’s hair. She got a growl and her leg ‘attacked’ for her transgression. “Of course,” She chuckles. “Daughters rub off on their mothers just as much as mothers rub off on their daughters.”

"Does the same work with sons, I wonder?" Tenne joked as he knelt down to let Kai and Quinn loose.

“I don’t know.” Toki grunts, and lifts her arms as Quinn comes to settle in her lap with his ball of wax. “Might be more effective if the son in question isn’t a Mama’s boy.” She chuckles lightly.

Ariel snorts, and glances down at Toki. “So, you adopted the boys then?”

“I did.” Toki nods, and flashes a faint smile up at her. “Quinn called me Mama, and I’m not going to tell him no. It kind of stuck.”

"My boys are so very happy with their mother, and I’m just as happy with my beautiful, wonderful mate” The blaster beast was glowing as he praised his new mate.

Ariel blinked, startled. "Mate, huh? When did that happen? Did you have a ceremony?"

"Awww! Why wasn't I invited?" Undyne demanded, turning a snaggle toothed pout to Tenne.

Toki snickered, and said nothing, leaving that up to Tenne to answer. She instead focused on her Honey making.

"No, no. No ceremony... closest thing was a process of courtship that was known within the tradition of my pack, but it's not as extravagant as you might think." He explained.

"Oh..." Ariel blinked. "You might want to talk with Asgore and get it legally sanctioned and recognized then. He's working on getting our current marriages recognized by human laws- anything after he gets it passed will have to be cleared with a literal mountain of paperwork." Ariel groans.
"Makes me wish I found someone soon."

"You're very right, oh yes." He rumbled as he nodded in agreement, "The sooner the better I'd bet."

At the mention of her own search, he smiled and came over to give her a gentle pat on the shoulder, "You'll find someone, Ariel" he purred happily, "You're a beautiful woman, and very kind. You won't struggle at all to find someone I'd wager."

"It's finding someone that the guppy approves of." Ariel smiles faintly. "Besides, you shouldn't marry for ease of doing so. You should do it because you love someone."

"And when they tolerate bites!" Undyne gnashed her teeth threateningly.

Toki snickers. It made her wonder how the boys would ever react if someone other than Tenne flirted with her.

Tenne laughed at that, "Don't stick your toes where the piranhas swim."

Toki laughed. "That's a true sentence. You've never gone swimming with her. She bites toes."

Undyne grins at Toki. "Yeah, but you ruffle me when I bite you too hard."

"For a good reason." Toki snorts.

"I don't plan to go swimming with Undyne. I kick rather hard when I get spooked." He admitted.

"Or fall on your fanny in the snow when spooked, twinkle toes." Toki hums cheekily.

He pouted at her. "I really hoped you would have dropped that by now."

"I never forget." She quirks a soft smile, glancing down at the honey with a dark look. "Never, ever."

Only thousands and thousands of lifetimes. She forgot those. All of those. But this... She would remember everything from this one.

"Toki, I will have my revenge." He bristled a little.

She glanced up at him and wiggled her brows. She knew exactly what to say to throw him off track. "Could take it tonight after the pups are asleep." She purrs. "Oh wait... You're still walking funny after my heat." She teases.

Ariel grins slowly. "Oh? Is that why the doctor was so snappy with everyone for the last five days or so?"

"Not at all!" He replied a little too quickly to save himself. "And I am NOT walking funny!" It worked to distract him though.

"Ooooh." Ariel's grin grew reminiscent of Undyne's. That would be where the daughter got it from, it seemed. "Me thinks you're lying. I think I saw a little hitch in your gait a couple days back, Tenne. It went a little something like this." And Ariel proceeded to mimic it, flashing a grin back to her bathing buddy.

Toki broke out into guffaws, making everyone pause and look at her. "She's got you pegged, Tenne, oh my god. Not that I'm walking any better than that, but you walked just like that after the second day." She giggled, dark mood dissipating with the distraction.
Tenne opened his mouth, and then closed it. He bristled sharply before he folded his arms at the both of them. "Ariel you might be a gentle soul but you are a nightmare once you've gotten hold of blackmail. And Tokiko, you are no better!" He hissed.

Toki snickered as she sealed the last of her jars. "I tease everyone. Getting your feathers ruffled is good for you. It keeps you humble." She grins. "And reminds you to keep a sense of humor."

Ariel laughed. "Apologies, Doctor Tenne. I couldn't help but join in the fun. You are just too easy to tease. So... How was she?" She glances down at Toki. "I've heard that fire magic users are firecrackers in bed."

Toki fluffs and sputtered, flushing brightly. "Ariel!"

Sweet revenge. He leaned over to Ariel and began to murmur his answer to her, telling to her just a scant few absolutely filthy things he had to say about how Toki treated him those nights of love and lust while protecting the ears of the children.

Ariel nodded and grinned as she listened, winking at Toki.

Toki flushed a bright green and her mane ruffled. She really, really didn't want the world to know her sexual exploits. She gave a tiny grumble and turtled inside of her fluffy mane, focusing on cooling the jars of honey to sell. It would seem she got a taste of her own medicine finally.

He chuckled lowly, and scooted over to his mate with a casual smile, before he leaned down and pecked her head gently.

She huffed at him and spread her teeth at him. "Nope. You don’t get to be cute when you were just telling Ariel all the nasty things we did." She pouts at him.

"Not all of them, just a few~" he purred, leaning in and running his tongue over her teeth gently

Her teeth snare his tongue, sharp edges snapping shut like a bear trap around his tongue. There was a barrier of her magic covering her teeth though, not unlike the time she'd taken him into her mouth during their... Well, sexual excursions during heat. It kept her from hurting him, but was no less startling to see. "Still, I only told her I made you walk funny. It's not my fault you're not used to the heat of a woman like me." She pouts at him again, and then lets his tongue go after she discretely licks it with hers.

He purred loudly and after retracting his tongue, gave her a soft kiss. "Heh heh heh. I love you~" He purred. "And don't worry, I didn't tell her too much~"

"That’s good. Wouldn't want my secret techniques to get out." Toki chuckles.

"Oh ew, get a room you two." Ariel rolls her eyes and nudges Undyne.

The girl grins in a challenging manner, arching her brow mockingly, and then tags Kai before taking off with the boy hot in pursuit.

Quinn patted his ball of wax and giggled quietly, before holding it up. It kind of looked like a bowl... Perhaps he was trying to copy his mother's work

With the two children off and running, Toki could focus on Quinn while Ariel talked with Tenne. She lowers her gaze down to the boy in her lap, and hums gently. "Looks like you're working on a bowl." She crooned softly. "Good work, little one."
He lowered it into his lap, tilted his head, then whined quietly and held it up again, as if with more emphasis.

"I don’t think that's what he was aiming for." Tenne commented with a quiet laugh.

"Ohhh. A jar then?" She smiled faintly. Her smaller arms slid behind her back, and she began to craft a small jar just for him. "Its a lovely jar, Quinn. Unfortunately, it wont be able to hold anything though. In order to keep the wax soft, I have to keep a certain property from mixing with it, or you wouldn't be able to play with it and mould it like you do." She explains gently. "However... This one should hold anything you like." She presents the small jar to him with a soft smile. "Its not as nice as yours, I know, but hopefully it's a decent replacement?"

He took it and looked it over, before he chirped appreciatively and hugged the jar with a happy coo.

Nothing could stop the 'awww~' sound that slipped from Tenne at the sight of his son admiring his newest treasure.

Toki glanced up at Tenne at the sound while cuddling Quinn closer to her chest. Well then. That wasn’t a noise she expected to hear from him. She lifted a brow at him questioningly.

He was smiling at the sight, though he gave her a look. "He's my son. I should be allowed to react like that." He huffed.

"Says the one getting all huffy." She teases lightly. "You're adorable."

"And as are you," He cooed as he winked at her.

Toki flushed brightly and stuck her tongue out at him. "Mlehhh."
'So... Toki...' Sequoia spoke up from within the hornet's mind, which was a rare occasion nowadays. She'd been progressively quieter and quieter since Toki’s heat, more and more brooding within Toki’s mind, only commenting when she really felt the need.

'Hm?'

'So... I've been thinking... We're healthy again right?'

'Well... yes, healthy enough. Why do you ask?'

'... I want to think about the potential of... well... What's the possibility of me getting a body soon?' Sequoia asked quietly.

Toki paused a bit from where she was cuddled up in the tent. It was late at night- and it had been nearly a month since she'd had her heat. Nearly a month since she'd been 'mated' to Tenne- with no such progress from the human government on them getting a home, even as the seasons began to change and the weather began to warm up and cool back down towards the end of summer. Or possible end of summer. She had filled out considerably, and was very nearly back to the weight she had been before she'd decided to tangle with the barrier to unexpected results.

Physically, she was probably good enough to go. Magically, she was at the peak of her magical prowess, and still felt overfull like normal. Emotionally, she was still a mess. Toki was pretty sure she was forever ruined by everything that had happened. But... Tenne was sweet, and he did help as best he could. He wasn’t Papyrus- or even a replacement for him. But he was a balm for her soul. Her... New mate was dutiful and loving to her. She just wished she could be just as loving back.

She was getting there. Slowly. But secrets... Secrets like hers... They limited that. A lot.

Toki heaved a soft mental sigh, and then glanced around at her companions. The boys had settled in a sleepy pile for the night, and were between her and Tenne in the tent. They served their purpose in their location though.

'Very good.' She said. 'I can't sleep anyways.' She'd been having dreams of Sequoia's memories as Cruelty. Toki, by now, had seen everything. She knew everything. It didn’t make it any more
pleasant to see it again for the second or third time. Toki hefted herself up quietly, and worked to extract herself from the tent, trying not to make too much noise and rouse Tenne. The children were dead to the world. There was no waking them.

Thankfully, she seemed to get away without waking the beast, who rumbled, as he lay curled up around his sons.

'I... I don’t really know what I can suggest for this... In all the time I lived, I never once thought about how a soul could separate...' Sequoia admitted. Though after all the dreams that Toki had endured, it was easy to understand the anti-heart had only sought the fusion to reunite with what had been lost.

'It would be helpful if we knew how Magic did it. But I suppose we'll try different methods of our own.' She murmured to her. That was one of the memories that wasn’t quite clear. Some stuff had degraded over time, or were corrupted by the ‘shade of Cruelty’ as Toki liked to call it. It felt like there was a film grain over some of the memories, like Cruelty only saw things a certain way, an angry and hurt way, and it skewed how the memories could be viewed.

The only thing that she could understand from the memory of the separation was confusion and fear. Balance had been afraid and confused- they hadn’t known what they had done was wrong, what they had done to deserve such a great bisecting of their power.

Toki knew, though, that it was for the best. Beings of her sort of power… They were not meant for worlds like this one.

Once out of the tent, Toki set off at a slow lope, going down the mountain a fair ways. She didn’t fly- her wings made too much noise. She didn’t have to go that far anyways. She only needed to go far enough that Tenne wouldn’t immediately hear anything from her.

She came to a stop just in a clearing, probably a minute or two's jog away from their campsite. Not far, but far enough to be out of immediate hearing range.

Toki stretched, and then pulled her soul out, letting it float between her hands. 'Maybe we can use our magic to separate it?'

'Do you think it'll work?' It almost seemed like her soul flickered when the other half of the heart spoke to her.

Toki cupped the soul gently. 'Maybe... Let me try.'

She closed her eyes and gathered her magic in her hands, letting the feel of it wrap around her soul. She visualized it pulling and tearing and sliding into two separate beings, with Sequoia forming once more into a body that was not completely different from her own body.

When she opened her eyes again... The soul was still there, untouched and floating harmlessly like before. 'Maybe we need to do a partial possession? I operate one side, you operate the other, and we both try to use the magic on each other's souls?' Toki suggested after a moment's hesitation.

'I can try... all right...' A moment to focus, and the darker shaded part of her soul began to thrum with Sequoia's presence as Sequoia took hold of Toki’s half of the soul.

Having half of her body being taken over was weird indeed. Toki embraced it though.

Together the two of them tried again, magic pooling and building and grasping at each half of the soul and willing it to split above their hands and form a second body for Sequoia to possess.
No luck, however. None at all for getting Sequoia the body that she desired.

'Darn it.' Toki mutters. 'Hmm... Maybe physical? But boy, that’s going to hurt....'

'... Is it a good idea? Because I don’t think it is...'

'It might be the only idea we have. Magic isn’t working. Can you think of a better idea instead?'

'No... But for our sake... I hope Tenne wakes up before you try something that could end up fatal...'

'Okay, okay hold on.' Toki rolls her eyes. 'I'm not stupid.'

She reaches for her power, and pulls up the save, load, and reset buttons. Toki hits save, and saves them right in that instant. 'There. Now if something goes wrong and we die, we load back here and we don’t try it again.' She hums. 'Sound good?'

'...' No reply. At least, not at first. It took Sequoia several moments before she eventually sighed and relented. 'Alright.'

'Alright, alright. So... How do you think we go about doing this?' She asked curiously.

'I suppose we’d want to find where our souls connection is the weakest, see about severing it... so it'd come unraveled?'

'So maybe along the center?' Toki suggests. 'Where the souls mingle together.'

'Sounds about right... But I still advise against this method...'

'Hm... I know you do. I saved though. If it ends bad, we'll be okay.'

'You say that, but I know... Just... Just do it.'

Toki sighed at her mental companion, and took full control again. She lifted her hands and physically grasped her soul. She stroked her fingers over it gently, and hummed a contemplative tune, before grasping it at the curves of the upper parts of the heart. The massive size filled both of her palms almost, and made it easy to grasp it. She slid her claws over to the seam along the center and prodded it faintly, giving it a curious sound. The prod was uncomfortable as the seam in their soul throbbed. Toki took it for a good sign though. It meant they were on the right path to where they needed to be. Toki took a firm hold on the soul, and then worried her claw against it until it began to hurt a little. She kept a careful eye on it though- and it looked like it was starting to ‘unravel’.

Once it looked like it was ready, Toki held it firmly- and then she began to pull.

The pain hit her like a freight train. She remained standing as the agony washed over her, and continued to try and pull on it.

She was unaware of the distressed noise coming from her throat. It wasn’t loud, or heartbreaking, but it was a noise that let the world know she wasn’t having fun. Her legs shook, wings bi-colored and trembling as she panted and stubbornly tried to hang on.

She focused on the soul- she was so, so sure she could see it start to pull apart, and was starting to turn into two souls again. Ultimately it wasn’t- but she was determined. She had to try. Toki pulled harder, and the pain dropped her down onto one of her knees. She bows her head, arms trembling with pain as she tried to hang on.
The pain was unfortunately much worse for Sequoia, who began screeching in pain not long after it began. Thankfully for them both, rescue seemed to hit them.

And it did. Quite literally.

Toki was tackled, her soul snatched from her hands before a clawed hand slammed into the ground by her head as the impact sent her falling backwards. She landed hard on her back, thankfully not crushing her wings.

"TOKIKO!" It was Tenne, short on breath, and still only wearing that which he slept in.

She shook under him like an addict without their drug of choice. Her arms trembled, all four of them shakily trying to find purchase in the ground as her eyes closed and she breathed, trying to let the pain pass from her soul.

Shit- shit, shit, shit, that hadn’t worked. That had hurt- that had hurt so, so much, and it hadn’t even gotten them anywhere.

She initially lay unresponsive under him, her soul shivering in his hands as it pulsed in the safety of his touch.

Tenne pulled her soul close to his and released magic that would provide a powerful emphasis to his soul beat, aiming to stabilize hers in the process.

The released magic helped to calm her. Eventually she cracked her eyes open, and blinked up at him slowly, blinking before speaking in a soft, ragged voice. “… What are you doing out of bed?” She croaks.

"What were you doing with your soul!?” He was quick to respond with his still-panicked tone. "Do you realize what you could have done!?”

“… I wasn’t doing what you think I was doing,” She murmurs softly. Her eyes blink against thick drops of moisture, around the same time that her chest hiccups, and she realizes that she’s starting to cry. She lifts one of her smaller secondary hands to her face and scrubs her eyes. “What I was doing didn’t work though. It didn’t work…”

"T-Toki... If you died..." He slowly pulled her close, revealing how roughly he was trembling around her. "If I lost you...

Toki looped her arms around him gently. Her soul thundered in his hand, pulsing sorely against his touch. “You would have felt what I felt when I lost my first mate.” She murmured. “But I wasn’t going to die, Tenne. That’s not what I was doing. I… I can’t explain it without telling you a story though.” She swallows. “Do you think you can listen?” The hornet asks as she trembles, holding him as tight as she can.

She can feel Sequoia in her mind, still trying to recover, and doesn’t press her for any help on any of this. This was all on her. This was her fault, her fuck up. She didn’t want to use the load unless she had to- she made her bed. She’d lay in it.

He hesitated before he answered her, choosing first to change their location instead. First he slowly picked her up, curling her tightly in his arms, and moved with her to a more condensed area of forestry that was closer to the camp. Once he found a secure location to stash her and himself, he tucked her in and proceeded with curling up around her.

Only once she was away from the horrible place from before, did he nod to her for her to continue
Toki nodded. She hadn’t taken back her soul while he had toted her off—instead, she’d let him hold it, sort of like a security net that she wasn’t going anywhere. Once he was comfortable, she remained boneless in his grasp, and settled in to tell him the story that she had gleaned from her dreams of the memories from her mental companion.

“Magic created everything. Every universe, every multiverse—every atom of matter, and everything that each atom would eventually create. Magic created monsters, Magic created man—and Magic created everything that fell between.” She begins softly, eyes drifting closed. “Back in the dawn of time, just as there were Boss monsters, there were also a type of human soul that was considered a boss type. However, there were only seven boss souls—one for each respective color, and never any more than that. Publicly, they went by colors as names. Green, Yellow, Blue, Purple, Red, and so on. Privately, they each had a name gifted to them by Magic itself, but that name was kept private between the Color and Magic. Green was known as Balance.”

Her fingers tapped anxiously on her arm, and she couldn’t believe she was finally doing this. Well… It was this, or load. And Toki didn’t want to make a habit of loading just for the convenience of things. “But the bosses were created too powerful, and Magic realized that too late. Each soul had the capacity for good and evil deeds at this point—and each one of them had gifts for their colors. Green had the ability to see beyond the universes—they could see the multiverse and beyond. Green could see the benefits of having Boss souls—and that not all of the universes had them. The mages there were lost and in disarray—the Boss souls guided and nurtured mages in their world, and ensured peace existed between Monsters and Man. The mages in other worlds did not have that—and war tore them asunder, leading to the deaths of millions.”

She shivered, recalling some of the memories she’d seen that Sequoia still had from her time as Balance. The things she’d seen…

“Green consulted the other Bosses—and they intended to pool their great wealth of power to bridge the gap between worlds, so they could bring peace to the other universes. But, that was not their intended purpose—this was not what Magic wanted for them. Magic had made them too strong—and Magic could not make them stop with words and warning alone.” She murmured. “So Magic tore them asunder—and halved their powers equally, while taking a small fraction of their power away, and creating yin and yang souls in their place. Balance was split into kindness and cruelty—or good and evil, essentially. All of the Boss souls were split into good and evil—and were respectively called Boss Hearts and Anti-Hearts from then on. When the souls were split, the gifts were split between the two souls. For Balance, who became kindness and cruelty, one half got the gift to see between the worlds, and to be an ultimate defense. However, if this ultimate defense were to ever be used to attack, the defense would be gone, and the soul would be vulnerable. The other half was given the ability to remember through the ages and to heal the wounds of others, and to fight most violently.”

Though the ability to heal was not something that Sequoia retained memory of using. Likely from going to long of never having used it—why would you want to heal someone when all you could feel was anger and hate for everything around you?

“Together,” She murmurs, “The pairs of souls leaptfrogged through time. They would live together, die together, and find each other again, drawn by the power of their souls. When they were together, they worked almost like they were Balance once more. This worked for a long, long time—until Monsters took notice of what the colors of the souls meant—and that, when they were separated, the souls acted so differently. Kindness was the epitome of kind—but often they were too kind. They would forgive even the worst crimes when alone, seeing that even the worst criminals could be given a second chance. Cruelty was… A very harsh and unforgiving person without Kindness there to act
as a buffer- and often times, they were indeed cruel to others without their other half there. For this… Monsters informed the humans about the true meaning of the souls and their soul colors, and then turned away the mages that showed any signs of a color similar to any of the Anti-hearts, for fear of them hurting someone in their anger.”

Toki sighs. That was the simplest explanation for a whole convoluted kaboodle of events that lead to the whole war. It was too complex for even Toki to really understand all of it, but what she did understand she was currently relaying. “Humans ostracized the Anti-hearts. But… But perhaps the cruelest thing that happened… The Boss hearts, who couldn’t remember all of the lifetimes that had been spent together, all of the friendships that had been won, all of the love that had been gained… The Boss hearts supported Humanity with the monsters. The Anti-hearts were grief stricken…” She murmurs.

Toki sighs. “War broke out. It was bad- and ultimately the Boss hearts sided with the Monsters- but on their own, the boss hearts were more defensive than offensive with the exception of Kindness and Cruelty, who were inverted for their offensive capabilities- and they were slaughtered by their betrayed counterparts. The Anti-Hearts ended up winning, and sealed the monsters underground by pooling their power to seal Magic itself. But it backfired. Magic rested a curse upon them- for instead of striving to prove that they were better than their color dictated, they chose to embrace it and prove the monsters right. Magic was sucked from the world- and with each rebirth, they would lose more and more of their magical ability, until they were no longer bosses. But the memories would remain, until the barrier was broken and they chose to redeem themselves.”

Shifting, Toki continued. “Skip forwards a little ways… To the day the barrier broke. The Boss Heart for Determination used what I can only guess to be human souls to break it. The monsters returned to the surface… and found an extraordinarily kind human. She helped secure them a place to stay on the surface, and began working hard to get them a place to stay on the surface. However… However, she began to get very, very sick. With the return of the monsters, those who descended from them began to change. They were called HTM’s- Humans Turned Monster- and they would become very, very ill before the completion of their change. This human was no different.” Toki’s eyes watered a little bit, even being closed. “However… With the return of the monsters, Cruelty was not happy. Cruelty did not have magic- but Cruelty remembered.

“The woman’s house was set ablaze one night by some of Cruelty’s followers, while she was watching children. In the heat of the blaze that burned her alive, she saved every one of the children, and made her change from human, into Monster. It nearly killed her- but she survived. Under the careful care of a family of skeletons and their beastly father, she thrived and returned to normal as best she could- and continued to work and toil for them, securing them rights and making sure they got to stay above ground. Along the way… She fell in love with one of the skeletons. She and the youngest of the brothers learned something significant to human souls- they don’t require intent to create life. So she fell pregnant- and the silent war between her and Cruelty continued to grow and wage onwards, growing more and more violent even after she was informed of who she was- the Boss Heart of Kindness.”

Toki swallowed. “There were many confrontations between this woman and the forces of Cruelty’s people. She and her monsters met them time and time again while she carried life- and even after she had borne her children and helped to secured them, and all of the monsters, full legal rights as living beings in the world.” Her voice shudders. “… And then their home was destroyed. They had to flee back underground. Cruelty contacted Kindness- and they set a date for a final show down. The clash that followed… It was not pleasant.”

She sucks in a shaky breath, and has to take a moment to compose herself. “In the end, Kindness won. But, instead of going with the plan that the others had set out- to use one of the soul jars to hold
Cruelty for all eternity- Kindness thought it a kinder option to merge Cruelty’s soul with hers. So… She did. And Cruelty took control- and claimed all of the power of the traits of every soul of all of his men. Cruelty took it all into himself- into Kindness’s body- and set it to turn them into a living bomb to destroy everything. Kindness did the only thing that she could think of. She reached out… and she dug deep. She found the void- she found Magic itself- and she fell, to save her mate and husband, and her two beautiful babies who hadn’t even seen their first year yet. She fell into magic that twisted and warped her into a form that suited it- and to a form that could handle the power that she had. And then Magic cast her out- into a world that was like hers- but not her own.”

Toki took a deep breath, and scrubbed her palms to her eyes. “So you see… I wasn’t trying to kill myself…” She wondered if he would connect the dots- and finally realize that she wasn’t who he thought she was.

He listened to her words, and then slowly looked down the soul he cradled in his hand. "You are two minds within a body of one...?" He slowly spoke, "And... You're... you're not of my kind..."

“Of body, I am.” She touches her arm quietly. “Of flesh and bone, I am, just like I was flesh and bone a human, and then a true skeleton when I was one. But... But everything else…” Toki sat up, and gave a bitter sounding laugh. Her claws itched at her skin, digging furrows as she scratched at herself.

Tenne hurried to stop her digging, and ushered her fingers away from herself, giving her a sharp look as he did so.

She was hit with a dysphonic feeling- one she hadn’t had in a long, long time. This wasn’t her body- but it was. This wasn’t the body she’d been born to, the body she was originally meant to have- hell, she hadn’t even had this body for as long as she’d had her skeleton one. She’d only just got used to being a being made of bone, when she’d had that torn from her. “I don’t know what I am anymore. Am I a human? Am I a skeleton? Am I a blaster beast? What am I? Who am I? I don’t know anymore, Tenne. Have you ever been one thing one day, and then woke up the next in a completely different body? And then, not even two years past that, been in yet again a third?” The laugh she gives is not a nice one.

Toki takes a moment to scrub her face and take a deep, calming breath. It doesn’t help one bit, but it helps her rein in the terror she feels in the face of his response to her story. He held her soul in his hands. He could literally crush her- and it would be over. It would all be over. She would have to load- and hoped nothing like this happened again. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I… at my core,” She motions to the soul in his hands, “I am, and will always be, Human, no matter what is done to me. When I die, my soul will reincarnate back into the Boss Heart for Kindness- and I will once again be Human. Though… I suppose calling me- Us- Balance would be the better term now.” She sighs. “But yes. Two minds in one body. I’m Toki. It’s nice to meet you. I’m the one who is always in control. Sequoia is Cruelty- she prefers to be called Sequoia though, just like I prefer Toki to Kindness. Sequoia always lurks. She made you and our boys breakfast one time though.”

"The morning when your pancakes were lighter and my coffee was a bit cooler than usual." He spoke quietly. Her soul, tucked in his hands, lowered to his lap and he smiled, despite tears starting to run down his cheeks... "I understand... And in the same... I’m so... so lost Toki..." He admitted quietly.

‘... T-Toki...’ It sounded like Sequoia was starting to stir.

“Yeah… my wings were a lighter color. More the color of… of that side of my soul.” She pointed at the lighter side. Her hands lifted up, and she brushed his tears away gently. “The darker side… The darker side is me. And… And for what it’s worth, Tenne… I’m lost too. I’ve been lost for a long,
long time. The only thing that gave me hope in this world was you and the children.”

‘I’m here, Sequoia. How are you doing?’ Toki watched as Sequoia’s side of the soul pulsed brighter when she spoke- and when Toki’s pulsed brighter with her response. She wondered if Tenne would notice.

'I... have never felt in so much pain... at least... not in this lifetime.' She murmured. 'I don’t feel good...'

He looked at her quietly, and then he sighed quietly, watching the soul only to twitch in surprise as it began to flicker as Sequoia replied. "... I... I guess that's them... right?” He asked quietly.

“Her.” She corrected gently. “Sequoia isn’t doing so well. I was... I was trying to separate our souls- so she could... could have a body of her own again.” She rubs her arm. “She’s not... She’s not doing so well after that. She just came back around. We’d tried magic before we went to physical, and... nothing worked.”

‘Not feeling good isn’t a good thing. What are you feeling?’ Her mind sharpened, trying to pick up on what her soul companion was feeling.

'I don’t feel good...’ Was all she could repeat quietly, before sighing. 'He's holding us... I can feel his magic... it feels so good... but it's in pain too... I... I guess you told him...'

As the second mind murmured to Toki, Tenne slowly lifted his hand and let it ghost over the darker half of the soul.

'I did. He's... Lost. I don’t think he knows what to do. Frankly... I'm not surprised either. That was hell of a bombshell I dropped on him.' She murmured softly.

Toki watched his hand ghost over her soul, and gave a phantom shiver at the sensation of touch that it provided her. It worked in ways that always mystified her. "If... If you would rather I leave... And not come back... I would understand." She starts hesitantly, wings shifting faintly. Her story explained why she was so adamant about some things that she knew could be done. Like the barrier breaking, for one.

But as she said that, his hand closed around her soul, now holding it with fear of letting it go. "No... Please... Don't leave..."

'Aah!' Sequoia was first to react to the sudden feeling of the hand closing around the soul.

“A-ah,” She gave a full body shudder after Sequoia. Toki twitched, and sat up slowly. She gave him a shaky look. “Gentle... please... We are... We feel fragile right now. Just... careful. Please. I wont go anywhere, I promise.” Toki shivered slightly. She took a deep breath in, and then rubbed her face quietly. “I’m sorry...” She says finally. “For... For not telling you. I’m not... really sure how I was supposed to tell you. If I’d have told you right off, any sane person would think I was crazy. Or... murdered me for my human soul.” Or thought her an imposter. There was a reason she had an ID after all. Her mane fluffed, and there was a tingle of nerves that trickled through her soul. She didn’t want to think of what would happen if Asgore found out.

His frightened grip fell loose again and after watching her, he slowly nuzzled up to her, offering her soul back as his tail wrapped around the two of them.

"I'm sorry..." He murmured.

“Whatever are you sorry for?” She hesitantly took her soul, and cradled it gently. She caressed the
cracks, before tucking it inside. Toki nuzzled him gently back and swallowed. “You’re not the one that kept secrets. It’s… It’s me who should be sorry, Tenne. Really.”

"I didn't meant to be so rough on your soul..." He murmured.

“It… more surprised us.” She swallowed. Toki sighed and shook her head. She rubbed her arm with a soft sigh. “It didn’t… completely hurt. Our souls are sensitive. Sequoia hasn’t ever had hers touched like that. Anyways… Are… Are we... Okay? I mean… I know how you feel about humans.” And at her core, she always would be a human.

"You are only human in your origins... but you are not to blame for our suffering. You ended it sooner than the other humans no doubt intended, in fact. There is nothing about you that I can find myself hating." He murmured as he hugged her and gave a soft squeeze to her form. "I can't anyways... I love you too much to consider such an emotion. I’m… I’m upset, but I understand why you hid it. Had you told me that when we had just met… Things would have been different. I don't think you would have left my lab in one piece.” Definitely not dead, if only for the fact that she was tougher than he was. “But that's not what happened. Yes, this is a big secret… But I love you anyways. I’ve known you’ve kept things from me, and I loved you anyways. You’re not as sneaky as you might think. This isn’t enough to break us, Toki. I love you- and I’m not letting go.”

Toki smiled faintly, and there was clear, palpable relief visible on her face as she slouched into him with a relieved sounding buzz. She trembled softly. “I was… I was very certain you would have hated me.” She said softly. “For… For everything. Or at least severely disliked me for everything that I hid. But… But you didn’t. You have no idea how… How happy that makes me, Tenne. How really, truly happy this makes me…” She sniffles softly, fingers curling into his clothing. She didn’t want to let go.

He smiled gently, and slowly scooped her up, steadily rocking his way back to his feet. "Let's go back to the tent before our boys realize we're gone." He suggested with a soft rumble.

“That sounds good.” Toki agrees. She squirms some in his grasp to get comfortable, but doesn’t try to fight out of his hold. She glances away from him with a soft sigh. Toki wonders if things will change- she honestly expects them to change, given the nature of her soul. Even if he loves her, she’s not who he thought she was. Sure, he’d fallen for her- she hadn’t faked her personality or who she was, but still...

He nuzzled her appreciatively and gave her a few soft kisses along her head. "I love you." He purred gently as he started back for the tent.

Toki had yet to say those words back to him. He had said them time and time again, and she would find some way to agree nonchalantly, or work around it- but she hadn't come out to say them fully to Tenne. Part of Toki wasn’t sure she was ready, honestly. Part of her felt she would never be ready to say them.

There was no time like the present, she supposed. And... And a man who still cared for her even after this... This sort of man deserved to hear these words. Even if they were words she didn't want to admit to herself yet.

Toki waited until they had reached the clearing, before nuzzling her horn gently to his shoulder. "I... I love you too, Tenne." She murmurs softly for the first time to him.

As if someone had just started an old fashioned car, the volume of his purr skyrocketed and he gave her a squeeze, his tail wagging behind him.
It made her giggle softly, and she brushed her fingers gently over his face, trailing over his cheek with a tender touch. “You… liked that, huh?”

“Mama?” Kai poked his head sleepily out of the tent. Quinn was asleep behind him. He rubbed his eye socket tiredly. “Daddy? Where did you go?”

Tenne nodded happily, then turned, having heard his son. He set Toki down, and nuzzled her, then quickly made his way back to the tent. "I'm here, pup. Papa just had some business to take care of." He assured him gently.

“Just some business.” Toki assures as well as she accompanies Tenne. She waits for him to enter the tent first, so she could crawl in after him.

“Business?” Kai blinked at him sleepily, and then blinked over at Toki. “Oh. Did you and Mama go off to get ‘Frisky’?” He quirks his teeth into a sleepy but smug grin and wiggles a tiny brow at them. “If so, gross. It’s cold and it’s bed time.” He yawns.

"NO." He replied stiffly, tapping his son on the head as he crawled into the tent past him. "We just couldn't sleep, and needed to talk for a little.”

“Oh.” He huffs, and slips to the side to let both adults in. “Phooey. I was hoping you’d be givin’ me and Quinn some siblings soon.”

Toki choked on her tongue as she crawled in, and then just flopped face first into her sleeping bag. She groaned. “It’s your fault he has no filter.” She accuses Tenne with a huff.

"I did not teach him that." He growled in reply, pulling his son back into his spot in the nest. "Now shush your smart aleck mouth. It’s time to go back to sleep for all of us.”

“I didn’t either. If not me or you then… Undyne?” The girl had no filter to speak of- and she hung around with Kai a whole lot.

“Yup.” Kai grinned and flopped across Quinn, snuggling into his brother with a happy sigh.

Toki grumbled into the blanket and sighed with a soft sound. “Oh well. Nothing to be done about it.”

"I will need to inform Ariel that her daughter is influencing my son with that language.” He grumbled.

“Once his mane thickens.” He grumbled.

"It’s a new age, dear.” Toki propped her head up on her arm. “They’re going to know about it a lot sooner than we did. Times change. People change.”

At first, he only grumbled into his pillow as his tail rattled quietly behind him. "Well yes, but come on, I don’t need him talking like that in front of others.”

“Then tell him that.” She sighed. She sat up. “Kai?”

“Hm?”
“You’re old enough to know what to say and what not to say.” She says firmly. “So that kind of talk needs to be kept away from where others can hear it. If you have questions, ask privately. Okay?”

Kai blinked slowly, and turned to look at her. “… Okay, Mama.”

Toki then laid back down. “There. That’s settled. He’s a smart boy, Tenne. Be frank with him- he’s your son. Sometimes frankness works better than dancing with fancy words.” Tenne was a dad though- a first time dad who hadn’t ever gone through this before. Toki was a first time mom- but she’d helped raise eight younger brothers. She knew how to handle them.

"Mmh... I forget how easy some things are until you show me they're just that. Where would I be without you...?" He sighed quietly.

“Probably under much less stress.” Toki chirps softly. “You forget though- I helped raise eight brothers. I have experience with boys.”

“So I have eight uncles?” Kai asks eagerly.

“Ah… Seven Uncles now.” Toki answers softly. “But they’re… back where I came from. They would love you though- with all of their hearts.”

"I bet they are worth meeting, my dear." He purred.

“They would be, if we could get to them.” Toki smiled faintly and sighed, before rolling over and facing away from them. Her soul throbbed again, a pang of homesickness hitting her hard. She curled up on her side and tried to get comfortable to ride it out.

He wrapped his tail around her once more and pulled her close as he gave her a few kisses along the back of her neck and mane.

Toki sighed as she was tugged to his chest, and glanced back at him with a soft sigh. “I’m alright, Tenne. Just… Homesickness again. Don’t think I’m ever going to stop missing them. Anyways… Lets sleep again. Kai already is beating us to it.”

The boy had conked out again in the time that she had gone quiet.

"As you wish, my dear." He kissed her head one last time and gave a loving purr, before he nuzzled into their makeshift bed and closed his eyes as he cuddled her close to his frame.

Toki took some time to fall asleep, not quite comfortable. Her soul ached, and in the dim lighting of the tent, there wasn’t much she could do about it. She craved a gentle touch to soothe over it and make the hurts and pains wash away- unfortunately, a touch with her soul often came at great risk. It was a particularly high risk if another soul could possibly come into play.

But… Well, that wasn’t something that would happen. Not now- probably not ever. Well… Maybe. She’d see.
Chapter 107

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: WELL. I WASN’T EXPECTING SEX. BUT THERE IS SEX IN THIS CHAPTER? SO 18 PLUS ONLY I GUESS. –SHRUGS-

On a side note, I’m sorry if this was delayed. I… had some irl shit happen, and I’ve also fallen sick again. Mom and I hit a dog- a great Pyrenees- and he managed to drag himself over mom in the drivers seat and into the back of our car when I hauled ass out of the car to see where he went, like he knew we would help him. There was a lot of blood, but we got him to the 24hr animal hospital, and hopefully he’ll be okay. He was such a good boy. I reached my hand in there, fully expecting and anticipating to take a bite and NOT going to be mad at the pained animal for biting me, to check his collar for information (which had none), and all he did was press his face into my hand and lick me. He was a good boy the entire ride, even over bumpy railroad tracks, and sharp corners. He just wanted me to touch him, and to give me comfort while I gave him comfort too. Casually updating this: we called the vets the morning after we hit him, and it turns out he made it and that he’s going to be okay.

Let this be a message to all pet owners to read TOTU. Please, for the love of all things holy, keep your dogs behind a fence and away from the road. If you can’t trust them outside while you’re gone, put them in the damn house. Listening to his pained cries as he went under the car and got dragged while we tried to stop… I was still crying, nearly 5 hours after the incident, while writing this. This could have been prevented if his owners would have kept him behind a fence, or kept a better eye on him.

Silverwing Notes: So I suppose you’ll notice something different about Tenne. All I gotta say is now that he's got a good place to call home sweet home, he's gonna start showing his age

Enjoy the chapter <3

It took them months to get homes. It wasn’t until early November that the government managed to get them housing. It was a little town hastily constructed between the hole in the wall that was Maupin, and the much larger city of The Dalles. There were a few sparse trees, but none of the dense forest that they had grown used to. It was open prairies, with deep valleys and ravines with jagged cliffs, and lots and lots of rolling farmland.

Honestly, the area reminded Toki of one of those old western American flicks- the only thing it was missing was the cactus and the tumbleweed.

A farmer who, in a fit of racism guided foolishness, decided that she didn’t want to live near monsters and had sold one massive piece of farmland. The government nabbed it up and proceeded to turn it into a town for the monsters. They worked on building an outdoor market place, as well as a town hall, a city square, a small clinic for Monsters, a laboratory of sorts for the scientists, and on the outskirts, a very, very large area with which to run cattle and a decent coop with a hen yard for grass and keep most of the animals safely locked up at night so that the coyotes and the cougars couldn’t get to them. There was even a bar for Grillby, nestled in the heart of the town.
Out in the open plains meant that the wind kicked up something awful. It whipped and whirled and rocked the small, shrub like trees, and created an endless volley of wind that battered everything in its path.

Toki and the boys were no different, as were any other folks moving in. They had a lot of boxes—everything from their house Underground— all of Tenne’s at the home lab. Basically anything and everything that could be important— they weren’t the only ones though, so there was that. Several moving companies had been hired to help haul items and monsters back and forth—and it only took a few jaunts to bring everything that they needed all the way from the mountain to their new home.

Tenne’s new home was on the outskirts of town. Well— their new home, rather. Months upon months— and Toki still hadn’t been kicked out for having a human soul. As far as she knew, only Tenne knew what she was. She had all plans of keeping it that way too. Who knew what would happen should Asgore find out— or should the nosy humans who still liked to try and photograph the ‘endangered monsters’ find out about her soul.

Regardless, Toki and Tenne had been given the home that had the barn and the coop built on the ‘property’ that had been sectioned off. They had ‘land’ so to speak. The other monsters had voted for them to have it so they’d have room to run and romp and stretch their legs as their beastly nature tended to make them frolic together in a pack from time to time.

There was also talk of possibly getting animals— but no one really knew for sure yet. Toki hoped not— she liked animals. She liked them a whole lot— but there was a large difference between caring for a swarm of bees and a herd of cattle, or a flock of chickens. Toki had never been a rancher, and while her grandparents on her father’s side had owned cattle, she’d never really learned much about caring for them or keeping them happy.

The house had come fully furnished— but not all of the furniture was sized for monsters. Like Toki’s bed— it wasn’t designed to accommodate someone of her height. They had heard ‘female bee monster’ and sent a bed sized for a child, thinking bee monster meant small monster.

Not quite so. So, they were hauling in all of their old furniture to fit in along with the old stuff.

The last haul for the moving van rolled up. Toki rolled her shoulders tiredly and made her way down the front porch, going to the back of the van to fetch out the next set of items out of it— and to open it up for Tenne to get out of.

She slid the back open and peered up at him. Neither he nor she could fit in the cars— so they’d had to ride in the backs of the moving trucks. It hadn’t been pleasant for her. One of her wing joints was swollen from taking a hard fall on it inside the back of the moving van— so she knew how bad it could be on one’s body. Which was why the boys both had been strapped in, and safely driven out. “So…” She says once the back door is open. “What’s the damage? Anything break?”

Where she seemed to have struggled, Tenne had it better off. His eyes were glowing as his magic kept the boxes upright, while he himself was lounging in a soft chair, sipping from a thermos of tea.

"Nothing. I might need to pop my back though." He replied calmly, before he smiled.

“Ohhh, is that so?” She tilts her head and cocks her hip at him. Both pairs of arms cross as she looks over the box of neatly stacked items, and makes a very nifty face at them. Toki rolls her eyes in good humor, and then sighs. “Well, mister gravity magic- you can just float those boxes right into the house and spare my poor back any more lifting.”

"As the lady wishes." He chuckled as he got up, stepping out of the truck and popping his back
before his magic flared and he got to work with unloading.

Despite what she’d said, Toki took boxes that had to go upstairs, and buzzed them up to the second story window, where they were neatly inserted through the open window. Massive insect jaws would take them from her, and Sugar would set items down carefully so nothing broke, before waiting for the next box from Toki.

Tenne would be able to take a large group of boxes inside with him per trip, a soft hum coming from him as he worked to stack each box delicately where they belonged.

It didn’t take long between the two of them before the truck was empty. It was good timing too- as the snow started to really thicken into a dense flurry by the time the last box was being stuffed through the window, and Sugar was being dispelled.

Toki landed on the ground and bustled for the front door, ruffling her mane as she rubbed her arms. It was vastly colder up here than it was in Snowdin- and it made her glad that the government had rushed to get them housing, rather than make them try and endure the winter in tents.

“Can you imagine trying to survive out in that in a tent?” She hums to Tenne as she steps inside. The inside was lit with glowing bees, keeping the area warm as they clung to the walls and roof. It was a small drain on her magic, but not too bad. It kept the pipes from freezing.

"Nnnope! And glad we don’t have to! I don’t have my fur to keep me warm this time, unlike you and the pups.” Tenne laughed at the last part stirring his memory, how both pups of his were starting to show a magnificent mane in the making.

Toki snickered. “Well, if you’d stop shaving it off, you’d grow it back. But that’s besides the point- I can hardly keep warm when my mane covers my neck and head, and only some of my chest. And my wrists and ankles- let alone the boys. It would be miserably cold, even with my hoards of bees.”

She chuckled cheerily, and made her way to the kitchen to start putting away dishes and crockery.

"I have been! It's just still growing... and I need to groom it before it actually retains any heat." He huffed quietly as he pulled his turtleneck down to look at the growing mane on his neck. "Mmh... Is it really not growing as well as I thought?" He whined.

“Well, you are growing older,” She grins teasingly over her shoulder at him, “And older men sometimes do go bald…” She wiggles her brows mischievously. He wasn’t much ‘older’ than her, making her tease completely invalid.

"And yet you're a few years younger yet so very full." He huffed.

“I'm a lady- what can you expect?” She giggles at him lightly.

He huffed at that, and then he reached up and rubbed at a small patch of fur that he could have sworn was thinning. His voice pitched up into a higher pitched whine. "Tokiiii! I'm not balding am I!?”

Toki turned around from putting things away, and moved over to peer at him. “Hm… I dunno, you might be.” She winked. “Nah, not really. Your mane looks thick and full as usually. If you keep pulling it and worrying at it though, it’s going to thin out.”

He didn't reply at first. Rather he turned, looking at her with large pupils expanded wide in his purple eyes. It was a kicked puppy look if anything.

Toki spotted the look, and held out for approximately ten seconds, before giving in and reaching up
to scratch her claws gently through the ruff of fur around his neck. “You are the neediest male I’ve ever met.” She informs him fondly as she gives him his rubs.

He leaned into the scratching and gave a soft chitter and a happy coo, his tail wagging behind him as his tongue stuck out in the cutest little subtle ‘blep’ one could imagine on a beast like him.

Toki snorted and rubbed his shortened mane, giving him the attention he needed. When she’d given him plenty, Toki drew her hand back and gave him a bemused smile. “Alright. We’ve got a house to unpack and fully move into. I can’t stand around rubbing your ruff all day, mister ‘am I balding’. If we want to be done in time for dinner tonight, we’ve got to work now. And hope the boys haven’t gotten into mischief with all of the items we need to unpack…”

"Fine, fine.” He fluffed up a little, and then smoothed it down and tucked his turtleneck back into place. "But once we're done, we're going to snuggle in our new bed, and you're gonna keep doing that." After a second though he gave a sweet, "Pleeeeaasse?” to Toki to garner her favor.

Toki cocked one of her secondary hands on her luscious hips, and arched a brow at him. Her primary arms worked at putting stuff away. Four arms meant multitasking- sassing the male in her life and putting things away was part of her routine now. “I dunno- I might be able to be persuaded if you might be able to be talked into rubbing my wings maybe?”

At that offer, he smiled happily and gave a nod. "I will treat them like nothing but the finest silk under my fingers." He vowed happily.

“Good.” She chuckles softly. “Because one of my joints is swollen from taking a hard knock, and if you were rough, you’re liable to get thwapped by my wings.” Toki gives him a lopsided smile, and then sighs softly. “Alright. We have a lot of house to unpack.”

"The sooner we get started, the sooner I will massage your wings and render you entombed in complete and utter bliss." He purred, before he turned and cracked his knuckles, stooping down to collect some boxes. "Let's get to work."

“You sound awfully sure you can ‘entomb me in complete and utter bliss’. You might be overstating your talents there.” She winks teasingly, and saunters off to return to her duties. “I suppose we’ll have to see if you can live up to it, won’t we?”

"Indeed.” He sighed in what sounded like defeat. "Oh well, I eagerly await when the pups sleep in their new beds and you and I have all night together~"

“No more sneaking off into the bush in the middle of the night for a quickie.” She quirks a faint smile. “Might actually get to see your face for the first time, hm?” She wiggles her brows at him, and starts stacking plates into their proper cabinets.

He chuckled at that. "But aren't the bush-bound quickies fun~?” He teased. "Mmm, not that I mind, I’d so love to see your face amongst the hot heat of pleasure~"

“You’re not the one that gets pine needles jabbed into your boobs when you get squished face down into forest floor,” She reminds him with an amused snicker. “You might actually enjoy them when you can see them.” She glances at her chest briefly, and then moves to putting things into the fridge. “But if you bite them,” Toki glances at him, and then his very much sharp teeth, “you’re going to get kicked.”

"Warning considered.” He chirped at that, giving a smile.

Her wings flick slightly behind her, rubbing together and making a noise not unlike a cricket
chirping. "Good. Because you bite them, you lose boob privileges." Her hips sway slightly, and Toki hums a soft tune as she dances a little bit. She pauses though, and rubs her chest as her soul pangs, throbbing painfully. It had been doing that any time she got excited over something ever since she had tried to free Sequoia from herself. Toki had been a fool to think that she would get away scot-free. She just had to exhale and breathe through it, waiting for it to end before she could continue to put things away. It was like a breath catch- she had taken to calling it a soul catch. They varied in degrees of how painful they were. This one wasn't the worst, but it wasn't the best.

Sequoia had barely spoke after the trauma to their soul, not even a remark when opportunity was given when it came to talking to Tenne. Not even this conversation, and Tenne's new found friskiness, could rouse her.

It was worrying... But there wasn't much to be done for it. Sequoia was there, but... Toki knew her hopes had likely been dashed. She had wanted her own body badly- and when Toki hadn't been able to do it... Well... The shock of pain wasn’t... Quite what either of them had expected. Sequoia still needed to heal- from the pain of the soul being torn, and from the pain of her dreams being dashed.

Toki leaned on the counter, and put her forehead against the cabinets, her breathing deepening as she waited for the pain to pass. These fits always made Tenne concerned. But there wasn’t much to be done for it. She had done this to herself. She paid the price for it. Toki tried to keep the pain on her half, and away from her soul companion as best she could. This was, after all, all on her.

"Are you okay, Toki?" And as if on cue, Tenne was standing besides her, whining quietly as he set a hand on her back.

"Soul catch." She murmurs to him with a soft sigh. It fades off as his hand brushes against her back, and she takes a deep breath as the tight feeling in her chest fades. "I'm alright. They're certainly annoying, aren't they? Always when I get too excited in doing something." She turned her head to give him a lopsided smile.

"Mmh..." He still looked worried, "Hey, is Sequoia okay?" He asked next.

"I don't... Think so." She shakes her head. "She hasn’t been speaking much since the incident. And its been... Well, months. She's been very quiet, and doesn't come out... Even when we're up to shenanigans. She usually has commentary for me."

"... Can I talk to her?" He asked.

Toki rubbed her chest and shrugged. "Let me see if I can get her to the surface, Tenne." She turned around and leaned back against the counter. She braced herself quietly, and then went deep into the inner recesses of her mind.

She nudged at her companion. 'Hey. Hey. Lazy bones. Come on, up and at it. Tenne wants to talk to you.'

'...' There was no immediate reply to Toki, but there was a nudging in the sense of who wanted to control their shared body.

Toki pulled at the nudging, and she switched with Sequoia flawlessly. Well. Semi- flawlessly. They hadn't done it in forever, so it was disorienting.

Sequoia was left wobbling, bracing all four arms on the counter as she tried to gain her balance and control of her systems. Her wings lightened to a different color, signifying that Toki was no longer in control.
He noticed the change in color of her wings and as he saw how shaky she was, he reached, gently setting his arms on the underside of her primary pair, offering to her his support. "Sequoia." He spoke gently.

"Mnnhnng." She made a soft grumbling noise, and leaned into his support until she had her control in place. Once she was good to go, she took a deep breath, and opened her eyes to peer up at him. "Tenne." She says softly. "You wanted to talk to me...?" Her voice was quiet and tired, lacking the vim and vigor that Toki had.

"I did..." he smiled down at her gently, "I was worried about you... Are you doing alright?"

She tilted her head as she looked at him. There was a fondness in her eyes, but it was chased by a deep sadness and longing. She tilted her face away, and instead looked at the sink. "I'm fine, Tenne. No need to be worried. I'm just... Recovering. Those soul catches aren't pleasant, no matter how much Toki muffles me from them."

"So I have seen..." He sighed gently, "I wish I could ease your pain, take it from you both if that's what it took."

"We did this to ourselves. Well... Toki did it, mostly." She ground her teeth with a sigh. "I just wanted my own body. But... Whatever. It's fine. It's not like I haven't dealt with chronic pain before in another lifetime, Tenne. I'll survive."

"I do not take so kindly to the idea of just giving up... I will do what I can, no matter how long it takes."

She glances at him and this time it's a sharper glance. "Toki and I were fools to try, Tenne. The power that split us... If you thought the power that Toki used to destroy the barrier was strong, the power that split us from one being into two is so much more than that. It is everything, it is infinity, and it is nothing at all." Her teeth curl into a sharper frown, and she gently shakes off his touch. Sequoia turns to resume what Toki had been doing in preparing the kitchen. "You can't help me. She can't help me. No one can. So it's best to just... Accept it. I'll be her willing prisoner for what I've done, and take my small measures of freedom when I can get them."

Tenne looked a little hurt at her words as well as her loss of hope, but he took a breath and looked away, "Sequoia..." He started, "I might not know nor ever learn everything you two went through before we met... But do not lose faith... You and Toki have freed us. This allows us to start our own stories without the suffering for what could have been centuries without the warmth of the sun. There is significance to such a deed like that. Not unlike a life debt from monsterkind to you for what you've done."

Her face twisted where he couldn't see it, but her non-swollen wing joint tensed. Sequoia took a deep breath and sighed. "Toki told me she told you our story. So you know... What I did when I was Cruelty." Her fingers tighten over a plate, and she's very gentle in placing it away. "I don't deserve a life debt, Tenne. Not me. Toki... Toki deserves the kindness." She tsks faintly. "I have no hope or faith left, Tenne. I am old, Tenne. I've done a lot of things in my time. Not all of them were good. One good deed does not outweigh a life time of wrong doing."

"But it still counts for something." Tenne murmured firmly. "The power you two used could have destroyed the underground. It was power to match a nuclear bomb. You didn't detonate it. You used it to destroy the barrier instead of us, and you two almost died doing it. It means something; maybe not to you... But to me, to my sons, to everyone moving into this new town... it means so, so much more than you can possibly imagine, Sequoia."
"Heh... Try hundreds of nuclear bombs trapped inside of one body." She snorts. "I kept telling her to detonate us. When we first got here, I plagued Toki's thoughts like... What did she call me... A particularly malicious shoulder devil? No that's not quite right. But close enough. If you knew about me what Toki does... I'm sure you would condemn me just like the other monsters from our world did." She sighs. "But that's in the past. We're not getting home, and I'm a permanent fixture on Toki's soul." Finished with that chore, she turns to face him again. The kitchen was done- four hands were better than two in this case. "And please don't tell me not to give up. Trying to conduct experiments to find the correct way to separate Toki and me would just cause you to commit inhumane acts. Experimenting on us will result in our death. It's sometimes less heartbreaking to give up and accept your situation than it is to try and fight and fail to change it." Her words faded off towards the end, and she peers up at his face quietly. "Tenne... I'll manage sharing a body with Toki. She and I were one once, once upon a time after all.

Her words rendered him quiet and he hesitated, before he sighed and his shoulders slowly fell in defeat. "I wouldn't consider experimenting, Sequoia.... You are my mate, you both are. And whether you share a body or not, I love you both."

"You are a scientist, Tenne." Sequoia sighs. "I had to cover my bases." She slowly gives him a faint smile. "Look. You've got two mates for the price of one... Even if we share a body, it's not that bad... Right?"

"Not at all." He wrapped his arms around her to give her a soft squeeze of a hug.

She gave him a lopsided smile and sighed, hugging him back. "I am sorry I've been so absent. I can’t promise being as active as Toki. This is her body. It is... Tiring taking control of it from her, after all. Even willingly- this isn’t my body, and it takes a lot of willpower to make it do what I want it to."

"Well perhaps you can take some time to regain your strength, then perhaps you and I could spend some time together. Perhaps talk over a drink... I want to get to know you as much as I’ve come to know Toki..." He made his offer with a gentle rumble as he smiled down at her. "Something simple and not at all exhausting. It doesn’t sound like it would drain you so terribly, does it?"

"A talk and a drink... I think I could manage that." She nodded slowly, and gave him a faint smile. "I was not so easily tired once upon a time. Since Toki spent the power inside of us, I find myself exhausted much easier than before. But I think I could manage a drink and some talk to start. I will need rest between now and then though... So you think, perhaps... A week would suffice? Enough time to put your home together with Toki, and to let me rest and recover."

"I think that's perfect." Tenne rumbled in agreement, giving her a soft squeeze before letting her go. "I eagerly await the day you and I get the chance to bond, Miss Sequoia." He then gave a small bow to her while smiling sweetly.

Sequoia chuckled softly. "It'll be nice to get to talk to you, rather than spend time admiring you from afar." She murmurs softly. "Well... Inside of her, anyways. Toki is a good woman." She wobbled slightly, and rubbed her face with one of her secondary hands. "My energy is waning, Tenne. After Toki and I did our stunt with our soul... I am still recovering from that. I need to rest, if I am to be able to enjoy our talk and a drink together in a weeks time."

"Rest, Sequoia. I will be here to speak to you another day; a day I eagerly await at that."

She nods and smiles at him one last time. Her eyes close, before she slumps faintly.

Toki surges forth and keeps her from dropping completely. She scrubs her face again and makes a soft groaning noise. "God I hate that vertigo feeling that comes with switching places..."
"Welcome back, Toki." Tenne greeted her warmly. "It was nice to get to talk to Sequoia. Thank you."

"Thanks for the welcome back, Tenne." She glanced up at him with a soft him and rolled her shoulders. "Did you manage to talk to her about what's up?"

"She was very grim about her chances of a body of her own, but she mentioned her exhaustion, so I let her be to speak another time.” He said. “We hope to meet in a week when we are adjusted here in our new home, to speak again over drinks. I hope for it to be a low energy activity, if anything” He explained.

Toki nods. "That sounds good. Honestly… I can't say that I didn't expect her to have a grim outlook on getting her a body. It might not be something we can do. Before... Before I spent out power, maybe. I might have been able to. But she wasn't... Ready for it then.” Her mane ruffles and then lays flat. Sequoia had still been Cruelty- and there was no way she would give that man a body. "Just make sure you don’t get her too drunk, yeah?” She gives her a lopsided smile. "Back when I knew her in her old body, she was a light weight. My body is not so much, but I don’t know how well she’ll handle it. Four hands means the ability to be four times as clumsy." Toki wasn’t at all bothered that they’d arranged a date together either - she was sharing her body after all. “I’ll make sure to give you both your privacy when you have your date.”

He laughed at that, "Oh of course, my dear! And thank you kindly." He purred warmly.

Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and chuckled softly. "No problem, Tenne. Alright!” She clapped both sets of hands cheerily. "Lets finish getting the house in order, and tonight we can cuddle with the boys and relax in warmth that isn't completely produced by my bees."

"Mmm, sounds perfect, my darling~” Tenne then rumbled as he gave her a few kisses, running a hand over her form appreciatively as he did.

She smiled at his wandering hand, and then set to work on unpacking the house.

As time passed and darkness fell, the house came to be put in order. Everything had been unpacked and arranged where it needed to go, and the house was looking good. There were just a few things that still needed to be dealt with, but they could be handled on the next morning.

Toki made up a thick stew for dinner, and lit a fire in the fireplace so they could keep warm without running the electrical heating system. After they’d all eaten, and the boys were sent to bed, Toki curled up on the couch with Tenne and enjoyed a mug of hot cocoa whilst cuddling him.

Tenne had his tail and an arm wrapped around Toki as they cuddled, a purr resonating from him as his hands wandered, kneading and caressing her body with the utmost appreciation.

She adored when he simply let his hands wander over her skin with utmost reverence. He tended to damn near worship her if she let him.

Toki smiled and nuzzled his shoulder. "We got a lot done today.” She murmurs to him with a pleased buzz.

"It almost feels like I'm missing something though..." He rumbled thoughtfully. “Something that is yet to be completed.”
“Oh?” She looked up at him curiously. “What do you feel is missing, Tenne?” Toki blinks up at him and curls her chin into her palm as she peers at him.

"I'll give you a hint. It's something green, beautiful, and opportunity to see it bloom only arises when my sons are asleep." His voice was a silky purr into her ear, very suggestive in his hint.

Well, Toki flushed either way and gave him a soft giggle. “I still don’t know what you’re talking about, you big flirt. Care to spell it out for me~?”

"Want to go break in our new bedroom~?" There it was, spoke in a purr so deep one could mistake Tenne for his older counterpart as he spoke.

She blushed as bright as she ever had and gave him a giggle and a lopsided smile. "You insatiable fiend." She laughs. "How are you not tired by today's activities?" She props her chin onto one of her many palms, and half lids her eyes at him. Bedroom eyes were a specialty of hers. "I'd love to. Think you can hold out long enough while I finish my cocoa?" Her palm settled teasingly on his thigh and gave a bold rub.

"Do I gave your permission to get a head start while you do?" He cooed, his tail rattling nearby as his hands crawled lower on her body.

"I dunno," her palm flattened and slid higher on his leg, fingers threatening to brush where his pants hid his slit, "I think we may just end up right here on the couch if you do." She stole one more sip of cocoa, and then set it aside. Toki winked at him. "Well, what are you waiting for, good sir? Take me to bed~" She purrs.

He growled happily and with that, he scooped her up and kissed her as he started upstairs with his mate in his arms.

She giggled and tucked her wings close, keeping them out of the way as he tooted her upstairs. Toki felt a flash of familiarity- Papyrus had done this before too- but didn't let herself dwell too hard on it lest the sadness take her again. Instead, she worked her mouth gently against his, and then nipped along his neck. Her primary hands eased up under his sweater, stroking her claws up his stomach and up to his shield across his chest as she buzzed for him pleasantly. Her secondary hands groped for the door so she could get it for them when they reached it.

As soon as the door was pushed open, it lasted only long enough for Tenne to get to the other side and push it closed behind him, before he gave a chuckle as he fell onto the bed with Toki, giving her warm and loving kisses as soon as they landed.

Toki giggled softly as he flopped onto the bed with her. Her wings folded firmly to her back, and she shifted so she was laying on her back. Her primary set of hands stroked over his shield, and eased along his skin as she buzzed for him. "Clothes are in the way," She purred warmly, and tickled her claws over his skin. "Help me with mine and I’ll help you with yours?"

"Hn... If these weren't new clothes they'd already be gone." He purred, his hands not hesitating to run down to her hips and hook under her shirt. "Such a wonderful body- how did I ever get so lucky as to land a mate like you?" He breathed after her body was freed from its clothing.

Once she was divested of her clothes, Toki took time to help free him from his clothing. She gave him a lopsided smile, using the claws on her paws to ease his pants down after she undid the strap that kept them up over his tail. His shirt was yanked up and over his head, leaving him just as bare as she was once he stepped out of his pants.
Her chest bounced with her breath, perky green nipples facing him as she hooked her legs lightly over his hips. "I dunno," She purred, "I ask myself that all the time." Her secondary hands wandered to the slit that hid his genitals, and she stroked it, slipping a finger just slightly inside to tease him temptingly. "Hah~"

Her teasing of his slit earned a shutter followed by a squeal and a partial buck of his hips as she slipped inside the soft tissue. "Nh!" He retaliated in the same, reaching down and gently pressing a knuckle between her folds.

Toki gave a soft purr and rocked her hips against the knuckle he had pressed between her folds. Her finger uncurled, stroking gently along the soft inner tissue inside of his slit. She gave him a warm look, and tugged him down to kiss him with another hand. "Don't be afraid to touch me," She purred. He hadn’t had the chance to play with her breasts before. They'd always done this with her face down.

"I trimmed my claws to make sure I don’t hurt you." He purred as his hands wandered to do just that, cupping her breast and giving a tender knead as he took the other nipple into his mouth.

Her milk had long since dried up. It had been more than half a year since she'd held her children and nursed them- her body had gone back to normal. It still felt good as his mouth closed over her breast, and his hand encased the other one. Toki eased her finger further into his slit, until she could touch his hidden member. She stroked the tip of her filed down claw against him, before smoothing the flat of her finger teasingly against his length. "I trimmed mine too," she purred, "so I wouldn't hurt you, if I touched you." Her thumb stroked the outside of his slit, her remaining hands gently fondling his shield and stroking over his shoulders as she rocked her hips into the knuckle he had buried between her legs.

"Mmh~" He chuckled happily, before he leaned his head back and let out a low rumbling groan as his cock quickly responded to her touch and began to push outward to emerge. "G-Good..." He murmured.

“Do you want more?” She purred. As his member pushed against her finger, starting to rouse outwards, Toki eased her digits around it to stroke it as it firmed up, helping him rise to the occasion. “I think you do~” She pipes softly to him, so only he can hear and so it doesn’t rouse the children who are only a few rooms over.

He moaned again and rocked his hips into her hand as he nodded. "Y-Yes please." Came from his lips, as his cock grew harder for Toki to see and admire all she liked.

Admire she would. She couldn’t help but compare him and Papyrus- Papyrus had been orange, translucent and bright like the sun. Tenne was black, not unlike the sky at midnight, and was thick and long, much larger than Papyrus was. His base was thick and bulbous- which swelled into his knot when his orgasm came. His knot was fun- she definitely enjoyed it a lot.

Toki gave a pleased purr, and stroked him gently from base to tip. “Mmm, I like what I see.” It was different... Different was good. She couldn’t handle it if it was too similar, she knew. Trailing her fingers down from her ruff of fur around her neck, Toki lightly trailed over her nipples, and down her ribs and belly with one of her hands. “You like what you see~?” She questioned lightly. Her shoulder bore faint scars from when she’d been in heat, and he had marked her with his teeth. That was the only mark marring the pale white flesh of her body.

His tongue ran over his lip and he swallowed. "Oh stars yes... You're the most beautiful woman I have ever seen." He breathed.
His words both pleased and roused her beast, and Toki gave a pleased rumble as her eyes dilated and
the beast stirred more in her. Her hand tightened a hair on his cock, stroking him firmly as her legs
tensed. She got a tingling urge in her mind- she’d gone into this with the plan to let him top for the
night but now… Now she had other ideas.

Her legs flexed, hand releasing his cock to grasp the bed. Her primary hands took hold of his wrists
while her secondary hands flipped her- and him- over. Toki straddled his hips, her wings flexing and
flaring out over top of him as her mane ruffled and flared out. Toki rumbled pleasantly, thick thighs
keeping her upright as she pinned his arms above his head.

Toki opened her mouth, leaning down as she cradled his cock between her body and his- her mouth
pressed kisses along his flesh, peppering sharp nibbling kisses along his shoulders and chest. “I’ll let
your hands go.” She purrs, “Only if you keep them to yourself.” She decides. “If you want to touch
me… Use your mouth~”

His mouth opened slightly, before he closed it and shuttered happily as his cock gave a hard throb
between them. "Oooooohhhhh god..." He squeaked happily.

“I didn’t hear a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ to that,” She nipped up along his neck, her breasts rubbing along the
sensitive bones of his shield as she rumbled softly. “Answer me, Tenne. Can you keep your hands to
yourself?” Toki questioned, nipping him again and then soothing it with a soft lick and a gentle suck
as she folded her teeth up and out of the way. “Or do I need to hold them here until I decide you can
use them~?” Her smaller hand slid down and grasped his cock, giving it a gentle but firm pump as
she rocked her hips against his, just below where his member slid out of his slit. The warmth of her
core brushed against his own teasingly.

"I-I can keep my hands... T-to myself." He replied quickly, his tail wagging fast as his toes curled in
pleasure. He fought to keep his eyes from crossing, and took a deep breath so he could focus on her.
"I can.”

"Good boy," She purred. Her hands let his go slowly, and she trailed her fingers down his sides,
touching sensitive skin as she slowly worked her way to sitting upright. "Now... Tell me, what do
you want me to do to you?” Her fingers stroke his member gently, and her back paws touch his legs,
remembering how enraptured he’d been with them so long ago. She kneads the softness of her toes
against the dense muscles of his legs. "How do you want me to touch you~?” She purrs teasingly,
pupils a narrow slit as she strokes him slowly.

"Hhn... Touch me as you wish, my darling... I love you so much.” He mewled.

Toki chuckled warmly. “I love you too.” She shifted slowly against him, and massaged her fingers
against her core. She eased herself open, and then slid his tip against her. She wasn’t made of
ectoflesh anymore- she unfortunately had to take time to stretch now. However, she could take her
time going slowly with his cock. And slow she would, easing her way down his length inch by inch.
“Now be a good male,” She purred, “And put that mouth to use.” Her breasts bounced, ripe for him
to play with.

"Yes, darling~” He leaned up and kissed her chest before he leaned to one breast and gently popped
it into his mouth, suckling gently as he rocked his hips slowly up into her. "Mmh~"

She let out a soft breathy gasp, and spread her hands out on his chest as he put his mouth to work on
her. She eased her way down his length, slowly working and bouncing so he didn’t hurt her with his
girth. She hadn’t taken him nearly enough times to be stretched to fit him- not when he was so much
larger than she was. But she didn’t have to take so long to adjust as she once had.
Soon she was hilting him, popping the rounded base where his knot would be past her entrance. She let out a soft groan, and her walls twitched and trembled as her hips gyrated on his, his member reaching her deepest recesses. “Good, Tenebris,” She purred his name as she eased off his length, and set a slow, torturous pace.

His fists clenched where they stayed above his head and he let out a pleased moan. "O-Oh god... Y-You're wonderful~" He mewled, looking up at her before he let go of her breast and leaned up, licking her neck gently.

She tilted her head to the side to let him have at her neck. Her hands slid up to his wrists again, and she claimed them once more as she sank down firmly over his member, walls clenching tightly around him like a vice. “I want you to touch me,” She guides his hands down again, and to her hips. “Anywhere. You did good in not touching me so far,” She gyrates her hips against his, wings flaring out above her and helping her keep her balance. “I think big daddy Tenne deserves a reward,” She purrs, “for being good. Don’t you?”

He let out a moan that took a lot more strength to hold back, but as soon as she voiced her permission he lunged and wrapped his arms around her upper torso as he gave a thrust into her body. His teeth nipped at her.

Toki gave a hiss at his thrust- it felt so good, too good, and she was tempted to let him take control and continue- but instead she shoved her hips down, using hers to pin his. “Ah, ah, ah,” She scolded with a soft pant, voice sounding very much like she would like him to continue despite her efforts against it, “I’ve set the pace here,” She rolled her hips slowly, legs clamping over his to keep him pinned in place. The female was dominating her male mate- and this was pleasing her beast exponentially. “You’ll have to roll with it.” She didn’t fight his arms around her, and slowly bounced and ground on his cock, surely driving him mad with the slow and scolding pace she’d taken on.

He hissed and gave a keen into her fluff. "T-Toookiiii...!" He mewled pathetically to her.

As if that would work on her.

Toki gave a hiss at his thrust- it felt so good, too good, and she was tempted to let him take control and continue- but instead she shoved her hips down, using hers to pin his. “Ah, ah, ah,” She scolded with a soft pant, voice sounding very much like she would like him to continue despite her efforts against it, “I’ve set the pace here,” She rolled her hips slowly, legs clamping over his to keep him pinned in place. The female was dominating her male mate- and this was pleasing her beast exponentially. “You’ll have to roll with it.” She didn’t fight his arms around her, and slowly bounced and ground on his cock, surely driving him mad with the slow and scolding pace she’d taken on.

His other hand rooted on her chest and he groaned again into the fluff on the top of her skull, before he leaned back and laid his head back. "Aaahhh... I-It's so warm~ I love you so much.” His groan wasn’t quiet.

Toki covered his sounds with a kiss as she released his neck. “Shhh… Can’t make too much noise, or we’ll wake the boys.” She bucked her hips into his, finally picking up the pace as she started to chase after an orgasm. “And if we w-wake the boys,” her voice trembled faintly despite her steady tone, “Then that means neither of us gets to finish~”

The kiss brought another fevered moan forth and he looked up at her, "Nnnh... I hate it but you're right..." He whispered. "Please... I... I need you.”

“And so you shall have me,” She murmured against his mouth. “You’re free to use your hand again-
so long as you behave like a good boy, big Daddy.” She knows how much that last word gets him going, and rolls her hips in time with his as she bounces and rocks onto his shaft.

He shivered and moaned. His sounds faded into a sharp snarl as his pupils sharpened in his eyes. "To hell with this!” He tightened his grip on her hip before he reminded Toki just whom she was mated to.

In a sharp shove that seemed to actually take effort, he pushed Toki over onto her back, returning them to their previous position, only this time with his cock hilted inside her. "I can't stand it... Me? Submissive... No... Not even with you, my darling~" He purred gently, before he ground his hips into hers. "You'll have to get the drop on me next time~" He hissed into her ear.

Toki’s wings automatically folded, and she gave him some fight in being flipped- but she didn’t struggle once she was down. Toki gave him a sharp-toothed grin from down below, and hooked her legs over his hips. Grinding her pelvis right back into his, Toki rumbled at him challengingly. Her beast had gotten a taste of what being dominant was like- his would need to put her right back into place. “It’s about time you bucked up,” She purred to him, and bucked up into him. There was such a thing as a bottom dom- and unless Tenne took full dominance back, he was going to have a challenge on his claws.

He growled again and kissed her with the feverish lust they had felt before and this time accompanied it with rough thrusts that rocked them and the bed both.

Her mouth met his in a heated kiss, her arms latching onto him. Her primary arms dug harmless furrows in his back as her dulled claws raked down along his spine and ribs. Her secondary arms held onto his shield, stroking the bone and the flesh just hidden below it. Toki met each of his thrusts with a rocking motion, but the force of his hips kept hers down, making her body submit, even if her will fought on. Her paws stroked over the backs of his calves, and she rumbled encouragingly at him as the bed rocked and squeaked below them.

"I love you. I love you so much!” He hissed happily, pulling her hips closer to his own as he gave a rough roll of his pelvis against hers. His knot had swelled at this point and now pressed against her entrance, which would no doubt take a nice, hard thrust to get into.

A hard thrust indeed, forcing her to kiss him to smother a soft cry that tried to escape from her as his knot forced its way past her entrance and into her depths. Her walls fluttered tightly around him, and clamped ever tighter on his knot. She could feel the coil of heat pooling in her belly, letting her know just how close she was. Toki tilted her head instinctively, bearing the scarred side of her neck for him to bite down upon. Most of her markings were from the back- this would be the first marking from the front.

The invitation was accepted and he nuzzled his face into her neck, kissing along her shoulder a few times before he opened his mouth and bit down on her shoulder and throat, his teeth digging into her flesh and marking her now from the other side.

Her mane protected most of her throat from damage, but his mouth left an impressive bite mark as his teeth sank into her shoulder, popping through her skin without issue as she dropped her defense for him to chomp down. Pain and pleasure mingled in her shoulder, and Toki felt her body trying to come undone. Her hips bucked against his, walls fluttering and clenching erratically as her breaths heaved in her chest. Her breasts rubbed against his armored chest, nipples stimulating against the bone of his shield.

Toki was putty in his hands as she mewled under him, on the edge and about to fall over into bliss.
"I love you," He purred quietly around his mouthful of fur. His hips ground against her a little rougher this time, passionate and with the heat of his love behind the roughness.

The passionate grind was enough to send her over. She toppled over the edge with a not so quiet cry of his name, and clamped around his knot like a vice as her walls milked his shaft for all that he had to give. Her claws slid against his back, digging faint furrows, and she very nearly stung him. Her wings practically were vibrating under her as her mouth came to close around his shoulder, however, and Toki cried out again in bliss, but muffled it by marking him just as he had her. "L-luh-love yuh-" her words were garbled, but legible enough as to what she was trying to say to him through her grasp on his shoulder.

He bit a little harder as her tight clench brought him over too and he tightened himself around her in response, giving a deep moan before he sighed and settled down, freeing her neck from his teeth with heavy breath.

As he flooded her, her body relaxed, instinctively receiving the seed as her beast purred inside of her. The beast was pleased with this mate that she had chosen for them- and the beast very nearly urged Toki to present her soul so something could come of the coupling.

Toki very quickly slammed the door on that, just as the glow of green began to grace her skin where her soul was starting to peek through. She sucked it back in rapidly with almost a panicked tremor, and released Tenne’s shoulder as she panted. She drew a hand up to her chest, and held it there shakily, willing her soul to stay in place. No- just because she’d merged with Papyrus and proven that not every time results in pregnancy doesn’t mean that she wanted to tempt fate. Nor… Nor was she ready for that. Not… Not yet. Not to risk it.

She shifted her hips against his, feeling the tug of his knot within her depths. Well, they’d be stuck face to face for a while. She hadn’t considered this when she’d wanted to do face to face.

He seemed in a state of mental recuperation, not reacting for a while as they lay there as one. It was a while before his eyes opened and he rumbled gently as he smiled at her. "Toki~" Was the word that slipped from his lips, a purr that carried all his love on it in the sweetest of whispers.

The so named woman shivered under him, her fingers trailing over her chest with a soft shuddering sigh. "Tenebris,” She murmurs softly. “Mm… I think I like face to face. It makes it more… Intimate.” Though it brought it’s own hassles in the fact that her beast seemed to think that it was a good time to reproduce. Her beast didn’t have the same sense of morals that Toki did. She just… did what felt right, apparently.

He chuckled gently and kissed her a few times before he sighed contently. "Intimate indeed. I think I came harder then I had before." He admitted with a quiet chuckle.

“She chuckles softly in return, hands still on her chest. It wouldn’t do anything if her soul truly cast out on it’s own, but picturing it there as a barrier did more than she expected it to do. “Mm… Now we just have to wait for you to deflate, before we can really cuddle up and get comfortable.”

"Do i need to deflate, dear?" he asked with a whine, setting his head in her fluff as he looked up at her with them big ol’ eyes of his.

"Don't you look at me like that with them big ol' eyes of yours," she giggled, and snuggled him close. Her hand slid from her chest to curl around his neck and she held him tightly. "Have you ever tried to get comfortable with a knot of your size buried in you? I doubt it. There are advantages and disadvantages to being as small as I am." She smooches the side of his head with a soft laugh.
"Mmh.... never had I thought my girth would have a downside of the sort. But it ensures my mate takes and bears my young, so I look past it."

That made her give a nervous laugh. "Haha... Yeah. I don't mind most times. It feels really nice. You're... Actually the biggest I've been with." She admits. "Though... You... You know nothing's going to come from just sex, right?" This Tenne was young... He had kids though, and was a doctor, so she hoped he knew that not just sex was required to make children.

He chuffed gently, "Yes, yes, I know." He then buried his face into her fluff and gave an appreciative nuzzle as he sighed. "I wouldn't force you to bear, my darling..." He murmured.

"It would be... very easy. For us to... To conceive." She swallows and closes her eyes with a soft sigh. "Human souls... They don't require intent to conceive, Tenne. My first children... were an accident because of that."

He chirped quietly and tilted his head lightly. "Oh?" He rumbled, before he sighed and nuzzled her. "Do you want me to attempt to pull out?" He then asked.

"No, not at all." She shakes her head. "But... soul play that involves touching our souls together and the like is... well, not something we can do." She rubs her fingers through his mane, and sighs softly. "I'm not... I'm not ready to take on babies again. It's..." She swallows. "Too soon for me yet." Too soon for her, too close to losing the children she'd strained to bring into the world. "I just want that to be out there, y'know? I... I've harbored too many secrets from you. I don’t want to keep more.” She shakes her head vehemently.

He nodded slowly, and then kissed her head a few times. "Even if you never carry my young, you're still my mate, and the mother of my sons, who both love you very much. I don't care if you never change your mind about this, I'll always love you."

Toki smiled faintly, and closed her eyes as she leaned into his kisses. "I know you do," she murmurs, "And... honestly, I want more children. I... Had a big family growing up. I wasn't lying when I said I had eight brothers younger. I lost one in the conflict, but... I still want a lot of children. But not... Not right now. Monsters live a long time- I need more time for my heart to heal. It... it hasn’t even been a year.” She sighs. “Give me time, Tenne. Time... Time doesn’t heal these sorts of wounds, but it makes them less painful. In time, maybe I’ll be ready to give Quinn and Kai a small hoard of siblings.”

"Time will tell, my darling." He agreed, before he set his head down and sighed tiredly, "Let us rest until I deflate... It might be a while..." He purred.

“Knowing you, it will be.” She chuckles softly, and settles down under him. Because of how the bed cradled her back, her wings weren’t even complaining at his weight pinning her down. Toki simply sighed contently, summoned a few bees to drape blankets over them, and then settled down to rest- and possibly sleep a little bit. They would have a busy week soon, she knew.
Chapter 108

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: We learn that Toki is not cow smart. ALSO, Silver’s dad had surgery, so once we’re out of chapters that are already pre-done… We may end up taking a small hiatus. Silver has lots of things to manage irl, and until she gets her family life sorted out, we can’t sort out Toki’s family life. But! That does not mean TOTU is being abandoned.

By the end of the week, they had animals. Not just a few of them either. People had pitched in and donated, one or two cows or chickens or sheep from this farm and that farm here and there- and there were a lot of farms that had donated. Toki and Tenne had been given the designated ranch house for a reason. Thanks to the number of animal donations, the chicken coop was filled with chickens, the shed full of chicken feed to last the winter, the pasture and paddock was full of cattle, with even more being unloaded. There was even a big pen with several pigs in it, and one with a flock of sheep. The barn had a selection of dairy cattle in it, which would need to be milked daily, much to Toki’s joy.

A good chunk of the guards had shown up, using their canine nature to their advantage as they barked and gave chase and rounded up the animals, and it was a big help as they got them all settled. The only problem that Toki had discovered, was that they’d sent two bulls by accident. Toki and the group had done really good to keep them separated, but they still had the issue of where to keep the second one, because they honestly didn’t have the fencing to run two separate herds.

Toki draped both sets of her arms over the thick steel panels that they’d been given to act as a sort of runway as the animals were unloaded from the massive trucks and stock trailers that had been driven in. They’d reworked them into a temporary holding pen for the second bull. They just had to get the bull into the pen- which was not necessarily as easy as they had planned. He wanted nothing to do with being moved so much, and was letting them know by being as stubborn as he could possibly be. Toki was in the pen to shut the gate from inside once they locked him in, since she was the only one besides Tenne and the King or Queen who could move the panels on her own without straining to do it. They were severely heavy-duty panels, after all.

“Shove him by the ass, Ariel!” Someone shouted.

“And get kicked in the tits? Hell no!” There was some small wonder where Undyne got her language skills from, as the redheaded fish woman instead used a blunted spear she summoned to nudge the irate bull forwards a bit. “Go on, you great big hairy son of a bitch!”

“If he was a son of a bitch, he’d be a dog,” Toki laughed teasingly, glad that Kai and Quinn were off having fun with the chickens instead of listening to the adults have their adult talk as they tried to get the stubborn bull into the pen where Toki was.

Tenne had taken a break to chew a few leaves of mint as he kept an eye on his boys, but once he caught wind of Toki and Ariel having trouble with the bull he chuckled and made his way over to give them a hand. ”Having trouble, are we?” He called to the ladies.
“This big bastard doesn’t want to move, and he keeps shaking his horns at us any time we try to get a rope around his neck to try and guide him along.” Ariel replies to the big white beast as he strolls over. She gives the animal a jab in the ass again, and has to dodge a flying hoof as he lashes out and tries to kick her. “NOT TO MENTION THE DAMN FLYING HOOVES.”

Toki just laughs.

“And she’s just in the damn pen laughing at us, because she’s the only one who can move the damn panels without hurting herself!” The fish monster looks flustered and frustrated, and damn near ready to say ‘fuck it’ and let the damn bull roam free. “Stop laughing, damn it!”

Toki just laughs harder. “I can’t! Your rage fit is too funny!”

He laughed gently as he came closer, "So much trouble, eh? Perhaps I should help, then?" He offered with a casual, though seriously smug, tone.

Toki’s laugh cut off at his smug tone, and she shared a look with Ariel, not unlike two housewives plotting even if Ariel was single. The women turned to regard him, and as one arched their brows. “If you think you can do so much better,” Ariel says, “Then please, mister macho muscle man, be my guest.” She steps back from the irate bull, the circle of monsters acting as a living fence around him not breaking but only expanding to include her into it.

Toki snickers. “Oh boy. This is going to be amusing to watch.” She stretches her sweaty and aching wings, and settles in for the show. “I wish I had some popcorn.”

He popped his knuckles and sighed as he walked around to examine the bull, "Alright... let's see here." He rumbled as he peeled off his turtleneck, tossing it to Toki before he shifted his feet and growled. "Does anyone have a rope?" He spoke up.

“Oooh, tough guy, peeling off your shirt like that.” It left him in his tank top that he wore below it, but it was a warm day despite the snow outside on the ground. Well… And they’d all been doing a lot of work. Everyone was sweating from wearing layers in the cold. Toki held his shirt without issue all the same, and watched him quietly.

One of the dog guards who had taken up post near Ariel tossed Tenne a rope, and grimaced when the bull gave him what amounted to a death glare.

The bull was smaller than Tenne in height, but probably outweighed him by more than three quarters of a ton. He blew steam out of his nose as he eyed the rope, and kicked up slush as he waited to see what Tenne would do.

"Laugh it up, Toki." He chuffed, adjusting the rope in his hand before he gave the lasso a testing whirl, "Alright." He sighed, before he grinned and lunged at the bull.

"I’m not the one who’s going to freeze his nonexistent nipples off once your testosterone buzz wears off and you cool down.” She watches him and the bull begin to dance with an amused look, and pulls the gate a little wider. This was going to be a fight for the ages.

The bull met his lunge by dancing away, keeping his horns out of range of the lasso, and kicking out at him with his hind legs as he circled the perimeter of the living fence he’d been caged in.

"You are a wise-ass." He huffed at his mate before he grinned and swung the lasso for his real target. As soon as the hoof went up, Tenne sent the lasso flying and snared the bull's leg.

The bull gave an angry noise, and began to kick like crazy to try and get the rope off his leg, or get
Tenne’s hands.

Toki snickered. “Better a wise-ass than a dumb-ass. I wouldn’t call this a smart-ass move, by the way.” Tenne would need new gloves after this, with the sort of beating they were going to take from the bull kicking and bucking and trying to rip the rope right out of Tenne’s hands.

"Mmhm. Come on, now he has four legs and I’m only one beast!” He announced before he gave a hard pull of the leg.

“Just don’t yank his leg clean off,” Toki snorts. She knows that’s well within the strength parameters for a blaster beast- they’re insanely strong, really, and Tenne is only a fraction of her power. However, in pure muscle strength, without her enhancing hers with magic, he outclassed her by far. Even though he was still a string bean compared to the Tenebris she had first gotten to meet. “That’s a nearly one ton bull- that’s a lot of cow that you’re tugging on.”

She watches as the bull gives a startled sound mid buck as he’s yanked on, losing his balance and toppling over with a solid thump.

Tenne gave a laugh and holding the rope taut, he came and sat on the bull’s neck, holding a horn tight before he grinned at Toki. "Ta-da~"

“Congrats!” She clapped with both sets of hands, and gave him a cheeky look. “Now how are you going to get a downed bull the last forty feet into the pen?” She was absolutely no help, more enjoying watching than attempting to assist. She was, after all, assigned gate duty since she’d ‘overworked herself’ flying around so much in these blasted winds that liked to slam her against things.

On a particularly windy day out on the plains, Toki couldn’t fly without extremely straining to do so. Ariel might have witnessed her doing a spectacular impression of a bug on a windshield against the side of the barn while they’d been rounding the milking cattle into the barn, and had banned her from stressing her wings.

"Some fancy rope work and we’ll get him up right quick." He retorted, taking the chance to take the rope from the bull’s leg and quickly get it around his head and horns. "And of course once I stop weighing him down."

“Oh goodness.” Toki snickered. “You might not need to. It looks like he’s plenty mad. You could probably just run in front of him and he’d probably give chase now.”

The bulls eyes were wide and practically rolling as he squirmed and kicked, trying to buck Tenne off of him as his sides heaved. The bull was, indeed, beyond angry. He opened his mouth and let out an enraged bellow that got half muffled by the snow under him.

"Oh boy.” He gasped. "Alright, as soon as I get off, scatter!” He got the rope off the bull's neck and held it tight as he quickly got off the bull. He didn’t hesitate before running for the fence that Toki was at, slipping through the gate and leaving himself quite ready to vault the fence.

“Run, Tenne, run!” Toki laughed. Watching him race through slush was always funny. Just about as funny as his cold toes dance when he stepped on the hardwood floors without his shoes on before they’d been heated by her magic for the day.

The bull lurched onto his hooves, and gave chase as the monsters around him scattered like leaves in the wind. He charged after Tenne, horns down and hooves churning up mud and snow. He ran right into the pen, and aimed to shove his horns into Tenne’s rear end if he could.
“Climb, Tenne, climb!” When the bull slid into the pen, Toki hefted the fence in her arms and began to pull it shut. They didn’t have a ‘gate’ so much as the panels had to be held closed and latched with thick chains to keep them from falling over, but it worked. Once she got it closed, she began the process of winding the chains shut, making sure they were tight and hooked and properly latched so that the bull’s large frame couldn’t just push it open if he got too rough with the fence. She did have some experience with animals, after all—though not much. Her experience with cattle was limited to her experiences back when she’d been human and had been a young child. It had been a while since she’d handled them, and she’d never handled them unsupervised—and never an angry one.

Tenne whooped and laughed as he made it to the opposite side of the pen and vaulted himself over, landing with a splash in the snow and mud before he stood tall again. "And he sticks the landing!"

Toki couldn’t stop her giggle. “Alright, mister landing. Check those fence chains for me, will you? We don’t want this big bastard getting out. Who knows if we’d be able to get him back in before he-” Toki got shoved into the fence, making the unfinished chains strain to keep the panels closed. They held though, which was good and bad.

For a moment, Toki wasn’t really sure what happened, or what had shoved her into the fence. And then the burning feeling of agony slid through her left wing, and up into her ribs as the thing behind her gave a shove and something slid deeper into her. Nearly two thousand pounds of pressure shoving against her when she hadn’t expected it… She didn’t have time to brace her magic or defenses.

Bright green poured down her back from the massive hole shoved through the sensitive membrane of her left wing, and from where the large black horn had her wing pinned forcibly to her back via stabbing. The bull had turned, quick as lightning, and directed his rage at Tenne on the closest living thing that was around him. That specific living thing happened to be her.

She felt briefly like a bug on display with one of her wings pinned to herself, and she couldn’t stop the pained cry from leaving her as the bull shook his head, driving her deeper into the panels. Her hands fisted onto the fence, and she tried to pull herself up and off of his horn as he beat at her back and rattled his horn around inside of her body.

There was a rush of movement, and then there were monsters flooding up and over the metal panels to try and get at the bull and pull it off of Toki before it could do much more damage to her.

Tenne had turned to see Toki be pinned and he snarled before he lunged back into the pen, scrambling noisily over the top of the metal panels as the other monsters did the same. He was faster though. He didn’t exactly think about sparing the bull at this point, only protecting his mate from the threat that was hurting her so badly. Without hesitation on his part, the narrow eyed monster lunged and landed onto the bull’s back before sinking his teeth into the back of it’s neck. He bit down with every last ounce of strength he had to protect his mate, biting through fur and gristle and fat to get to what he needed done.

The bone of the bulls’ neck was easy to find, and for someone with Tenne’s jaw strength, very easy to break. It didn’t even break—it crushed under his bite, the animal giving a weak bellow as his legs dropped out from under him, unable to support his body or anything else. His horn slid out of Toki’s back, covered in green blood, and he slumped lifelessly to the ground.

Toki clung to the fence, too startled over what happened to even resume climbing out. Her wing had a massive hole in it, and her back as well. The one for her back was deep and curving upwards inside of her body. Her free hand slid to her back, and pressed into the wound there to try and staunch the bleeding.
His teeth retracted from the bull and without bothering to wipe the blood off his face. He moved to catch her and used his turtleneck to cover her wound. "I shouldn't have turned my back." He growled quietly as he nuzzled her. "I'm sorry, Toki."

“No, it’s… it’s okay.” She wasn’t sure that hurting her had warranted the animal’s death… but there was no taking it back now, not without loading a save. She didn’t want to muck with those unless she absolutely had to, and this wasn’t one of those times. “It wasn’t your fault. I wasn’t thinking. Of course he’d go after me. He was… he was angry.” She grimaced as he used his turtleneck to put pressure on the wound. It didn’t feel like it had punctured anything important, thankfully, but there was blood pouring out of it at a steady rate. Her wing dripped with it too, but not as badly. Toki reached up with shaky hands, and started to undo the chains on the fence so they could get out.

Ariel came to the fence, a firm look on her face. She’d settled into her guard mindset, apparently, to help keep order. She took the chains from Toki, got them undone, and several other monsters and herself proceeded to move the panel out of the way so Tenne could take Toki out and away from the dead bull. “I called the Queen.” She said. “She’ll be here as soon as she can to heal Toki.”

"Thank you, Ariel." He looked up at the aquatic woman, and then gently hoisted Toki up in his arms. "I'm sorry I killed him... but if I hadn't, I don’t know if you would have survived." He whined gently.

“It’s okay, Tenne.” She swallowed faintly. Being hoisted up made the turtleneck loosen some, and blood gushed out with the new position, soaking the front of Tenne’s tank top as her veins throbbed. “We still have the better tempered bull… All the same, if he was this aggressive, then there’s no telling who he could have hurt or when.” It was better if it was her. Toki was tough, and getting hooked with a horn wouldn’t kill her. Other monsters with less HP than she had? Not as tough. They probably would have been scooping up a pile of dust from the muck.

Ariel motions Tenne to the farmhouse. “Take her to the deck- Hey!” She calls to a small collection of monsters, “I need some jackets on the porch, stat! Make a surface to lay Miss Nara on, while we wait for Queen Toriel to arrive.”

The monsters scurried to obey, gathering jackets and blankets and other things to lay on the porch for Tenne to rest Toki on.

Tenne brought Toki over to the porch and gently laid Toki down facedown, before he pressed the turtleneck into the wound. "Tsk, nasty bastard... good riddance." He hissed quietly.

“He was just an animal, Tenne,” Toki murmurs softly, whining faintly as he pressed down on the wound. It hurt, and blood seeped between his fingers in a steady gush. It hadn’t been a small horn that had stabbed her, after all. “An animal with a foul temper. Hhh… Hah… Did you know that… cows kill more people than sharks do on average per year?” It was a random fact from her world- she didn’t know if it held true here or not, but she would assume so. Toki’s savaged wing twitched sorely, the weeping wound ripping faintly as the gossamer surface tried to instinctively flex away from the pain.

He sighed as he looked at the damage to her wing. "My darling hornet..." He murmured gently, wanting to touch but knowing better than to do so. Tenne stood up after giving her a gentle touch to her head. "Tori will be here soon, I have to go check on the boys, alright?"

“I would change your shirt first.” She grimaced slightly. “Maybe your pants too. You’ve got blood all over you. If Kai and Quinn see you, they’re going to freak out. They’re going to freak out if they see me… So maybe don’t let them see me, okay?”
"Mmh..." He then lifted his head, "Ariel, would you make sure the boys don’t eat any chickens?"

"The boys weren’t eating chickens last I saw them, but I’ll go check on them." The fish woman nodded and took off for the coops.

Toki gave a faint smile, but it faded as her back throbbed. She bent one of her arms behind her to put more pressure on the wound. She was starting to get light headed. “I feel kinda dizzy…” She mutters softly.

"Take it easy." He murmured, stooping down and kissing her head. "I love you, Toki. Toriel is almost here."

“Hope she gets here fast, before all of my blood is gone,” She mutters hazily. The kiss registers, but she simply closes her eyes so she doesn’t have to deal with the dizziness. “Go change, Tenne. I’m not going anywhere. Toriel will be here by the time you’re done, I’m sure. You take so long sometimes…” She teased just faintly so he didn’t fret so much.

He whined at that and gave her a gentle nuzzle, "I'd rather do that once Tori arrives."

"And arrived I have, Tenne dear." The beast lifted his head as the queen approached quickly, a gentle look on her face despite the worry in the air. "I heard that Toki had a run in with a nasty beast, so I did my best to hurry..."

“Not so much a nasty beast, as a big ass bull with a nasty ass temper.” Toki murmured into her makeshift bed. “… I realize I have bled all over these people’s coats. I’m so sorry to all who gave me coat pillows. But yeah. I have a big hole and it hurts a fair bit, and my wing hurts too and I’m a bit dizzy so I think I lost a little bit much blood.”

With Toriel here, Tenne slipped inside to change his clothes.

"You bleeding a little on our coats is the least of our problems." Tori assured her as she knelt at her side, calling up her magic so she could begin to heal her.

Toki couldn’t help the soft snickers that left her. “I suppose so. Hey… Heyyy this is the second time I’ve been healed by you. And in less than a year too… I really need to be more careful.” She knew the Queen had limited magic- no one in this realm came even close to the sheer quantity of magic that she had. Toki had an absurd amount of magic for as small as she was. But that was the nature of being Balance. Or rather, a Frankensteined version of Balance. “Hey… Queen Toriel? If it doesn’t all heal up, did you bring bandages?” She wasn’t all fried from the inside out like last time Toriel had healed her, so it was possible that Toriel could heal her. But there was a lot of skin and flesh that she had to re-knit together, as well as weaving her wing back into one solid piece so she could fly again.

"Tenne is a father, even if I hadn't brought my first aid kit, I assure you that there would have been one at our disposal not twenty feet inside." The queen laughed gently, before she shook her head gently. "You will not need worry about your recovery, I am still capable of fully healing even a nasty wound like this." She tutted.

“Mkaaay.” Toki drawled. “My wing too? I like to fly. It would suck to not be able to fly again. Then I’d be like my summons, Sugar. Sugar used to be able to fly, but she got her wings torn off in a battle. It was bad.” Blood loss made her lips loose, it seemed.

"Of course, my dear...” Toriel soothed, her hands moving over Toki’s back as she worked. The damage was deep and extensive, but not beyond her skill to heal. This was a wound she could manage. “It will be healed as if it was never hurt in the first place."
"Awesome," She drawled. Her four arms shifted and spread out slightly. The wound on her back was feeling better and better in small increments, as the flesh knit back together and her organs were healed.

"Such damage... it's a good thing indeed you have such kind people to help you when you're down for the count..." She sighed gently, before she smiled warmly. "Almost done."

"Wooo~" Toki cheered faintly, muffled by the jackets. "Then I can get back to tending to the animals."

“That might not be the best idea with as much blood as you’ve lost, boss lady.” One of the monsters laughed gently. “Why don’t you just sit down and relax while we finish rounding up the cows?”

“But I don’t like to just sit and do nothing.” Toki’s brow furrows, unseen.

"You're going to stay here and rest, Toki." Tenne stepped out of the house, now in a pair of pants with a dark print on them, and a new tank top. "I'll keep working with the herds, you're going to rest and let Tori take care of you."

"You wanna know something cool?" Toki gave him a faint grin as she tilted her head. "If I just sit here and rest and everyone goes off to work… Then there’s no one here to make sure I sit here and rest." She gives a cheeky grin to him, feeling quite proud of herself for her deduction.

"..." With that, he turned his head and gave a loud whistle that brought his sons running.

They looked up at him when they reached him, and he gave a small gesture to his mate. "Keep an eye on your mother, my pups. Make sure she doesn't get up."

And with that, both pups nearly tackled Toki over.

Toriel’s hands fluttered worriedly. “Gently boys, gently!” She fussed slightly. “Her wing membrane is healed, but it is still fragile until the healing fully sets!”

Toki merely grunted and lay there, hoping that the boys didn’t detect the scent of blood and pain probably coating her. “I’m okay, Toriel. I can reinforce my defenses- these little hooligans won’t hurt me any.”

Tenne chuckled gently, swelling in pride of his victory.

Kai sniffed quietly, and then sat up. His eye lights dilated, and then he turned upset eyes onto his dad. “Why does Mama smell like blood?” He demands tartly to his father, loathe to keep her pinned with her smelling like so much blood. It was like the floor incident- but so much more.

"She saved your dear father from the wrath of a bull." Tenne’s chest puffed up proudly as he peered at his son. “I’m letting her rest and recover from her amazing heroism.”

To say the least, that had Quinn's eyes gleaming as he nuzzled his face into Toki’s fluff. "Nyeh!"

“Remember your words, Quinn.” Toki reminds him gently as she shifts and sits up, regardless of Tenne possibly grumbling at her. She’d been working with the boy, trying to help him speak better beyond just ‘nyeh’ and ‘Mama’. “It was hardly heroism, Tenne. Don’t lie to them. I wasn’t paying attention and the bull got me, and you saved me from the bull.”

Kai puffed air at his father, and huffed slightly. “Daddy, don’t lie. Lies are bad.”
"Well I don't want your attention stolen away, my darling. I rather someone take care of you rather than praise me for my rather beastly efforts."

"We're blaster beasts." Toki rolls her eyes blearily at him. "Beastly efforts are what we do." She props Quinn in her secondary arms, before shakily reaching out to haul herself up with the railing. "I mean, I threatened the king for choking you out that one time. And kinda intimidated him."

Toriel blinked at her. "Is that why he looks away whenever he thinks you're giving him a firm look?" She inquires curiously.

"Yep." Toki owned up to it too. She and her beast had come to terms with establishing dominance over the King and they would not be swayed. Her legs however would, and she wobbled as she got to her feet, not unlike a calf just trying to walk. "Whoa hey, who turned the deck into Jell-O?" She jokes faintly.

Tenne was quickly at her side, urging her back down to continue resting. "No, no, go back down. You need to be resting."

Toki locked her fist on the railing to keep herself from being eased back down, and felt her pupils contracting as she peered up at Tenne, giving him an instinctual sharp eyed look. "If I'm going to rest, I'm not going to do it out in the freezing cold while covered in my own slowly freezing blood."

She says firmly, managing to keep her feet. Her beast didn’t necessarily want to be seen wounded- or weakened- around so many other monsters either. That was a beastly response though, one she knew she should ignore but found herself incapable of doing.  

Kai took a step back. "Ooo. Daddy's getting the stink eye."

He opened his mouth, and then closed it as he nodded slowly. "Allow me to help you inside..."

"Please." Toki nods her head slowly, and leans into his grasp. Her wings fold behind her, the green covering the bloodstains, and she feels her head crash into his bicep as her balance makes her wobble. "I just need to eat something while my body regenerates. I'll be back and good as new before you know it."

He nuzzled her and whined quietly. "My mate, I love you..." He told her as he led her inside.

Toki kept a firm hold on Quinn, with Kai following at her heels. "I know you do. I love you too."

She butts his arm with her head in a gentle way, and steers him for the kitchen. "Tally ho, my handsome guide. I need cocoa, and then I shall rest."

"As you wish, my darling." He purred happily, carrying her with a light bounce in his step into the kitchen.

She grunted as he dragged her along, but let him tote her into the kitchen. She took one of the chairs and sat down once she was close enough, before slowly scooting it towards the counter. Quinn was giggling in her lap as she went, and she figured he thought she was silly, but she didn’t care. "Alright. Now I wont fall over with a chair. Just gotta get to the counter now." Boy, being a creature with blood wasn’t fun when it came to blood loss.

"Oh no, you stay put. This time you have no excuse." He tutted.

"But... I'm on a chair." Her teeth pucker at him in a pout. "And I make good cocoa..."

"Tell me what you need and I'll be sure to provide, my darling." He purred.
“Well… water and milk in a pot, and cocoa powder, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon… I can boil it myself. And a spoon for stirring?” She blinks. “Mugs for pouring. I’m sure you need to warm up too, mister tank top in the snow. I’m surprised your shield hasn’t frozen off.”

“Adrenaline will do that to you.” He rumbled as he collected everything into the pot as she named them off. “Ill probably get really cold later and need my perfect little heater to warm me up.”

“Adrenaline gives you the shakes,” She chirps cheerfully, and sets Quinn down to take the pot once everything had been added. “Mmmnnehhh gimme more Vanilla please.”

Kai fetched it for her willingly, and handed it over.

Toki added more splashes, and then started to warm it slowly as the pot rested on her lap. Her arms trembled faintly, and she crossed them over her chest. “I won’t have a problem warming you up. My magic is fine- it’s the blood in my body that’s all over the ground and the bull and your clothes and the deck. And all of those coats.”

“Well I’ll let it sink in and worry about it when it comes around... I’ve got more important things to worry about. Like how much blood is now outside of your body than inside.” He tutted.

“Ohhh, this is nothing.” She hums softly. She glances at the boys, and then hums. “Can you both go get me a blanket and a new shirt please?”

“Yeah!” Kai nodded. “I’ll get the blanket. Quinn- you get the shirt.”

The younger boy nodded, and both raced off up the stairs.

Once they were alone, Toki’s eyes slid to Tenne. “Trust me- I’ve had worse.” She promises. “When I went from human to monster, I vomited blood. Lots of it. It wasn’t fun. Not to mention monthly visits from Lucifer’s Waterfall. Definitely one thing I don’t miss- though the five day heats every so many months is kind of hellish too. Well… for you, anyway.” She glances up at him with a smug smirk, and stirs the cocoa.

“You make it sound like I don’t enjoy when you have nothing more than a carnal craving for your alpha~” He teased, before he sighed and moved closer to nuzzle her, and wrap his arms around her once more. Okay wow, he was starting to feel cold now, pardon him while he nuzzled into her fur. "I love you, Toki.” He murmured softly.

Toki smiled, and patted his head gently. She could feel his skin chilling, and it didn’t take much to let her magic wash over him, like bathing in a hot spring. “You enjoy it just fine- but I don’t think you enjoyed it as much when it went for longer than… What was your longest heat again? Two days?”

The different worlds had different heats. “You were walking pretty funny after it, you know, and you weren’t even the one getting speared, mister alpha.” She rolls her eyes sassily. Her beast rumbled softly inside of her. She was dominant in her own right.

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"I'm a defective product. Usually male heats last long enough to sate more than one female's heat.” He murmured into her fluff, before he mewedled happily. "Oh my goodness your warmth is absolutely wonderful~"

Toki snorts gently, and presses an affectionate nuzzle against the top of his head. “You’re hardly defective, Tenne. It might be because we’re from different worlds. Where I come from, heats vary. Here, short ones seem to be the norm, from what I’ve heard from the women gossiping.” She sighs gently. “I’m glad you enjoy my warmth though. I try to keep the house warm for you and the boys.”

"Mmh..." He lifted his head enough to look up at her with a relaxed look on his face, probably a
result of the ever so enjoyable warm up from Toki. "I know I love it~ and no doubt the boys are with me when I say that snuggling heated fluff is the best possible thing."

Toki snorts, and taps a finger on the bridge of where his nose should be. “And just what would you and the boys do if I ever decided get a haircut?”

"Nooooooooooooo." Was the long, drawn out noise that he proceeded to make next, before he buried his face again. "Don’t take too much off?" He whined.

“What if I shave it all off?” She teases him cheekily. “Go for the silky smooth skin feel? Smooth and soft like a baby's skin," She grins. "Completely hairless. Could use my fur and weave it into a rug or a coat, like Hitsu does."

Tenne's caterwauling was joined by Kai as the elder picked up on the conversation of shaving Toki bald. He had a blanket in hand, and was dragging it towards her with a pout on his face.

Quinn, of course, had no idea what was going on, but made the same sounds as his brother and father as he made his way over to crawl into Toki's lap.

Toki took the shirt that Quinn brought her, and lifted the simmering cocoa pan up and out of the way as the whimpering pup shoved his way into her lap. She laughed, and slumped into the chair. “Alright, alright. I won’t shave all of my hair off. I wonder how long it’ll get. I might have to start braiding it soon, if it’s not going to stop growing.”

Tenne purred at that and lifted his head. "I can help with that~"

“Do you even know how to braid?” She inquires of him gently. “Also, cups please, before I spill cocoa on you all.”

"Yes, I know how to braid.” He rolled his eyes. “I wouldn't have offered otherwise.” He chuckled. Tenne slipped away from her and went to get a few mugs down for her.

“I would love to know where you learned how to braid, when you have such a short mane.” Toki took the mugs from him, and began to fill them shakily with her hands. She set them on the table, and then sent the empty pan with a couple bees over to the sink to be left there for later cleaning. “Alright kids, off of me for now and you can have your cocoa.”

Kai huffed, but grabbed his from the table. “Thanks Mama.”

"I might have a short mane, but His Fluffiness has all the mane one could ask for." Tenne laughed, "Tori taught me in case I ever grew mine out."

Toki snorts, and shoves a mug of cocoa into Tenne’s hands. “Can your mane even grow out longer than it is now?” She inquires curiously as she takes her own and sips at it. Her eyes drift closed, and she lets her body enjoy it.

He took the mug and chuffed at her. "I'm an alpha, Toki. I can grow a mane that would make Asgore jealous."

She wasn’t sure what being an alpha had anything to do with it, truly. She lifted a brow at him, and drank her cocoa with amusement at him. “I somehow doubt this. I’m the true alpha of fluffiness here, and you shant take that title from me.” She wiggles her brows at him above her mug.

"Challenge accepted.” He waggled his in return and took a long, appreciative drink of his cocoa.
“We’ll see.” She gave him a smug look, and simply enjoyed her cocoa as her body worked to replenish itself. “Mm… good cocoa. On a side note, you’re going to look a little ridiculous with just your neck covered in a rug of fur, if you can in fact manage to grow one.”

“I can. I remember my Father's mane was quite magnificent.”

“I’m going to call you the rug monster.” She informs him teasingly. “You’re literally going to grow yourself a shawl of hair. You’ll be putting old ladies and their knitting out of business all around the world.”

"How dare you accuse me of such a crime?" He snickered shamelessly. "Of course, I mean..." Though before he finished what he was planning to say, he set down his mug of cocoa and reached out to clasp his hands over the sides of Kai’s skull to muffle his hearing. "I'm already kind of a rug monster, just a different kind of rug monster~"

Toki couldn’t stop from inhaling a whole mouthful of cocoa instead of swallowing it, and she proceeded to choke and sputter all over herself as Quinn tossed himself from her lap to avoid getting splattered in the spray. Her eyes popped wide and her lungs rebelled. “Oh~” She hacked a cough again, lungs burning from the warm liquid that should very much not have been there. “Oh my god, you d-didn’t just say that.” Her voice carried laughter despite her sputtering.

He chuckled as he winked in a manner so smug that it was almost audible.

She flushed a bright green, and smacked him with one of her wings. “I can’t believe you said that around the children. Shame on you.”

"Kai didn't hear it, and I’m sure Quinn wont understand nor remember it even being said.” He chuckled, patting Kai's head before returning to his mug of cocoa.

“All the same, I can’t believe you, Tenne. What if Quinn does remember hearing it?” She shakes her head and sighs at herself. “Well, I’m covered in blood and cocoa. I need a shower, and this blanket and shirt need washed because I sputtered on them.” She was going to change behind the blanket, and slip into a new fresh shirt, but apparently that wasn’t going to happen.

“Hear what?” Kai blinked up at his dad. "What did you not want me to hear? Was it a secret? Am I gonna be a big brother maybe?” There was a hopeful ring to his voice.

It was Tenne's turn to slightly choke on his cocoa. He coughed several times before he managed to clear his throat. "No, Kai. And go shower, Toki, I'll wash the boys after and put them to bed later tonight, but there's something I have to do before I can shower.”

“I'll just wash them with me. Not supposed to be alone anyhow.” She shrugs. They would sneak in and keep an eye on her wobbly ass if she didn’t, and she’d rather they be productively cleaning their little bodies rather than trying to peep around the curtain to see if she had keeled over and died. “What have you got to do?” Her head felt less foggy with the chocolate working it’s wonders, but it would take a day before she was back up to snuff.

"Just a little last bit of business with one of our bulls." He answered simply. Easily it could be translated as he was going to do something about the bull they had killed.

Her mouth popped open into a small ‘o’ shape, and she nodded. “Ah, I see. Well, put on a shirt and a coat first. I can’t fix it if it freezes and falls off.” She wasn’t sure if the ground was too cold and frozen for him to dig a grave for the bull, but she wasn’t going to tell him that. He was a strong monster- and beasts were generally good at digging.
"Shirt I will do." He rumbled gently, kissing her head and finishing his cocoa before he proceeded to jog upstairs so he could grab a shirt from the hamper and pull it over his torso. He made his way back down stairs and waved to her and the boys as he stepped into his shoes and started outside.

Toki watched him go, and shook her head quietly, sighing softly. She and the boys all finished their cocoa, before they- Kai more so than Quinn- helped her upstairs to the bathroom.

She got them all undressed, and then settled everyone into the shower, where she did her best to keep from slipping while she scrubbed both boys down and made sure they were spotless from running around out in the chicken coop. They didn’t need to be tracking in chicken poop and getting it all over the new house just quite yet.

It was maybe an hour later that Tenne returned to their home, though he had made a beeline to the kitchen and then to the back yard, seeming to be doing something that was probably going to end up useful to Toki and the boys in the long run.

Toki had settled onto the couch, and was covered in blankets. The boys had settled in front of the couch, and were in an intense game of checkers, which the puzzle loving Quinn seemed to adore. Toki was watching them passively, but was for the most part simply resting. Watching Tenne bustle back and forth through the house prompted her to sit up a little bit though, and squint curiously at the back door. He’d forgotten to shut it, so cold wintry winds were blowing right into the house again.

After a few trips though, he seemed to notice the accidental 'leaving the door open' he would do, so he aimed his tail to hook the door and pull it closed behind him, much to her relief.

While he did his hustle and bustle, there was a soft hum in Toki's head.

'You know... This is really nice... I never could have imagined living with Monsters was so wonderful... You were right, Tokiko.' Sequoia sounded content. Her voice seemed much healthier than it had been the past long while as she seemed to be relaxing right alongside Toki on the couch, in that warm bundle of blankets. 'Not counting what... happened... with that bull... ow...'

‘Yeah, I know. Living with monsters is great. Honestly, I prefer it to living with humans. Humans are so... self absorbed and rude sometimes.’ She closes her eyes with a soft sigh, and stimulates her secondary hands on the material of the couch by rubbing her fingertips on them. ‘The bull was an accident. I tried to keep as much pain from you as I could though. How are you feeling? You feel like you’re feeling much better than you have been.’

'You did a good job, but I don’t care about taking pain for you, despite that... risk we took in the past. And yes, I am feeling better... I think I’ve finally reached that point in adjusting where it's finally starting to reach that steady feeling of peace. I'm starting to get maternal instincts back.' She admitted with a quiet laugh.

‘I’m glad you’re feeling better, Sequoia. Tenne and I have been worried about your radio silence.’ She peeks her eye open as she watches Tenne bustle through the house again, and sends a couple of her hornets to chase after him and latch onto him, to act like little body warmers for him. He got cold far too easy, and running around out in the ice doing who knows what would make him frostier than a snowman. ‘Back? You’ve had them for a while. I just think you’re starting to realize you have
Toki sighs and snuggles into the couch. ‘Don’t worry about the horn I took. My body should be recovered in time for your date this weekend, no worries. You might not be able to get frisky with him yet on account of blood pressure shifting, but I’m sure you both can enjoy your evening all the same.’

That got a soft laugh from Sequoia. ‘Perhaps we’ll just talk over water if you think it would be wiser than drinking.’ she hummed.

‘I think alcohol is going to be hard to get unless you go to Grillby’s.’ Toki chuckles to her mental companion. ‘You know... You've changed a whole lot since the barrier broke. And I think it's a good change, you know that?’

‘I'm not Guano-Nutso anymore.’ Sequoia laughed, ‘But a very good change indeed.’

‘Not only that, I think that much power was just... corrupting.’ Toki gives a pleasant hum, and watches Tenne dart through the house again. ‘... What do you think he’s doing? He’s running through the house like a headless chicken.’

‘I don't know, but was it just me or did he smell smoky?’ Sequoia then asked with a hum. ‘I think he's doing something big with the bull.’

Toki opened her mouth and discretely huffed in a deep breath, inhaling his scent the next time he tore through like a bat out of hell. Huh. He did indeed smell smoky. ‘He smells like he’s been rolling in soot.’ She says. ‘What on earth could he be doing with the bull? Burning it?’

‘... Or better. Feel up to going outside again?’

‘I don’t really feel like moving, to be honest.’ She shivered and nestled better into the blankets she’d been packed in. Toki sighed and closed her eyes, before shifting one of her primary arms under her. She sits up, and eases the blanket off of her body.

Kai glances at her from where they were playing checkers. “Mama? What are you doing?”

“Just going to see what your Dad is up to.” She says lightly to him. She eases onto her feet, and gets herself upright.

“Okay.” He nods.

‘Might not want to move, but I’ll do it anyways.’ She padded closer to the door, and poked her head out to see what he was up to. She had no shoes on, and had no desire to put them or a coat on, so she stayed in the doorway, peeking out at Tenne.

Tenne was standing with a few of the other large-built males of the village- mostly some of the dog and wolf guards. They were all around a large fire with a spit roast set up, flames licking high into the air as monsters fanned air into the coals.

In the center of the fire pit, speared on the spit roast, was the bull. He was skinned, gutted, and without his head and legs. The body was speared on the spit, slowly being rotated over the hot fire as the males took turns rotating it, while others fanned the flames or fed wood into the coals.

Toki blinked, and huffed in a soft breath. Well, that explained what he was doing, and why he smelled like smoke. She glanced at the snow, and debated if she wanted to trek out into it barefoot or not, and if Tenne would absolutely have a fit if she did. She eventually huffed, and simply stepped
out onto it. Without all of the magic from all of the souls to bolster her body, she felt the cold more intensely, and boosted her defense to keep it from dropping as she shuffled slowly out the door and into the snow.

Toki looked at the gutted bull as it twisted around, and shivered as she saw inside of it. Gross- but this was how they did it back in the olden days, she knew. “So this is what you’ve been up to,” She comments lightly as she pads out into the snow.

"Hello, Toki." Tenne greeted with a smile, coming over to her to give her loving nuzzles and kisses in greeting. "Oh yes, we’ve got plenty of time before it gets dark, and the heat from the fire has started to melt a nice ring around the set up."

Toki meets his kisses and nuzzles with a soft smile, returning them chastely, before flicking her gaze over to the fire. “So why did you all decide to… roast… That is the bull, I’m assuming?”

"He's huge, he could feed a lot of mouths." He rumbled in reply.

“That’s very true. I felt all of his hugeness when he shoved all of his mass into his horns in my back.” She rubbed her back lightly, and grimaced faintly. “Well, did you at least put some spices on the meat? Or are you just smoking it?”

"Of course we did!" He held up a few spices he brought out, as did the others. "We found a rather nice mix that would go well with the bull's meat."

“I see.” She blinked. “Well, testosterone makes the meat taste weird, so I hope you all used a lot.” She settled into his side with a quiet smile. She shivers, and ruffles her wings out behind her, before wiggling so she could stand on the top of Tenne’s shoes. Her toes were cold. She wasn’t technically supposed to be running amok outside after all, but she wanted to see what they were up to. “I’m tempted to flood the area with bees. It’s too cold.”

He noticed her lack of shoes after she made the comment about the cold and he puffed his cheeks at her. "Oh Toki." He nuzzled her as she came close and began to waddle her back towards the house, keeping her feet on his with delicate precision of each step. "Why don’t you have your shoes, my silly queen?" He tutted.

"I didn’t have the energy to put on a jacket or shoes. Coming out was sort of spur of the moment,” She huffs, and wiggles in his hold. “Noooo don’t penguin waddle to the house. I don’t need to go inside. You can stand on the bottoms, I’ll stand on the tops, yeah?” She gives him a sulky pout, and wiggles back against his turtleneck. The hard shape of his shield pressed against her back and was slightly unpleasant.

"Toki why do you do this to yourself?” He sighed. He turned his back to the group and carefully moved her around. He turned her around on his feet, and then promptly pushed his turtleneck over her so her body was flush to his, sharing his warmth, "Silly Bee." He purred sweetly.

"I," she declares, "am the silliest bee and I am proud to wear that crown." She grins up at him as she pops her head through his neck hole. Her mane spreads out and basically fills his shirt as she shares her warmth with him and they keep each other warm. "As for why I do this to myself... Because I have impulses and sometimes I lack the ability to control them?" She blinks up at him. "I'm also not used to being so... Vulnerable yet." She'd gotten used to being basically invincible from damage when she had all of that magic. Now that she was just a Balance soul... She had to adjust.

The heat made him coo happily and he wrapped his arms around her, snuggling her for a moment before he turned again to face the fire and everyone else. "So you need big Papa beast to protect
you? Awww~" He teased as he returned to the fire where the bull was being rotated steadily.

Him calling himself Papa made her soul squeeze, and not in a good way. She missed Tenebris then. It had taken her so long to build up a relationship with the stoic and grumpy old man... She missed her Papa.

All the same, Toki managed a lopsided grin as he turned around, and shifted in his sweater. "I dunno about a protector, Big Daddy," she purred teasingly, knowing he would flush brightly, "but I sure don't mind using you for a living heating pad."

He chuckled and leaned down to nip her cheek, "Says the literal heating pad I've got pressed against my chest~" He purred, his arms wrapping around her and giving a squeeze.

She snorted as he nipped her cheek, and raised a brow at him. She snaked her slightly chilly fingers around his back and slid them along his lower back. "And just what would you ever do if I ran out of magic to heat you up with?" She had been familiar with magi-drain before.

He squeaked sharply and shuddered, before he squeezed her again. "I'd never force you to come close to running short of magic, my darling. If you came close to running out of heat, I'd simply have you stop, and I'd heat you up myself."

Toki chuckles softly. "I've dealt with Magi-drain before, believe it or not." She knew her magical stores here were damn near God like to these monsters- much to her displeasure- so it was likely he might not believe her. "It's definitely not a fun thing to experience." She chirps cheerfully, and gives him a lopsided grin. "You do know though that if there ever arose a situation where I had to use all of my magic, I would." She'd done it with the barrier- it wasn't hard to envision it happening other times. "Though, I'd love to see your attempts at warming me up~"

"Yes, well... we already had a preview of how far you're willing to go with that." He sighed, before chuckling and gently nipping her mane a few times. "I'm a clever beast, I'd make something work~" He purred into her ear.

She blushed, and dipped her head down to nip at his shield. Her fingers, unseen by anyone but definitely felt by Tenne, slid down and goosed his backside from inside of his pants. "You're a tease sometimes. There are guards with amazing hearing like... Not even ten feet from us."

"Mmmh~ you're no better, coming in here and commandeering my feet." He teased as he poked her sides, before he gave a pleased chuckle and gently rested his palms on her hips. "You're getting pudgy, it's adorable~"

"I'm allowed to commandeer your feet, given how often you like to play with mine. If I had to guess, I'd say you might have a little thing for them," She lifts a brow at him. His following words and hands on her hips make her blink, however. "I'm getting pudgy?" She glanced down at her middle. Well, she supposed she was pudging up a bit. Her middle was thickening again- which was good. She'd lost a lot of weight after the incident with the Barrier. You could no longer count her ribs, or stick your fingers between them, which was a good thing. "I guess I am. Huh. Weird. I've never been a pudgy person before." She had a small roll of pudge on her belly and along her hips now.

"Well I love pudgy, and you are especially adorable when you're pudgy, my plump little honeybee." He cooed as he gave her hips a wiggle.

Toki flushed a bright green. "Oh boy. Are you going to try and fatten me up, hm?" She wondered if this was another blaster beast thing. She figured a healthy female was probably on the plumper side- probably for nourishing young. Her beast rumbled in her head in agreement that yes, it was very
much good for a female to be plump so she could nurse her litter.

"As long as you don’t mind it. Fat pups are healthy pups." He purred as he moved to rub her stomach. "And a plump Mama means that she can feed her young without issue~" He purred, "plus more for me to hold onto when I take you." He was such a shameless fucker.

Her blush brightened, and she chuckled softly. “Oh boy. Ahah… Well, I’m not really feeding any young right now.” She points out, “But I suppose more padding would help me keep warm in the winter. Besides, all the flying I do will help me burn it off in the summer.”

He cooed happily and nuzzled her cheek, "You would be warmer, yes~ young perhaps might come later on in life, but warmth is a plus right now."

“Young later;” She replied lightly, hiding a nervous twitch of her teeth against his chest. She shifted against him, and gently flicked her wings inside of his shirt. “Warmth is definitely a plus now though. I didn’t think it would be so… cold out here on the plains.”

"It's far more open. The winds are strong out here, and it brings the bite of the cold with it, my dear, so you're fortunate and well protected where you are now, aren't you?"

“Very.” She laughs, and nips his collarbone, before turning around in his shirt so she could actually see the fire pit behind her. “I would like to go flying in the winter winds once I’m recovered.”

"I bet that will be fun indeed. Perhaps on a low-breeze day so you don’t have to strain anything to keep yourself steady, yes?" The doctor hummed.

“I wouldn’t mind flying on a high breeze day either. I’d like to see what it’s like, and know what I can do. It’s not like I can hit anything except the broad side of the barn flying around out here.” She chuckles. She’d already done that- and only Ariel had seen it.

"I imagine that would be quite the impact though, ouch." He rumbled. "But I’m sure at least one boy would want to go flying with you when you did."

“Oh probably. The boys both like to fly with me- if they can’t fly with me, then they can fly with Clover.” She quirks a smile up at him, and wiggles her shoulders against him. “Clover’s got stronger wings than I do.”

"Oh yes, I remember her." A nervous chuckle escaped him, "Rather large girl wasn't she?"

“IT absolutely bamboozles me that she terrifies you so much.” She laughs softly. “She’s about fifteen feet tall. She’s actually really nice.” She says. “Well… nice in a grouchy grandma sort of sense.”

"Yes exactly, very grouchy..." He rumbled quietly, "And it's not that she terrifies me! It's just that... I mean... imagining what that stinger of hers is capable of...”

That makes Toki laugh harder. “The first time I met Clover was the night my brother was murdered.” She says. “Clover and Sugar fought for me when I was too distraught to do it myself- and I know what their stingers can do. I watched them melt a man from the inside out with their venom.” She glances up at him with a cheeky smirk on her crocodile teeth. “I suppose you shouldn’t make her angry then, hm Tenne?”

"You wouldn't let her hurt me, would you Toki?" He whined quietly, pouting at her as he put on a kicked puppy look.

“I dunno,” She gives him a cheeky look, “I might just let her teach you a lesson if you offend her too
badly. You’re a tough monster- you can run fast.”

"Faster than she can fly? And dont you dare." He nipped her cheek. "I'd rather take a schooling from you than her."

"Maybe," she laughs as he nips her. "If you cant out run her, you're smaller. Hide from her." Big brave alpha that Tenne was, was apparently petrified of her much more controlled summons, rather than the one that acted like a puppy that had consumed too many treats and was running amok. "Oh boy. I'm a better fighter now than I used to be. I'd take Clover over a spar with me." She grins at him cheekily. Toki might not be as physically strong... But magically, she could decimate the monster population if she wanted to.

He rolled his eyes before he chuckled and nuzzled into her fluff. "Once things warm up, we should have a spar.”

"That depends. Strictly magic spar, or strictly physical spar?" Her mane ruffled up around her neck, and she hummed as his face got muffled in it. "Because I might have a small chance in a physical spar, but I could accidentally turn you into dust with a magic spar." He was not as tough as the monsters from her world. Not even close.

"Physical. I don’t think I have any magical capability." Tenne murmured into her fur. "Though I could go easy on you~" He then teased.

Toki laughed. “I have magical capability in the sense of someone tossing a bomb into a room and letting it explode. All power, not much refined control.” Not with the fact that her power level had literally doubled with Cruelty being added back into her body. “You do have magical capability though- just not enough.” She wiggles against him instead. “And please- you wouldn’t have to go easy on me. I think I’d have to go easy on you. I play dirty. Besides- you only have two arms. I’ve got four- that’s twice the fun.”

He snorted and nuzzled her, chuffing gently through his teeth. "Compared to you or the queen, I’ve scarcely any to count." He chuckled as he lifted his head a little. "Yes I suppose the extra arms could cause me a little struggle.”

“Though I will admit,” Toki lifts her secondary arms and wiggles them at him, “My secondary arms aren’t even close to the strength of my primary arms. But... They make great tickling arms.” She then demonstrated her skills in tickling by bending them back, tucking under his shirt again, and running them up and down his sides. She laughed softly. “I’m sure we’ll have fun.”

He squealed and made a very frantic wiggle behind her as his sides were assaulted, as his previous generosity of warmth now spelled his entrapment and at her mercy.

Toki laughed heartily as all the monsters turned to look at the royal Scientist making the most un-majestic squealing sound to ever hear. She ran her claws up and down his sides, and cackled. She might not be fully recovered, but she could still tease the trapped male and tickle him unmercifully. “See? I play dirty. No where to run, no where to hide~ there is no escaping the tickle fingers, Tenne.”

"TOKI LET ME GO!" He squealed as he continued to do his hilarious wiggle of despair. "I can’t get out of this!"

She laughed heavily, until she felt light headed from doing so. She wobbled on his feet, and drew her fingers back. “Alright, alright. I’ll tickle you later.” She teased, and closed her eyes.
“That’s a manly noise there, Tenne.” One of the guards across the fire teased.

He turned and bristled at the guard, hissing loudly, "You try getting trapped by your mate and getting tickled with no escape!" He hissed, his cheeks darkening as he spoke.

“Been there, done that, they didn’t have a shirt in my size,” The guard laughed heartily. “I don’t think I’ve ever heard you make such an adorable sound though.”

“Shhhh,” Toki reached a hand up and mushed it gently against his face. “You’re adorable, but you’re my adorable Tenne.”

He grumbled and nuzzled into her fluff, his own rising a little on his neck, which was now more of a sight as his fur had been growing much more lush since they came to the surface and he’d had time to heal from Asgore’s assault. "How dare you embarrass me like this, my love. I’m hurt." He rumbled grumpily.

"A little fluster won't kill you, Tenne." She smiles. "Lighten up. It reminds the guards that you, mister 'I'm a stoic scientist when I'm doing my work', are just as emotive as they are." Given how little he hung out with the other monsters, they often didn't get to see the sides of him that she did. She cuddled back into him. Toki gives a soft hum, and her beast releases relaxing pheromones while her fur fluffs up, tempting him in for cuddles instead of getting into a temper induced snit.

And damn did it work, he wrapped his arms around her and made a few more snuffles, before he sighed and nuzzled her, starting to rev into the soft texture of her mane, "You are really something, Toki... And I don’t think I could love it more~" He purred happily.

"There's not another creature like me out there." She smiled. There was a flash of a bittersweet scent that slid through her pheromones, but was gone before any of the guards who were too far away could notice. It was probably for the best that there was no one else. No one else could go bad...

He twitched lightly as he scented it, but didn't respond beyond tightening his grip and nuzzling her again, "And that just makes me consider just how lucky I am to have you, Toki." He purred.

"Yeah." She smiles quietly. "We're both lucky." Without him, she wouldn't be there, truly.

He smiled slowly. His head lifted from her mane, and he quirked a brow at the monsters across from him. "Let me know when it's my turn to turn the bull. I'm going to take Toki inside."

"See you then, Tenne! Don’t get into any trouble!" One of the guards responded, a teasing pitch to his tone that had Tenne rattling like an irked child as he started back inside.

Toki laughed as he waddled away with her on his feet. He was so easy to tease- something that didn’t change between universes. At least this Tenne had more of a sense of humor than her Tenebris did. Her Papa got very… grumpy after too much teasing.

She missed his grumping. It wasn’t the same as Tenne’s irked rattling.
The morning was cold and only growing colder. It didn't matter to him though. For Tenne, he spent his morning just as he had the night prior, with the only exception being when he had to get up and make breakfast for the boys. He spent it tangled up with his mate- perhaps mates would be the better term, given the fact two souls occupied the same body. Toki was taking the back burner, as she had the night prior to give Tenne and Sequoia time alone, which left him spending time with his other mate.

It was obvious to him now that he knew what to look for, as to who was in charge of the body at which time. Sequoia had lighter colored wings than Toki did, and Toki's wings refracted light in a different way. They also carried themselves differently. Toki walked with a sway to her hips- Sequoia wasn't quite as comfortable with their body yet, and had a slightly stiffer gait.

He could tell now when they were conversing too. Small patterns of light would swirl through their wings- it was truly a fascinating process.

Tenne shifted and scooted over on the couch, setting his mug of cocoa down. Eventually the duo had moved to the couch. They had to milk the cows later, when they got home from their trip to town, but that was later, and this was now. For now, Tenne could quietly rumble and enjoy the warmth that his mate put out, as he draped himself practically over her while they watched the boys wrestling on the floor.

Quinn was smaller than Kai, but like the good big brother that he was, the older boy was letting the younger boy dominate him in the long run.

It was cute to watch the boys wrestle, they were vocalizing much like puppies would, growling as they squared up to each other, though with Kai's sportsman ship, often their little 'clashes' would end up with him pinned by his younger brother.

Tenne's fur had continued to grow, especially with this colder weather, and after long enough, he began to have a mane to match Toki's, and at this time, while his face was nestled in her green fur, she rested her head near his, and could smell the scent coming from it, it was nice, but unlike Tenne and his habit to often praise how wonderful she smelled, Sequoia savored in secret, idly stroking the deep black fur as she watched the pups wrestle.

Tenne rumbled softly as she stroked her fingers through his mane, and half lidded his eyes at her. "You know," he says lightly as he watches the pups play, "it's mighty cold outside. Are you absolutely sure we have to go to town today? We could just stay here. Just like this." He wiggled up
against her backside, his chest rumbling with a warm purr as he relaxed against her warmth. Tenne knew they had to go to town. That didn't mean he wouldn't try and get Sequoia to cuddle with him longer.

"Toki made it sound important that we had to go..." she sighed quietly, before she chuckled and reached up, patting his cheek lightly, "I can warm your clothes for you, but I think she wanted this done by today"

He sighed softly and stretched against her. His claws flexed, and he snuggled closer as she patted his cheek. The eye with the scar that met his mouth closed, and he peeked at her through the other one. "Toki sure is a house wife, isn't she?" He laughs softly. "Only minus the wife part." They never did get around to getting married before everything had gotten more complex by paperwork. Though, he mused to himself, it was probably for the best given the event with the soul split attempt that followed. "Warming my clothes would be fine, my dear. It would give us more time to spend together." He knows Sequoia isn't as good at milking cows as Toki is, so she would need to return for that.

"Calling her a house mate sounds more like you're just splitting the rent together" Sequoia joked, completely ignoring the jab at her psyche from the dormant Toki.

Though it also made her a little mischievous as she grinned and looked up at him, "I have one method." She purred. "Remember how you warmed Toki up at the spit fire?" she asked with a coo.

Almost immediately Tenne recoiled and gave her a look. "You're not going to ambush me like she did, are you?" He asked quickly.

That gave Sequoia a good reason to laugh. 'Oh look at that, Toki, You traumatized the poor puppy!' She laughed mentally.

Toki couldn't help snorting back. 'I call it mental payback for the times his alternate self traumatized me. I got my hand bit off, swallowed, and then pulled out of an abdominal cavity covered in goop. It was gross. A little tickle fest is nothing on that.'

Tenne gave her an even more suspicious look when all She did was laugh. "Ohhh, Sequoia..." He huffs.

"No, no, Tenne. No foul play, just warmth~" She held her hands up with a sweet smile, "I can keep my hands to myself beyond what is necessary to warm you up~" She winked at him sweetly, "Promise~"

The boys heard the new name and both ceased their wrestling to sit up and look up at the duo, tilting their head before Quinn chirped. "Ma...ma?" He asked.

He gave her an initially suspicious look, before glancing down to the boys when Quinn called out to Sequoia. "What's wrong, boys?" He asked, noticing they had stopped their play.

"Mama?" Kai tilted his head curiously. "Why did daddy call you 'Sequoia'? Isn't your name Toki?"

Sequoia realized, then she looked at Tenne, not entirely sure what to say.

Tenne shared a look with her, but he seemed also at a loss as to what to say. "Well... Have you ever heard of two souls sharing one body?" He asks his son gently.

Kai blinks and shakes his head. "No? It's not possible. Right?"
"It is." Tenne says gently. "Toki is the dominant soul- I didn’t find out until a while ago myself that Sequoia is also there. She’s been coming out more often- but it takes more effort for her to come out than it does for Toki to be the one in control. Sequoia spends a lot of time inside."

"So… you’re saying we’ve got two Mama’s for the price of one?” Kai says curiously.

"Two Mama?” Quinn blinks, seeming excited at the idea. One Mama was fantastic- two Mama’s must be even better!

They were taking it really well, and Sequoia smiled happily because of it. "Two Mamas~ and both think you're so sweet and absolutely lovable."

The boys grinned cheerfully at her. It was Kai though that asked the rougher question. “Have you always been like this?”

Sequoia hesitated, and then she smiled slowly. "Well, yes, but I haven't been strong enough to come out much before tonight.”

“Oh.” Kai blinked. “Have we seen you before and never known?” He asked curiously, and lightly gave his little brother an instigating noogie.

Quinn squealed before he gnawed on his brother's arm harmlessly.

"Well... I suppose you could say I made breakfast for you once on one of my especially better days” Kai laughed and tickled his side like the hellion he was. "Oh really? Were we still underground? 'Cause I only remember one morning where breakfast was a little weird. Was it because you were there? I thought maybe Mama had slept funny and ended up with stiff arms, but maybe not.

"You can tell I carry myself differently, yes." She nodded gently to confirm his belief. "That was me then."

"Ohh… Well yeah, you move differently than Mama T does." He tilts his head, and then flops on his brother, tickling him where he can squeal all he wants but can't escape. On the offensive Kai was going. "Mama T has had more time with four arms though I guess. All of her life is a long time.”

Sequoia laughed gently, "Very true, yes." she agreed, before chuckling, "I think your brother is gonna start crying, he's laughing quite hard under your merciless hands, Kai"

Kai grinned and ceased, lying across his brother like a limp rug. "Which means I win this round until he gets out and we go again. But yeah. So you've been in Mama T all her life? Weren't you bored?"

"Well... Not the way you might think... but I guess you could say I knew her since the moment she was born." Sequoia gave a lopsided smile.

‘Technically, we officially met when I was like… four? I think. You were a young man then-learning your father’s trade I think. You were going to take over our families holdings for us, and your dad thought you should learn who we were. I thought you were a weirdo when I was little.’ Toki chimed in, having tuned in long enough to listen to some of the conversation. ‘You’re the only one who officially remembers meeting me from before I was Toki and you were Simmons. I mean, I remember through your memories, but secondhand memories don’t really count.’

“Really?” Kai tilted his head curiously. “So how did that work? Were you like… another pup trapped in her head when she was a pup? Or were you an adult in her head when she was a pup? It sounds so neat, but I want to know more!”
Sequoia laughed at that gently. "Well... I wasn't always in her head... I suppose you could say it's a more recent event..." she explained, "But I knew Toki's parents, and I was a helper to them."

"Really?" He tilts his head. "What were my grandparents like? Where they nice?" He wiggles slightly, and grunts as Quinn squirms under him, excited at the prospect of grandparents.

At that question, Sequoia reached and gently scooped them up, cradling them in her lap where the warmth of Tenne and herself could spread to them.

"Your grandparents are the most wonderful people I've ever met. Their names are Yumei and Jiro. You have seven uncles, and one of them has flamboyant pink hair!"

Quinn's eye sockets got comically large, and his little mouth opened happily. He wiggled his fingers at her, and sunk his fingers into her mane, chirping softly. "Ink?" He questions curiously.

Kai blinks. "We have seven uncles... Mama T said we had eight. What happened to our eighth uncle? Did he die when he was a pup? I bet Grand... ma?" He wasn't sure. "Yumei," The name felt weird on his tongue, "and grandpa Jiro were very sad."

Tenne sat curiously, eager to learn more about his mate's family while her other half was interested in speaking about it. Toki was so close-lipped about things sometimes...

"Yes, Yumei was your grandmother..." She chuckled quietly, but the mention of Han made her stop. Shit... How did she explain that?

Sequoia took a slow breath. Now that her morals have straightened out, she felt the guilt that came with Han's death quite acutely. Adding it to Toki's mourning... She felt it quite deeply. 'I'm... I'm really sorry about that...'

"Well... There was an accident..." She murmured, "And your Uncle... Well... he didn't die as a child... he had a life... and it was left behind when he died..."

"O... Oh..." Kai murmured softly, frowning faintly.

Toki stirred within Sequoia, and nudged her mentally. 'My brother's death is not something I can forgive.' She says firmly. 'But, you're not Cruelty anymore. You're Sequoia. This is a new start for you- and a new start for me. So while I will never forgive Cruelty, I do forgive Sequoia for the things she did when she was not herself.' She says cryptically, before sliding away again to give her privacy.

Kai glanced up at Sequoia again and ground his teeth slightly. "What was he like? What was his name? I wanna know about the uncle I didn't get to meet. Would he have liked Quinn and I, even if we're not Mama's pups by blood?"

"His name was Han, and he would have absolutely adored you both, if not perhaps feel a little nervous around your father." She chuckled lightly. "Then again, who wouldn't be? Besides me and Toki of course." She joked next, providing her time to ask Toki a question. 'Toki... do you want to tell them about your brother?'

'I... I think I would like that. Can we switch? I know this was your day. But my brothers... No one knew them better than I did.' Toki answered softly.

Kai blinked and smiled. "Daddy is scary, but in a good way." He says proudly, grinning widely. "He scares all the silly humans. I don’t think he’d scare our uncle though."
"This is something they should hear from the one who spent her life loving the man they ask of... I want you to do this. It's not my place.'

And with that, Sequoia leaned slightly against Tenne and closed her eyes, wings drooping as she opened her mind to allow Toki to take control once more.

Tenne braced her gently, and stroked his hands up and down her arms. “Sequoia?” He murmurs softly, concerned. Had she grown tired so soon?

Toki surged into place with ease, arms twitching as her wings flooded a different color. “Hey… It’s Toki now.” She nudges him slightly, and stretches, as if she’s been asleep for a long time. “Mmm… So, I heard you had some questions about… your Uncle Han?”

"Yeah.” Kai now spoke quietly, knowing how it was a sensitive topic for his mother. "I wanna know more about him... What was he like?” the pup asked

"Unk...” Quinn agreed, as he got comfortable in the lap of his mother.

“Han was one of my younger brothers. I was the eldest of nine children, you see- my mother had one girl, and eight boys.” She smiles slightly. “I was four years older than my oldest little brother. Han was one of the older of the brood… He… He was part of the…” How did she put this... “He was part of my people’s royal guard. He had to do things that he wasn’t proud of doing, and it gave him bad dreams and scared him afterwards. But,” Toki heaved a soft breath, and tucked the boys closer to her as she cuddled into Tenne, “Han was a gentle soul, for all that he was built like something designed to rip holes through hardened steel. He was sweet- after he retired, do you know what he became? A music teacher. He couldn’t sing, not like me- but he could play any instrument there was. I…” She swallowed. “My first mate was gifted with my brother’s favorite violin once he died. I can’t play instruments, you see- and Han would never have wanted one of his violins to sit and go to waste.”

Toki sighed. “I’m getting ahead of myself. My brother lived with me on and off- he didn’t like the loud sounds of the city, but music… it soothed his soul. He was an amazing person, truly. He lived with me when I was pregnant- And he died in my arms just after I was… well, proposed to, officially. He found happiness with a fox monster named Todd, and his two children, Rosie and Felix. But it wasn’t to last. Todd brought him a lot of joy- Han struggled to find meaning in his life outside of music after the things he had to do when he was a part of the… ‘royal guard’. Pretty much adopting children and their father into his life gave him purpose.” Toki gave a reminiscent smile. “I don’t think I had ever seen him so happy in his life, as I did when I saw him with his new family.”

Like sister like brother- he’d adopted a dad and his two kids, and she had pretty much done the same.

Kai smiled sadly as he made the connection and he slowly snuggled up to her and Quinn followed rather quickly.

Tenne nuzzled Toki and gave her a loving squeeze. "Sounds like a spitting image of you, Toki... The love that powered you both must run within the Family's very DNA...”

“It’s the same love my mother and stepfather gave me and him both.” She smiled slightly, and simply cuddled all three of them as best she could. “I was the tallest of my siblings though. My family was very small. I got my size from my birth father, who was a very large man. Han was built large and muscled- proportionally, more muscled than Tenne here.” She tapped his thigh with her hand. “But he was very short. But size didn’t matter- what he lacked in height, he made up for in the size of his heart. He’d have loved you with everything in his being- it wouldn’t have mattered if you were born of my flesh and blood or not. He’d have adored you- just like he would have adored the niece and
nephew he never got to meet.”

Kai smiled and his tail wagged slightly behind him. "Good, I'm glad he would have liked us, because if he was like you, I bet we would have loved him as much as we love you."

Quinn nodded fast at that, a bright look on his face.

Toki smiled, and kissed both boys' foreheads. “I'm glad.” She cuddled them both closer to him and sighed back against Tenne. “My other brothers would love you too. Kon… Maybe not let you around Kon yet. I wouldn’t want you too corrupted. He’s very… dirty minded.” She snorts.

"Kon?" Kai chirped.

"Something makes me want to guess he's the one with the pink hair." Tenne snorted quietly into Toki's mane.

“He is,” Toki laughs softly. “It was... Well, an awkward time when I first got married. You see, before that... he had initially bedded the monster who would become my future father in law- so there was a lot of awkwardness between the two of them.” She smiled and twitched her wings slightly. “Kon has no filter. He’s... sort of like Kai, but worse. Much worse.”

You could hear Tenne making an 'oohhh' noise as he chuckled into her fluff.

"Worse than me?" Kai took that as a challenge as he grinned. "Never."

“Very much worse.” Toki laughed softly. She settled some with a soft hum. “I had a niece, and two nephews. I... Well, I got my ribs blown apart to save my nephew when the start of the conflict happen- if he’d have taken the hit, Dominic wouldn’t be here today. Well... Wherever he is now.” She takes a breath and sighs. “Luna... My sweet little Luna was the light of my life- she adored everyone, you see. She was... well, of rare coloration among my kind. She was unique.” Her sweet little albino niece... She missed her so much. “Mirou was my youngest nephew. He was really shy, and very quiet- he was a lot like Quinn, in fact. Just not so reluctant to use words,” one of her hands lifted to boop Quinn’s nasal ridge. “Mirou’s father was Kohaku- and Kohaku was the builder in the family. He actually helped me build my first set of apiaries.”

"Koha." Quinn repeated, making a scrunched up face when his nasal ridge was booped.

At the mention of what happened to her ribcage Tenne gave a whine and reached up to run his hand over her ribcage, his hand going under her fur to check her sternum first off.

Toki had first gone to coo at the cute face that Quinn had made, but Tenne's fingers sliding up her shirt to run over her ribs and sternum made her break into a snort of laughter. She squirmed some, having not expected the ticklish feeling against her ribs. "O-Oh my. Tenne dear, I had a healer. He k-knit them back together and I healed fine, I promise. No marks left. I'm just as flawless under my skin as Quinn and Kai's bones are."

He whined again, looking up at her from her mane as he nuzzled her neck. "Who would do such a thing to such a beautiful creature..."

“Someone who was very hurt and very corrupt inside, and it made him do a lot of bad things, and get a lot of other people to do bad things for him.” Toki says cryptically. “I'm alright now. Despite being a civilian, I've been caught in the crossfire and gotten hurt plenty of times. That's why I've said I've had worse after the barrier incident. All in all... I've had worse.” She sighs. “But I survived. I'm tough, you know. Lots of HP to tank things.”
He whined again and gave a slump of surrender as he hid his face again. "Yes, I know..."

Toki sighs and nudges him gently with her wing joint. “Tenne,” She says softly, “No need to sulk over things you couldn’t prevent.” With that said, she turns her gaze to the boys. “Lets see... I should probably list all of my brothers in order... Ryushi was the oldest of the boys. Han was second oldest, followed by Roshi, Utaka, Kohaku, Konpaku- which was Kon’s full name, though he hated it- and Souta and Shiro.” Toki pauses, and then smiles slightly. “My brother in law... He had a daughter with a fire Elemental. Solstice wasn’t much younger than my kids- only a few months, actually. She was... the sweetest little thing you’d have ever seen. Had little horns,” She pantomimed them on the top of her head, “all wreathed in blue flames, and I got to help deliver her. That's why I did well helping Sapphire with Fuku, you see. I helped my brother in law with Solstice.” Toki chuckled. “Experience helps.”

"What was your brother? Was he a hornet too?" Kai asked.

“Which brother?” Toki queries gently to Kai. “Do you mean my blood brothers or my brother in law? My brother in law was a skeleton monster, just like my mate and husband was.” Still is, her mind whispered to her softly. Toki would never stop loving Papyrus. But Toki had to adapt... If she didn’t, the grief would swallow her whole and she... she would never recover.

"Were your babies Skeletons with big hornet butts?" Kai then asked, ever curious.

Tenne couldn't stop the snort of laughter that he quickly covered up in Toki's fluff. "Oh good heavens, Kai..."

Toki echoed his snort. “No, no, not at all.” She laughed. “My son had my teeth- and my daughter had my horns, but other than that, they came out entirely skeleton and completely healthy despite all of the crap that I went through when I was pregnant. They were perfect though, and I loved them with all of my soul.”

"Horns? Like yours I'm guessing." Kai hummed.

“Not quite.” Toki rubbed his skull gently. “More straight back, like dragon horns. More like the swept back horns on my hell hornets.” She explained.

"Soooo..." The chatty pup then grinned, "They looked like Papa's!"

“Yes, I suppose so.” Toki chuckled softly, and pinched his cheek. She gave it a playful tug, wiggling his skull gently. “My little girl summoned a bearded vulture blaster beast hatchling, while my son summoned some type of sub species of grub, like my summons. You know... Quinn and Skylar are a lot alike. They were both Mama’s boys.”

He whined loudly and puffed sharply, pulling his cheek as he pouted up at her.

"Skylar... was that the name of your son?" Tenne asked gently, not sure if it had been her son or daughter with that name. "It's a lovely name..."

“Skylar was my son, and first born.” She nodded, and shifted to tickling Kai’s cheek. “Honey was my second born, and my daughter. She was a lot like her father. Very out going, very energetic, always getting into mischief, and not afraid to try new things. Skylar was very timid in comparison.” Her soul throbbed, longing for her children, and she tucked the boys closer to her chest in response to the sensation.

And both boys were quick to respond to her moment of distress, nuzzling into her fluff while Quinn began to chatter and whine.
Toki took a breath, and exhaled softly. "It's okay, boys. I'm okay. Sometimes I just get sad feelings. The sad feelings last a long time sometimes, but they always go away. In okay now. Thank you for helping." She kissed their heads softly. "Is there any more questions you had?"

"No... no more questions." Kai murmured quietly.

"Nm..." Was a half of a reply from Quinn.

"I do have a question though..." Tenne then spoke up, shifting his form as to carefully pull Toki into his lap comfortably as Toki had done for the pups.

Toki grunts as she was pulled more solidly into his lap than she was before, taking with her both of the boys who were still cuddled in her lap. "Well, ask away then Tenne. I'll do my best to answer."

"Your past mate..." He started slowly, as if worried to tread this water.

"Yeah...?" She glanced back at him thoughtfully. "What's your question about him?" She didn't talk about him much because men didn't tend to like their women talking about other men. Particularly ones they had relations with. The last thing she wanted to do was cause drama between Tenne and her just because she still would and likely always would love Papyrus too. If he had questions though, Toki would answer them.

"What was he like? Is there something he did that you enjoyed?" He asked quietly.

"He was... A lot younger than me. He wasn't expecting or ready to be a father yet- in fact, when we learned I was pregnant, he fainted. He fainted again when we learned it was twins. Papyrus- that was his name- didn't back out though. He stayed with me. He actually proposed to me just before Han died. He was a good man. Very brave. Worked as a royal guard, so he was gone working often, but I would see him every night and on the days he had no work. We would spend time cooking together, reading, watching movies, or playing puzzle games. He was...better at those than I was. He was a good father, an attentive mate, and I grew to love him a lot." Toki sighed softly and closed her eyes. Her soul throbbed, longing for her first mate, though her beast rumbled in her mind and informed her that their mate was behind her now.

"Something that I enjoyed..." She murmured to distract herself from that train of thought. "Yes, yes there was. He would come with me out to my Apiary, and tend the bees with me. The bees liked him- though they couldn't sting him anyways because he was a skeleton. But it was special. I'd never had someone join me like that before. Everyone always thought my passion for my Apiary was strange."

"He sounds wonderful. I'm glad you had someone like that to take care of you... Would you like an Apiary here? I can ask around and we could see about making one up for you..." Tenne offered sweetly, a small smile on his face as he did so.

"He was. You and he would have got along well, I think." She wears a secret smile that means there's something only she knows, and that she'll never tell. It fades to shock for a moment, and her gaze slides rapidly to him. "I..." It would cement her place in this world further, and her beast purred at the thought. Toki swallowed. "I would love one... An Apiary is a lot of work though. So maybe just... A couple hives, since I do have to take care of the boys too. Though... Wouldn't it be a waste of our resources since I can just produce my own honey from my magic?"

"Not at all... it would encourage genetic diversity in our new home's flora... And we would be able to sell more to humans. There's nothing we could do that wouldn't be akin to what humans do to harvest their own... Your honey is special, and it's a grueling task to empty your venom and cool it,
and making sure it's safe. We will save that for luxury, but our kind need more ties to their world so they will accept us easier." He explained.

"'Genetic diversity' makes it sound like I'm going to mate with the bees. Ew no." She jokes lightly as she watches his responses, even if he had meant the flowers. "I would really like to have an Apiary again. Maybe come the spring we can work on getting one? They need to be set up so we can move them, or at least reinforce them. The bees won't survive this kind of cold on their own." Toki sighs softly. "Without all of the pent up magic inside of me, that literal bomb of magic that is, I no longer make seemingly infinite honey. It is a task to make my honey though, but it's worth it... Once we can get some honey going, perhaps I can hit up some of the markets in the cities?"

He nodded in agreement, "Now you're getting it. That's a wonderful idea, Toki"

"I think I heard wind of a thing called a Saturday market up in Portland? Once I can get some honey flowing, maybe I can sell it there. I think they're interested in selling monster goods." Toki hums thoughtfully. "It would let the humans interact and see us better. We're secluded out here."

He nodded in agreement, "That's an idea. Sell it every once in a while so you have enough for a day's sale."

"I'll sell my honey too, so that we can see what humans think of magic based honey.” She taps her fingers against her sides and the boys backs with a soft sigh. “If I have enough hives, one harvest will be enough for one day of sale at the market. If I want to do other sales, it’ll have to be strictly my honey though, or split up sales. Hives only make honey so fast, and that’ll take months to harvest. I used to harvest mine every month or two, based upon how my production was going.” But... then and again, she had an uncanny knack with the bees. Toki swallowed and sighed gently. “We would need other things to sell during the times when honey isn’t available. I can’t imagine getting places in the market is easy… Maybe we can talk with the Vestimoves and see about them selling some of their wares? Maybe some of Grillby’s ale… We’re going to need permits and all other stuff.” She grimaces. “It's going to be a lot of work, but we can do it."

"I know we can do it... because we have our guardian light to show us the way." Tenne was a complete and utter sap. His words were followed by his nuzzling her happily, a smile on his face as he began to purr loudly. "Don’t you think so~?"

Toki chuckles as his purr vibrates through her back, tickling over her spine and wing joints. Her skin tingles pleasantly with the sensation of it, and her body hums with a low, subsonic buzz in reply. “Guardian light?” She queries lightly, not sure what he meant by that. She’d been called the Guardian Angel in her world… She hoped this wasn’t a name for this world.

"You were the one to bring our light, without you we could not step outside and feel the sun on our faces, or the wind in our fur." He told her.

Yep, it was another moniker. Toki sighed softly, and fluffed her mane up. "It's ironic." She tells him softly. "In my world, I was the Guardian Angel, because my kindness was unparalleled and I helped as many monsters as I could without asking for anything in return." She chuckles softly. "I'm neither an angel or a light. I'm just... Me."

"Then it looks like what you think is just 'you' is a lot more special than is let on. I speak highly probably because I’m your mate, but if you asked anyone they would agree with what I had to say." He spoke through her fluff as it ruffled up and partially swallowed his face. His mate had a lot of hair, and he loved it so. "If you have two names like this, from two entirely different crowds, than it's not just something so simple. It's complex, and it's beautiful."
"I think, my dear, your opinion is biased." She rolled her eyes heavily. "The crowds were not so different as you might think. But... I suppose you might be somewhat right." It made her a bit happy, though, that she had made so many monsters happy even with her soul not being purely kindness any more. "Still, try not to spread it around too much. I still get awed looks from monsters who never used to spare me a second glance, and it's not something I'm used to. I liked being able to skate by without being seen, you know. Now all the monsters notice when I'm in town, and they stare, Tenne. Its... Mind boggling." They stared more down here, now that they were settled into their homes and not tents. Or perhaps Toki just noticed the stares more. All the same, she noticed when she headed into the town proper that everyone stared. It was... Awkward.

"... I may be a little biased." He agreed quietly as he listened to her words, "They will notice you, Toki, you're as large as I am. Your wings are longer than Asgore is tall, and you unloaded a massive amount of power that completely destroyed the barrier that may well have kept us trapped underground for the rest of our lives... You're a hero and a lot of people know this, my dear."

"I'm two feet shorter than you, you dork. That's why I make you grab all the stuff from the top shelf." She rolls her eyes in good humor, and sighs as she listens to him. "I never wanted to be a hero. I just wanted to help people. But Asgore wouldn't take the credit for me breaking the barrier, so I guess a hero I shall be." She only wanted to be a simple woman- a writer, a beekeeper, a wife, a mother... Not a hero. But to these monsters, she was one.

He gave another nuzzle and purred quietly before he spoke up once more. "Tell you what... I'll spread the word that perhaps you wish for the energy of your praise to ebb, so people remember what your did, but praise you in silence." He offered.

“That would work.” She smiled quietly, and glanced down at the boys. Kai had dozed off on her chest- trapping Quinn under his weight, though the boy also seemed to be napping, cuddled to her ample bosom. “I’m a humble person by nature, you know.” She hums lightly.

"Yes, yes, you're right." He rumbled as he leaned up and kissed her cheek. "I love you~"

“I love you too.” She chuckled softly. Toki shifted, and hummed. “Now, I think I’ve interrupted your date long enough. I think you and Sequoia have some shopping to do, if she’s feeling up to it?” She gave her mental companion a nudge, to get her reaction to her words.

Sequoia did stir at the mental nudge and gave a soft hum in reply. ‘You made it sound like a leisure trip.’ She teased.

Tenne smiled and sat up, stretching. "A small trip to the market wouldn't hurt."

"A small trip? Tenne, dear, we're out of things. That's why I made you both a list." She lifts her brows at him as he sits up, which partially forces her upright too. She just goes up all the way, and cradles both boys easily as she moves out of his lap. "Be a dear, will you? Go get the slings for the boys and their snow clothes. Its too cold for them to go without them."

'Well, it's leisure in the sense you get to spend time with the doctor you so lust after.' Toki teases her counterpart. 'But house chores need to be done, and either you're doing them, or I am. If you need me at any time on the trip, just switch places.' Social situations could make Sequoia uncomfortable sometimes, because Sequoia Did not act like Toki did, and could only fake it for so long.

"Yes, dear.” Tenne chirped after her, moving to get up and go get what she asked.

'Appreciate that, Toki. I'll go ahead and take first shift with helping that bumbling goof get out the door.' Sequoia chuckled, before giving a mental nudge for the control of their body.
"I'll see you later, dear." She called out to Tenne, before slipping out of her own skin and into the inner recesses of her being.
Chapter 110

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This is the one that starts us down a path. What path this is… I think you’ll like, my friends. I know I’m liking writing it.

Sequoia took control once more, maintaining her grip on the boys as she flexed and made sure everything had feeling where it should. She smiled at the sleeping kids on her chest, and waited for the doctor to return.

Tenne came back with his satchel on his torso, a smile on his face as he handed over the boys’ winter gear. "They still asleep?" He asked quietly, before rumbling happily. "*Little darlings~*" He purred.

“They are.” Sequoia nods gently. She adjusts the boys, and glances at him. She stands, and carefully gets the boys into their winter gear once Tenne hands it over. They don’t stir, lolling gently in her grasp and snoring contently. Once Kai is fully dressed, she slips him into Tenne’s satchel, and gets him tucked in. “Did you grab mine too? Quinn rests better in my fluff, and I don’t mind toting him around today.”

"Of course I did." He replied, holding hers up. It was newly made by their local friendly seamstress, and had a perfect strap to go between and around the underside of her wings rather than having to be pulled on like Tenne's was.

Tenne pulled his coat on over Kai and adjusted it comfortably over his form, before helping Sequoia get Quinn comfortable too. "These pups are so lucky." he chortled.

Sequoia lifted a brow and tilted her head as soon as Quinn snuggled to her breast- or rather Toki's breast- and took a fist full of her mane. Pups slept often, she remembered that from when she’d watched monster kids grow up before the war. They played hard and slept often and grew like weeds. "How so?" She shrugged on the best coat she had, since Toki still hadn't let Tenne shell out for an expensive magnetic one for her wings, and pulled on her shoes. Her secondary arms cradled Quinn in his sling while her primary arms laced her shoes. "Guh. Toki really needs to let you just get her that damn jacket. She doesn't admit it, but it’s colder than a witches tit on our back, and our wings feel so stiff in the cold.”

"They only started with a silly, inexperienced father... then I had the most beautiful creature become my mate.... As for that coat topic, with you in control of your shared body, I was starting to think that perhaps you could assist me with such a task as getting her the coat. She can complain all she likes... But if you will, I still want that coat for your mind-mate." The doctor hums.

"We might be beautiful, but we're also a walking drama magnet." Sequoia rolled her eyes. "It's the fate of us boss hearts. We're always surrounded in drama." She hummed. She slid her arm through his, and then padded for the door. Outside was bitterly chilly, the snow deep enough to bury most of their legs. She huddled into him and flared her magic to try and create a buffer, though Sequoia was not as good at it as Toki was. She lacked experience. "We could probably get it today. She's not paying attention. Better to ask forgiveness than permission, anyways." The shorter female hornet shrugged. "I would not mind a warmer coat. Toki wont mind either once she gets over her initial grumpiness."
He chuckled at that, before he shuddered, "Next thing to save up for, or hell, build myself, a proper motor vehicle with heating... I cannot stand the cold without my mane at it's fullest..." He hissed quietly, pulling his coat a little tighter over himself and Kai. "Sequoia, perhaps I'd think about also looking into a heater while we're out..."

"Unfortunately, you'll have to wait for a vehicle until you can get your license, which also goes hand in hand with full rights." She hums. "We couldn't even drive the moving trucks here. Humans did it for us." His shivering prompted her to pump her magic directly into his skin. Toki slid into awareness long enough to help direct it, so she warmed him instead of fried him and the boys. "A heater? We've got a wood stove. It puts out lots of heat along with Toki's hornets. All she has to do is rest a bit and she renews her magic for those." Sequoia hums. "You know... It's nice without all of that magic inside of us. It was so much that our core could never get warm. Now we sort of can get warm. It's really nice."

"I'm supposed to be a genius... yet I haven't got a way to harness your heat in a way that I don't need to cling to you on all hours of the cold-biting day. I hate to ask that of you so often... it would feel like I'm a whining, needy child." He grumbled, giving a disgruntled look as he started for the local markets.

"I don't have access to the sort of human magic that I used to practice when I taught classes of young mages. However, I distinctly remember that there is a way to imbibe fabric and material with fire magic, to provide heat during the cold months, if it's done properly." Sequoia hummed. Toki also had memories of getting a couple deliveries of monster versions of blankets like that from someone called Muffet, during the monsters first winter on the surface. "Toki and I can possibly work on enchanting your coat. She's better with her magic, but I have the theoretical knowledge. So maybe she and I can get something worked out for you and the boys." She shifted faintly as they walked towards the town proper. "Nmn... Maybe even for some of the towns’ folk if we can manage it for you. It would be easier than letting you carry a bee all the time."

"If you managed it and gave me a warmth-emanating winter coat, I would be unfathomably thankful." He purred happily at the idea, before he sighed out in relief as the snow began to thin under their feet, a result from the all the townsfolk who walked the same road again and again.

"Do you have Toki's grocery list?" He asked a moment later.

"We'll work on it. We might want to get some fabric scraps from the Vestimoves, in case it goes wrong. I remember some bad attempts burning. Might as well do our attempts on cloth and not your coat." She was thankful that the snow thinned. Her legs had been chilling steadily. "And yes I do. It's in my pocket. We might as well stop at the Vestimoves first though before we weight ourselves down with groceries."

"Get you that little something before it's realized." He chortled. "Keep you warm while we walk... Potentially some shoes as well."

"Definitely only going for fabric." She winks, her thoughts guarded by layers and layers of raunchy sex bombs which would turn Toki away rapidly. "Only fabric. What shape the fabric comes in, I won't ever know." She paused, and then fidgeted. "Though... I don't... Know if I can pull off the Toki act for Mrs. Vestimoves and her husband." A thread of anxiety pulsed through her scent and wafted up to him.

"Hey... Hey..." He tutted gently, slowing her down and turning to face her. "Honey... Do you know the language Toki was speaking when she spoke to Mrs. Vestimoves?" He asked gently.

"Well, yes. Along with seven or eight bits and pieces of other ones. I'm fluent in Japanese. I spent a
great many years speaking it." She blinked, flushing faintly as he called her honey. "But Toki and I
don’t have the same mannerisms."

"Indeed, there is that." He hummed quietly as he considered their options. He then sighed and kissed her forehead. "I need you to do your best, Sequoia..." He murmured. "I want to do this for both of you... call my wording awful, but I know Toki will spoil it if she gets the chance to do so. She's too kindhearted, too humble..." He huffed quietly.

"Toki will spoil it if she gets the chance. She doesn't think she deserves things unless she can afford most of it herself. It's... I dunno. It's just Toki. She worries about money in the most ridiculous way." She agreed quietly. She hesitated, and her fingers trembled against his arm. "I'll do my best. Just... I know most of what Toki knows, but if she senses something off, we're going to need to come up with a fib or something to explain my odd behavior."

He opened his mouth, and then closed it, his cheeks darkening a deep ashy color as his thoughts betrayed him. "I ah... I have no ideas..." From his tone of voice, that was obviously a lie.

"I... Okay." Sequoia blinked slowly. "Well... We'll come up with something on the fly then. Come on, Tenne. Let's get in before your tail freezes off."

He nodded in agreement, walking with her to the Vestimoves first.

Sequoia opened the door to the Vestimoves, and brought them inside easily. The bell above the door chimed, announcing them to the world, and she put on Toki’s usual smile for the woman behind the counter.

Hitsu smiled at them, the fluffy sheep sheered of her usual plush wool for once. She was weaving her wool into a thin, thin thread, which her magic was then threading onto a loom and compressing into a fabric. "Konnbaaaaaantwa!" She greets cheerfully. "Ah! My darling Toki, and her sweet mate Tenne. What can I do for you and your children today?"

Tenne stomped the snow off his feet and shivered, before he smiled warmly at the seamstress. "Hello my darling Hitsu." He greeted with a smile. "I've come with hopes that you can perform your magic once again and give my dear mate a coat that she can put on that will manage around her wings." He requested.

"Aaaaahh," The sheep looked at Toki contemplatively, before bouncing away from her task. Her magic kept working, spinning her wool into a fine thread, while she flounced off for designs and fabrics. "I think we talked about designs once or twice when you were in getting seams mended, Tenne dear." She hummed. Her fingers thumbed through a stack of papers, and she drew out several sheets of paper. "I think you wanted to work some magnets into the design for her wings?"

Sequoia blinked and looked blankly at the sheets that Hitsu offered out. "Uh... I’m not sure. Maybe ask Tenne? He has a better idea of what would work with my wings and what wouldn’t. As it is, the space between my wings gets awfully cold." And it kind of sucked, she added quietly.

Hitsu nodded and offered the papers to Tenne to look over. She eyed Sequoia out of the corner of her eyes, and made a low bleating noise in the back of her throat. "Tenne dear? Which do you think would work best with your darling mate's wings?"

"Well, let's have a peek." He came over to the papers and found the one they had agreed on amongst the rest. "This one. The magnets are small and many along the seam, which allows a secure connection as well as play room for adjustments." He explained.
"That would work. It would also leave her room for her wings to move, so she could fly without having to take her coat off." Hitsu agreed. "The magnets should also just simply fall together, eliminating the need for help in putting her coat on."

"That would be nice." Sequoia smiled faintly. "Being able to do things on my own is nice. Having to get help with my coat every time would be pesky."

"I agree." He rumbled. "We had some errands to do today and hoped you had the time to make such a jacket while we were out."

Toki stirred curiously in the back of Sequoia's head, and she did her best to deploy her sex bombs and keep her tucked away. It worked well, but it prompted her to lift one of her primary hands up and rub the space between her eyes so she could ease the odd sensation it brought.

Hitsu caught the motion and tilted her head. "Of course, Tenne dear. I don't mind doing that at all. It's not a problem at all. What color do you want, Toki?"

Shit, Shit... "Uh..." What would Toki want... Something dark and earthy toned most likely. Sequoia was fond of reds and other bright hues, but Toki didn't like to stand out. Plus it would look gross with the color of her mane, or make her look like a bad Christmas ornament. "Maybe something in black or dark brown?" She suggests awkwardly, not all that sure on the usual color schemes that Toki went with.

"I can do black. I just ran out of brown yesterday, and need to get more bolts made up." Hitsu nods. She hums softly. "Are you okay? You seem a little... Off today, Toki. You're not sick, are you darling? I know your kind don't handle the cold well." She frowns softly.

Double Shit. What did she say...? What should she say?

"I can explain... You see, we had caught a little something with the bad weather." Tenne spoke up. "We're doing better now, healthy enough to make our way around and get things done."

“A little something…?” Hitsu blinked curiously. Her eyes gleamed brightly, and then she gave an excited bounce. "Oh my god! Are you pregnant? Are we going to see little lambs from you finally?"

Sequoia choked on her tongue.

Tenne's breath hitched and he cleared his throat rather roughly. "U-Uhm...!"

Hitsu took Tenne’s hesitation for affirmation. “Oh my! YOU ARE! This is joyous news! Oh!” She opened her mouth, hands clasped to her cheeks. “Forgive me! It’s tradition not to tell until you’ve felt the first quickening. I wont tell a soul! Or too many souls.” She gave Sequoia a joyful smile. “Do you know how many you'll be having?”

Sequoia flushed, but simply rolled with the lie. She latched onto Tenne’s arm with two of hers, the move seemingly tender and romantic, but her hands clutched at him anxiously. “T-three.” The first number that came to mind was three- why did she say three. Why, why, why?

“Three! How exciting!” She beamed. “Are you excited, Tenne?"

"Ecstatic..." He laughed quietly, reaching up and giving Sequoia a squeeze. "As well as... overwhelmed."

“I bet!” Hitsu let out a soft ‘baaa’ as she laughed, and gave him a wide smile. “No wonder you managed to convince her to get a coat!”
“Yeah,” Sequoia smiled, “got to keep the little ones safe, y’know?”

"Safe and warm." He purred quietly, nodding gently before he sighed softly with a smile. "I'm hoping you work your magic and make a robe very much worth it's weight."

“I’ll make one that can be expanded to make room for her growing belly.” Hitsu smiles widely, and then bounces back into the back to gather her fabrics.

Once she’s out of range of hearing her words, Sequoia looks up at Tenne and her face blanches. “Shit. I’m not actually pregnant though.” She whispers.

"We will talk about this later." His voice was lowered, not just in volume but in pitch, he didn't sound... happy.

That tone of voice made her eyes flash, and she leered up at him sharply for a moment. “Fine.” She tsks. “You’ll probably want to talk to Toki about it.” She keeps her voice quiet. “She’s going to need to know-” She cuts off as Hitsu comes back, and slaps on her previous smile, before stepping away to let the sheep measure her.

Dutifully, Hitsu begins to measure her and get her fitted, as she needs to, whistling happily all the while.

Tenne took to the side, watching with a calm and neutral gaze as he seemed to observe every time the threading needle dove into the fabric.

Sequoia hadn’t ever really paid much mind to the way the clothing had been made before, but watching it be made on top of her body, and how it settled and insulated her... it was magnificent. Truly magnificent. She smiled to Hitsu as the hardworking sheep worked her coat over, the black material looking lovely against her pale skin.

Once it was gone, and the magnets secured on her back, Hitsu did a quick check over of it, before pulling back and smiling. “I declare this a success!”

"Indeed so, it looks perfect Hitsu, absolutely miraculous" Tenne purred happily, "Perfect performance as per the usual," he praised as he came and examined the coat for himself, his fingertips tracing the fabric gently as he then gently tugged the fabric apart, only to have them click back together with the magnets when he released it. Tenne chirped happily, "Oh I could enjoy that for hours."

"You do find entertainment from the simplest things sometimes." Sequoia teased lightly, her wings swishing against her back. She glanced over at Hitsu and smiled warmly as she snuggled into the plush fur of her coat lining. It wit with space to spare, and she could zip it up in the front around the sling holding Quinn against her front. With it zipped up like that, she really did look pregnant. "How much do we owe you, Hitsu dear?"

"Nothing you need to worry about," the sheep tuts predictably, and flounces to her register. "Just do your best to stay warm and stay un stressed. And try not to get gored again! That's not conductive to proper baby growth."

"I'll owe you a favor, then." Tenne smiled at Hitsu then looked to Sequoia. "Shall we go, then?"

"We shall." Sequoia looped her arms through Tenne's, even though she knew he was still upset, and guided him gingerly for the door.

"A favor indeed! Maybe more of Toki's special honey when its next made? My husband and I
enjoyed it greatly." She giggled.

Sequoia blushed brightly and waved back at her in affirmative, before stepping outside. The coat helped keep her warm and that was heaven.

Tenne chuckled at that, and once they were outside, he folded his arms behind him. "Come, we have much left to do." His tone returned to the pitch he had uttered at, and quietly began down the path once more, his tail trailing low behind him.

Sequoia sighed and let go of his arm, so he could walk on his own. "I think you and I need to talk first." She says lightly, and instead heads for a semi-sheltered overhang between two buildings. It was too cold for other people to really be out, so they had their privacy besides the boys huddling sleepily into their middles for warmth. "Its not fair to either of us if you're in a foul mood for the rest of our date day, Tenne."

"Sequoia... I do not know how much Toki filled you in... But she told me everything of the past, and the truth of her origins..." He spoke quietly. His pupils thinned a little, and no longer did he have his usual, sweet look. Instead, Tenne carried a very upset look upon his face.

"I didn't hear all of it. I wasn't conscious for all of it, anyways. But I know she told you everything as she and I understand it." The woman crossed her arms and propped her shoulder up on the wall. She didn't like seeing him upset, but she wasn't Toki. Offering comfort wasn't... Something she was good at. "But what does this have to do with what happened at Hitsu's shop? You seemed to get pissy the moment that she thought Toki was pregnant." She inquired bluntly.

"Toki's trauma with losing her first litter constantly stayed in my head after what I witnessed when Quinn first called her 'Mama'. I promised her that I would never propose the idea to children to her... I... What will she think when she has to live a lie that she's pregnant with my pups? There is no way to fake it after a certain period of time... And everyone will want to be informed."

Oh. Well... That was what bothered him. Sequoia sighed and scrubbed her face. "You can't walk on eggshells with her forever." She remarks lightly. "I sure don't, and she knows it. She can buck the fuck up and deal with it. She's an adult, and she's dealt with lies before. As far as the general public can be concerned, she can have 'lost' the pups in a week or so. Lies are easy, Tenne. We lied to you for a long time. I'm the better liar of the two of us. Its the truth that is hard to give." Sequoia provides an easy flat answer. Then the bee woman clicks her claws slightly. "I'd love to have a litter of pups with you, to be frank. Toki probably is ready, but she grows guilt complexes like a garden does weeds. I can work on her. Its not like we're ever going to fucking get to go home. Not that I want to, really." There was nothing for her there. But she didn't tell Toki that.

Toki had people waiting for her. Sequoia had imprisonment and scorn waiting for her.

He didn't answer at first, watching her with intently glittering amethyst eyes. Soon his shoulders slouched as if he was admitting a defeat, and he gave a slight nod. "I never thought to resort to dishonesty... But perhaps when she returns, I will speak with her about it."

"Monsters are not dishonest by nature, Tenne." Sequoia soothed. "But humans... Humans are." Her face twisted a little, and she glanced away from him sharply, shoulders tucking up defensively. "And me? It's easy to forget that I was the worst one of them. I might not be that man now, but that knack for lies never leaves. You don't forget how to breathe, after all." She remarks tartly. Sequoia takes a deep, bitter breath, and lets it out in a sigh. She was too jaded sometimes. Very jaded. "Talk it out with Toki. It's her body. It'll be her babies when we convince her to stop with the guilt complexes, and it'll be her life... Her everything." While Sequoia would just be tagging along for the ride.
He nodded slowly as he listened to her and he sighed, "When it comes, I suppose… She must realize we are not yet home. Let us take the chance since she’s not trying to rouse, and finish our errands, yes Sequoia?"

"Sure." She pushes away from the wall, and heads out of the alley, not bothering to offer her arm to Tenne. Their day out definitely wasn't as enjoyable and he'd need his space. Besides, she could just blame it on 'mood swings' or other bullshit. If he wanted her arm, he could grab it and cuddle her close. For now, Sequoia did her best impression of a turtle, and became one with her new coat.

Tenne checked Kai, and then caught up to Sequoia, his mind was wandering and it was clear in his eyes. Thankfully it faded away as they made it to the marketplace. "Ahh. The market looks so nice blanketed in snow." He chuckled quietly, making to relax once more.

The cold did little to soothe the bitter ache inside of her. She steeled herself, slipping a better practiced 'Toki' smile onto her face, before taking his arm and striding inside the market proper, her shoes crunching in the snow. "Snow makes anything more beautiful. Why do you think I came to live in Snowdin first? The snow is beautiful no matter what the location." She chimed, her farce in place better here than at Hitsu's shop. Sequoia nodded when several people called out to 'Toki', and made her way over to get a handcart to carry their spoils.

"I suppose we best get started on that list," he chuckled, though he did examine the occasional stall, a small smile on his face to serve as a neutral expression.

"Indeed." She fished it out, and gave him a smile, before striding off just like Toki would, recalling from her memories how she would act and what she would do. For her anxieties, Sequoia did what she did best. She wove a lie. She wanted them to believe she was Toki now, where she hadn't really wanted them to before. And to anyone who didn't know better, it simply looked like Toki had come to market, flirting here and there and talking like a natural. Only the glow of her wings told her tale.

While she set to work on the list, Kai reached up and tugged on his father's beard. "Daddy? Are you and Mama okay?" He whispers sleepily from inside the sling and his dad's coat. It looked like he wasn’t nearly as deeply asleep as they thought he was.

"Well, Good afternoon pup," Tenne greeted with a quiet rumble, not going to let Kai think for a moment that there was something wrong. "Yes, all is well here. Are you alright?" He asked.

"I don't think it is." He hums softly into his dad's chest, but chooses his words wisely, knowing they're in a public space. Toki's words to him had resonated. He was old enough know when and when not to ask certain questions. "Are you two arguing over who ate the last of the spider donuts again?" He asks cryptically, blue eye peeking up at his father though the sling. Kai was a smart boy.

Such a smart boy, so functional already, he had such potential...

Tenne chuckled and reached up to pat Kai's back through the coat and sling, "We both know it was me" He chuckled lightly.

So his Dad was upset over something then. "If we both know if was you, how come you insist it was Mama who ate the donuts?" He hums back softly, stretching sleepily in the sling. He was getting too big for it, but he didn’t care. It was comfortable and it meant he could be mobile without having to walk. The best of many worlds.

"It's a long story, pup... we'll talk about it later... okay?"

Kai gave him a contemplative hum. "Okay. I suppose i can live with that... iiiif you buy me and
Quinn some of Grillby's fries!" He grins cheekily.

"Jokes on you, I was going to buy you guys fries anyways." He blew a raspberry at his son.

Kai blew a raspberry back at him and laughed slightly, before reaching up and poking his cheek. "It’ll be okay, Daddy. Whatever you and Mama are upset about, you can work through it."

"Of course we can." he chuckled, "Do you want down?" He then asked.

“And use my own legs to walk?” The boy gave him a sassy grin that was entirely Toki in it’s being. “No way.” He rolled over in the sling, stretched, and curled up like a big blue potato. His tail wagged in his pants, and he made a tiny content sound. “Hey Daddy? Can we do some science experiments in the house sometimes? I like to play with Quinn, but puzzles get boring.”

He laughed at that, "Lazy pup! But yes, of course we can!" He chuckled. "Who could have raised such a lazy little thing like you, Kai?" He teased.

"Woop!" He punched a fist lazily into the air, and then curled it up again because it was too cold to venture outside his father’s provided body heat. “And I dunno, Daddy. I like to think I made the choice myself to be lazy.”

He chuckled at that and shook his head, "Lazy... and sassy." He tutted, looking around at a few of the market stalls.

“I get that from my Mama.” He grins up at his daddy. “I am the sassiest. Mama teaches me well when she sassies you, though. She calls me a sponge sometimes.”

Another soft laugh leaves him. "So you are, you've proven to be a very smart little boy."

“Sometimes too smart though.” Sequoia hums as she pads back over, her basket full from her purchases. She reaches in and boops Kai’s nose, much to the boy’s surprise, before looking up at Tenne. “Just like his father.” She arches a brow.

"Who me? No, no, I’m innocent~" He chortled shamelessly.

“Uuhh,” Sequoia rolls her eyes in good humor, and hands over the list. “Can you double check this for me please, dear? I’ve put a hole next to everything I grabbed, but I want to make sure I got everything.” Heaven forbid if she forgot something off the damn list. Toki would never let her hear the end of it. ‘It’s a damn list,’ Sequoia knew she would say, ‘how hard is it to find the items on the list and get them? I even marked where to get them!’

Toki was such a housewife. A housewife with a backbone of steel and no fear of filling your ass with hot bees.

And damn did Tenne love her and Sequoia both.

He took the list and gave it a look over while looking at everything she had collected. "Looks right... except you're missing just one thing." He hummed, before he lowered himself down and gave her a swift kiss. "Okay! Now we're good~"

Sequoia couldn’t stop the flush that swarmed up her face as one of the monsters shopping around them whistled at seeing the kiss. “Well then, I guess we’re good to go to Grillby’s for those fries that I heard you promise Kai.” Sharp teeth edged up into a lopsided smile, and Sequoia hesitantly offered out her primary arm for him to take. She’d already paid for their groceries and other goods, so now all that was left was to take them home and return the shopping basket on the next trip. That was the
neat thing with the monsters—there was community trust among them. You could bring the shopping basket home, and bring it back next time you were in town.

Almost like reusable bags, only bigger and made of metal and hard plastic to be much more durable to higher levels of weight.

Tenne gently took her arm and smiled gently, seeming to feel a little better from before. Either talking to Kai or stealing that kiss did the trick. "To Grillby's it is!" he chuckled.

"Woo!" Kai whooped from inside the sling. "I want fries and oodles of ketchup."

"Or we could just use the ketchup at home." Sequoia snorts softly. "I bought a couple extra bottles. But, you have to wash your own plate if you don’t rinse it when you’re done. Dried ketchup is a pain to get off.” And responsibility was something that Toki was working on teaching Kai.

Quinn, who had stirred while Sequoia was doing her shopping, gave a thrilled coo and leaned up to nuzzle Sequoia's head happily.

Sequoia laughed and kissed the top of his head gently. “Well, hello to you too. Looks like your nap is over. It’s a little cold out, little one, but if you want to walk around, you can.” If not, she didn’t mind him remaining practically glued in her mane.

He trilled quietly and nuzzled her mane to give her his answer to the idea of walking.

"Seems we both have a lazy pup to carry today." Tenne laughed gently.

"I think mine is more because he has a thing for my fluffy mane," Sequoia chortled, “while yours is laziness.”

"Yep.” Kai agrees. “Mama is fluffy, and Quinn likes fluffy. I’m just lazy and don’t want to do the thing."

"Lazy pup… did you know he’s getting too big for his satchel? I might just make him walk home."

"Noooooo." Kai whined.

Sequoia smirked as they walked along, heading towards Grillby’s bar and grill. “Well, I knew he was getting bigger, but I didn’t know he was that big.” She laughed. “It sounds like he disagrees though.”

"I know he does. Big whoop, I’m the one with the old back carrying him, I say I get precedence over him.” He chuffed.

The queen bee snorts. “Well, everyone has to grow up sometime. If Quinn keeps growing like a weed, soon I won’t be able to carry him like this anymore.” Give or take a year or two, and he’d overtake Kai in size if he kept up his current rate of growth.

And just like that, it was Quinn’s turn to whine.

Sequoia gently patted his backside through her coat, and hummed softly. “Oh, little one, it’s alright. You’ve got a while yet before I can’t carry you like this. Even if I can’t carry you, it doesn’t mean you can’t cuddle in my mane, right?”

"Cuddles..." He murmured quietly as he kneaded her mane.

“That’s right.” She murmurs and rubs his head softly. “You can be as old as I am, and I’ll still cuddle
you close to my mane.” She promises, knowing it’s something Toki would agree to as well.

"Mweh..." He purred at that, smiling into her fluff as he continued his kneading.

"He's gonna make me a bleeding heart. That's so cute." Tenne snickered.

“He’s adorable.” Sequoia grinned as her fluffed continued to get kneaded and knotted up. “He knows it too. Ah- thank goodness, Grillby’s. You want to go in and place orders? If I go in, I might get roped into working.”

"Oh yeah, I’ll go take care of that.” He laughed, going inside to make the order to go.

Sequoia settled down to wait for him to come outside. It wouldn’t take Grillby all that long to make their order, she knew.

And lo and behold, Tenne wasn't out ten minutes later with a paper bag that had to-go containers within it. "Ta-da~"

“Smells good.” Sequoia smiles, rubbing her chest slightly from where she’s standing not far from the door. She looks like she’s starting to tire out- and she is. She also looks like she’s just had another soul catch. Sequoia isn’t used to running Toki’s body for this long. Her soul needs to rest soon, sadly. “Shall we head home?”

"Oh yes... You're starting to look a little tired out." He agreed as he offered his arm once more, his tail coming to his son as to let him have something to hold onto.

Kai grasped his tail contently and hummed.

“I am tiring.” She admits softly. “Being in control for so long is not... something I’ve done. I’m going to need to rest for a long time to recover from this.” She sighs softly, leans into his arm, and then leads him off into the thickening snow.

"That's fine, a whole day with you... I'm content to wait until next time, my dear~"

“You’re sweet.” She manages a smile for him, and bumps the lower curl of her horn against his arm. “I’m sorry the day ended up a bit muddled though.”

"Not at all." He gave her a soft squeeze as he purred happily, "I love you, my dear~"

“Love you too, Tenne.” She bumped her hip to his, and leaned on him contently.

The walk to the house was kept in comfortable silence. Sequoia carried their shopping, but she started to flag by the time they got home. She struggled to carry their things in through the door, trying to keep a hold of the items and Quinn and coordinate Toki’s body properly.

At this point Tenne had taken notice of her fatigue, and he wrapped an arm around her back to support her. "I've got you... Take it easy now, okay?" He murmured, "I'll get you to the couch, and you two can trade off once we're there."

"Thanks Tenne," She murmured tiredly. She focused on holding her arms firm, and making her feet walk. Sequoia barely noticed the change from the front room and kitchen, where her arms were relieved of their burden, before the living room registered to her. She spotted the couch, and her fingers twitched eagerly. "I'll see you all when I can," she murmurs, knowing she soon won't have the energy for goodbyes. She was going straight to sleep, she decided. Toki could sort out this pregnancy business on her own.
He nodded as he set her down, gently unlatching Quinn and letting him go play with his brother to give Toki what room she might need when she woke.

Sequoia watched the boys go off to play, and felt like she was made of molasses as she sunk down into darkness.

It was several long, worrying minutes where her wings were devoid of color, like she was an empty husk, before Toki took control again. Her wings lit up, and she took a deep breath. Her eyes slid open, and she rubbed them. "Mmm, wow... That wasn't fun..."

"Good morning, Toki..." Yes Tenne worried in the time she was unmoving, but he knew she'd wake up. He would make sure she always did.

"Hi... Did you have to wait long?" She blinked up at him. "I'm sorry. Sequoia wasn't all the way out before she was gone, so I had to extract her control carefully or risk fracturing her. What did I miss- why am I in a coat."

"Perhaps next time we'll skip the walk... if she really wasn't strong enough..." he sighed quietly, before he smiled at her innocently, "Surprise~?"

"She's strong enough for most things, but she's got to work up to it." She paused and stated at the coat. "You two planned this, didn't you?" She lifts a brow and sighs. "Its a nice coat though. Very warm."

"Heh heh~" He smiled at her innocently, "I knew you'd like it~"

"I do." She smiles. "So... Besides the coat, which I know cost a fortune, what all did I miss? How did the trip to town go? No problems right?"

"Well...There is one thing..."

"Oh?" She arched a brow.

"Well... you see... it's a bit of a long story." He started slowly.

"A long story?" She tilts her head. "Just be frank with me, Tenne. What happened?"

"Sequoia didn't know how to play you to the letter... Hitsu asked if something was up... Sequoia spouted out... aaand now probably half of town thinks you're pregnant..."

"WHAT."
Chapter 111

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Big skip here. 8) Silver and I want to get close to Toki going home… and it’s drawing near. But things need to happen first. Things you may or may not like. 8) One of them draws a sort of closure for Toki. Not in this one though- THIS IS NSFW. IF YOU ARE A MINOR, PLEASE WAIT FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER, AND READ THAT ONE. IT SHOULDN’T BE NSFW. Alright, public announcement over. This chapter contains soul sex, some very beastly encounters, and smut. Yup. Tenne and Toki do the FUCKS. Also Sequoia is there too, so technically a threesome. Anyway. Enjoy or don’t- it’s all plot related :)

It turned out that half the town did, in fact, think she was pregnant, so Hitsu told more than just a few people, and half the town mourned with her when she ‘lost’ the baby. Or apparently the triplets, because Sequoia just had to spout a high number. Toki felt bad about the lie, but she handled it like a champ, and so did Tenne.

They walked on eggshells for a few months though. It did make things awkward between them. She knew that Tenne did want children, and Tenne knew that she wanted children- but Tenne knew that she was, but also wasn’t, ready for children. Any time that Kai quietly poked for siblings, Toki would flinch, and Tenne would flinch, because they both wanted, but knew she wasn’t mentally prepared yet to accept it.

They worked things out though. Like Tenne had said when she’d first told him about Sequoia and being human, it wasn’t enough to break them. They were back to normal before Christmas came, and spent the holiday together happily. Well, happily enough. Toki missed her family. They helped to soothe the emptiness in her heart, but it didn’t stop the ache in her soul for missing her children’s second Christmas. The one that they would be able to really enjoy and remember, anyways.

And so the year passed on into the next, and Toki’s first year in that world came to pass in a rain of sparks and fireworks as winter turned to spring and then spring turned into summer. It turns out she had landed there in the middle of their Fourth of July celebration, despite her having left her world in late August. How time worked in this world, she would never understand. For her actual birthday, several months prior, Tenne had gifted her with a couple beehives, so they had celebrated her ‘birthday’ into their world with her traditional honey tarts dyed in a festive red, white, and blue to match the colors of just about everything else, and a layered cheesecake done in strawberry, vanilla, and blueberry for the fourth of July, while they watched the fireworks from the loft of their barn.

The monsters put on a beautiful display, for their first Fourth of July on the surface in god only knows how long. It was a day of liberation, a day of freedom- and they celebrated it with much zeal and a lot of alcohol. Toki and Tenne had sipped a few ‘adult’ beverages of their own, while the boys had chugged down oodles of fruit punch and played with sparklers and Toki’s bees. They’d made a small trip to one of the closer towns, making use of Clover to cross the airspace faster than any could cross land, and had gotten some human made fireworks for the monsters to enjoy, on top of the ones they made themselves.

It turned out that on top of being a hell of a bartender, Grillby and Sapphire were also very, very
talented at making beautiful explosives. Toki and Tenne got to watch all sorts of shapes- shapes 
humans hadn’t even achieved yet- get shot into the sky. Monster fireworks were made with magic 
instead of gunpowder and small strategically placed bits of explosives and colored flash paper, and 
were much less of a risk for starting grass fires than the human made ones.

The sparklers were fun though. It also melted her heart when Quinn and Kai wrote ‘Love you’ with 
them when the dark fell.

As a family, they spent their time taking care of the animals and making sure that product was being 
shipped out to the town proper. Eggs, milk and meat- though Toki only handled the eggs and milk. 
Tenne did anything that had to do with sending meat to town. She didn’t have it in her to kill the 
animals, despite how good they tasted.

Surprisingly, they adapted to being ranchers quite well. When summer rolled around and their milk 
cattle were let out into the small pasture for them, Quinn and Kai had a ball rounding them up for 
their morning and evening time milking. It gave them time to work off excess energy, and kept them 
fit and healthy. Quinn was also the chicken king. They followed him around like ducklings followed 
their mother, so Toki could send him out to distract the chickens, and she could go collect eggs 
unmolested. The rooster was not fond of her, and she didn’t like getting holes pecked into her pants 
legs when the rooster took offense to her presence.

Summer also brought up the production of honey, and Toki started stockpiling her own, and her 
bee’s honey. She hadn’t made trips to market yet, but she had plans to start come fall. A year here in 
this world had been rough on her soul, but she was… healing. It didn’t hurt so much now. It still hurt 
to think of her children, but she could talk about them, and about Papyrus.

The months since their attempted separation also stopped the soul catches, leading her to believe that 
whatever damage she’d done to her soul had been repaired finally. She and Sequoia would switch 
out from time to time, but Sequoia was still not the predominant soul in charge. It was too tiring, and 
if she was out for more than a couple hours at a time, she had to sleep for several days to recover the 
energy that was lost.

It was obvious that the Void hadn’t designed their body to work like they were making it work.

As the season neared the end of fall again, and the cold weather settled in quick, Toki had taken time 
to spend the last day out with the bees. She had to tarp up the hives to keep them extra insulated, but 
had to leave a way to keep them fed through the seasons. Taking care of the hives that Tenne got her 
was very soothing for her, and she spent as much time out here as she could. It was usually her 
private alone time, where she could relax and decompress.

“You know,” She spoke softly to the small honeybee cleaning its face on her finger, “That I’ve been 
here for… Goodness, a year and a half almost? That’s probably longer than you’ve been alive, little 
one, but… a year and a half feels like a life time.” She sighs. The bee buzzes up and lands on her 
face, and she chuckles. “You know, a year and a half ago, you’d have been able to walk all over 
inside of me? I was just made of bones, then. Now I’m flesh and meat and everything else. 
Sometimes I miss being a skeleton. My bees used to love hiding in my shirt. You guys can’t do that 
with me though. I’m not hollow inside.” She gave a low buzz that sent the hive into a flurry, before 
they settled down, clinging to her clothes. It was amusing, how these bees reacted to her sounds. 
They weren’t used to her yet, but they were all getting used to each other slowly. “Sometimes I feel 
hollow though.” She muses.

Tenne had been watching Toki talk with her bees and waited until there seemed to be an opening 
before he approached, clearing his throat to garner her attention without startling her and the 
potentially stinging insects. "Toki... Can we talk?"
Toki lifted her head when he approached. The bees spooked, clouding around her with an aggressive buzzing sound until Toki calmed them with a melodic piping sound. “Sure, dear.” She gave him a smile. She brushed off her hands, and gave a light puff of her magic to dislodge any bees that clung to her, before carefully scooting over to edge of the ‘apiary’, if it could be called that. She crossed her legs, enjoying the grass, and patted her legs for him to join her. It was still chilly, but just warm enough to still enjoy the grass. “What’s up, Tenne?”

"I was just... thinking..." He murmured as he sat down beside her. "I've never lost thought of the whole... pregnancy scare event that happened a few months back..." He started slowly, "And honestly... I have been hoping to talk to you about the potential idea that perhaps..." He was trailing off...

Her teeth pursed, and she sighed. Of course. He might have said he wouldn’t press about it, but Sequoia had been pressing too- the two of them wanted to have children, and her body was the only option for them to have them in. “I see… You and Sequoia have been talking when she’s out, haven’t you? She’s been talking to me more and more about children too.”

"I know you've wanted time to mourn...” He hedged. “But... Yes. We had talked..."

“And you both are ready.” She says softly. Toki takes a deep breath, and sighs. Both sets of arms cross over her chest, and she looks up at the sky, before flopping gently back into the grass on her back. She stares skyward, letting the fronds of green tickle her curling horns and her cheeks through the similar green of her mane. “It’s not just my body anymore, is it.” She muses. “I... You’re ready... to expand our family, aren’t you?”

"..." He moved to lie beside her. "Yes... I want to... Are you ready?" He asked.

“Yes and no.” She answered quietly, both set of arms folding over her stomach. Her chest rose and fell with a deep breath. “Is it... weird? That I both am and am not ready? I’m just... afraid.”

He rolled over and wrapped one arm around her. "I understand how you're afraid... But I love you, and I wouldn't suggest it unless I wanted to trust myself with thinking that you were ready. Sequoia and I would be here with you through everything."

Toki sighed and snuggled into his side. “I’m... just afraid that by having more children, I’m... betraying the memories of my first.” She admits quietly. “It’s... different with my first mate.” Her mother used to tell her that men could come and go from her life- that she should never hold too tightly to just on. Love them- mourn them- and then move on when her heart was ready. But children... Children were something you loved forever, no matter what happened. She takes a deep breath, and sighs. “I'm sorry. I know I'm ready. I'm just... a big jumbled mess of nerves inside. My soul hasn’t been touched that way since... Since Papyrus.”

Tenne took her words in, and he sighed, before he sat up to lean over her, shading her from the sun while simply watching her with a calm gaze. "I understand... Blaster beasts mate for life, so I understand how you would feel with the conflict..."

She sighs. She wasn’t so sure on that- because her beast had accepted two mates. She had accepted that Papyrus, accepted that they had lost Papyrus, and mourned him- and then chosen Tenne. Toki simply smiled though, and nuzzled him with a soft sound. “I...” She sighed against his shoulder. “I suppose we could start trying. I can’t... I can’t cling to the past forever and prolong my future, can I...? My heart will heal when I can begin to let go more.”

He held her close and he smiled a little, "If you're sure... will you want to try tonight?"
"I... Suppose we can." She nodded quietly. "After the boys are in bed... Unless we want to try and get Sapphire and Grillby to watch them for the night? Soul stuff is still new to me. Papyrus and I didn't... Do it a lot because of the nature of my soul." She'd done it a whopping record of two whole times and didn't know what would happen if they got disturbed or anything by an outside source.

"We will wait until they are asleep, we need not send them away... Besides, Kai already knows what we'd be doing, the intelligent little shit." He chuckled.

Toki snorts. "That he does. He takes after you. He knows what we're up to and keeps Quinn occupied." She settles down with a soft sigh, staring at the cloudless sky. "... When I do inevitably get pregnant, how many do you think we'll have?" She asks lightly.

"I don't know... We may have just one, or we might have a couple... it depends on how our souls match up in compatibility..."

"Well considering I only have two boobs... Hopefully no more than two." She gives a nervous chuckle. She wasn't made from ectoplasm. She wouldn't just be able to make a third boob out of thin air. "But I see what you mean. I think we'll be okay... We might have some struggles to start. I don't know how stable Sequoia and I are, technically. Our souls are kind of... Squished together. Not sure how stable that makes us."

"Yes I considered that too... Your souls might cause an odd creation to be born, a hybrid at best..."

"I... Don't know really. I know a child born from a human soul and a monster soul comes out monster." She murmurs. "Did... You want to check my soul and make sure its healthy first?"

"Yes... I'd feel much better after knowing your soul was healthy enough to offer what would be needed for a child."

She sighed and nodded. Their property was private enough that she didn’t mind offering over her soul. Toki drew it forth from her chest, and cradled it in her hands before holding it out to him. "Here, Tenne." It was still bi-colored, and still scarred. But the scars seemed to be healing over, and the center join in point was stable. Her stats were fine too, last she checked.

He took it gently and smiled, "It looks better than it did last time, looks healthier..." He purred, "Hello Sequoia." He purred to the lighter half, watching it flicker slightly at his greeting.

Toki chuckled softly. "She's watching. Letting you handle talking to me, but she's watching you." She says. "I'm glad we look better though."

"Indeed so." He smiled and gently lifted her soul to his lips, giving a gentle peck to either side.

That brought a shiver to her body, and she let out a soft, shaky sound. "Ah..." She blushed a bright green, and gave him an amused look. "You realize that's the equivalent of oral soul sex, right? Right out here in the open, where the birds and the bees could see." She teases.

"So it is. I'm such a filthy mate aren't I~?" He teased back.

“Yes, you are.” She laughed. She flushes some more, and arches a brow at him. “You’re a tease and not being fair. I can’t exactly kiss your soul.”

"Why don’t you ask for it then~" He purred.

“But... do you want to out here?" She glanced around. The kids weren’t far, after all. And touching souls... well, that lead to more than just that.
"Mh... no, it really is a risky idea isn’t it?" He chuckled, before he held her soul out to her. "Here you go... for now."

Toki gave him a smile and tucked her soul into her chest. “For now indeed. Come, dear. We can continue this inside if you’d like, but… I’d rather not do this outside. Souls are private matters, and… Well, we still somehow get photographed by the damned press.” She flushes. “How our lie hit the news I don’t know, but people got ridiculously excited over the thought of me being pregnant… if they knew we were ‘trying’ again, they’d go bonkers.”

"Try not to look too excited on your way in." Said the pot as he called the kettle black.

She rolled her eyes, and got to her feet. Her wings gave a flick, shaking off grass, and then Toki sashayed for the house. Those hips of hers, nice and wide and lovely? Oh yes, they swayed, like bells in the wind, alluring and tempting all the same. “Too excited? Tenne dear, I’m equal parts excited and nervous.” She chuckles. She was more nervous and dreading it than excited, but they were right.

She was ready, even if she didn’t want to admit it.

His tail was wagging fast behind him, belaying his ‘innocence’ to show just how excited he was about this.

Toki made her way into the house, but paused in the doorway. “Kai,” she says sweetly, “Why don’t you and Quinn go find Undyne and get a game of tag going? Your father and I need to do some… talking.”

Kai grinned a little, but with Quinn right behind him he held back on what he was about to say and instead just nodded. "Yeah, no problem."

“Thanks, sweetie.” She padded in and ruffled his skull, leaning down and smooching his cheek. “Be good, okay? Don’t get in too much trouble.”

"Of course, Momma~" Kai replied with a sweet smile.

“I know that smile.” She pinched his cheek and wiggled it. “I mean it, mister. If I get another phone call about you and Undyne and Quinn wrecking shrubbery with your magic again, I’m gonna take away your science kit for a whole week this time. Seven whole days with no science with your dad.”

He giggled but groaned at the threat. "Noo! Not my science kit!" He whined.

“Then see to it that I don’t get another phone call.” She wiggled his cheek again, and let him go. “If I do, then you’ll have to find something else to entertain that brilliant mind of yours. Alright. Gimme a kiss,” she taps her cheek with a finger, “and go off and play.”

"Mwah!" He kissed her cheek, then ran after his brother as he took off.

Toki smiled and straightened, glancing back to Tenne. "I'm serious. If he gets in trouble, no sneaking him his science equipment just because you feel sorry for his puppy eyes and pout."

"You really do cover all bases, huh?" Tenne sighed.

“I’m a Mom.” Toki sniffs. “I have to cover all my bases, or my kids and my man will find the loopholes.” She bumps her hip to his, closes the door, and then saunters for the stairs. “You coming, Romeo? Or did the thought of no science kill the mood~?”
"Rrr~" He purred, and then followed her. "Right behind you."

Toki grinned, and sashayed up the stairs. She took lithe and quick steps, knowing she looked like prey before his eyes. “I’m sure you are,” She purred. “I hope you’re enjoying the view.”

"It doesn't get any better unless I start getting handsy and in there like some nasty beast~" He purred, "And yes. That was a promise~"

She rolled her eyes in good humor, and coyly stripped off her shirt. Topless, she walked down the hall, and worked on shedding her bottoms, like the tease she was. “Riiight.” Maybe if she didn’t remind him, he’d forget about their initial purpose in this romp.

He chuckled coyly and followed her as he started to strip his own clothes, his purring picking up louder as they stripped.

Soon, Toki was naked, and she splayed her wings a bit so he could enjoy her pale backside as she ducked into the bedroom. She crawled onto the bed, and flopped there, settling on her front like she was taking a nap. Let him try and ‘rouse’ her. It was funny to see him get all antsy. Or if she was unlucky, he’d nip her ass.

"You are absolutely divine." He purred as he joined her in the bedroom, the door was clicked closed before he stalked closer.

Hilariously enough, she ended up 'unlucky' as his form slid between her legs, his mouth going right to her folds to press his tongue between them.

She squeaked, and shifted on the bed. "That's playing dirty." She pouts at him, shifting to roll onto her back and look at him. Her legs part, and her toes splay, claws kneading the bed just faintly. He was good with his tongue, no doubt about that.

He chuckled and purred as he continued to lick her with a delicate gentleness that completely disguised just how eager he was.

"Mmhmm~" He chuckled, before he leaned in and put more weight into his tongue, pushing it into her body to taste of her essence so sweetly.

Her legs splayed as his tongue slid into her depths. Mouth popping open with a soft gasp, Toki kneaded the bed with gentle hands. "Ah~" her soft moan was gentle and blissful as his tongue sent tinges of pleasure up her hips and into her belly.

Such beautiful sounds- it made Tenne tremble with excitement as he licked and began to suckle on her folds ever so delicately as his tongue slid smoothly in her.

His hand began to wander and cupped her rear tenderly, digging his digits into her rear tenderly. Her breath hitched, and she let out a soft keen, legs parting to let him have as much of her as he could take. Her walls trembled and pulsed around his tongue, sucking at him as he drank in her nectar. She sucked in a soft gasping breath, and reached a secondary hand down to stroke it over his scalp.

That was more like it~ Tenne purred louder and it began to make his tongue vibrate, his tail starting to wag behind him as his other hand joined the first in kneading her rear.

'Holy shit. You better be willing to share this sensation, Toki.'
Instead of answering Sequoia initially, she removed any walls she had up, and let the sensations flow evenly between the two. ‘Don’t I always share?’ She chuckles through their link.

And her reply was a pleased moan from Sequoia as the pleasure was shared to her as well. ‘Oooohh yess~’

Her hips rock into his mouth as best she can with him holding her ass captive, and Toki’s legs slip over his shoulders. Her soft toe pads knead his shoulder blades. Her tongue lolls out of her mouth, draping over her teeth as her walls tremble around his tongue. She can’t stop the soft groans that slide from her. “Ah~ Tenne~”

"Good~" Tenne purred loudly as he slowly withdrew his tongue, running it over his gums to savor the flavor as he came to sit up between her legs. 'I suppose I’ve done well enough with foreplay~” He chuckled.

“D-don’t you usually?” She teases, sucking in a shaky breach as he looms above her. Her chest trembles with her breath, and she wiggles her hips at him. “Well? Going to keep a lady waiting?”

"Heh heh heh, why don’t you ask me sweetly~?” He purred, lifting a dark brow at her as his eyes gleamed.

“Well,” Toki grinned, “I could just finish the job myself.” Her fingers slid down her belly, and she brushed her primary digits against her folds. She toyed with her button, making her legs twitch and her breath hitch. “And leave you wanting for yourself.” She purred teasingly.

He gave her a frown and folded his arms.

Toki rolled her eyes and pulled her hand back. “Alright fine.” She turned big doe eyes onto him, and cranked the pouty face on high. “Wont you please, please, give me more~?”

"Why don’t you give me your pretty soul while you're at it~" He purred, brow arching higher.

She hesitated, and sighed softly. “Okay. Only if you do too.” She drew it from her chest all the same, cradling her soul in her hands. She looked up at him, and for all of her strength, all of the power that made her so astronomically stronger than any of the monsters in this world… there was a vulnerability in her eyes that was not usually there. She held her soul out to him in the knowledge of what she was about to do- of the ultimate betrayal to Papyrus that she was about to do. Her body was one thing… her soul was another. But… she loved Tenne too. It was a bunch of conflicting emotions that bubbled inside of her, and she often didn’t know what to do about them. “H… here. This is all that I am- and all that I ever will be.”

He took her soul gently and smiled at the sight, then summoned his own.

His soul resembled the Tenebris' that she knew. His soul was a gentle lavender color, and was adorned with two scar-like divots on the arches of the upside-down heart. Though they looked far better than his elder-counterpart's, they had actually gotten to heal.

"Ah... What do you think~?” He purred, holding his soul out to her.

Her own soul was littered in scars, so she wasn't one to judge. There was a flash of familiarity in her eyes and face when she saw his soul- she'd seen the same soul what felt like a lifetime ago, back when she had been human.

Toki gently traded souls, and cupped his gently. Her fingers stroked around his scars, not touching them directly but edging around them. "You're perfect.” She smiled.
He purred quietly at her words and his tail wagged behind him, before he gently kissed her soul, purring louder as he did. "And you're the most beautiful thing I have ever seen~"

The kiss made her shiver, and her soul pulsed brighter. She brought his soul to her mouth, and her eyes slid into a half lidded position, giving him bedroom eyes. Her teeth, so sharp and jagged, pursed to press the gentlest of kisses against the core of his being. His soul was so much smaller than her own, and so much more fragile than hers. His HP didn’t even reach a fraction of her own. She could break him without even trying- and she would break for doing so.

Toki’s mouth opened, and her tongue slid out, lathing gently over the surface of his soul. She had more experience than he did in soul play, as far as she knew, though her experience itself was fairly limited. She touched him gently, lavishing him in care and tender adoration.

The sensation was unbelievable and Tenne was quick to react, trembling as he leaned his head back, "A-aaahhh..." That noise was beautiful.

Very beautiful indeed. She indulged in it a bit more, lathing his soul with her tongue as her own soul reached out tendrils of light to stroke over his fingers. “You like this, I think.”

"I-It... Ahh... It's enjoyable because of how much I trust you~" He cooed.

Toki smiled. She glanced up at him, and motioned to his hand. “I trust you too, Tenne. Are you… ready to see what a soul merge is like…?”

"I... ah... I’m a little nervous, but... yes. I'm ready." He nodded gently.

Toki nodded, and very gently motioned to his hand which held her soul. “Alright, Tenne. Clasp your hand with mine. Our souls will know what to do from there. You, ah, might want to get comfortable first. It’s overwhelming the first time you do it.”

He nodded gently. He slowly got comfortable, draping across her lightly, and reached to her hand with his own cradling her soul.

"A-Alright..." he took a breath, before he allowed their hands to touch, his fingers linking with hers, before he slowly closed the space.

Her soul reached out to his, and coaxed tendrils from his, before linking them.

The beginning link had her soul and chest jumping, a shaky gasp leaving her mouth. The beginning of the link was always strange feeling… But as the souls pulled closer, and the surfaces brushed and melded together, deeper emotions were felt, and she could feel everything that he could. He would feel the arousal curling in her belly- the anxiety, the fear, pulsing in her chest. He would feel Sequoia in her soul too… There was much to feel, much to experience.

For both of them.

And touch? Touch would be amplified.

Tenne was trembling, his eyes shut tightly as he clung to her with his other hand. "O-Oh god..."

Toki shivered and panted gently. Her belly quivered with need, and her hips twitched into his with want. Her soul thundered against his, shared feelings overwhelming her faintly. “Hhaahhhh… Ah~”

Tenne was lost in the sensations that came with the soul-merging. It had been his first time, so to say it was overwhelming was an understatement. "Oh god... h-haahhh... Toki..."
‘Tenne...’ There was more than just Toki in the merge too- and Sequoia could talk to Tenne this way- without having to take control of Toki, or have Toki reiterate what she wanted to say. ‘Oh... oh Tenne... This is what a soul merge feels like...?’

He wasn’t the only one who had his first soul merge- Sequoia was having her first as well.

Toki took control after a moment, and took a shaky breath. She slid her fingers down to the apex of her legs, and opened her soul to Tenne, letting him feel as her smaller set of fingers slid down her belly, tracing a path of heat as she went. Toki was showing him what to do- and as her fingers brushed her button, she trembled, biting her tongue with her gums as the back feed from the merge was nearly overwhelming. She touched herself for a moment- and then she reached up, and cupped her hand against his slit, sliding her finger gently along the inside of the pale slit hiding his member.

‘Sequoia...’ Her name was on a mental whisper, a sound that was of thrill, excitement, and his own share of amazement and fear.

His slit was loose and her rubbing hand easily coaxed it open, warranting a soft moan from Tenne.

"O-Ooohh~" His cock was practically hard already as it emerged from his slit. The soul merge was offering so many new thrills to add to his usual stimulation at this point, that he couldn’t help but not be hard. "Toki~" He cooed to her.

Toki’s hand circled around his cock as it emerged, and she stroked him, from base to tip, her fingers massaging over him languidly. She panted softly, eyes unfocused as she got tingling sensations of a hand running over a dick she didn’t have. The back feed from a soul merge was absolutely fantastic- and Toki made sure to feed the loop back to him, creating a never-ending cycle of sensation. It was massively overwhelming- but only in the best of ways.

Her legs parted, and she teased the tip of his member across her folds, tempting him with body language as she continued to stroke and massage him.

Tenne, the poor thing, had practically bucked into Toki as soon as his mind put together that his cock was lined up with her body under him. His mind was static, and what wasn’t static enough was growls and snarls of his inner workings telling him what to do as if it was his own mental Sequoia.

Toki wasn’t nearly so lost as he was, but his growls and gutteral inner language was rousing her beast. Pupils dilating as she rolled her hips into his thrusts, Toki’s mind space made space for her beast to rumble up and brush against Tenne’s beast. She purred to him while Toki’s hips rolled and gyrated against his.

“Ah~” Toki cried out, her soul thundering against his as she rocked into his member.

It was a good thing their mental beasts could not face off physically in this moment, if there was one thing about Blaster Beasts, it was when they got hot and in the heat of it.

Tenne growled before he pulled Toki close and bit into her shoulder, moaning as he ground his hips against hers.

She snarled right back at him, and her teeth sank into his opposing shoulder, deepening the marks she’d been remaking time and time again since the first time she’d given in to her instincts to bite him. Toki bucked her hips into his, grinding into him as her walls fluttered and flexed hungrily around his member.

It was thrilling to the beast and his grip tightened as his form twitched inside of her.
A few hisses and snarls resonated from his form to reach Toki's ears, but after a short time, it faded and was replaced by blissful moans and pants as Tenne snapped out of his episode to instead do as he always did with Toki.

And that was love her. And treat her body as if it was the most priceless treasure he could ever own. All the while giving her spirit the burning passion that was his love.

Under his passionate love and attentive care, it wasn't long before her soul, dragging his smaller one with it, thundered towards release. Her head lolled back, teeth stained black, and she let out a languid moan of his name as she came around him, walls clamping tight over his cock and the knot she knew he would give her.

Tenne wasn't long after her, trembling before he mewled out and promptly howled out as his form arched deeply over her, his cock twitched before he grabbed her hip with his free hand and pulled her close to push her onto his cock as his knot pushed into her, the ball of muscle and blood swelling inside of her before he gave a few more thrusts and came to release, filling her body with his heat.

She shuddered as he expanded inside of her. Locking them together. Toki trembled, her mind whirling, soul twisting with her thoughts as she came down slowly, so slowly, from her orgasm. Her belly was puffy from his load, as it seemed to be as of late, and she hummed a soft considering sound. This was... Nice... So my h different than it had been with Papyrus, but it was nice. Their souls felt different. Papyrus was the sun, her fire and her flame. Tenne was the moon- her cold winter and ice. She loved them both, truly she did.

And for all her initial anxiety about the soul merge, she found herself with little to no regret for it.

Tenne was blacked out as he hung over her. He wasn't unconscious, but for a moment was unresponsive. His body made sounds all the same, however. "Hhhahhh~"

Toki couldn't disengage her soul from his without his help, so she was stuck as he draped over her. Her fingers flexed against his, stained in the goopy secretions from their souls. Lavender and two shades of green was... Weird.

"Tenne..." She murmured. "You... Okay?"

"Rrrrrrr~"

She snorted. "Oh my god."

'We fucked him senseless.' Sequoia made sure he heard that, sounding pleased and smug all at once as she practically oozed in a mental puddle in Toki's mind.

'Laugh while you can... will recover... Will go for round two.' Was a sudden deep resonance from Tenne's soul.

'I doubt you can go for a round two.' Sequoia snorted lightly. 'I doubt I could go for round two."

'She might be right. The only reason I managed multiple rounds the first time I merged was because my husband had gone into a rut and brought me into heat with him.' Toki murmured, and flicked her tongue out to gently groom along his neck and shoulders.

'Tamed mind will not interfere.'

Oh shit. That wasn't, Tenne now was it?
That was Tenne's beast. Shit. Heck. Alright.

'If you think you can,' Toki goads, because she has no sense of self preservation, 'I won't hold my breath, Big Daddy.'

The inner beast snarled in a way that seemed to make even the soft lavender soul tremble and Tenne's lip curled back slightly as his grip on her hip tightened.

Toki remembered baiting Papyrus in a similar manner, only his beast was less controlled. Or visibly controlled, anyway. Toki grunts, and lets her teeth scrape over his neck and shoulder, her chest rumbling under his. Her soul trembled, and the tendrils shifted, curling around Tenne's soul and stroking it in a dominant way. Toki was good at goading beasts- and taking what would come when she did. 'Didn't like that, Big Daddy? Too bad. You're stuck in place until the knot softens,' She teases him again. Oh she was going to get it.

Tenne twitched slightly and growled at the challenge, before he began to pull against the knot, his lips curling further into a snarl of both aggression and growing pain.

'Ooh shit, he trying to pull out...! Oh FUCK. That's starting to hurt!' Sequoia bleated.

Toki wasn't about to let that fly. Her legs clenched around him, muscles pulling tight, and she kept him right in place. 'Ah, ah, ah, Big Daddy. No pulling out now, you could hurt all three of us if you did it too soon. A knot is a knot.' She nips his neck in a scolding manner, and drags blunted nails down her mates back.

He growled at her and snapped at her in turn. His eyes were open again, wide purple disks glaring down at Toki with needle-thin pupils leering down at her. It was fortunate that they were not clothed, otherwise the bone-plates that began to rise off Tenne's form would have torn through them.

His crown was growing into sight, and over her body came the plating and spines that came to his shoulders, his back, his haunches and tail. His hands curled slightly, claws digging less mercifully into her hip. He was looking more and more like his magnificent beast with every passing second.

Toki hummed. Despite the ache it brought her, she rocked her hips up into the alpha beast above her, wondering what he would think about a female desiring to give him pleasure too. His snap and growl didn't make her flinch like it would have once upon a time. This time, she soothed her nip with a soft lick, and raked her claws over the new armor plates, nibbling her mouth against his neck as she began to play a dangerous game. They still had one hand joined, holding their souls together. It wouldn't be hard for him to lose his temper and hurt them both if he wasn't careful. Still... It was fun flirting with danger, with a smidge of pain as his knot pulled inside of her while she rocked around him and teased him more.

His reaction barely wavered as he simply watched her, but it seemed to do the trick as his claws withdrew from where they were just starting to tear into her hip and his hand went instead to position on the bed for the sake of staying up.

She rumbled up at him, green eyes peering up at his own as her mane ruffled and fluffed. She used it to waft pheromones over him, wondering how he might respond to them. "Big Daddy," she purrs teasingly, choosing that as a name for his beast quite easily, "are you going to be gentle with me?" Her hips rock into him again.

The pheromones were a good move. There was silence from the soul, no doubt Tenne was unreachable, but Big Daddy gave a low rumble as he took in the scent that he recognized as his mate. His pupils widened a little and he leaned down, licking her lips as his hips rocked in return.
As he promised, there would be a round two, but it looks like she managed to talk him down from his pride-dented threat.

Shame on that, but Toki figured it would be better for her body if he didn't completely wreck her. She slid her tongue from her mouth, letting it brush against his and then tangle with it. It was coated with her pheromones, making it taste like honey and the best aphrodisiac that could be gotten. Her hips rocked into his, her soul rubbing gently along his, and her claws shifted where they were locked together. He was a good mate- a difficult one, sometimes, but a good mate.

The beast purred and rattled in a pleased manner before he shifted on his legs. He hoisted her hip up with his legs movement and from there he began to rock his hips once more, defying his knot's purpose and instead rousing his body in time with Toki's offering of her aphrodisiac.

Toki hadn't ever thought of a knot to be used like that. That... Ohhh, she liked that. She's very certain he could feel just how much she liked it through the pulses of her soul, and how her breathing hitched needily under him. "Ah~"

Beasts were clever like that weren't they? Lucky Toki has one such as Tenne.

Her noises excited him and though he brought a gradual increase, he made sure she knew he was thrilled by her sounds as he began to nip her neck like she had done to him, licking and delicately biting her soft neck

She tilted her head to the side for him, the sensitive skin of her neck trembling and tingling as his teeth teased her flesh. Her thumb found his soul inside of their hands, and she stroked it, from base to tip. Toki gave a full body purr, before her body began to pipe for him, her walls fluttering as much as they could around his hardened knot. The sounds she made were definitely alluring, and it made her glad that she'd sent the boys off to play for a while, because she was not quiet at all.

Such was the perfection of their beastly bond, though her sweet teasing made Big Daddy more eager than what would have been best, as he began to grow more aggressive with his nips, before attempting to even roll Toki over for what he recognized as proper mating positioning.

The rolling was... Not pleasant. Toki shifted, and kept her legs locked. Her hand pulsed gently around his, and she tried to draw his attention to their souls. 'Wait please, Big Daddy.' She pleads. 'We can't roll yet. Not until our souls are separated... And they need to be together to make pups.' She says to him. She doesn't mind his sharper bites. All Toki does is up her defense against them, and then they feel less painful and more pleasant.

He growled and rattled in defiance at her resisting his attempts to roll her, and he thumped his tail a few times, what looked to be bony ears pinning to his head as he rattled at her sourly.

'But pups,' she croons. 'Tell you what. If you can manage to flip us without breaking our souls apart, then go ahead.' A challenge of sorts, to see if he could think of a way to do it.

He tilted his head at the challenge, and for a while seemed to look over his options. A few times his clenched grip around the souls would loosen but tighten up again after a moment.

After a few moments of thinking, he had enough. He gave a loud warble and snorted sharply, giving a sour look to her. 'Cannot maintain grasp if going to roll mate over...'

Toki hummed softly. 'So it seems... I guess we'll have to let go then. Hope it's enough for pups.' She nipped at his neck, and released her grip on his hand. Her hand was stained by both of their souls, covered in a thick, sweet smelling goo.
As Big Daddy's paw retracted, the creature shuttered and rasped quietly as the sensation nulled him for a moment, though it did not last long as he released the soul in his hand, moving instead to gently roll Toki over, more insistently, but sweetly this time around.

She went willingly, settling onto her chest as her soul parted from his. It drifted lazily away from his, slowly heading back for her body, and drifting past his face before sinking into her back to return to her. Toki rocked her backside against him, and let her horned head settle down against the sheets as she submitted gently.

Eventually his own purple Soul returned to his chest, and Big Daddy begin to respond Toki's submission.

Thankfully at this point his knot had just begun to deflate so it allowed him a little more room to get around, making it so he was able to begin a steady thrusting into his mate.

The steady thrusts were nearly enough to leave her mewling brainlessly. Each one brought that knot of his shoving back inside of her, and it stroked along all of her sensitive places while his member proper shoved deeper, pounding against her womb. Her wings flared, offering him access to whatever part of her back he would like as she moaned helplessly. God, she loved to bring out to beast sometimes.

Now that they had actual motion and pleasure intake between them, big daddy started to enjoy himself. His arms wrapped around her stomach and he rested his cheek on her back, nuzzling the tender flesh before he give it a soft bite.

Her spine jolted, all four arms skittering briefly as he bit down on the soft skin over her spine. Toki choked out a pleased purr and rocked against him again. The actual motion felt like heaven, and she was helpless under him.

Such sweet submission. much more appealing to the beast~ He rewarded her with a soft lick of where he had just bit before lifting himself. His hands pushed her shoulders down and his hips withdrew before they snapped back to meet her hips, repeating this a few times as his pace came to meet this, striking her deepest with the head of his cock as his softened knot gave her such pleasing pressure on her entrance.

Each stroke of his member tore a tiny moan from her, particularly as his knot popped free and then shoved in again. He was like the world's wildest sex toy, but in a form that didn't come in cold hard silicon. She rocked into him, her piping continuing to draw him into giving her what she needed. Her skin broke out in soft pebbles of gooseflesh under his hands, and her magic pulsed strongly under her skin as her chest squashed into the bed. Toki was his, and so was Sequoia and her beast- they were all quiet and in tune with the forefront personality as Toki took the lead on dealing with the beast in the best way she knew how.

By sassing the beast until he's annoyed, and then magically soothing him again with pheromones and sweet words. What a gal.

Toki did know best how to deal with beasts.

Big Daddy's reply to her piping was deep rumbling and growls as her other noises egged on his behavior, he began to go faster, thankfully not harder yet but faster indeed, her body was so good to him it would be very hard for him to want this bestial breeding to end.

Her back bowed under his touch, and a series of soft, submissive sounds came from her throat. She had no idea she could make those noises- but those were noises she could make. She made them
again, more tinged with pleasure, as he thrust faster into her. Her mouth fell open, tongue lolling over her teeth. They really were a bunch of beasts rutting on the bed, but Goddamn if she didn't love it completely.

Good mate, good mate, great mate, mating good.

Big Daddy's mind was racing at her sounds and his tail wagged behind him as he rattled to her sounds. So exciting this was, his toes were curling.

The thrusts continued to pick up until he was practically abusing Toki's sweet body under the mercy of his thrusts. His tongue was hanging from his mouth, lips curled back as he took in the air that had quickly heated up around them.

Her pulsing magic had made sure the room was definitely more than warm. It felt more like a dragons den, hot and dry, and her body put off heat like an open oven. Her walls were starting to flutter tighter and tighter around him, her four hands clawing at the bed as she keened in need. She panted, her mind whirling as his hips abused her backside with each thrust. She'd feel it later but oh boy, she was enjoying it now. Her defense shifted to help her take the brunt of it, and it wasn't all that rough thanks to it. But Toki was definitely was enjoying the sensation.

Big Daddy huffed and growled in her ear as he put more weight on her, but it was accompanied by pleased squeezes as he filled her again and again.

Such a pleasured moment had gone on forever but thankfully after the not so few bliss-filled hours passed, Big Daddy rested himself and allowed Tenne to wake again, this time, he wasn't so blacked out, holding Toki as if he had been the one with her for those hours.

Hours. They had gone on for hours. Round two? More like round five. Toki was sore and exhausted, and swollen about the middle from how much he had filled her. Laying on her front was uncomfortable with the small potbelly she had, and she exhaled tiredly as she waited for the next round to begin. She wasn't aware that Tenne had returned.

"Mmmhhhh..." A sound soon roused from the creature, as if cutting the silence with a knife.

"Hn~ You okay~?"

"Mnnnnm... Tenne?" Toki murmured sluggishly. "Ah... S' good t' hear ya again... I'm okay... Just a little worn out."

He cooed and kissed her a few times. "You're so wonderful~ Beast shared with me how wonderful you were."

She gave a languid purr, her back covered in slowly healing bite marks. Her wings had been left alone- one straying fang had prompted her to crack him hard with one of her wings, and he hadn't tried to bite them again. Those were for Tenne's sound mind- the beast was not gentle enough to get to play with such delicate limbs. "I know best how t' rile up Big Daddy n' then calm him down again. It's like a game of cat and mouse."

"Mmh, that's what you're calling him, huh? I thought I heard that get mentioned." He teased.

Toki snorts, and elbows him faintly. "Shush," she grumbles, "It's not like you ever told me if he has a name or not. Mine doesn't, but you never know." It was just like dicks- some people named theirs, and some people didn't.

‘PFFT.’ Someone was tapped into Toki’s thought process and couldn’t contain her snicker.
"Well he and I never really got acquainted, y’know?"

Toki hummed, and shifted on the bed. She was still face down, so she dragged one of the pillows over and secured it to her front with all four arms, cuddling her face sleepily into it. He was still stuffed inside of her, but he wasn’t going anywhere for a while. “Am I the only one who regularly has conversations of sorts with the things rattling around in my head?”

"Sounds about right at this point." He sighed as he nuzzled her. "I love you~"

“Mmm, love you too.” She thrummed softly. She shifted on her side a little bit, and her abdomen stung. “You filled me so full… Like ridiculously full. Look at how stuffed I am. Big Daddy didn’t want any to run out, it seems.” Her body would process his magic and convert it into her own, so it wasn’t an issue. Just uncomfortable until it went away.

"It seems he’s really eager for pups."

“Half.” She wobbles a hand. “The soul part is important- or we’d have conceived by now, for sure, with how often we go at it. He wasn’t much interested in that part.”

"Mmm, human conception is odd."

She snorts. “You say that, but how you’re thinking of is how humans actually conceive. This… this is how monsters conceived in my world. This is the only way I can- because I’m neither human nor monster anymore.”

"That’s amazing in itself." He murmured.

“Mrrr?” She made a noise, asking him to clarify.

"Your mutation from human, to skeletal creature, to one with the potential compatibility to bear my young..."

“Technically,” Toki stretches and hums lightly as she corrects him, “A skeleton is actually one of the few monsters out there that’s compatible with all types. We adjust to what our mate’s needs are. Er… They adjust. Sorry. It’s kinda dysphoric still sometimes.” She waves a hand and then continues. “In fact, my first mate looked mostly skeleton, but he was half skeleton, half beast type, like us. So, theoretically, a skeleton would have worked too. Just… not to what you would have wanted.” Pure blooded blaster beast pups and all.

"Interesting..." He chuffed at that, and then nuzzled her. "Well... that's true... But even if they were half-breeds, I’d still love them, you know~"

She chuckles softly and hums against his nuzzles. “I don’t doubt it. Kai and Quinn aren’t full bloods, and you love them without question.” Her eyes close and she sighs softly. “But if I had come to you as a skeleton… I have to wonder, would you have loved me for me?” He had lusted for her because of what she was- what it meant for him- and love had come later when she’d proven to be… well, basically the ‘girl of his dreams’, plus some baggage. A lot of baggage. Okay, a metric fuckton of baggage.

He opened his mouth, then closed it again, then sighed as he nuzzled her. He gave a soft contemplative noise of agreement. "Maybe... Though... I’ll admit it'd be a tad bit slower progressed..." He murmured.

“I think you could have accepted me as a caretaker for the boys- perhaps as something to study, to observe, and perhaps as kin. I haven’t seen any other skeletons underground- I would have been the
only one of my kind too.” She murmurs. “Maybe something would have blossomed in time…
Maybe not.” She sighs. “I was given this form to cage the power I held inside of me. Now that I
don’t have it… I have to wonder why I haven’t reverted back.”

"Could it be Sequoia's soul within yours?" He asked as he tilted his head slowly.

“It might be.” She nods. She sighs. “Or it might just be that I’m meant to be like this.”

"If that's the case, then I’m glad you're like this. You're very beautiful and I could stare at your body
forever~”

She snorts. “I’m glad you approve of my appearance.”

"Well that's not all I appreciate of you." He chirped.

“Hm… Well, I suppose I could believe you.” She smiles teasingly, though he can’t see it with how
she’s laying. He can hear it in her tone. “What about me to you appreciate?”

"Your personality for one.” He replies with a bad pickup quality for the sheer giggles, "You're
wonderful with my boys, you're kind to me, and you're not a filthy slob with your living space.”

Toki chuckles softly and nods. “That I’m not. I am a very, very clean woman. It kills me a little
inside every time I see Kai’s desk.” Considering their home was constantly being cleaned when she
was home and out and about in it… Well, she kept their home immaculate. She reaches back, and
snags his hand, dragging it around her swollen middle so she could cuddle his arm. To him, it
probably felt like she was pregnant- he’d probably enjoy that, until she processed it.

He cooed with glee at the feeling under his hand and his tail rattled soundly as he nuzzled her
cheerfully. "You're swollen~" He cooed happily.

She couldn’t help but laugh. “I told you I was!” She exclaimed in great amusement. She guided his
fingers over the soft lump. “You and your beast filled me with so much magic that it’s a little
absurd.” Toki sighed softly, and settled down. “Mm… Rest, Tenne. Maybe something will come of
it? Who knows. Maybe there'll be babies in there soon.”

He chirped happily at the thought of pups, and nuzzled her back with a trill. Though once he had
made the two of them comfy, he settled down to sleep.

Toki was as comfortable as she could get, and for once… she didn’t really sleep. She just rested her
head down, and let her body relax. Her mind whirled with a dozen small, idle thoughts- nothing too
hard though. Toki was at peace- and perhaps, there would be more children in her future to keep her
busy. Who knew…?
Chapter 112

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This is something we had planned later, but it fits in now with how the plotline is being shifted. Hopefully you like this little bit of fun before we go places. We’ve had to adjust the plot some, so we’re progressing FINALLY TO THE FUN STUFF. OWO I am excited to see ya’lls reactions.

It didn’t work. They tried and tried- for weeks and weeks. Toki wasn’t sure what was going on- if there was just some subconscious part of her that didn’t want it that was keeping it from happening, or if perhaps it was because her soul wasn’t just hers anymore, that she shared it with Sequoia and it wasn’t a perfectly balanced Balance soul- but it just… it wasn’t working. She couldn’t get pregnant.

It was a bit disheartening.

All the same, they didn’t give up, and kept trying, even when his heat rolled through, and hers a month or so later.

Still, there were no results by the time the snow fell thick and heavy, blanketing the land in icy white and keeping them contained in icy bliss. With no children blossoming inside of her, Toki and Tenne were tasked with heading to Portland Oregon for the Saturday bazaar- which they’d be helping to sell oodles upon oodles of monster supplies at. Toki had honey- hers and from her small apiary- to sell. She had been planning on doing it anyways, going to the bazaar, so she’d volunteered to simply have one massive booth instead of twenty small ones here and there.

She’d be keeping track of what was sold to who, and she’d give the money over. She had no intentions to jip them any either.

The drive to Portland from their location was two hours and then some- they’d had to hire another U-haul to haul all of their things and themselves there- but it was a beautiful drive along the Columbia gorge. The river was probably a mile wide, and lined with waterfalls here and there… It was beautiful, truly. Toki spent her early morning watching them as they went past, and leaning against Tenne’s arm as her wings were squished in the cab of the truck.

Kai and Quinn were being watched by Ariel, and alternatively Sapphire and Grillby, so Toki didn’t worry too much about them. They’d be alright, spending time playing with Undyne, Lana, and the other little kids.

The driver brought them to the bazaar, and got them unloaded, but it was up to Toki and Tenne to get themselves set up- with all of the other stall owners staring at them while they did so. They were the first monster stall in town, of course- so people were going to gawk.

It didn’t make Toki any less self-conscious.

“They’re staring…” She murmurs as she hefts a box up in her arms and walks quickly towards their designated stall spot, her head ducked down shyly. Toki wasn’t necessarily the prettiest monster- or the friendliest looking with her teeth and the fact she looked like a giant bee- but at least Tenne was dashing. He had many people gawking after him as they walked.
With the word of his mate that they had an audience of simple gawkers, Tenne couldn't help but feel a little bit proud, even with how she worded it. He had grown in his magnificent mane while the winter months began to roll around, and it was now quite full around his head and neck. "Am I not finally a sight to behold?" He cooed proudly.

“You are.” She agreed eagerly, glancing to him and his luscious dark mane. It was full and fluffy—and if she had a hair straightener, or ran her fire magic heated hands over it long enough, she could straighten it out and make him into a walking carpet. Toki’s mane fluffed as a pacific breeze blew through the bazaar, whipping her coat around her back as she hauled the boxes to their tent. Once she got there, she began carefully unpacking and setting up tables, working on getting everything set out on display.

She summoned a couple of her bees to keep watch—thieves were a thing and she had no intentions of tolerating them—and then started organizing. Grillby’s wares went into a twenty one and over section. They didn’t have to have a license for it because it wasn’t human alcohol, and they weren’t sure how to classify monster alcohol yet, so Toki at Sequoia’s behest was taking advantage of it while she could.

While she was setting up, a couple of mothers herded their kids closer to themselves as they watched her and her bees, the mothers looking horrified. Toki sighed. Her magic wasn’t… Humans associated bees as bad, so she was always going to appear as a bad monster at first. And, perhaps she was. “I’m not,” She mutters lowly between her interlocking crocodilian teeth. She sighs, rolls her shoulders, and prepares to put on her ‘I’m a businesswoman’ face.

His moment of preening had passed and his main flattened against his jaw as he noticed the children coming closer. Having tucked away his tail in at a previous time, his long tail blade was out of sight, posing no threats to the children. He offered a sweet smile to the children, and a calming one to the worried mothers.

"Hello there dear children and Madams. Do not be shy! Come closer if you wish to have a look at the strangers from underneath the mountain. Perhaps you might partake of what sweets we have brought with us on this fine day?" He was using one of those voices; whether it was the father voice, or the kind-hearted doctor voice, it was not clear. Regardless, he spoke soft, sweet, and kindly to the group, to welcome them closer.

One of the mothers gave him an awkward smile, but ushered her child away, heading in the opposite direction.

The other one slowly edged forwards, uncertain as she watched the wares being slowly stocked. She took note of the two different kinds of honey, and kept her hand tightly on her sons. “Ah… Good morning.” She murmurs awkwardly. “I don’t… Uh… I don’t really see much sweets out yet.”

“I haven’t gotten them unboxed yet.” Toki gave her an awkward smile, but let it fade as the woman’s gaze locked on her teeth. Toki sighed softly, and turned her gaze away. She ruffled her mane up enough that she could duck her mouth behind it, and then continued to lay out goodies. She’d pre-made honey tarts, and hardened honey candies made from both normal honey, and monster honey. She’d even worked in a few flavorings to some, but not many. Once she got the sweets up, she worked on the Vestimoves stock, and left Tenne to handle the customers. Toki was probably better suited to working in the back.

"I'll give you a little hint, some of these candies were made with a very special ingredient. Completely of the Earth, and only accessible so many times in a year.” Tenne knelt and gave the boys accompanying their mother a nice smile. "Would either of you boys like to make a guess at what that ingredient is? I'll even give you a hint if you want one.”
The boys looked at each other and seemed to contemplate the monster in front of them. The taller of the two raised a hand. “Can we have a hint please?”

He smiled, then he stood tall. He reached and collected from a nearby window-cover a handful of the white powder that blanketed the land. He then knelt once more, and showed it to the boys.

“What- snow?” They blinked incredulously, eyes going wide. “No way- you can’t use snow to make candy, can you?”

Toki listened and hummed. They did use the colder temperatures of the snow outside to help harden the candies faster, but did that count for cooking the snow into the candies?

"You best believe it, dear boys. Snow as you might already know, is simply cold water, but it's just that. Cold, clean, filtered by Nature itself. We have utilized it, and another of Nature's gifts, and made this delectable treat to offer to you today." He purred, tilting his hand to let the snow sprinkle to the ground. "Honey-Snow Drops."

The mother didn’t look too sure if she believed him or not.

The kids eyes glinted excitedly at the thought though.

Toki smiled faintly, and pressed two of the mint flavored honey drops into Tenne’s hand as she passed by. She wasn’t above giving out a couple samples if people asked to try them- and the mint flavored ones would be ‘cold like snow’, and help solidify his story.

"Thank you, my darling." He cooed to her, before holding the disks to the boys. "Want to try?"

The smaller of the two shrank back and away as Toki passed near, but the taller nodded to the bigger monster. “Yes please.” He held out his hand eagerly.

“I… guess, yes.” The smaller nodded too, and peeked out from behind his mother’s leg. “The lady with wings has scary teeth, mister candy man.”

"She might have scary teeth, but she is the most sweetest woman I've ever had the fortune of meeting in this life of mine. She's the sweetest, most gentle mother to my boys, younger than you two are." He told the younger boy as he held the disk to him with one hand, the other going to the elder brother.

The two boys took their candies. The eldest worked on unwrapping his, his eyes wide and curious.

The younger one fiddled with the wrapper, slowly opening it as he nodded quietly. “But… isn’t she a bee? Bees are mean. They sting me and then my arm swells up and I can’t breathe.”

“Bees don’t try to be mean,” Toki says softly from behind Tenne. She keeps her teeth hidden, and her stingers on her wrists well out of sight. “They’re just afraid. You’re so much bigger than them, that they get scared very easy and act out. It’s okay if you’re afraid of me, little one. I’m not going to hurt you though, and neither will my bees.”

The boy hesitated and nodded slowly. Together, the brothers popped the candies in their mouths, and then started to bounce. The younger one’s eyes lit up. “It tastes like honey and cold!” He exclaims.

“It’s so minty!” The older beams. “I like it! Mommy! Mommy, can we get some please?”

“Oh… I don’t know…” The woman hesitates. She looks at Tenne and fiddles with her purse strap. “How much for a little baggie of them?”
"Mm... We have barely opened our store. I never once thought about what might be the requested price for such treats." He extended a hand to the closest bee, and he smiled wider, subtle and still calm, but now revealing his own sharp teeth, "Toki... My dear, darling love, just how much do you think would be fair to ask for?"

The woman blanched just a little at seeing his sharp, sharp teeth, but she kept her composure and straightened her back.

Toki blinked slowly, and pondered the economics of the time. For a bazaar, prices were supposed to skyrocket. She didn’t want to inflate too much- but she knew other monsters were depending on her to bring them back an improved amount of funds. She exhaled softly. “We have four different sized bags,” She says softly, and holds up a sample bag of each, using each of her arms. “The smallest holds ten candies- medium holding fifteen, large twenty, and the jumbo topping out at twenty eight candies. Their prices... are two dollars, four dollars, six dollars, and eight dollars, respectively.” She dips her head, and waits for the woman to decide. Her profits were hers and hers alone- and she had to help bring them income somehow. She couldn’t undercut this- though she paid nothing out of pocket for these candies in particular. He’d given them the magic ones. “It’s three, five, seven, and nine for the candies made out of bee honey instead of monster honey, Ma’am. What would you like to purchase?”

“My sons tried... monster honey?” Her mouth popped open.

Toki nods, and points to the clearly marked sign on the front of the table. “Green candies are monster candies, Ma’am, no matter the flavor.”

The woman sputters a moment, but recovers. “I... suppose a medium of your monster candies, I suppose. In the... mint flavor?”

"A medium monster mint it is, my lady." He purred. He turned, and gently took the medium sized bag of green candies off the stand. He then held it out to the mother. "Here you are."

The woman gave him a faint smile, and dug out four dollars from her wallet. She traded it over for the bag of thick, quarter sized candies, and tucked them away from her kids prying hands into her purse. “One at a time, children, or you’ll choke.” She admonishes gently. “Thank you. Have a good day.” She nods to Tenne and wanders off.

Toki tucks the bags down and turtles her neck into her fluff as the mother and her sons wander off. “I wonder if Hitsu would be upset if I borrowed one of the scarves.” She murmurs idly, and stoops to fetch a box of cinnabunnies from the general store. Toki pulsed some magic into them, and they warmed right up, spreading that hot, steamy fresh baked smell into the air as she settled them on the end of the table, summoning a few bees to keep the box warm for her.

"Let us go sit down, and you can snuggle into my coat instead.” He offered gently as he moved to behind the stall to get comfy.

Toki paused, and glanced at him. Oh... Oh that just made it more awkward. “I’m not... cold.” She says awkwardly, and turtles further into her fluff. “But my teeth are going to make people uncomfortable, on top of me looking like a bee. I figure maybe scarf can cover it and mask them instead?” She glances at him and the number of boxes they have to stack and put up. “We can’t just... Sit around either. We’ve got tables to stock and... a lot to do.” She finishes lamely. She never usually handled face to face sales back in her world- she did it with companies, and they picked up shipments and then sold it elsewhere.

"Ah." He nodded slowly in understanding, before he gave her a smile. "I'm sure she wouldn't care a
“Yeah.” She nods softly, and then fishes out a box of scarves. “Find one that’ll fit me, mister color-coordinated?” Toki was decent at it, but it would make him feel useful and helpful if he could find one that would make her look nice.

He chirped happily at that and came to her side to start rummaging. "If we're lucky there's a green one in here that matches your luscious fluff~" He purred.

Lo and behold, in the middle of the box was a beautiful green scarf with several different hues of green. There were multiple copies of it, in adult and child size, but the color seemed like it would fit well with Toki’s mane. She blinked and motioned to it. “What about that one?”

"It's perfect." He took it out of the box and gently wrapped it around her neck, covering her mouth and hiding away her teeth. "You look perfect~" He purred, "Well... if you would, if you weren’t already perfect, that is.”

Toki blushed over the edge of the scarf and laughs. It helps to keep her cheeks warm, so she doesn’t complain too much, even when she has to adjust it under her horns so it doesn’t stick. “You’re too sweet, Tenne.” She laughs softly. “So… I can finish setting up here. Do you want to go explore the bazaar and see what they have for sale? Maybe start looking for Christmas presents for the boys?”

"I suppose it wouldn't hurt, however I haven't much of their currency so I might not actually make a purchase."

"You can come back here. We have some to use for trading money back and forth and making change, so if there's something you really want, I'm sure we can manage it." Toki nods lightly to him. She takes a deep breath, and then exhales, before clearing a space. Its cold, but they have a fairly large space to set up. There had been a few cancellations with her taking up a spot here, so... There was plenty of space for her to summon Clover, and for Clover to curl up behind the back of the tent and radiate warmth. She just needed to make space for her better behaved summons.

He pecked her head lightly, and then went over to Clover, of who he wasn’t entirely afraid of anymore, and gently massaged her cheeks. “Such a good girl.” He purred before starting out. "Alright, I'll be back later. I love you!" He chirped.

Clover rolled her eyes at him and rolled onto her side, stretching her long legs out and sighing as she got comfortable with her large head on a box.

Toki smiled and waved him off, before focusing on setting up.

It didn’t take her long without him underfoot, and soon she had everything on display, and their stand lit up by the green glow of her bees as they sat tightly onto the tent and didn’t move, looking inanimate as they provided light and warmth and helped keep the area around them warmer than the rest of the bazaar.

In the long run, Toki had probably… four or five customers in the time that Tenne was gone. As the bazaar started to pick up with more and more people coming, lots of people came to gawk at her as she fiddled around in her stand. She had a book to read during her down time, and Toki honestly wasn’t sure what to do with herself. It was slow- but at least she’d sold some of the more expensive things. Someone had bought several bottles of the alcohol- and several people bought the clothes that Hitsu had sent, after Toki had warmed them with her magic.

Tenne hadn't bought as much as Toki sold, but he was excited to see all the different wares that the
humans offered. There were candles with different colors and scents, knitted wears, jewelry, there was food in some of the stalls, food that smelled heavenly, and even some produce. There was also a section where they were selling some glass... but that area smelled horrendous and Tenne quickly sought to avoid that section of the market.

He had returned after not too long to Toki's stall, a warm smile on his face as he gazed upon his mate. Of course he was gone for only maybe 20 minutes but he loved her so dearly, so could he be blamed?

Toki spotted Tenne heading her way long before he reached her. He was several feet taller than almost everyone, and the stark white of his skin stood out in the bright colors of the tents. She waved a hand at Tenne, and then looked down at her next customer, which was a young couple that were mostly keeping to themselves as they talked over which scarf would look the best, and if they should get a matching set.

Ah, young love. It was very sweet. Toki was especially fond of one of the red scarves that Hitsu had for sale, but she kept that to herself. Red didn't look good on her. She just liked it because Papyrus had one just like it, and it reminded her of her first home.

"I would suggest the blue." She says softly to the couple. "It will compliment her eyes, and help frame the shape of your jawline and make it stronger, sir."

"See? The gray bee lady says blue." The girl grins.

The guy sighs and kisses her forehead. "She's green, Heaven. She's green. But the blue would look good on us both." He nods slowly, and then they both set out to picking their preferred sizes.

Toki chuckles softly. Partial colorblind people definitely did see the world differently. She glanced over at Tenne and waved him over while they figured out what they wanted. "You weren't gone long. Did you have fun, sweetheart?"

"Indeed so, my love." He purred happily as he came to her side. "I can only hope you had a good time in my absence." He purred, pecking her head gently.

"Well enough," She says lightly, and leans into his kiss, "I'm not very good at the whole sales thing, but I manage." She blinks up at him. "Did you find anything that you'd like to buy?"

"There were a few things that I liked, but nothing caught my eye enough to consider purchasing," He answered.

She nodded lightly and hummed. "Did you scout out any good places for lunch?" She inquired lightly. "Or dinner, perhaps. We're gonna be home late."

"Yes, I think I found a place that would suit for a dinner out on the town." He replied with a smile. "I think you'll like it. And we'll be able to get our food to go if we have to leave sooner than later."

She nodded and smiled at him, even if he couldn’t see it. Her attention was drawn back to the man and woman as they waved to catch her attention again. "Have you made your decision?" She inquired gently.

"We have." The man nodded. He held up two blue medium scarves- the ones sized more for monster teens than adults, and then tucked them under his arm. "How much?"

"Ten each." She gives him an eye smile, and collects his money as he pays. She watches them go, and then carefully marks down what was sold, before tucking the money away into the pouch. She’d
divvy up the funds at the end. Once they were gone, she looked up at Tenne. “I don’t know how you do it,” She says. “I don’t like being stared at. I didn’t mind it before,” before she’d been a beast, before she’d been a skeleton, before, before, before, “but it gets my beast’s hackles all up and she gets grumpy. It’s so…” She fluffs around her borrowed scarf and seems to pout.

"It's not easy at first... but don’t worry, it'll get better in time, especially once everyone learns you're not a scary monster, but a sweet Momma bee."

Toki nodded and chuckled softly. "Well, here's to hoping so." She bumps her hip to his, and then sidles out of the way to replace the scarves that had been claimed. She hummed and spread them out on the table, listening to the voices of the people passing by. "You're doing better around lots of humans than I figured you'd be." She comments, knowing he wasn't fond of large crowds or of humans.

"Beast is probably a bit more anxious than I am, but my tail is tucked away and I keep my voice sweet, and the humans do not grow scared or hesitant around me... It works to remind me that I aim to behave the same, as well as the opposite. Besides, I have you.” He chuckles. “Why the hell would I be nervous?"

She laughs softly and lets her head bump into his arm. Considering he was very aware that her power trumped his, and she could very easily keep him safe if she needed to, it very well explained why he wasn’t too nervous. "I wish you could tell that to my beast. My beast is not fond of the humans. Which makes no sense considering..." She'd been human. All the same, Toki exhaled and glanced up at him. "The humans can get past the bee look, but my teeth can’t be hidden, and that's the main problem. Hence the scarf. The calmer they are, the better, though."

"I suppose there's no true winning for this, but at least we've met a point of compromise." He purred, kissing her head.

She chuckled. “I guess. Compromise is part of all relationships, right?’

There was a light knock on the table, and a voice started out in soft stuttering English. “Ah… you sale demon items?” The man cleared his throat awkwardly and flushed. “English not good.”

It wasn’t the lack of English, or the particularly thick Japanese accent that caught her attention. No, what caused her body to tense like she’d been stuck with a cattle prod was the voice itself. That voice- she hadn’t heard it in years. Not since before her children - not since just shortly after she’d gotten engaged.

She turned, and there he was.

Dark hair, dark and slanted eyes with small worry lines in the corners, darker skin… He was still shorter than her, and bundled up in thick coats, but he was still built just like she remembered. He still carried himself like she remembered, like he’d seen too much and done too much.

Han.

Her throat bobbed- she’d last seen him slathered on his own blood, begging her not to make him leave, pleading with her not to let him die. He’d died in her arms, cradled to her chest, and his soul had shattered, crumbled into beautiful blue dust in her hand.

A quick and sharp mental pulse from her beast had her snapping to her senses, and she managed a soft, strangled sound, before clearing her throat. “I speak Japanese.” She said, switching to her native born tongue very swiftly, her voice shaking just slightly. She’d been teaching Tenne the
language too, in her spare time. The only good thing about her scarf, was that it helped hide most of her expression. Only her eyes were blown wide, but there wasn’t much she could do about that.

Han looked relieved. “Oh thank god. I’ve been wandering around here trying to find gifts for my family back home. I’m here on a business trip, and my kids asked me to get them gifts from the monsters. I didn’t even know where to look- but here you are.” Han gave a soft laugh, and rubbed the back of his head. “So… What would you suggest for a gaggle of young men, a lover, and a son and a daughter?”

Tenne had grown worried when she made the face she had, but as she began to converse pleasantries with the man he seemed to settle. As the man spoke, he took in what words he understood, and then he rumbled quietly. "What do you think would do for what he needs, my dear? I would think our honey-discs would survive his trip home.”

Toki was still reeling. Children. A son and a daughter. Young men. She noticed he made no mention of a sister. She dry swallowed and it took her a moment to answer.

It was a moment that Han noticed. “Are you okay?” He asks slowly. “You look… well, like you’ve seen a ghost, frankly.”

She sucked in a soft breath and nodded slowly. “I’m sorry. You just… sound exactly like someone that I once knew.”

“Once knew?” He lifted a brow curiously.

“My little brother.” Toki answers softly. “I’m sorry. It just… threw me. I haven’t heard his voice since he died so long ago.”

“I’m sorry for your loss. To be fair, it sounds just like my big sister. She died almost two years ago, so it threw me for a moment too. I understand.” He nodded gently, and gave her a smile. “She was really sweet. Her name was Tokiko- but she preferred to be called Toki. You… well, you remind me of her. Toki kept an apiary, you see.”

Toki simply smiled. Well, Tenne was going to have questions after that. That also answered questions for her. Apparently only one could exist at a time. She’d replaced this world’s Toki. “I see. I’m sorry for your loss as well.” She dipped her head to him, and then glanced over her wares. Her insides hurt. Her heart hurt- and her scent displayed this nicely. This was her brother- this was her baby brother from another world but he’d never know it was her. She couldn’t- she couldn’t do that to him. Because she wasn’t his Toki- and he wasn’t her Han, despite what she would like to think. “Well, what do your son and daughter like? Our honey drops are good treats, but we’ve also got plain honey, scarves, alcohol for your ‘gaggle of young men’ or your lover… Lots of choices.”

He hesitated and nodded slowly. “Well, I wouldn’t mind some honey- maybe some of the drops too. But definitely the scarves. My Rosie loves scarves, just like Todd does. Felix would like… a green one. Rosie would like pink- she loves pink. Todd… Red. Definitely red for Todd.”

“Blue.” Toki blurts. “For you.” Like his soul. Like the one she had gotten to see once- so damaged and hurt and wounded, but so strong and beautiful and gentle of a blue- before it had cracked and shattered into dust in her hands.

“Blue for me?” He blinks. “Blue is good. I like blue.” He glanced to Tenne, hesitant about asking his opinion on the matter since he wasn’t sure if he understood what he was saying.

Tenne was still a little confused, but he was letting Toki talk, as she seemed to know something
about this man that he didn’t.

“Blue is good.” She agrees, voice wanting to choke up. Blue was his soul color, she knew. A soul that would be filled with LOVE- and with love too- but be so kind and so gentle. She missed him. Oh how she ached to reach across the table and hug him- to call him brother and hear him call her sister. But he wasn’t- and like with Tenne, Quinn, and Kai, Toki had to accept that.

It didn’t make it hurt any less, or make her soul sing any quieter with her pain. Homesickness hit her hard, and there was nothing the soft comforts of Sequoia could do to help her, or even the soothing hand of her beast. She was faced with her blood family, blood family she had lost, and it was family she could never have again.

Han nodded, and collected multiple items from the table, piling them into his arms. He grabbed a couple copies of things, things he deemed fitting for people she may have known, and people she may not have known- people she may never know again- and once he had a sufficient pile in his arms, he smiled up at her. “How much do I owe you, Mrs…?”

Toki didn’t answer immediately with her name, or her last name, because she knew what sort of attention that would draw. Instead, she made a small show of tallying up what he was buying, and how much it would cost him in American dollars.

Tenne at this point stepped in, and he gently gripped her shoulders as he leaned in and kissed her cheek, before rumbling to her quietly. "Are you alright?” He asked her in a hushed whisper.

“No,” she answered, “I’m not. I’m not okay at all.” But, when she straightened, she had a smile back on her face, and held out the tablet with his total written in his native language.

Han’s eyes sparkled, and he fished out the amount for her, handing it over eagerly. “Thank you, Mrs.-.” His eyes caught on the label on one of the jars of honey, and then flashed back up to her, “Nara. Huh. That’s a familiar name. Same as mine.”

“Small world.” She smiled back politely, and dipped her head, giving him a half bow as she did so. “We’ll be here every Saturday, from here on out, so please, if you’re ever in the city again, Mr. Nara, feel free to visit.”

“I will.” Han gave her a brilliant smile. “I may make a trip back to the states just for these candies if my students like them too. Buy enough in bulk maybe to last me all year. All natural is better than processed goods for children anyways.”

He was a teacher- at an actual school. He’d gone to school to be a teacher. Toki’s heart throbbed more, and her scent thickened with it. Still, she kept up her facade, and smiled until Han wandered off to another stall to seek out more goods. When he got distracted by something off down the way, Toki’s shoulders slumped. She put up her ‘gone to lunch’ sign she’d made, her wings practically dragging the ground, and she turned away from the table to step mechanically into the back.

And Tenne went right with her. "Toki... what happened? Who was that?"

The worst possible thing happened. Toki hiccupsd. The hiccup lead up to tears- which steadily began to roll right down her cheeks, right into the scarf she had covering her mouth. She yanked it down as she kept her back turned to the crowd outside, covering her crying with one of her hands as best she could.

“That was... That was Han.” She knew he knew the name. And he’d be even more confused- because he knew her brother was dead in her world.
He knew indeed but he knew not how to answer as he immediately made to comfort her, pulling her form to his as he ran his hand over her head

"Han... your brother?"

“Yes,” She turned and hid her face into his chest and mane, all four of her arms looping around his middle as her word was choked on a sob. Her fragile barrier around her soul chipped and shattered a little bit more, her walls crumbling down. Of all the people she had to meet, it had to be him. “It’s him, Tenne, it’s him but it’s not him. It’s Han, but it’s not my Han, and it’s not fair. Why did the universe have to show me this? Why did it have to be him? He died in my arms Tenne, and there he was, not three feet from me but he doesn’t know me! I’m not his Toki! His Toki is dead and my Han is dead and it’s not right!”

"Why didn't you say anything?" He asked quietly, "I would have thought this was your chance to say something... especially if there was something to be said."

“Because he’s not mine, Tenne, he’s not mine, and I’m not his.” She stresses. “His sister died, and he’s made peace with it. I know what I’m feeling because what I know, and I wouldn’t wish that on him. I wouldn’t wish that on any of the multiples that I know.” She sniffled. “Imagine he knew that… That his sister died because I came here. Because two of the same person- the same soul- can’t be in one world at once without repercussions. Imagine… Imagine you went to my world. And… and you met your sons there. Your sons who have children of their own- families of their own- and they found out their father died so you could be there. Imagine how you would feel. Imagine how they would feel. And… And you’d know why I can’t. I can’t, Tenne, and I want to tell him so bad. I want to hold my baby brother again, to laugh and sing songs while he plays his violin… But I can’t. Because he’s not mine.”

He listened to her before he sighed and rested his head on hers, "Alright... I'm sorry..." he murmured gently, "I will drop this. I'm sorry I put you in distress with my naivety." Though after some time of letting her sniffle against him and calm down, he smiled and lifted her head so she’d look at him. "You make it sound like I was a cranky old man in the other-verse. I suppose that would mean my darling Kai and Quinn would be dashing grown men there as well..."

She sniffs quietly. "You're not naive, Tenne. You're not. You meant well and I'm sorry I got upset." Toki closes her eyes and just hiccups against him. It wasn't fair. It wasn't fair, and whoever was pulling the strings for this world was an asshole. His following words made her give a soft bitter laugh into his chest, right up until he tilts her head up and makes her look at him. "You're not wrong. In another world, in another life, you grew old and bitter and sour in a world where everything was terrible, and you and the king were alone except for each other. Your sons had different names, but grew up well all the same. I knew them... Well. I see this world and I see how much I've changed it, and I wonder if it will be the same again."

He smiled gently and he kissed her head tenderly. "It will never be the same as it would have been before you came... and you know why." He chuckled gently. "I love you." He then purred sweetly as he kissed her gently.

Toki met his kiss gently and lifts a hand to stroke over his bearded cheek. She peers up at him tenderly, and offers a faint smile. "The Tenebris I first met never grew a beard. Sometimes he melted into a blob of particularly cantankerous goo, but he never grew a beard or a mane. He was also... Built different. But he was older." She sighs and nuzzles him, "I love you too, Tenne. I love you a lot. I couldn’t have made it in this world if not for you and the boys, I really couldn’t have.”

Her heart still hurt, but the pain was lessening a bit with his comfort. Some of that was her beast pressing in and trying to soothe it, and the wordless comfort that Sequoia was offering. Sometimes
words weren’t needed - sometimes it was just comfort and companionship that helped. Toki already had words from Tenne - but comfort was never turned away.

She leaned back a bit and scrubbed a hand against her green stained cheeks, sniffing softly through her teeth. “Thank you. I’m sorry I fell apart. It just… was sudden.” She hadn’t been able to brace for, or even expect to brace for seeing Han again.

Tenne chirped happily and his tail wrapped around her for a moment. "No matter what happens I’ll be right beside you." He purred happily, "Got it?"

“Yes.” She nuzzled his shoulder. “I’m glad you’ll be here with me - I’m not going anywhere either.” Especially since she had no idea what the Void had even wanted her to do. And… Well, Sequoia didn’t want to leave. Toki was conflicted. She honestly didn’t want to think about it, frankly. Just… no.

It was understandable that she didn’t want to think about it, and Tenne wasn’t in any mindset to question the topic further. He rather simply savored that Toki was so happy with him. He was sweet and innocent in the mate mindset, simply happy enough that she was happy with him. It made the maned beast fluff up in the middle of the market.

She laughed as his blanket like mane fluffed up, and gently tangled her fingers in it. “You look like a melanistic dandelion.” She tells him fondly, and kisses him again. “Okay… we still have work we have to do.”

"Indeed so. We best get back to it then, we have more children looking at the honey discs." He chortled as he reached up and gently re-wrapped her scarf. "As beautiful as your teeth may be, you wish to hide them away for now... so let us do just that."

Toki gave him a faint nod, and stoke his fingers to kiss them through her scarf mask. “Alright… Tonight, when you and I get home and the boys are both in bed and asleep,” She murmurs softly, “May we…?” She brushes her fingers to her chest, motioning to where her soul lay hidden. After today, seeking comfort in a merge would be a familiar, welcoming habit.

He gave a nod to her request, his expression a mix of eagerness and excitement, though his vocal energy cleverly hid it as he kissed her again. "As you wish~"

Toki laughs softly into his kiss, and leans into him. “As I wish,” She teases, “I think it’s more than just me wishing for it, dear.”

He was insatiable, really. Once he’d gotten a taste for merging, he loved it. He touched her soul, and let her touch his, as often as they could. It still baffled her that they hadn’t conceived… But it was probably because of the instability. Toki and Sequoia were a mishmash - a frankensoul - and that instability would probably never result in a healthy pregnancy. Part of Toki mourned - part of her did not.

Most of her just wanted to take solace in Tenne’s soul, and spend the night wrapped up in him to ease away the painful scar that had been scraped raw once more by Han. Logically she knew it wasn’t her fault Han had died- but there was a small part of Toki that blamed herself for her little brother’s death. If she hadn’t kicked the metaphorical hornets nest… But there was nothing to be done. Going back wouldn’t fix it, even if she’d been back in her world.

As much as it hurt, Han’s death wasn’t her fault. She blamed herself, but she couldn’t have prevented it, she couldn’t have stopped him from dying. Toki needed to forgive herself for it - and she would, in time.
“But,” She continues a moment later, “We have work to do first, and kids to put to entertain when we get home tonight. Once we’re alone… you’re all mine.”

"I'm all yours~ and you're both all mine to love~" He purred happily.

“You’re ours to love too.” Toki smiled to him, and leaned up to kiss him again. Then, Toki straightened, blocked up everything to deal with later, and headed back out to deal with business, as she needed to once more.
Chapter 113

They ended up making decent money for themselves, and for everyone else by the end of that day. When they got home, they divided up the funds to their rightful owners, and then got the kids and went home.

And, well… Later that night, Toki and Tenne spent their hours simply laying together with their souls merged. They ended up falling asleep like that, and it was what Toki needed.

She felt lighter a week or so later. She’d taken time and just… let her mind settle, coming to terms with everything that had been stirred up. Toki still hurt—seeing Han had ripped her scars wide open—but she was… not better, but more at peace with it.

It left her in a good mood, as she bumped her hip to Tenne’s and danced around the kitchen while she did dishes. Her pheromones were high with her glee as she hummed a silly song and balanced doing dishes in her hands. She was just finishing them up, washing and rinsing the dishes with one set of hands, and drying and putting them away with the other set.

People joked about having four hands, until they actually did. But, when you got four hands and learned to use them, they were actually very, very useful.

"Tenne dear?" Toki chirps, glancing out at the snow falling, "We need t’ go milk the cows after I finish dishes and you finish breakfast. We’re almost out o’ milk, and town needs another shipment."

"'Tenne Dear'?" Tenne laughed a little as he ran the ridges of his tail over her back, his hands unable to prod her in teasing as he was on breakfast duty. Four hands made washing dishes so much faster, it was amazing, but unfortunately she lacked a third set to also do breakfast. It gave him something to do. "It sounds to me like someone's in one heck of a good mood." He commented as he flipped a pancake in its pan, hearing the soft sound of sizzling and growing, pleased by it,

"Of course, we could see about having the boys aid us in milking the cows. Kai does very well by it, and Quinn is learning quickly under his brother's teachings." He rumbled, "By the way, I've been thinking about designing a milking machine to help us with all our cows."

“I am in a good mood,” She laughs and smiles at him. “Is it so strange? I know I’ve been a bit melancholy since last week’s Saturday Market, but I feel better.” She finishes dishes with a flurry of her hands and magic, drying the fluffy fur around her wrists that hid her stingers, and then she tucked the dishes away and turned off the sink.

She slid over to him and looped her arms around his middle, nuzzling her face into his shoulders. “I would absolutely love that. As much as I don’t mind milking, it’s slowly killing my wrists. I don’t mind if the boys want to help though. It’ll give them something to do, until they get bored and it’s just us again.” She laughs gently. Toki was the fastest milker. Four hands, again made for the best
way to get milk out of a cow. “Mmm, breakfast smells amazing.”

He squared his shoulders a little as he gave a grin and he rumbled softly in reply. "I'm glad you think so."

She felt him square his shoulders and laughed into his back. "You puff up like the world's most adorable dandelion when you're proud of something." She laughs. "Or strut like a peacock. Are you sure you're not part bird beast?" She teases him, and peeks around his arm to look at breakfast. One of her smaller hands snakes around to try and steal a blueberry out of the pancake batter without him noticing.

"I wouldn't think it impossible." He chortled, before he swatted her hand. "Get outta there." He tutted, before poking his butt out to push her back some from the stove.

“Tennnnnneee," She pouts, and there might have been a tiny playful whine there as she’s denied a blueberry. As his butt pushes her out, her eyes glint, and she leans back, before goosing him right in the ass. “Fine. If I can’t have a piece of sweet blueberry, I’ll have a piece of this sweet ass~” She jokes.

He gasped sharply and jumped slightly, before he chuffed and chuckled. "You little stinker. Get outta my space and get back to your dishes."

She laughed and scooted away. “But I’m done with the dishes, Tenne, until you’ve finished cooking. I’m bored. And bored bees are feisty bees.”

"I wonder if their mommy is feeling feisty too~" He purred as he gave her a look. "And I dunno, pups and mothers eat a lot of pancakes."

She pouts at him. “Well, I could help make more pancakes, but you told me you had it down.” She crosses both sets of arms, and cocks a plush hip at him. One of her wings quirks up with her brows. “I suppose I could go wake the boys to give you time to finish cooking. Sound about good~?”

"Sounds good, sweetie." He pulled her close and gave her a kiss, grinning at her once he pulled back. "Love you~"

“I love you too.” She smiled up at him, nudged him with the curling part of her horn, and then made her way to the stairs. She sauntered up, and went to the boy’s rooms, carefully knocking on Kai’s door so he’d have time to get up and get dressed, before she stepped into Quinn’s room. “Quinn? Sweetie, it’s time to get up.” She slips inside, and pads for his bed, reaching down to gently touch his shoulder as he slept, sprawled out in an adorable pile.

"Mnhhh~" The pup whined and waved a flimsy hand at Toki. "Noooo Momma..."

"Yeeees, Quinnny," Toki laughed. She crouched down, and ran the fuzzy fluff of her fur along his neck, tickling him gently. “C’mon, sweetie. Your Daddy is making breakfast- he makes the nummiest breakfast, doesn’t he?”

"Pancakes?" He asked as he squirmed at the tickling.

"Pancakes," she nods and smiles. She'd been doing so much work with him on his speaking, and it was finally paying off. "Pancakes... Maybe with some honey on them?" She tickles him again, rousing him more as she wonders if he wants her honey or honey from her apiary.

He trilled happily then rolled over and clamped onto her form to be picked up. "Honey!" He trilled.
Toki scooped him up with a soft chuckle, and tickled his little pajama clad sides, before propping him on her hip. “C’mom, sweet cheeks.” She smooched his cheeks with a dramatic kissy sound, and then headed out the door, to knock on Kai’s door again. “Let’s go see if your brother is up.”

"Mkay." He yawned widely. Quinn lifted his head and blinked, spooked. "M-Momma!” He whined, patting her shoulder before pointing at the mirror.

Toki turned around and spotted the mirror. She froze, and her eyes stretched wide, her arms clamping protectively around Quinn.

There in the mirror was a black void, yawning open like the gates to the abyss. She remembered that hole- the Void, the Magic, was unforgettable. No, what was truly terrifying, was the hands stretching out from it towards her.

She bolted, instinctively panicking as she shoved into Kai’s room. The void yawned wider behind her, taking up the wall with wispy black tendrils crawling across the floor.

Kai startled awake with a loud cry, a pups frightened cry, as Toki yanked him out of the bed and barreled out of the window. The glass shattered, and she used her magic to brush it off her skin as she powered through, taking to the sky and circling around the house with her wings buzzing as she tried to get Tenne's attention. He couldn't, couldn't, go upstairs.

Tenne had stepped out of the kitchen as the door was slammed to Kai’s room but he hadn’t made it to calling out her name when he heard the noise. Unfortunately, he knew not the danger, and went upstairs quickly. "Toki?"

He opened the door to Kai’s room and he looked at the broken glass. "Toki!?"

The void was not there as he rushed back upstairs. The only thing that remained was an inky smudge, darker than the darkest black, smelling faintly of the deepest depths of nighttime and cold.

Toki however, heard him going back up. She panicked, and headed for the barn. Both boys were gently dislodged and nestled inside of the hay, where she shushed their whimpering, and covered them up to hide them. “Stay quiet, stay down, don’t move,” She whispers, “Until I or your Daddy come to get you.”

She left once they nodded, and buzzed back to the house. She hovered outside the broken window to Kai’s room, and buzzed to call his attention. “Tenne!”

"Toki, what happened?!” He came to the window. "Where's the boys?"

“Get out!” She came closer to the window, her eyes frightened. “Out! There’s something in the house! It’s not- it’s, it’s what brought me here!” Her tone spoke it all. If it was here again… what was it doing? She hadn’t done anything for the Void to take her- so what was it doing here?”

His eyes narrowed before he turned and growled. He then looked around, "What is it?" he asked, before hearing as the kitchen's smoke alarm going off, "Oh Damn it!” he snarled, "Toki... Just hang on!” He told her, before disappearing to the hallway and downstairs. He turned off the stove and moved the pan to the sink, coughing at the smoke before he turned and opened the window in front of the sink, coughing still as he waved his hand to coax the smoke out. "Toki!” he called again.

Toki appeared down at the kitchen window, planting her hands on the windowsill as she gave him a concerned look. “Get out of the house! It’s... It’s the void! It’s nothingness but it’s everything. It can’t be explained!” The smoke looked dark, and it smelled foul.
"Toki..." He coughed again, "Once this smoke clears, I want you to come back in. We'll have a cuppa tea and we'll talk this through... Okay?"

He gave her a smile, unaware of the form stepping through the darkening smoke, empty eyes looking over him before turning to stare right at Toki.

Toki’s eyes blew wide, her pupils rapidly expanding into black disks that reflected the form of a medieval doctors mask back at her. She bolted, not away, but for the door, aiming to get Tenne out of there. If Tenne couldn’t see it, she needed to get him, get the boys, and run. Fuck everything else—they needed to leave, now.

And yet, in those fearful black disks, Tenne could see the form behind him and he turned to see the being as it turned back to face him again. Without another thought, Tenne roared and lunged at the stranger, who simply disappeared into the darkness.

Already out of breath, Tenne's breathing was rough and deep as he navigated out of the darkness and into the front room, where the form was waiting.

Tenne snarled as he made to lunge at the intruder before the form lifted a hand connected to his body only by a few wisps of smoky essence.

‘Kneel’

Tenne's legs buckled and he barely made a few more feet before falling to his knees at the foot of the strange monster invading their home, his eyes lifting in what appeared to be a increasingly drugged state from the vapor he was breathing in...

Breathing? Was he even breathing? He couldn't...

"L-Leave..." He started breathlessly, before the hand that forced his knee lowered to in front of his face. His eyes followed it before a wave of black washed over them, darkening his already black Sclera and hiding his purple irises as he fell silent.

And as the beast was sedated, the hand lifted to his forehead and began to look within.

Trudging his way through the snow, he makes it to the cave and shakes off before approaching the form collapsed against the wall "Oh my goodness..."

His newfound kin was laying on a slab now under a warming blanket, her breathing was deeper... Good... She would survive.
“Speaking of pack... what caused you to be separated from yours? Such terrible damage... Do Insectis not aid their kin as Drake or Avari would?”

“I'm Tokiko... Nara.”

“She's missing... where in the underground could she have gone if she was still recovering? If she died and I wasn't there to try and save her...” Tenne was pacing back and forth in his office, her note of farewell laying on his desk where he had put it once he had found it.

She was cradling them, singing to them... He could feel his heart leap in his chest at the sight of how happy they were in her arms.

Toki burst through the front door, her eyes wild and wide. She opened her mouth and snarled at him. “You get away from him! You get away from him right now!” Her mouth lit with a green beam of energy, and despite her fears, she stalked forwards, her mane bristling upwards with a surprisingly intimidating amount of force.

The reading of Tenne's memories cut short when Toki appeared and the form slowly allowed his hand to fall. The darkness drained from Tenne's form and came out his mouth, allowing him to cough and regain his breath. It didn’t last long before the form gave a small wave of his hand, and sent Tenne falling to his side with a crash onto the floor, his eyes now closed.

‘There you are, Tokiko Nara.’
Toki’s breathing picked up and she swallowed hastily. She edged around him, and came to Tenne, crouching down to check on him as quickly and as gently as she could. “Who are you and what did you do to Tenne? How do you know my name?” She demands. “I don’t know your face or your voice.”

‘I am Phase, and I know everything about you.’ The form allowed her to go to Tenne. ‘He is merely unconscious. And irrelevant to my presence... I have come for you.’ The hand lifted once more, and this time snared her soul, pulling her away from Tenne, and closer to himself.

‘TOKI!’ The first thing to hit Toki about the soul being in this stranger’s grasp was Sequoia’s panicked shriek from within.

Sequoia’s panicked shriek from within was soon echoed by Toki’s as their soul was grasped by the stranger. She was pulled closer to him by the power in his hand, and as his grasp curled around the source of their life, she felt the power in her throat die off. She sucked in a shaky breath, claws curling into her chest. This wasn’t what her soul being touched should feel like. “What… What are you doing to me?” She gasps. It wasn’t pleasant- not in the slightest. “What do you want with me?”

‘You were brought to this world with a task given to you...’ He twitched the hand and her soul was pulled from her chest... The shadowy smoke then pulled her body back as a weapon began to form in the creature's hands. It was a large scythe, much like a reaper's weapon. ‘And now,’ The form continued, ‘your duty is complete.’

‘Toki... Toki is he gonna kill us!? ’

‘I… I don’t know!’ She cried out to Sequoia, and lunged against the bonds holding her. She looked to Tenne, to his unconscious form, and called upon her magic, willing him to wake up, to get away so he didn’t have to be near what would come. She would die- a reaper's blade was not a peaceful weapon. No, it was for many things- many unpleasant things.

“I don’t know what my duty was, so how would I know I completed it!?” She shouted at him. “Let me go! Don’t touch me!”

‘It was not for you to know. It was the will of the darkness.’

‘Toki do something!’ Sequoia was scared, and a final scream of Toki’s name was the last thing the monster heard as the scythe was swung with deadly precision, slicing the two boss hearts apart from each other. Coming with their separation immediately was followed by a powerful tearing at their body, as if it attempted to split like the souls had.

“I… I can’t do anything!” Toki squirmed and struggled, right up until the split happened.

Toki’s body bisected itself down the center, Toki splitting off on the left side, following the scarred side of her skull. She cried out, and the fog split and folded in, reforming what was taken from her body with a swift action. Toki was left whole, half naked, and in agony as newly formed nerve endings fired and went off as they experienced everything for the first time.

The other half of her body went under a greater change. The bee wing was swallowed up by shadows, twisting and morphing into some unknown shape. When the shadows dispersed, in it’s place stood a fluffy looking moth monster, with glittering wings and glistening skin, complete with soft looking antenna sticking up from the mane on her head. She had the same teeth as Toki, and had six arms instead of four- she was an entirely different breed of beast.

The scythe disappeared as the monster that identified himself as Phase focused on the split souls in
his hands. It took both some time, but with the aid of the shadow magic, they formed their own souls once more. Toki's had the power that made her a boss heart, While Sequoia's had been drained of all her boss magic, leaving her a perfect little ordinary soul. He delicately put both souls with their respective owners, and laid them down to rest. Toki was laid on the sofa, and the moth on Tenne's chair.

Tenne on the other hand was fine where he was. He wasn't laying on anything that would cut off blood flow, so he was just fine there on the floor.

'And the will of the void has been done...'

"Mo..... wa.... mma! Momma!" A soft hiccup interrupted his words. "W-Wake up Momma!" Toki's face was being pushed against with desperate paws, "Momma!" Quinn was sobbing as he stood beside her, shaking her as best his tiny paws could.

Kai was over on Tenne, shaking him with the same frantic as his little brother. Kai wasn't sobbing as hard as his little brother, but they were both terrified that something had happened to their parents.

Part of her face felt like fire had lanced over it as Quinn patted her cheeks almost desperately. She sucked in a soft breath, her lungs shakily expanding. One was entirely new, had never been consciously used, and the older one was distressed from the loss of her initial organ. So were the rest of her insides.

Toki's eyes slid open just a crack, and she groaned softly. Her chest felt heavy, but also feather light, like she was missing something that weighed her down.

"Quinn...?" She whispered softly. They hadn't listened to her orders to stay put... But it made her happy to know he was okay. She shakily tried to stir. "Quinn..."

"Momma!" He shrieked her title as she woke and he immediately dropped to hug her neck, wailing into her fluff in pure relief.

His wails were loud, and he made her head ring. Still, she hugged him when he latched onto her, and held him close as she groaned softly. “Hah… I’m here, baby. I’m here…”

Kai shook Tenne’s shoulder, harder than Quinn had dared. “Dad... C’mon, Dad, wake up. C’mon… Wake up…”

"M-Momma...” Quinn sobbed into her fur. “Momma..."

Tenne's form was shaking with the desperate rattling that Kai was inflicting, and soon he groaned. "Kai..." He grumbled, before his eyes slowly opened. "Ugh... What... what happened?" He growled quietly.

Kai latched onto Tenne as soon as he was awake, letting out a desperate sound of relief.

“Darkness came,” Toki answered softly. “Darkness came... and Darkness took... Took Sequoia.” Her soul was quiet- empty. Toki’s hand touched her chest, and it hurt. She glanced to the chair where a moth monster was sprawled. She swallowed. “I think… I think…”

The moth stirred slowly, blinking open green eyes. She moved awkwardly, jerkily, like it was a body that she wasn’t used to having. She sucked in a sharp breath, mouth gaping open as she filled her
lungs and kick started her body functions into hyper drive. Her eyes slid over to everyone else, and blinked owlishly.

“Toki…?” It was Sequoia’s voice, coming from the moth’s body, sounding frightened, panicked, and in pain. She reached for her, trying to go to her, and tumbled right off the chair in a jumble of multiple limbs.

“Sequoia got her own body.” Her soul felt empty. She hadn’t been that empty in… In so long. Toki scrambled up with a wobbly position, her muscles not responding on her right side like they should. They felt false, temporary, like they were just there so she didn’t keel over right there. She ended up crawling to her, and reached out to touch her. Sequoia flinched, and Toki flinched back too. “I’m so sorry… It’s sensitive, I know.”

Tenne slowly got up and winced in pain, slowly coming over as well, "Sequoia... you look amazing." He purred to her gently.

'She repented for her sins, and learned to love again. Her task is complete, and I was ordered to give to her what she yearned the most…’ Came a voice from the form standing nearby, unnoticed until he wanted to be seen and heard.

Sequoia startled at the voice, and she half flopped onto Tenne as she tried to get away, her wings getting in the way as she tried to flap them and move them. “What I yearned for most?” She asks shakily.

Toki bristled, her mane fluffing out, and she turned Quinn away from him. “You’ve finished what you’ve come here to do.” She leers at him. “As grateful as I am for you giving her a body… Why are you still here?” Toki was wary to trust anything from the void.

Tenne looked up at Phase and hissed loudly at him, but the form approached without fear.

'My work is not yet done...' He answered simply. 'I have given her what she yearned for most. For her tale to finally conclude.'

That had Sequoia pause as she tried to translate that into something that made sense... But once it did… "D-Do you mean I…?"

'Yes. When your body is old, and you are ready to bid this world farewell. You will close your eyes, and you will never open them again. The Anti-Heart of Cruelty will be dead... Forever. Though with its death, the soul of Balance shall forever live on.'

Sequoia brought a hand to her mouth, shaky but with the most control she could muster at the time, and she took in his words, before she began to tremble, tears welling in her eyes. "I... I'm going to die..." She whispered.

Toki stared in shock, her wings trembling. She exhaled softly. “So… You’ve got one life left to live.” She gives Sequoia a soft smile. “This is what you wanted, Sequoia. You were so tired of living again, and again, and again…” She wasn’t sure what he meant by balance living on though. “Does… that mean that I’m not Kindness anymore?” She asks hesitantly. “And that… I’m going to reincarnate and remember?”

'Yes. Her burden has been lifted from her and is now to become yours. Whether or not it is a boon is up to you.' He answered. 'However, she is not the only one who I have come for...' His empty gaze turned to Toki.
“Nothing that you and the Void have ever done for me has been a boon.” She tells him sharply. “I’ll handle it just like I did being brought here. But…” She hesitates, and she feels a chill run down her spine.

Sequoia seemed to feel it too. “What do you mean? You already did something to her. What more are you going to do to Toki?”

“Leave my Mom alone!” Kai snarls from Tenne’s arms.

'It is time to go home.' Phase spoke simply.

"Momma is home." Quinn hissed at Phase, who did not react to the children’s’ aggression.

“Home…?” Her eyes slid wide, and there was a torn expression that crossed her face. Did he mean… Home to Papyrus? Home to her kids? But… What would happen to her family here? What would happen to her boys, her sweet Quinn and her stubborn and silly Kai?

“I… I…” She stuttered, throat bobbing. But what if he didn’t mean her home? What if he meant to keep her in the void, to make her like he was? To keep him company? What if he meant his home, not her home? “I can’t trust you. I’m sorry. I… I don’t know where you would take me, and I don’t trust that. I don’t… I don’t want to end up displaced again, as some misguided attempt just to amuse your asshole of a boss- the Void. Unless you’re the Void. Or… I don’t know.”

This wasn’t right. She was… She was finally starting to be happy here. Why did they have to do it now?

'You are not a fool, Tokiko Nara. You know very well where you would go.' He turned, and lifted a hand, before seeming to tear a hole in reality. He then took a step back, and turned to her, 'Look upon the world you left behind.'

What was within the hole was a sight that had Sequoia and Tenne staring in the same

It was two small skeletal-beastly looking child monsters curled up together. They rested in the cradling arm of a massive male who was nestled into a turtleneck, his old eyes closed as he rested. His other arm held close a tired looking skeleton, who looked to be distressed in his slumber, stains of tear streaks on his face to nearly match the downward scar on the larger males face...

Though Tenne would not recognize them, Sequoia, and most certainly Toki, would.

Toki’s heart squeezed. Her fingers reached out for the visage that she could see, and there was the same forlorn heartbreak visible on her face as when she has first admitted to Tenne that she had children that she’d ‘lost’. “My babies…” She whispered, voice rough. Her heart felt like it was being torn in two.

Sequoia swallowed. “That’s Toki’s family.” She supplies for Tenne, and for the children that were no doubt confused about Toki’s response. “Those are her children, her mate, and her father in law. That’s…” That was cruel to hit her with.

Toki wilted, unable to look away or do anything. She wanted to go home. She wanted her twins. She missed them - she missed Papyrus too. She missed him so much, so, so much… But how could she abandon Tenne? How could she abandon the boys, one of whom was so tightly clinging to her mane that he might never let her go?

How could she choose? How did you choose one family over another? Birth children or adopted, it
didn’t matter, they were her children. She couldn’t… How could she?

Tenne looked upon the older form within the tear, and slowly leaned up to look him over. At that moment the beast twitched and his tired purple eyes opened, if just momentarily to glance down upon his armful of pups, before his eyes closed again and he settled back to sleep.

"Toki..." He started, looking at her with a small frown. He wasn’t upset about this, but he looked worried as to what she was going to do.

Sequoia looked at them both, and then turned to look at Quinn, who still clung to Toki...

“I can’t…” Toki chokes, and tears flood her eyes. “I can’t choose. Please. Please, please anything but making me choose. I can’t. I can’t do that. They’re… They’re all my children. I love both men. I can’t… I can’t choose who to abandon.”

Quinn looks up at her, and he swallows. He glances down, and nuzzles his face against her chest. “Momma…” He whispers, eyes flicking over to Sequoia. “Momma too?”

Sequoia smiled at Quinn sweetly, ”That’s right, little one..." She cooed to him, before looking at Toki, "I have no place in that world... not anymore... but you can go back... You can return to your husband... your children." She told her gently, reaching to touch Toki’s shoulder. "Toki... You won't abandon anyone if you go back, you know that."

Quinn held tighter to Toki at Sequoia’s words. “No!” He cried. “Momma can’t leave! We can go too.” He says. “Right? Both Momma’s and Daddy to go with Momma’s other family?” His fingers laced with her mane. “Momma is mine.” He keened softly.

Toki couldn’t even look at Sequoia. She was a trembling mess, staring at the moving vision in the void. She couldn’t even… She couldn’t even process everything. It was too much, too much to choose, to even consider. Sequoia said she wouldn’t be abandoning them, or anyone, but she would. Quinn’s words confirmed it. He was her boy, her boy who was such a Momma’s boy that he didn’t even deny it when teased about it.

He would feel abandoned if she chose.

Sequoia then knew as Phase stepped forward... She shouldn't have to...

With gentle coos and coaxes Sequoia, gently took Quinn and hugged him softly, stroking his head before she slowly moved to her knees and moved to Tenne's side.

'I do not do this lightly... Say goodbye.'

Phase stepped forward and reached out, gripping Toki by the arm as a wave of his other hand split open a rift to the Void.

"T-Toki!" Tenne tensed up before he made to get up.

Phase turned quickly to face him, staring him down.

"..." Tenne was unnerved by the empty eye sockets, and sat down again.

Toki choked again as the man gripped her, and she felt the presence of the Void pulling her in. “W-what?” She squeaked, her arms empty. Her hands clenched, and she made a motion to grab for the boys, and for Tenne, her eyes tearing up. “G-Goodbye…?” It was said airily, like she wasn’t sure she was supposed to be saying it.
She was leaving?

She was leaving. He had made her choice for her. She had no choice now. None…

She didn’t have the will to fight his grasp.

Phase looked back and used a blast of magic to send Tenne back to his rear from where he was attempting to stand.

Sequoia was simply holding Quinn close, and had taken Kai from Tenne before he’d made another attempt to stand.

"Toki!" Tenne cried out as he got up once more, saying damn the strange feeling the eerie-eyed man gave him, before he reached for her. "I love you!" He called to her desperately, before Phase and Toki both disappeared into the rift before it closed.

Toki heard Quinn’s echoed cry after her along with Tenne’s and her heart broke for him. The brokenhearted “MOMMY!” Echoed after her as the dark swallowed her up, and sucked her away into it’s depths.

Like before, it was overpowering, bearing down on her like the ocean itself. She was left unable to fight, rendered helpless, as she floated along. Unlike before, she could still see Phase, and she was torn between staring at him tearfully and glaring at him. She didn’t know how to feel- her peace was broken and her heart hurt.

Her everything hurt. Her skin tingled and though she could no longer see her body, she felt like it was being… shorn away. It wasn’t a pleasant feeling. “So what now?” She asks, voice sounding broken. “You send me home, a broken, shattered version of myself… No one is going to recognize me.”

‘That is not true. You will indeed be recognized.’ Phase tutted as he set her down on what seemed to be a solid ground within the void. ‘You underestimate your family’s... love for you.’

“I am not the same woman that I was. I’m not sure I can ever be again.” She whispers and closes her eyes. “I know they love me. And I love them. I love Tenne too- and Quinn, and Kai and Sequoia too… Will… Will they and Sequoia be okay? Can you tell me that at least?” She asks softly.

“They will be happy in enough time. They will mourn you, but they are not left alone. They have another to fill the void. It will suffice. It’s good to see you again, Kindness. Or should I call you Balance? I think that is a more accurate term.” The voice from oh so long ago echoed around her like a plague. “You’ve changed- and you’ve completed what I wished for you to do.”

“You never told me what it was.” Toki rasped softly, brokenly. “If you’d have told me, I’d have done it before… Before…”

“Before you could fall in love with Tenne? Before you could betray your dear Papyrus, your dear mate, by falling in love with another man so quickly? Don’t worry. You’ve been loyal to Papyrus this whole time. It wasn’t your fault you fell in love.” The darkness hummed alongside its queried words.

“What… What do you mean? What do you mean it’s not my fault I fell in love?” Her eyes popped
open, blind in the dark except for the starkly creepy doctors mask looming overhead of her. “What
do you mean? What did you do?”

“I made it happen. It was never real. Well, not at the start anyways. You were so torn, so
heartbroken, that you would not do what I needed, not with the man who so resembled your
beloved ‘Papa’. So… I made it happen. Not all of it was my doing, of course, but I greased the
wheels, kept it going any time you wished to hesitate and to back out. I made sure the cogs of
fate kept turning as they aught.” It hummed. “After all, in another world, in another time, you
could have fallen for Tenebris instead of Aliquam, and you’d have been just as equally
happy.”

Toki gaped, unsure what to say. Her love… her love had been fabricated? But it… it felt so real…
She loved Tenne- she did- and her betrayal burned deep in her soul for what she’d done as sacrilege
to her marriage to Aliquam. It wasn’t her fault though. The void had made her- had wanted her to.
“This is… Because Sequoia needed to love Tenne.” She whispers. “Because she needed my love to
learn how to love. Can you answer me this… If you hadn’t meddled… Would I have ended up with
Tenne anyways?”

“No. If I hadn’t meddled, you’d have stayed lost in your pain, and you’d have never
remarried, or taken another lover. You’d have kept to yourself, taking comfort only in the
friendly company of others, but never passion. You’d never have betrayed your mate without
me. Which is good for your morals, but very bad for what I needed from you.” A solid answer
from the void was all the black essence thought she needed. “As for Sequoia, the answer is
partially. There are other reasons for what I did that will eventually become apparent to you
both in time, once you’re ready to see them.” The darkness mused. “Phase, dear friend, make
sure she is comfortable. She has been through much. Make sure she’s healthy. We don’t want
this for naught. I hate to have to redo things, you know this.”

‘As you command.’ The being that pulled her away from Tenne stepped forward, and instead of
taking her by the arm, this time offered to her a hand. ‘If you will accompany me, Tokiko.’

Toki stared at his hand, not really comprehensive of what she was seeing. Slowly, she took it all the
same, and very gently let him haul her to her feet off of the strange surface she had been laying on.
Her center of balance felt off again, and she felt lighter, like she had lost weight again. Her mane was
still there though, tickling her face and the top of her skull as she breathed quietly. "... Are you really
sending me home?” She asks softly. "I... I can't handle another world. Another heartbreak. Please...
Just, if you want to do that to me, to use me for some toy to amuse yourselves, just... Hollow me out.
Leave me a shell, take the me in me away, so I don't... I don't have to love and lose them all over
again.” She pleads quietly. "I can't take it. I can't. I'm not strong enough." But she was. She was
Balance now. She'd have to get used to reincarnating over and over again, dying and losing her
family over and over again, finding them again if she could...

And mourning them when she finally couldn’t.

He nodded slowly, and once she was up, he slowly released her hand to cradle her cheeks in his
hold, before they moved to gently smooth down the fluff around her head. 'Indeed you will go
home... you will return to your lover, your son and your daughter, your fathers, mother and
brothers. You might not be exactly as you had been when you left it, but your family indeed loves
and misses you. They cannot hope to make the mistake of not recognizing you.' Phase spoke
softly, now with a trace of more warmth that was not there when he was in front of Tenne and
Sequoia.
“I hope you’re right.” She whispered. The tender touch was lost on her- it just made her feel sick, coming from a being that had ripped her away so swiftly from her second family and tore another great big hole in the warm green soul in her chest. “I hope you’re right.” She sniffs softly. Tears stain her cheeks, and she sucks in a soft, shaky breath, before glancing up at him. “When do I go home…?”

'As soon as the master is sated with your condition, you will be released to your home realm once more.' He answered gently. The once-empty sockets now had small white eye lights in them as he looked down at her.

“And… what exactly is my condition? Besides heartbroken, homesick, and pretty much burnt out inside.” Toki asked blandly.

'I know not what my master demands precisely of your health...' He spoke gently, before reaching down and examining her magic of her soul. 'Your soul has stabilized, it will not waver from instability like it had in the past.'

“Good.” She sighs softly. “It hurt when it would become unstable. So… Am I good to leave then?”

'Yes.' Phase then looked up into the darkness. 'My Master... Miss Tokiko is prepared to be returned.'

Toki glanced up too, hoping to see what he saw. Darkness, only darkness.

“Good.” The voice purred. “Then you’re ready. Good bye, Balance. I'll see you again at the next life. Or before, if you get into mischief again.”

A void opened up behind her, and then something pushed Toki- and she fell backwards out of the darkness with a cry that was swallowed by the early afternoon light. The darkness in the sky was unnatural, as was the hole opened in the middle of it, and Toki was, once more, freefalling through familiar rough winded skies, smelling air she never thought she’d smell again.

High above, she could see inside of the hole, the masked doctor peering out at her.

To say the least, his shocked look, as well as he could even pull such a face through a mask, was a relief to her that he wasn’t aware of, or perhaps he was and just wasn’t looking forward to, the Master's plan to push her out so abruptly. It wasn’t long after she was shoved out that the rift sealed, and she was left to fall in her lonesome.

She turned around mid air, and started to work her wings. Her balance felt off, her body disproportionate to her wings, and she had to work in different ways than expected to slow herself down. She came in to land on the ground in front of some big, silver statue. She blinked slowly, and stared at the ground, and at the very skeletal set of four arms bracing her up. They were ringed in the same green fur, and her mane was still fluffy and windblown, but… Well, there were no clothes and no skin covering her bones, save for a span of green skin covering from her neck to her pelvis, forming an ectoplasmic body in the place of where her skin had been. She was a strange mix of bone and an odd skin like structure, just like Tenne and Tenebris were.

She sunk her fingers into the soil, feeling the ashy loam mixed mixed with pot soil. There were flowers planted here. She might have squished some, but… She took a deep breath, glancing at the green glow of her ecto body, before exhaling softly.

She was home.

Once she had taken in the sights long enough to believe them, Toki slowly looked back to the statue.
It wasn't anything much, but she definitely realized the theme.

It was her. She was sitting, her gaze downward, so if one to look up into her eyes, it would imitate eye contact. Her smile was gentle, and carved as if taken right from a picture. She was dressed in what looked like her wedding dress. There were bees around her, all fluffy and large-eyed and cute as ever, nestled in a bed of flowers.

Below the statue sat a plaque.

'Tokiko Nara, The Heart of Nara Village. Rest in Peace.'

Well now wasn't that awkward...

She hadn’t expected to land on her metaphorical tombstone. Or perhaps memorial? Epitaph? She wasn’t sure what to call it, really. Her gaze lingered on it, and on the flowers resting in vases below it, though, and for a moment she felt disconnected from her body. She reached up, tracing a skeletal hand gently over the plaque, and noting the reflection of her fur in its surface. She was so different… She wasn’t the same woman as before. She probably never would be again.

From the statue, Toki’s gaze wandered, drinking in everything around her. The ground had been churned some, but it was mostly an ashy loam now thanks to the firebombing. They seemed to have managed to fix it with some careful applications of potting soil to various places- such as the grass slowly growing around the statue and surrounding paths- but the soil was, like her, forever changed by the experiences it had gone through.

The village was not the same. Most of it was gone- she could see all the way to the river, and far beyond it. The trees were gone, and the ones on the edge were burnt black, crisped to the point that there was nothing but a standing pile of charcoal. Further off, though, Toki could see green- hopeful, amazing green.

Around the statue, though, the village was not abandoned. The statue was in it’s own little courtyard, a small little area of private solitude and solace, where people could likely come to pay their respects. There was an eight foot high wall, and it seemed to be maintained well. When she looked closely, they’d planted a small tree in the corner, and it appeared to be the same type of tree as the clan tree that had been lost in the fire.

Her soul warmed. Whoever did it was very thoughtful and kind.

Outside of the courtyard, which had four entrances lined with flowers of all kinds, buildings were being raised. She couldn’t see any completed ones from her position yet, but the sounds of construction were all around her, and it made sense that no one had noticed her. Builders didn’t look to the sky- they focused on their work.

It was good though. They were rebuilding- they weren’t… They weren’t giving up and hiding away. They’d come back to start anew.

Thankfully all the bustle was not simply work, there was talk between the villagers, there's activity of play. It told Toki how despite everything, the people kept on keeping on. And a monster accompanying their children was growing closer to her with each passing moment. This monster was perhaps one who Toki would be either happy or very conflicted to see.

Toki didn’t notice the approaching monsters at first. She was still entranced with the fact that she was at home in the world she’d been born to. Her hands stroked over the plaque, her bare back and skeletal backside turned to the direction of the approaching monsters. Her wings shielded most of her
from view, but she wasn’t too worried at the moment. “I’m home,” She whispers softly. “I’m home.”

With her back to the entrance, Toki hadn't seen the child that had run ahead of his parent... Not until he couldn't stop fast enough, and grunted as he ran into her legs, before falling back onto his rear. "Oof! Sorry ma'am!" He whined, rubbing his face.

Toki grunted at the smack, and straightened, turning around. She froze as she spotted the child. That was... “Skylar?” She spoke softly, her voice hesitant and shaky. She crouched down slowly, aware she was very nude, and gave him a once over. He’d grown so much... They still shared teeth, but he looked so much like his father. Her eyes misted just looking at him, and she choked up, trying to say more.

"Yeah..." He looked up at her, taking in the sight of her before he blinked, looking up at her as she stood in the very shadow of her statue. "You look like Momma..."

“That’s... That’s because I am your Momma, baby boy.” She crouched down, and let the scar emblazoned on her skull be seen. It, and her teeth, were her most identifiable features visible. She blinked at him slowly, and offered out her smaller hands. “I know I look different, but it’s still me. It’s still Toki- I’m still... I’m still Momma.”

He tilted his head, and then turned as he heard a call of his name.

"Skylar!" It was a little girls voice.

Another adorable child appeared at the archway that was the entrance, this one bedecked with a set of straight, smooth horns, just like Toki used to have. "Poppa says no running ahead!" She puffed with broken words. Sweet Honey was still learning to talk it was adorable.

"Aw Sorry Sis... But... This lady says she's Momma!"

Honey pauses at that before looking up at Toki. She looked to the statue, and then looked back to her. "M-Momma?"

Toki took a knee, and held out her other hand to her daughter. “My beautiful Honey... You’ve got my horns,” she says softly, “But you look so much like your Daddy. It’s me.” Toki’s eyes watered harder, and she had to refrain from just taking them into her arms and holding them tightly. “It’s Momma. I’m back. I’m... I’m home.”

Honey was hesitant, before she turned. "Daddy!" She called.

"I'm here, Honeybee. Is Skylar okay?" There was then his voice.

Aliquam appeared in the archway, reaching out and running a hand over Honey's head before looking within. He stopped dead at the sight of Toki standing before her statue.

Toki froze too, her green eye lights staring up and meeting his. Her mouth twitched, teeth parting in a soft exhale. Her mane ruffled, before smoothing down along her bones. “Papyrus...” She breathed, her voice carrying to him on a breathy exhale across the courtyard. “Oh... my Papyrus...”

"Toki...?” He hesitated with his very words as he turned into the courtyard. But immediately something was obviously off about him that hadn’t been there before. Cradled in his left hand was a cane.

Toki’s gaze flicked over the cane, but she disregarded it. It wasn’t important at the moment. She straightened more as he stepped closer, and she took a soft breath. Her eye lights fogged with thick
tears, clogging her sights. “I… I kept my promise, Papy. I finally kept it. I came home to you.”
Chapter 114

Strider Notes: Well… What do you think? We’re home. But… The excitement isn’t going to end. Did you think just coming home was the end? No, no. There is much more to this than meets the eye.

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Aliquam slowly stepped closer, the cane silent in the grass as he looked down at her. "Tokiko... Is it really you?" He murmured, reaching up to cup her cheek, but hesitating right before his bones made contact.

“It is.” She nods softly. She hesitates too, before tilting her face tight into his touch. Damn the consequences- damn them all. Her bones were warm and his… His magic still felt like the sun. Her soul practically sang at the familiarity of it, and her body did give off a familiar happy buzzing sound that he likely hadn’t heard in forever. She didn’t look like she used to, save her scar, teeth, and her magic color, but she hoped the scar was at least distinctive enough to him for him to realize it was her. “It’s me, Aliquam. It’s me… Your Toki.”

Tears had grown in his eyes as his hand closed to cradle her cheek, "Oh my god... T-Toki..." He whispered, before pulling her close into his one-armed embrace. "Tokiko... My beautiful wife…”

She gave a soft sob, and curled her arms- all four of them- around his chest, locking him to her as she nuzzled her face to his chest. She gave a watery laugh, and, in typical Toki fashion, replied with, “I’m not so beautiful anymore. But I’m back. Hopefully that makes up for it.”

Honey hesitantly hovered by her Daddy’s pants leg, and then tugged on it. “Poppa…? Is this really Momma?”

"That’s not true, Toki... You're still as beautiful as I remember.” He scolded with a weak laugh, before he looked to Honey with a shaky nod. "Yes, Honeybee... It's her.”

Honey stared up at her with wide, hopeful eyes, until she got the confirmation. The confirmation was enough to send both children into hysterical sobs, and Toki had to step away from Papyrus to stoop down and take them into her arms. Once she had them secured and latched onto her front, she slid right back into her husband’s arms. One of her hands swiped her eyes and she gave a watery laugh. “You and I remember me very differently then.” She sniffs. “But it’s been two years since I’ve been home.” She nuzzles him. “It’s good to be home… I’ve wanted to go home so bad, so, so, bad… But I just couldn’t come home. I tried.” She sucks in a breath. “But I kept my promise. Do you remember my promise? I said I’d come home to you.”

"I know you did. I never forgot...” He told her with a watery smile. "I waited for you the best that I could...” Though he tilted his head as her words registered in his skull. “But what do you mean, two years?” He then asked.

Toki shifted awkwardly, her bare bones rattling as they clacked together. She’d need to get used to being made of bones- or something like bone- again. He had waited for her. Toki… had not. That
hurt, and she struggled to keep it off her face. It hadn’t been entirely her fault, but the point still stood. She sucked in a soft breath, and glanced at him. “I’ve... I’ve been stuck in a different universe for roundabouts two years.” She says. Her brows furrow. “Has it not been two years...? I thought... I thought I missed the twins first birthday.” There was a faint glimmer of hope on her face. Maybe... maybe it’d only been a month or two. Maybe she would still be in time to make it- though her logical side shone through and informed her that her children wouldn’t be so advanced with only a few short months or weeks difference.

"You did..." He winced at watching her face fall. “But it's been six months... Not two years.”

“O... Oh.” Her crestfallen look at missing her children’s birthday’s didn’t dissipate, but she simply shook her head. “So much has happened... We need to let everyone know I’m home. I just... I want to see everyone.” Her voice is thick, despite a lack of physical throat with which to speak. She realizes she’s been moving her teeth, and there’s been sparks, and resolves to adopt her old habit of speaking with her mouth closed. “Please... I want to see everyone. The world I was in... It wasn’t like this one.”

He slowly shed his coat and wrapped it around her to clothe her

"Toki... You know it's not going to be easily done... a lot of people accepted your disappearance as your death... They're mourning..."

Toki swallowed and closed her eyes. “I mourned you too.” She says softly, having only slid the coat on over her primary arms. Her secondary arms remained inside, holding her children to the soft green ecto flesh of her body. “I was under the impression that I may never get to see you again. Never get to see my children again. So I mourned. I understand fully. But... having me back might make it better. Maybe.” She heaves a soft breath, and then slides an arm around his chest. “And... maybe later, you can tell me what’s up with the cane? If you want, that is.”

"We'll tell them together... It might make it easier..." He assured her, before giving her a squeeze as if to reassure her, and himself, that they were indeed there together. Though his expression fell at the mention of his cane. "I will explain, yes... but you may want to be sitting down when I tell you." He murmured.

She didn’t squeeze him back too hard, wary of hurting him, and instead motioned for him to guide her. “It will.” She says softly. “We can do it at your house. Or... wherever you’re staying.” She corrects her statement as she looks at the progress of the homes being built. She could see some were complete, but she didn’t know if he’d have taken one. She glances at him as his expression falls. “…Papyrus?” She nudges him gently. “I’m not going to judge. Cane or no cane, you’re my Papyrus. I love you. I came back different to you- why should it be a surprise that you would be different when I returned...?”

"I love you too, Toki... Come on.” Letting Toki go, he turned to the entrance of the courtyard and took a breath to steady himself. "I know there will be someone very happy to see you."

“Happier than you?” Toki hesitated, and followed. “Is it... Stag?” She guesses lightly, keeping the twins cuddled flush to her chest. They had no intentions of leaving, and she had no intentions of making them go.

"Heh... Stag will be happy to see you, yes. But no. Someone a lot closer to home.”

“My Gracie-gray?” The nickname for her cat rolled off her tongue like it had never left. Toki glanced at him, and ground her teeth. “Don’t tease me.” She very nearly said ‘Don’t tease me, Tenne’ and had to stop herself. “C’mon, tell me.” She said instead. "I know Papa and Cae will have missed me,
and my family too. I’m going to get an ear full from everyone…”

"Heh... well I’ll give you a hint, you did just say who," He teased.

“Uuuuugh, I forgot you can be worse than- uhhh one of my friends in the other world.” She nearly messed it up, and groaned and let her horn gently bump into his shoulder as they hobbled along at his pace. “I can’t believe you’re not telling me who. I guess I’ll just see for myself.”

He smiled at her before he wrapped his free arm around her. "It's... amazing... that I’m getting to hold you again... it's... I can't believe it." He chuckled weakly.

She leaned into him as much as she dared, her wings remaining folded under his borrowed jacket. "I never thought I'd see you or our babies again. I was... Alone, with nothing but Cruelty in my head..." She shakes her head. "He got better, but..." She didn’t need to tell him she’d nearly fallen. He didn’t need to know that. "It doesn't matter. I'm here now... Speaking of, how far until we're at your home? I could... Summon Sugar if it's very far."

"We're almost there... I'm so sorry, It must have been torture having that demon with you..." He sighed. He gave her a squeeze, then let her go again as he slowed, looking up.

"It was at first. But... He got better." She says, and her gaze follows his as they both go quiet.

Before them was Toki’s old home. Though now it looked to be in a state of repair, maybe the end of said state of repair, it was still standing, if a little bit more singed than before. The brick and cement home had several new places, where it had to be repaired, but... It seemed to have been the first one fixed.

"I've been working on fixing the house... It's not that easy, but I have Cae and Father to help me.” He sighed quietly, before he smiled. "Come on..." He started to the door, and after he unlocked it, he pushed it open, "Well... I don’t need to say it, it's your house after all.” He chuckled gently, "But welcome home... Come on in.”

She stared at their house and smiled faintly, walking up the front steps with him. She reached out a hand to touch the bricks, which had been charred and some replaced, and only drew it away when her children pulled away and squirmed out of her arms to stand on their own. "I guess it's a good thing I made it to withstand accidentally burning something back when I was still afraid of my fire.”

The inside of the house hadn't all been furnished yet, but there were some things she distinctly recognized as something they had owned. She shuffled on her toes, bare bones clicking on the cement below the floor, which needed to be retiled. "I'm home." Her primary hand came to touch the banister of the railing to the second floor, and she drank in everything she could with her eyes as they watered again. Her breath hitched in her chest. Toki probably looked like a little lost wraith, standing there with his coat pinning her wings and her secondary arms. "I had dreamt of getting to see our home again..." She whispers. "I'm home..."

Papyrus let her go in and let the pups go in first before himself, and then closed the door once he stepped inside.

He sat down and helped Honey and Skylar take off their coats and boots before letting them go to the front room, where immediately they both begin chattering, both seeming to try and wake someone up.

"Why don’t you go and have a seat in the front room, we have some of our furniture already set up in there." Aliquam spoke as he got up again. "I'm gonna make up some tea."
Toki hesitated and nodded slowly, mane ruffling awkwardly. "I... Could help with the tea. But okay." She turned to head for the front room, trying to see who the children were trying to rouse as she went to steal a familiar shaped couch. She had to pause though, and strip off the coat. She couldn't sit on the couch with her wings bound. Once she was naked except her fluff, she say down, and crossed her arms over her bare chest. The void had given her an odd body this time, surely.

The Pups whined and bothered the form in the large familiar chair until there was a low growl and a swatting hand that had both scrambling hand that had both scrambling hand with mischievous giggles as the old male stirred

"Tsk..." The form sat up and rubbed his face, before he lifted his head and his lips curled back to take in the air. Though this is when he stopped... "Toki?" The name slipped from his lips before his still stirring mind could stop it, before he scowled. "No, no, of course not, Tenebris, we've gone over this." He scrubbed his head with one hand. "She’s gone." His hand then went for his pipe, which sat on the table beside his chair

She had frozen at seeing Tenebris- because that could have been her future. If she'd have been made to stay with Tenne, they'd have grown old together, she'd have belonged to the grumpy old man... His grumbles brought a soft, fond chuckle past her teeth.

It didn’t take her long to unfreeze, forcing herself to calm. She was going to have to get used to this. She didn’t have... She didn’t have anyone to help her keep steady. "Actually, Papa, I'm here. I know I don't look like me, but your nose isn't lying. You're not that old, old man, for your nose to be playing tricks on you yet." She remains seated on the couch, and waits.

His hand stopped before it could scoop up his pipe, and it slowly lowered to the arm of his chair as he turned to look at her. His pupils were thin at first, and then they widened and he gave a quiet laugh, before he got up and came over, kneeling before her, "Toki..." He then reached up and cupped her cheeks, "Oh my god... It really is you!" he then laughed and scooped her up into an embrace, "You're alive!"

Her mane ruffled as the familiar scent- the scent of Tenne, of mate, her beast purrs in her mind-swirled over her face. She curled all four arms around him and hugged him back, her wings splaying out so his massive arms didn’t crush them. She was smaller now, so much smaller than she had been when she was a beast, and he was larger than even Tenne had been. She huffed in his scent in a soft instinctive motion, breathing through her mouth like she had when she hadn’t had a nose, and her beast purred at the semi-familiar scent she took in. "It's good to see you, Papa. I've missed you so much." Her fur is soft as it fluffs up, and she nuzzles him. "I've missed everyone so much…"

Tenebris sounded as if he was an engine purring as he snuggled into Toki's fur. "My beautiful little Toki. I've missed you too..." He cooed, his tail wagging behind him with its trademark rattle. "I almost fear that I’m dreaming." He chuckled quietly.

Aliquam laughed, "You're making me feel like I under-reacted, Dad."

Tenebris turned and smiled at Aliquam. "Don’t let me steal all the attention. Come on, come give your wife the love she deserves."

"Father, I'm making tea."

"So then I’ll take over, and you take care of Toki." He chirped, getting up and patting Toki's head before he walked towards the kitchen.

Aliquam smiled and came over to Toki, sitting beside her and pulling her into an embrace now with both arms available to hold her close.
Toki laughs gently as she's pretty much swapped between the two men. She doesn't even fight it. She does hesitate though, before her instinctive desire to sit in her husband's lap kicks in. His leg... She doesn't want to hurt it. So she cuddles into his side, and lets her luscious mane ruffle over the both of them. "You know," she calls to Tenebris, "if you bring the teapot here, I can make it without using the stove. Then you both can enjoy my company and we can all have tea." She says, right before she finds her lap full of squirming toddlers, demanding their mother's cuddles too. She tucks them close, and her ribs rumble with a soft beastly noise of comfort. "Aww, Skylar, baby, please don't cry... Momma is here now, I promise. I'm not going anywhere again."

In fact... Toki pulled up the save and load screen. This world still gave her power over it, it seemed, and the reset button was still shattered, but she didn't need it. Toki touched the save button with a primary hand, knowing Aliquam and both her children were watching. "Now I'm never going to be made to leave again."

Aliquam smiled at the sight of the save screen and he hugged her tighter. "I'm glad." He whispered happily, "I love you so much, Toki... I was so worried about you."

Her soul thundered behind her ribs, and she turned her head to nuzzle him. Her curved horn accidentally hooked on his shirt, and tore a neat hole in the shoulder of it. "Aww heck, I'm so sorry. I love you too, Pap. I was worried about you too. I didn't... I didn't know how you were doing. Every night, I tried to see through the worlds to see you, but... It wasn't until I came here that the Void allowed me a glimpse of you and Papa and our babies. I was mostly stuck with all of Cruelty's memories." She closed her eyes and sighed. "It got better though. I can say that. I had... People who helped."

"Don't worry about the shirt, it's nothing anyways..." He purred, before kissing her head gently. "I'm glad you weren't alone... I couldn't imagine enduring it..."

She shuddered a soft sound and made a soft keening noise. "I'll tell you more about it," She says, "When everyone is here. I don’t want to say it twice. Speaking of everyone... Did Sans and Grillby ever get married? Or are they still engaged?"

"Oh yes. Of course... and yes, Caeruleus and Grillby married, right after your memorial was put up and the flowers were planted."

She nodded. "Good. I wanted some happiness to come even if I wasn't here. Where did he have his wedding at? Are there photos?"

"Right in front of the statue." He answered with a quiet laugh, "You bet there's pictures, everyone wanted one of them."

“Uncle Sans wanted you to be there too, even if it was just your statue.” Skylar sniffled into Toki’s chest. “He even put a little flower crown on the horns, so you could be apart of it in s-spirit.” That was enough, apparently, to bring him right back to tears again.

That just made her soul hurt, and she cuddled her son, who was so much a Momma's boy, closer to her. She pressed a soft kiss to his skull, and made a soothing sound in her chest again. His response to her return made her hope that her little Quinn- her sweet little Quinn- was doing okay with Sequoia to take Toki’s place. “Shh...” She said softly. “It’s okay, Skylar. I know I was gone for a long time... I’m here now. I’ve missed a lot, but I’m not going to miss anymore.” She vows gently. “I’m not.” Toki sucks in a breath and looks up at Aliquam. “You should call your brother and let him know I’m back. Grillby too- he can spread the news. I’ll... tell my family tomorrow, I suppose.” She grinds her teeth a bit. “I don’t remember their numbers. Are... they still in your phone?” She hoped he and her family hadn’t had a falling out. She couldn’t see it happening, but... Well, she didn’t
think her husband would be walking with a cane either.

Aliquam watched Toki soothe Skylar before smiling and hoisting Honey into his lap, giving her a soft peck on the head before he looked to Toki once more. "Of course, here." He pulled his phone from his pocket and handed it to her.

"... I didn't mean call them now, are you serious?" She blinked at him owlishly. "You want hundreds of my relatives to descend upon this compound like worrying flies? Because I don't. It's my first day back, and I'm still naked and I'd rather not be when I have thirty cousins getting underfoot. And you know Mom would call everyone and tell them to rush here." She nudged his phone back to him. "Call Cae. Let me get my monster family done today. The human clan can be tomorrow. When I can... I don't know, fashion a cloak or something to wear. My dad will have a heart attack seeing me alive and naked all at the same time. Besides... I need to go slow. My beast does not handle being overwhelmed so well." She explains gently. "Humans make her nervous."

"Of course, I was wondering if that's what you meant." He laughed quietly. "We can call Caeruleus, of course."

'Beast'. That caught his interest though, and he tilted his head, regarding her curiously. "Toki, what do you mean about a beast?" He asked.

Toki canted her head to look at him and hummed. She contemplated waiting, but simply went ahead with telling him. "I spent my time in the other world in a body that could handle the power that was inside of me. My skeletal body couldn't handle it and was falling apart at the seams. The void made me a blaster beast to compensate... And some of the features stuck when I came back." She motioned to her wings, horns, the different shape of her ribs, and her four arms. "With the shape came the actual inner beast. She's... Nervous in a new world. She hasn't ever known this one before."

His gaze flickered as his brows rose in surprise. "You've become the same species as Father?" He asked, before he chuckled. "I'm wondering if he'll be jealous now that you're my wife..."

She chuckled weakly. If only he knew... "I'm not full beast anymore. I was fully flesh before I came back through the Void. I... I can't even show you what I looked like." She pauses, and then shifts. "I can show you with my ecto body, but... Not now. Anyways, I'm... Probably a hybrid of sorts." She shrugs. "My beast is... A different sort of animal than your Dad's is. Anyways..." She rolls her primary wrist over, and pulls the fur back, showing a stinger emerging from between her radius and ulna. "I've got some new tricks up my metaphorical sleeves thanks to my new limbs. My venom is very good for fire elementals."

"Whoa..." He looked at the stinger, before he smiled up at her, "Whatever the case, I bet you looked amazing... I... honestly I still can't believe it, I never imagined I'd reunite with you" he laughed weakly.

"I'll show you tonight." She smiles softly. "And... Honestly, I lost hope." She looked away. "It was... Rough. I broke down. I broke, deep inside. I... I fell. The only reason I didn't die was because the power inside of me wouldn't let me. For the first several months, I didn't look good. But a family stepped up and helped me. They... Became my rock of sorts, and kept me from sinking deeper into despair." She sighed. "Anyways. Call Cae. What I'm saying isn't making any sense to you I imagine, until I can tell the gist of the whole story."

He nodded gently and turned away long enough to call his brother, though his free hand stayed on her, never once letting go of hers as he told him to get Solstice and Grillby and get over to their home quickly.
At this time Tenebris had finished with the tea and brought out the tray, putting it on the coffee table before retiring back to his chair with his pipe.

Toki watched Tenebris and his pipe while Papyrus made his phone call, and then, in a moment of mischief, made a gurgling chittering sound of an Insectis, which translated as a greeting from her beast to his just to see what he would do.

That definitely gave him a start and he shot up with a snort, sliding out the start of a rattle in his tail before he looked at Toki. The older male’s expression was one of extreme shock. "Toki... Did you say that?"

Toki made the noise again, this time adding a soft twisting rumble to the sound she made, signifying that she had indeed made that noise. The good thing about being a skeleton was that the lack of proper sound making organs meant didn't limit her. Mimicry was a wonderful thing. "I learned a new language from my new room mate," she tapped a finger on her skull, "during my time away. I'm fairly fluent now. There's only a few differing words between Insectis and Draconis."

"This is wonderful~" Tenebris whined and chirped happily. "I've never had anyone who shared, none the less understood my kin-tongue. Toki, I could kiss you!"

And Aliquam chuckled quietly as he hung up his phone. "I told you so." He told her teasingly.

Toki laughed softly, slouching as Skylar tried to mimic her noises softly into her mane. She ruffled it, fluffing it out like a proper alpha female would. "I spent two years living as a blaster beast, Papa. I had a good teacher helping me along the way. I had to learn a lot on my own though." She makes a chittering clicking sound deep in her throat and chuckles. "My beast is... interesting. She's an alpha.” She informs him lightly. “It’s only that coming back here made me into something of a hybrid. I’m sure I probably smell something between a beast and a skeleton.”

And the face he made was familiar to Tenne's when he would fluff up, though instead of the luscious mane that Tenne had, Tenebris had what began to look to be bristle on his jaw and neck. "An Alpha~ you indeed smell like a partial beast, my dear daughter, and it makes me so happy to smell another of my kind... It makes me wonder what you and I could have been in another life.” He purred.

That very nearly made her blanch, because he was hitting far too close to home. “I suppose we’ll never know. The other you that I got to meet told me he wasn’t interested in anything less than a full blood.” Toki arched a brow, and her mane remained fluffed. Her beast rumbled in her mind, refusing to submit. “I didn’t know you could grow a mane,” She said to smooth over any ruffles her lack of submission might bring. “You must have kept yourself clean shaven.” She mused. “When did you start growing it back?”

"I'd been running a few tests back in the labs... I had been since a little after you disappeared..."

"Against our better judgment." Aliquam jabbed at him.

"Regardless," Tenebris chuffed, "I had been trying some processes I wouldn't have been able to see through while we were dealing with the threat, and I had made progress in a fair number of them.”

She read between the lines- he was finally working on stabilizing his body enough that it could finally start to grow hair again, now that there wasn’t a threat to distract him from his work. She nodded slowly, and hummed, her mane smoothing down and mildly smothering Skylar with all of its mass. “That’s good.” She said lightly. “… I figure you’ll actually want to give me a look over eventually.” She hums. “My soul isn’t... the same any more. You’ve got data on boss hearts, and on
anti-hearts, as much as you can anyway. But… do you have data on a complete Balance soul, I wonder?” She asked, teasing the curious scientist side of her father in law that would be dieing to study the pulsing green light hidden behind her ribs.

"I do not. As a result, I am looking forward to when I may analyze your soul." Tenebris nodded happily.

“We can do it soon.” Toki nods. “Perhaps in a couple days, when everyone knows I’m back. Unless you want to do a preliminary exam now, before Sans and Grillby get here?” She shifts, and then grunts uncomfortably. Her wings splay, and shift behind her back, stretching out so they weren’t stiff in the joints.

"It would ebb my curiosity a little bit." He chuckled.

Toki snorts. “That’s something I missed.” She smiled. “Your curiosity. Alright.” She drew her soul from her chest. She hadn’t even seen it yet, so she took a moment to look, as did her children while she held it. It wasn’t the dark emerald it used to be- no, it was a forest green now, like someone had watered down the dark emerald color and brightened it, evening out the shade and making it more whole. It was larger than before too. Her soul was missing the scars of old, but there was still the gash in it from being torn from them, along with a new one missing from along the bottom. She touched it, and felt a pang in her center for Tenne and Quinn and Kai. Ah… So that’s what that was.

Toki held it out to him, pushing it towards him with a gust of magic and then settling back on the couch as her soul drifted further from her body, leaving her feeling cold and… weird. "There. Go ahead and look- might as well take notes, yeah? I’m sure you carry around a note book for such sciency things, huh Papa?”

"Wow…" Aliquam had spoken quietly, while Tenebris gently took the soul, looking it over gently.

"This is very impressive, albeit a bit sad, looking at this damage." He murmured.

Toki fidgeted on the couch. “I didn’t… have anything that could help me at first. And Cruelty in my head didn’t help.” She says softly. “It didn’t… help. The first crack there is from leaving here. The second… is from leaving the friends I made behind.” She gave a sad smile. “It’s a curse, having an open heart.” Truly it was.

She fidgeted some, feeling very weird with her soul outside of her body. Her bones buzzed, and her breathing felt… off. She leaned onto Papyrus, and slumped some, sighing quietly. “But this… This is what a true Balance soul looks like. I’m no longer Kindness. I’m not Cruelty. I’m what our souls should have been, before Magic completely ruined it.”

Skylar stared at his Momma, and touched her ribs with his little fingers. They gave under his fingers, and bruised a dark green color from their pearly white color, and he gave an alarmed sound, realizing he was sinking into his mother, and that she was sticking to him. “Momma!?”

Aliquam lifted his hand slightly and tensed up as he realized the same thing as his eldest child. "T-Toki...! What's happening?"

Tenebris noticed the same, and he tensed up, already knowing what was happening.

"I... I don't know..." Her mouth was growing stiff, her teeth refusing to move as she shifted. Her arms tried to pick up Skylar, but the bones proceeded to collapse into a thick green goo, not unlike the time she’d seen Tenebris start to melt. She looked to him with a panicked look in her eye as Skylar scrambled off and away from her.
He was stained green where he had been touching her. "No, no, NO! You can't go away again! No! You can't!" He cried out, frightened by his mother literally starting to deform and melt into the couch cushions. "Papa!" He looked to his grandfather, "Papa make it stop! Make Mommy stay! Please!"

Tenebris got up as well and came over. "Toki... No, no, no..." He set her soul at her side before he tried to check her magic. "This couldn't be happening to you..."

Caeruleus had just come in when he heard the ruckus, and he was shocked as he stood in the entrance to the front room. "Wha..."

Toki noticed Caeruleus, along with Grillby looming behind him. Her eye lights flicked over them briefly, before she took note that her goopi-fying was stopping now that her soul was near. The near rapid-pace process at which she was turning into oobleck halted nearly immediately, and began reversing rapidly, her body solidifying slowly into a solid shape. Toki's hand slid towards her soul, and she drew it into the mass of her chest, drawing a breath once it was inside of her.

Human souls naturally produced their own Determination - hers provided what she needed to remain stable. Without it close enough, that stability fled.

"What the..." Tenebris tilted his head, before he realized what was going on. "Ooh..." He murmured, "Now that's an interesting update..."

"Toki, are you okay?!" Aliquam asked worriedly.

"I'm okay," Toki said softly, aware what effect her voice and name would have on Caeruleus and Grillby across the way, "My soul just can't go far from my body apparently. All tests will have to be done in close quarters, or I turn into a puddle of green snot, apparently."

Skylar didn’t touch her, but wanted to, so he clung to his Dad’s leg instead and stared at her with great upset in his eyes as her body formed again.

Grillby’s flames flickered higher, and his soft voice rumbled forth. “Toki?” He said softly, and adjusted the blue flaming toddler on his shoulder. “Is that…? Tenebris, is that really Toki?”

Once the panic eased, Tenebris sighed and nuzzled his head against Toki’s, before he turned to Grillby and Cae. He gave them a smile. “Yes. Come in you three...” He chuckled happily.

Grillby nudged in Sans, who had frozen, and guided him towards the couch. He moved his husband closer, and then gently bopped his head to snap him out of it. “How?” He asked Tenebris, and eyed Toki gently.

She was firming up more and more, and it didn’t take but a few minutes for her to regain her shape, compared to Tenebris’ hours that it took him on the norm. Once her shape was back to normal, she stood from the couch, caressing Aliquam’s skull with one hand, and took a step towards Caeruleus. Toki couldn’t help the laugh as Grillby averted his gaze from her nudity, but she held open all four arms for her taller brother in law. “Sans.” She says softly. “It’s good to see you. I’m home.”

Cae's eye flickered before he laughed gently and came over, hugging her tight, almost as tight as Tenebris had. "Hey..." All his emotions were in the one word. It was not much, but it was enough.

Toki laughed, and closed all four arms around him. She cuddled his face to her shoulder, and let him breathe her in. “Hey... I heard you went and got married where my memorial was. You great big sap...” She strokes her fingers over his skull. “I’m home now. I’m not going anywhere ever again.”

“You had better,” Grillby nods, “or I’ll have to track you down myself. We all missed you, Toki.
Your human family, and your monster one- we all mourned your loss. The way Tenebris spoke of it... Well, you wouldn’t be coming back from the darkness.”

“And I wouldn’t have,” Toki said softly, “If the Void hadn’t intended for me to come back once I’d accomplished my purpose in the other world. But I did... and I’m home. That’s what matters now.”

“What kinda task was that?” Cae asked, going ahead and asking what everyone wanted to ask.

Toki glanced away, and her arms loosened around him slightly. To tell the truth... Or weave a lie. In the words of Sequoia, the truth was harder than a lie. And getting caught in one... Well, if Toki kept up the lie, they’d never know, right? “I never knew what the Void wanted, until they ripped me away from everything there.” She’d never tell them about her relationship to Tenne. She could tell them she babysat Quinn and Kai and helped to raise them... but never more than that. “The Void wanted Sequoia to learn and to heal. To... Well, to use me as a base foundation for what a person could be.” She sighed. “Cruelty healed and changed. Cruelty became Sequoia, once I broke the barrier and got us topside again, and then... Sequoia was actually someone I could consider a friend. It’s... strange. It’s like they were two different people. Cruelty died when all the power was gone, and Sequoia was born from his death... Other than that, the Void said there were other reasons I was kept there, but I would only see when I was ready.”

“That's... very strange,” Tenebris muttered quietly. "Never once did the void speak to me directly.” He rumbled.

Aliquam spoke up, "I have my doubts about Cruelty truly reforming themselves after what happened... But if you can vouch for them..." He sighed, and then nuzzled her, "I'm glad you made it home."

"The void is... Different." Toki murmurs. "The void treated us like old friends. It was... Definitely an odd experience." She exhaled softly, and looks over everyone. Her gaze settles on her husband. "I did too. But... Our souls were one. Even when we hid things from one another, we couldn't hide everything. Sequoia... She fell in love. She learned how to love, and she got a second chance at life from being a part of my soul. I helped to heal the damage that... countless lifetimes did. I relived each of those lifetimes in my dreams, Papyrus. It doesn't... Excuse what she did when she was Simmons. But I understand why she did it. If I'd have been in that position... I don't know if I would have handled it any better.” She nuzzled him. "It doesn't matter. I'm home though... But, now that you're all here, I should begin recounting what happened, shouldn't I?"

"Yes!” The entirety of the Gaster family managed a synchronized exclamation of as they settled down to listen to her.

"Alright.” She laughed softly, and leaned back down onto the couch so she could sit and explain. "After I fell into darkness, it was all I could see or feel for some time. You see... The Void is more than just darkness. It is everything and it is nothing all at once. It's overpowering. Even with all of the souls that my body had trapped inside, we were nothing but an ant under the metaphorical boot.” She shakes her head. "The Void gave me a task, and then sent me on my way. I thought it sent me home... But no. It dropped me into a world very like this one, but also so... Different.” Her mane ruffles in an instinctive shiver. "I got hit with Deaths Rebound- you know, that sickness you get after dying in a load and coming back, and it hit hard as I was falling from the sky. Only it wasn't the sky. I landed in Snowdin, completely buck-ass naked, with four arms, wings, and legs like Papa has. I had no idea how to walk or move or do anything. It was... Hard, but I managed to get into a cave.”

She glances away. "Cruelty and I suffered there for only a little bit. Someone had seen me fall. That someone, as luck would have it, was... Well, you.” She looked at Tenebris. "A different you. Younger. He'd never gone through the Void, and preferred for me to call him Tenne, not Tenebris,
which was his pack name. He was... Nervous of why I knew his pack name." Toki fidgets. "I lied and told him I had visions."

Tenebris tilted his head as he listened, nodding slowly to show her he understood. "Did he have pups?" He asked quietly.

“He did.” She nods. “Very young. Everyone there spoke English as their primary language, so their names were different, but... Well, it was basically small versions of Sans and Papyrus. Their names were Kai and Quinn. Quinn… well, Quinn got attached to me quite quickly. Kai was a daddy’s boy, through and through, and was quite the little scientist himself when I babysat him.” She shakes her head. “Getting ahead of myself. Tenne took me to his laboratory up in Hotland- which they didn’t even call Hotland until I started namedropping things- and helped me recover. By the time I was fully healed from both my Rebound and Cruelty’s Rebound, I had learned to walk, and I made my escape from the lab without telling Tenne what I was up to.”

Toki gives a soft, sad laugh. “I tried to contact the Void about going home- I managed to get the Void open, and it basically told me to fuck off. I spent… I don’t know, several weeks just… giving up. I fell- or my body tried to fall. The magic in my body didn’t let me die, no matter how long I just laid there in the dark and did nothing. So eventually I just… wandered. I mapped out all of Waterfall, learned all of the ins and outs of the unoccupied parts of the Underground… I saw the castle, which was being constructed, and I saw the lab, and the CORE, which were also under construction. By the time I made my way to Snowdin, I was… well, in a sorry state. I ended up making a den in Snowdin.”

A universe that was further back in their time than this world had... it was interesting and yet Tenebris and his sons were glued to every word while listening with marvel

Toki glanced at Grillby. “Well… After that, I wandered into your alternate’s bar. That was… Weird. You were pretty much the same. Though… Younger. Less burly. Kinda scrawny, actually.”

Grillby blushed. “Good gracious. I haven’t been scrawny in a long time, since I got out of shape after the war.”

“Indeed.” Toki nods. “That’s where I met Quinn and Kai though. They wandered over to my booth as I was warming up in the corner. I didn’t have gold to buy food, you see, but I hadn’t eaten a full meal since I had left the lab,” which for creatures made of flesh, like Tenebris, was a bad, bad thing, “so I wasn’t all that hungry anyways. I was just leeching warmth when I got company. Eventually, a very pretty, very pregnant fire elemental wandered over. She was having some health problems, and that’s where I ended up learning that my venom is good for elemental health. I got her to sit down and rest, and took over the rest of her shift. Sapphire was a lovely woman, and I considered her a good friend- and she’s also how I ended up working as a barmaid at the bar.”

Grillby froze, and his flames paled. “Sapphire.” He breathed, his voice a ragged whisper. His soul throbbed in his chest. You didn’t forget your first lost mate, even if you found a second that you gave your soul to. He still loved her, even if he loved Caeruleus. “You… met my Sapphire?”

“I did.” She nods. “I helped her through her labor and deliver of Fuku. She wasn’t healthy through a lot of her late pregnancy, and regular shots of my venom helped improve it. She had a long labor, but between me and your alternate self, both she and Fuku were just fine in the end. Fuku was born just shortly after Tenne invited me to stay with him rather than sleeping out in the snow.”

“My Sapphire…” Grillby seemed to be stuck on that. “I didn’t think… I’d ever hear anyone besides Fuku mention her name again…”
Tenebris got up and reached out, resting a hand on Grillby's shoulder.

Cae looked up at Grillby, a small frown on his face as he reached up with a hand to cup Grillby's cheek.

Grillby rumbled a soft sigh, closing his eyes. “I’m alright. It’s just been… A long time. After the human got her, and people stopped talking about her… She just was sort of forgotten. It hurt.” He glanced away.

“She won’t die there.” Toki says softly. “Just like… Han didn’t there.”

That made his gaze jerk up to meet hers again.

She gave a shaky smile. “Yeah. I broke down a little bit when I met my brother there. He didn’t know it was me, and probably thought I was some weirdo, but… Damn. It hurt. All the same, I left Sapphire on the surface. There’ll be no human souls needed,” She says that part flatly, aware that she’d never expressly been told how they’d gotten out, “for them to break the barrier. It wasn’t long after Fuku was born that Cruelty and I broke the barrier.”

"So they were freed earlier than we were." Aliquam spoke quietly.

“Yes.” Toki answered. “Chara and Asriel were still alive, and I was quite vested in not waiting to see what could happen to cause them to not be.” She rubbed her arm. “The straw that broke the camels back was this… This little asshole of a monster. I’ve never met a monster this bitter and cruel. He bruised my arms taking venom from me just because I was a beast type monster, like Tenne, and he thought somehow I was a dumber subspecies.” She shook her head with a rough sigh. “He’d been sending threatening messages to Asgore under the guise of Tenne, and it caused problems. Asgore lost his temper, and he would have ended up dusting Tenne if… Well, I hadn’t have stepped in.”

Toki’s mane ruffled. “My beast and I… Kinda dominated the King.” Bashful embarrassment is rich in her voice. “He couldn’t look me in the eye for long after that day, and any time I bristled, he’d shrink. So, uh… yeah. I was very angry, and demanded that he take me to the barrier. Once Tenne was up, we went, and Toriel healed him before I broke the barrier.” She shrugged. “It had some nasty side effects, but it was worth it. We weren’t under Mount Ebott though. We were under Mount Hood, in Oregon.” She knew Papyrus and Tenne remembered seeing the mountain from afar from their trip to Portland for business.

"Oregon... In the United States?” Tenebris questioned, before he perked up. "Do you think there might be another region of monsters there?” He asked.

“Maybe,” She hedged and glanced away, “But if there is, I don’t have the power to free them anymore. It almost killed me on my own, even with all of those souls. There was a sort of… death switch on the barrier. It was supposed to drain the life from those trying to break it and use their life to repair itself. I don’t know if there are more monsters in our world, but I know there are in other worlds and in other locations.” She taps her skull. “I’ve seen them.”

“Can we open a portal and let them here, perhaps?” Grillby murmured idly. “Give them freedom without having to break-”

“No.” Toki said shortly, and sharply. “No. The worlds are meant to be separate for a reason. Reaching across them is within my capabilities, but I will not do it. The Void is not one to be trifled with, and I’m very certain it will not bring me back to you all if I were to meddle with it again.”

Grillby fell silent and he swallowed shortly. “I… I see.”
Tenebris frowned, then he deflated a little. "A pity..." He murmured.

Toki looked at Tenebris and sighed. "That's why we were split." She says abruptly. "Because us Colors- which us what we were called before we were Boss hearts and Anti-Hearts- decided that we needed to reach to the worlds abroad and help guide them too and we didn't heed the Voids warning. So we were split so we might never be able to do what we were never made to do."

Grillby frowned. "That's from a time beyond even when we monsters kept record."

"I know. I have Cruelty's memories. All of them." She looked to Tenebris, and gave the doctor a meaningful look. "All of them. Now, where was I with my recounting?"

Tenebris tensed at that look, and swallowed slightly, wondering what she knew.

"You had just found yourself on Mount Hood." Cae answered.

"I found myself at Mount Hood." She nods. "Thank you. Anyways, humans saw the blast of light that I let off, and came to investigate. This world was... Weird. I know you've all studied human culture, so you know what I'm talking about when I say this world was similar to the nineties, but... With music and things that wouldn't have come out until more recent times. It was... I don't even know how to describe it." She shakes her head again. "Anyways, all of us monsters got to spend months living in tents until we managed to get housing. In that time, I was... Well, photographed by several reporters during bathing, and it was inquired about many, many times if Tenne and I were going to reproduce because we were the 'last of our species' and I spent a lot of time mothering his children." Now came a lie. "To clarify, I spent a lot of time babysitting all the children. Undyne was a nightmare, and Ariel- that was her mother in that world- couldn't watch her and help keep up the kings guard during negotiations. Lana's mother and father- who spoke Japanese instead of Russian- had to run their shop, so I spent a lot of time watching a gaggle of children in my spare time, between making my own honey and selling it until we got our own homes down on these plains between a place called Maupin and The Dalles."

"Heh... Remember Ariel, Grillby? She acted so calm and gentle until she put her armor on. She was as much a spitfire as her daughter." Tenebris reminisced as he laughed lightly.

Grillby chuckled quietly as he nodded in return, before they returned to Toki's storytelling.

"Whoa, whoa, hang on." Sans then spoke up. "You can make your own honey now?" he asked

"Uh... Yes." She nods. She raises a hand, and then looks at Tenebris. "If you've got a vial or a beaker in that endless coat of yours, Papa, something that's fairly heat proof, I can show you. It has to cool a bit first."

"Not even two hours back and you're sassing me again." He kissed her forehead with a rumble, "It's good to have you back."

He then backed up went to find his coat where he left it hung up.

"I am the sass master. My sass never stops flowing." She informs him cheekily, and watches him wander off to get his coat. She glances at Grillby. "On another note, would you like to see what my venom does for fire elementals?"

He hesitated. "... Do I want to?"

"It's better than coffee." She nods.
He offers up his wrist without a fuss. Grillby flinched at the initial pinch of her stinger sticking into his arm, but his flames visibly brightened as his body processed the venom she gave him. "Oh. Oh wow. That is better than coffee." Coming from the monster who would work himself to the point he was burning lowly if he didn't have his coffee to help recharge his magic, that was saying something. Toki looked pleased and relaxed back, crossing her legs as they waited for Tenebris. "It feels so weird to have normal legs again."

Cae smiled at how Grillby lit up. "You think that’s healthy for Solstice?" He asked, taking his daughter from Grillby and giving her a soft hug as he looked to Toki.

Toki hesitated and looked at her niece. "I don't know." She admits. "She's half fire elemental, half skeleton... We could try it, but not without saving first, just in case. I won't gamble with her health. I don't think it will hurt her, but my venom is very... Dangerous." She glances at her stinger. "It burnt the floor of Tenne's house when I gave him samples to study. I haven't seen what it will do to people I mean ill will too, but... Yeah." She wiggles her fingers at Solstice and smiles. "Hi baby girl... I don't know if she remembers me."

Solstice gave a shy giggle and hid her face in her mothers neck.

She did not apparently remember her Auntie Toki.

"Aww~" Cae cooed gently, patting her back before seeing Tenebris return with the vial she asked for.

Toki smiled and thanked him, before taking the vial and carefully slipping her stinger into it. Her venom flowed out, bright green and hot and practically glowing. She hummed, and capped the vial when it was full, before carefully setting it on the coffee table. "It needs to cool first." She didn't know if they had electricity running again or not, so she wasn't sure if a fridge was an option.

"Anyways. Once we had our homes, I sort of moved in with Tenne and his boys as a live in Nanny. I helped keep an eye on them while I also handled the animals we'd been given. I also got to experience being gored by a bull. That was fun. And... Well, life went on. Sequoia got better and better, and I started to help rehabilitate her into the world, and, ironically, she fell in love. Can you guess whom with?" She half lidded her eye sockets at them all and grinned slowly.

"No way-
"You don’t mean-"

Both brothers looked at their father, who tinged black in the face. "Really?" He asked quietly.

"Yup." She laughed softly, continuing her half woven lie. "She and your alternate self fell in love. I would give up control of our body from time to time so they could go on little dates. It was kind of cute. She wasn't designed for full control though so she couldn't ever stay out long. They made it work and enjoyed themselves though. And yes. He did know about us. He, ah, caught us trying to separate our souls and thought I was trying to commit suicide. I had to explain everything."

"I would have worried in the same if I had seen such a thing." Tenebris admitted, before he chuckled. "Would’ve tackled you if age allowed.”

Toki snorted. “That’s actually about what Tenne did. He slammed into us, and stole our soul from us. Wouldn’t let us have it back until he was quite sure we weren’t about to dust ourselves in front of him.” She taps her fingers on the green ectoflesh of her belly, and hummed. “He was a lot younger than you- and I think, even as ‘old’ as you are, you’d still have tackled us if you saw it. You’re a lot
more spry than you let on.” She says wryly. “Or am I remembering wrong all of my memories of you and your silly shenanigans with Thumper’s laser light? Where is he, by the way?”

“He’s with Toriel.” Grillby answered. “Spending the night up with Frisk. They became fast friends after… everything… So from time to time, Thumper will still stay with Toriel and Frisk up at the castle for a night or two and then come back down to us.”

"He’ll be happy to see you again, Toki... He took losing you as we all did..." Tenebris murmured, brows only twitching at her tease.

Toki sighed gently. “I know.” She said. “I’ll be expecting a proper glomp of a hug when he learns I’m back. Anyways… I think that about sums it up. Life continued on as it would, and I ended up meeting that world’s Han, and… I dunno. That might have been part of my trigger- accepting that it wasn’t my fault that my Han died.” She scrubs her face and shakes her head. “It was… Maybe a week later, if that, when the Void’s little minion, Phase, opened up a rift in time space and scared the bajeezus out of me, Tenne, and his kids,” She’d very nearly blurted, ‘our kids’, “and then ripped my body and soul in half to make Sequoia her own form. I barely got to say goodbye before I was sucked into the Void again, and then… well, I was dropped from the sky again. Nearly landed on my statue.”

"And the rest is history." Aliquam spoke quietly, before he looked to Tenebris.

The elder looked thoughtful at the mention of 'Phase', before he shook his head, no doubt engaging in a mental conversation with himself before he looked to her. "At least you're okay... And you're home."

“I am.” Toki nods slowly. “I’m home, and I’m not going anywhere.” She shifts slightly. “It’s going to take some time to get used to me being back, I’m sure. I know… I’m going to need to adjust to being home. But… We can do it.” She glances around her, at all of her monster family, and curls her finger gently over Aliquam’s leg. “I… well, I know none of my clothes are going to fit me now,” she motions with all four arms and a twitch of her wings, “But maybe we can just rip some holes so I’m not sitting around all of you in the nude.”

"Nonsense!" Tenebris then got up. "I'm going to call Lana. Clothes are a must now that you're home. We must save your unclothed state for your husband's eyes alone." He heckled, before he walked to where they kept the house phone.

Toki watched him go with an owlish blink, and hummed. “Well, it will be good to see Lana again. The last time I saw her, she was shorter than my knee and kept begging goodies from me, alongside little miniature Sans.”

"Did you meet her mother?" Grillby asked quietly.

“Hitsu.” Toki nods. “Hitsu Vestimoves. She and I were close friends. She helped design a coat with magnets that I could wear so the cold wouldn’t bother me. Papa’s weakness to cold is not just a Papa thing- it’s a blaster beast thing. I was always cold, no matter how warm my magic made me.”

"Lana will no doubt carry such cleverness to her work when she's called upon.” Aliquam chortled.

“I have little doubt.” She smiles. “Did… Lana and Kon ever get anywhere further?” She asks curiously.

Grillby nods. “He proposed to her. They might not be able to legally marry yet, but they can live together as fiancé’s for a while until we get full inter-species marriage sorted out.”
Toki’s brows shot to the sky. “No way. She actually settled my gallivanting little brother?”

"She adores him." Cae laughed. "He’s seriously settled down. He's not the same guy he was when we first met."

She laughs gently. “I’m glad. He’s finally found something worth staying for. Who’d have thought that a taste in monsters runs in the family?” She jokes.

Both brothers chuckled with the same joke but neither dared speak it.

Tenebris entered the room with a hum and sat down again, "Alright, I gave her a call."

“Alright.” Toki smiles. “When will she be here?” She inquired curiously.

"Very. Quickly." He warned. "She moved fast hearing you were her customer."

Toki blinks. “Oh dear. She probably missed me. I should… probably stand up so she doesn’t tackle me on the couch and hurt Papyrus.” She glanced at her husband, and gently touched his leg. He still had a grip on her, and she didn’t want to pull away. “Papy? Will you let me up?” She asks him gently.

"Yes, of course." He let her up, before he folded his hands in his lap. "It's good to have you back, Toki."

Toki gave him a half smile. “It’s good to be back, Papyrus.” And… as much as it hurt, it was good to be back. She mourned for Tenne- but she had… She had missed her first love- her first mate. Papyrus was… Papyrus was unique to her. He was hers, and she was his, despite what her best thought- and Toki had wanted him back a while ago.

She glanced at the door as it burst open, and found her face full of wool as her neck was nearly snapped clean in two by a pair of deceptively strong arms. “Toki!” Lana cried, and hugged her tightly. “Toki! So this is not a cruel trick! You've come back!”

Toki could only manage a squeak, and to hug her back too. Lana had missed her- everyone had missed her. Toki could only imagine how her blood family would feel later about this.

“Yeah.” She squeaked, “I’m home. Please, lets not squish me before I get to be home for long, okay?”

Later that night, it was… Well, almost weird settling down in her old home. She’d gotten used to the sounds of Tenne sleeping, of the boys in their own rooms… To be taken up familiar stairs, and brought to a bedroom she’d never thought to see again- well frankly it was like a dream.

Toki got away from Lana’s grasp with an entirely new and well fitted wardrobe. She had shirts for her arms with designs to make room for her wings, and she even had turtlenecks designed to accommodate her new style of horns, and hopefully resist her from tearing them all the time.

She even had a new night gown- which she was wearing to bed.

The children had already beat them to bed, and slept in the room across the hall with the door open. They’d started falling asleep earlier in the evening, so they’d opted to put them to bed while Toki spent time with everyone. Once everyone else started to nod off, she ushered everyone else to bed.
too. Tenebris was alternating staying with Aliquam and staying with Caeruleus while his house was being fixed, and it appeared that Aliquam had his father for the week, so the older male had crashed in another room.

Stag was asleep in the hallway- the deer monster had shoved into the house as soon as they had smelled her, and had rebound themselves to her effective immediately, and then had lazed about on the carpet and basked in her presence. Where Toki went, Stag was not far behind, a hovering, silent guardian. Apparently they had bound to her children, but it was not a proper bond, and their health had suffered. With Toki back, they could recover.

Toki sat on the bed, and was quietly grooming her wings while she simply processed the day. Everything was… So much. It happened so fast… She wasn’t sure how to feel, other than relieved, and then feel bad about being relieved for being home… She was a mess inside. At least she was in a place where she could heal and recover.

Aliquam had made it to bed and set the cane somewhere easy to reach before he sighed and lay back on the bed. "So many nights I thought I'd never feel this again... That I was stuck in a waking hell, where nothing was right and everything was wrong. Now it's like a dream come true." He chuckled, reaching up and making grabby hands at his wife. "I get to hold you again."

Her wings flipped back over on her back, and she peered over her shoulder at him. Toki clamored onto all fours, her primary arms taking her weight while her secondary arms curled at her chest. She slunk over to his side, and got settled down, a soft trill leaving her. The bed felt foreign and strange after so long being out of it. All the same, Toki draped two arms over him, her other pair folding under her to help with position if she needed.

"It's no dream, my dear." She says, her wings flicking as she cuddles into his side. Her bones clanked gently against his as she settled. "Hey... Pap? I wanted to ask earlier, but not in front of everyone. What... Happened to your leg? If you don’t mind me asking."

He gave her a squeeze, relieved to have her in his arms, and then sighed. "Do you remember at the final battle against Cruelty? I took the first strike for you... It had severely damaged my hip and my femur, and they were cracked through the fight... after you tore open the void H had made to stop you but my left femur..." He trailed off, before he sighed again, "shattered... and part of my hip went with it."

She frowned and nuzzled her face to his chest. "It's hard not to forget." She says. "I remember... But shouldn't they have grown back? My ribs grew back after Papa and you patched me up. Or... Was it something in the weapon?" Toki was guessing to be sure. Her arms stroked his back gently.

"I think it was the stress... I lost you as it happened, I never had any time to begin healing... eventually it turned to dust, and we had to make prosthetic replacements for what was lost." He answered.

Toki frowns, and clicks her teeth. She exhaled softly. "That might make sense... Sort of why Undyne's eye never grew back from whatever made her lose it." She stared at his leg, before sitting up and drawing out of his arms. She didn't go far. She just slid down to his hip, where she could see the prosthetic bone meeting the real bone, and then pressed a gentle, loving kiss to it. "This doesn't change anything about how I feel. I want you to know this. Whether or not you’ve got a whole leg, a prosthetic one, half of one, twenty legs- I love all of you, and all of you is enough for me." She peers up at him firmly, and then scoots right back up into his arms. Her four make short work of securing him to her chest, as she partially suffocates him in her mane. "I'm sorry you had to handle this all on your own. It... It must have been rough." It also explained why she didn't see his armor... Anywhere.
The kiss had him shudder, but he suffocated with pride as he wrapped his arms around her and savored her scent. "It was horrible, but now that you're home, it's as if none of it happened." He spoke in a softer, hushed tone. "I love you. I love you so, so much."

"I love you too." She nuzzled the top of his head, and cradled him as she fluffed. She didn’t have pheromone glands in her usual places, but the ones in her mane seemed to have remained, so she released relaxing ones into the air, ruffling her mane to help them spread. She wanted him to sleep—he didn’t look like he had slept deeply since… Since she had left, frankly. “I’m so, so sorry for everything. It’s… my fault. If I had just… followed the plan, not acted on my own, stupid thoughts of what was the kinder option… Your leg might not have been like this, and I would have been here.” She murmured. But, if she hadn’t have acted, hadn’t merged her soul with Cruelty’s… She wouldn’t have been Kindness. She wouldn’t have been herself.

"You did the right thing... the difference between then and now, is that you're absolutely sure you reformed Cruelty..."

“I did.” She nods. “And even if I didn’t… Sequoia- that’s the name she chose when she chose to give up being Cruelty and being Simmons- doesn’t have the power of an anti-heart. The monsters in that world… they’re not even a fraction of the power of the ones here. She’s just a normal, human soul, in a monster’s body. She’s never going to be able to hurt people again. Not with this life being her last life.” Toki swallows. “I’m Balance now, Papyrus. Do you know what that means?”

"It means that you've done something a lot more important in the six months you've been gone." He chuckled.

“No.” She shakes her head. “Well... partly. But... No. It means... It means, when I die- and I will die, eventually, be it in forty years, or four thousand years- I'll reincarnate. And I'll remember.” She rubs her fingers gently over his spine, stroking his bare bones lightly as she watches him. “I'm going to remember everything. This- me, Toki- is going to be the baseline personality for the rest of my eternity. I'm not going to rest- ever. I won't move on, I won't ever really die.” Her green gaze is muted and dull, serious as she watches him. “I'm going to remember every laugh, every smile, every bit of love we shared, and I'm going to remember losing it, for this life, the next, and every life after.”

Cruelty’s curse had become hers.

He took in her words quietly before he nuzzled her. "Oh Toki..."

“It’s okay.” She nuzzled him back, her teeth clicking against his as her scar brushed his forehead. Her horns framed his face. “It really is... Because I’ll be able to remember you, and Papa, and Cae, and all of my family, and I’ll be able to keep watch over our children, and our children’s children, and their children after them.” She rubs her nasal ridge gently to his. “I’ll really live up to the name Guardian Angel.”

He chuckled quietly, rubbing his nasal ridge against hers in reply before kissing her forehead. "It's so good to have you home, Toki..." He purred. "It's like the fire was brought back to my life."

“It’s good to be home.” She says softly, and closes her eyes. She gives a soft sound, and then gives a soft flex of her magic. Her magic pulled open little portals in the room, and a soft green light filled it. Her bees settled along the walls and the posts of the bed, before they began to buzz softly. “You’re the sun in my skies, the light of my heart.” She says to him. “And it’s a cold, cold world without my sun in my life.” Toki kisses him softly, passionately, and then sighs. “Sleep, Papy. I’ll be here when you wake up- I promise.”

He sighed happily as her bees came to fill the space that had been left cold since she was lost, and he
nuzzled into her, squeezing her again tightly. "I love you..." He murmured quietly.

“I love you too.” She says. “Sleep. You haven’t been sleeping well.” She drags one hand up and strokes her fingers across his cheek, where the dark marks under his eyes were visible. “Sleep…” She says softly. “You need it.”

Aliquam stared up at Toki for a long while, his eyes half lidded, before they lulled closed and he sighed quietly, finally falling asleep.

Toki pressed a kiss to his skull, and then just lay there in bed. She didn’t sleep until much later, while she mulled over everything. She was no longer in that other world- which had become a second home to her. She’d left her home to make a second one, and then been torn away from it… Toki was not sure how she was supposed to feel about everything. Any time she thought she should feel sad, she felt worse because she should be happy at being home… But she missed Quinn and Kai and Tenne too, even if she’d spent the entire day with her babies in her arms and her husband as close at her side as he could be without stepping on her feet or tripping her with his cane.

She didn’t know how to feel… So she just settled on relieved to be with her husband again, and settled to sleep with that thought in her mind.
Chapter 115

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: Ah what a lovely way to start the day. A fresh chapter of TOTU, ready for you all to read~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Toki’s family spent a week with her. The entire family. Not just her blood related family, but the entire extended clan- relatives she hadn’t seen in years. She hadn’t realized how highly they thought of her until she was welcomed back with open arms, and they flooded the compound to help with repairs to the house, and repairs to all of the monster’s houses. She spent her first week back in the world with her family helping to reestablish her place in the world, calling their various contacts to reestablish her identity and the fact that she was no longer considered deceased, but alive.

By the end of her first week there, Toki had all of her accounts back in her name, she was considered living once more by the world, and she had a meeting to eventually be scheduled with the world’s leaders to debate with them on where she had been, and to explain the disappearance of the leader of the terrorist organization and why he couldn’t be prosecuted.

Toki was ultimately glad when her family went home, as sad as it was. Her beast was agitated around so many people, and her mane spent a lot of the time being bristled and tense. Her beast was tense and afraid and wanted to hide and shore up in a protected den, and Toki wasn’t sure why. It was on par with the anxiety that her beast had felt when she’d been at the Saturday Market, if not more.

So she breathed a sigh of relief when they’d gone home, and the compound had been left brighter, in better shape. They had flooded homes, filled houses, camped outside- and monsters had welcomed her massive family with open arms as they welcomed their clan leader back into the fold. Her brother had given up the title with no fuss, so she was, once again, leader of the Nara, even if she was still a Gaster.

She’d been home for two weeks when things were finally settling down. The villagers stopped giving her awed looks, and stopped treating her like she was some sort of mystical being for returning from the ‘beyond’.

The two weeks she was home made her miss her boys from the other world, even if she spent time with her children. It never stopped hurting- just like when she’d lost Skylar and Honey- and she was aware that for all the relief that she felt in being home… Some part of her longed to be back there, where life was simpler.

It was confusing, and Toki did her best to shove those feelings aside.

One thing Toki did definitely miss from the other world, was a house designed around her wings. The shower they had was fit very well for a skeleton without wings, but Toki ran into everything in this one. They had finally gotten the water running again- everyone had been abstaining from more washing with than just a sponge bath unless someone got seriously disgusting, simply because the river water was so cold. But now, they all had running water, and heated running water at that.
It was heaven—Toki hadn’t missed not washing, or sponge bathing with cold river water. She hadn’t done that since she’d broke the barrier in Tenne’s world, and since they’d gotten their own home in that world. Once they’d moved out of a tent, she’d had a shower with hot, running water, and she’d loved it. Baths too.

She sighed, tilting her head back under the spray. She scrubbed her hands down her body, brushing her soapy hands over her ribs, and down to the flesh of her sides. She wasn’t sure why she had flesh from under her ribs down to her hips, but guessed it had to be because of what she had been before. After all, wings required muscle to flap, and skeletons had none. She was still semi-fleshy in some spots, where the bone wasn’t quite all solid bone. It was more the mix of what Tenebris was made of, that weird bone-flesh mix. All the same, it worked.

Her fingers scrubbed, cleaning away any filth she had gathered, when she paused. Her soapy hand roved back over her belly, and traced there.

Yes. Yes, that was an undeniable curve. What. What.

Toki glanced down, and had to peer through the murky flesh of her body. This body wasn’t crystal clear like the other one. She couldn’t see her bones all the way, or see all the way through it. It was thicker, kind of murky, more like someone had added a few drops of milk to the Jell-O mix rather than just pure water. She squinted a bit all the same, and paused. She pressed a little on her abdomen to make it shift.

Something rolled into view. It was about the size of a large, closed fist, and several shades darker than her actual flesh and seemed to be very swollen.

Panic hit her, because she knew exactly what that was.

No—no, no, no. No—please—she couldn’t… She couldn’t be…

Toki could hear the kids on the stairs, and washed off in a rush. She scrambled out, drying herself in a flash of magic, and rushed into her clothes, before standing in their room to just try and calm down. She couldn’t… She had to be sure. Maybe it was a growth. A byproduct. A… A tumor. Or… Or something from being in the void.

Anything but that.

“Momma?” Honey poked her head in, eying Toki. “Momma, Daddy is making tea.”

Toki swallowed, and tugged her turtleneck down. She was glad it was loose— it covered the swell of her belly that she could no longer deny was there. She managed a smile for Honey and Skylar despite the panic fluttering in her soul. She needed to tell someone— but not Papyrus. Not him. Not now. Maybe… Maybe Tenebris. Or Todd. Tenebris was a doctor. Maybe he could… Tell her if it was a tumor. Or something. And not… Not what she feared. He’d been at his house for a week and a half, and she hadn’t seen much of him since Thumper came home, so… She’d need to find him.

“I think I’m going to go see your Papa,” She smiles for her children, “so lets go tell your daddy, shall we?”

"Okay Momma." Skylar chirped up to her, before taking off to go inform Papyrus.

Honey squeaked quietly before she smiled up at her mother, coming over and giving her a tight hug.

Toki smiled and scooped up Honey, propping her up instinctively on her hip. She headed down the stairs with her and smooched her little face, hoping her daughter didn’t notice the pudge to her belly.
“Papyrus? Love, I’m going to go visit your father for a bit. I haven’t seen him in several days, and I think he did want to actually record the data from my soul, so we might kill two birds with one stone.”

"Of course.” He calls from the kitchen. “Would you like to go with a thermos of tea to share with him? I just made a fresh pot of Orange Blossom.”

“I’d love to.” Toki nods. The smell wasn’t all that pleasant to her, but she was figuring out why very rapidly. She made her way to the kitchen, and gently plopped Honey down onto the kitchen counter, where there was free space for her small posterior. “Alright, Honeybun. Why don’t you help Daddy until I get back, and then you can help me jar some honey, yeah?”

Like in the other world, Toki was working on making a business with her own honey, until she could get hold of a proper apiary to work with. Pretty much everyone liked her honey, so she didn’t mind, and it expended magic she didn’t need.

Honey chirped happily. "Okay Momma! Say hi to Papa for me!” She squeaked happily.

Filling a thermos with Tea, Aliquam set it on the counter for Toki before he gave her a hug. "I love you~" He purred gently. "Say hello to Father for me.”

Toki was entirely too self conscious of the hug she gave to her husband, wondering if he could feel the changing bump to her front like she could. It was small yet, could just be mistaken for a fat roll if one was looking, but… No. No, no, it wasn’t. It couldn’t be. Not after being split in half- no, no, no. “I love you too, Papy.” She kissed him gently as she hugged him back, and then wiggled her fingers to Honey. “I’ll say hello for you, sweetie. See you all soon, okay?” She snagged the thermos, cradling it in her hand, before letting herself out the repaired back door.

Her wings tensed, and she had to push more magic towards them. Flight was not as effortless now as it had been when she had been a beast- probably an effect of what she was- but she did her best to fly. She was relearning, just as she had to learn then. A few strong flaps, and her wings sent her buzzing off into the sky, the droning hum of her flying a message to all that she was in the sky. She headed for Tenebris’ house, wondering if he’d hear her coming before she’d even get there, and wondering how she’d broach this with him. Or… if he’d smell it.

It seemed she was downwind so it was less likely that he would smell her coming. The sound of her hum however did make up for it and once she was close enough, he had been lifted from his distraction and set out to greet her at the door.

Toki didn’t take long to land outside of his house, and she adjusted her wings, taking a moment to straighten her shirt and make sure her pants hadn’t slid down, before approaching the front door. She knocked on the door with one hand, the other three clutching the strong smelling thermos at her front. “Hi, Papa.” She says softly, hesitantly. “I brought some tea, and was hoping we could enjoy it together.”

The door had opened not long after she knocked upon it and Tenebris' elder face had a warm smile as he then stepped to the side. "Come on in, my dear Toki." He purred happily. "My home is your home, after all."

“You’re too kind.” She smiled and brushed past him, her mane ruffling faintly with the nerves bubbling in her chest. She sucked in a calming breath, and made her way towards the kitchen, scenting the location of food rather than going by memory. She carried with her the smell of tea, her scent, and her conditioner. She did so like her conditioner. “Big mug or a small mug for you, Papa?” She inquired as she peers up at his tall cabinets, summoning a few bees rather than trying to hover to
"Get some tea for yourself and I'll drink out of the thermos itself." He joked with a soft laugh. "Whatever has been washed already, I suppose." As he turned to watch her go into the kitchen, he noticed she was a little off in both behavior and scent, but so far said nothing.

Toki exhaled softly, and simply fetched herself a small mug. She didn’t want much, so she poured herself a little bit, and then steeled herself. She turned to Tenebris with a grin and a quirked brow. “Well, you did say just give you the thermos.” She jokes, and offers it out to him, before letting her bees fade off while she slid towards the couch. She curled up on the end, making herself instinctively small as she let her wings drape over the back of the armrest.

He watched her take position on the couch and tilted his head slightly as he now held the thermos in his hand. "Toki... Is everything alright?" He asked as he came over, setting the thermos down before he sat down.

“No.” She shakes her head. “It’s not. I…” She exhales sharply, and takes a sip of her tea. It tastes sour in her mouth, so she chokes it down and sets the cup on a side table, before curling her arms around her knees, careful not to squish her belly. “I don’t even know how to explain it, Papa. I…” Her throat bobs. “I’ve… done things. In the other world. That I’m… I’m not proud of. I came to find out just before I came home that, if not for the Void essentially making sure I would do them, I’d never have done them, but… It had lasting effects.”

There was no denying what the swelling lump in her belly was. Wishing it was a tumor or a void growth was not something that would just make it so. It wasn’t… that.

"Toki... You can be straight with me... what happened to you before you made it home?"

“Many things, Papa, many things. So many things that I can’t even tell you, and most of that is because half of them are full of so many lies that even I don’t know the truth anymore.” Toki laughs, and it is a bitter, unhealthy laugh. “I was made to fall in love.” She says shortly, “Because Sequoia needed my love to learn how to love on her own. Did you know you can love two people equally, even when one of those loves was brought on falsely because of some dark god’s meddling shenanigans?” Her eye lights peer up at him. To her dismay, they dampen with tears. She fights them back, so her eye lights just gleam extra bright at him. “And what happens when two beasts love one another, Tenebris?”

One hand wanders down to her middle, and tightens over her shirt, where the swell was burgeoning into life. Her hand was in clear view of her father in law’s eyes.

He took in her words and was going to answer her no doubt rhetorical question before he stopped as he realized exactly what her hand was doing, and what that meant.

His gaze slid back to her face, unreadable for a moment. "You're pregnant... And... If I had to guess... My counterpart is the father."

"And I shouldn't be pregnant! Let alone this big!" Toki laughs shakily, confirming his assumption easily. "When the Void made Sequoia, Phase split me in half, Papa. He split me from the tip of my skull down to my pelvis, like he grabbed me by one leg in each hand and just yanked me in half, organs and all. If there was anything, anything that could have taken root... That should have killed it. But it didn't, which means the Void means for me to do this.” Her other secondary hand comes to her face. "It means for me to carry Tenne's pup, and... And I'm not sure what to do. Or... Or how I even tell Papyrus. What kind of excuse is 'the Void made me do it'?” Sure, she wouldn't have ever gotten with Tenne if the Void hadn't meddled and made her, but... Would Papyrus even accept that?
Sans? Grillby? Would anyone even accept that?

Tenebris had a look of unreadable emotions on his face as he let it sink in that she was carrying in this... interesting situation.

His eyes closed and he took a calming breath, before he reached out towards her with one hand. "If it's alright..." Tenebris kept his voice gentle so she didn’t spook. “May I?"

Toki sighed and nodded. She slowly unfurled from her defensive ball, stretching her legs out. She slid the edge of her pants down just a bit, and slid her shirt up, showing the swollen, fist sized balloon distending the inside of her belly. "Yeah, go ahead. Might as well make sure it's healthy... Its not the baby's fault I was made to fuck up." She murmurs softly. Toki looks at the glowing swell, and peers at him quietly to see what he would do with what she’d offered him.

She wasn’t very big yet- her belly was definitely curved up though, and she shouldn’t have… Toki would have known if she was carrying in the other world- she was too far along for that. Unless… beasts carried faster than skeletons and half-beasts did.

His gaze opened once more and he gave her a soft look to reassure her that he did not plan to antagonize her about it. Rather than torment the obviously stressing female, he slowly moved close enough to reach her and press his large, warm hands on the bump that was her stomach. "I love you, Toki..." He murmured, "And I wish only the best for you and my Son. I will do whatever I can to help you in this time."

Toki sucks in a soft breath as his hands slide over her belly. Her beast purrs in her mind that this was just right, and she works very hard to pinch her for it, because no, this was her Papa, those were two different people, two different worlds, two different timelines. Her beast subsides, and Toki glances up at him. “I love you too, Papa.” She says softly. “I… I just don’t know what to do right now. I’m… thinking maybe just keeping this quiet until I can figure out what to tell Papyrus.” She glances away and sighs, her belly shifting under his hands with her breath. “… I wonder if it’ll come out full beast.” She murmurs. “Tenne was one, and I was one at the time it was, uh… yeah. Is there any way to tell…?”

"I do not know yet... But with the genetics of what you were and my counterpart is... Then perhaps they will come out full beast." He didn't want to admit it, but his heart was leaping in his chest at the idea of beast-pups. If they survive, he'd have a few more pups to hunt with.

She could see the gleam of hope in his eyes, and she gave him a faint smile. “You’re excited for more beast types, aren’t you?” She asks softly as she watches him. “It would mean…” He wouldn’t be the only one. Her eyes lit up. Oh. Oh. That’s… That’s what she was supposed to do. “Oh… Oh my god. I know why I’m pregnant.” She gives a faint laugh, and cups one of her many hands to her face. “I’m supposed to make sure there are more beasts here. The Void never tells me what I’m supposed to do, only says that I’ll know when I’m ready. This… This took marginally less time than trying to figure out how to get to come home.”

He had to wonder, was he that readable? Tenebris chuckled quietly in embarrassment before he looked to her as she made a realization. "Toki?" He questioned.

"I'm... I'm supposed to bring little blaster beasts here." She says. "The Void doesn't do anything for no reason. Everything has its purpose... And I think this was mine." She stares at her middle and sighs, one of her hands coming to cradle her skull. "I just... I don't know what to do, Papa. I'm going to carry to term, I know that, but after... Not... Not a lot of men can look past their wives having another man's baby." Her eye lights burn unpleasantly at the thought of losing Papyrus because of the actions she had been informed weren't all her own. This was a giant middle finger from the void,
and Toki was very lost.

"I'm not sure what to say myself... this is... strange... I never thought the void would consider something like this as an option... I certainly hope this is not my doing either..." He sighed, "Centuries in the void, I had a lot to think about..." He then shook his head. "Toki, Papyrus knows exactly what the void is capable of. If you explain the circumstances to him, he'll understand. I know he will."

Toki trembled where she sat. "I am afraid." She says softly, and looks up at her father in law. "I am afraid. There was... There was a saying that Cruelty and I used to live by in the other world, until we couldn't anymore. The truth is much harder than a lie. I was... I wasn't ever going to tell anyone about how I... How I still feel for Tenne or what transpired between him and I. And now... Now I have no choice. There is no way to lie, no way to... To keep from hurting him with this." She exhales. "I might not have ever loved him on my own, Papa, but... But the love I feel now is very real. I love two men at once, as does my beast, and it is... It is very hard." She sighs. Toki watches him quietly. "Papa? If you were in his place, how would you react? Your wife just told you that she's pregnant. The baby isn't yours. It's from another man, in another world, another man that she still loves, almost as much as she loves you. Except this man isn't just a man- this man is basically your father from another world. Even when she tells you that the only reason it happened is because some godly black mist creature partially controlled her actions to make sure it did happen, how would you react? Please. Tell me."

Tenebris took only a moment to ponder his words as he peered at her, before he began to speak. "When you were within the realm that was not your own, you were a puppet. You came to love after you lost... and you thought it was two years... you had mourned until you could mourn no more. The one you fell upon for comfort loved you, and no doubt wanted the best for you, and just when you were fated to accept it, you were torn away again... The child was conceived of love, and though it may not be of Papyrus' being, it's still your child, and being your husband, he will still love you as much as he did the day you married him."

Toki’s breath hitched, and then she exhaled softly. "You’re... You’re right." At least she hoped so. Toki glanced away from him, her secondary hands coming to fold over her belly. Her thumbs rubbed it gently. "... Will you help me tell him?" She says softly. "I... I don’t know if I’m ready yet. Or if I’ll ever be ready. But... But I’m pretty sure it’s only been two weeks, and I’m already showing, so... So I don’t have much of a choice."

"Don’t hurt yourself worrying about it, Toki. When you are ready to tell him, I will be right beside you to help you tell him."

She managed a fond smile for him, and reached out to pat the top of his head. "Thank you, Papa. I'm just a bit... Lost." She sighs. Her eye lights focus on the green flesh peeking between her finger bones, and she grinds her teeth. "I'll tell him. I need to tell him now. Just... I don't know if I should yet. Or if I can hide it for long. My body is changing and... Well... He's bound to notice since we share a bed. He's very clingy in his sleep now."

"If he finds out through you, it will do you a lot more good than if he found out himself..." Tenebris told her. "Clingy indeed, he'll notice it very quickly."

She heaves a sigh and nods. "I'll... tell him when we finish tea." She decides anxiously. "Though... Go ahead and finish it. It... kinda tastes disgusting to me." She glances away awkwardly. Probably a pregnancy symptom- Toki was sensitive to foods last time.

"Mnh, the stage of the cocoa once again." He sighed quietly. "A pity that it had to be tea. Though perhaps cocoa is spared this time around."
“I hope so.” She sighed. Toki rubbed her belly gently. “Spaghetti too… Now that we’ve got running water again, I was going to ask Papyrus if he’d like my help making it. I haven’t had his dinner in… years.” She glances at Tenebris and taps her fingers on his head. “Thank you for not… freaking out. Considering… Well, these are kinda…” His kids from a different world, if she let herself think like that. It was… kinda creepy if she thought about it. His alternate kids? She’s not all that sure what to classify them, but she’s sure he gets the picture.

He got it well enough, but didn’t make drama of it as he pats her shoulder while offering her a smile. "Whatever entity in that void isn't stupid, I’d bet. He wont let you off the hook until he knows you played right into his hands with the task that you had been assigned."

She tensed at that, and then flicked his forehead, giving him a dirty look. “Thanks. Like I really wanted to see them again, Papa. The creepy doctors mask was hell enough.” She rolls her eye lights, her wings flicking over the back of the couch. “Finish your tea, Papa. I think I’ll head home when you’re done. And… Tell Papyrus about… this.”

"Alright." He nodded gently, before he sat back to continue sipping his tea. "I'll come with you if you'd like." He offered.

“Please. If… If you think that’d be a good idea.” Toki continues to gently rub the tiny swell of her belly, and sighs softly. “Hey, Papa? Can you… See if it’s healthy yet? Or is it too soon? I just want to make sure that the void travel hasn’t had any lasting effects.” Like… Was it going to come out of her in a puddle of goo? That was her first growing concern.

“I can do that much.” He chuckled gently. He shifted from his seat to sit before her and he reached out, setting both hands on her slight swell. “They're very healthy... though it's a bit of a flurry of soul beats to read.” He chuckled gently. "But they are all strong indeed.”

“Wha-” Her eye lights disappeared in her sockets, and she stared at him blankly. ‘Flurry of soul beats’. “What do you mean by flurry of soul beats? Is… Is there twins again?” Twins twice in a row- she’s pretty sure she’d have lost a bet twice in a row in that case, though from whom she’s not sure. “God I hope not… I was huge with Papyrus’s twins. I can’t imagine more than one from a monster your size.” Toki was no longer the seven-foot tall monster. She was just… her little six foot self, surrounded by monsters that made her feel dwarfed. It was nice to be normal sized again.

He opened his mouth, and then slowly closed it, his gaze averting. "Ah... You are aware of... how many pups a blaster beast could have in a litter... did my counterpart not tell you?"


Oh man of all the things his counterpart didn't explain to her- then again, he didn’t really have the chance most likely. He’d give it his best attempt. "A healthy mother with a complete litter… Three to potentially eight pups."

“Three… Three to eight?” She squeaked. “Oh… Oh dear.” She rubbed her skull and glanced away. Her soul glowed under her shirt in a faint panic, but her beast soothed her rapidly, because to the beast, this was a normal and good thing. Eight was small for a hornet. “According to my beast, eight is apparently… small for a hornet.” She informs him, feeling faint. “Fuck… Just… fuck. That’s… That’s a lot.” She murmurs softly. “And… How many souls can you feel?”

"I immediately counted four... Might end up being six as they get stronger.” He murmured, investigating her closer. "Insect beasts have the potential for hundreds of children. Would you rather have that instead?”
Toki physically blanched at that. "Please no. Not hundreds. Just... Four is fine. I can... Fuck I can try to handle four. I'm going to explode, dear gods." She looked at her belly again and the panicked flutter in her soul was real. Four. That was double last time. She... She had been so tired after last time. "Hhh..." She sucked in a soft breath and let it shudder out. "Is that why I'm so big? Because there's so many? Or are they growing faster than the twins did?" She had gone overdue with the twins by two weeks.

"I don’t think blaster beasts gestate for nine whole months, so luckily you might not have to suffer for long."

“… That’s both good and bad.” She blinks. “Because you obviously don’t know how long I’ll be pregnant, so… it’s going to be another case to study.” She sighs and deflates. “I really didn’t want another birth filmed. But I guess this is what happens.” She looks at him, and then shifts in her seat. “I guess you should start keeping records. These will probably be the only full blaster beast pups born. We’ll be flying by the seats of our asses again…”

Toki glances to his tea, and motions for him to finish it. It was really bothering her nose.

He chuckled quietly, "I wont record it this time... It makes me sound like a dirty old man instead of a scientist." He put the lid on the thermos and stood up to take it to the kitchen.

“I don’t mind if you film this. It’s… Well, science, frankly. Just… Keep it out of sight, out of mind, like last time. No fuss from me then.” She got up and straightened her clothes, following after him like a lost lamb. “Well, I mean, you do go have dirty old man sex with the king up in the castle.” She teases. “Speaking of… Papa? Remember how, during my first heat, you told me that I couldn’t handle your heat? Well… I can now speak from experience that yes. I could.” Toki leans on the door frame to the kitchen. “I left him walking bowlegged.”

It wasn't clear just which part he choked at, but he had definitely hitched his breath enough to choke on air. After a small coughing fit, he looked at Toki with a flush to his cheeks. "Tokiko, dear lord!"

She laughs, bracing her hands on her hips. “Oh Papa, I’ve been holding that in for a while. I’ve missed teasing you. I kept instinctively cracking jokes at Tenne, but he’d just look like a confused puppy. It’s no fun unless I can get a rise out of you.” She snickers gently, and feels a bit lighter. “Alright- once you’re done clearing your lungs, I’ll go talk with Papyrus before I lose my nerve.”

He took a moment to clear his breathing tubes and with a sour look at her. He started out towards the door. "Come on then, my dear." He rumbled, the sour look fading as fast as it had come and being replaced by a smile.

Toki smiled faintly, and followed him. She headed out the door, and then flexed her wings, before glancing at him. “Well, since you can’t fly back, lets do the mundane task of walking,” She gives him a faint grin, before starting for home.

He rolled his eyes and chuckled as he walked at her side, his hands folding behind him as he took in a breath of air. "It's so good to have you home, Toki."

“IT’s good to be home, Papa.” She looked up and inhaled softly. “It smells different than before, but... I never thought I’d see it again, frankly. Home is... Home is nice.” She pokes him with one of her arms. “I bet you didn’t expect to see me come home with four arms, wings, and different horns.”

"Not at all did I expect it, Toki... but even then, I’ll admit that regardless of how you look, we're all very happy you're home."
“I’m happy I am too, even if I miss the friends I made in the other world.” She nods in agreement, and simply falls into step with him. She’d gotten better with walking in the two weeks she’d been back- relearning how to walk on human shaped legs was fun. “Four arms are surprisingly useful.” She tells him. “Once you get past them getting in the way of everything, and never being able to buy normal clothes again, it’s actually really nice. I can make pancakes and stir more batter at the same time. It’s like magic, but better.”

He chuckled at that. "Don’t you mean it's like magic but batter?" He nudged her with his hip as he walked, chuckling proudly as if he’d made the best pun.

It took Toki a moment, but she sputtered. “Papa!” She cried indignantly. “That was a terrible pun. But well played.” She bumped him back, and her indignant sputtering faded off into soft laughter. “I suppose I know where Caeruleus gets his punderful skills from.”

"I'm a dad. I have bad puns in my genes, or rather, my sweatpants." He gave his leg, bedecked in his beloved sweat pants, a wiggle as he chortled smugly.

Toki groaned and rolled her eye lights. “Ugh, dad jokes. I’m so glad Aliquam doesn’t crack so many of those. Only when he’s feeling particularly sassy. I recall being the one usually ruffling his feathers with puns and jokes.”

"That's one thing that Aliquam didn't get from me. I think Cae got his brother's share." He cackled.

“Oh yeah, I’m pretty sure he did. He’s a hundred percent sass.” Toki watched the houses passing them by, and waved her hands at monsters and workers when they waved at her. Toki sighed through her nasal cavity, and glanced at her father in law. “Papa…? What are the other monsters going to think about… this?” People talked. And talk was never, ever nice.

"I don’t know yet, but I don’t think anyone here has the consideration to talk poorly of you, regardless of your suffering...”

She glances at him and hums. “Monsters probably not. There will be talk though,” She says softly, “Some of it, even from monsters, might not be kind. Some won’t understand like you do- like I hope Papyrus will. They may say… unkind things.” Her reputation would take a blow- she would probably be known as the monster who cheated on her mate. “Just… if you hear such things, Papa, don’t get upset. People talk- humans especially, and the builders will be talking I’m sure.”

"Me? Believe such scornful words? Never." She bumps his hip and snorts. “I didn’t think you’d believe them, Papa. But you’ve got a temper on you, even if you hide it behind your calm demeanor. I know, because my beast has a short temper. And she’s not a forgiving creature. The Asgore of the other world learned that the hard way. I just don’t want you to take it to heart and get angry in my stead, okay? Sticks and stones can break our bones, but words can hurt a lot too.”

He nodded gently. "I see... alright..." He murmured.

“I’m surprised you didn’t ask what happened with the other Asgore.” She hummed conversationally, trying to get him distracted from the moderately upsetting topic of badmouthing her reputation.

"Well I was wondering, but I wasn't sure I wanted to get my hands on any juicy blackmail.” He chuckled.

“Well, you remember how I said we dominated the King, right…? Well… We uh, kinda did something that verged on treason. We threatened him.” Her mane ruffled. “He left bruises around
Tenne’s neck. He was, uh, effectively choking him to death. The otter Galloway had been framing Tenne and using his name to try and sway the king to use Chara’s soul to break the barrier. You understand that killing one’s child is just not possible, even if they’re not yours by blood.” She sniffs slightly and hums.

Tenebris nodded as he listened, but had slowed down when she mentioned the otter monster. "Ohhh no..." He grumbled, before he pressed his face into his hand. "Galloway was there?" He groaned.

One could hear how hard the beast was cringing behind his hand.

“Oh yeah. He was there.” Toki nods. “He spent… Oh, I don’t know, the entire time I was giving venom samples telling me about how dumb and stupid beasts were and how entitled Tenne was because he didn’t have to go to some whatever the fuck school for monsters and mischief to learn how to be a smarty pants scientice-mc-guru.” The sarcasm in her voice is nearly tangible. “I didn’t like him and neither did my beast. It probably didn’t help when I got there to see Asgore and Tenne either. My beast was just starting to show herself then, and I wasn’t sure where all the aggression had come from until later, but… You know how when we use magic, it puts a sort of pressure into the air, right?” She waves a hand around them. Maybe she was just sensitive to it, and no one else felt it, but she was trying to explain. “I sort of used that, and the threat of filling him- Asgore that is- with my venom, to make him let go and back off. I had his guards nearly on their knees with the pressure of my magic. He said I could be imprisoned for my treasonous actions.”

"Mmh..." He took a moment to groan in anguish, clearly he and Galloway had history... Though once it passed he lowered his hand and looked at her. "I'd bet it was a hell of an effect on the guards. Having your soul been fused with the Anti-heart, It was very powerful magic. I'm not surprised they buckled. Hell, I'm not even surprised Asgore backed off." He chuffed, "He might have Boss magic, but you had human magic. I simply wish I could have seen your stats when you were one with Crue- I mean, Sequoia."

An amused snort left her. “Papa? You remember all the souls that Cruelty sucked in before I took control again? Those were still inside of me. All of that power- all of the power of those souls, those traits.” She tapped her chest. “My body had too much power to contain. The Void put it behind a wall. A leaky wall, mind you, but a wall all the same. It wasn’t just me and Cruelty- he hadn’t become my friend yet, so it’s fine to reference that name then. Sequoia was post barrier breaking- Cruelty was pre. What you saw in my stats now is what my stats looked like with just me and my Anti-heart.” She hums. “Other than my HP, my stats displayed as question marks, Papa. I had so much power that it broke my stats. No one but myself and the environment could hurt me, up until I threw everything into my damage to break through the barrier.” Her eyes flick away again and she sighs. “No chain will ever hold me anymore. No chain, no prison, no barrier- I will only stay where I want to stay, Papa. And I didn’t want to stay underground anymore. So we didn’t.”

Her eyes do darken though, and she sighs. She knows how her monsters got out- the dots had finally connected, and she felt stupid for having taken so long to realize it. Toki falls quiet, not sure how to broach that subject with Tenebris. She needed to talk to Asgore about it. She really did.

"Impressive..." He murmured, before he rumbled, patting her shoulder gently in assurance, "No one in their right mind will think about stopping you, Toki, don’t worry." He assured her, "And no one, absolutely no one will force us underground again, thanks to you.” He told her, noticing her gaze darkening but not questioning it.

“Not now, and not in a hundred lifetimes from now.” She says firmly. “I will protect the monsters as best I can… Anyway,” she looks at him, “I think we’re nearly there.” She glanced up, and spotted the familiar roof looming around the corner. She smiled faintly. “You moved further away,” She
noticed faintly. “Though... It looks like the most damage was closer to my house.”

"Not that far. Just far enough to give you privacy." He chuckled. "Your home did take substantial damage, but it was one of the first to be fixed... We couldn't leave it to break down in your absence."

She nods quietly, and reaches out to rub his arm. “It was one of the few things Papyrus had left of me,” She says gently. “That you all had left of me. I understand.” Toki exhales softly and gives him a warm look. “At least you all had each other to help each other through it.” As they reach the stairs, she feels a coil of nervous nausea bubble in her belly, and wonders if he can smell it. She sucks in a breath, and starts up the stairs, her footsteps making noise so her husband would know she was home.

Tenebris chuckled gently before he rumbled softly, his own sound of announcement as he padded up the steps.

Aliquam came to the door with a smile on his face. "Welcome home, Toki." He purred happily.

That was a new thing- any time she came home, he came to the door to greet her. She hoped it was a temporary anxiety thing- because he would stop whatever he was doing to see if it was her, and the relief on his face when it was her coming in the door broke her metaphorical heart.

Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and waved a hand. “Hey, Pap. Thanks. It’s nice to be home.” Her mane ruffled and settled, and she slid up to press a kiss to his cheek, before meandering towards the living room. She pauses. “Ah... Are the kids upstairs? I need to talk with you about something that your dad and I... went over today.”

He gave her a tight squeeze when she stopped to peck his cheek and nodded gently. "Yes, I just put them in their room to play." He explained. "Is everything okay?" He asked.

“Good. I’d rather sort this out before they know.” She fiddles with her shirt, and then hums. “Well... That depends on your definition of okay. Let’s go to the living room first. I’d rather you sit down for this than stand.” Especially with his leg and his tendency to faint with surprise announcements.

He nodded slowly and walked to the front room, sitting down before he looked up at Toki.

Tenebris sat down, before he sighed and folded his fingers in front of his chest. A small frown graced his face as he intended to let Toki do the talking for now.

Toki watched them both and sighed. She fidgeted, and was tempted to just call it off, but ultimately just said screw it. She sucked in a breath, and gave him a shaky smile. “Okay, so... Alright. Fucking hell.” Toki rubbed her forehead. “So... I didn’t tell you everything about the other world. I didn’t... I didn’t want to tell you everything. I had hoped what I’d done in the other world had... Well, had stayed there, especially after what the Void told me.”

Toki was beating around the bush she knew. She could only beat it so long, but she needed to gather herself against the nerves that made her stomach rise into the back of her throat.

"Go on..." Aliquam was paying attention to nothing but her. She wasn't going to get out of it now.

Toki sighs, and she sits down suddenly on the coffee table. All four hands come to clutch her skull as she leans forward to rest her arms on her knees. She feels dizzy, but she perseveres. “Sequoia... Sequoia wasn’t the only one who fell in love.” She says softly. “Unfortunately, she... She needed my love to learn how to love for herself. So... So the Void pulled some strings when I proved too stubborn, too obstinate on my own, and too unwilling to... Too...” To betray her mate. Toki swallows, and her mouth feels dryer than the bones that make up her limbs. “To take a second mate
after losing my first. The void had plans for me though, and plans for Sequoia too, and that involved
love. Though… Truthfully, it wasn’t an honest love at first. It wasn’t a real love- the Void informed
me of such. But… It became love.” This is where she cringes. “I still love him Papyrus. Not as much
as I love you- but he’s got a small place in my soul for the kindness he showed me, and for making
sure I didn’t give up and die in a hole somewhere. He was… He was my kindness in that world- a
kindness I needed. But… Our love had consequences. These consequences are why I’m telling you
all of this- I can’t run from them for very long.”

His face was still of concern, but there was a knowing worry in his eyes.

"I cannot thank him enough for keeping you from falling into a grave you could not climb out of...
But if there’s something left..." He murmured, before he tilted his head slightly, gaze wandering
lower as if he already had a guess.

“There is.” Toki straightened, and pulled up her shirt just a bit. “I didn’t think, if there was anything
that might have came from it, that it would have survived the process of Sequoia’s body being made.
I got… literally split in half, from the fun bits to my skull.” She says awkwardly as she displays the
growing, faintly glowing bump that was her belly. “But… Yeah. This is it. I’m pregnant. Papa
confirmed it when I noticed in the shower. He, uh… said there could be from between four to six in
there. Kind of hoping it’s just four,” She gives an awkward attempt at a laugh. “It’s… It’s not
skeletons. It’s blaster beast pups.” She was, effectively, carrying the children of another Tenebris
from another world.

He wished he were wrong. He wished he had the willpower to be ready for this sort of news, but he
was so very, very wrong. Aliquam looked at the glowing bump that was his wife’s stomach before
he closed his eyes, folding his hands over his mouth.

"I... just need a moment..."

Toki lowered her shirt and nodded. She stood up quietly, and looked down at Tenebris and her
husband, before awkwardly tucking her hands in her pockets. “I’ll step into the kitchen to give you a
moment, okay?” She kept her voice quiet, and her tone even, though her heart broke a little. She
knew what was coming- and Tenebris had been wrong.

Toki headed for the kitchen, her wings tucking tight to her back as she slipped inside. It wasn’t far,
and she’d hear what they said, but it was a modicum of privacy for him to… to process what she told
him.

Toki heard Tenebris start up first, his voice quiet and hesitant as he prodded his son verbally.
"Aliquam..."

"This is a sick joke...” Aliquam sounded hurt, but his tone was venomous. "First the Void takes my
father in my childhood, and then it steals away my wife for months- months for me, years for her...
And she comes back... thinking that I'll think she betrayed me by coming back pregnant as a result of
being manipulated into love..."

"... You're not upset with her?"

"Hardly... I’m a little upset that she thought she had to lie to me, but from what I’m understanding,
she had to do a lot of it in this other world. Lying is a hard habit to break… Honestly, Father, I barely
want to let her out of arms reach after so long of thinking I had lost her. I’m not mad at her, but with
this being of the Void on the other hand… I'll have some very unpleasant words to have with it,
should we ever meet...” Aliquam growled.
That did make Toki feel a little better, but not much. She still felt like she had betrayed him, but… There wasn’t really much that she could do at this point. She was pregnant, and she had to live with it. He might have been hardly upset with her, but he sure didn’t sound happy. And… Well, children born into an unhappy marriage usually didn’t grow up happy. She wasn’t sure what to do, frankly.

She quietly busied herself in the kitchen, turning on the sink just long enough to wet the dishes laying in it, and beginning to do dishes on autopilot because that’s all she could do currently. She didn’t remember the password to her computer, so getting back on it to read and work on her books from what felt like forever back would have to wait until she could get it unlocked somehow. Housework was relaxing in it’s own way anyways, and she didn’t mind doing it, and just letting her mind wander as her expression sank into something that was both tired and sad. She was so tired of things happening that just kept ruining what little bits of peace she’d find. She was so, so tired of it.

Toki just hoped that he’d still be okay with… well, her in general when he called her back to the living room. She wasn’t sure that she could handle losing that one little bit that she had gotten back. Not permanently anyway.

The father and son talked for a while, before Aliquam came into the kitchen. He hobbled slowly on his cane, the telling sound of it on the tile echoing before his steps did. He wasted no time in coming to Toki and wrapping his arm around her. "I love you, Toki… I love you so much. And nothing can change that. Not even this, as you might have feared."

Toki’s wings remained tucked flush to her back to allow him as close as possible, and she hummed softly. “I love you too,” She says softly, sockets squinting shut. “I love you so much, Pap… I didn’t want to upset you with any of this. I know how much it bothered me. I’m sorry I kept it from you.” She leaned back into him slightly, and glanced back up at him. The one good thing about not having her horns spearing back from the top of her skull anymore meant she wasn’t likely to stab him in the eye anymore. “Things are still going to change though.” Her voice fades quietly, and she sighs. ‘I don’t… I don’t know how we’re going to handle this. I don’t know how you’re handling this right now. Handling it so… so calmly.” Toki was upset and disquieted and it was upsetting her insides.

"You were brave enough to tell me. That's all that matters." He sighed, before he turned his head to rest it on her skull. "It will not be easy, I understand this... but it's okay. We can still make this work out... somehow."

Her crocodile teeth settled into a wobbly crooked smile. She sighed gently. Her hands itched to wander to her belly, but she didn’t let them. This wasn’t their twins- he wasn’t their father, and she didn’t want to upset him or bother him with anything too soon after he’d found out. “We’ll figure it out.” She nods quietly. “It’s going to be hard. People… People are going to talk, Pap. Humans, monsters… Not all of the talk is going to be good. Particularly about me.” She watches him through the window, and nuzzles her skull up into his. “You talk about me being brave… I’m really not. I just got backed into a corner where I couldn’t run- didn’t want to run.” She corrected. “Running would mean leaving and that’s not something I could ever do.” Her shoulders trembled at the thought. “I… I would rather take your scorn a thousand times over, or sleep in a room in an entirely different building if I have to, than run from you.”

He chuckled quietly and he nuzzled her. "And leave me to hobble after you?" He asked, before pressing a soft, tender kiss to her skull again. "I only just got you back from this despicable creature who manipulated you..." He spoke more somberly now, traced with anger towards the Void and the entity within. "Not even this can tear me away from what I believe..."

“You don’t hobble,” Is her automatic response, “You gracefully waddle. But… yeah.” She sighs
quietly. She relishes the fact that she doesn’t have a lot of skin limiting her movements anymore, and cranes her neck around so she can kiss his jaw line gently. “Thankfully, the Void said I won’t see it again unless I do something incredibly stupid… Presumably ripping open another hole to the Void would be said stupid thing, of which I’ve got no intentions of doing.” Her wing joints press awkwardly into his chest, and Toki sighs. “… I’m not going anywhere. But… I know this is probably hard for you. Knowing that I… What I did…” How she felt… “I wouldn’t blame you, if you decided that this wasn’t your problem. I just want you to know that.”

"It wouldn't be that easy to simply overlook it, Toki... It's complicated to explain, but don’t you worry. I've dealt with a whole lot worse, and I've come through that well enough. We'll get through this just fine.”

Toki rolls her eye lights. “I didn’t think it would be, Pap. It, uh, is kinda gonna grow big and grow fast. Hard to ignore something like that.” Her fingers give in, and one of her hands strays to her growing swell. “I hope so… Because Pap…? We're not gonna have nine months to get used to the idea of this. I don’t think we’re going to have anywhere close to that. Papa doesn't know how long for sure, but… I’m probably between two and three weeks. Maybe more, maybe less.” And she was already showing, with her womb visible in her belly.

"It's okay." He pecked her head some more. "I'll be ready by the time they come out..."

“I hope so, Pap.” She nuzzled his skull with a quiet sigh. “I really do.” She looked up at him quietly. “I just hope I am by the time they’re here.” They were going to be a constant reminder for her of what she lost in the other world- and a constant reminder that she’d been essentially forced to betray her marriage to Papyrus, even if it hadn’t felt forced.

Aliquam set his head on hers and sighed, giving her another soft hug.

She leaned back into him with a soft sound, before glancing away and rubbing his knuckles. “We should go tell your dad that we’re okay for now.” She wasn’t sure how truly okay they were- she knew Papyrus was forgiving, but there had to be some limit, right?- but she wasn’t going to push it. “Besides, we need to figure out what to tell the kids. They’re… going to ask questions. They’re both smart as a whip.”

He nodded in agreement, "Come on" he purred, leading her out of the kitchen.

She didn't echo his purr, but followed him quietly. She went at his pace, slowly hobbling out with him to the living room. She managed a smile for Tenebris, and then took a seat on the couch with the two of them. Her hands folded over her lap, and she sighed.

Tenebris looked up at them both.

Aliquam sighed. "Things will be okay. We're going to get through this together."

“Yeah.” Toki nods. She glances at Tenebris and gives an awkward shuffle. “I’m not sure what to tell the children though. They’re smart- they got that from the both of you- but I’m not… entirely sure what to tell them concerning…” She gestured to her belly. “They’re going to come out looking different than they did.”

"It's going to be quite an explanation..." Tenebris agreed.

Toki leaned back and rubbed her middle with a soft sigh. The flesh was soft and warm- almost overly warm, but given the concentration of magic there, she didn’t doubt why. “If we don’t tell them, they’re going to ask why they look different.” She glanced up and closed her sockets. “I...
don’t know what to tell them.” She confesses quietly. “How do I tell them… about Tenne?”

"It's going to be a hard tale to tell... But I wonder if for once they are simply children, and don't question it."

Toki lifted a brow. “Honestly, can you see Honey not questioning anything? She questions why we put milk in cereal.”

"..."

Neither male replied, but they both made a face that screamed 'truuuuuueee'.

Toki sighed and rocked her head back on her neck. “I’m just going to have to think of what to tell them. We’ll… Tell them in a couple days.” She decides. “When Pap and I are used to the idea ourselves.”

"That’s a wise idea." Tenebris murmured as he gave a nod.

She sighs and rubs her face. “I’m just going to need to wear long shirts.” She murmurs. Not that she wouldn’t anyways. These weren’t the twins- these… well, these were proof of her betrayal of her mating bond to Papyrus, and her matrimonial one. Oh the talk the people would have. “So… Lets just keep the news between us three for now. I’ll tell Cae soon, but… Not yet.”

She needed time to get used to the idea of being pregnant before she told anyone else. She told Tenebris because she had panicked and needed confirmation- Papyrus because he was her husband and it was his right to know… No one else for now.

Not until she could get used to the idea herself.

Chapter End Notes

Strider Notes: MY SOOTHING MESSAGE AT THE START WAS A LIE. Just like the Cake. You thought you were going to get an easy, comforting chapter to help get you all used to Papyrus being crippled and Toki being home? NOPE. GUESS WHAT. YOU GET A BOMB DROPPED ON YOU JUST LIKE FUCKING TOKI. We’re just the nicest authors, aren’t we?
Chapter 116

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Here we have some morning sickness showing up, and the after effects of last chapter. They’re trying to make it work, but there is that underlying tension there. I wonder what can be done for it…? Also warning- this is a two part chapter, but it’s split awkwardly because the chapter got waaaay too long.

The next week was… rough. Toki and Papyrus were normally cuddly- even more so since she’d returned. But he wasn’t sure what to feel about her belly yet, and any time he touched it by accident, his fingers would flinch away, and he’d draw back to more casual touches around her shoulders and back. She didn’t blame him, and she wouldn’t get upset- Toki just hurt a little bit inside every time it happened.

She missed the ease of which they could be together. There was an unsung tension as he slowly worked out how he felt about everything, while she was left dealing with her body rapidly changing to fit the growing litter in her belly. Despite her offers, he didn’t want to sleep apart, and she’d wake with him wrapped around her, as if he could make sure she’d never leave his side. His hands would even be over the ever growing swell of her belly- which was bigger by the day, unfortunately- in a protective embrace. In his sleep, his mind seemed to have made up what it accepted. Awake was when the thoughts brought the disturbances.

Unfortunately, from time to time, she had to do the thing he feared most. She had to pry herself away multiple times during the night when she felt sick, and she’d slip downstairs and turn on the sink in the bathroom so she could be sick as quietly as she could.

Morning sickness wasn’t just morning sickness- Toki found that as it hit, it hit all the time, and she began to be unable to eat anything. If it wasn’t water with a tiny drop of honey in it to soothe her agitated summoned organs, she was hurling it back up in an hours time, if not less than that.

She dealt with it in silence though, keeping it from Papyrus and her children as best she could. She still hadn’t told them- or anyone yet- because she wasn’t sure what to say. The stress was eating at her, making her sicker and sicker inside, but there wasn’t much to do besides deal with it.

Speaking of her children… They were trying to kill her, she’s very sure. Inadvertently, of course, but they were. While Aliquam was out getting his leg looked at by Tenebris, Toki had volunteered to play with her kids. They wanted to do a tea party, so that involved Toki making tea, and lots of little treats for the kids.

And Honey was very vested in making sure Toki ate every single treat that the little girl had put onto her plate.

Of course, Toki couldn’t refuse her. Any time Toki wanted to say no, her daughter would crank those blue eyes onto her, and they would brighten and quiver, and Toki just couldn’t deny her after everything. So she’d eat another treat, feel her swollen stomach clench and wobble around it and the other collection of treats settled inside while Skylar munched his goodies and watched the Disney movie she’d put on for them.
“Honey,” Toki says once she’d choked down the next cookie her daughter shoved in her face, “Why don’t you let Sobek have my treats, and the two of you watch your show with Skylar and Snuggle? I can go get you some apple slices or some yummy pomegranate seeds. You need something healthy besides sweet and sugary things, you know.”

Honey looked up at her mother with the intention to pout again, but it would appear that Toki got lucky. Sobek had jumped up onto the table and promptly snatched the treats from Toki’s plate, before scrambling off to eat them. Honey gave an upset rattle of her bones and went after her bird, shouting ‘Bad Sobek!’ as she did.

The damn bird was enough of a troublemaker for even Honey to memorize how to scold him.

Toki couldn't hide her snort, even if she felt terrible. Sobek had gone from looking like a plucked chicken, to looking like something between a half shaved canary and a fully feathered vulture. Well, baby feathers. He was fluffy from the chest up, but bald from the ass down, which left him looking half naked. It was amusing.

Toki glanced to Skylar and to the massive, sleeping grub at his side. Snuggle had grown too, nearly four feet in length, but seemed content to laze about like a fat sausage. He was a laid-back creature, to which counteracted Sobeks’ nearly hyperactive antagonistic shenanigans.

"Hey, Sky?" Toki brushed his skull gently. "I'll be right back, okay? I'm going to run upstairs for a moment. Mommy needs to do something, so if your sister asks, tell her I'll be back in a minute or two."

"Okay Momma." Skylar had Snuggle wrapped around his waist, petting his head with one hand as he munched the snacks provided in the other. They were both mostly focused on their movie, and content to enjoy each other’s company as they watched the movie.

Toki smiled and patted Snuggle, before carefully standing. Her stomach squeezed, and she knew she needed to hurry, but if she hauled ass, she’d be suspicious.

She took her time carefully going up the stairs, focusing on one foot in front of the other as she made her way up. She was tired- throwing up most of what she was eating wasn’t letting her replenish enough magic. Her massive amount of magic was dwindling down between infusing food for her family, and feeding the growing brood in her belly, and hurling up lots of it with her meals.

She just had to wait it out though. It wouldn’t last forever.

Toki made her way to the bathroom and closed the door, not fully shutting it so that the doorjamb didn’t click and get her kids attention. She made sure she was care in turning on the sink before her middle gave a lurch. She made her way to the toilet, kneeling down and bracing her arms on it. Sweat gathered on her brow, as she breathed shakily.

It wasn’t long before she began heaving up mouthfuls of what she’d eaten, the contents of her stomach coming up as a thick, green sludge. Her mane bristled each time her stomachched heaved, and her wings lifted slightly as she retched. Toki was going to be stuck here until she’d emptied out everything she’d consumed since she’d woke up.

But with leaving the door open, the noise would travel, even a little bit.

Skylar lifted his head as he heard the sounds from upstairs and a frown came onto his face. Scooting Snuggle to a nearby pillow, he got up and made his way to where they kept one of the house phones. He took it, and after a little while of staring at the phone while thinking, he pressed one of the buttons
that would allow him to speed-dial someone. He then lifted the phone to his ear, waiting until he heard it click.

"Yo."

"Uncle Cae?"

"Skylar? Why are you calling me?"

"Momma's really sick." He winced at hearing another retch, which was partially muffled. “I meant to call Daddy and Papa, but I guess I called you instead... Can you come help Momma?"

"Yeah... I'll be there soon. Thanks kid."

"Mmhmm." He heard as Cae hung up before he put the phone back on the base, going back to Snuggle and picking up the front half of large worm, which rag-dolled in his grasp while chittering his mandibles quietly.

Honey soon came back to the main room with Sobek awkwardly held in her arms. The bird was big, but not nearly as heavy as Snuggle, so she could lift all of him. It didn’t mean he made it easy for her, and he squirmed and wiggled and kicked up a fuss. Honey blinked as she noticed someone very key to their tea party missing, and frowned. “Brother,” Her mouth tilts into a pout, “Where’s Momma? She’s missing tea and… Well, Sobek ate all her cookies. You butthead.”

He squawked at her, and then gave her the sort of coo he knew she couldn’t resist, before running his beak over her horn and grooming it tenderly.

Snuggle watched them, and wiggled his legs in Skylar’s arms. His lower half was still draped on the floor- he was too long for all of Skylar to hold, but he still enjoyed being held as much as he could by the toddler. Or anyone who would hold him, really.

"Momma had to go to the bathroom." He answered, before hefting Snuggle higher into his arms, over his shoulders. "But Uncle Cae is coming over."

Snuggle let out a pleased sound, and draped over his shoulder like a particularly pudgy featherless feather boa.

Honey cocked her head like a confused puppy. “But… I thought only Uncle Kon had to poop.” She makes a face. “It always stinks when our uncles go to the bathroom.” She had learned the joys of human bodily function when her family had swarmed. Stinky bathrooms were gross, and Honey did not like them. Not at all. Her eye lights brightened though, and she bounced Sobek in her arms. “Uncle Cae!” She squeaked happily. “That means he’ll bring Solly and maybe Uncle Grilly!” Her eye lights gleamed eagerly with the prospect of more people to add to the tea party.

"Maybe... but Uncle Cae's going to help Momma. I don’t think she feels very good..."

Honey’s gleeful look fell and she frowned. Even Sobek stilled as he took in Skylar’s words. “But… She’s Momma. Momma never feels bad.” She says softly, looking owlish. She frowns more, and sits down with Sobek at the table again. The bird sits in her lap without a fuss, and she looks towards the front door, waiting for her uncle to come. “Why is Uncle Cae coming and not Daddy or Papa?”

"I accidentally called Uncle..." Skylar admitted, before hearing a knock on the door

Honey gently shooshed Sobek off her lap, and ran to get the front door. "Uncle Cae?" She asked, swinging it open.
"Not quite. He got a head start." Grillby was smiling at Honey on the either side, Solstice in his arms. "Hello dear."

Honey blinked at him and managed a smile. "Uncle Grilly!" She smiles. "Little Solly! Come in! Momma doesn’t feel good, but that means you can take her spot at the table for tea while Uncle Cae makes her better. Come, come!" She motions them in and skips back for the table, her skirt swishing around her legs as she does. "Can Solly have cookies? I have lots of cookies."

"One or two wouldn't hurt. What kind are they?" Grillby asked, bringing Solstice over and sitting at Toki's chair with his daughter in his lap.

"I ‘unno.” Honey shrugs. “Cookies are cookies. They’re all yummy, and they all go in my tummy. It doesn’t matter what they are.” She hadn’t eaten one that was yucky yet. She held out two- one for Grillby and one for Solstice. The cookies were chocolate chip cookies, but made with M&M’s instead of chocolate chips.

Sobek made to nip at them, but Honey clamped a hand over his beak and then squished him into her lap so she could keep him under control.

He took them gently and held one to Solstice, who quietly munched on hers, crackling happily as she seemed to enjoy the taste of the treat.

Honey beamed up at him, but seemed to wince as she listened to her Momma get sick again. "Is Momma gonna be okay?" She asks around her cookie.

"Perhaps... If something's not right with her, we'll take her to Tenebris. She'll be fine in the end."

"Okay. I just don't want her to turn to goop again. She could slip down the drain and we'd lose her forever to the scary drain creature." Honey nods seriously around her treat.

"I don’t think she'll do that again... It was only when Tenebris moved her soul."

“Still.” Honey puffed air through her nose. “Momma looks better when she’s not soup. It’s hard to hug and cuddle soup.”

Around the time that Grillby had arrived, there was a knock on Toki's door. "Hey, Toki." It was Sans- his voice deep and gentle on the other side of the door. His knock made it swing open a little bit, and he kept his hand on the knob to give her privacy.

The knock at her door had Toki startling, and she coughed and gagged. There was a wet retch as she sent another spurt of magic into the toilet.

Toki gave a tiny groan, and spat to clear her mouth as best she could. "Hey Cae," she says shakily, "I'm not in a good place right now... If you g-guhh... Give me a few, I can be out."

"You don’t need to worry about it, I went through this crap too, remember?" He chuckled. "Eat something bad? Or did you and Pap have a celebratory session as soon as you got settled again?" he asked

Toki tensed, and choked. She sputtered, her hands tightening their grip on the porcelain bowel. From how he’d first spoken, it almost sounded like he already knew. “S-some of one, some of the other. Not quite the other.” She manages to speak with semi-forced nonchalance as she side-eyes the door.
“Y-ugh- you can come in. Better than talking through the door if it’s not going to bother you.” Her head swam with nausea, and she breathed through it as she had been practicing. He’d know when he walked in- he knew what pregnancy looked like. The twins were still little enough to be blind to what it was.

"Sure thing." He came in and closed the door behind him, leaning against the door. It seemed he knew by the time he made it to the door exactly what was wrong with her. "What's going on, Toki?"

“It’s… A mess.” She says, and has to lean forwards as she retches again. Another mouthful is spat up, and she groans. One of her hands cradles her belly, and she rubs it to try and soothe it. “Hah… Let’s just say, until I can explain it… without my face in the toilet bowl,” she swallows shakily, “That there’s going to be a boom in the blaster beast population.”

"Well I know that. If either of us get pregnant, it's an addition to the population, even if it's half-blooded."

He hadn't understood her meaning. Her mane ruffled, and she had to push it out of the way with her hand as she dry heaved. There was nothing left to hurl- now she was just left to be miserable until her stomach calmed.

"They're full blood." She chokes out as she spits to clear her mouth. Toki doesn't look at him- she doesn't want to see the look that's going to cross his face at knowing she'd... Well, betrayed Papyrus. She couldn't explain now- not while she felt like she wanted to toss her organs out her mouth next. Once the nausea faded some, she could focus to tell him properly.

It was a look that did indeed show surprise, but instead of disgust or scorn, it conveyed confusion. "There's something missing out of this explanation, huh?"

She leaned back and flushed the toilet, before closing the lid and just bracing her arms on it. She was so tired and she just did not feel good. "Yeah," She rasps as she cradles her skull, "lots." Slowly, she pulls herself up to rinse her mouth out in the sink. "Long story made short, the void did some bullshit, made me into an unknowing puppet because I wouldn't have done what it wanted, and made me fall in love with Tenne. And what comes when two beasts love each other? Pups, apparently." She exhales and swishes water around her teeth, cleaning out her mouth. "They're technically your siblings from another world. Which really sounds like some fucked up Game of Thrones shit." She hadn't even told Papy that yet. But Sans had a bit darker humor sometimes.

"Oh... shit..." He seemed to think about which face to make really. "That's... that's something..."

“Yeah.” Toki took deep breaths, and then looked at him. “Papyrus and I... are trying to be okay with this. I don’t think we really are.” She rubbed one of her arms, and couldn’t keep her gaze on him for long. She’s ashamed of many things. “He… can’t touch further than my chest when we’re cuddled up anywhere, unless he’s asleep. I still haven’t told the kids. I don’t know what to tell the kids. Only he and Papa knew at first... and now you.”

"I understand how this would be hard to share with the kids..." Cae spoke quieter. "It's... a bit of a predicament, to say the least."

“Yeah.” She sighed. “It’s... It’s just- yeah...” Her hand wanders to her belly, and she rubs it for a moment. “Papa I think is the only one who is really excited about it... It’ll bring back more of his kind, you know?” She sighs softly. “But... I can’t get a read on Papyrus. And I’m a mix of... well, excited to be a mom, but also other things. Less pleasant things. Also mostly nauseated.” She waves a hand at him. “Join me in the kitchen? The only thing I’ve been able to keep down in days is water with a bit of honey in it.”
"Bastard better not be THAT excited about this, I can smell how distressed you are..." He growled quietly, before he nodded and followed her down.

Toki took her time going down, being quiet so she didn’t draw attention. The kids were occupied with Grillby, so Toki didn’t worry all that much. They didn’t notice her when she crept into the kitchen, and began preparing herself a glass of water. She glanced back at her brother in law, and mixed in a few drops of honey, before sipping it. “He is excited. But I don’t blame him.” She sighs. “I am distressed, but… Sans, it’s… I understand why he’s excited. It’s more of his kind- I understand his excitement. He’s trying to be very supportive. It’s a future for his species- I think that’s why the Void made sure I… was before it sent me home.”

"The void has a sick sense of humor after everything that's happened. First him, then you, and now this... Since when did it matter to the Void if he was the only one or not?"

“I don’t know.” Toki says. “The Void has it’s own agenda- and I don’t even think that its assistant, Phase, knows what it is.” She shakes her head and sighs. She looks down at her growing belly and cups it with a soft sound. “Papa said there could be between four and six in here. That’s... That’s a lot of blaster beast pups.”

"Compared to starting from one." He agreed. "Find anything that your body doesn't reject yet?"

“Not yet. Just water and honey. Anything else comes up in an hour or less.” She sighs. “I’ve managed to keep it hidden from Pap and the kids for now. Dunno how I’ve managed with Papyrus-I’ve been up all hours of the night being sick. Well… I obviously kept it secret up until now, anyway, if you’re here. Which of the kids called?"

"Yeah, Skylar apparently meant to call Pap."

"So my sixth sense wasn't doing me wrong." Cae turned to see Aliquam entering the kitchen with a subtle smile. "How are you doing, Toki?" He asked as he waddled up to her, pecking her head in greeting as he gave her a gentle hug.

“I’m, uh… Alright. Alright enough I guess.” She nuzzled into his shoulder, one hand quietly hugging him back while she rubbed her belly and sipped her drink. She was thankful that his scent didn’t upset her stomach too badly, or she’d have been tossing this little bit of water up too. “Your sixth sense?” She queried lightly, fingers twitching around her glass of the only thing she could ingest. “Also, how is your leg? A little better after Papa took a peek at it?”

"My leg will be fine, yes." He nodded gently. "You, on the other hand..." He then spoke with more concern.

“I have my honey water.” She held up the glass to show him as such. “I shall be just fine. It’s a delicious treat. Mmmm.” She’s not sure who she was trying to fool- him or herself- but she made the noise as she took a pointed sip from the glass. Her eyes darted to Caeruleus, and she wondered if he’d call her bluff.

Both brothers were giving her the same look.

"Toki."

"You're not fooling anyone." She sighed. “Well, there’s not much we can do.” She says softly. “Unfortunately, my, uh... litter, has decided that nothing is suitable for me to consume.” Her finger bones click on the glass. She takes note that she still has the slightly sharp tips, like small claws. “This is about all I can eat, or I’m
hurling it up later. I mean, I still end up getting sick if I don’t eat, so it’s a double edged blade, but…” She shrugs with a sigh. “I’m dealing, Pap. I’ll be fine.”

"I mentioned this to Father, that you hadn’t been eating as much... he said he'd have something made up for dinner tonight... I think he knows something that will help you feel better." He assured her.

Toki hesitated at that, and her mane ruffled slightly. "I hadn't realized you'd noticed." She admitted quietly. "I was doing my best to keep this as much as just my problem as I could. Anyways, Papa making something got dinner tonight? That... Could mean a large number of things." Tenebris wasn't well known for his cooking. Tea yes, cooking no. Usually his sons cooked. Perhaps it would be an herbal tea of some kind.

"Indeed so." Her husband nodded. “He went out as soon as I left.”

"Went out?" Her eyes blinked wider. "Huh... Alright. Well, whatever he can get at the store, I hope it helps. I'm very tired of throwing up. Also very tired." She sighs, and her mane deflates and slicks down. Her wings droop, and she leans into her husband just a bit so she doesn't bother his leg.

He didn't seem to care as a gentle arm pulled her closer, encouraging her to get comfy against him.

Toki made a low rumbling beastly noise at him, and then glanced up. She read that body language just fine. "Standing in the kitchen is not comfortable cuddling," she laughs just faintly. Her gaze slides to Sans as she leans into her husband all the same. "I'm sorry if the call scared you. I'm not sick, I promise. Well... not too sick. It'll go away eventually."

"You were sick enough to need some company through it, Toki. You can call me anytime." Cae winked at her as he gave a grin, "As long as Grillbz and I aren't in the middle of something~"

She rolled her eyes in good humor. "I don't think I'll call, but if I need you, I will." She nods. "I mostly don’t like to bother people. Company is nice, but this is kinda my issue. So..." She flails a hand awkwardly. She wasn't even bothering Papyrus with it. She was trying to keep it as far on the down low as possible. "Besides, my luck, I'd call and you'd be doing your Jack-o-lantern impression." She teases.

He laughed at that, "Yeah she'll be just fine, Pap!" He cackled to his brother, who rolled his eyes in response. "Alright, I'll go see about prying Grillby from the snacks I saw on the kid's table and we'll get out of your fur."

"It's a mane, not fur. Fur is everywhere. I'm only a little fuzzy." Toki pauses, and her face twists a bit at the reminder. "Oh... Yeah... The tea party." She looks down at her water and swallows. "Honey is going to want me to come back to it." The thought of the sugary cookies was making her nauseated, and it was plain to see on her face.

"No, no, you settle down and relax, I'll take one for the team. Aliquam smooched her head before he too started out for the living room.

Toki snagged his wrist before he could go. "They're going to want to know why I was sick, Pap. We have to tell them now. It's... Probably going to happen again. I can't hide anything here for very long, it seems. So... Do we tell them together?" Or did he want to swing it on his own?

"Yes, we'll tell them together, but once you're better."

"Papyrus." Her fingers didn't tighten on his arms, but they did gently tug so he would look at her. "Pap, you remember with the twins. It comes and goes. I'm okay right now, honest. So long as I don’t have to eat cookies, I'll be okay."
"Alright... alright... Do you want to tell them now?" he asked, "before you have to go again?"

"Uh..." Now that was the question, wasn't it? Toki hesitated, and anxiety flashed through her scent. Slowly she nodded. "Sure... Yeah. Better now than later." She glances to Sans, and then moves to lace her fingers with her husbands hand, so they can walk together to the living room.

Immediately upon coming into sight, Honey very nearly shrieks happily, and waves a cookie. "Yay! You're not goop! Uncle Sans fixed it."

Skylar rubs his ear slightly before smiling up at Toki, "Feel better, Momma?" he asked.

Toki slaps a smile on her face for her children and hums. "Well... I do right now, sweetie. But, this did something your Daddy and I need to talk to you about." She waved at Grillby and Sans as they made their escape with Solstice, and Toki made her way to the couch. She helped Papyrus sit, and then sat with him. "Can you both come here for a moment? It's very serious what we have to tell you." Her fingers might have been trembling around Papyrus' own as she clutched them tightly.

Honey nodded and got up, nibbling a goodie as she made her way over to her parents. She peered up at them and leaned against her daddy's knees.

Smiling at Honey, Aliquam gently bounced his leg to occupy her while Skylab got comfy beside his mother.

Toki patted his head, and then glanced up at Aliquam. "Alright... Well, I'm going to be sick for a little while longer. It might be a few weeks but it's nothing bad, I promise. There are... There are babies growing in my tummy," she pats her belly, highlighting the swell as she does so, "and sometimes they don't like what I eat, so they make me get sick so I'll get rid of it." that was the easiest beginning to an explanation that she could manage. Toki's fingers rubbed her belly quietly. It felt good over her skin, which was having to stretch rapidly with little time to adjust.

Honey's eyes blinked wider. "I thought you were just fat!" Her mouth popped open too. "So there is babies in there? Daddy, did you know?"

Children were often the bluntest of things, even if not meant in ill will.

Oh god. Aliquam bit back a snicker. "I knew."

"Huh." Honey blinked. "How did they get there? Did daddy put them there?" She blinks up at him innocently.

Toki ground her teeth. This was the question she had been dreading. She nudged Papyrus. He got to help with this too.

And like that he didn't need to hold anything back anymore. "It's... a bit of a long story." He started slowly. "But this time, I didn't put them there."

Skylar's face wrinkled faintly and he gave them a weird look. "But... All the television shows say that the daddy puts the baby in the Momma. But... If you didn't... Who did?" He looks perplexed by this idea.

"It happened while I was gone." Toki hedged softly. "The babies are going to come out a lot like Grand Papa Tenny."

Honey hummed. "So they're Papas' babies?" She asks, her voice thick with utter confusion as she made the wrong intuitive leap.
Toki gave Papyrus a look that screamed 'help me please'.

"No, no, no." Aliquam spoke up quickly. "You know how momma was gone for a while?" He asked.

"Yeah." Both twins nodded in synchronicity.

"Well... in the time we thought was a long while, it was a lot longer for her... She met someone who... just looks like papa. He helped her recover from thinking she lost us..."

"He sounds nice." Honey nods.

Skylar frowns though. "Is he the babies daddy?" He asks immediately, wanting this question solved.

"Yes. He's their daddy... But it's okay, because they're still Toki's babies too, and even though they'll be your half-siblings, I'll still love them very much."

Skylar grinds his teeth, and it's a very Toki like action. He takes a lot from his mother. "I guess... But Daddy? You don't seem happy. Or... Feel happy." He touches his chest. "I don't 'member much, but I remember you being happy and Mommy being happy. You don't feel as happy right now. Neither does Mommy." His fingers slide away from his chest, where he had referenced the soul bonds, and the bright boy sighs.

Honey hums slightly and blinks at her parents, adding her own question to the troubling slew of words that her twin had given to Papyrus. "Who's going to teach them to be baby-not-papas? You're a skeleton, and Papa is a Papa, and Papa acts weird sometimes. Are the babies going to be weird too?"

"Momma feared that I wouldn't love her the same after she told me about this. She was wrong." He wrapped his arm around Toki as if to reassure her of the same and he pressed a gentle, loving kiss to her head. "I still love her as much as I did the day she disappeared." He purred, before looking to Honey.

"Not weird, Honey... Papa is a great beast, and the pups will be just the same as Papa..."

Toki leaned into him with a soft sound and nuzzled him warmly. "And I still love your Daddy and all of you. I never stopped loving you." She murmurs softly.

Skylar nods, and is echoed by Honey. Their son is the one that speaks next though. "So the babies will really be more like if Momma had Papas babies than when she had us." He tilts his head and fiddles with his fingers. "How many babies is 'babies'? Like... Two? Two is a good number."

"It could be between four to six." Toki answered, and watched her son make a face at that fact.

"Beasts have lots of babies, remember when we saw that possum with her babies?" Aliquam asked.

"Well, yeah, but Momma isn't a beast now. She's a skelly, like you and me and Sissy." He didn't seem upset by this fact, but Skylar just didn't understand. He was a little young for everything to be fully clicking like it should.

Toki sighed softly. "The babies were made before I was a skeleton. That's how they'll grow because of that." She explains softly. "I don't know how it works or why, but that might be so. We wont know until they're big enough for us to take a look at with a flashlight."

That apparently disquieted them both. "You can look at them?" They asked, looking aghast at the
"It's your Uncle's idea, if I remember correctly. He pulled it off either with you two or with himself when he was carrying your cousin."

Toki snorts. "Actually... Actually, it was an accident at first. Remember? We were setting up the nursery, and the sun shone on my belly, and you got to see Skylar and Honey. You got the flashlight so we could see them better."

"So... Technically it was the sun's idea?" Honey chirped.

"Yes. It was the sun's idea." Aliquam chuckled quietly. "Your Uncle just decided to act upon it further in a very silly manner."

"Uncle is silly." Skylar nods. He glanced at Toki, and then scooted into her lap. He leaned down and nuzzled her belly, and his sharp teeth pursed as he kissed the growing swell. "I'll be a good big brother." He promises.

Honey smacks her daddy's knee lightly and waves an arm. "Daddy up! I wanna give kisses too! Kisses make babies grow good. Gotta give lots of kisses cause there's lots of babies."

It was warming Toki's soul watching Skylar, and she may have been fighting off the need to get teary eyed.

Aliquam smiled proudly as he gently hefted Honey onto the couch beside her mother, before he scooted close as well, "And kisses for Mommy because Daddy will always love her and her babies" he cooed, kissing Toki's cheek until the time she would turn her head for a proper, loving kiss.

Her secondary hands cradled her twins skulls as they nuzzled her belly and gave attention to their half siblings inside. Toki turned her skull, intending to nuzzle Papyrus. She got a kiss instead, and she didn't mind at all giving him an actual kiss in return. She could feel some of her stress easing off as her children accepted the litter readily and with easy affection once their questions had been answered.

"Daddy?" Skylar glanced up from his snuggling with his Mommas swollen belly. "Since the babies don't have their daddy, you'll be a good daddy for them too, right? Like you are for us?"

"Of course. The only way I would say no was if Papa were to instead, but I don't know if that old codger could take the challenge of pups." He teased with a light laugh.

"Don't let Papa hear you say that." Toki snorts. "He likes to say he's old, but you'll ruffle his fragile feathers."

Skylar nods. "He naps a lot. Babies need lots of care, like those human ones we got to see. You can't nap all the time and have babies. Daddy will be good."

Toki shifted on the couch and sighed as the twins got comfortable, and began to quietly speak to her belly. While they took some time to talk to the little ones within her, distracting themselves from grilling Papyrus and herself about details, she looked to Papyrus. Toki hummed softly. "Well... That went well."

"Very well." He purred in agreement.

"So... How are you feeling about this? I don't want to hear 'we'll make it through' either. I want to know how you feel about... Well... Them. Being a stepfather. I think that term is... Accurate." She's
"It's not easy to wrap my head around, but you're still my wife and they're still your pups. Whether I raise them, or father takes the 'old' comment to heart and offers to raise them himself and I assume a role as their older brother, I'll love them all the same."

She pauses at that last bit and blinks. "... Would he?" She wonders. Tenebris and Asgore had wanted children, she knew. Children so Thumper could grow up with little siblings, and their little hodgepodge family would be bigger. She shook her head briefly. An idea for another moment. "I'm glad. I... Don't like the strained distance that's been between us." She says gently. "I love you. I don't want you afraid to touch me anywhere."

"As long as you're comfortable with me touching you." He purred, a hand slowly making its way to rest on her stomach.

"I never minded. I just didn't want you to do something you were uncomfortable doing." The twins made space as their father's hand wandered to her belly, and Toki smiled slightly. Her middle was overly warm and very soft. It wouldn't be moving for a long time, as far as she knew, but they'd be enjoying her swell for a while.

"Mm~" He rested his head on her shoulder as he stroked her stomach gently. "I wonder sometimes... Father missed out on raising Caeruleus and me, but now that there's the option to raise pups of his same species... I feel like he won't hesitate to take the chance."

His hand was a lot larger than her own, and it felt nice. Her skin was stretching so far and so fast that it was itchy and achy almost, but the gentle rubbing touch felt very nice. "I can see that too. It... Well, honestly I don't think it would bother me if he wanted to take the litter." Her wings shift awkwardly. "They are my children, and they're innocent of any fault in this, and I'm going to love them regardless, but they're going to be reminders for me of the time I was taken from you, and the time I was... Well, made to do things I thought were on my own." No one really understood just how much it fucked with her head for her to think she'd willingly betrayed Papyrus by mating and falling in love with Tenne, only to learn that oops, nope, the Void had been pulling her strings to make her do it all along. "It's... Going to be difficult to ignore that." She admits softly. "I know I can raise them. But I know Papa could too. He and Asgore wanted more children, did you know...? But Papa can't carry, and neither can Asgore, and they don't have a third in their relationship who can."

And she couldn't see them getting one any time soon, honestly. All of the older monsters were taken.

"I didn't want to suggest it if you were wanting to keep them regardless of their conception, but you telling me this is very reassuring. The children will be in very good hands if my father were to take them for his own." Papyrus spoke every word with caution, not wanting to say something wrong and give her the wrong idea.

"Boss Monsters age when they have children." Aliquam told her. "If the prince had not died, his majesty would be a bit more aged by now. This would give him a second chance of being a father as well. And even then, I don't think they'd be their parents alone." He chuckled. "This entire community would be their family, they would grow up knowing our love regardless."

One of her brows twitched slightly as she considered his words, and she gave a soft hum in response. "I both do and don't." She didn't want to say fully, because the kids were there, still sharing in the experience with their dad in giving attention to her belly. She didn't want to ruin it for them. "But... You're right. They'd still grow up with our love, and everyone's love. Maybe... We can talk to Papa about it. See if he and Asgore are up to the task." Her fingers rubbed the side of her belly, and she sighed through her nasal ridge. Her middle ached- there was so much growth going on inside of her,
that her skin ached.

He nodded, before leaning his head up to kiss her gently. "I love you." He purred.

She kissed him gently and gave a soft buzz to him. "I love you too, Pap." She smiled at him. She sighs, and pokes his middle gently. "So… what do you want for dinner tonight?"

"I'm looking forward to whatever father brings. He sounded like he was sure what the trick would be for your stomach to settle down."

She makes a face and sighs. "I'm not sure about that." She says. "And I didn’t think he was bringing dinner. I was thinking it was probably something like a tea or something. But… if it's a dinner, then that's fine. If I don't have to cook, I'm not going to complain." She gives him an awkward smile. "Cooking is nearly as hard as eating is some nights, I will admit."

"Then this will be a night for you to take it easy, my dear." He chuckled.

She rolls her eye lights fondly. "And what about tomorrow night?" She questions him lightly as she nudges him gently in the ribs. She did most of the cooking recently because he had missed her cooking- and because she didn’t want him over-stressing his leg. "And the night after that?"

"Leftovers, and I’ll cook when we run out." He purred. "Don’t worry… I’m not gonna leave you to do all the work." He chuckled, "Just a little bit of it once you stop feeling so sick~" He teased.

She laughed gently and nuzzled him. “I can cook. I just don’t feel good while I cook.” Toki slumped into him with a soft sound, and shifted one of her wings up to stretch the join where it had gotten cramped. “I don’t want you to over work yourself, Pap.” She rubs his knee with one hand. His leg was still fairly new- and she’d been told some mornings were worse than others. She hadn’t seen the bad days yet, but she knew they would come eventually.

"I cooked and cleaned for six months, Toki... I’ll have my rough days but I’m still able." He chuckled.

“’m not saying you’re not.” Her horn nudged his shoulder. “But, just like you worry about me, I worry about you. It’s not a light switch I can turn off, love. It’s really not.” She smooched his cheek next, and then flapped a hand at her kids as Honey blew a raspberry on her belly. Her queasiness did not like that at all. “Alright, kids, off for now. Go play- you can cuddle my belly later. Momma might take a nap, so that means…”

“We stay inside, and tell you if we want to go outside.” Skylar nods and slips from her lap, pulling a pouting Honey with him. He eyes her, and then tickles her, before racing off, knowing she’d give chase.

Predictably, she did.

"We have such smart children. I can't believe it sometimes." He chuckled. "They're gonna be the ones to graduate high school when they're 15, I’ll tell you that."

“It wouldn’t surprise me.” She hummed. “They’re growing faster than the average human. They’re not even two, and speak full sentences and are mentally at a level that is several years older. That’s the effect of the beast blood though. They grow faster than the average monster does.” She glances to him.

"Makes me wonder if we have to worry about boyfriends and girlfriends sooner than humans would..."
That made her snort. “Alright, come on mister overprotective dad. You can worry at me about your babies first dates upstairs. I was serious about that nap. I’m still all sorts of nauseated, and a couch isn’t going to fit us comfortably like it used to.” Her wings twitch for emphasis.

"All right, a nap it is~" He chuckled, pushing himself up before offering her a hand.
Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Alright. So, this chapter is a direct continuation of the last- and damn, does it cover a lot of stuff. Depending on what you think of it, it might be something you like, or don’t like. All the same… it’s definitely something that makes us happy, and makes two of our characters very, very happy. Also yeah, there was no good splitting point for this chapter that left both chapters at a decent amount of words, so I had to make due with an awkward one right here. I’m very sorry. Hopefully the content makes up for the awkward chapter break?

Also, Merry Christmas to all- and I hope this counts as an early Christmas present from us. XD the timing was just right.

She took his hand, but mostly hauled her own weight up off the couch. She held his hand as she guided him towards the stairs, bypassing the closet where his armor had been stored. She’d found it when she’d been looking to see if they had any of her shoes left over. Toki didn’t ask why he had it stored away. Toki rubbed his knuckles and hummed. “I’m going to get back in to writing my novels when I can get into my laptop.” She tells her husband conversationally as they go up. “I need to refresh myself on my plotlines though. My editor is happy to have me back… I guess movies are in production still, as far as she’s told me.”

"It will be exciting to see your work blossom into something that everyone will be able to see."

“Yeah.” She fiddles with some of her fingers, and then slips into their bedroom. Toki shifts onto all fours as she gets onto the bed, her secondary arms curling at her chest. Her wings arch up, stretching as she gives them a flap, and she looks over at Papyrus. Her beastly habits lingered, even in her semi-skeleton form. She stretches, like a cat, and then hums at him with her rump in the air. “I might start working on a new book series once I round off this one.” She shrugs lightly, and stretches one of her legs. She was still getting used to having human shaped legs again, and her toes were instinctively splaying like she had paws. She had claws still- longer than before- so she short of did.

He chuckled quietly and sat on the bedside, "You're so cute~ Like a cat now~" He purred sweetly, laying on his back and inviting her to lay at his side.

Toki couldn't resist giving him a playful little "Nya~" as she slunk across the bed towards him. She couldn't lay on her belly with the swell, but her side worked just fine. "I'm not a cat though." She chuckles. "I'm a bee. Some sort of bee skeleton thing. Kinda a mix."

"I am, however, a cat magnet." Toki grins.

The cats knew you were gone too, though... they were wailing when you didn't come to bed. Gale would scream at the bathroom door when it was closed for nearly a month, like it would make you
appear.” Aliquam sighed before he chuckled and reached up, running his fingers through her fluffy mane.

Toki sighed and kissed the demanding cat. Once she’d given Gale his required space, he demanded her face be in his so he could love on it. With his tongue. Cat tongue on bone never got any less strange feeling. Nor did the drool from Gracie staining her shirt. "I missed them too. There were days when I just wanted to curl up and hold something soft and cuddly and all I had to hold was Sugar or Clover. Sugar is too active, and Clover is a grump.” Her body began to relax as his fingers carded through her mane, coming through tangles that had gotten into it from it fluffing and smoothing out over the course of the day. It ruffled under his hand, seeming to lean into his touch.

"They need some nice male hornets to calm them down, hm?” He teased.

Toki snorted on a soft laugh. "I think Sugar is like a youngling. She's probably not old enough for that. Clover... Yeah. Clover needs to get laid. She's so tightly wound." Toki can't stop her soft snorts into his chest. The idea of her hornets getting laid is amusing. Though on a more morbid note, Sugar probably never would find a mate since she had no wings. Toki's wings twitched and lifted up, flexing and making their gossamer surfaces gleam for her husband.

"So pretty~" He cooed happily, looking up at her wings. "I have such a pretty wife~"

She flexed them and flared them, letting their colors dazzle him as it soothed something inside of her. She let out a pleased rumble, and her eye lights went slitted as she melted against him, boneless and content. Her fingers splayed on his ribs, and she felt the thrum of his magic and soul beating under her digits. "I'm glad you like them. It would be hard to fix it you didn't. The extra arms pop on and off, but the wings don't do the same."

"Oh god, do they really?"

"Uhuh." She'd learned that in the shower a little while ago when her joints had gotten too soapy and she’d gotten too vigorous in her scrubbing. "I could take them off and look semi normal, but I've still got these little joints here that make weird bulges under my clothes. All the same, I'd rather keep my arms here." All four of them snake around him tightly. "Means I can hold you better, even if the second pair are really fragile."

"Mmh~" He chuckled happily. "I wouldn't have it any other way~" He cooed.

She smiled and nodded, settling against him with a soft sigh. “… Pap?” She questions softly. “I need to ask you something. Something serious. Do we… Do we want to ask your dad and Asgore if they want to take the babies?” Her fingers fiddle with his shirt anxiously.

“Do you?” He questions gently.

“No.” She murmurs softly. “But also… Yes. They’re my children, Papyrus, I love them even if they’re not yours. But… I want them somewhere that they’re not ever going to feel unloved, or unwanted, or like they’re… a burden, or causing problems.” She says quietly. “I’m not… Entirely certain that we can give them that, Pap. As much as you don’t want to admit it, it bothers you, and I know it. It’s going to eat at you and eat at you, and eventually it will cause problems between us- and they’re going to think they caused those problems, and that’s not fair to them.” Because Toki would have caused all of those problems.

“Toki, you know I will do my best~"

Think about how you would feel, knowing that your children have the chance of ever, ever, feeling like they don’t belong there, like they’re not wanted by their stepfather and that they’re causing problems. It’s…”

“Shhh….” He soothes gently. Papyrus closes his eyes for a moment, and sucks in a soft breath. Exhaling softly, his fingers continue to stroke through her mane. “I understand. If I were in your shoes, I’d be torn too. I don’t think it’s a choice I’d find easy to make. They’d be my children, born of my magic and my soul- but to know they’d have a chance of feeling… something like that…”

“It’s not something any child should ever feel.” Toki whispers softly. “I can’t…”

He tilted his head down to kiss the scar on her skull. “No. No it’s not something any child should feel.” He said softly. “How about we ask? If they want to take the pups after they’re born, then they can. If not… Then I will get over it, and I will be the best damn father I can be, and if… if there comes a time where things do become problematic, we’ll handle them together.”

“Okay…” She nods slowly. Toki sighs, and presses her face against his chest. “Do you think… they’ll hate us for this?”

“Father and Asgore?” He blinked. “I couldn’t see them ever hating us.”

“Not them.” She says softly. “The pups, if Papa and Asgore take them. When they get older, they’re bound to ask, bound to inquire about things… You know they will- you see how Honey and Skylar are, and they came out of me. These will be part of me too- they’re going to ask questions.”

“They may.” He sighs. “But I don’t think they will. If Father and Asgore take them, they’re going to grow up with love surrounding them. If they start to ask questions, we will be as honest as we can be.”

“I’d… I’d rather tell them that I agreed to surrogate for Tenebris and Asgore if they ever ask.” Toki murmurs softly. “The truth… Papy, you and I both know the truth can hurt. A white lie… A white lie can save so much pain and hurt so few people if everyone agrees to keep it up.”

“We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.” He nuzzled her. “I don’t like to lie, but perhaps… you might be right.”

Her eyes drifted closed as she listened to the children playing downstairs, and she quietly summoned a couple of her smaller summons just outside the door to keep an eye on them just in case. Toki gave a small, sleepy sound against his chest, appearing to settle down to nap some with him by her side.

"Rest... And I’ll be here with you until you wake~" He purred, not telling her the part about how he’ll get up if something goes crash downstairs.

The croon that left her is sweet, sleepy, and appreciative. She settles to sleep with no issue, drifting off to his scent, and finds herself peaceful rest as she relaxes.

She wakes some hours later with their bed filled fuller and her empty stomach something between nauseated and hungry. She had sleeping toddlers in a pile across her legs, and somehow the bees she’d summoned had joined them too with the cats, making for an incredibly full bed.

Her sockets didn’t open, nor did her eye lights blink on. Instead she quietly groaned, and nuzzled her face into her cuddling pillow, and sought out more of the feeling of whatever was toying with her
"You awake now? Right when I’m about to finish." Aliquam's gentle chuckle resonated near her ear.

"Mhm." She makes a small confirmation noise and nuzzles his chest. It turns out, upon peeking open one eye, her pillow was actually his chest. Toki's chest stuttered up into a rumbling purr. "Whatever you're doin' feels really nice..."

"Well, why don’t you reach up and feel for yourself what I’ve been up to while you slept?" He teased.

Toki snorts, and reaches a hand up to feel what he was doing. Her fingers touched her mane- which wasn’t in the loose tangles that it always fell in. It was in straight braids, thin and orderly, and there were a lot of them. She hummed softly. “You braided my mane,” She blinks, and sounds happily pleased. “…you haven’t gotten to braid anything for me since I was human.”

"So you could imagine how excited I was that you fell asleep with your mane exposed to my wandering hands." He hummed, his fingers continuing their gentle pace down her mane.

She chuckles. "I suppose so. You know, you don't need me to be asleep to put in braids. I loved when you would play with my hair and braid it for me." It seemed that a love of hair was something universal to all Papyrus types. Or at least all ones similar to hers. "It's very relaxing and soothing. My mane gets so tangled, and I can't do much with it on my own. Does it look okay with braids in it?"

"It looks amazing~" He replied happily, kissing her gently as he hummed happily.

Toki gave a soft, pleased buzz, and gently rubbed her nasal ridge against his chest. “Good. Maybe I’ll have you braid it more often.” She gives another pleased noise, and peeks up at him. “Mm… what time is it?” Tenebris would probably be over soon with whatever he’d got at town, depending on if he had to go to the big city or not.

"Seven in the evening." Toki stirs and grunts as her stomach complains. “Ah. It’s time to feed you and the kids, if Papa hasn’t procured dinner yet.” She yawns and rubs her eyes. "And some water and honey for me, or I’m gonna feel horrible here soon.” Pregnancy was a delicate balance at the start. Too hungry and you were sick, too full and you were sick- sometimes you were just sick because your body said ‘no’. “Wonder if Asgore will be joining us for dinner.”

"I don’t know." He shrugged, before there was a knock on the door downstairs. "Well. Speak of the devil.

“Speak of the devil, and he shall arrive bearing goodies.” Toki murmurs idly into his chest. She looks down at her legs, intent on waking her kids, but it seemed between the knock and the word ‘goodies’, the twins had practically startled awake, and were scrambling off her legs in a discombobulated jumble, and were making their way down the stairs.

She watched them run off to greet their grandfather and shook her head with a sigh. Gracie, sensing she was getting up, spring boarded off of her abdomen and waddled off to flop across her house slippers, giving a content sigh so she could sleep some more. All that did was jar Toki, and she groaned into her husband's chest as it made her nausea worse. “Damn it cat… Why do cats feel the need to jump for everything?” She asked as she eased herself up into a sitting position. She felt a little green, though there wasn’t anything in her middle for her to be really feeling sick on. She got up from the bed, and made her way around to fetch his cane for him and help him up in case she’d made
him stiff from laying against him for so long.

"Thank you." He purred to her as he took his cane and got up off the bed. He stretched a little before he sighed and hummed, walking to the staircase. "Father, that's you, yes?"

"No, I'm the Krampus here to steal your children and your cookies!" Tenebris called from downstairs.

Toki snorts, and follows Papyrus down. “Please take all the cookies,” and her plea is partially serious, “Before Honey makes me eat more of them.”

“Cookies are good for you and little ones, Momma!” Honey calls indignantly.

“Not when they make Momma sick,” Toki mutters to herself, but figures Papyrus, and maybe Tenebris, might hear her. “Are you here alone?”

“No,” Asgore chortles, “I thought I might join you all tonight, since Thumper has been invited to spend the night at Twitch’s house. Something about a school project.” He waves a hand lightly, swinging the little skeleton monster that had latched onto him so giddily. The king was a giant jungle gym, truly.

Tenebris laughed gently and came closer to Toki, giving a greeting smile. "Hello, dear. I brought something that will help you feel better.” He hummed happily.

Toki paused as her mouth opened, and she scented him. He smelled of mint, and unlike before, mint was not helpful. "Ah... I sure hope so.” She managed an awkward smile as she reached the bottom of the steps, eye lights flicking to Asgore. "Does he...?” Had Tenebris told Asgore that Toki was pregnant? She was keeping it on the low for now. She'd understand him telling his lover- the King- but she didn't want to blurt something if he didn't know.

"Know? Yes. Just not the circumstances entirely." He answered quietly.

She nods slowly. “Alright. That’s fine. I’d rather... not tell him everything, honestly. Not beyond what he needs to know.” Her hand drifts to her belly, and she soothes it as it gives a warning squeeze. “Alright- I need to go get some water, or I’m going to be back in the bathroom again.” She wiggles her fingers at her family, and makes her way to the kitchen to make herself a glass of the only drink her body will let her ingest.

Asgore watches her go, and glances to Tenebris and his son. “My love,” The King murmurs softly as he swings the laughing children- who were basically his grand children- gently on his arms, “Are you sure this... remedy of yours will work for Toki? She seems quite sensitive to everything, frankly.”

"Indeed so.” he rumbled as he gave his mate a reassuring nuzzle. "I have complete faith that despite all, this will work. It's the only thing left to try, I bet.” He laughed next.

“Didn't mint help her last time?” Asgore hummed softly.

“I can hear you, you know.” Toki called from the kitchen. “And it’s not helping this time. Sorry to say, Papa, but you stink.”

Asgore snorted, and hid an amused smile.

"How dare.” Tenebris snorted, before he chuckled lightheartedly. "I don’t smell nearly as bad as some things." He came into the kitchen and set down what he had packed for dinner.
Toki eyed the non-clear Tupperware boxes on the counter tops, and sipped her glass of water as she regarded him and his display of… Tenny-surprise. “No, but you’re no spring flower today either. Though… Those make me gag too, so there’s no winning there either.” Toki gives a shrug of one of her wings and shoulders, and buzzes as she nurses her drink slowly. It doesn’t really settle her stomach with all the smells assaulting her, but it soothes it a little bit. “It’s the mint.” She confesses. “It smells really bad. The smell of you isn’t bad, but the mint itself is bothering me. Most food related things, or strong smelling things, are making me nauseated.”

"I’ll step out if I want to have a pipe then." He chuckled gently. "I hope you like Manicotti, kids." He purred, pulling the lid off one of the Tupperware containers to reveal hot pasta in a deep red tomato sauce. He carefully put it on the table. "Aliquam, will you please serve up the pups and yourself? I’m going to step out for a moment with Toki." He rumbled, before he set a hand on her shoulder. "You're looking a little greener." He chuckled.

“And not the good kind of green.” She manages a weak joke. The Manicotti looked delicious, and from afar, it made her want to make a plate for herself and eat it too. However, smelling it? Far from it. The water she’d been drinking was souring in her stomach, and she set her glass down on the counter before stepping towards the back door.

Asgore nodded to them both, and swung both kids into their chairs with a soft laugh. He got them seated, and went to help who he hoped would eventually be his stepson get plates down and get them filled for the eager children wiggling and making grabby hands for the hot, stuffed pasta noodles. “Take your time.”

Tenebris led Toki outside and reached into his coat. "As soon as I heard you weren't able to keep anything down, I realized just what the problem was." He started to explain.

She tilted her head at him, and leaned against the porch railing. It was a newer installation, she’d noticed, but it made their back patio into something they could use even when it was pouring buckets, since it was now covered. “Oh?” She prompts, and sucks in a breath of soothing outside air.

He nodded and pulled out a large item wrapped in paper. He unwrapped it to reveal a large rabbit, freshly killed. "Ta-da~"

Toki stared at it and blinked slowly. “Uh… That’s… That’s a dead rabbit.” She waited for her stomach to twist, but it didn’t. Her beast purred inside, pleased at the sight of a fresh kill. “That’s… supposed to cure my morning sickness?” Toki sounds a little incredulous, but it’s not hard to understand why.

"And your inability to keep anything down." He answered, almost glowing with pride for offering the rabbit to her in her time of need.

“Well, you’re not wrong there. I miss being able to eat food…” She pauses. “You, uh… realize I have no idea how to deal with a dead rabbit, right?” Tenne had handled all the skinning after she’d confessed to being human, and she’d never had to really touch anything dead after that. Well- he brought her gifts, and she accepted them, but he did all the skinning and the handling, until it was just meat for her to prepare for them. “But… If you think it’ll work…” She rubs her arms lightly. Toki couldn’t hurt his feelings with how proud he looked to have come up with a solution. “It’s worth trying at least.”

"Well..." He looked at the rabbit. "I thought back to what I remember you sharing, and you mentioned that you had a beast within. I thought perhaps if you were to consume prey like beasts had, that it would soothe your body enough to accommodate for the more human-oriented meals... I could skin it if you'd rather eat it bare."
She peered at the rabbit again and swallowed. “… Yeah, I’m not eating fur. I did that with a mouse once so I didn’t hurt a pup’s feelings, and that’s…” She shivered. “Fur is not for me. I think I can handle skinned,” She’d long since gotten over the whole eating stuff mostly raw or even completely raw, having spent years with Tennen and his boys and their eating habits, “but fur is definitely a no.”

"Alright.” It only took a few moments, but with skill that had taken years and years of practice to refine, Tenebris was able to practically pull the rabbit to be inside out from its skin after a few easy snips from his claws in a few precise locations. He pulled the hide free and smiled. "Ta-da~”

Toki was utterly revolted by the process of skinning it, but she dealt with it by glancing away. Once he was done, she glanced back over and nodded. “Thank you. Uh… Papyrus and I wanted to talk to you about something later. Um… I can hold the rabbit if you’ll get me a plate. I think I’ll eat out here. I’m very sure I’ll revolt everyone inside if I try to eat inside. And, uh…” She flushed and glanced away. It was different eating around another beast-based monster. Non-beast based monsters didn’t operate the same.

They didn’t judge, but… They got easily grossed out, which lead to some judgmental looks.

"I suppose it would require a few bites since I don’t know if you can unhinge your jaw... I’m sorry, dear…” He murmured.

“I could before.” She blinked at him. “It could sort of… split down the center if I wanted it to. But I never used it like that.” Toki gently took the warm rabbit from him, holding it awkwardly. She wasn’t revolted by it though, so that was a bonus. “I’m also a lot smaller than I was, Papa. I was a foot and some odd inches taller as a beast- I retained the features, but I shrank.” She blinks at him. “So... plate please. You can enjoy your manicotti, unless you want to share this with me?” She’s pretty certain she can’t eat all of it, but she’d try.

"I’ll eat whatever you don’t I suppose. I do have a good knife on hand, after all." He chuckled, stepping in to get that plate that she asked for.

Toki stepped out of the light of the doorway so no one could see her, and went to sit down at the table that had been put on the patio. She rumbled, eying the rabbit hungrily, and hummed softly. “I suppose you do. I don’t, but I don’t really need one.”

He came back and put the plate on the table. "Here you are, my dear.” He purred quietly.

Toki gave him a smile, and carefully got the rabbit settled on the plate. No point in staining the table after all. “Thanks, Papa.” She gave him a pleased buzz. Her braided mane ruffled as she eyed the rabbit, and her eye lights narrowed to slits as she huffed in a soft breath. Toki gave a tiny rumble, and it might not have just been Toki who set in to the rabbit once the older male took a seat across from them. Her crocodile like teeth made short work of the meat on the legs, and she stripped it bare quickly.

Toki had long since equated raw meat- some raw meat, mind you, she wouldn’t be caught dead eating pork or chicken raw- as the beastly version of sushi. After all, humans ate raw fish and often times didn’t get sick. She didn’t have a problem setting into the rabbit at a pace that would have horrified Papyrus or anyone really, to see her eating a raw critter.

It soothed something inside of her though, and bite by bite, her stomach settled, and her body was at peace.

Tenebris watched her. Rather than growing shocked or horrified by how she was consuming the rabbit he’d procured, he simply smiled. "You know, this is the first time I’ve seen you eat with actual
use of your teeth." He chuckled. Once she came to finish the rabbit, he tilted his head. "Did you enjoy that?" He asked.

Once she was finished- and she’d stripped it completely bare, down to most of the organs, which she had no intentions of eating- Toki leaned back and thrummed a low content noise. Her face was a bit of a mess. Her teeth were not conductive to a clean eating experience, and there were little strings of flesh stuck between them. She parted her jaws, and her teeth splayed, also giving him a first look at just how she cleaned them, and she summoned her tongue to do what she’d been doing for the past two years of her life.

“Yes.” Toki answered while she cleaned her teeth. Her hands were a mess, as was her face, and there was no way she could go inside looking like she’d killed something, but her belly was fuller than it had been in days, and she was content. “For the most part, I don’t use my teeth because it’s a messy affair. Forks are much less messy. More civilized. More Human.” But it wasn’t skeleton shaped eye lights that peered up at him out of her sockets. No, no, they were slit and narrow, and very beastly. “We’ll have to wait an hour and see, but I think that’s exactly what I needed.”

Her beast was agreeing and supplying her with some instinctual information. Fresh, raw meat was what the pups in her belly needed. Cooked meats and those pastas and sauces and other things the beast considered tasty were essentially non-nutritional when it came to growing pups properly.

He chuckled. "There a chance you will want another? I caught two."

The look she gave him was seriously contemplative. Rabbits didn’t have a lot of meat on them, nor were they very large creatures, and she was hungry and feeding not only her magic, but also four- or more- growing beings inside of her belly. But gorging herself was probably not a good idea. She hesitated, and tapped her fingers on the table, before slowly nodding. “A little bit of a second.” She says. Pregnancy was about balance. She’d rather eat what she could than go eat pasta and have that make her sick.

"I'll cut it for you so you can eat the limbs and head now and the body later." He rumbled, pulling another wrapped rabbit from his coat.

“Alright.” Her wings give a lazy twitch, not unlike his tail often did, and the pregnant skeleton dropped her clean hands to her belly. She caressed it quietly, and hummed softly. She could probably ask him now while it was just them, but that was a conversation to be had with her husband here too. Probably Asgore too, now that she thought on it.

He skinned the bunny with an effortless pull as he had the first, and with a great accuracy cut the legs, forelegs, and head from the rabbit, keeping the internals all safely contained within the body as he placed the rest on the plate. He used the skin of the rabbit to wrap the body.

Toki gave him a thankful hum, and carefully set in again, cleaning the bones of meat just as effortlessly as she had the last time. The extra helped top her off, and she felt better for it. “Ah… much better. Did you want to keep the bones? Or should we just toss them in the garbage can outside before we go in?” She inquired lightly once she finished rapidly stripping the bones of meat. She cleaned her teeth and her fingers with her tongue, the motion idle because she didn’t have a wet cloth out here with her to help clean up the mess. “Also, Papa… I need to talk with you and Asgore soon.”

"I'll keep them, no problem." He chuckled gently, wrapping the bones up in the skins. "I'll snack on the marrow later." He then looked up at her quietly. "What's going on? Are you alright?"

“Not fond of marrow.” She admits. “Meat is better. Anyway, I’m okay, I promise.” She pats a hand on her belly for emphasis, and gives him a thumbs up. She hasn’t felt this great in days. She could
run a marathon, or fly to the highest heights. All she wants to do is sleep though. A full belly and no nausea is a dream come true. "I just… wanted to go over something Papyrus and I discussed before we napped, if that's okay with you."

"Why don't you run it by me now and we'll see how it goes?" The pale beast murmured softly.

Toki hesitated. "This sort of thing is really something that's run by a couple, not just... One person in a relationship." She hedged, knowing it sounded all kinds of shady how she phrased it.

He raised a brow at that, before he nodded slowly that he understood as much as he could. "I see... Alright..."

"Yeah..." She nodded slowly. "Anyway. Why don't you go in and enjoy dinner with Pap and the kids. I'm going to relax out here a little bit. When you and Asgore are done, you can join me...?"

"Of course." He gave her a gentle kiss on the head, then started for inside.

Toki watched him go, taking with him the mess from before, and then got up from her chair. She made her way down and out to the now functioning garden hose, and set to cleaning up the evidence as best she could.

Asgore looked up once Tenebris came back inside. "You were gone for a while. Is she alright?"

"Oh yes, she's peachy." Tenebris purred in reply as he walked around the table, nuzzling his mate. "The rabbits worked like a charm. I knew first-thing that the poor dear was suffering from a case of domesticity." He chuckled, "How are they enjoying the Manicotti?" He asked as he looked at the children and his son. Tenebris blinked. Almost all of the Manicotti was gone. "Well... I told you that's a great recipe." His amused snort slid forth without his permission.

Asgore laughed. "I doubt morning sickness equates to being too domestic, my love. But, the rabbits were probably what her body needed." He nodded. He glanced at his own plate, half eaten, and nudged it towards Tenebris. "It is a very good recipe. Good thing we still have some at home, no? Here, dear. Eat, or you'll get grumpy."

The King then glanced to Aliquam. "So, it appears your wife might need a more raw diet for a while."

While Tenebris ate what was left on the king's plate, Aliquam looked up at him, a look of realization hitting him. "Of all the things, I never considered raw meat would do the trick..." He exclaimed, before he slumped and laughed at the thought for a moment. "Of course... Thank you, Father. You're a miracle worker." He beamed up at Tenebris.

The older male gave a garbled purr as he inhaled the still warm noodles. He was too busy eating to reply with words, but that was fine- he had to make use of the lingering taste of Asgore's magic, which had kept the plate tasting hot and fresh.

"The Toki that I remember may be a little bit sensitive to the idea of eating raw meats at dinner with you and your young," Asgore continued, patting Honey's head as she snarfed down another stuffed noodle, "but talk with her and see if perhaps you can take your dinners later in the evening if you don't mind eating after your children sleep. I'm sure she would like to not be isolated during meals. Perhaps even have proper utensils." He rolled his eyes at Tenebris. "More than a plate at any rate."

That got a stink eye right back from Tenebris, before he swallowed and ran his tongue over his teeth to clean them. "Trust me, she didn't need them." He chuffed. "Though when she feels better she may want them."
"Well, we'll wait and see." Asgore laughs lightly. "Will she be joining us soon?"

"Actually... She had something she wanted to discuss with us. Will you step out with me for a moment?" He asked.

Aliquam realized what that meant and he hummed quietly.

"Oh?" He blinked. "Of course, yes." One of his long ears twitched as he picked up the low humming, and he quirked it at Aliquam, before standing quietly. "Excuse me a moment." He smiled at the kids, and makes his way towards the back door.

Tenebris followed him out, before Aliquam sighed and got up. "Kids, stay here, finish your dinners and then go get ready for bed, okay?" He murmured, kissing Honey's head and giving Sky a ruffle before he walked behind the older males.

"Toki." Tenebris spoke as he stepped out.

Toki had returned to the deck, but her bones were damp and part of her shirt had been dampened by accident. All the same, she was there, and she looked up as all three men came out the door. "Oh. Well, hello there." She offers them a smile, and motions for them to join her as she quietly relaxed. Instead of taking a narrow chair, she'd stretched out on one of the padded benches, and was quietly rubbing her belly. "Come, sit. There are things we need to talk about."

"Things?" Asgore asks. He grabs one of the chairs for himself and another for Tenebris, and goes to plop them in front of the bench, leaving Papyrus to join his wife on her seat.

"Mhm. Important things."

Tenebris sat down and looked at Toki inquisitively, while Aliquam sat down beside Toki, wrapping his arm around her.

Toki gave him a nuzzle, and leaned into her husband as she hummed. "I'm going to just jump right into this because I don't really know how else to broach this subject." She says lightly. "I know you two want more children. You love Thumper, but you wish you could have more."

"We do." Asgore nods. "Neither of us can carry however, or I'm quite sure we'd have a brood despite our age."

"I'm aware that it's kept you from having more. I'm saying that... Well... Papyrus and I have been talking, and... You can." She brushed a hand to her belly, hoping they'd get the picture. Toki, despite having a beast, wasn't a born beast. She wasn't really fit to be raising true born pure blooded beasts like Tenebris was.

Tenebris grew a shocked expression at her proposal and looked to Asgore for his reaction.

Asgore looked equally shocked. He also looked contemplative though. "Are... You sure? That's a big thing, Toki, giving your children to someone else to raise."

"Yeah, I know." She looks away and swallows. "But I wouldn't be able to look at them and raise them without remembering everything, the good and the bad, and... It wouldn't be right to them. But, I could love them as family." She runs her fingers over her belly lightly. "I do love them, don't get me wrong. That's why I want the best for them. I want them with someone who can give them the sort of upbringing that a pure blood beast need, and the unconditional love that I know you two can provide- the love that they deserve. I would effectively be their blood mother- I'd be a surrogate for you in essence- but I'd take on the role of sister in law for all intents and purposes once nursing was
done, if that's what you'd prefer. For Papyrus and I... Let's face the truth here. They would put strain on our marriage, no matter how we say we could make it work. There would be times when they would feel like the problems were their fault, no matter what we did, and that's not acceptable for any child. No child should ever feel like the problems are their fault." Toki exhaled gently. "That said, if neither of you is up to the task, then I'll raise them regardless. They'll have as much love as I can give, and as good of a home as I can provide. I will do my darndest to make sure they grow up as they should."

Asgore nods, and looks to Tenebris to see what he thought. There was hope in the kings eyes, and willingness to take on this task. He wanted children- and if Toki wanted to effectively be a surrogate for them... Well, he wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth, as the saying went.

Tenebris' hands were folded in front of his mouth, his jaw tight and his eyes closed tightly as his eyebrows pressed against his knuckles "I... I'm not sure what to say, Toki... This is... This is big... It's... Oh good lord..." he lowered his head a little, hands parting to cradle it between them. "J-Just give me a second..."

"Take your time, Papa." She soothed gently. "It's big news I just gave you. Very big. But... I know you are older. If you're not up to raising pups... Don’t feel pressured, okay?" She peered at him gently, and snuggled into Papyrus.

Asgore set a hand on Tenebris' shoulder and rubbed it gently. "Easy, my love, easy... Take your time."

Tenebris' tail was swaying slowly behind him as he let it get through his mind that she just gave him the chance to have pups- true blaster beast pups. Have them, and love them, and raise them with his chosen mate... His hand went up to grip Asgore's, and he took a weak breath, before lifting his head to peer at her. "Toki... Of course I’ll take them." He told her, a look of sheer happiness on his face. "Nursing... yes. I want them to be nursed... Their mother's nurturing and love is very important, at least until they’re old enough to wean. And then you can love them as the greatest older sister-in-law they could ever have."

Toki smiled and shared a quick look with Papyrus. "That sounds good to me. And since we've got the approval of the King for such matters to happen," she winked at Asgore, making the King let out a weak chuckle as he cuddled Tenebris close to his side and nuzzled his head, "I want to be the first to congratulate you. Tenebris, Asgore..." Toki patted her middle lightly, an offer for them to come close. "You're going to be parents. Come, meet your babies. All... Four? Are we still at four? Between four and six of them according to the last time I was examined."

Asgore hesitated, and then motioned Tenebris forward first. They were the first of his kind to be born- pure blooded of his kind. And now they were his- theirs- to raise as their very own children. Asgore wanted him to have the first touch as parents before the King took a turn on the much smaller skeleton's middle. His eyes danced with happy tears all the same, and the rumble in his chest couldn't be anything but a purr. He was going to be a dad again. He would have Frisk, and Thumper, and now four to six more. This was the family that he and Toriel wanted but hadn't gotten to have because of what they were. Boss monsters didn’t often get big families.

Tenebris steadily got up, coming over to Toki as if he still couldn't believe it. He slowly knelt, and his large hands extended, resting on Toki's stomach. After a moment, he broke down, lowering his head and resting it on her stomach as he finally cracked under the pure emotion of this wonderful news, shoulders trembling as he began to sob, "Bless you, Tokiko... Bless your soul..." He whispered, "You're the most wonderful daughter a beast could have, bless you..."

This was the second time she had made him break down. The first had been after his return from his
torture, and she had forgiven him for things that hadn't been his fault. This time... This time, it was because she had made him so happy he simply couldn't take it. And for a non-religious monster to start blessing her...

Toki settled one of her many hands on his head and rubbed as he sobbed against the warm swell of her belly. She hummed a soft sound for him, and found her soul finally at peace with the situation. There was someone who could find total joy in this— who saw no darkness in this gift of life, who had no bad memories associated with it... Only good. This is what she could only hope for. This is who could give the proper care to her pups in her belly— and she could love them from afar. "And you're the best father a daughter could ask for." She murmured gently to him, and then smiled over at Asgore. She motioned him to join too. Her lap was big enough for two. "And I know... You'll be an amazing father for them too."

The king made his way over, and settled in next to Tenebris. He didn’t push him over. More or less, he draped over him, and began to soothingly nuzzle his shoulders and the back of his neck to help ground him and steady him.

Toki smiled at the duo, and glanced up at Papyrus. Her eyes looked lighter, less burdened. She nuzzles his jaw gently.

Aliquam nuzzled her and gave her a gentle kiss, "I love you." He purred in reply, simply watching as his father savored his first time with his future children. His first time with Aliquam's future brothers and sisters...

Papyrus couldn't wait to meet them.
Chapter 118

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Well, this is a cuter one. Cuter ish. You get to see just how many Blaster Beasts are going to be brought back, so there’s that.

Silverwing Notes: So, i have some unfortunate news for you guys... but we wont be posting any more chapters for the rest of the year.

HA! Had you for a second didn't i! dont worry, we arent done YET.

Eating a diet of raw meat helped, as gross as it was. Even raw vegetables seemed to be okay enough, but almost anything cooked seemed to come right back up. Though, not all of the raw stayed down either. Some parts of the day, she could enjoy a rare mug of cocoa, but most of the time she couldn’t touch more than water. Some days were worse than others, and Toki suspected that it was just her body telling her that it needed specific nutrition, and that it didn’t approve of the number of things growing in her belly, nor how fast and how large they seemed to be growing so quickly.

Toki was already outgrowing her shirts, which hadn’t been made nearly loose enough to accommodate this sort of rapid growth. She needed to talk with Lana about expanding them.

The rapid growth was also hell on her magic stores. She could literally feel the litter draining at her magic as they grew and expanded her waistline, making her pants obsolete and her shirts a hassle to slide over her middle. Toki was napping more and more between increasingly frequent bouts of sickness as the days wore on. She was four weeks pregnant by her count now, and she shouldn’t have been this drained of magic.

Toki spent her days in perpetual exhaustion, dealing with family asking questions about her growing middle, and the general population starting to step up and take notice too. She couldn’t hide it for much longer.

But, she could hide herself. And she may have been hiding from the world a little bit- the world and her family. Her kids were exceptionally loud and rowdy today, running all over the house like someone had given them liquid caffeine, and Toki just didn’t have it in her to keep up.

She’d made a little hidey-hole in one of the closets for the spare bedrooms at the behest of her beast, who sometimes just needed a space Toki could step into to let her decompress. This world was different and scary for her inner beast, and the beast stressed a lot. They both needed a little space to call their own- and thus far, no one knew where Toki disappeared to for a couple hours when she’d nap frequently. Toki had taken a couple pillows that had been in storage, and lined the floor of the empty closet, before deeming that a decent enough little nest to stretch out on. The beds were more comfortable, granted, but they were too open, and if the kids saw her, they usually came to wake her up to play.

Normally she didn’t mind, but sometimes… Sometimes you just needed to sleep. She was getting what she called ‘growly’ with how tired and utterly terrible she felt, and after she’d wanted to growl
Toki stretched out in her little hidden closet nest, her wings making the faintest of noises, and tried to rest as best she could. Her clothes were uncomfortable, she was uncomfortable, and she was so tired that she just couldn’t settle to sleep immediately. Her belly was heavy, the skin was stretching and itching, and she couldn’t lay on her front or on her back comfortably...

All the same, it was better than trying to nap on the couch. Napping on the couch with kids was asking to wake up to getting her wings tugged on for attention, or her mane pulled on. She loved her children, but they were rough and tumble little hooligans. That, she knew, was the beast side of their lineage coming out.

She sighed and flexed her fingers over one of the pillows there, closing her eyes as she tiredly stretched and resettled, rubbing her fingers into the sore ectoplasmic muscles that were already knotting up.

Aliquam had come to understand she retreated for 'Toki time’, and while it was understandable she needed time for herself, he would still worry when she'd be gone for too long. He searched until he found where he could hear her humming, and he was at least assured enough in her location to leave her there. He let his father know and allowed him to be the one to bother her when the older man needed her.

It was one such moment. "Toki?" The beast rumbled gently on the other side of her door.

Toki exhaled slowly. Well, she knew she couldn’t keep her secret hidey-hole hidden forever. And there was no use in the whole ‘holding your breath and hoping the monster went away’ thing. He could scent her and feel her magic besides. Toki shifted up, pushing herself up slowly with her primary arms. The narrow small state of the closet made it so the doorknob was within reach of her grabbing when she sat upright. She opened it, and peered up at the big beast outside the closet door. “Mmm…?” She queried from within her dark haven, her darkened eye lights peering at him.

"Hey~" He smiled at her. "Aliquam mentioned you might want some beastly company to bother you rather than anything that might make your beast grow concerned." He rumbled.

"Mm…” She snuffled faintly, and then scooted over a bit in her little sparsely padded nest. “Sure.” She yawns, and settles down. There’s not a lot of space in the closet, but if he leaves the door open, he should fit just fine. “The kids are just kinda… loud. Everything has got my beast on edge today.” She says, voice a little slurred with exhaustion. “… Can you fit okay?” She’s suddenly not sure if he can fit- the closet is designed for humans, and her wings take up a lot of space. “’Spose we can move if we need to. Just want somewhere quiet and dark.”

"Oh I don’t need to." He chuckled as he then laid down just outside the closet, relaxing there. "I'll admit... I still tear up, I'm so excited..." Tenebris smiled. "I've been wanting to plume, but my mane is still too short and my quills would get bent wrong under my clothes." The doctor laughed.

"Imagine how uncomfortable that would be.”

She wiggles her wings at him. “I know how it is.” Pinched wings were a plague and she got them often. She yawns, and rolls half onto her side, before stretching her arms. Her shirt tugs up, showing dull, gravid flesh. She doesn’t bother to fix it as she shifts so she can see him better. She hums and peers at him. “Mmmn... You know, if you want to run around with your quills and armor plates out,” she yawns, “you can. I honestly don’t mind. Tenne used to have a shirt with all sorts of holes in it from his quills and stuff whenever he’d sprout them.” Her smaller hands curl up and idly groom through her mane. She didn’t have any braids in, so her mane is loose and everywhere. “I know you
and Asgore are excited. I heard he’s already getting a nursery of sorts set up for when they’re weaned and you can take them home?"

"He had dragged me around all day looking at cribs." He laughed, though he had noticed the dull flesh and he gave a small frown. "Toki, are you in need of a magic donation?"

“That’s adorable.” She laughs gently. “At least his nesting urges kicked in faster than mine did, and he’s not trying to get a nursery in weeks- or perhaps days- before I pop.” Her hands go still and curl to her chest, and she yawns again. “Mmm... I think so. They’re sucking me dry faster than the twins. I’ve got double the magic, but there’s so many of them and they’re growing so fast... It’s upsetting my body more.” She rubs her belly and then nuzzles her face into her ‘nest’ with a sigh. “I’ll manage.”

He pulled himself a little closer and tutted. "Toki, you'll get Magi-drain..." He told her, "May I?" He asked as he then extended a hand.

“I know,” she groans softly. As he scoots closer, her eye lights slit again, and her bones rattle in a soft instinctual reaction. She hums softly, and then nods. “If you want.” Toki takes a moment to wriggle closer, turning her belly to give him better access. She knows what he’s going to do, and what her body needs.

He gave a soft croon, and he rested his head on her stomach beside his hand. A gentle rumble rose from him as he released his magic, letting the powerful concentrated magic seep from his claws into her body, deepening the hue of Toki’s stomach but making it more transparent in the same.

Her middle took in his magic, and it darkened to a darker green. She felt the drain ease off some, but it wasn’t nearly enough for what she needed. It was a start though. Her belly was warm under his head though, and soft with a slightly hard part in her belly. “Mm, gentle with your claws please. The skin is really tight. Feel like I’m an over ripe fruit going to pop once I get big enough. But... damn, that feels nice... Did I ever tell you that your magic feels cool? Kinda cool and deep, like an ocean?”

"Mmh... That’s the first time I’ve been told 'deep' is a good thing.” He winked at her with a shameless chuckle, though he curled his claws to knead with his knuckles instead. "Just tell me when." He thrummed, "I want to make sure they all get enough to last them a while so you can recharge.”

He got a soft laugh out of Toki, and she patted his face in fond amusement. “When the color looks better and brighter, you’ll know when it’s good. Just don’t worry about going too far, okay?” She wiggled a little bit, and risked turning onto her back so that he had a pillow made out of her belly. “I don’t think you’re going to be enough honestly. I’m very... drained.” She says gently. Her color was improving, but not at the rate it had with the twins. He had put what felt like drops in with the twins, and this was what amounted to gallons. That should say something about what this litter was demanding of her. “Speaking of ‘all’... are we still at four?"

"That’s a good idea... giving a magic donation is like pouring dye into water, I can see it a lot better." He purred as he took a moment to focus, his magic momentarily shifting to utilize what had been given to examine everything that the magical essence wrapped around. "There they are, my beautiful pups-to-be... Mmh... Oh goodness~" He chuckled quietly. "Well would you look at that... It certainly explains the high magic demand."

“… Lemme guess. Five?” Toki sighed and chuckled in soft amusement. “Dye to water is one way to put it. It feels more like to me you’re trying to fill a pool with a gallon of water at a time. By hand.” Toki watches him slowly, and exhales gently, making her belly move.
"At least I’ve spent long enough building up my magic... it feels good to be able to let it out." He purred, before he lifted his head, smiling at her. "Six." He beamed.

Toki let her skull thump onto the pillows with a soft groan. "Six. I am going to be huge. That explains the drain though. I was so tired with two, and four would have made me super tired with what I have now... Six is triple the twins. Even if they end up smaller- and I’m hoping so, if only to save my poor pelvis- then that’s still a lot of magic to expend. Of which... If you’re getting close to low, you should probably stop. I don’t want you too tired- you need to be able to function, Papa.” Toki exhaled gently, and peered at him. “So. Now you know. You’re going to have six pups. Think you’re up to it, old man?”

"I won’t get low for a while. Besides, I’m an old man, all I do is sleep all day." He chuckled. "And yes, I am very sure I’m ready for pups. I went my whole life wishing to have my very own pups... My sons were a blessing, but I missed out on so much... I wanted a second chance to be a father, and lo and behold..."

Toki gives him a tired smile. “You do more than sleep all day and you know it.” She says lightly. “Much more active now that you’re going to be a new daddy again.” She stretches her legs a bit, her toes splaying, and the skeleton gives a soft sigh. “You’ve got a second chance, Papa. You’ll get to see it all, the good and the bad. That includes the good and the bad of the pre-pup stages.” She exhales slightly and gives him a crooked grin. “I get to call you if I get weird cravings in the middle of the night.”

"If Aliquam cannot provide, then I shall do so with honor." He purred happily.

Toki snorts. "I love my husband. But if I get a sudden craving to eat Bambi in the middle of the night,” She wiggled a brow at him, “he isn’t going to go chase a deer in the dark. But... yeah. I don’t really want to trouble him too much with everything.” She shuffles awkwardly where she lays. “It’s... I dunno. There is more peace than there was before. But I don’t want to ask too much of him.” Since they weren’t his. “Six pups though. Oi. That’s going to be fun. No wonder my body is hating me so much. You’re going to owe me so much hot cocoa by the end of this, Papa. So much. Like... A bath tub full of hot cocoa.”

"I will make a cauldron of it and let you soak as if I am making a witches brew. How does that sound?” Tenebris chuckled. "I'll even give you marshmallows shaped like a duck."

She snorts and laughs faintly. “So long as you don’t actually make me into a stew.” She gives him a bemused laugh, making his head and palm bounce on her belly. Toki sighed softly, and rubbed her sides. “So... Six. That’s... definitely a lot. You going to be alright to do the delivery, mister dad? Or am I going to need to ask Todd to do it, while you pace and fret in the living room?” She gave him a teasing wiggle of her brow, knowing the stereotype of the fretting father in the waiting room would bemuse him.

"I'll admit, I’d most likely be the one pacing, but I’m professional you silly girl." He puffed. "Of course I'll handle the doctoring." He then chuckled, running his thumb over her swell delicately. "Maybe with Todd standing as my nurse."

"Riiight. You were nearly in a panic when I was in labor in your car." She pats his head fondly. "But you did good during it. You were calm when I needed you to be, and that's what's important. I get the gut feeling this one is going to be very different from the last one, so... We'll see how it goes." Toki relaxes quietly, and simply enjoys the feel of magic flowing into her. "I don't know about that. My beast is... Kind of unpredictable. I personally wouldn't mind, at least right now anyway, extra hands to help hold babies while the others are born, but I'm not too sure how my beast is going to respond to so many people in the room at once. Her mood varies."
He rattled and chirped quietly in understanding. "Perhaps Aliquam then. He would be appealing to you in assurance, while I appeal to your bestial side."

"Like last time. That might be good." She nods. "We'll see. But, uh... Sans teleportation is probably going to get him stung if he startles her. She's capable of taking control when she's determined enough. She's only done it once so far, but that was... Interesting." Shaking her head, Toki peers at him quietly. His magic was starting to dwindle, though he was still trying to give her what she needed. "Maybe train Papyrus a bit more in midwifery. He's... Well, since he's not on guard duty anymore, I think he gets a little stir crazy. Classes would give him something to occupy his mind with, and maybe keep him calmer when it comes time for him and I to have children of our own again."

"I'm sure he'll want to avoid one of the midwifery habits, but I'm positive he's gonna do the best he can at least."

Toki tilted her head. "One of the habits?" She inquired curiously, but doesn't expect an answer. He does that sometimes, and leaves her with more questions than not. "He did well last time, but he spent his time behind me acting as support. If he has to do much else, I'm pretty sure he'd faint again." Such faith she didn't have in her husband, truly. Toki shifted and sighed, before nudging his face. "Papa. You're starting to drop on your output. Stop before you run low on magic."

"Mmmh... By the time I was my current age, I should have been a father to many a litters. It would have been nothing to share enough magic for six pups." He murmured, before he sighed and yawned widely, his form stiffening up as he made a stationary stretch and cut off his magic supply.

"You've had other events in your life that changed the tides of fate." She says gently. "It's not your fault. I'll... See if I can ask Papyrus for some magic later if I really need it." She looked better, but not the bright color she was when he discovered she was pregnant. "Also keep in mind, they're based probably on my power levels thanks to the severely unequal difference between Tenne and myself. They are probably going to take a lot to keep them healthy. Good thing it's not just me and Papyrus trying to do this." That amount of magic Tenebris had given her probably would have sent Papyrus into coma.

Tenebris slowly pushed himself to a sitting position, his eyes now dimly lit as he looked at her. "Indeed so... I would suppose Asgore would offer his own magic if needed." He rumbled, before he sighed. "This 'Tenne'... I wonder if his story was truly to be of the hunter..." The doctor murmured, his tail tucking in over his feet as his head tucked slightly into his turtleneck. "What was he like?" He then asked quietly.

She frowned at how dimly lit his eyes were, and shifted up. Her magic funneled into her hand as she reached out to touch him, and Toki topped him up just a bit. "You silly, overzealous old man." She scolds. "You gave a bit too much." She doesn't give much back, but human magic is much more potent than monster magic. She doesn't need to give much. Toki draws her hand back and sighs. "We can call Asgore later. He'd probably like to donate too, since they're his too. They should get to know his magic."

His eyes did indeed light up a little brighter after her donation, but they continued their relaxed gaze as he listened to wait for what she had to say about his counterpart.

Relaxing as best she can while she sits and is generally tired, Toki processes the questions she'd been asked since he was waiting so expectantly. "His full name was Tenebris. He called it a pack name, and asked that I not call him that in public. Everyone, even Asgore, knew him as Tenne. He was... A lot like you. But much less grouchy. I didn't have to work as hard to get him to pull the stick out of his ass and get him to tease me back. He worked a lot at first, but it started to dwindle as he spent
more time with me and his sons. His sons adored having him around. He was a good man."

He hummed quietly, and then he chuckled gently. "Sounds like he was a very proud pup growing up, and carried this vanity through his youth until he reached fatherhood... At that point, he no doubt yearned for children as badly as I did. I would have loved to watch my dear sons grow up, and I envy that of this Tenne, that he got to see his grow up.” He sighed.

"I'm pretty sure I'm what kept that timeline from going the same as this one." She says lightly. "Everyone was pushing for the core to be done, and shit just happened, and, well... I kinda lost my temper and broke the barrier." Settling back down on her side, not unlike a pregnant cat lounging in the shade, Toki's mane ruffled up. She nuzzled her face into it and was tempted to groom it. It was a bit messy. "All the same... I ended up earning an ironic moniker there. The Guardian Light."

"I wouldn't be surprised. It was a very wise move, using the power of the souls to destroy the barrier... if it were the same as it was here, it no doubt would have taken quite the effort to eliminate." He purred, "You have continued to carry your kind and incomparable love through the realms."

She reaches out with her smaller hand in a motion that is very cat like and just mooshes it against his face. "Nope. No. Nope. Tenne said the same thing almost. Don’t give me flashbacks to that, Papa."

She blows a raspberry at him, and then huffs. "I was a ticking time bomb back then. It felt good to get rid of that power. No living being should have that much power."

True, very true indeed...

Tenebris chortled as her hand pressed against his face before his eyes gleamed a little brighter. He snapped his head to one side before it was brought back, quickly closing around her fingers as he loosely nibbled on her, just like old times. And like that, he gave a quiet rumble, chuckling gently as he gave her a sweet purr.

She squeaked, but at least he hadn't taken her whole hand that time. Or taken it off. She laughed and wiggled her fingers against his tongue. "Oh noooo. I have been nommed." She feigns being faint, and grins at him as she flops over. "You have slain me, oh great and mighty finger nibbler."

He chuckled lightly, grinning around her fingers as he then provided to thoroughly drool around her fingers, covering them before he let them go. "Bleeeeehh~" he drawled out, pushing them out with his tongue before he grinned and laughed gently while reaching into his pocket to pull out a black handkerchief as he held it up to her, "Here. No more smearing my drool on my sweater~ I invested in a handkerchief for just the occasion."

That was utterly revolting, in so many ways. His revenge was most amusing. "Oh, so you planned to drool on me?" She laughed quietly and took it so she could clean her fingers. The drool-dampened cloth was then tossed right back at him as her eye lights twinkled in mischief. It smacked him in the face, damp side down, and stuck to his cheek. "Or is it because you drool when you sleep now, old man?" Oh there was a teasing jibe there, and Toki wondered what he might do about that.

He made a sound of disdain and wiped his cheek, before he tucked it way. "How dare you." He snorted. "If you want me to be honest, I wasn't positive if I would be strong enough to resist tearing up a little bit while I was here." He admitted. "You have made me very happy, you know. My mate and I are both indebted to you."

"I'm the only one that dares to ruffle those feathers of yours." She smiled. Her eyes gentled at the tone of his voice, and she shook her head, momentarily growling as her horn hooked on loose threads on a pillow. She disentangled it from the new hole, and peered at him. "You don't owe me anything, Papa. Jokes of hot cocoa baths aside, just the both of you being here and helping Papyrus
and I through this is enough, I promise. I just want them to be somewhere that they'll be loved and grow up in a household without any underlying tension."

He hummed gently and gave a nod. "I will do nothing to make them feel any less than at home."

Toki chuffed, and reached up to bump her face to his, before drawing back. "Just give them the father they deserve, Papa. I'll nurse them and love them until it's time to pass them into Asgore's arms, and then I'll be their sister by law, and love them all the same." She runs her fingers along her lower belly and massages the muscles lightly. They ached from the fast growth.

Tenebris hummed, and then lifted his head as the door opened.

Aliquam entered, holding a tray of steaming mugs of cocoa. "Hello Toki, Father. Hope I'm not interrupting bonding time between you and the pups." He gave a gentle laugh.

"Come on in, Aliquam, don't feel like a stranger." Tenebris greeted happily. "I had just given Toki a magic-donation and I'm pretty sure she was close to sassing me yet again."

"Typical Toki, eh?" Aliquam chuckled as he came and knelt near the closet as well. "Hello, my love." He smiled at Toki, "I brought you some cocoa~"

Having two large monsters settled right outside her only exit was making her beast feel caged and trapped, and their little safe haven wasn't so safe anymore. Toki would need to find a new one, her beast decided.

Toki ignored her beast musing at her, and gave them both smiles despite the line of tension that crawled up her spine and settled at the nape of her neck. She knew they meant no harm, but feeling caged was not a nice feeling. "Hello, my love." She greets Papyrus fondly, and straightens in her little cubby, angling her body away from them instinctively to face them head on. She scooted closer to the end of the door, and peered at the cocoa. Her stomach gave a twist as it decided if she could partake or not today and ultimately settled on 'yes for now'. She leaned forward on her primary arms, secondary arms taking her cup of cocoa. "Thank you, love. I see you found my little cubby." She sipped her cocoa. It was rich and tasty, but she took it slow so she didn't get sick on it. "Papa and I did a donation, and discussed that this litter are taking much more than the twins did. And our usual teasing, of course."

"I did find it after discovering where you were hiding all the pillows." He teased with a gentle laugh. "The litter definitely would be quite the drain, so I'm willing to offer my magic to contribute as well."

Toki blushed as he called out her hoarding. "I didn't take them all. Or the soft ones. Or the ones I really wanted." Her instincts had wanted pillows that smelled like her ‘pack mates’ to surround herself with, but she hadn’t gone stealing all the pillows from everyone’s houses. She wasn’t that out of control. "I just took a couple ones from the spare rooms." Which would have smelled heavily of her and led him straight here. Well, she could understand how he found her. The pregnant queen bee enjoyed her sugary treat as she watched her husband. "I drained Papa, but Papa knows when to stop. Sort of. I had to give some back. Anyways, love... I don't want to see you fall into Magi-drain again. Literally. Can you promise not to go too far?" She knew he could see how dark her belly was- still was, even if it was mountains upon mountains of improvements from what it had been- and wondered what he thought of it. It wasn't the neon 'I ate glowsticks' that he tended to make her back with the twins.

"Of course, dear. I promise." He assured her, his hand going to rest on her stomach. His eyes slowly closed as his magic began to pool into Toki's body.
“If I have to scrape you off the floor, I’m gonna summon Sugar and let her do it.” Was that a threat? Yep. Toki sighed though, and she straightened to let him touch her belly better. It brightened some, though not as fast as it had with Tenebris’ potent magic, but she enjoyed it all the same. “Mm… It’s like the sun.” She inhales contently. “It feels so nice.”

Tenebris watched with a smile.

Aliquam hummed, smiling at her reaction. "I love how much you enjoy the heat I have to offer~" He cooed gently.

Toki smiled at him gently, and gave him a gentle sounding purring noise. “I always love it. I’ve missed it.” Her hand settled down onto her belly, and she rubbed her hand gently over his knuckles. “I love the warmth and I love the feel of it… It lets me know I’m home.” Her smile widens, and she hums softly. Toki glances at the pillows she’s seated on, before sighing. “I should probably stop hiding away.”

"Only if you are comfortable with coming out." He assured her gently.

Toki twiddles her fingers and fidgets her wings. She doesn’t tell him that she’s going to find another hidey-hole. Her beast demands that she keeps it quiet. She’s pretty sure her body language tells all though to the two men who are so intensely focused on her. “I’ll manage. I’m not as tired now, so I think I can handle some rowdy kids for a little bit… Speaking of, what did you send them to do while you came up here…?” Or should she suspect something to be broken?

"Surprisingly enough, this time it was the aid of their summons that distracted them." He chuckled gently. "Sobek stole Honey's graham crackers."

"Oh dear. There will be hell to pay for that." Toki laughs gently. "Those two have the most interesting relationship I've ever seen concerning summons. At least Snuggle lives up to his name." Sobek was hell on wheels.

"At least Snuggle is more than merciful with behaving with Skylar; or perhaps it's that with his physique, he doesn't have much of a choice." He snorted.

"I have seen that grub move before when I dropped a cookie. He can haul ass when he wants to. He just doesn't because he doesn't want to." Toki can feel her womb sitting heavier in her belly with all the extra magic settling in it, and her fingers massage the sore muscles near the base. Hell, round ligaments were a bitch. "Mmnn."

And noting he was short on magic, Papyrus allowed himself to stop giving magic before it knocked him on his ass.

She checked him over all the same, and paranoia made her take a look at his eye lights next. "How do you feel?" She asks gently. Her lights are brighter and healthier looking. Two donations was closer to enough. She could function off two- she didn’t need to be full to function.

His eye lights were dimmer than they were before, but not nearly as they were for Tenebris. "Just fine. A bit lighter in the same."

She nods, and let's the breath ease out from her chest. "Good. I'm better. Not quite a glowstick, but that's just fine." She gives them a lopsided smile, and takes another gulp of cocoa. "Now all I've got to deal with are muscle pains. At least until the magic runs out again."

"You hungry?" Aliquam asked as Tenebris stood to go.
“Mmm…” She gave a contemplative sound, watching Tenebris stand. She was pretty sure they were
down to just chicken in the freezer- in a house full of carnivores, and with her being only able to eat
raw meat mostly, they went through a lot of meat. “I am yeah. Hungry and crampy.” She shifts and
stands slowly, balancing her cocoa with one hand, and offering a hand out to Aliquam. “Going
home, Papa?” She asks. “You’re welcome to nap here if you need to.” He did look like he’d curl up
in the nearest flowerbed and just sleep.

"I'll have a nap before I go, but I best leave you to your own devices.” Tenebris answered as he
rubbed his eyes lightly, "I'll bring over Venison when I come again tomorrow, give you some nice
quality meat to munch on when you get peckish." He purred.

“That would be nice. Go get some rest, Papa. You need it.” Toki smiles faintly, and leans into
Papyrus to nuzzle her mate. “Hey, Pap? What do we have in the freezer to last until then anyways?”
She’d eat anything but chicken and pork raw… If she had to wait until tomorrow, it wouldn’t kill
her. They had a bag of raw carrots stuffed somewhere that she could nibble on.

"We have chicken. I think we had some pork strips left.” He answered. "Maybe some veggies."

Toki makes a face and sighs. “Veggies it is then.” She gently nudges his hip with her- so very
gentle because his leg can’t take the bumps that he used to- and then takes his arm in two of hers.
“Unless… Hm…” She wasn’t sure if Grillby did steak burgers, or if he’d even sell her one
uncooked. She’d buy one if he did though. “Mmmn… Think Grillby has a steak or two we could
buy from him?” She asks him gently, and guides him towards the stairs. She keeps a careful eye on
him, because she doesn’t want him to wobble from magic exhaustion or while carting the tray of
mostly empty mugs of cocoa.

"I'm sure he would be willing to send us a few. As the owner of a public restaurant, I have faith he
gets nothing but the best quality meat."

Toki hummed. “Maybe.” She knew a lot of restaurants bought lower quality meat and made it taste
better, but she doubted Grillby did. “We could take a walk with the kids, if you’re up to it.” She
hummed as they reached the bottom of the stairs.

"If you're up for it." Aliquam gave her a smile, "Come on, then." He laughed gently.

Tenebris chuckled and made his way downstairs, humming to himself as he went for his coat.

She chuckled. “Alright. Go get your shoes, and I’ll get the kids.”

She didn’t have to actually look for them- Honey came speeding around the corner, and crashed into
her grandfather’s leg at full force. Full force meaning hard enough to pop both of her little arms right
off, and send them clattering down at her sides as she reeled backwards and clattered onto the tile.
She gave him a grumpy look as Skylar zoomed around behind her, and proceeded to trip over her.

He landed on his hands and knees. “You’re it!”

“Tagging with feet doesn’t count, you butthead!” Honey puffs unhappily, and flails as she tries to sit
up with no arms.

“Oh dear,” Toki takes a step over to help her.

Tenebris grunted quietly as the pup had ran into his legs and he lifted his foot gently. "What are you
two doing?” He asked, before he used his foot to gently push Honey upright.

Honey flailed a bit where she sat, until Toki knelt down to help pop her arms back on. She peered up
at her Grandpa. “Sobek stole my crackers, so we chased him, but he ate them before I could get them back, so we decided to chase each other instead.”

Skylar skitters upright and rubs his head fondly against Tenebris’ knee. Or as much of it as his diminutive height can reach against the massive monster’s own great height, as it were. “We just need to run.”

“They’ve been like this all day.” Toki sighs wearily. She might have the magical energy to deal with them, but that didn’t mean she had the physical energy. “Pretty sure they’ve got built up energy they need to spend. Come on, little ones. Go get your shoes and coats. It’s still cold outside, and we’re going to Grillby’s.”

They both stood and raced off, scrambling up the stairs and to their rooms in a competition to get their shoes and coats. Toki watched them go and shook her head. Her son wasn’t usually so active, but whatever was up, he was wired. He’d crash hard come night time, though he would sleep very, very good.

"They’ll enjoy the walk, I wager." Tenebris chortled. "Such energetic pups. I should start babysitting and be ready for when my own are born."

“Well, they wouldn’t turn down getting to spend time with their Grandpapa.” She peers up at him, and makes her way over to get her shoes. She eases into them, and then fetches her coat. Toki comes to a small problem, when it refuses to button in the front. Lana hadn’t made it with much room to spare. “Well then…” She just leaves it open. “Asgore might appreciate getting to brush up on his skills handling little children. If ours are this active, I can’t imagine how six full bloods are going to act.”

"At least you don’t fear them chewing shoes.” Tenebris chuckles.

“No, they just chew my bones.” She laughs.

"Wait, wait... SIX?!" Aliquam asked with surprise.

“Uh…” Toki glanced at him. “Yes. That’s, uh the number we found out today.” She pats her belly through her coat. “So you’re going to have six brothers and sisters, Pap.” She gives him a grin. “What do you think of that?”

"I... Don’t envy you, Father...” Aliquam laughed quietly, rubbing his head. "Six... wow... I'm excited to meet them."

“An interesting fact, my love,” Toki gives him a cheeky smile, “Insectis- which is partly what I am- can have a hundred or more children all in one go. So we’re lucky they take after the sire, and not after me.” Her wings flick as she gets herself ready, fetching her newly set up wallet and tucking it into her pocket, before going to stand near her husband. She bends down to help him with his shoes so he doesn’t have to stress his leg. "Just something to think about whenever we have kids again ourselves.”

"Thank you dear." He purred gently as he let her tie his shoes for him, and he gave her a soft peck in appreciation once she finished and straightened. "Very lucky indeed, huh?" He then teased. "Well I think I’m thankful all the same. I’d rather have six younger siblings, rather than hundreds." He laughed.

She smiled at him, amused, but didn’t bother to reply as she had to guide him out of the way as their kids barreled down the stairs again. She didn’t let them run off though, and leaned down to scoop
them into her arms. She settled one on either side of her hips, and grunted as their weight settled in her arms. They were heavier than she was expecting—she was still getting used to her arms lacking the muscles that she’d had as an Insectis blaster beast. “Alright. Let’s head out. Snuggle? You’re in charge of the house while we’re gone.”

The grub gave a noise from the living room, along with Sobek giving an indignant squawk.

Toki snorted, and hefted the twins onto her hips. Their knees pressed awkwardly to her belly, but she made it work as she headed for the door.

Once everyone left, Snuggle’s mandibles clattered in a pleased manner that he was left in charge as he made his way to the large recliner that Tenebris claimed when he’d visit. The grub curled up comfortably and gurgled to himself in a proud manner.

Sobek, pride damaged, stormed closer before attempting to climb into the chair and steal Snuggle’s spot. He flinched back as the grub snapped and hissed an ugly sound at him, long mandibles and massive maw rapidly clapping shut with an audible sound.

A moment passed as Snuggle set his head down again before Sobek carefully climbed into the rolls and coils of pudgy grub. The grub let out a more content sound as Sobek then nestled down and the two proceeded to doze off there.
Chapter 119

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: A continuation of the last chapter. It got a little long, so we trimmed it.

Also first chapter of the new year! Hope everyone has had a good one so far-

It was towards the last weeks of February- she’d arrived home a week or so after she was supposed to have turned thirty four in this world, though she was actually thirty five now thanks to her time in the other world- so the ground was slushy and something of a mix between snow and frost. She’d learned that the flowers around her memorial were maintained by magic, so they’d be kept blooming all year round, to honor her memory. It was a sweet idea.

Once they’d gotten some distance from the house, Toki had plopped the twins down and let them rush off and play in the last bits of the snow and ice, while she walked at a leisurely pace with Papyrus and Tenebris, until the older male branched off, having decided to go home instead of napping at the house.

She looped her arms quietly with her husband, and enjoyed the leisurely stroll. She was at the point where hiding her belly didn’t work, so people stared. She tried not to let it bother her, or let it raise her beast’s hackles. “So… Papa and I were talking about how the delivery would go.” She says lightly to her husband. “And we were thinking maybe you could train up a bit in midwifery, to help him? With how… finicky my beast is, I’m not too sure how friendly she’s going to be with too many people in there.”

"Oh?" He laughed gently. "Oh of course, I'll be willing to help in anyway I can." He promised.

“Thank you.” She smiles. “I’d ask Sans, but I’m pretty sure he’d be a nervous wreck. I’m pretty sure Papa is going to be one too, so… You’re going to need to be calm.” She peers up at him. “My beast might be closer to the surface, so you’ll definitely want to read our body language. She’s not the friendly sort all the time. I’ll have to introduce you sometime though, so she knows you’re safe.”

"I am eager to meet her." He rumbled, "I want to learn everything about her; whatever it takes to be ready for when the day comes.”

Her beast purred in her head, and Toki’s eye lights narrowed to slits as she watched him. She wondered if he ever noticed when her eye lights did the narrowing thing. “Mmm, well, that definitely made her happy to hear.” She informs him cheerfully. “Perhaps later I can let her out some to meet you. I need a space that is quiet and calm though. This world frightens her. She only knows it from my memories, and memories aren’t enough.”

"Understandable." He nodded gently, "I'll make sure to find a perfect little spot for meeting her.”

She hums and nods. “Maybe not on a night with the twins this… Active.” She eyes them as they run through slush and dirty up their pants. They’d need to be changed when they got home- not too big of a problem. “They make her more alert and agitated in an effort to keep the kids safe.” Toki’s wings twitched and lifted some as she spotted Grillby’s ahead. It would appear that the lunch rush was there, because there were people- monsters and human builders from the contracting companies-
gathered inside and partially lingering outside as they gobbled down food.

He nodded lightly as he gave her a soft squeeze, before smiling at the sight of Grillby. "It's good to see that Grillby's doing so well..."

“It’s the closest thing the workers have to a fast food joint this far out in the middle of nowhere.” Toki chuckled. She gathered the twins close, and kept two hands on them tightly. “Besides, would you eat a bag lunch, or a hot meal every day? It doesn’t surprise me at all that the building was one of the first ones finished. Muffet’s too.”

"Grillby's food is a lot more healthy for human consumption." He laughed gently. "And Muffet's pastries are unbelievable.”

“Very true.” She chuckles.

Toki guides them in to the mass of people who are jousting for space, and tucks her wings in tight so she doesn’t accidentally knock someone’s food out of their hands. She puts the kids between her and Papyrus, giving the smaller ones a protective barrier as they make their way inside to get in the long line. Over top everyone, she can see both Sans and Grillby working in the back, and Fuku too.

“So… Do you want anything?” She blinks up at him gingerly. “I kinda wish I could eat some fries. God, I want fries. Mm… But I’m pretty sure I’d spend a couple hours in the bathroom if I indulged.” She gave a sad sound. She managed a bit of cocoa- she didn’t want to push her body too far and pay for it.

"Perhaps something light, or quick to take with us." He answered, before he laughed gently. "I've heard Caeruleus is trying to introduce more recipes to Grillby's menu."

Toki smiled faintly. “I heard both Grillby’s and Muffets started selling Honey Tarts.” She elbows him gently. “So I’m sure it’s not just him that’s introducing more recipes, hm?” She laughs, not at all bothered by her recipe for her homemade treat having been given to both monsters. She knew why- it would be another way for her to have lived on if she hadn’t come home.

"-ou see that? Look how big she is. She wouldn’t be that big this soon if it was his. Kinou was right. It looks like Mrs. Gaster couldn’t keep her legs closed during the time she was gone.”

Toki couldn’t identify who said it in the middle of the thick crowd. She just tucked her head down into her fluff, and tried to ignore the shame that burned through her soul. “Anyways,” She continued, “What are you thinking with ‘light and quick’? A milkshake maybe? Or some of those cinnamon bun things I can smell somewhere in here?”

"Now you're thinking." He chuckled with a smile. Having heard the man speak, however, made him give of a low growl and give her a soft squeeze. "I love you." He assured her as he then led her to where they could wait in a different line, away from whoever had spoke.

As luck would have it, Caeruleus saw them and waved them over. "Heeeyyy!"

Toki tucks her head and guides her husband and kids out of the line and off to the side, heading away from the line and towards where Sans had stepped off to the side of the lunch rush. Her mane is ruffled, and she’s doing her best to hide in it, and pull her coat subtly around her belly to hide it.

"Hey…” She murmurs quietly to her brother in law. “Where’s Solstice?” She asks, curious as to
where her niece was if both her bearer and her father were working.

Sans came over and pressed a soft smooch between her horns. "Sol is out with Tori today. Don’t you worry, soon as they hear this is for surrogacy for the king, they’ll all shut their traps." He murmured.

“Yeah I know.” She murmurs. The surrogacy was more or less a backup plan, or she’d have been mothering six pups. Toki sighs and glanced up at him. “I’ll be fine. I might not look like it, but I’ve got some pretty tough skin.” She lied as she winked at him, her joke carrying and making Honey giggle at her side.

“Momma, you don’t have skin.” She pokes at her finger bones. “You’re all bony, like Daddy and Sky and Me. Well, ‘cept your tummy that is.”

“That’s right.” Toki nods. “Of which…” She glances up to Sans, and then hesitates. How could she ask for a bunch of raw meat to eat here in a crowded restaurant? “Congratulations, by the way.” She says instead of asking. “You’re going to be a big brother to six more little ones. We found out this morning- there’s more than four in there.”

"Holy crap, six." He laughed quietly. "I’m excited. That’s a lot. No wonder you look so tired, Toki. How about you tell me what you want and I’ll get your food to go. I’m half tempted to spit in the food of anyone I hear talking sh-... Stuff about you..."

Toki gave him a smile, and reached across the counter to pat his shoulder. “Don’t get into trouble with your husband now,” She gave him a chuckle. “Besides. We’re skeletons. We can’t spit. It’s just words anyway. Just let it go.” She tries to take that to heart as she hears more murmuring rising up behind them. It’s hard to pinpoint where, because there are just so many people and monsters inside of the bar and grill. “I, uh…” She flushes and glances down. She’s still not sure how to ask for a bunch of raw meat.

"Watch me." He huffed, before he smiled at her cheekily. "Don’t worry, you're a Gaster now. I know already." He winked at her then went to the back, humming a tune to himself.

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"Watch me." He huffed, before he smiled at her cheekily. "Don’t worry, you're a Gaster now. I know already." He winked at her then went to the back, humming a tune to himself.

Toki watched him go, and looked baffled. She glanced up at Papyrus. “… What does he already know?” She whispered to her husband.

"What you came for." He chuckled quietly. "He said it himself. You're a Gaster now. He knew exactly what you wanted.”

“Ohhhhh, is that so?” She crosses one set of arms, the other still holding the twins, and peers up at him lightly. Toki arches a brow. “Does that mean you eat an all raw diet sometimes since you’re a Gaster?” She wiggles a brow, showing that she doesn’t mean him any ill-will with her gentle gibe.

"I have my times." He winked at her. "I'm just exceptionally good at hiding those times."

She stares at him, her mouth opening just a smidge. It shuts rapidly, and she exhales. “… Huh. Honestly, I never knew. You know, I wouldn’t have judged you.” Found it a little gross, yes, but she wouldn’t have judged. She still found what she ate to be a little gross, but she valued being able to eat something and fueling her body over her own instinctive squeamish responses. “I suppose I don’t have to hide outside to eat then, do I…?"”

"Not at all. It'll be as easy as eating at the dinner table with the rest of us." He chuckled. "I simply hid it because you might not have appreciated the way I eat when I get in such a mood." He rubbed his chin at the thought.

Caeruleus returned swiftly. "Don’t you worry, Tokes. It’s normal for all of us. We'll all get a time in
our life when we just wanna unhinge our jaws and taste the fresh meat of Mother Nature." Cae clacked her head as he handed her a takeout container in a paper bag. "Love you both, enjoy!"

Toki peered at the paper bag, and could smell fresh meats in it. Her stomach rumbled thoughtfully, and she nodded. She glanced up at him. "I figured the same about you, you know. I'm not a pretty eater." She warns. Her eye lights drift to Caeruleus and she smiles to him. "Thanks. Love you too, little brother. I'll see you later, and pay you back for this," She wiggles the paper bag, "after I convince Papyrus to take me to the store."

"Fair enough~" He winked at her, and then went back to work. He sidled up seamlessly next to Grillby and began to work one of the grills, sending his lover back to the front to take another order.

Toki waved at him, and then worked on dragging her family outside.

"You know, I heard~"

And she shut the door behind them before she, or her family, could hear what the man had to say. Her mane ruffled and settled, and her wings buzzed in a soft bit of aggression, before she chuffed. She glanced to Papyrus, before hauling him off with their children in tow. "Do the kids eat like we do?" She asked lightly. They were even less beast than he was, since she had been full Skeleton at the time of their birth. She had to wonder if they did, or if she was going to have two grossed out children.

"Maybe."

"We'll see when they get older then." She muses. She relinquished her hold on the twins, and watched them race off again to head towards home. "Mm... It smells good and fresh. We do need to pay them back though. Think we can make a run to town tomorrow if you’re up for driving? I really need to get a car, but my wings don't make driving comfortable." She couldn't shift to readjust how she needed to. Passenger was hard enough. Her wings weren't small things.

"Yes, yes of course. A run to town would be healthy for the children as well." He agreed.

Toki nodded slowly and continued on, falling quiet as they walked towards the house. Her gaze wandered over the ice and slush, and she idly pondered how everyone had fared during the winter she'd been gone. She said not a word though and simply made for home. She'd need to make up a grocery list so they could get everything they needed while at the store.

Aliquam hummed as he kept an eye on the kids while they walked. "Will you want a steak once we’re home?" He asked as he kept his sweet, air-headed Toki on the beaten path, and away from potholes that could make her roll her ankle and trip if she wasn’t paying attention.

Pregnancy brain was a thing, and she suffered from it when she wasn’t given something strictly to focus on.

"Uh. Yes. That was partly the purpose in coming out." She chuckles softly, letting him direct her wandering path back in the right direction. "There's probably more than a couple in here, so we should be good to go regarding having some for lunch and some for dinner."

"I'll make the pups something else to eat. You can enjoy your meat and not worry about need in to get more yet."

"I'm pretty sure your brother sent some for you too." She points out. "So we can share a couple steaks if you're in the mood for them. It would do good for you to eat something and replenish your
magic after you donated today."

"If you’re offering, who am I to refuse, eh?" He laughed lightly.

She chuckled gently as they reached the house. The kids bounced up the stairs and waited for Papyrus or their mother to let them in. Toki opened the door and the motioned him in once the duo had burst past and made their way inside. "I certainly don't mind sharing. Also, maybe I can convince you to lend me your legendary knot slaying fingers later tonight to remove some of the knots forming in my muscles?"

"Consider them slain and gone." He announced with a grin as he slid into the house and took his shoes and coat off.

Toki chuckled, shutting the door behind her. Her coat was discarded onto the coat rack, and she eased out of her shoes, before glancing to the twins. “Ah- before you race off, you need to strip. You’re covered in mud. Clothes into the laundry, and into a fresh set, both of you.” She wiggled her fingers at the laundry room, and was rewarded with eager kids racing to do as she asked. Goodness, she loved when her kids behaved. With them off changing clothes, Toki made her way towards the kitchen to put most of the meat away and get her and Papyrus a steak apiece set on a plate.

Having multiple hands meant she could massage at her knots while she toiled, and she didn’t waste time in not doing so. “Thank you though, Pap. With how fast the litter is growing, it’s stressing the muscles in my ecto flesh. My round ligaments here,” she rubbed along her lower belly, “feel like they’re being shredded. It so sucks.” She wondered if they had a lotion that would help with the cramps, but figured probably not.

"Dinner and a massage- goodness it's like I'm married to a pampered queen." Aliquam teased as he sidled up behind her and cradled her stomach in his palms. The bones of his hands were warm, and his thumbs stroked over the swell gently.

That made her snort. “Well, I am a queen bee, so I suppose you are married to a queen in some ways.” Her mane ruffled at him playfully. She set them both up plates of food, and then washed her hands, content to let him cradle her belly. His hands felt nice with as warm as they were. His words, teasing though they were, made her think, and she hummed as she started to get to work on lunch for the twins. She really hoped she wasn’t putting too much on him by asking him for things during this… They weren’t keeping the pups, so really, he didn’t have to help her, or even indulge her. “You know… you don’t have to rub my muscles for me, or… anything like that if you don’t want to.” She felt like she needed to put that out there, so he knew he wasn’t required. He could tell her no- she wouldn’t be upset.

"Why do you make it sound like I don’t want to?" He asked with a soft hum as he nuzzled her neck.

“Mm, I don’t mean to.” She says by way of apology, and tilts her skull down with a soft purr as he nuzzles into the ruff of her neck. Her mane smooths out, laying flat instead of fluffing up, to give him better access to the back of her neck. Toki puts together a healthy selection of vegetables and fruits for the kids, along with a small sweet treat on the side for them to enjoy once they’d eaten the main part of their lunch. “I just don’t want you to feel obligated to do something if it’s not something you want to do. But, if you want to have your hands all over me, I’m certainly not going to complain now am I?” She gently wiggles her rump back against him and gives him a cheeky buzz.

"Definitely not~" He laughed heartily and gave her a few appreciative kisses to the back of her neck and skull as his hands continued their work slowly rubbing her belly. His fingers didn’t knead like Tenebris tended to do, but he massaged and rubbed, his thumbs working soothing circles on the muscles he could feel under his digits. He could feel the knots, and had to wonder what those
actually felt like.

“Indeed.” She chortles. She enjoys his rubs and his touch, and gets the twins lunch together by the time they’re bounding down the stairs in fresh clothes.

Honey and Skylar come to stand by their legs, and Skylar looks up at Papyrus curiously. “Daddy? Why are you rubbing Momma’s tummy like that?” To Skylar, the massage looked weird and foreign.

"Because Mommy is sore and I’m rubbing her stomach to make her feel better.” Aliquam explained easily.

“Oh.” He blinks, and tilts his head like a little sharp-toothed owl. “Why is Momma sore?”

“Well, we found out this morning that there are six babies inside of me instead of four.” She says. “So, they’re taking up more space than normal. And while they’re growing, they’re making my muscles stretch faster than they’re used to stretching, so it hurts.”

“Oh.” Honey answers in her brothers stead, and then leans up to poke between her Daddy’s fingers. “Silly uncles and aunties, grow slower so you don’t hurt Momma.” She chirps.

They’d explained as best they could to the twins that the babies, instead of being siblings, would be their younger aunts and uncles since they were going to be raised by their Grandpa and the King. They hadn’t understood, but, much like their mother, they had rolled with it.

“I don’t think it works like that, baby girl.” Toki laughs, and gently hands down a plate of food. “Here, sweetie. Why don’t you go turn on your learning cartoons and watch them while you eat?”

“But the movies are better,” Honey pouts, taking the food all the same.

Skylar makes a face and accepts his plate. “I like the learning cartoons, Honey. I wanna watch those. We can watch movies tomorrow.”

“Okaaaay.” She huffs. Both kids make their way to the living room, disappearing out of sight.

Toki watches them go, and leans into Papyrus with a soft sigh. “They’re growing so fast.” She frowns. “I’ve missed so much. Well… I’ve got the rest of their lives to see everything else. I’m not gonna miss anything else.” She vows.

"They'll have you all the while, don’t you worry." He assured her with a soft clacking to her head.

Toki hums and nods. She shifts, and pets his fingers gently. "Alright. Lets go eat while the kids are distracted for a little bit. We can cuddle and relax on the couch when we’re done. Speaking of, I wonder if we should get another couch." One, she muses silently to herself as she offers him his plate, that they could cuddle on with her wings without her getting crushed.

"Maybe... though perhaps once we have settled down after everything that’s soon to come, yes?” He agreed, giving a small nod as he took the plate of steak.

She nods, and moves away from him to take her plate of steak to the table. She seats herself after collecting some napkins to share with her husband. “That sounds just fine. I’m not up to really furniture looking anyways. Though, it would be good to know if we’d fit cuddling while I’m pregnant. You know, for future times.” She gives him a teasing smile, and flicks her wings as she regards her steak lightly, wondering if it really wouldn’t bother him how she ate her raw meats.

"Oh yeah, of course.” He nodded as he settled down as well, tucking his cane at his hip before he
looked to Toki, giving her a gentle 'go ahead' nod.

She hummed, and leaned down a bit. Her fingers took the edge of the steak, and she held it up to her mouth, her teeth splaying open like the legs on a crab. Toki’s pupils slid to slits as she watched him, and she set into the steak with a subsonic rumble in her chest.

He noticed her eyes turn to slits but as she delved into her meat, Aliquam simply smiled, happy she felt that this wasn't something to hide from him.

Once she was into hers a fair amount, he enjoyed his own simply enough.

He had started with small bites, but once the soft meat's size was reduced to a much smaller amount in his hand, he brought his head back a little and allowed himself to finish it in a final, large bite.

Toki took a little longer with hers, since she didn’t have teeth like his. She had molars yes, in the very back of her mouth for chewing, but her teeth mostly consisted of the crocodile like front set, and they weren’t built for ripping and tearing. As a result, Toki’s teeth and a good portion of her face were a mess by the time she was done, and she took a long moment to clean her fingers with a napkin. Then, Toki splayed her teeth and summoned her tongue to clean between each fang.

Her slit eye lights watched him the whole while, and seemed to be regarding him thoughtfully.

He had cleaned up a lot faster but once he was done, he simply smiled and offered her a toothpick, setting it on the table for when she wanted it.

Her gaze settled on the toothpick. Beast was puzzled by it. She knew what it was used for, having seen it used in memories, but she didn't know why it was given to them. Toki did know, however, and as her eye lights widened a bit more, she scooped it up and made use of it as best she could without biting through it by accident.

Her face still needed a scrub with a wet cloth, but it wasn't as bad without the mess between her teeth.

As she took the toothpick, Aliquam gave a soft 'Nyeh heh heh heh' and got up to go to the kitchen sink and dampen a cloth for her. "Well my love, don’t you feel better now?"

"I do, very much." She agrees. Her stomach was fuller- not too full because that was bad, but just full enough to be good enough- and she'd eaten a meal with her husband. "I hope you do too. Er... What are you doing?" She asks curiously.

"You have much to learn for your post meal cleaning habits; I can tell mostly by the way you attempted grooming afterwards.” He gives a fond chuckle and motions to her messy face, verses his cleaner one. “As you might have seen, I've gotten in a bit more practice with utilizing the best of both worlds, so I can help you reach a middle ground for the next time we eat.”

She hummed and tilted her head as she watched him. Her sockets half lidded as she regarded him and got up to take the wet cloth from him so she could begin cleaning her teeth. "I'm usually better at it, but I've been spending my time hiding how I eat and what I've been eating from everyone I know.” She lifted a brow at him lightly and wiggled it playfully.

He chuckled at the wiggle of her brow and he waggled his in return. "So long hiding it, you got rusty~" He teased.

She snorts lightly. “Roundabouts that, yes. I’m also a bit messier of an eater than you are, my love.” She hums. “My teeth aren’t designed for clean eating, so it’s a bit of a chore any time I eat anything
without silverware. And raw food… is not really silverware stuff.” Not only was it nearly impossible
to cut raw meat with a butter knife, but it just felt… weird. She’d embraced this habit for so long with
Tenne that eating raw things any different felt strange.

It doesn’t take her long to clean her teeth with the cloth though, and floss between them to make sure
she has everything out. Once she’s got her fangs pearly white again, Toki flared a couple of her teeth
and wiggled them at Papyrus. “Did you know that Tenne found the flexibility in my teeth
fascinating? He couldn’t figure out how I could drink with them. I still don’t know how I drink with
them, but I manage.”

"I suggest cutting it up a little next time so the bites are smaller and easier to tear apart." He
suggested. "You don’t have teeth meant to tear, so it would assist rather well simply to take bites of
food that are already small enough to swallow." He gave her a soft peck on the cheek. "Your teeth
are very interesting. I’m not sure what I could imagine comparing it to, if I’m honest.”

“That’s what I usually do, but, well… I’ve been eating outside, and toting out silverware every night
is harder.” She blinks and smooches him back. “They might not be meant to tear, but they can lock
in place and tear. I have done it before. It’s just… hard.” She could tear out someone’s throat just
fine. What they lacked in tearing power, they made up for in cutting power, and she could shred
through simple meat quite easily. “But yeah- I don’t even know what to compare them to. They’re
just weird teeth.” She settles them in their normal positions again, and hums at him. “Well, would
you like to go join the kids and relax a bit?”

"Only if I’ll have my beautiful wife at my side~" He hummed happily, wrapping an arm around her
and giving her a soft squeeze. "I can't imagine savoring anything less.” He gave her a few more
sweet kisses before he let her go, making sure all was where it should be before he started towards
the sound of the pups. He wondered if they were pulling all sorts of mischief.

Toki smiled and joined him in the living room. Her instinctual response however, escaped her. “At
your side? But what if I want to be in your lap?” She gives him a playful pout. She hadn’t actually
done anything like that since she’d gotten home, for fear of hurting his leg. Toki guided them to the
couch, and settled down contently with him on one side, watching as their kids ate and watched the
cartoon intently.

"See, now that's even better~" He hummed happily, sitting down and getting comfy before pulling
her into his lap.

Toki hummed and draped across her husband’s lap. She was a little hesitant, but she held still so she
didn’t hurt him, and let her wings drape over his arm as she cuddled sideways into his lap. She
couldn’t sit with her chest flush to his easily anymore, so sideways had to work. She hummed, and
fluffed her mane as she nuzzled her skull onto his chest. “Much better. If I’m too heavy though,
lemme know.”

"You? Heavy? Hardly.”

“I don’t know,” She gives him a bemused look, “I recall you asking if I had gained weight once,
before nearly dropping me when you fainted.” It had been from Magi-Drain, of course, but that
didn’t mean she wasn’t going to tease him for the rest of forever.

"I was weaker back then. I put a lot of work to up my strength after everything that happened.”

Which was sad in a way, the way he put it made it sound like he didn't think he was strong enough
after she disappeared into the void, so he had to train himself to improve so he didn’t lose anyone
else.
It was very sad, considering he wasn't even on active duty anymore and his armor was discarded in the closet. Toki hesitated, and then rubbed her hand over his knee. "You were never weak." She tells him gently. "You were strong. Stronger than me most days. Maybe not in magic, but there's something called a strength of heart... And Papyrus, you were the source of my strength when I needed it." She nuzzles him and peers up at him. "Love...? Why did you stop being a Guard? I know patrols would be hard for you, but there are other duties you could have done. Training, administrative duties... Your organizational skills outclass anyone I've ever met. The dispatch office is always a madhouse of papers everywhere, and it used to drive you nuts."

Her words of strength had him smiling lightly, but upon the questions of his reason for leaving the royal guard, his expression slowly fell. "I was retired. After... After losing you, I had to recover from my injuries and go through rehabilitation to get used to my prosthetic. That took at least two months. After that, I don't think I have had the will to continue; I simply wanted to protect your greatest gift to me... I felt like that was all I was capable of doing, if even that..."

Toki sighed softly through her nasal cavity as she listened to his words, and then leaned gently up to nuzzle his face. "I understand." She says softly. "I... I'm sorry I brought it up. Thank you for telling me though." Her hand rubs his knee again, and she hums softly. "I love you. Together, the both of us will keep getting better, okay? Neither of us is okay after what's happened." She might have had more time to cope, but it left it’s lasting scars on her. Literally, in her soul’s case. "But, we can get better together. As better as we can get."

"As long as I have you right by my side, I'm willing to endure it all, thick and thin, no matter how long it takes." He gave her a nuzzle in return, and then kissed her head. "We will recover together."

"Together." She promises warmly, and rubs her fingers over his. Her bare fingers ghost over his ring, and her face slides towards a frown. "I need to get a new ring." She says softly. "Between the Void and what it did to me, it was lost. But I want the world to know I'm still yours." Even after everything, she had never stopped loving him. She was still his, even if she did have affections for another male. They didn't run as deep as they did for Papyrus.

He quietly hummed in thought, and then he smiled lightly, having gotten an idea. "Does it have to be a ring?"

"Well no." She blinks. "So long as it's not going to tangle in my joints, or my mane won't eat it, anything would work so long as it shows I'm yours, really."

That stirred a chuckle from him, before he gave her an assuring nod. "Then what I have in mind is going to be perfect."

"Oh?" She leaned against his chest and propped her chin on one of her many palms. "What do you have in mind?" She inquired curiously.

"It's long, it's soft, and it's very warm. And better yet it, won't get swallowed up in your mane."

"If you’d said it’s long and hard and very warm, I’d have been very amused given where I’m sitting." She waggled her brows at him, unable to resist the dirty joke while their kids were distracted. "Hm... I don’t know what it could be."

He chuckled lightly and gave her a squeeze. "You can keep guessing I suppose~"

“But I hate to be kept guessing.” She pouts, and gives him her best puppy eyes, complete with fluffing her mane and sinking her neck into it like a fluffy turtle. Her eye lights rounded out, and she
gives him the exact sort of puppy face she used to give Tenne, wondering if it would work on Papyrus too. "Wont you please tell me?"

"Honey definitely got that from you..." He heckled her teasingly, before he shook his head. "Nope~"

“So stingy!” She draped against him with a soft sigh. “Fine. I’ll wait and see then.”

Sobek, about that time, hopped over the couch and glared at the both of them, before sharply biting at Papyrus to tell him to move. He wanted that spot, and the two legs were lower on the pecking order. They might be bigger, but they need to move because he said so.

Toki frowned and swatted at him gently. “Sobek, no. Biting is bad.” She scolds, sitting up slightly to shoo him off.

He hissed at her and fluffed his tiny ruff of feathers.

Toki’s mane ruffled up instinctively, and she gave a warning buzz. “Sobek.” She says, voice dropping from its happy-neutral tone to a sharper tone.

"I’ll put you back in the birdcage, Sobek.” He warned. "Do not test me.”

Sobek hissed, and flared his feathers higher. The bird snarled at them both.

Toki’s beast rumbled a subsonic sound through her chest, vibrating the noise through her husband’s chest from her shoulder. Her eyes narrowed to a slit, and her teeth parted. Toki snarled right back at him, making her children pause in what they were doing.

The bird paused at the noise, and his feathers flattened. He cocked his head, and then scuttled away with a spooked squawk when she snarled again.

Toki huffed, and ruffled her mane, satisfied at her dominance.

Aliquam watched with surprise, before he chuckled. "Well done, way to send him running.” He praised lightly.

“IT’s about dominance with beast types.” She chuffs, and nuzzles up into Aliquam as the twins return to their television show. “I’m not going to submit to him, and neither is my beast. She’s an alpha.”

"I hope she and Father get along then..." He mentioned with light concern.

Toki glanced at him with a soft hum. “It’s not him that my beast has issues with.” She gives an amused snort. “She intimidated the Asgore of the other world. It… confuses her that the one here doesn’t act like the one from there. She wants to fix it, which I’m avoiding.” Toki blinks slowly. “She’s also not sure where you stand in the pecking order.” She tells him honestly. “You keep your inner beast so tightly chained that it’s hard for her to get a read on him.”

"That’s definitely concerning. If she shows too rough a front towards Asgore, it may upset Father..." He sighed, before he chuckled gently. "You know, any other time I would have thought that is a good thing.” He laughed.

“He’s going to need to establish that he’s not going to be intimidated.” Toki nods. “She doesn’t handle logic like we do very well, sadly. But… yeah, any other time it would be a good thing, but not with her.” She nuzzles him and laughs gently. “Perhaps sometime we can let them meet and they can hash things out. She’s not an aggressive creature, but she gets defensive when she’s uncertain.” It also didn’t help that Toki figured out why she was so anxious- the beast knew they were pregnant...
the whole time.

He sighed quietly and gave a nod as well. "Once things have settled down, I suppose." He spoke as he gave her a squeeze. "I bet she is just as beautiful as you are." He purred softer as he nuzzled her again.

She began to make a soft sound, between a buzz and a purr, and nuzzled into him with a happy noise. “Good. And I don’t really know- she’s… interesting.”

"I bet she is." He chuckled, nuzzling her cheek before he gave a soft coo. "You're an interesting woman, of course your beast would be interesting in the same."

She snorts and goes limp against him. “I never used to be interesting. I just farmed my bees, and wrote my books, and lived a simple, homely life out in the middle of nowhere.” She smiled up at him. “But becoming interesting got me you and our twins, so I think I can live with it.”

"Good. I wouldn’t have it any other way.” He gave her a grin to challenge his brother's as he gave her another squeeze.

She squeaked at the next squeeze, and laughed. “You’re going to squeeze the litter out of me at this rate.” She nudges his ribs gently, and then turns to lace all four arms around his neck and hug him close. “Mmm… It feels nice to just get to hold you, you know that?”

"It feels wonderful being held, especially by you, of all the souls I'd let get away with it.” He purred. Toki chuckled. “You’d have enjoyed my beast frame. I was around seven-foot tall- I could have really, legitimately held you then. I carried Tenne several times to prove that flying was faster than running.” She nuzzles her nasal ridge to his. “I love you.”

"I love you too, Toki, and I would have loved to see that.” He nuzzled his head to hers, a smile on his face. "You were that much closer into my kissing range~”

"Very true. But, I wouldn't have fit in your lap half as well." She kissed him gently, and hummed softly. "I like being smaller. It means I can cuddle even closer. If I were bigger, I couldn't sit like I am."

"I suppose that's true." He hummed in agreement. "It would indeed be a bit of an inconvenience when it came to cuddling..."

"A bit." She nods. It had worked there with Tenne because he was still much larger, but... Not with Papyrus. She was the right height for Papyrus cuddles. "But I'm just me size, so we're good.""And that there is the best size you can be." Pap's hands smoothed over Toki's stomach and he smiled into her shoulder. "I'll be honest... I can never get over how perfect you look when you're pregnant~” He purred as he looked up at her.

That had not been what she'd been expecting to hear. Toki flushed a bright green, and smiled at him as her breath hitched and her soul thundered with excitement in her chest. "Well, I suppose I do have that pregnancy glow about me." She purrs, meaning the green glow of her middle peeking out from under her shirt. She wasn't full where she should be, but she was at a functioning point. She felt better than earlier, surely, with the magic working it's way through her.

"Glowing indeed~ A sight to behold if naught else." He purred while sneaking some kisses to her neck.
Her mane settled flat to let him have access to her neck, and she couldn't stop the soft purr that rolled from her. Her sockets half lidded, and Toki hummed softly. "Makes you wish you could see more of the sights, doesn't it?" She purrs to him gently, her gaze sliding to their oblivious children. Too bad they weren't alone- but such was the life of a parent.

"Once it is a more appropriate time, I will see about resolving it." He purred in a deeper tone, his eye lights flashing orange as he rumbled softly to her.

"I'd like that." She chuckled, though her soul thrumped eagerly at the idea. Her mind paused though, and her expression grew thoughtful and then a little hesitant and severely self-conscious as Toki was prone to being. "Are you sure you want to though?" She asked. "I mean..." They hadn't since she had returned, especially with everything going on. She wasn't sure if her being pregnant with another male's children would put him off of exploring her new body or not. It was one thing to cuddle and touch her like this- but that kind of touch, exploring their bodies once more, was a whole different sort of thing.

While in truth it would put Aliquam off a little, Toki was still his wife and he wasn't going to stop loving her for this. She was his queen bee, and as a soldier bee, it was his duty to remind her that she's worth far too much to him simply to stop loving her because of what happened. "I'm positive." He reaffirmed gently.
Chapter 120

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: What do you know, another continuation chapter. Sometimes our writing just flows so good that it just keeps going. And going and going and going. XD more than it should. Also over 900k words on TOTU as a whole :) Makes me very happy.

It was only 6pm, but being it was February, it was understandable that it would be dark early in the day. One couldn’t tell the time if they were to glance outside, but one look at the clock could tell the difference.

The children couldn’t tell the difference between tuckering out at six at night, or in a few more hours when it was actually bedtime for them. Not that Aliquam was going to complain. Pups needed their sleep after all, with how hard they had been running and playing all day.

With Toki’s help, Honey and Skylar had been put to bed with both of their summons by their side. That gave them the night.

And utilize it they did.

Toki started their evening by guiding him to the bedroom, and then stripping bare once she’d closed up the bedroom. She didn’t bother with clothes of any kind- she wanted him to see her for all she was in all of her glory. Or lack there of.

She was a little shy, but strove to not be. He’d seen it all before, it just looked different. Her ribs were thicker, and there were less of them now. They had fused, into a strange sort of rib cage. It was sturdier looking, all the same, but it would be foreign to him. Toki crawled onto the bed, and got herself situated on her side to wait for Papyrus to undress.

“Here is all of me.” She says gently to him. “I offer all of me… for all of you.”

Foreign yes, but familiar in the same, it was almost like the shields that his family wore upon their chest.

Shedding to wear only his boxers, Aliquam came to the bed and set his cane aside, before he brought his hands up to caress her cheeks. "You're so beautiful... I bet that old ghost got jealous that I had such a perfect, beautiful wife." He chuckled, before he slowly let her go long enough to move to his end of the bed.

He sat down and sighed, before he smiled and turned to her. "Get comfy... I'm going to be here for a while. I want nothing tonight but all the time I can to have a look at my wife." He cooed to her.

Toki blushed, and got comfortable as she was asked. “I want to look at you too.” She says shyly, and brushes her fingers against his hip. She cuddles closer, and smiles to him. “But… I’m all yours, from now until the kids wake up tomorrow.” As she breathes, her belly shifts, and she exhales gently so she can cuddle up to him.

"Lucky me." He cooed happily as he rested his hands on her body. "So beautiful, I'm so lucky to have you."
Toki purred, and slid her fingers over his ribs. “I think, my love, I’m lucky to have you. I’ve missed you.” She was bare, but he was not, and she respected his boundaries as much as she was able. Her hands still touched along his boxers, nothing sexual however. They simply pressed and prodded, and gently explored around his prosthetic with a gentle touch. “Hey, Pap…? Can I see you?” She rubs her fingers over the hem of his boxers, on the side that hid his prosthetic from her.

He looked to her hand, and then he nodded slowly, slowly moving off the bed again to remove his boxers. Not like there was much to see, though it was obvious where the prosthetic began on his hip. It was also clear he was uneasy as he had kept a hand on it as he sat down again.

Once he sat back down, Toki very gently ran her fingers over his, and coaxed them away from the prosthetic bone. It was very obvious indeed. The fake bone was an off white color, like most true bones were. Papyrus’ bones, now that she saw it side by side with another type of bone, was tinted the same orange hue as his magic. Toki scooted down in the bed, aware of him probably watching her, and leaned down to press tender kisses from where the prosthetic began along his femur, and up into his actual pelvis. He’d never healed from where the gun had blown it out- and they’d just had to replace it. “It’s still you.” She says softly. “Even if it looks different and feels different. I still love each and every inch of you. You’re so brave, Pap, so brave, to have dealt with this while being a single dad… I’m proud of you.”

He smiled a little and stroked her head where it rested at his hip. "I would do anything for my family... I would survive the worst to protect them." He spoke quietly.

“You and I have survived a lot of horrible things.” She says quietly, and gently touches the prosthetic. It’s warm under her fingers, but it’s a sort of off warm that feels slightly abnormal to her. She still gives him a lot of gentle affection, while he strokes her skull. Her skull was different too. He was used to horns that went straight back, like a dragon. Now she had curling horns, much like the lower horns on her Hell Hornets. “But, we always make it through no matter how it changes us.”

"That's right..." He nodded slowly, smiling at her words as she spoke them. "We are survivors..."

“We survived.” She says, and slowly crawls right back up to him. Her hand strokes his hip again, before Toki gets comfortable and offers her body to him to explore, while she simply touched him and soaked in his essence and the feel of him.

Her warmth soothed his soul and it was not long before Aliquam returned to his caressing of Toki’s body, cooing words of loving praise as he did. He could do this for hours...

There was a lot for him to explore. From the differences in her ribs, to the mane of hair that stretched from the top of her skull, down her neck and around it in a thick, fluffy green mane. Even her legs were different. The bones were thicker, made of a denser material than they were before. Her bones were stronger now, more like his, instead of the fragile bone that broke so easily. Her dual arms were the subject of interest too. The primary set were tough and strong, built to handle much more than her secondary. They were strong yet dainty looking. Her secondary set looked fragile, like they could be snapped and broken between his larger hands. Of course, Toki’s wings were of interest too, but she couldn’t lay on her front to let him look at those, so she’d have to settle on her side when he was done with her front.

Toki hummed softly, and returned his loving praise as she basked in his touch and let him explore, touching over her bones and exploring new places. She just simply touched and hooked her fingers gently into his ribs, holding onto him with a need to never let him go. Her secondary hands folded over the swell of her belly, fragile fingers stroking the warm swell as she stared up at Papyrus with nothing but love in her eye lights.
She was home—she was home and with him and though it hurt in so many ways to be taken from her second home… She was so glad to be home. She’d wanted to go home for so long. Sometimes she felt like she’d blink, and she’d be torn away again and cast adrift once more.

Toki blinked slowly, feeling moisture gathering in the corners of her sockets. Emotions made her nonexistent throat thick, and she simply hummed as she held him a little more firmly.

He held her as he felt her grip tighten and he cooed sweetly before giving her a gentler squeeze. "I love you, Toki... I always will... You're my darling wife. I would do anything to ensure you thrived..."

"And I would for you too, Pap." Toki nuzzled him gently, and sighed into his touch. "Pap... Sometimes, I'm afraid I'm going to close my eyes, and when I open them again, I'll be taken away again." Her fingers tightened more, and she forced them to relax, to gently stroke his ribs again. "I don't want to be taken away again Pap."

"And you won't be... I won't let anyone steal you from your home. Not again." He murmured.

"You'd fight the Void for me?" She asks, her eye lights flicking up to his face. Her sockets water more again, and she sucks in a heavy breath. "Tell it no?"

"It would not know mercy if it dared threaten to take you away again." He growled, before he tilted her chin up and gently kissed her tears away. "No would be the first of many things I would have to say."

"You're such a brave fool." She presses her face to his and just gently breathes him in. "The void humors me and my sass, but I don't know how well it would take to a lecture from you." She pictured it a lot like ‘ant meet boot’ and she vowed to never let them meet. "I love you. You're my brave fool, and I love you so, so much... I just... need your touch. I want to hold you, and be held and just..." She half glomped him and wrapped around him. "Mine." She makes a soft sound deep in her chest. "I'm yours, you're mine, and nothing is going to tear us apart again."

He rumbled loudly as he pulled her so her body was flush to his and he gave her a loving kiss.

She met his kiss deeply, almost desperately, and she tucked as close to him as she could. She was thankful that he had no flesh, and that he was made of bones. The swell of her belly fit snug in the gap between his boxers and the bottom of his rib cage. Toki let out a soft sound, a queen bee’s song for her beloved, and held him close as her soul shone bright in her ribs.

He smiled at the combined sensory of her song and her soul, and he hummed quietly as his soul was summoned in the same. It a light to offer to her, if naught an offer to give her what she might have missed in her time in the other world.

Toki spotted the orange glow of his soul coming through for her, and she sucked in a soft breath. She hesitated, her fingers twitching. She longed to touch him, to hold him, to feel him against her soul… Toki wasn’t sure if he would, so she did the only thing she could do. She offered her soul, letting it slide from her chest. She didn’t send it far- for fear of turning to goop in his arms- but she let it brush his chest in an offering as she gently slid a hand between them to brush her fingers to his soul. “It’s been so long since I’ve gotten to feel my sun… You’re so warm,” She whispers.

He shivered and sighed quietly at the feeling of her hand against his soul. "You feel wonderful... your touch is kind and I’d trust nothing less than you, my love.” He purred happily.

She smiles at him, and cuddles her head against his shoulder. “I trust you too, Pap.” She whispers
softly. “You can touch me too, if you want.” She swiped her thumb gently against his soul, stroking over the flat of it. She saw some marred marks, like he’d almost cracked in some places, but he’d managed to hold together. He was so strong - so very, very strong. She stroked those spots so gently, and cuddled his being to her chest, her magic enveloping his soul in warmth. It would awash his body in the feel of her magic, making him feel like he was bathed in her. It was her favorite thing she’d learned about soul merges in her time with Tenne.

She said he was her sun, and yet the heat that spread through his body had him feeling like he was covered in liquid sunshine. He trembled in excitement as he brought a hand to carefully cup her soul, examining it with the utmost delicacy as he remembered to keep it close to her body. "So beautiful... So full of life..." He purred quietly.

Her magic was fire and could bring catastrophic destruction in its wake. But for her husband, her soul's true life mate, it was a gentle heat, like a campfire, soothing and warm and reassuring. It was warmth and life and light, and it brought with it a sensation to soothe any aches his hip might have. Toki cradled his soul, and shivered as he held hers. Her wings moved behind her, their gossamer surfaces shining and catching the light. Her soul bore scars, mostly 'new' to him. The scar from her being torn from her home world had sealed over, and was a lighter green on the massive soul. Hans' scar was healing visibly, finally progressing. Her original scars from the fire were gone, sealed away and covered over by a new one - being forcibly torn from her second family. She was worn and scarred and she shone bright. She knew in the many lifetimes to come she would carry scar after scar as she suffered loss after loss. She would wear them with pride.

"So beautiful.” He repeated for the sake of emphasis as he kissed her again.

Toki met his kiss, and let it linger as just rested against his kiss. "I love you." She tells him firmly. "I love you so, so much. I'm going to love you now, and I'm going to love you in my next life too... I never have and never will stop loving you, my brave, brave Papyrus."

"Sounds good to me." He nuzzled his face to hers and hummed happily. "I feel like I could lay like this forever... nothing would be able to make me let you go."

Almost as if fate punishing him for jinxing it, there was then a savage roar from outside that had him jolting as he shot upright, holding Toki tight to his chest as his soul gave an anxious pulse.

Her hand nearly reflexively squeezed his soul when the roar sounded out and she was forced upright by Papyrus jerking upright. She grunted, her belly pinching against his hip. That roar was familiar though, and it had her scrambling to gently give his soul back, and take her own back in turn. Once she is in no danger of melting, Toki scuttles off the bed and grabs her robe for the sake of decency.

"That's Papa." She says. She knew Tenne's roar, and while younger, he roared just like Tenebris. Grabbing his pants, Aliquam pulled them on fast and grabbed his cane, making his way to the window. He tried to see what was going on outside, though with it being dark, it wasn't immediately obvious what was happening. "Come on." He growled, starting for the stairs.

Toki was ahead of him, her body not hindered by a limp in her gait. The swell in her belly didn’t slow her, but she did stop to gently close the twins door and tell them to stay inside when one of them peeked it open to come out and see what was going on. Once she’d secured the children inside, Toki bypassed the stairs, and used her wings to slow her fall as she jumped the banister.

Landing like a feather, Toki slid to her shoes, and kicked her husband’s over to him as he reached the bottom over the stairs. That done, Toki headed for the stairs, her robe being cinched shut with a rope that left the swell of her belly very visible. It kept her modesty hidden as she opened the front door though, and went to the porch while Papyrus caught up.
Tenebris was standing now on the porch with a young man hanging from his grip like a terrified dog, trying so hard to shrink into the jacket that Tenebris had a firm grasp on. "Good evening, Tokiko." Tenebris would greet with a deep, growling tone, a tell tale sign he was pissed.

Toki paused, noting his tone as she stepped outside. She glanced at the young man- the son of one of the workers, she thought- and then behind him. On the wall… Well, she hadn’t had to see such colorful language since before Cruelty had gone from slander, to outright attacks. “Papa.” She greets gently. “How about you set the boy down before he pees himself, and we both call it a night, hm? I’m sure he’s learned his lesson about tagging peoples houses with…”

Well, she wasn’t going to say that out loud. She didn’t really want to call herself a whoring ‘c’ word, or blatantly blurt that she was carrying a bastard baby. Well, she was, but… All the same, Toki didn’t want to verbally repeat the colorful words painting the brick siding of her house.

"I don’t think so." He hissed. "Maybe we can make agreement with this boy..." He growled, before lifting the boy a little higher. "He's going to come back tomorrow morning, and he's going to clean every inch of his 'work' off your home." His snarl reverberated through his chest. "How does that sound?" He then spoke to the boy, leering to the boy as his pupils thinned.

Toki padded closer as the older teen let out a whimper. She reached up, and put her hands on Tenebris' arm. "Papa." She says softly. "He's just a boy. He's probably dealing with shit at home and venting it on the easiest target he has access to. Let him go." Her fingers gently pet his arm, trying to relax his muscles. Her mane ruffles, and Toki focuses her pheromones, aiming to soothe the irked beast before her. "I told you people would say and do things, Papa. You just have to let them go, okay? It's not worth getting angry over."

"Can't make me do shit anyway." The boy sniffed. "You or the slut." He glared at her with frightened, watery eyes.

The scent hit Tenebris quickly and he chuffed, before he slowly lowered the boy to his feet. "I'm tired of hearing this slander... I was coming over to tell you that he's going to make it clear to the public just what's going on." He murmured before he slumped down and rested his head on hers. "I'm tired of hearing so many people say such poor things about you, my dear..."

The boy skittered off, and Toki let him dash into the dark to escape back to where he and his family were staying. As Tenebris draped on her, Toki sighed and patted his head. "Asgore... He knows of how severe the words are. He's going to address everyone here, and clear the rumors."

Her gaze slid over to Papyrus, looming in the doorway with only his eye lights visible, and her green eye lights held a tired weight to them. It appeared the mockery had caught up to someone. "Isn't that right, Papyrus?"

Aliquam didn’t answer, simply came over and wrapped his arms around her with a small breath of air.

Tenebris had leaned back when his son came forward. "Asgore... He knows of how severe the words are. He's going to address everyone here, and clear the rumors."

Toki sighed and leaned back into Papyrus, her night robe pulling tighter around her swell. “I see.” She glances away and gently sighs. “He might as well wait until the interviews next week, or he’s just going to have to say it twice.” Her hands slide down to her middle, and her wings wilt down a little against her back. She looks up at some of the derogatory things being said, and sighs through her nasal cavity. “Though… Some part of me feels that some of these things… are right. About me.”
"They’re not.” Aliquam spoke sternly. "Don’t you dare think that you deserve this." He growled. "You're nothing like they claim. You're the most wonderful woman that any of us could hope to meet."

“How can I not?” She says quietly. “Contrary to belief, sometimes I can have a very, very poor self image of myself despite how wonderful you think I am… And this is just voicing what I’ve been thinking about myself for a while now.” Toki sighed. “All the same… it’s over. I’ll clean it off tomorrow when the sun is up and I can see what I’m doing, okay?”

"The boy is going to return to do it. He wouldn't want to test a beast's patience like that..." Tenebris growled quietly.

“The chances of him coming back are slim. He’s a ruffled teen, and he got caught.” She shakes her head with a sigh, and reaches out to pat the space where he should have a nose. She uses her smaller hand, so it’s more like a soft ‘boop’ than a pat. Toki upped her calming pheromones, letting them wash over both men full bore at close range. “Calm down, you ruffled old man. It’s paint- it’ll wash off in the morning, and it’ll give me some exercise so I don’t get fat and lazy without my hives to keep me active.”

Tenebris snuffed quietly at the boop, before he sighed and sagged slightly at the sweet smell of her pheromones.

Aliquam was less visibly effected even though he was at a closer range, but he loosened his grip on her as he began to purr quietly.

As both men began to drape against her, Toki sighed. At least she had something she could do to calm them. “Come on, boys.” She said slowly, soothingly, her voice low and steady. “Let’s go inside. Papa? Did you need some tea to calm down, or do you want to go home and cuddle with Asgore?” She knew he might need some time with pack since there was a metaphorical ‘threat’ to the pack, and she was willing to accommodate him if he needed to spend some time with Aliquam and her.

"Mmm... Perhaps a few moments would be alright..." The older beast chuffed slowly, eyes looking a little glazed. "I'd love to see the pups again. Are you doing well in magic levels?” He asked.

“I’m not full.” She says, “But I wasn’t full when you and Pap gave your donation earlier today. You give any more, and you’ll probably drop.” The only one who probably had enough magic to give a donation was Asgore- maybe Grillby- and she wasn’t going to ask either of them for magic. That was just... awkward. Yeah, these were Asgore’s kids too, but you didn’t just ask the king of all monsters for magic. “I’ll survive without looking like a glowstick, I promise.” She paused though, and hummed. “I have exactly zero clothes on under my robe, Papa. I need some pants on at least before I open this robe and let you see the pups. I mean, yeah, you’ve seen everything there is to see, but that doesn’t mean I need to strut around in the buff. What would people think?” She jokes dryly.

"Let’s go inside then." Aliquam laughed quietly.

“Only Papy gets to see me in the buff.” Toki hums, and then turns to walk back inside. She waves them in, her pheromones beckoning them to follow her, and she heads for the kitchen and lets out a soft sigh. So much for her night simply cuddling up to her husband. She just wanted to spend a nice evening loving on him, and… Well, now she had company again. Toki sends one of her bees upstairs to fetch one of Aliquam’s pair of boxer’s for her to wear, and then sets to making a pot of soothing tea for the men who’d had their feathers ruffled.

Tenebris sat down in the living room while Aliquam accompanied Toki to the kitchen.
"Hey..." He spoke gently once they were alone. "Are you alright?" He asked.

"I’m okay,” Toki responds quietly, holding one of the tea pots in her hands. She cradles it to her belly, and begins to heat the water she’d put inside. “Well… That depends on what you mean by ‘alright’. Do you mean in general, or with everything that’s happened so far?”

"Everything... I was worried about you." He spoke as he came and put his hands on her shoulder, pressing gently.

Toki sighed softly, and leaned her shoulder into her husband’s hand. “In general, I’m tired and I’ve got usual pregnancy aches. With what happened tonight… The words hurt, I don’t deny it. They… They’re what I’ve been thinking about myself since I found out I was pregnant. I was working on getting past my thoughts until I found out there was something growing inside of me, but… Well, here’s living proof that I did, in fact, betray our marriage, even if it wasn’t fully by my choice.” It had felt like it was her choice at the time, at least mostly, and that’s what mattered. Toki hums a soft sound. “I know you say not to listen to the words, Pap, but it’s hard, because they were echoed inside my skull by my own thoughts. Just… not as vulgarly as the words painted on our house.”

He grit his teeth as he reached up and gently cradled her head in his palm. "Toki..." He whispered, before he shook his head. "You didn't betray our marriage; and I am the one to say this. I was not betrayed. Our marriage will still be as strong as it was in the beginning." He growled. "Nothing's going to change that, do you hear me?" He sounded like his father at that moment with how sure and passionate he spoke.

Toki blinked slowly, and then gave him a slow smile. He was just so… earnest. It was refreshing, and his warmth and honesty warmed her soul. He sounded so much like his father too- the apple sure didn’t fall far from the proverbial tree. “If you’re sure…” She says softly. “I hear you, Pap. I hear you. I love you.” She honestly was surprised that she’d needed to hear him say he wasn’t betrayed- she felt another small thing inside of her easing, and some part of her shoulders slumped. “…honestly didn’t know I needed to hear that from you.” She said softly. “But I did. Thank you.”

He reached up and cupped her cheek and he gave her cheek a long kiss, before he chuckled. "Never hesitate to ask me to tell you again. Alright, darling?” He hummed to her sweetly.

“Okay.” She nuzzled her cheek into his, and makes a soft purring sound. “Mmmrrr… Can you get me the bags of tea?” She spies a pair of boxers coming over their shoulders, and the bee carrying them looks bemused. “I need to put on some pants while the tea steeps.” The pot was hot, but not too hot.

He chuckled sweetly at that and he nodded. "I love you so much. You raid my boxers when you need pants” He laughed gently as he stepped away from her and collected the tea bags from the cabinet.

Toki set the kettle on the stove, letting it steam as she turned to the bee. She collected the pair of boxers- not recognizing the pair with their snowflake patterns on it. “Hey now, I didn’t raid it. My bees did. But… Boxers are unfairly more comfortable than panties are. Panties can pinch all the fun places.” She got them up, and got them adjusted around her as best she could. These ones had drawstrings, so she pulled them tighter, and tied it in a nice little bow. That done, she let her robe fall open. She didn’t have boobs, so it was just bones. But her pelvis was still kinda… private, even without parts down there. “Well, how do I look?” She inquired, giving him a warm smile as she struck a pose. She probably looked weird, four arms in her four-armed robe, pregnant belly sticking out over his boxers. Either weird or adorable.

"Like a fluffy, bony, pregnant, four-armed beast monster wearing a bathrobe and her husband's
boxers. I’ll tell you what, it's the most beautiful sight I could ever lay my damn eyes upon.” He brought the tea over and proceeded to assault Toki's head and face with more kisses.

That made her giggle quietly, and she fluffed her mane up under his onslaught of kisses. "You're too sweet, Pap. Anyone else would tell me I look weird." She smooches him gently all the same, and preps the tea with two hands while the other two gently twine around his ribs and pull him close for a cuddle. "I love you so much, Pap. I hope you don't mind if I steal your boxers from time to time. You're a bit large on me yet still, but I can enjoy them all the same. At least the ones with drawstrings."

"How about I get some special pairs just for you to nab at your leisure?" He offered.

"Yeahhh, but then they'd be my boxers, and not your boxers, and it's not the same." She gives him a pouty face. For one, his boxers smelled like his magic, and it was a soothing smell to her. Once the tea is done, Toki takes the three steaming mugs in hand and motions him back towards the living room.

"I'll keep that in mind." He chuckled gently. "I may not need that tea, my love... reminding you that my heart has and always will belong to you... I think that's all I needed to settle down..."

"Mmm, well, if you don't drink it, you know Papa will. Seriously, tea doesn't go to waste with him. He's like the tea version of a garbage disposal." She chuckles, and drags him gently with her to the main room all the same.

"He and Asgore BOTH, you know that." He laughed lightly, following her to the front room where Tenebris was waiting.

"Very true... That’s about all I needed too, by the way- just reaffirmation. Well... Cuddles would be nice too. We got interrupted earlier and I wasn't done being held, or holding you yet." She hums, and spots Tenebris on the couch. "I've got tea and pants, Papa. You wanted to see the babies before you went home for the night?" She wouldn't begrudge him the chance to see them since they would be his, even when she wanted to go upstairs and cuddle up instead.

The old man rose from the couch, and his eyes gleamed as he looked up at her. "But for a moment to say hello while I was here. You two look a little tired, so I'll be quick, out of your fur before you realize it."

Toki quirked a brow. "I can't drink a lot of tea. I was counting on you both to mostly drink my cups. So... At least take the tea with you when you go then." She snorts softly. The cups are set to the side, and she quirks a brow higher at him, before offering her middle for him to touch. "Well, we were cuddling before your roar startled us. Go ahead and take your time, Papa. I don't mind. They're yours- they need to learn their Daddy. Asgore too, whenever we can get his fluffy butt around." It didn't matter as much with human babies if the surrogates were there often for them, but based on what she'd felt carrying the twins, it was best if a bond was established early. Monster kids worked differently.

"I do apologize... I sort of saw red when I realized such profanity had been put on your home..." He murmured, moving to settle where he could be comfortable before he set his head on her stomach, his throat pressed against the soft skin of her belly as he began to purr loud and deeply against the flesh of her skin.

And, just like with her dearly beloved kittens cats, that tickled to high hell. Toki withstood it though, and just patted his head. She sighed. "I know. I tried to warn you what would happen, but apparently you've got a bit more of a temper than your age lets on. The paint can be removed, Papa. It's no
different than the graffiti I had to deal with that was aimed towards monsters when I was still human."

"It's personal now..." He growled lightly where he sat, his hands in his lap as he looked up at her. "You're my daughter, Toki... A Papa must keep his little girl safe... Even with a husband a Papa will worry."

She stood before him, looking down at him as he peered up at her from over the pudge of her pregnancy. "Really? So me being slandered and being called a whore among other things is more personal than being racially slurred against?" She chuffs, and pokes the space between his eyes, where his nose should be. "Good to know what your priorities are, Papa. I'm okay though, really. Please don't go hunt down that boy and scare him into cleaning the house." She knew beasts and beasts could be vindictive when one of the pack was perceived to have been hurt. She didn't even want to think about what 'hurting' a pregnant female in the pack would make them do.

"I don't even need to go back to do it." He smirked sharply, before he nuzzled her stomach, a hand coming to caress it. "The racism we supported each other as a whole, all of us Monsters. You only have so much... Their skepticism... it's destroying your reputation."

"Papa... My reputation with everyone else doesn't matter to me." She says gently, and makes a small sound as she feels the weight inside her shift just faintly at his touch. Probably a trick of the mind, but it was an odd sensation. "What matters most to me is how you think, and how Papy and Sans and Grillby, Asgore, Fuku, and everyone who truly knows me thinks. So long as none of you think badly of me, I'll be okay. Really. Their words hurt, but I've dealt with pain. I can handle it."

He shifted his head and he gave a sigh, his mouth opening a little as a gentle 'creeeuu' slipped from his lips, before he blinked soberly and he sat up. "I'm slipping..." He murmured, rubbing his face. "This might just end up reverting me if they are born quadruped..." He sighed.

"Reverting you?" She inquired, arching a brow curiously and wondering what he meant. "Do you mean your more beastly form?"

"Oh yes... A wolf, even after five hundred years as a man, is still a wolf. I have a beastly mate, and soon I will have children of my very nature. I cannot lie when I say you may see me with my crown grown out as an alpha would and rightfully should."

Toki blinks, and realizes he only knows that she would still be afraid of that form after the incident. "Oh. Well, that's fine. If you feel the need to take on that form, I frankly don't care. Tenne wore his 'crown' a lot, so I got used to it. Had to, crash course, so I didn't blow my cover." She hums. "I don't think Pap will care if you run around in that form either. Just don't bite, because I bite back now." She gives him a teasing wiggle of her teeth. "And it would be a shame for you to have to wear dentures again if you broke your teeth off, old man." She teased.

He looked up at her and gave a smile. "Oh Toki, I'm so lucky to call you my daughter." He purred, before he deadpanned as her words caught up with him. "Dentures? Me? Please. I grow my teeth back too fast to need those damn things." He snorted as he stood up and stretched a little. "Alright, I'm off. I hate to keep you two any longer than I already have." He pecked Toki's head, then patted Aliquan's shoulder, taking a moment to enjoy the tea that had been made for him before he took his leave. "Good night, you two~" He smiled at them, and then left their home.

Was he in a hurry because he left the stove on? Because Asgore would ask?

The world may never know.
Aliquam watched Tenebris go, and then he laughed gently and scooted closer to his wife. "Toki, let's go back to bed. I think Father realized I wanted to get back to what I was doing with my dear wife." He chuckled softly.

Toki snorted and nodded, gently leaning into Papyrus once Tenebris had left. "I think you're right." She leaned up to kiss his cheek, and then flexed her wings as she shed the robe and made for the stairs. She peeked back at him over her shoulder, now only sauntering up the stairs in his boxers, with her robe clutched in her hands. "Well, are you coming? We can leave the dishes for tomorrow."

"Oh you know I am." He laughed gently as he followed her. "Dishes indeed will wait, you on the other hand are overdue for more pampering." He cooed.

"I just want cuddles and to possibly wrap around you like a skeletal leech." She laughed gently. She beat him to the bedroom after peeking into the kids' room and making sure they had indeed fallen back asleep. Once she was in her room, Toki stripped fully, and then climbed onto the bed, stretching out with a languid purr. "Though, I'm definitely not going to turn down rubs and touches from you." Never, ever.

"Rubs, touches, and anything carnal you might want, my darling~" He dropped his pants, and more confidently, his boxers this time. Just as bare as she was, Papyrus climbed into bed with her, laying his form beside her before he pulled her into a gentle kiss, a smile making it a little tricky to maintain.

"Anything carnal hm?" Her sockets half lidded at him as she spoke, her teeth gently moving against him as she kissed him back. She hadn't expected to get to lay with him in his bare bones, since he had been so why about showing her what was under them... But she was glad he was comfortable enough to lay with her. Toki hummed gently, rolling over to face him. Her belly brushed his pelvis before she scooted up, and the soft flesh was replaced with gentle bone. "Mmm... I could think of some things we could do..."

"Just say the words... and I will do anything you ask of me." He wrapped his arms around her before nuzzling her neck.

"Anything I want, huh? That's awfully tempting..." She welcomed him close, and rumbled warmly, happily. "But... What if I want to know what you'd rather do?" Her mane ruffles, covering his face in silky green fur.

"Then I'll answer you." He purred, reaching up to cup her cheeks. "I... I'd like to meet her... Your beast."

That surprised her greatly. She blinked her sockets open wide and stared at him for a moment, before beaming. "I could do that. She's been very eager to meet you. Is there anything you want to know before I bring her out?"

"Mmh... How slow should I start?" He asked. "I do not want to overwhelm her."

"Just be you." She says. "Avoid loud noises, and abrupt movements, and you should be okay. And... I suppose don't try and intimidate her? If she flares her mane at you, just glance away and down if you don't feel up to dealing with challenging her."

"Submission huh? Alright... I will do my best to behave." He chuckled quietly, "No fighting for dominance until you've had the pups safe and sound." he gave a nod, "Alright, dear. I'm ready." He then spoke as he leaned back and sat on his knees, watching her carefully to know when she switched over.
"She's not likely to actually fight you, but... To be frank, she's definitely not one to mess with." She chuckles. "Alright."

Toki sat up, and scooted away just a little to give her beast some personal space. Then, she drew her up to the surface, impressing upon her that she would be meeting Toki's husband, and that she wanted her to be familiar and comfortable with him.

The switch over was less smooth than the one with Sequoia was. Toki initially dropped boneless onto the mattress, curled on her side facing him. Her sockets were empty of light, and she was utterly motionless, like a puppet with its strings cut.
Chapter 121

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So here we get to meet not one, but two beasties. This should be fun!

Beast took control gingerly, and beastial eye lights ignited in Toki's sockets as her body tensed. Her bones didn't shift or change form, but her wings raised, and her mane bristled and mantled warily as her Beast sat up and took in huffing breaths through her teeth. Examining the room, she determined that it was safe for her, and for the litter. She balanced on her primary arms, her secondary curled to her chest as her gaze slid towards Papyrus. She cocked her head, and made a soft, curious warble at him. Her eyes, when it was strictly beast in control, were very different than when the Beast was showing her face through Toki's own at the same time.

Aliquam stayed out of the way as she took in the necessary sensory for self-reassurance, but once he became her center of attention, he gave a gentle purr. "Hello there, my dear," Were the words he spoke, soft and sweet, to his wife's inner beast, "do you know who I am?"

"Pah-pai-roos?" Beast let out a soft noise at his purr, pleased at his friendly response. She warbled a gentle greeting, her pupils expanding in a soothed manor. The room was quiet and not very stressful which was good. Her voice was different than Toki's was. She sounded out his name, having never said it for herself. Her mane smoothed out some, and the Beast let out a small noise.

That was about the cutest sound to ever come from his wife and Aliquam cooed in response. "Oh my god~" His eye lights brightened. "That's so cute~" He laughed gently, and then smiled up at her. "That's right, my dear. My goodness, you sound so cute~"

"My Dear?" She trilled at him questioningly, her mane fluffing just slightly at his happy sounds. She liked his happy noises- they made Toki happy, and that made Beast happy. "My Dear?" She questioned again. Was that her name now? He had called her that twice- his dear- so maybe her name was Dear, like Toki was Toki, and Papyrus was Papyrus? The beast made a soft whuffling sound through her teeth, and leaned out to scent him. It was nice- he had nothing covering him, no weapons to hide. It was just smooth bone. Safe bones.

He smiled and gently brought a hand up to see if she was comfortable with him touching her. "You're so beautiful, did you know that?"

She decided she would be Dear until someone else gave her a better name, or she found a nicer one. Dear’s eye lights slid to his hand, and she warbled again, her teeth pushing out to enunciate her sounds. She leaned her skull out to sniff his hand, before she rubbed the smooth part of her skull against his palm. His hand was larger than her skull, but his bones felt good on hers. It took her a moment to register that he'd asked her a question, and she felt silly for not having answered. Dear hoped he wasn't upset by it. "Beautiful? Did not... Know." She didn’t know she was beautiful. Toki gave the impression that they looked strange, so Dear had come to expect some degree of strange reception for their appearance.

He caressed her head gently and slowly cupped her other cheek. "You, and your mindmate Toki, are the most beautiful woman, and creature, I could ever ask to be married, and mated to... You're beautiful, you're perfect..." He purred.
His compliments pleased her, and Dear practically preened at his words and praise. She leaned her cheek into his palm, her secondary hands fidgeting on her chest, and gave him a warm coo. His words were kind- he was a kind mate. “You are... first mate?” She asks. Tenne had been their second mate- they had lost their first mate, and now they had lost their second mate and gained their first mate back. Dear was still not sure how to feel about losing Tenne. She mourned him still- though she didn’t understand fully how Tenne and Tenebris were not the same. Toki was working on explaining it to her. She was understanding- but it took time. “Never got to know first mate. Toki loves first mate though.”

"That's right... I'm the first mate." He purred, stroking her cheeks with his thumbs. "I'm so overjoyed to meet you... And to know that Toki still loves me so..." He laughed gently, before he smiled at her happily. "It's so reassuring... it means I’m doing my job right."

“Mmm, yes. Mate supposed to love, and be loved. Though... Do not understand why Toki only has one.” Confusion does light up in the beast’s eyes, though she nuzzles his hand affectionately. “Queen bees- what... What you.” She huffs in his scent quick, and processes it even quicker, “… Mmm... You are mostly Felis, but you have bits of Canis and Draconis. And bone man. Skeleton. Mmm... They take only one mate. Queen bees... We have many, to form a big hive and help with magic needs. Usually one female, sometimes two or three if there are Sister Queens, but many males. Eggs- Pups.” She corrects, recounting the times she’d heard Toki correct herself, "need more magic. They are not pure Insectis, like we were, but even half breeds need much magic. They grow fast and strong. Many mates eases strain. Sometimes not even mates- hive drones donate to help make hive bigger, stronger. Hive is... pack to you. She has... small pack, but why does pack not help with strain? I do not understand."

From how the Queen bee was explaining it, there was one or more females, and basically a reverse harem of males that the female was mated to, and if there weren’t males, then the drones stepped up and the drones would donate the magic to meet the Queen’s needs. And it seemed, now that she had the chance to ask someone other than Toki, she was determined to get answers.

He tilted her head as he took in her words before he rumbled gently, "ah... Well, it's a bit hard for her to ask for this... My father and I are both willing to share magic as much as we can without damaging ourselves, Father perhaps past such. My brother and his husband both adore Toki. We all will offer magic if it meant the pups are happy." He explained gently. "It's simply the oddity of the circumstances, and Toki generally hesitates to ask for help."

“Noticed that.” She huffed, blowing warm air over his bones. “Need to just do, not wait for her to ask. She does not like to bother people. Does not matter what people say about not being bothered. She is a strange Queen.” Dear’s wings gave an irked flick at that. “Pups health is most important. Magic is needed for big, healthy litter. Need to look like... Like ‘stick of glow’, as Toki say. Not this. Will be small, feeble, easy prey if not given enough.” That makes her pause though, and then her head tucks back into her mane. She sucks in a breath and sighs. “Not keeping pups though. Toki told me. Giving to someone else in pack to raise. Don’t understand why we giving and not just share raising, but is not my choice.” Her gaze slides back to him, and sharpens. She warbles at him. “Want more pups later. Family pack is too small. Needs to be bigger. Can make pups, yes?” She couldn’t tell if he was fertile or not, with how tight of a chain he kept on his beast. She could smell what he was, but she couldn’t tell if he was an alpha, a beta, or, gods above, if her primary personality had mated to a submissive or a drone.

"It's complicated to explain... but the sire of the pups within you is... more or less the same man as I call my father. He's much older now, and neither he nor his mate can bear children of their own, and he so dearly wanted children of his bloodline after my brother and I... Tokiko and I want him to have this litter to raise as his ow, so he can be happy with his mate, and his own pups, to have the life he
could have had if it weren’t for the darkness..." He explained gently, before he smiled and spoke again. "You and I? Yes, of course we can have more children. Of course we can have more children. As soon as we are all ready, we can begin as soon as the last litter are weaned."

"I am... Understanding this. Slowly, but I am understanding. This is not our second mate. This one is pack father, mate's sire." Dear warbles a soft noise, and slowly settles closer to him. She doesn’t touch, not yet, but she is relaxing in his presence. which is good. "His mate. Yes, different-king. Toki says I'm not allowed to intimidate him. This one is pack, but I do not know where he sits in the structure. By rights he would be alpha female, mate to the alpha, but he cannot bear, so I do not know where he sits." She tilts her head. "He reminds me of a beta. What are you? I cannot tell. You are a hidden-mate, and it is not right to hide so much. Beasts need freedom or we go crazy." Mouth opening, she quietly huffs at him. "Two moons for the litter to be weaned, and two moons hence that for our body to recover enough for another litter. It would be sooner, but she has gone so long unseeded that it will take time to get things moving again."

"I did my best to control myself from a young age. I would not let my beast get the best of me..." He admitted, before he chuckled. "Indeed. Please be nice to Asgore. I’d hate for my Father to think poorly of you, my dear mate." He laughed gently. "Two and Two would be perhaps four months?" He asked. “Correct me if I’m wrong.”

The queen bee beast chuffed at him. “Is not healthy. He is probably insane by now.” She gives him a severely disapproving look. “We need freedom to be healthy. You would not be healthy if you spent years inside of a cage, looking out from inside but unable to touch or interact. He will need to be taught manners when he is let out.”

It was very safe to say that Dear did not approve of how he handled his beast, not at all.

Her mane ruffles, and she chuffs again. “I want to meet him. Without you or mate’s sire stepping in. If he is to be taking my pups, it is in my right to meet him. I wish to meet with mate’s sire too. I want to meet the pack.” She knew she didn’t have a choice in the matter either way- Toki held the main control. The primal instincts were never meant to hold control for too long. Things got messy when they did. “I do not know this month thing. Two moons and two moons. When the moon is gone from the sky for nights on end, to when the moon is full and swollen with stars to birth into the sky.” She blinks at him and flicks her wings. “Two and two of those.” She pauses for a moment, and recollects with Toki, before slowly nodding. “Toki says that two moons is... A little less than two months. So a little less than four of your months?”

He didn’t reply to the comment about his beast, but he nodded. "Four months will do perfect. As for meeting the pack, I can set up meetings. I'll let Asgore know you wish to meet him."

She let out a slow warble and nodded. “Good. I want to meet them.” She snuffles softly, and eyes him slowly as she scoots closer, quietly sniffing and taking in his scent. He had something on him that didn’t smell natural, and she wasn’t sure what it was, but she knew it was there. “Do you have... questions? Toki said you might.”

"You look like you have one starting... Go on then...?"

“There is a funny smell.” She says. “It’s not a natural scent. It’s on you. But you don’t have that cloth stuff covering you. What is it?” Her mane fluffs at him, but there’s no animosity in her question. Just honest curiosity. She doesn’t know what she’s smelling, and she feels she should know what is on her mate.

He reached out and gently took her hand, pulling it over to his hipbone. "This. This is what you smell."
"Oh." She moved down on the bed, her gait differently than Toki’s, and took a breath of air near his hip. She peered at it, analyzing it, and then flicked her tongue out and licked his hip gently. “It is different.” Toki was trying to explain what a replacement was, but she couldn’t quite grasp the concept of it. She could understand fake bone though. “Is fake bone.” She blinks up at him, and then settles down at his side. Their first mate had been crippled- which would mean she would need to protect him when they had pups, not the other way around. It wasn’t very wise, but life bonds were life bonds. You didn’t just leave your mate because his leg didn’t work right anymore. You adapted to what he needed.

One could see the gears turning in her mind as she processed what she was seeing and understanding.

"I was hurt..." He admitted, before he smiled, and wrapped his arms around her gently, stroking her head gently. "I'm still your mate... and I plan to do whatever I can to protect you, regardless of what has happened to me." He promised. "I will not lose any of you, not again."

Dear tensed as his arms came around her, and her eyes slid wide. She made a soft uncertain noise, not quite sure what he was doing. The stroke to her head felt nice though, and she murred softly, though her confused trill echoed after it. “Mates protect each other.” She says. “Toki remembers when you were hurt. It was before the darkness created me to teach her. What... are you doing? This... Touch. What is it?” She was unfamiliar with this type of cuddling. Beasts usually just piled together- they didn’t usually hold each other. Not like this.

"I’m sorry... should I let you go?" He asked gently. "It's called a hug. I don’t know how beasts show their affection, but humans and monsters... we hug. This is a hug, and it's supposed to be warm, and give a feeling of protection."

Dear quietly inhaled and contemplated how she felt about this ‘hug’. It was warm and it did make her feel safe, though she hadn’t been expecting it. Slowly, she shook her head. “I like this... Hug, Beasts show affection by grooming and laying against each other. Hugs are... not things we do.” She snuffled closer, and nosed her teeth against his sternum, before licking along his collarbone and sternum. She groomed his bones gently, using her teeth to nibble gently along any place she felt might be dirty so she could show him how they groomed.

He jumped at first, but the grooming tongue was soft and he smiled gently. "Ah... Heh, this is nice. I like this." He purred, giving her another hug to pull her closer as he kissed her head. "I love you."

She buzzed a soft sound to him and gave him a happy chirp. Dear nuzzled close, and made a quiet pleased noise. “Love you.” She parroted warmly. She didn’t, however, want her abdomen squished, and she made a soft sound of discontent and adjusted so her belly didn’t have pressure on it. She didn’t have any armor on her belly, and even the ectoplasmic skin wasn’t as tough as her beast skin. She didn’t want harm to come to the litter.

He noticed and cooed gently as he helped her readjust so her stomach was more comfortable. "There, is that better?" He asked gently.

“Mrrrr.” She says by way of agreement. She peers up at him, almost shying away from his hands near her belly. He didn’t have claws though- only smooth bone, and his touch had never been rough. Not with her, anyway. “This flesh is so... squishy. Fragile. Easily broken.” She doesn’t sound happy with this. “Have to keep the litter safe.”

"It's okay... it's soft, but no one's going to try and hurt the pups. Nothing will hurt them here, well, as long as you're careful. But U should think you're better than that, eh?" He chuckled gently.
She blew warm air in his face. "Threats can be everywhere. There are those that dislike the pups now. Dislike is one step away from aggression." She tilts her head at him. "Why does everyone let them talk like that about her?"

She was referring to the people that thought bad things about Toki.

"They don’t understand the circumstances... It's... a bit farfetched. They think she cheated on me and is pregnant with another man's young on purpose." He murmured in explanation to the beast. "They speak cruelly, but they will not harm her physically... especially now that Asgore is going to do something about it"

"Is he?" She questions doubtfully. "He does not seem as driven as the one I know. He seems... Softer. Can he prevent such things from happening? Because I want a safe place to birth this litter and rear our litters. The forest is vast. We could find better territory." Her understanding of human laws was slim, and she frankly just didn't care on the best of days.

"You have much to learn, my darling... I'm afraid it's not that easy. This is the safest place for us to be, for the pups to be."

She made a soft noise, like she wasn’t so sure, but she slowly nodded. “Then here is where we will build our nest when it is time. We’ll find the right spot, and gather things, since…” Her gaze flitted down towards his hip, and then back up. Usually the male- males often times- would help, but she wouldn’t send him scouring the grounds for soft cloth and blankets. “We will nest here.” She ends finally, and her four arms hesitantly curl around him. “… If you are gentle,” Dear says slowly, “You can touch my belly. Mates are gentle, and you are gentle.”

"Thank you..." He purred gently as he cupped her stomach and slowly stroked it with a delicate hand. "I'm glad I got to meet you..." He brought up next.

“I liked meeting my mate too.” She thrummed, and her sockets half lidded as his hand gently stroked her belly. That felt… nicer than she imagined it would. She might not mind belly touches if they were all like his- gentle and delicate. “But... You want Toki back now, yes?”

"She and I have much to plan and prepare, so you and I can speak again later on, perhaps once you've met some of the others. But if you'd like to enjoy some gentle petting first, you need not leave immediately~"

She nods slowly and sighs. Dear looks around them, at the room in which she’d gotten to see, and then she sighs again. She cuddles closer to him, and ruffles her mane. She lingers a little bit, only for a few minutes to enjoy some of his touches. The beast doesn’t bother saying goodbye- between one breath and the next, without saying a word to him about her going, she’s gone limp, like someone has cut the strings out from under her.

Toki stirs several minutes later, and makes a soft groan. One of her smaller hands comes to her head. “Ow… She and I need to practice the switch over.” She mutters. “She’s a bit rough dragging me up.”

"Take your time, Toki." He murmured. "No doubt it's disorienting..."

“I’m okay, Pap. She’s just not experienced.” Toki sighs. She nuzzles him. “So… Since I’m this close, and didn’t have to come to the surface earlier, it went okay. What did you think of her?”

"She has much to learn of our ways, and she wants to meet the pack. Starting with Asgore. She understands that my father and the Tenebris you knew in the other realm are not the same. But she
wants the pups to go to a place she knows with utmost certainty will be safe for them."

Toki grimaces. "Oh boy. That’s… Going to be fun.” She sighs. Toki notes his hand on her belly, and gently wiggles so he has easier access, before wiggling closer. “She does have a lot to learn, but she thinks differently than we do. I’ve been trying to teach her as best I can. The best we can do is let her meet everyone that she could eventually come into contact with.” Toki exhales, and nuzzles him. “Mm… Did you like her?”

"She's a queen bee if I ever met one, but in the same... I don’t think she likes the way I restrain my beast within." He answered with a quiet chuckle. "I adore her in the same, though... I see how she matched up with you, my dear."

“We’re quite the pair, she and I.” She agrees lightly. “And I don’t agree with your method either, Pap.” She kisses him gently. “You need to let him loose. You can only learn how to control him if you let him out.” The one time she’d gotten to play with him, he’d been very rough, but it was likely he didn’t know how to behave or be gentle.

"I imagine he's at least learned a little from me... He behaves most of the time..." He murmured, rubbing his neck lightly. "I just don’t like letting him out... unless I have to..."

"Why don’t you like letting him out?” She asks him gently. “Just out of curiosity. He’s... not the most gentle thing, by the way. At least he wasn’t with me that one time on the couch. A lot of that is probably being locked away."

"I was a bit too obsessed with humanity in my younger years... I wanted to make sure I assembled better to human society rather that of a beast for once we were free..."

He then sighed quietly. "Perhaps.. I'll go for a run tonight, let him out, perhaps talk with him if he's willing..."

Her brows furrow, and she lets out a soft sound. "Do you want me to go with you?" She asks gently. She could understand wanting to assimilate better to human society, but to completely turn away his beast... Well, he had done a hell of a job. She hadn't known until recently, really.

"Are you in the mood for a walk? I mean... we could head out as soon as we're actually dressed..." He offered.

"I could walk, yeah." She nods softly. Her uterus was sitting weird in her pelvis, and a walk would probably fix it. "I've got muscles that need to stretch. So long as I can just wear a night shirt and some shorts, I think we'll be okay." Toki kissed his cheek, and then made to let him go and roll away so she could get into clothes.

"Alright."

The two parted ways long enough to be dressed, reuniting downstairs as he made for where they kept the shoes. "Do you want some help with your shoes?” He asked gently.

She peered down at her feet. She could still see them, but in a week, Maybe two, she might not be able to. Toki shakes her head, and balances with the railing so she can get her shoes on. "Not quite yet. Do you want some help, Pap? When I can no longer see my toes, then I'll start really needing the help. Until then, I can help you."

"I'll be alright." He answered. He carefully tied his boots then collected his coat, looking to Toki for confirmation that she was ready.
Toki didn't bother with a coat. Instead, she just settled for her shirt, which framed her front, and her shorts, over top her sneakers. Toki threaded his scarf around her neck, and then gave him. Thumbs up. She was good to go. "You lead, I'll follow?" She hums and offers her arm to him.

He put on his coat then smiled and gently gave her his arm to loop around, opening the door and taking in the crisp air before he sighed and started out. "Allow me a moment to lock up." He rumbled quietly.

"Please do." Their kids were sleeping and she didn't want to disturb them. Likewise, she didn't want to leave them alone in an unlocked house. Toki let him lock up the house, and took a few steps into the darkness, rubbing her belly quietly. This was bringing back memories from back when she'd had the twins and her nightmares.

He locked up the house, and then pocketed his keys and he smiled to her, offering her an arm. "Alright, here we go." He purred gently. "All locked up, nice and tight."

She took it without hesitation, and gave him a loving smile. "Good." She sent a couple bees to keep an eye on the house just in case, and then walked with him off towards the woods. Well... The un-burnt woods. She looked at the dead trees they hadn't cleared yet and gave a soft, sad sigh. "It's going to take so long for the forest to recover... I kinda hoped that little pool of water that we spent our first Valentine's in was still secluded, but it's not, sadly." She murmurs.

"It's sad, yes... but do not worry, in due time the forest will heal, and who knows we may have an even better pond than we did the first time." He assured her. "And just imagine all the lush life once we clear the earth and spread the ash."

"True." She smiles lightly. "Ashy loam is supposed to be very good for growing certain kinds of plants." She hums. "And who knows? Maybe we'll find a better pond across the river. Though... Are you okay to cross?" She eyes his cane, which is not river worthy, and then flicks her wings. "I could try to carry you."

"What's a little water to one who's fought in the rain and snow?" Aliquam countered with a gentle laugh. "Don't you even consider for a second about carrying me, I'm too heavy for you." He dismissed the idea lightly.

That just made her puff up a little bit, and she leered at him, moderately offended that he thought she couldn't lift him. Before she had been changed, certainly. Now she thought she maybe had a chance, pregnant or no. "You're too heavy? Pfft. You're all bone. I carried Tenne on a couple occasions." Of course she'd been a being of flesh and muscle then. "Alright, well, we're going to see if I can do it." As they reached the river, she wiggled her arm out of his, and then flexed her wings. "Get a good grip on anything loose, Pap, and a good stance. I don't want to knock you over by accident."

"Oh boy..." He chuckled quietly. "Alright, alright, let's see how this goes." He replied as he took a step to the side.

She stretched her wings, and then took to the sky. Toki took a moment to get herself oriented, and then she came behind Papyrus, and hooked all four arms under his armpits, and heaved.

Her back strained, and her wings strained, and she found herself missing the strength she had as a beast. Toki sunk magic into her bones, pulsing it into her wings and making the beats stronger and heartier. Slowly, carefully, she lifted him off the ground, and began to drift him over to the other side of the river. As her body adjusted, the strain eased. She just wasn't used to it, but it wasn't so bad. Tenne outweighed him by several times his weight, so Papyrus was refreshingly light.
She took care with setting him down on the other side, and then touching down. She rubbed her wing joint. "Ugh, I'm out of shape. Round might be a shape, but its not a shape for good flying."

"Toki holy crap." He commented, before he huffed and reached up with a hand, gently knocking on her forehead with his knuckle, "I told you it wasn't a good idea but did you listen?" He gave her a hard time before pulling her in for a soft kiss

She puffed air at him when he knocked on her forehead with a knuckle. "There comes a point in every wife's life that she has to prove her husband wrong. Lo and behold, I can carry you. Not far, not yet, but you're lighter than you think. Plus I'm something between a wasp, a hornet, and a bee, and hornets and wasps can carry other bugs while flying." She smooches him back, and beams at him. "So we can cross the river any time we want now."

"I feel like there is a video game reference somewhere in that statement." He teased, giving a quiet laugh before he turned and took a breath. "I think this will do well for meeting my beast." He announced as he looked around.

"We crossed a river, and any guards who walk by can see us. If this is where you want to do it, then we can. If not, we can go to the green shrubbery." Toki wiggled a brow at him. "And maybe there was, maybe there wasn't."

"I mean... of course we can go somewhere we won’t be seen... this is just a good area..." He murmured, patting her rear before he started into the forestry. "Come on, then."

"I'm just thinking beastly, my dear. Mine doesn't like a lot of people." She gets him right back on his rear, goosing it as she speed walks to catch up. She's glad she has no waddle yet, because waddling sucked.

"True indeed." He agreed.

"So... Do you know anything about your beast?" She asks lightly. She was going to probably be going in blind with this.

"Yes, one of the only reasons he's not completely suppressed. He possesses a sense of justice like I do..." He explained. "He doesn't like dogs as much as he does our cats."

Toki paused in her words as she listened to the murmurs of her beast inside of her head. She listened to her more now, since she missed the companionship that Sequoia had given. "My beast- pardon, apparently she... Named herself Dear? Dear says he's mostly Felis, which explains it. They're cat beasts. Probably why you don't like dogs either." How he could dislike dogs but be completely fine with dog monsters was beyond her, but she supposed there was a huge difference. Wolfen wasn't going to steal his femur and chew on it.

It was the only one he had left of course he wouldn't appreciate it.

"She named herself, huh? That’s so cute~ and I suppose that makes sense. Bastet and Neko are both cat-skull blasters."

"And mine is an Insectis, and I summon giant hornets from hell." She hums. Toki peers up at him and hooks her arms tightly into his. "My beast knows a lot despite not being born or raised a beast. I think she was... Pre-programmed with knowledge maybe, since the Void did make me into one, and it probably made her."

"It explains the same as to why Father knows as much as he does of his race." He rumbled in reply.
“Maybe? I know mine wasn’t naturally there though. He’s had his for his whole life.” Toki hummed softly up at him.

He nodded gently, before he sighed. "Right. Topic at hand... I can do this... I don’t want to hurt you..."

Toki pauses, and looks at him. They’re a fair ways into the brush by now, and it’s green and lush and smells fresh and new. She tugs on his shirt to get his attention, and then pulls up the save and load screen. She presses the save button, and then smiles at him. “If anything happens and it goes bad, I’ll load back, okay?” She reaches up to kiss him. There was a reason she hadn’t given it back to Frisk yet- mostly in part because she didn’t know how, and partly in part because this kind of power was not pressure that a child should have on them. Frisk seemed happier without it anyway, as did Sans. “Your beast can’t hurt me too badly. My beast is an Alpha, remember? I’m also Balance. I’m tougher than I look.” She wiggles her wings. “Plus you can’t fly, so it would be like watching Gracie try to catch the sky raisins in the summer.”

Gracie liked to hunt flies and eat them- Toki called them sky raisins because of a silly meme she’d seen online, and it stuck for her.

He chuckled quietly, before he nodded gently. "Alright... I'm going to sit down so he doesn’t have to deal with one leg." He murmured, slowly moving to sit down before he took a breath, and closed his eyes.

“Alright.” Toki took a couple steps away from him, making sure she was upwind from him. Toki smoothed a hand over her belly, and carefully crouched down so that she was on fairly even height with him. Toki watched him, and waited to see any physical signs.

He thrummed quietly, and then he shivered and rattled quietly, giving a soft growl as his eyes opened. They were now a much deeper, bold orange color, his pupils thin as he looked around. He sniffed quietly as soon as his eye lights locked on her.

"Mate." Was the first word to come from his mouth.

"Yes.” Toki says softly, and nods gently to him. “You know who I am then. That’s good. Do you know my name?” She asks gently, and gives him a warm smile. She stays in her crouched position, hiding the curve of her belly with her position. Well, somewhat hiding it.

"To... toes.... Take. Took..." He looked back and forth before growling quietly, "Toes... Toe... Key..." He murmured softly.

"Toe-Key." He then glanced up at her. "Toe-Key...?"

“Yes. I’m Toki.” She smiles softly. “And you’re Papyrus’s beast. Do you have a name?” She inquires gently.

He turned and sniffled quietly, before he shook his head. "Only pup name..."

“Well, if you find a name you’d like, you can choose it.” She smiles to him. “My beast has chosen the name ‘Dear’ for now.” She watched him, how he seemed to be watching everything. He reminded her of a sentinel, or some sort of guard. “You’re quite the handsome little sentinel, aren’t you?” She hums. “How are you feeling? Would you like me to come closer, or stay over here?”

"Sen... Sentinel." He spoke quietly, before looking up at her. "Mate." He then spoke, reaching to her.

She took that as a sign to come closer, and moved down carefully onto her hands and knees. Toki
made her way over to him, keeping her eyes on him gently. “Sentinel?” She inquired gently as she came into his reach, and carefully sat down again. She crossed her smaller arms over her belly as she smiled at him. “Did you want me closer?” She asks him lightly.

He rumbled in reply as he inched closer, dragging his leg behind him. It was a tragic sight as he didn't understand the prosthetic yet. He pressed close and rumbled as he set his head on hers, purring quietly as he pressed loosely curled fists into the ground below him. "Smell like mother~" He purred.

“Well, I am a mother.” She smiles at him, and leans her skull up to gently nuzzle his. She wasn’t sure if he was aware she was pregnant or not, but she wasn’t sure she wanted to try and explain to him the entire situation. He probably wouldn’t take it well that his mate was carrying another’s children. “Maybe you smell our children on me? Honey and Skylar?”

"Hon and Sky, yes... Kits... Adore Kits." He purred, before a hand went to her swell. "You carry..." He purred. "More Kits?"

Well shit, how did she tell him they weren’t his. Toki sucked in a soft sigh, and covered his fingers with hers. “Not quite Kits, but something close. Something that is partially kits. What all has Papyrus told you about… the long time that I was missing from you?” She asks, her eye lights searching his.

"Missing mate... thought lost... not lost..." He replied. "Carrying... something for sire."

“Yes.” She nods, her face brightening some. So he wasn’t entirely shut away from everything. Thank goodness. “These are pure blooded blaster beasts in my belly,” She tells him gently. “They’re going to come out just like your Sire, and like I was before I returned home to you.”

His gaze twitched upward. "Why like sire? Why not like me?" He questioned, before growling quietly as he tucked his head in, no doubt Aliquam answering his question from within.

As his head tucked down, Toki gave a soft sound. “Is Papyrus explaining it to you?” She asks him gently. “I can try to clear up what he can’t."

"Queen bee... mates with many... mated to one?"

Toki thought back, and prodded at her beast. Slowly she nodded. “Insectis work differently.” She says slowly. “My beast is… Not accustomed to having one mate. To her, you are her First mate—there is a special place for that. Tenne was her second mate, after she thought… She thought we lost you.” Toki deflates a little, and glances away. She’s aware body posture counts for much with beasts, and she knows looking upset at having thought she’d lost him would count for something. “We thought we would never find you again. But… we did. We carry our second mate’s young, though we’re not keeping them. Your sire is going to adopt them and raise them.”

He tilted his head, then sighed and nuzzled her. "I... I see." He murmured.

He didn't really, but he trusted his mate, such came from Aliquam, and he no doubt would be able to understand later on if someone explained it well enough a second time.

She nuzzles him back, and then lifts her fingers up. She rubs under his chin, wondering if he was like their cats. “Hey, big guy,” She calls to get his attention. “After this litter is here, the next litter will be ours. I promise.” She leans up and chitters a soft sound for him before smooching his cheek. “Any every litter after that, if we want more kids.”

He chirped, before leaning up into her hand, purring at the rubbing before he nuzzled her again. "More litters... soldier wants more children."
“You’ll get more.” She promises gently. “We have many, many years together, my dear.” Toki nuzzles him in return, and continues to gently rub his jaw. “We can have many children in those years- a big family is definitely in our future.” It would take them a while though, going one at a time, but they could do it. It wasn’t impossible.

"Big family." He agreed happily, resting his head on her shoulder as he purred gently.

“Maybe we’ll get your brother to have more nieces and nephews for us too,” She gives him a lopsided smile as she listens to his purr. She’s glad he’s relaxing instead of tense and angry or startled.

"Canis make many pups." He chuffed. "They nibble tails and pull on ears." It seems Aliquam had helped him get a hang of talking at this moment. "Why only one pup?" He asked in wonder.

“Well,” She says softly, “He’s mated to a fire elemental. You know Grillby, yes? The fire man?” Simple words seemed to be best with beasts. “They only have one or two at a time. So, Sans only had one because that’s what Grillby’s kind has at a time.” She wasn’t sure if it was true, but it sounded good for an answer on the fly.

"Mmh..." He purred quietly. His sockets closed as he settled down beside Toki, a purr coming from him.

She listens to him purr, and smiles softly. She hums to him and drops her hand down to the leg he’d dragged through the grass. Carefully she touched it so she could gage if he would let her adjust it for him into a more comfortable position, so Papyrus wouldn’t hurt as bad when he came back.

He jerked a little in reply then growled at it. "What is that?"

"Easy..." She says gently. "That's your leg. Your body got hurt a while ago, and it didn't heal right. Papa- your Sire- made a prosthetic to fix it. It's... A kind of fake bone. It helps you walk and move around. Is it okay if I help you move it so your leg is sitting a little more comfortably?"

"Mmh..." He growled quietly, but slowly nodded.

Toki was quick and gentle in straightening his leg. She smoothed down his pants, and then rubbed his knee gently and peered up at him. "Papyrus walks with a cane now to help him balance. Maybe in time he won't need it, but it's too soon yet for him to be running around without it." She's not sure if Pap had told his beast about their leg yet, but she figured he should know.

"Wounded..." He nodded in understanding, though he looked displeased as he looked at the prosthetic.

“Wounded,” She agreed. She took his fingers, and then moved them up to the scar on her skull. “But, not broken.” Toki’s voice went firm. Hers hadn’t been a physical disability- but hers had come with a severe fear of fire. She’d worked at it. And, if he worked with his leg, he could get some improvement. Never what it was, but then and again, she never would be what she was before she’d burned alive either. There would always be that small anxiety whenever she was near a flame that wasn’t hers.

He looked up at her, and then tilted his head. "Mate does not seek another?" He asked quietly. "Even when mate is lame?"

“No.” She shakes her head. “I don’t seek another. My beast and I have differing views on how mating should go, but we both agree that you don’t abandon your mate, even if they have trouble with their leg.” She rubs his gently. “We work together, and adapt to each other’s needs.”
He chirped happily at that and nuzzled her. "That is relief..."

"Would you, if I had a bad leg?" She asks him gently, honestly curious to the beast’s answer. She nuzzled him gently, and peered up at him quietly. They thought so differently than she and Papyrus did, that it was interesting to see their answers to questions.

"Leave you? No..." He shook his head. "Soldier is loyal. Sentinel will be the same."

"Good." She smiles softly. Her brows furrow thoughtfully. "So... I’m understanding that... Soldier is Papyrus? So that makes you... Sentinel?"

"You... called me Sentinel. I like it."

She thought back. Yep. She’d called him a handsome sentinel. “Alright.” She smiles. “Then Sentinel can be your name if that’s what you want.” She rubs his cheek gently and hums. “So... What do you think of the outside world?” She wondered if he knew what their house looked like or not.

"Free. I miss the hunt..."

“I don’t know if you’ll ever get to hunt again, Sentinel.” Toki glances at his leg, and then back up to his face. “But, maybe you and Papyrus can work something out so you can come out more often instead of being locked inside?”

"Would like that..." He nodded gently.

“I’m sure you would.” She nods. “I’ll talk with Papyrus, and tell him how polite and how gentle you are.”

"Did he fear otherwise?"

Toki shrugs. “I think he might have. He wasn’t sure how you would respond to everything outside, or respond to me.” She blinks up at him. “But neither I nor my beast approved of him keeping you locked up like so.”

"Mh..." He sighed, and then reached up and rubbed his face against hers, purring. "I like being with you..."

“I like being with you too.” She nuzzles him in return. “I like being with both of you. I love you both very much.”

He smiled at that before he hummed happily, and nuzzled his head under her chin.

Toki enjoyed his soft affection, and fluffed her mane for him to snuggle into. She knew her mane was full of pheromones, so it would be full of her scent, and it would, hopefully, keep him relaxed as they sat in the grass in the dark.

The cat-like beast was quite contented, though after a short while, he had gone silent and limp beside her.

As he went limp against her, Toki grunted and braced his weight. “Hell- Sentinel? Did you just fall asleep on me?”

There was no reply at first, but soon there was a soft hum. "Mh... Toki?" Aliquam was back.

“Ah, Papyrus.” She smiled and nuzzled the top of his skull. “It’s good to see you again. How are you feeling? How did it go inside? Did you talk some while he and I talked?”
"He was a lot more calm than I worried he would be." He answered.

“He was. He was upset about your leg though. He didn’t know what was wrong.” Toki blinks at him slowly and sighs. “I’m not too sure he fully understands my situation either,” She touches her belly to emphasize which one, “but I promised more children after and he seemed happy with that.”

"That’s better than what I feared. Cats are a breeding race, aren’t they? Perhaps he understands the difference between damaging mate-ship and simple breeding differentials."

Toki shrugged. “Maybe? I know cats- the animals- have many, many litters in their lifetime, and go into heat often so… Maybe he does?” She’s not sure. “His name is Sentinel, by the way. He calls you the Soldier, I think.”

"I've heard worse." He laughed gently. "Glad he thinks so highly of me."

“Indeed. I’m just mate. Or ‘toe-key’,” She laughs gently, and bumps the curve of her horn to his skull. “I love you. Now… would you like to go back home? Er… How does your leg feel, by the way? He was sitting funny on it.”

"Probably numb... I'll be fine." He chuckled gently as he reached for his cane. "Let's get home... I want to cuddle you again."

“Sounds good to me.” Toki shifted and it took her a while to get up. Her center of balance was set for more or less walking on all fours, with how her middle was, but she forced her way up onto two legs and gave a soft grunt. “Alright.” Once Toki was upright, she offered Papyrus a hand, and helped him up and making sure he was balanced and braced upright so he could test his leg before trying to walk. She didn’t want him to fall.

He did seem to put more weight on his cane, but he gave her a small smile. "I'm okay."

"If you're sure." She looks dubious, but simply casually supports more of his weight as they start to walk towards the river to go home. "If you're not up to it, Clover can give us a ride." He hadn't gotten to ride her in... Well, ages.

"We might need her to in order to cross the river again."

Toki purses her teeth and sighs. "I could carry you. But... Probably. Here. We might as well just fly back. Then I can cuddle you faster." She draws on her magic, and summons Clover. It takes more than usual, with so much going to the babies in her belly, and Toki momentarily wavers on her feet from summoning something so big.

Clover settles down in front of them, and gives them both an unimpressed look, before laying flat so they could mount up.

"Hello clover. It's good to see you again." Aliquam smiled up at the large hornet.

She buzzed at him and clicked her mandibles. If he expected her to jump for joy at seeing him again, he was sorely mistaken. She wasn't Sugar. Her knees ached and she had no desire to bounce around like a puppy. Still, she made a fairly warm sound, and that was the best he would get.

"Want to know something amusing? Clover scared Tenne." Toki hummed conversationally as she helped him hobble closer. Clovers legs came together and made a sort of walk way up to her saddle, thankfully, so he wouldn't have to try and climb.

"I'm not surprised. She is very large and very intimidating." He chuckled lightly as he climbed onto
Toki made sure he was strapped in once he was seated, and then paused. She leaned in and lightly sniffed the saddle. It smelled like Kai and Quinn, and faintly of Tenne too, amidst the usual brimstone smell. Toki swallowed thickly. She missed her adopted sons. She missed them a lot. "His sons adored her." She tells him, and motions for her to stand once she'd made sure that he was secure.

Clover stood up with a chuff, and lifted her wings to stretch them, before taking off towards the house with Toki on her tail.

He smiled as he gently pet Clover's body. "It's been a while... pretty girl."

Clover buzzed her thanks, and twitched her mane at him. She huffed and made to land outside the house, touching down with a heavy thump. She let her legs drop out from under her, and thumped down onto the ground with a hard crash. Wheezing out a sigh, Clover lifted her legs and offered him some steps down.

Toki landed, and rubbed her back. She let out a soft groan. Agh, flying while pregnant was harder than it should be. Her center of weight was off, and everything was just... unpleasant while in the sky.

He slowly stepped down and went to Toki's side, wrapping an arm around her before he smiled at the hornet. "Thank you, Clover. I appreciate the lift."

Clover let out a buzz at him, and then gave Toki an expectant look.

Toki heaved a sigh, and opened another door. She staggered a bit into him as the magic drained on her. When Clover disappeared, she shut the door, and slumped a little into Papyrus. "I'm tired," She tells him softly. "I think my big summons are going to have to be limited with this litter. I've never felt the drain like this."

"I agree." He smiled softly to her. "Come on, let's get you in bed, shall we?"

"Please." Toki made a soft sound and sighed. She'd probably just wasted all that magic they'd given her, damn it. She wobbled with him towards the house, and pulsed magic up and down her legs to fortify them. "Mmm... I want cuddles and sleep. Lots of both."

"And you'll get just that, nyeh heh heh!" He laughed.

Toki snorts and pinches his rib gently. "Shush, or you'll wake the twins." She laughs quietly, before going inside with him. "Megh... If I didn't have a belly or wings to cause issues, I'd say to hell with it and just flop on the couch." Stairs. She didn't want to go up them. But the bed was calling.

"But we have a bed big enough for the both of us to snuggle on, would you really deny that, darling?"

Toki gave him a flat sounding buzz, and slowly started for the stairs. "I think you underestimate how much magic it sucked to open the big gates for Clover. Besides that, I slept on a couch for like, four months I think, after sleeping outside for half that in the other world. I'm no stranger to discomfort." Toki used the banister to support her weight and hauled him upstairs with both arms around his ribs to keep him steady.

"You don't need to carry me, you know." He assured her as he reached up to pat her cheek gently.

"Half is to keep you from falling, half is to keep me from going down." She makes a grumbling
sound at him. "Because if you go splat, I'm just gonna get the pillow and the blankets and we're sleeping where you fell." She informs him lightly. Not really. She'd have called Tenebris if he couldn't get up, but it didn't mean she couldn't bluff at him.

"And the last thing we need is me with a stiff back." He murmured, helping her get him upstairs as best he could.

"Exactly." The top of the stairs came sooner than she expected, and she was thankful. Toki gave a soft sigh, and made it to their room with him, before she let him go. Then she carefully began to strip again, intending to sleep in the buff.

And as if someone sprayed them both with a bottle of clothes-b-gone, the loving couple reunited on the bed sheets, quickly returning to each others embrace like a pair of magnets.

"I adore you," Aliquam purred.

Toki draped against him like a cloth, and made a soft purring sound. Her eyes drooped tiredly, and she made a faint sound of exhaustion. “I love you lots. Lets get some sleep, okay? The kids will be up early, and tomorrow will be long. I've got cleaning to do.”

"Sounds perfect. Except you aren't gonna do as much cleaning as you think. I'll help you."

“Well, I'm not gonna turn down you helping me. But it's still gonna be a lot of cleaning. Paint doesn’t come off brick easier. We’d have an easier time painting over the house, but I don’t want to do it.” She grumbles sleepily. “At least four arms makes cleaning easier.”

"That is very true..." He agreed. "Well, perhaps Father will come and help as well."

She hummed a noncommittal noise, and pressed her face into his ribs. “Maybe. Might send him the kids so he can watch them while we clean.”

"It would keep him from hunting down the boy who did the spray painting." He agreed.

“Very true.” She yawns sleepily and lazily grooms his chest. “Mm… Yep. He gets grandpa duty for a day.”

"Watch him carry them around in his cavity and come to help anyways." He then giggled in quiet sleepiness.

Toki snorts into his bones. “It wouldn’t surprise me. But to carry them he has to catch them, and Honey is much more energetic than Skylar is on the norm.”

"Okay so you think Skylar would nestle happily but he'd have to get clever for Honey" Aliquam gave another gentle giggle, and then sighed contentedly where he laid.

"Yep. Skylar would probably nap unless his sister gets him in on the game of keeping away from their grandpa. Honey? He'd have to catch her." Toki snickers. "And she's crafty."

"Could you imagine if they were born with proper scruffs? I couldn't imagine Father passing the opportunity to carry her around in his mouth all day."

That makes her sigh. “Oh yeah, I could see it.” She gives him a soft purr and sighs. “I’m excited to see how he handles being a dad to newborns again.” Her fingers thread through his ribs, and she sighs, melting.
"You know this is gonna be the best thing to happen to him since myself and Caeruleus." He chuckled.

"I know." She murmurs. "I just hope he’s prepared. Six is a lot. Two was a lot for us- I can’t imagine any more than that at one time." She gives a soft exhale.

"He and Asgore are both previous fathers, I’m sure they've got this." He assured her.

"Asgore had one, and presumably adopted the other at an older age. Unless someone dropped Chara underground as a newborn baby, in which such case they were scum. He’s gonna get six weaned babies." She lifts her brows. "But I suppose. It'll be good for them either way."

He rolled his eyes and chuckled quietly as he gave her a squeeze. "They’ll be fine."

"When one of them comes to you for advice while pulling out their manes, I’m going to laugh and tell you I told you so." She leans up, licks his cheek, and then goes limp. "Sleeeeeeep now Pap. I’m tired, you’re tired, the pups are tired, and we’re parents so we’re not allowed to be uber tired.” Her hidey times non-withstanding.

"And yet we're just simple monsters, let's sleep and we will wake come the morn" he purred, kissing her one last time before he rested his head on his pillows with the intention to keep it there.

Toki draped against him with the intention of not moving until morning, so long as her body let her. She sighed contently, making sleepy sounds as she drifted off in the following silence.
The day had come for Asgore to make his announcement. They’d decided to hang on, to deal with all of the words slung at her, and do the announcement on the day that Toki was scheduled to do her debriefing of sorts and explain on where she had been.

Happily enough, Toki’s morning sickness seemed to have abated as well. She wondered if five weeks marked the end of her first trimester- but she wasn’t sure. All the same, she wasn’t nauseated anymore, so she considered that good enough.

Five weeks, however, should not have meant she was showing. But she was, and had been for a while. So, Toki made the best of it, and she had one of her nice light gray blouses to put on, with Pap’s help. It tied between her wings, so help was needed.

But before she could get dressed, Toki had full intentions on helping Papyrus get dressed. She gave him a hum and a smile, and helped him get his dress shirt buttoned, while he pulled his pants up and made sure his boxers didn’t cause any undue bulges in awkward spots.

Lord knows he didn’t need that.

Aliquam adjusted his pants comfortably before slipping his belt into its loops, before he secured it tightly to make sure he wouldn’t have his pants slipping down. It wouldn’t do to flash his boxers at politicians. Once that was done, he looked to Toki and smiled gently. "Thank you for your help, my love."

She flicked her wings and smiles at him. “You’re welcome, my love.” She smooches his cheek, and finishes his buttons, before grabbing his tie and working to secure it around his neck. “I’ll need your help with my shirt. Do you think your scarf will look okay with it? Or do you think it will be too much?”

"It will look just fine." He purred as he paused her hand to lean in and kiss her head gently. "I assure you, you'll be just fine." He purred.

She smiles at him, and sighs. “I worry all the same, Pap. I’ll manage all the same- and I’ll have you, and Sans, and Papa there to help me. Asgore too, though he’s going to be apart of the meeting.” She chuckled gently, and then gently wiggles her fingers free so she could attend to his tie.

"That’s right... We'll be here to make sure nothing goes wrong." He nodded gently, allowing her to finish on his tie.
“I know.” She made sure he was good to go, and then got his overcoat. It was still a bit nippy when it got breezy, and the coat would look nice on him. “Here you are, dear.” Then she worked on getting her shirt on, turning her back to him so he could do up the lacing on the back and tie it shut between her wings. It framed her belly, enhancing her look of pregnancy, but she honestly didn’t care. She had on a pair of maternity slacks, so the slacks, her blouse, and the scarf would make her look very nice.

He pulled on his coat, and then helped her by threading the lacing delicately, knowing just how tight to make it so it didn’t hurt her. "How does this feel?" He asked.

“Mmm, that’s good. We don’t want to go too tight, or we could make me pop.” She laughs softly. Her wings flex, moving to make sure she had full mobility, and once she was good to go, Toki let out a soft buzz. “Alright. Where did we leave my scarf?”

"By the door, though knowing our children, it might have gotten stolen." He chuckled. "Let's see if they know where it is."

“Indeed.” She snorts. She straightens, and hands him his cane, before dusting herself off. Her hands momentarily pet her swell, before she heads for the bedroom door. “We need to make sure they’re still in their clothes and haven’t stripped out anyways.”

"I hope they haven’t, because it means they won't get Grillby’s afterwards!” He called aloud into the house.

Lo and behold, there was a naked skeleton child running down the hall away from them.

Toki heaved a sigh and went to get Honey.

Skylar had his clothes on still, and he waddled to his daddy and made a face. He was in a tiny suit, just like his dad. "Do we have to wear these? I don't like them."

"Yes, Skylar. This is a very important event, and we must look professional for it." He answered as he adjusted his son's coat.

"But why? If we all came in pajamas then it wouldn't be weird at all." He sighs but lets his dad fix his coat. "We'd all be matching and much more comfortable."

Honey was swiftly wrangled, and carefully wiggled back into her dress and leggings. Toki sighed, and fixed the bow her daughter had wanted tied around her horn, before planting a hand in her lower back and straightening. "Alright. If you go streaking during this event, I'm revoking cartoons for two weeks, Honey. Two whole weeks." She warns her.

Honey's sockets get huge. "Two whole weeks?"

"Two whole weeks." She nods seriously. "Keep the clothes on until we're home again, and you can keep your cartoons."

Honey pouts. "Daddy, tell Momma she can't do that! My cartoons are important!"

"So is this event, Honey. Your mother is right. This is detrimental to our situation." Aliquam spoke sternly to his daughter, "I don't want to see you lose as much as your shoes or Mother will know about it."

Honey pouts at him and sulks. "I'm gonna tell Grandpapa on you."
"You go ahead and tattle to him, baby girl, it's not gonna change a thing because you're our daughter and not his." She ruffles her skull gently, and then ushers her down the stairs. "Go put your shoes on, both of you."

Both kids slunk off with pouts to do just that.

"If anything, I think he would raise the bar to a month anyhow." Aliquam chuckled once they were out of earshot.

"He does seem the type." She snorts, and makes to look for her scarf. "But he is putty in her hands when played the right way. I was a little girl once too, and I was a grandpa's girl. I could play mine like a fiddle. Well better, actually, since I have the musical talent of a flipperless walrus."

He laughed heartily at that, before he pulls her to a stop so he can press a kiss to her head. "I love you, Toki, you're so graceful."

"I love you too. I'd love you even more, mister tall, if you could help me find my scarf. It's big and red and you'd think you could find it anywhere. Apparently not." She makes a soft, frazzled buzzing sound as she nearly trips over Gracie. "Gracie! I love you dearly, but shoo, shoo! Upstairs with you. Go sleep on Papyrus' pillow."

Seeing the cat made Papyrus think, and it didn’t take long for him to put two and two together. He went over to where Gael was snoozing lazily and gently pushed him off his 'bed'.

"Found your scarf, darling." He sighed, holding it up before he began to laugh quietly.

"And it’s covered in cat hair." She sighs. "Thank you, Papy." She padded closer and took it from him. Giving him a quick kiss on the cheek, Toki turned to work on shaking the hair off the red scarf. Gray blended in, but Gael's white did not.

"I'll get some tape and we'll get that fur off." He told her as he started for the garage.

"Alright." She waved a hand at him, and worked on getting as much off by hand as she could. "Silly cats..."

When he came back with tape, Toki cleaned up her scarf, and then got it wrapped around her neck. She hummed, and fluffed her mane over the top, and then gave a little twirl. The gray of her frilly maternity shirt made her look bigger than she was, but she didn’t care. Her shoulders would be a bit nippy, but she’d deal. “How do I look?”

"Darling." He replied happily, fluffing her gently before he hugged her. "You look wonderful."

"Good. I look okay enough to appear before a bunch of stiff politicians?" She blinks big eyes at him, nervous and hopeful.

"Of course." He answered. "You will remind them just who you are; you've got this."

“Good.” She sighs. “Let’s just hope I don’t get nervous and faint in front of everyone, eh?”

"You won’t collapse, you'll do great." He assured her.

“You have more faith in me than I have in myself.” She bumps her skull into his shoulder and sighs. “It’s been a while since I’ve attended one of these. It’s been over two years since I’ve been active in politics. I didn’t... get into them in the other world.” She says. “I’m going to do my best. It’s been a while since you’ve accompanied me to one of these too.” She says. “Just keep your head. They’ll
probably touch on rumors and other things.”

"I know... I spent time steeling myself while you were in the shower."

“You’re going to be okay.” She smooches his cheeks. “You know the truth, and what they say will be addressed later, okay?” Toki leans back, and smiles at him, before glancing to the clock. “Alright, let’s go. We’ll be late otherwise, my love.”

"Of course. Come along, pups.” He spoke to the children lightly.

Honey huffed and puffed, but fell in line with her brother as they went to stand with their daddy.

Toki took Skylar’s hand while Honey took Aliquam’s, and together the family set out from the house.

After five hours of repeating what felt like the exact same story over and over again, Toki finally felt she was getting somewhere. Somewhere in the sense that the conversation was finally rounding to a close, and she felt like she wanted to go curl up somewhere and cry, because she was so, so tired of so many eyes staring at her, and so many whispers glinting off her audio range.

She wanted to go curl up in the tub and spend some time with Papyrus, or hell, even retreating into the woods where it was quiet and there was no construction sounds. She and her beast were both agitated, and her beast was too close to the surface for it to be good. She wondered if she could get Papyrus to take her to the lake for a day or two, just so she could unwind away from people.

“So let me get this straight.” One of the politicians rubbed his brows, leaning forward on his elbows as he sighed. “You spent the last six months in an alternate dimension- which was, according to you, running on a different flow of time than here, so you actually spent two years away from here rather than six months. During such time, you… reformed the terrorist known as Cruelty, who became known as Sequoia, and let him- pardon me, her- take control of your body on countless occasions to… do various activities with the family you spent time with there.” The man leaned up and peered at her. “And when you returned, you said some shadowy figure split you in half, and gave Sequoia her own body and left her in this other world- away from the prosecution she would face here. Am I correct?”

Toki grinds her teeth, and nods slowly. "You are correct. However," She tilts her head, "I would like to point out that she paid for her sins. Not in ways you can understand- but she did pay. She got a fresh start. And beyond that, there is nothing that can be done.” She taps her bones on the table she’s seated at out in the grass, and watches the men in front of her. They were up on a ‘pedestal’ of sorts, with hundreds of monsters and humans around them, watching them and what they were saying.

"Are we so sure?” One of the women murmured. "If you opened the portal once, you could do it again so she could face our proper.”

“No.” She shakes her head. “No, I will not.” She says. “That is off the table, and I will not even consider it. Move to something else.”

The woman looked displeased.

The man from before coughed and continued. “Perhaps not to prosecute her then.” He says. “But to extend… a friendship of sorts. Nothing bad could come from sharing our technology with another world like our own- and getting technology in return. From what I understand, they were not nearly
as advanced as us. Perhaps our medical technology could help heal their sick, cure their diseases. Nothing bad could come from it.”

“Everything bad could come from it.” Toki frowns. “I don’t think you understood from my explanation. The entire situation- the entire crisis with Cruelty- happened because the colors decided they wanted to help the other worlds too. Darkness, the Void, Magic- they don’t want that. And what they don’t want, they prevent.” Toki sets her teeth in a firm line. “I’m not going to go down the same road as my ancestor souls did.”

“If you were ordered by your government, as a citizen of your nation, you’d have to do as we ordered.” The woman says flatly.

“No.” Toki says, in an equally flat tone. “I would not. As a citizen, I would be required to obey, but as Balance, I am going to tell you no.” Her eye lights glint, and she lets out a soft tsking sound. “And Ma’am? There is not a damn thing you can do to make me. Chain me? I’ll break them. Put me in prison? Good luck trying. I will die before I open the door to the Void. And anyone who threatens my family will die before they can touch them. I am through with threats, Ma’am, even as weak and paltry as the ones you might give.”

“And there’s no need for threats.” The man soothes. “We’ve got no need for it. If you say there’s no need to try and cross the world boarders, then we won’t have you try and cross them.”

“No one will try and cross them- me, you, or the other Hearts.” Toki says. “Because the Void is even less forgiving than I am on the subject, and I pity the fool who tries.”

“I see.” He nods. “We’ll take that into perspective then.”

Toki nods and gave them both a faint sigh. “I pray that you do, or you’ll live to regret it. Or probably won’t.” She would await the day when they broke the barrier to the Void by some fluke, and gave the Void some toys.

“Another matter to note would be your pregnancy.” The woman hummed. “From the… rumors… we’ve heard, we can gather that it’s from the man in the other world. This… Tenne, that you spent your time with.”

“And that,” Toki coughs into her fist, “Means it’s time for Asgore to take a stand. He’s got something to say to you, and to all of the people. And this will be rounding off our debriefing, sirs, ma’am.”

“Alright.” They both leaned back to wait.

With her mentioning of his name, the king stood up and gently cleared his throat, before he stepped forward to speak. "I'd like to thank you, first of all, for gathering for this event, ladies, and gentlemen. I would like to start this off by answering the questions last asked. Yes, during the time that Tokiko was in this alternate realm, she had ended up impregnated by the one known as 'Tenne' before her return.” He spoke.

‘Impregnated.’ You say it like means she wasn’t a willing participant.” The woman arched her brows at him. “So the rumors are true then. She did have an affair outside of her marriage with another man.”

"Not entirely.” He spoke to the woman, his eyes resting on her heavily. ”During her time in the alternate realm, she was made more of a puppet in the control of the entity that was the Void. Her mind was shared, and the puppeteer had alternative plans for her than what she wanted for herself. In
the end, regardless, she returned to her husband and they both agree that their marriage is going strong, and that they will not break their bond anytime soon no matter what happened in her time in the other world."

"I see. That's good for them then, that he can overlook such... Transgressions, willing or not." The man nods slowly. "It takes a strong man to raise another man's children as his own. I will give her husband kudos for that."

"Well... there's another thing to that, which might shock many of you. You see, there is a bit of a quirk with our recent miracles." Asgore took a deep breath, and exhaled softly so it didn't echo out to the people. This was it- this was big. "The father of these pups was a young man by the name of 'Tenne'. This, however, was only a nickname he used in the public's eye. It was a shortened version of his full name, Tenebris. By some divine roll of fate, Toki, in her altered state of mind, had fallen for a younger version of the same man I call my own mate."

The man's face twisted curiously, and the crowd around them tittered with growing gossip.

The woman looked disgusted however. "So you're saying she had relations with not only another man, but a man who was her father in law, save in another universe? That is... Reprehensible, and truly ghastly. Is she going to abort the... Problem? Or... Keep it?"

"Councilor," The man protested, "that is out of line."

"I can ask, and he can answer."

The first sound to answer the reporter was a vicious snarl from Tenebris, his lips curled back as he bristled at what the woman had dared to call the pups- his pups.

"Please." Asgore then spoke sternly, a curt tone to his voice. "Allow me to finish without anyone resorting to such inappropriate words or questions."

"Our apologies, King Dreemur." The older man dipped his head. "We'll keep quiet. Please, continue."

Toki sunk a bit in her chair and held in a sigh. She wanted to go home. She wanted to go to the lake top and just be away from people and places and the noise of building... With no whispers of rumors or people around her.

Aliquam wrapped an arm around her and gave her a gentle hug, "You're doing great." He whispered.

"The only thing my mate shared with this male was his name and his place in his universe. He was his own young man. He had no relation to her whatsoever- it was no different than a man or woman having relationships with two separate people who shared the same name and similar hobbies." Asgore spoke flatly. "While it would be strange to imagine, simply think of it this way. This young man had taken her under his roof. He gave her sanctuary and came to love her in his own way, and in the same, she came to return the feelings, albeit these feelings were not entirely her own, but also the affections of Sequoia, and of the Void’s making. She thought they were real- to her, they felt very real and the grief she must have felt at losing him to come here must have been very real as well." Asgore explained.

The duo nodded, but the man elbowed the woman so she didn't say anything rude.

Toki leaned into Papyrus quietly while Asgore spoke. "I want to go to the lake when this is done. Away from people and noise and sound..." She whispers quietly as the speaker crackled under
Asgore's voice.

"I agree. It will be healthy for all of us." Aliquam whispered in reply under Asgore's voice.

"Furthermore, bringing home with her these children had brought us a great gift. You see, my mate and I are both males. While some males of monsterkind are able to carry young, for instance Caeruleus here, neither of us are capable of bearing. So we can father, but never could we hope to raise our own. We could not seek others of our species to surrogate.” Asgore hummed. “Boss monsters work a bit differently than regular monsters, so asking my ex-wife to be a surrogate for me and Tenebris was not something that either of us could necessarily do. Likewise, Tenebris as a Blaster Beast tragically hasn't any of his kind to seek. Even with our freedom to the surface."

He looked back to Tenebris, and then turned back to the crowd. "During her time in the other world, Toki was a creature unlike she is here. In fact, she was a sub-species of Tenebris' race. In that same line of thought, she was a sub-species of Tenne's kind. The pups she carries now are pure-blooded Blaster Beast. In other words, the pups of a race of which there is a single survivor known to monsterkind. Toki is carrying these pups to term, but once they are born and at a healthy age to be weaned, they will be adopted by Tenebris and myself, so that my mate may finally have the chance to raise a pack as his species were meant to."

The murmers of the crowd got very quiet after that. The humans went almost completely silent. It was one thing to whore around after all, but to be a surrogate and revive an almost extinct species was an entirely different scenario. Most of them were at a loss as to what to say.

"I see... Well, I suppose we should congratulate you on your impending fatherhood, shouldn't we?" The man gave him a lopsided smile. "The both of you."

"So you're saying that Mrs. Gaster is... basically helping to revive an almost extinct species of monster?" The woman asked afterwards, her brow twitching upwards curiously.

"Thank you." Asgore smiled. "And to answer your question, yes. Toki is the salvation for the Blaster Beast race, as well as what Tenebris hopes for his future with his kind after his own tragic tale... And in the same, allows this old man the chance to have children to call my own." He rumbled, before he smiled as the reserved doctor began to quietly purr, his tail twitching behind him. "And we would have it no better way... " He then stepped back and sat down. He turned to Toki with a smile.

Toki offered a faint smile to Asgore in turn, and then returned to the metaphorical spotlight. “And that’s the gist of it.” She says. “I don’t think any more needs to be said on the subject.” She sighed, and rubbed a hand along the back of her neck. “We’ve all been here for hours, and I for one am tired. I think we can call this good enough?”

“But-"

“That’s fine enough.” The man nods, interrupting his partner. “I’m sure you need your rest, and I’m old enough that cutting the day off early wouldn’t be bad for my health either. I’m sure we can call this adjourned, and put to rest any and all rumors that have been going around.”

“Thank you.” She nods. She shifts, and sits down again, with an almost boneless sigh. Her fingers twitched tiredly, and she finds herself wanting to leave immediately.

Aliquam quickly made to help her up to take her leave, praising her gently as he hugged her close.

Toki leaned into him, but nudged him before he could haul her off. “Gotta get the twins from Papa.” She murmurs softly. She kisses his cheek. “Wait here for me please? I’ll be right back.”
The crowd was starting to move and disperse, so there were people everywhere. She stepped away from him and made her way through them over to Tenebris, and wiggled her fingers at him and the kids.

“Hey Papa.” Toki murmurs softly. “I’m here to get my kids. Papy and I… I think we’re gonna take a drive.”

"A drive?" He asked as he released the children’s hands to pass them back to their mother. "Where are you doing?" He asked.

“Anywhere but here.” Toki sighs and gathers her children to her sides. “But realistically, I think we’re going to the lake. Just… I need some peace and quiet. I know it’s not summer time, but I need somewhere that there’s no whispers, no talk, just… quiet.”

"What if we made it a family vacation?" Aliquam then suggested from behind her. "It would do everyone some good wouldn't it?"

He proceeded to scare the bajeesus out of her with how tightly wound she was, and Toki spooked, her mane fluffing out as her pupils narrowed. She leered at him with a huff, and cuddled the twins to her hips. “It would.” She nods, tilting her chin down slightly.

Papyrus chuckled. "Sorry." He murmured as he gave her a gentle kiss.

Tenebris nodded gently, vaguely amused at her spook. "I agree, a vacation is called for, for us all. " He rumbled, "Where else but the lake? I say it's perfect."

"Okay." She nods, and leans into her husband with a soft sigh. She's anxious and so is her beast and it is a bad combo. "Then we'll meet up in... An hour? That will give you time to spread the word to Caeruleus and Grillby, and to get packed? We'll need tents. It's too cold to go without."

Tenebris nodded in agreement and turned, quietly making his way to his mate and son to share word.

Aliquam smiled to Toki and gently wrapped an arm around her. "You did well today."

"I sure hope I did. I know I didn't win any points by telling that woman she couldn't control me." Toki leaned into him with a sigh, and then guided her husband and children through the crowd and towards home. "The government isn't fond of things they have no control over."

"It's just a message they're going to have to get used to. We are our own people, and though we abide their laws, we are not pawns for their manipulation." Aliquam spoke firmly.

“In their eyes, I’m something in-between. That’s why HTM’s can marry monsters- we’re considered citizens of both worlds, not just monsters and not just humans.” Toki exhaled gently and then sighs. “Whatever. I’ll handle it if it becomes a problem.” She nuzzles her head against his shoulder, and then swings both children into her arms. She grunts as Honey’s knees nail her in the belly. “Oh, my Honey, you’re getting big.”

“I’m gonna be as big as Grandpapa.” She beams.

“Not as big as Daddy?”

“Nooo.” She shakes her head. “I wanna be tall, so I can see all the things.”

“So she can see all the things, Papy.” Toki’s teeth twitch into a smile, and she looked at him with faint amusement.
"Every last thing there is to be seen, she will see it, especially if she grows up to be as big as my father." He replied with a gentle laugh.

"Indeed." She laughed quietly. Toki perked up a bit as she spotted the house. "So… divide and conquer? Do you want to pack the bags, and I'll… Oh. Uh… Never mind. All the tents burnt up." Toki frowns. "Well shoot. It's not warm enough to rough it." Particularly not for the kids- Solstice especially.

"How about we pack pillows and blankets and sleep in the car?" He asked.

"I suppose…" She pursed her teeth and hummed. "We might have to leave a window open though. My wings won’t fit correctly." She’s not sure how they’d all fit and sleep in his car though- it wasn’t designed to fold down all the seats to make a bed. Not that she knew, anyway. Older cars yeah, but fancy new ones, not so much.

"We'll make it work, don't worry." He assured her as he gently gave her a kiss.

"Telling me not to worry doesn’t work." She says softly and sighs. "It would be easier if I could just take my wings off." But they didn’t rip off easily. She wished they did. She wanted to lay comfortably on her back. They didn’t have a mattress designed for that- they’d need a memory foam mattress, which they didn’t have. "But I can’t. So I’m going to worry." She was probably going to slip out of the car and make a nest in a tree. "Riding in the car was doable, but she couldn’t imagine sleeping in it with her wings, her husband, and her kids. Not in her husband’s car. A truck maybe, with a canopy, but…"

Toki shook her head with a soft frustrated buzz, and then headed up the steps and into their house. She set the kids down, ushering them into the living room to play while she stalked off her frustrations to the second floor where she could take care packing them a couple spare pairs of clothes, and herself a set or two, in case she decided to take a dip, or carve out a pool in the sand. She was agitated and frustrated and part of that was her beast, part of that was herself.

It took her most of the hour to make sure she had everything packed that they would need. This wasn't the frightened rush of the last time she had packed to leave her home. This was a family outing, and she was taking her sweet time in collecting clothes and trying to let her body and mind calm down before she was stuck in the car with her husband for an hour or so.

When she had a bag for her and Papyrus finished, and one for the twins done too, Toki clumped back down stairs with every intent of getting some camping food packed away next if Papyrus hadn't gotten to it.

She didn't look as irritated and twitchy when she came down stairs. Though Toki being good at masking things was a lifesaver in that regard.

Aliquam had packed them a few meals in a cooler and packed some snacks, before he collected some bedding. Though as Toki came down the stairs, there was a knock at the door.

The knock at the door had her mane warily tensing, but she made her way over regardless. She opened it without preemptive, and put a smile on her face. "Hello?"

Tenebris was standing there, carrying a massive duffle bag. "Hello, Toki dear." He purred happily.

"Asgore and I got a little something you can use… well-" He then looked at the item he was carrying and laughed gently, "Weeeell… not so little. It’s our tent."

Toki looked bewildered at the massive duffle bag in his arms. She took a closer look at the picture on
it, and saw that it was a tent. It was something she could use indeed, though she wasn’t sure how they’d get an utterly massive duffle bag inside of Papyrus’s car. “Not so little indeed, Papa, good lord.” She wanted to know when he’d gotten it, and when he’d found the time. Maybe he’d stayed in a tent a while before she’d gotten back though. “I’m… not sure how we’ll bring that with us. That should fit… Hel- Heck,” she corrected, knowing her kids were somewhere within hearing range, “that should fit all of us for a night or two, if we all bunk closely together.”

"I'll teach Papyrus how to strap this to the roof of your car. I remember we got this after we lost our last one and it could use a good breaking in." He chuckled, "It should fit your wings perfectly."

“That's going to be a big relief.” Toki smiles. “Papyrus was thinking we’d camp in the car, and I wasn’t sure I could… manage that.” She flicks her wings. “But, all of us- the whole family- could probably fit in the tent. A big cuddle pile.” It was still cold enough for one of those. She huffed gently and reached up to try and take part of the tent’s weight for him. “Well, don’t stand in the door way all day, Papa. Come in, come in. I think Papyrus is finishing getting ready.”

He nodded and stepped inside, closing the door behind him before he set down the duffel. "Cuddle piles, mmh, how long has it been since I’ve enjoyed one of those...?" He chuckled quietly.

"With me? Before I fell into the Void." Toki gave him a sad smile. "I'm sure you had others after, but they probably weren't the same." She'd seen one in the vision Phase had given her, and they had been... Sad. Crying. There had been a lot of tears. Shaking her head, because that wasn't something they would have to deal with again, Toki hummed. "Did you and Asgore get some clothes packed up, Papa? Its about time for us to meet up and head out, isn’t it?"

"We won't be staying at the lake past dinner. This is your night with your husband, you deserve it."

"You're not?" She blinks slowly. "Huh... I thought we all were staying to get away for a little bit."

"Maybe, but you deserve it more right now. Asgore and I can have some other time together, and it's too cold for Grillby and Solstice to stay in such conditions as a lakeside."

Toki shook her head. "I don't deserve anything. But you're right... Even if we stayed far from the water, lakes get colder than forested areas do. Even in a cuddle pile, I wouldn't risk them getting sick." She sighs a bit. Part of her had wanted the whole pack there, but another was simply pleased that she'd have time with Papyrus and her children.

He leaned down to press his head to hers and he gave a gentle rumble. "Well tell you what. When you get back tomorrow, I’ll see about opening up the space in my living room and we’ll all gather in there like a pack."

“Tomorrow… Or the next day.” She tilts her head and gives him a faint smile as she bumped her noggin against his. “This isn’t just for me. My beast is… on edge. If I don’t get her away from all of this talk for a little while, she’s going to snap, and it’s not going to be pretty.” She exhaled softly, and made a soft warbling sound to him. “But that does sound nice, Papa. Gathering together would be nice. The pack that cuddles together is the pack that stays together. Those not as in touch with their beasts, or those lacking them, don’t quite understand. I didn’t before, but I do now.” She blinks up at him slowly. She now knew what Tenne and his boys had been talking about when they’d pulled her into their little nest and welcomed her into their little pack, despite her hesitance and constantly pulling away.

Beasts needed other beasts.

"It will be healthy for all of us.” He rumbled in agreement, before he looked up at Aliquam as he
came back.

The younger man was chuckling as he reached up and pressed his palm to Tenebris' face. "Father, you're hovering over her again." He laughed gently.

"Blaster beasts are a social race and she understands!" The beast keened as his tail dropped behind him once more before he chirped and ratted in irritation as he leaned back in surrender.

“I do understand,” Toki laughs, and made a soft chirping sound to soothe Tenebris. She chittered a soft beastly sound at him, a promise for cuddles later when they weren’t busy, and then leaned up to smooch Papyrus’ cheek. “He’s not wrong. Blaster beasts are a social race, at least within their pack. When you’re not considered pack, they can treat you kindly, but keep you at arms reach, until you earn your place. But when you are pack, they’re very social. Physical contact, vocal sounds, it’s all part of being in a pack.” She smiled up at him. “Papa hasn’t had contact with many who understand, since, well…” Papyrus had locked up Sentinel, and Toki had no idea the status of Sans’ beast. “So he’s… touch starved to be with his own kind, I guess? Or someone who understands, at least. It will ease in time. When you and Sentinel learn more, you’ll understand too.” She taps his nasal ridge gently, and then hums. “Is everything ready? It looks like we’ll have a tent to rest in, instead of the car.”

"Yes, I just need to finish loading things in and get the pups in as well, then we will be ready." He rumbled. He pressed a kiss to Toki’s head, gave his father a patient yet un-amused smile, and turned to do as he said he would, calling the children to prepare them to go.

Toki watched him and hummed, wondering what the strange look on his face was for. Was he... Jealous? Or possessive? She's not sure. Either way, she'd talk to him about it later if it became an issue. "Well, I need to go get our bags down to the car. The garage is a nice touch up to the house rebuild, by the way." She smiles wryly. "Go get your ride of choice and Asgore, Papa. We'll meet you in... Fifteen minutes? Maybe less, if the kids are cooperative.

"I thought you'd like the garage." Tenebris chortled, before he gave a nod. "Alright, see you soon then." With that, the older male started out.

Once he was gone, Aliquam folded his arms and closed his eyes for a moment. His fingers curled, before he made a face, though after seconds he opened his eyes again, whatever just happened having passed quickly.

Toki didn't see his face, but she saw his clenched fists. She frowned, and made her way over to him. The kids were still occupied in the living room, 'getting ready' so they claimed, so she took a moment to gently slide her fingers along his shoulders, and then nuzzle her face into his back. One of her smaller hands slid down to where his fist was tightly clenched around his cane, and she rubbed his knuckles softly. "Are you okay? We don't have to go camping if you're hurting today." She had completely forgotten his leg for a moment. Camping was going to be rough on it. Well... Shit, she felt terrible. She'd bring extra pillows to help pad his leg.

"Mmh." A purr-like exhale was released when she nuzzled his back and he looked at her with a smile. "I'm just fine, my darling. Sentinel is simply voicing his opinions to me, it's nothing too important." The hand clenched around his cane loosened and he lifted two fingers to gently hook onto hers, giving them a loving squeeze as he slowly turned to wrap an arm around her. "I want you to have a nice getaway night. It matters more to me that you get a chance to relax and be happy."

“I'm happy with you wherever I am.” She tells him, and leans up to nuzzle him. “And Sentinel’s opinions matter, dear. But, if it was something I needed to know, I’m sure you’d tell me.” She gives him a warm smile, and then hums softly. Her fingers rub his, and she’s content to cuddle up to him
for a moment. “Alright, my love. Let’s get the kids wrangled up, and I’ll pack some extra pillows. I plan to make a nest in the tent, and no nest is complete without being extra soft.”

“Nest?” Skylar poked his head out of the living room, his arms full of pillows. “Nest! Nests are fun. We gotta bring all the pillows.”

“I’ll go get mine!” Honey chirped, and hoofed it up the stairs to fetch the pillows from her room.

Toki laughed. “Now I’ve done it. Well, let’s get stuff to the car.” She lifted a hand up and stroked over his cheekbones, rubbing the prominent edge gently. “If something’s bothering you, you can talk to me, Pap. Even when I’m upset about something, I’ll listen, okay? I love you and Sentinel both.”

"Of course, I best go get my pillows too once everything’s loaded. Think you can handle latching the pups into their seats?” He asked.

"Of course!” She beams. "Getting the kids wrangled is easier with four hands, dear." She does a four-handed jazz hand at him, and then scoops up their kids as Honey gallops down the stairs. Smooching both of their cheeks, Toki grins and makes her way down to the car to open the trunk and then get the kids in their seats. "Did you two bring toys?” She figured they were stuffed in their pillows, or elsewhere.

She got bumped a bit on the stairs as Stag came behind her in their bipedal form. They had Snuggle in one arm, and Sobek wrangled in the other. The deer beast gave her a soft bleat, and then made their way to the back seat, stuffing the baby summons into the floorboard of the car, before changing shape and climbing in to nest with the little ones.

Stag was coming along too.

Stag coming along wouldn’t bother Aliquam in the least.

Collecting Pillows and a few thick blankets, Aliquam went out to the car and loaded them up. A gaze into the distance could see Cae and Grillby packing a cooler into their truck. Looks like dinner would be covered easily enough.

Toki got the twins buttoned into their carseats, and fetched toys out of their pillows, before leaving them to occupy themselves while she headed back inside and upstairs. She fetched their clothing bags and extra pillows and blankets from her hidden nest, and then trundled down the stairs with her many arms fully loaded.

The spacious trunk was going to be overly stuffed.

“We still need to tie the tent duffle to the top of the car.” She hums to Papyrus as she gently bumps him with his hip so she can wedge in with him and pack the trunk.

"Right." And with that he padded back into the living room, snagged the duffle, and rejoined her. He grabbed some straps and hefted the tent duffle up higher onto his shoulder, before hobbling to the side of the car. "This won’t take long at all if you’d like to start warming up the car.”

“Sure.” Toki nods. She shifts, and slips her hand into his front pocket, groping around for the keys. Once she finds them, she pads around to the drivers door, and slips inside, trying to get her wings situated some. Eventually she gave up, and simply started the car, making sure the parking break was on so it didn’t roll off. Once the engine was purring nicely, she stroked the wheel and hummed softly. “I haven’t drove a car in… years.” She murmurs lightly, and then carefully climbs out of the car. Bracing her hand on her lower back, Toki grunted and made her way around the car. “Alright—anything I can do to help with the duffle?”
"You could brace the hook, make sure Ht doesn't come undone when I tighten it." He told her, and grabs the hook that would secure one end of the duffle bag.

She nods, and leans up to grab the end of it. She holds the ends of the hooks still as he ties it down, and then gives an experimental tug when he's done.

It moves only a little, but it should stay just fine going down the road. "Looks good to me." She says.

He nodded gently then gave her a smile. "Get comfy, I'll go make sure everyone else is ready."

"Alright." She gave him a cheeky salute, and did a quick check of the house to make sure it was locked up and that they had everything, before crawling into the front seat. She settled with her back against the seat and dealt with any cramps her wings had. They were flexible after all, so bending them wasn't an issue, just uncomfortable somewhat. She relaxed back, fluffed her mane, and then settled in to quietly stroke her belly as she listened to the kids playing with their toys in their car seats.

Papyrus returned as Cae's truck began pulling out into the road that would lead out of the village.

"Alrightie, we're off." He announced as he climbed into the car.

"Sounds good." She smiles. She could hear the telltale roar of Tenebris' car making its way through the houses too, and she gave a soft bemused sound, before leaning over to cuddle her head to his shoulder. Getting away was going to be so nice for everyone- even if they were the only ones staying the night.

"This will be healthy for the both of us. I'm looking forward to this." He purred as he replied to her cuddle with a soft kiss to her head as he started the car out of the garage. "Everyone could use the evening off, but I think it will help your beast as much as you to have a night out." He rumbled.

"It's kind of sad that no one else is staying the night with us, but at the same time I understand." If she hadn't been pregnant, keeping the tent heated all night wouldn't be an issue. As it was, small summons for long periods of time was exhausting. Toki nuzzled into his shoulder, hooking her horn around his arm so she could be a bit more comfortable without jabbing him, and then settled contently for the long drive up. "My beast might stretch her legs some today. She's anxious and cooped up, and some fresh forest air would be good for her, instead of the smell of machinery and construction."

"Knowing Father, he'll make it up for not staying tonight. He seemed excited earlier... I wonder just what's going on in that ancient mind of his." He chuckled quietly.

"With old men, you never know." She snorts. "Same to be said with young one's too. Never know what mischievous things could be cooking up in your noggin."

"And according to his Majesty, Father always had something growing in his mind, whether a scheme or simple mischief..."

"The mischief would probably be the Felis in him." She laughs into his shoulder. "Considering the mischief our cats get into... And the fact that the same cat toys work on Gracie and on Papa when he's in one of his moods, I'd say it says something."

"Just keep me from grabbing the laser pointer when I feel like spitting him. I'd hate to have him punish me for that."

"All you have to do is bring it out again and wiggle it just right, and he can't resist pouncing it." She snorts. "I'll protect you from the big bad alpha, don't worry."
He laughed at that, and a Papyrus laugh was always healthy to hear. "I do not fear my father." He then spoke.

"That’s good. You shouldn't fear your dad. I don't either." She answers softly. "Not anymore, at least."

His smile faded at hearing that and he reached to take her hand, "You still remember the incident, huh?"

She laced her fingers with his. Even her primary hands were much more delicate than his own, not to mention her much smaller secondary ones. "I do." Toki murrs. "But I've worked past it. When I told your father that I was fine with him walking around in his beast form, I wasn't lying. I had time to heal and get used to it." Of course, getting speared deep by Tenne in his beast form was definitely one method of exposure therapy that she wouldn't recommend to everyone.

"I'm glad." His hand squeezed hers, and then slowly let her go to continue steering.

She peeked open one eye socket and watched him curiously. "Out of curiosity, do you have another form you can choose to take for when your beastly side is in control?"

"I believe I might. When we last let Sentinel out, he did urge me to try to do something, perhaps it was just that."

"Maybe we can give it a go sometime. I wonder what it looks like, given that you're all bone." She gently pokes a finger into his knee. "Try as you might to hide extra bones, but I can see right through you."

He chuckled, "Maybe tonight. It'll be just us after all."

"Us and the kids. But, they sleep early. We'll put them in the nest with Snuggle and Sobek, and then the night is ours." She smiles at him.

"Precisely." He chuckled softly.

“Indeed.” She nuzzled his shoulder, and settled down for the drive.
Chapter 123

Strider Notes: Chapter 123 is an amusing name. I like it. XD Lots of fuckin’ chapter’s we’ve done. Also… Honestly, I feel like we owe it to you guys to have something soft and not so… yeah. So have a cute, soft chapter~

Unlike the village, which had melted off most of the snow, just an hours drive up towards the lake proved that there was a lot more snow yet to melt off. The lake was frozen over, several inches thick with ice, and it seemed like the coming spring hadn’t even touched it yet.

The snow was untouched, no animals or people having disturbed it all winter. It was pure and thick, nearly as deep as their children were tall.

It was perfect.

When everyone was parked, Toki slid from the car, and let her legs sink into the snow. She inhaled the crisp, cool air, and smiled. It was different than the last time they had been here. But… it was good. She turned to help get the kids out of the back, and let them run off into the snow to frolic, while the adults unloaded.

“It is very different than the last time I was here.” Asgore blinked as he stepped from the car. “I was thinking it would be thawed, and that we might swim.”

“Me too, don’t worry.” She laughs. “But it’s just fine. I like it.” She inhales softly and smiles wider. “It just means we need to melt the snow to make the campsite. But that’s fine. We can build up a windbreak and enjoy ourselves in the snow. Maybe ice skate a little bit, if the ice is thick enough.”

Tenebris got out of his car and rumbled as he looked around. "It's beautiful." He purred.

"I agree." Aliquam spoke as he carefully got out as well, making sure he wasn't at risk of slipping.

The snow was remarkably not slick, much ice not having formed over the fluffy snow. There was no risk of slipping, except on the snow already trampled down.

Toki hefted out a bag, and then grunted as she felt something slam into her leg and try to skitter up.

Snuggle looked utterly beside himself, distressed as he tried to climb up her leg and away from the chill.

“Oh goodness, Snuggle.” Toki sighed. She set the bag back down, and stooped down, picking up the oversized grub. His cold feet pulled at her clothes, and he wrapped around her body like a massive, shivering scarf, chittering at her unhappily. She patted his back and sighed. “Alright, I’ll hold you until we get the tent up.” She rubs his head gently, and then loads her arms.

Stag gets out in their deer form, with Sobek cradled in their golden antlers, and the deer proceeds to prance through the snow. The deer didn’t seem to mind the cold and chill, and showed as much by bounding around and keeping the kids corralled.
Grillby’s pant legs steamed a little as he got out, but he didn’t seem too bothered by the snow. He had lived in Snowdin after all- snow was different than rain. He had Solstice strapped to his chest to keep her warm, and it left him with his hands free as he went to grab the cooler for Caeruleus.

Asgore watched, and then approached Toki with a soft hum. He tittered, and took the bags from her, before shooing her along. “I know you’re not as far along as you were with the twins last time we were here, but still, I’d rather you relax. Leave the luggage to us, yes? Why don’t you and Papyrus go find a suitable spot to set up your tent?”

Toki puffed up a little bit, but sighed. “You know, I have not one, not two, but four perfectly good arms, right?”

"He does know how to set up the tent and his height would make it easy for everyone.” Papyrus came and wrapped an arm around her as he pulled her away slowly, "Come on, let's go find a nice place for our tent.”

She deflated at his touch and made a soft chittering noise at him. Toki leaned into her mate with a soft sound and nodded. “Okay.” Her wings twitched, and she relented, letting the other men in her life unload everything as her husband dragged her away.

The snow was thick and cold, even to her bones, but it wasn’t slick. She walked with him slowly, going at his pace as she knew he’d be struggling with his prosthetic in snow that came to his knee. "You know... This sort of snow is perfect for a den," she muses to her husband, and then blinks slowly. That was a bit odd to say. Alright then. "Anyway... What about that flat area by the trees? I can melt the snow, and we’ll have flat ground to do whatever we want." It would take a good chunk of magic, but it wasn’t out of the question.

"Not a bad idea, but I don’t want you using up the magic. You’ve got a better use for it. I think we can use the snow as a bit of extra cushion, you know?"

She sighed softly. “But Papy, honestly, I’d be okay using some magic to melt the snow. But if you’re sure, we’ll still need to flatten it, or we’ll sink in as soon as we climb into the tent. Either flatten it, or dig it down some.”

"We’ll set the tent up over it and let the pups weigh it down with their weight." He chuckled.

She snorts. “They’re skeletons. If they were flesh and bone, I’d say it’s a legitimate method, but heck, Snuggle weighs more than the twins do.” The grub chitters at her, and she pats his rump, before nudging Papyrus. She eyes a small curve of trees that’s fairly sheltered, and where there’s not much foliage. There is, after all, poison ivy and nettles and the like in the undergrowth that she has no desire to deal with. “There.” It’s close to where they had camped prior, but further up towards the trees and away from the lake.

"I like it." Papyrus praised, making his way over to examine it before he nodded in approval. "This will do very nicely, good eye, Toki."

She made a soft chittering sound at him again, a very much Insectis noise, and then unwrapped Snuggle from her person. She looped the grub over Papyrus, letting all four feet of him drape like the world’s clingiest scarf, and then she stooped down, settling onto all fours to begin digging in the snow and clearing off at least half of the surface snow by hand. If he said no magic, then she’d just do it manually, stubborn as she is. Besides, being on all fours stretched her back, and she had three arms to dig with while one braced.

He voiced a brief sound of complaint as she began to dig manually before he huffed in defeat and
came over, doing his best to help kick some out of the way.

Though soon they were aided as Tenebris came over and chuckled. "Digging old fashion way hm? It's wise to save your magic, and four arms I’d wager make it easier." He rumbled as he then knelt down to help her, digging into the snow and part of the ground to break up the hard surface.

Toki hummed. “I was going to use my magic to melt off some of the snow, but Papy said not to. So,” She grins, “I have a workaround. I’m pregnant, not useless. And Papa, really? I would think your massive shovel hands dig better than my tiny skeleton hands. The snow falls between my bones most of the time.”

"Do you want my help or not, you little wiseass?" He stuck his tongue out at her. "I retain enough nesting knowledge to make this as comfortable as it can get for you and Aliquam."

Toki formed her tongue specifically to blow a spectacularly immature raspberry at him, and then chucked a puff of snow at him. It wasn’t firm enough to form a good handful, so at most he got a fluff of snowflakes over his shoulders. “Help would be good.” Her wings shift, and she flutters them, blowing away loose and powdery snow. “Do you know I lived in a den made of snow for a while in the other world? It was very cold.”

"Cold at first, I would have bet. But properly packed dens can retain a substantial amount of heat.” He shook his form to get the snow off before he huffed. "How long did you stay in it?" He asked.

“Not all that long, actually. I spent a bit of time taking care of Tenne’s kids while working for Grillby.”

“I had forgotten that you’d worked for the other me,” Grillby hummed as he approached, arms heavy with baggage and coolers. “I should offer you a job.”

“I’d rather not.” She laughs. “Your bar here is hell compared to down there. Anyway, I spent time caring for them while working there, since Tenne was busy working. They adopted me into their home the night that Tenne came home, and I lived on the couch again.”

Asgore dropped the tent duffle, and then slid in next to Tenebris and Toki, laughing softly as he used his large, fluffy hands to scoop snow. He winked up at Papyrus, hoping to keep the young skeleton from getting irked that he couldn’t help his mate dig a nest. If it was a community thing, then it was less of a ‘mates digging together’ thing. “Toki,” He hummed softly, “please be careful, alright? I know you’re strong, but don’t strain yourself.”

“I won’t.” She sighs. “My back hurts, but it’s been hurting for a while. Nothing is going to change it. There’s six little ones in my belly, and six is going to put a bit of strain on my back.”

Aliquam puffed up a little as he was going to tell her again to be careful, but Cae thumped his shoulder before he could start up and pulled him away to start setting up the tent for placement. "Come on, bro, you were always better at setting these things up anyhow."

Point to Caeruleus for the clever ruse to distract the worrywart.

"Poor lad." Tenebris sighed quietly once the brothers were out of earshot.

“Eh?” Toki glanced to Tenebris, arching her brow. “Why ‘poor lad’?” She inquired, and moved over, beginning to build up the walls of the ‘nest’ that would hold the tent, and cradle their bedding under it.

"I can tell his beast is influencing him. He’s growing more and more protective as your pregnancy
progresses...” He explained. "I'm wondering if this has to do with his retirement...

Toki grunts before she can reply, and huffs as her palms slip in the snow, making her momentarily face-plant and ‘eat snow’.

“Bones in snow doesn’t quite work, my dear.” Asgore laughs softly, and reaches out a gentle hand to help straighten her up and make sure she hadn’t hurt herself. “Let your pack members prepare your nest for you, alright? Then, perhaps I might donate some magic tonight, if that would be alright. My sweet, eager mate over here has been hogging our children.” He teasingly bumps Tenebris’ shoulder, and gives him a warm smile.

Tenebris gave Asgore a look but it was lighthearted and teasing.

“Ah...” She nodded slowly and sat down at Asgore’s urging. “I wouldn’t mind if you wanted to donate magic, Asgore. They’re as much yours as they are Papa’s. Anyways, Papa, I see what you mean. It... might be the cause? His beast and I had a talk, and I think he’s fairly insecure about... his leg.” She says quietly. “I’m honestly not sure how things are going to go as it continues. He... may get grumpy with you, Papa.” She says honestly. “He was very firm in the fact that he doesn’t fear you in the car...” She was also fairly certain that his beast was an alpha, even if Papyrus himself was not an alpha personality.

The older man took in what she had to say, and gave a soft hum as he considered her words.

"I wonder if a night of freedom is what he needs." He rumbled. "I think in a few nights we should all gather in my home and have a night of beasts." He offered, "I'll prepare raw meat, a proper nest, and leave the doors closed so that we may have a night simply to let our inner instincts run rampant. Aliquam is resilient. It would do him some good to let his beast blow off some steam."

“It would do everyone some good, I think.” Toki says softly, nodding as she exhales quietly. “I wonder how my beast will react to everyone... She’s only ever been around Tenne’s beast, and around Papyrus. She hasn’t even met Sentinel yet.” She muses lightly. “It should be interesting.”

“Mmm, I could take the twins and help Grillby watch the children.” Asgore nods. He didn’t have a beast of his own, thusly was counting himself out. “I never mind spending time with the kids. Thumper can help me keep the twins rounded up.” He chortles.

"Now that I think about it." Tenebris then looked at Grillby. "Has Caeruleus let his beast out any time since he moved in with you?" He asked.

“No.” The fire elemental shook his head. He was busy unpacking things, and digging out a space in the snow to put a fire pit so they could cook. His hands were steaming, but it didn’t seem to bother the old general too much. “He’s acted strange, sometimes, but I don’t believe I’ve met his beast. Or at least, I might not have realized it. Either way, I do not mind. I love him regardless of if he wants to introduce me or not.”

Toki nods. “I’ve never seen an inkling of it either. I did have a brief meeting with Pap’s beast before I was taken into the void though. We, uh...” She flushes. “Anyway,” She coughs, “It’s going to be a lot of first meetings. I’m probably going to keep partial control, mind you. My beast... if she feels threatened at all, I can’t guarantee she won’t lash out.”

And with Toki’s power, she could dust any one of them. Toki would never forgive herself for that.

Noticing what he was doing, Tenebris let Asgore dig the last of the nest while he went to help Grillby dig. "I am rather surprised, Aliquam showed more feature of a Felis, while Caeruleus is more
of a Canis, and yet they behave like the complete opposite than what might be the norm behavior of each.”

“I don’t necessarily act like a bug, yet I’m fully Insectis.” Toki arches her brows at her Papa, and then shifts back down to help Asgore dig once more since Tenebris had went to help Grillby. She rounded it out, and once it seemed good, she straightened and gave a pleased buzz. “You act like a cat though, Papa. Papyrus might have even packed the laser light.” Was she flicking him shit? Oh yes. Yes she was.

Grillby snorted a plume of smoke, and laughed quietly into the top of his daughter’s head as she giggled a high, twinkling sound at his laughter.

"I don’t see the relevance to him packing the light." Tenebris murmured, pressing his lips together. He totally did see the relevance.

"Oh we all know you need your exercise." She grins, looking completely unrepentant. "What better way to get you into shape to be a dad to little ones again than to get you to spin in circles until you trip over your hands and roll through the grass, hm?"

Even Asgore laughed at that one as he straightened and dusted off his hands. "That was a most memorable crash."

He bristled at Asgore. "Do not encourage them, fluffybuns." He hissed quietly. "I might need to work off a little retirement but it does not mean I am so willing to embarrass myself for a simple light."

"A little retirement?" Toki gives him a playful look. "I dunno. Might be more than just a little. Too much tea, too many naps..." She pats her middle. "Going to be as big as me."

Asgore guffaws, and patted his lover on the back. "I can assure you, he’s in perfect shape. Round is a shape. One that I love very much." His hand, hidden from view of their companions, wandered down to goose Tenebris on the ass. "Yes, nice and round and perfect for my hands."

Toki squinted slowly. "Why do I feel like I just witnessed something dirty?"

Tenebris did gasp and proceed to leap over the fire pit and swipe snow at Asgore, bristling as his cheeks darkened.

Asgore took the improvised snowball to the face with grace, and wiped it from his beard as he laughed. "I'm sorry, dear, I couldn't resist getting in on the fun and feeling young again."

Toki laughs and stretches, planting her hand on her lower back with a soft groan. "I'm too old to be carrying six. They're not even big and they're already heavy on my spine." She had an inkling six was designed to be carried on all fours. She refused to walk on all fours constantly. Just... No. She wouldn't be able to reach anything in the house if she did. "So... Did we pack chairs this time or do we need to go fetch some logs to sit on?" She didn't recall packing chairs, but maybe one of the others had lawn chairs they'd gotten after the firebombs.

"Of course we packed chairs." Tenebris rumbled, before he chuffed and shook himself slightly, tail rattling as he sulked at his mate. The larger, pale beast got up to go collect the chairs.

"I wasn't sure if you even had chairs, to be honest." She had brought all of her camping equipment last time. This time, she had none. She didn't know what they had and what they didn't have. Toki hummed, and then summoned a few small bees to go collect tinder for a fire. It took a little dip of
magic, but Stripe and her companions didn't pull much from her.

Asgore sighed and looked put over the snow. "Thumper is missing out." He decides. "But he wanted to stay over at Twitch's house again, or he'd be here, helping us corral the twins."

"I haven't gotten to see nearly enough of that boy." Toki blinks. "He's sure busy with Twitch... Think he likes her?"

"Undoubtedly." The king nods. "A child's crush is sweet and innocent. Who am I to deny him time with her?"

"His father." Grillby hums. "He is missed here, but he can come next time, when its thawed and he can swim with the twins."

"Indeed." Toki beams.

At around this time, Cae and Aliquam came back. "Is the den ready?" Aliquam asked, his tone a lot more settled than it was before he was snatched by his brother.

"It is." Toki nods lightly, and motions to the mostly smooth swath of snow at her feet. Padding to her husband, she takes Snuggle from him, and then leans up to kiss his cheek. "Thank you for getting the tent unrolled and ready to be set up."

"Happy to help." He kissed hers in return then gave her a soft squeeze. "Looks like you guys started on the fire pit."

"Grillby did." She nods. "I suppose he does want to warm up. I sent a couple bees into the woods for some tinder." Toki bites down on her metaphorical tongue and waits for the stink eye she's going to get for using her magic.

"Only a few? Good." He nuzzled her lightly. "Just make sure not to keep them out too long."

"Just long enough to get some kindling for the fire." She nods, relieved he wasn't grumbling at her.

Asgore hummed, and set to work putting up the tent for them.

Toki smiled, and leaned into Papyrus with a soft sigh. "It's going to be very nice to camp together tonight. I'm very good at soft nests." This would be his first time-sharing a nest with her. A bed was one thing. A nest was another.

"It will be wonderful indeed." Aliquam agreed, Tenebris chuckled quietly as he returned, having heard the last of that statement. "I'm starting to get jealous that we decided not to stay the night as well." He laughed.

Toki laughed. "Well you made your choice. You could always stay, I'm not going to tell you no. But you didn't pack any more clothes for sleeping, only swimming. Which... For you, Papa, is gloves. You would be quite cold in the buff." She cuddles into Papyrus, content to be near him while she chatters to his father. "Besides, I'm sure you'll see my superior nesting skills on our 'beast' night."

"You thought I packed with the intention to swim?!" Tenebris boomed with laughter at that. "I wasn't going to go anywhere NEAR the water!" he shook his head, "I suppose I might have brought a spare set of clothes in case it got chilly" he then chortled a little quieter, rubbing his head

Aliquam stared at his father, before he chuckled and shook his head. "Do you want to stay for the nesting, father?"
"I wouldn't want to impose, we don't have a second tent..."

Toki noticed the stare out if the corner of her socket, and her case shifted so she watched Papyrus thoughtfully, wondering what his stare had been about. "I figured you'd dig a little pool in the sand for us all to lounge in, and we could fill it with water for me to heat. Sort of a self made hot tub. But certainly not in this chill." She snorts. "It would be tight quarters with all of us, but it could be done." She wants to know if her husband is alright with it, or if he simply wants the night with her instead, so she bumps him discretely in the ribs with her secondary elbow, and makes a tiny noise at him.

He grunted at the elbow, before he rubbed his side and chuckled, "It's quite a massive tent... I suppose it wouldn't hurt to have Father and his Majesty tonight."

"You two are stayin' the night?" Cae piped up.

Aliquam peered over then he chuckled, "If Grillby and Caeruleus stuck around we'd have a heater in the nest, wouldn't we?"

"You forget that I put off heat too, Papy. Though, I asked Papa if we all were going to stay. He seemed convinced it was too cold for Grillby and Solstice to stay the night." Toki wagged a brow at them all. It seemed the old man was going to be out voted and Toki was going to have a full nest.

Grillby rolled his shoulders and straightened with a grunt. "Out in the open it would be too cold for Solstice. I am old, my flames more established. In a shelter with others that have flame magic, she would be just fine. If you want us to stay, then I don't mind staying. If you'd rather have a night in the wild with your wife, I don't mind going home. I can drive out tomorrow or whenever you wish to help dismantle the tent." Since it did require someone of substantial height to put it up.

"Seems everyone's staying tonight then." Aliquam laughed gently, before he hugged Toki softly. "We might need to make a food run in that case."

"That depends on what Grillby and Sans brought." She cuddled under his arm, and looked to her brother in law. "So, what's in the cooler~?"

"Steaks, brought some salad. Stuff we don’t need plates and fancy forks for, that kinda stuff." Cae answered as he sat down and made grabby hands at Grillby for his daughter.

Grillby hummed and pulled Solstice from her carrier, before handing her over to her mother.

Solstice beamed up at Sans, and stuffed a fist into her mouth with an adorable coo. “Ubbahh!”

“Steaks and salad, huh?” She smiles. “That should work fine enough for tonight’s dinner.” Toki glances to Tenebris and chuckles quietly. “Of course, if we find ourselves short of food, the mighty hunter could always go hunting.”

"Damn right." Tenebris seemed to fluff up with pride at that suggestion from Toki.

"I packed seasoning too so if Dad did go hunting, we could still eat like kings and Queens." Cae laughed, giving Solstice a soft hug before lowering his gaze to press kisses to her a few times in dear appreciation for his daughter.

Solstice squeaked happily, and clung to his face, nuzzling her warm blue flaming cheeks against his.

Toki laughed at her niece’s adorable antics, and smiled softly. “I definitely wouldn’t turn down flavored meat. I spent enough time eating unflavored things during my stint in the other world to last a life time.” She shifts, and grins at Tenebris, before going to help him set up chairs. Her bees
returned with kindling, and piled it into the middle of the cleared fire pit. It wasn’t enough for a full fire, but would do to get them started. Toki returned them to their realm, and then huffed softly. “I miss having full access to my magic.”

“Well with three sources of magic I wonder if it would be safe for some extra magical output, right pops?” Cae piped up.

Tenebris hummed quietly then nodded slowly. "If Asgore, as a boss monster, shared his magic, I would suppose it would mean you have enough for safe output.”

Toki waved a hand in the air and snorted as she set up chairs for everyone. Once they were set up, she stretched her arms, and then straightened. “Then I’d basically be using you all as extra batteries, just because I’m impatient. I’ll manage. I don’t want to leave everyone drained dry like some sort of magic vampire.”

“I still do plan to donate, but perhaps later tonight, after we’ve frolicked in the snow some.” Asgore smiles, as he finishes the tent.

Scooting back over to Papyrus, Toki leans up to kiss him, and then smiles quietly. “I kind of want to see if the ice is thick enough to ice skate on. Or at least slide around on it. But first… Now that the tent is up,” She glances to the finished product, “I have a nest to make.”

It seemed to get all the Gasters’ attention when she said nest, but Aliquam had immediately snapped out of staring at her to instead prompt her with a gentle question. “Shall I assist you with preparing the nest, love?” He asked.

Though she would admit, as soon as she said nest, it was almost creepy how fast three sets of eyes locked onto her and seemed to stare. She was relieved by his question, though her brother in law interrupted her before she could speak.

"Grillby and I will get started on preparing what we have.” Cae announced, putting Sol over one shoulder and patting her back as he got up.

Tenebris noticed both boys attempting to make themselves useful and he leaned back, rumbling quietly as he took his seat and leaned back, purring quietly

Solstice squealed, and giggled happily. Up on her Mother's shoulder though gave her access to seeing her Grandpa better, and she cooed, making grabby hands at him.

"I would love your help, Pap.” She wasn't going to tell him no. Toki fluffed up, and then padded off to fetch blankets and pillows for the first load into the tent.

When she got back with her armload from the car, she clamored in, and started lining the tent bottom with pillows to give it a solid base for them to work with.

With an armful of blankets, Aliquam was right behind Toki, though he stopped at the entrance of the tent, simply passing her pillows and blankets as she called for them.

Tenebris and Asgore had taken the chance to go for a walk, leaving the brothers and their mates.

Toki clicked softly as the older couple wandered off, hearing their footsteps leaving, and she set to work building the nest. Papyrus was a big help fetching and passing her things once she was actually in the tent, and even the children started to tote pillows too, though only one at a time.

With swiftness born of practice on a scale only slightly smaller than the nest she was building now,
Toki had crafted a soft, warm nest that lined wall to wall of the tent, with small cubbies of sorts where couples could curl together while still being close as a family without invading too much bubble space.

Once it was finished, she carefully settled in to lay on her side. She never used to be a side layer, but wings made things different- and this pregnancy too. Something about being on her side felt right. “The nest is done.” She chirps to Papyrus. She’d used almost all of the blankets, leaving enough to cover everyone as a spare, in case they got too cold. The nest was soft and plush, and she couldn’t feel the cold or the hardness of the snow under the tent. “Would you like to come in?”

She trusted Stag to watch her children as they romped off to play more in the snow again. Besides… There was no more lake monster anymore, with Stag having been healed.

"It looks perfect." He praised, stepping into the tent before he carefully kicked off his shoes, coming to sit down in the heart of the nest. "Mm... This is nice." He hummed contentedly once he was nestled into the blankets and pillows he brought from home.

Snuggle slipped off of Papyrus, and disappeared into the mountain of blankets to make a little warm spot for someone to find and cuddle up to.

Toki buzzed lightly at him and nodded, her mane fluffing up as she snuggled in contently. “It is nice.” She agrees. “It’s warm and soft and sheltered… It’s a good nest.” She’s pleased with it, even if the walls of the tent aren’t thick enough for her taste. It soothes enough of her instincts to make her beast happy, and that’s good enough for her. Toki hums a tiny sound, and wiggles her wings at him. “You’re very far away.” She notes his location for stretching out, before wiggling a little bit closer to him.

"Hm?” He lifted his head at her comment about the distance between them and he chuckled, slowly lifting and turning himself to be close to her. Once he settled, his arms looped around her to give her a squeeze.

She cuddled in and smooched along his jaw line. "Much better." A couple pleased chirps rattled up through her ribs. Toki peered up at him lightly. "Is the nest soft enough for you?"

"I adore any bed that I have you to cuddle with while I’m in it.” He answered as he gave her love-nuzzles, a smile on his face as he peered up at her.

She cooed at him, and gave him tender sounding chirps. "I meant comfort wise, you goober. Think you can lay in this well enough without too much pain?" Her hands slid down and she rubbed his hip gently. Fire magic bubbled at her fingers, and she pulsed warmth through his bones. "I want you to be as comfortable as you can be tonight."

"I can slip a pillow under my hip if it gets too uncomfortable, but I like this, yes."

"Alright.” She gave a soft warble and wiggled closer to him. Toki chirped again, making soft content noises. "I miss being able to lay on my stomach." She admits lightly. "I'm not a side sleeper.” Not with four arms. She made due because she had to, but she was not a side sleeper.

"Oh?” He looked at her, and then he chuckled and grabbed a pillow, putting it on his chest before he wrapped his arms around her. "Roll with me." He urged her, gently tugging her in the direction that would put him on his back.

Toki grunts lightly, and uses one of her primary arms to help them roll. The sturdier limb doesn’t have a problem getting them up and over, and she spreads her legs so she’s astride his hips without
putting too much pressure on them. She was on her stomach though, her belly pressing into the empty space hidden by his shirt and coat while her chest was propped up by the pillow. "Ooo... I like this." Her eye lights expand in delight, and she makes an adorable purr-chirp noise, before all four arms go limp around him and she drapes, fully relaxed and 'boneless'.

He looked up at her with a gleam in his eyes to match the smile growing on his face. Papyrus reached up to gently scratch his claws through the soft green fur of her mane. "So beautiful. I'm so glad you're comfortable now~" He cooed.

"Mmm..." Her eyes close as his fingers carded through her mane again. It was nice. The peace and quiet- or relative quiet, because the sound of the children shrieking and the bleating of Stag as they chased and were chased by the twins was definitely not absolute silence- was doing wonders for her stress levels. "Are you comfortable too?" She questions softly, wanting to know if she needed to adjust her hips any for him, or take more weight off of his pelvis.

Grillby poked his head in. "Food is all set up for whenever anyone wants any. If you need something cooked, let me know." He hums softly. "Room for two and a half more in there? Solstice needs to warm up some before Sans helps her make her first snowman." The first snowman was a right of passage in Snowdin.

"Come on in! Just don’t mind the position, this is beneficial to Toki's comfort while accommodating her pregnancy." Aliquam called to them.

Grillby nodded, and slipped in. He accepted Solstice from Sans once he’d kicked off his shoes, and then crawled forth a few steps into the nest to let his husband in. His gaze slid over to Papyrus, and he chuckled lowly. “That’s a familiar position if I’ve ever saw one.”

Toki flushed, and her face rolled down into her husband’s chest. Her mane fluffed with her slight embarrassment- because she could read between the lines, and if neither of them had clothes, this would look marginally less innocent- and with her position the fluffing of her mane let it cover almost her entire skull. It also partially fluffed into her mate’s face. “It’s comfortable. I’m pretty sure I’ve hit the end of my equivalent ‘first trimester’,” Since she hadn’t hurled up food that wasn’t raw in a couple days, thankfully, “with not two, but six little ones in my belly, so I’m entitled to my odd positions for comfort.”

Caeruleus climbed into the tent and happily took position on some of the pillows once he kicked off his shoes, reaching up for Grillby and Solstice with a widening grin. "C'mere you~"

Grillby laughed softly at Toki’s grumping, and said nothing more on it. Instead, he made his way over to Sans, settling Solstice down carefully on the usual crook she slept in. Instead of his usual side sleeping position, Grillby shifts over so he’s got his back against the arm cradling Solstice, putting his back against the chill of the tent wall. He opens his coat, and then drapes over them both so he can warm them.

Solstice squeals, completely and utterly happy to have her daddy’s face in her reach. Her hands come up, and his face is hers to play with.

All the giant fire monster does is close his eyes and coo at her as she tugs on his fangs and pats his cheeks.

Toki’s mane smoothes out, and she watches Grillby with a quiet smile. She nuzzles her face into Papyrus’ chest, and sighs contently. “It feels like a lifetime ago that Honey and Skylar were that small.”
Caeruleus cooed at the heat but a hand came to rest on Solstice's back, the other's wrapping around Grillby's back as the pillow-worthy monster hugged his husband close.

"Indeed... and yet soon enough Solstice might end up being as big as the pups, if not bigger."

"Mmm, maybe." Toki hums. "Remember now, Solstice’s mother is Cae. Cae’s my height, roughly. He’s a short stack… and I’ve seen how you two grew as kids." Sort of. "Ours started out ‘big’ for me, but small compared to you, but they’re growing fast. Sans was big for him, and she’s probably gonna grow slow and stop short. Though… if she gets somewhere between the heights, she might be as tall as you. Genetics can be weird like that."

"He’s my short stack.” Grillby purrs, content to cuddle up to his plush husband. Despite being made of bone, Sans was the best pillow.

"I'm not short." Cae huffed, though with Grillby's nuzzling he was sedated as he gave him a squeeze. "I'm stout. There's a difference." He grumbled.

That had Aliquam laughing gently. "On the other hand, our children will grow to be towers over little Solly."

Cae calling himself stout instead of short had Toki laughing into her husbands chest. She began to sing a soft teasing tone. "I'm a little teapot, short and stout. Here is my handle, and here is my spout~" Two of her limp arms came up to be the handle and spout respectively, and she giggled into the pillow.

Grillby couldn’t stop the guffaw of laughter, but he was quick to bury it into his husband’s shoulder so only the trembles of his back could be seen.

"And yes, Pap. Our kids will be very tall.” Toki grins.

Cae grumbled as he pinched Grillby's butt. "You're gonna pay for that." he grumbled, before half-lifting his head, shooting Toki a look. "Toki, I will get revenge on you." He threatened. "You wont see it coming."

Oh yes, Sans was so scary with a cuddly husband and a child on his large form.

“When I get all steamed up, hear me shout, ‘Tip me over and pour me out!’” Toki teased again at her grumbling brother in law, before breaking out into snorts of laughter.

Grillby wheezed into Sans’ shoulder, the pinch to his rear only making him twitch and laugh harder.

Cae gave a flailing gesture with his arms and he grumbled sourly. He didn't even sound angry, just embarrassed as he pinched Grillby again up and down his side.

Grillby’s laughter faded into tiny crackling squeaks, not unlike that which Solstice made as he tried not to squirm away from the tiny hands holding fast to his face.

Toki’s giggles faded off slowly too, and her fingers slid to Papyrus’ ribs, before exploring them slowly. She was relaxed and content- up until her sixth sense went off, and she tensed. Her four arms braced on the padded part of the nest, and she lifted up off of Papyrus just in time for Honey to barrel into her back. Her knees jabbed into Toki’s spine, and Toki’s face visibly flinched in a brief flash of pain. Tiny bony knees to one’s spine did not feel good. But, Toki had been fast enough to not let herself get crushed down onto Papyrus.

“Momma!” Her tiny hands grabbed Toki’s wings and pull slightly. “Momma! I wanna build a
"Welp! Kids are back!" Papyrus brought his arms up to support her before he slowly wriggled out from under her, scooping up Honey and gently coaxing her into releasing her mother.

"You don’t need your Momma’s help to make one, do you?" He then asked, giving Toki a light wink as he pulled on his shoes. "Come on, pup. Let's go build us a snowman."

Honey glanced between them both, and then her big blue eye lights swelled larger as Toki shifted to sit upright. “But… But Momma didn’t get to help us make our first snowman during Christmas.” She tucks her chin. “I want us all to make a snowman.”

Toki’s soul sank a little bit, and she nodded. “Okay, little one. Let me get my shoes, and I’ll come make a snowman with you.” Her back hurt, but she’d be alright enough. Her kids came first.

"Oh Honey..." Aliquam pecked Honey's head and then glanced to his brother. "You two going to stay and nap?" He asked Caeruleus and Grillby.

"Yup."

Grillby nods. "Once Solstice's temperature rises to a higher state, we may join you in making snowmen. For now, we're going to relax and spend our day off lazing about."

Toki nods and fetches her shoes. She slips them on, and then slips from the tent. It's cold outside, and she fluffs up a bit to accommodate, before she turns and scoops Honey into her arms. She steps out of the way and holds a hand out to Papyrus.

He took it and got up, before he turned back and zipped the tent closed. It wouldn’t do to let all the heat out. "Shall we get started then?"
After a day of frolicking in the snow, the children were tuckered out come evening. Toki relaxed in her chair, the twins half dozing on her chest while dinner was prepared. She had her niece stretched out on her too- she was officially on babysitting duty, though it was more like they were sitting on her.

It was dark out, and the fire was roaring. It sent glimmers of light twinkling over the snow- no longer pristine, but filled with several snowmen from the snowmen army that they had built, and waged a ‘snow war’ with. Toki had lost the war, for the record. Papyrus and his masterful skills as a Guard had planned it out so she had lost spectacularly- but that was perfectly fine. His reward had been a kiss, so she completely understood his reasoning.

Skylar nuzzled into her mane and made a sleepy sounding coo, echoed by his sister.

Toki hummed in return, and let her magic waft over them, pumping some of it up into Solstice so she would stay warm. The almost-toddler was fully asleep on Toki’s chest, drooling with part of Toki’s shirt in her mouth while her mother was given a break from holding her, and her father was on cooking duty. Toki’s feet were also almost occupied.

Stag was making sleepy grunts at her feet. They had been tuckered out by the kids, and was soundly out of it, curled up at her side with their head at her feet.

“You know…” Toki murmurs slowly, glancing across the fire to the older couple lounging in their chairs and enjoying each other’s company. Toki rubbed her husband’s knuckles lightly with one hand, and sighed softly. “We all needed this.” It really was a shame Thumper decided to flirt instead of spend time with family- but, children would be children. “Today was ended up being a much better day than it started out being.”

"I thought if it was just you and me, it'd be nice... and yet I don’t think at this point things could get any better... our family really does have a tight bond don’t we?” Aliquam spoke up quietly, giving a quiet chuckle as he followed her gaze to his father, who was currently napping against his mate's golden mane.

“Another time you and I can come up here with the kids- or just us, if we need some adult time- and take some time for just us.” Toki smiles. “But… we really do. I honestly am not sure how I’ve fit in so well with your family. With our family. Not a lot of in-laws are so close, or get along so well.” Her eyes close softly, and she exhales lightly. “I want to come to the lake more this summer.” She murmurs softly. “I want… I want to do a lot of things, now that there isn’t a threat looming over us. I’m home… and there’s no Humans Against Monsters to threaten us anymore. We can finally live, Pap.”

"We’ll come here every summer. We’ll bring the children, and if things are as they are now, we’ll end
up bringing the rest of our family anyhow." He chuckled.

“True that.” She laughs quietly. She glances across the snow and hums. “If it wasn’t so damn cold in the winter, I wouldn’t mind coming here. It’s… nice. It’s peaceful, with just us, the lake, and the snow. I bet this is how people who go to ski retreats feel.”

"Perhaps with a few more layers of clothing between them and the snow." Aliquam then joked, nuzzling Toki.

Toki laughed and nuzzled him back. "Love, most ski resorts don't get as cold as they do here. It's deadly here in the heart of a winter snowstorm. I don't think a few more layers here would help."

"Good thing we're so darn immune to the elements, huh?"

"You are." She glances up at him. "I don't know if you've noticed, but I get cold now."

"That is the beast in you. Its very thick in your makeup for it to be so visible." Grillby chimes in lightly.

"Even with your fire?" Cae asked incredulously.

"Even then." Toki nods. "I get cold very easy. I just don't complain about it."

"Then I should keep you warm." He chuckled, setting his head on hers.

Toki smiled warmly. "You do." She says. "You're good at keeping me warm. And tonight, we're all going to be very warm."

"Warm and happy. Like a pack should, as father would say." He joked, before hearing a grunt from Tenebris.

The grunt had her glancing over to Tenebris. "Sleeping beauty finally waking up?" Toki teases lightly.

"Perhaps." Asgore chuckles softly, his voice sounding tired by content.

Where Tenebris sat, a tired hand crawled up to Asgore's face and gently combed his mane, cooing tiredly before he give a wide yawn right into Asgore's neck, his tail stretching it's full length as his limbs did the same. He was like a goddamn cat.

"Hm." There was then a noise from Cae. "Totally just realized, we've never measured how long Pop's tail is." He chuckled quietly.

"It's nine feet long." Toki chirps easily.

Asgore withstood the sleepy gropes of his hands and simply patted his head fondly. "He's been tuckered out by the days activities. I wonder if he'll even wake up to eat." He pauses though and looks at Toki. "How do you know how long it is?"

"Reeaaaasons." She'd measured Tenne's tail once for one of Kai's science projects, and figured they were the same length.

And as if on some hilarious cue, Tenebris leaned up and began to gnaw on Asgore's throat under his great mane, a muffled "Feeed mee," crooning from him as his tail coming to wrap around Asgore's arm.
Asgore snorts fondly, and flaps his hand at him to discourage him from nibbling on him. He didn’t need to get ‘excited’ in front of all of these youngsters. "I'm not food, you great dork. There are steaks in the cooler."

"Foooooooood," Toki groans. "If only I had hands to eat with." She had three babies and no spare hands.

"Food is just about ready." Cae spoke up, gesturing to where the table was almost set up with dinner. "Cooked to perfection to suit everyone's likes."

"So ketchup with a side of actual food for you?" Toki teases.

"Maybe before I got pregnant and started taking care of myself." He snorted, sticking his tongue out at her. "I got disgusted by ketchup for three solid months, I have a little on my hot-dog but that's it."

"More like I aided in your proper diet." Grillby murmurs very, very quietly.

Toki almost didn't hear him, and she snorted, before guffawing into laughter. "Oh Sans, I couldn't drink cocoa or eat spaghetti until near the end of my pregnancy, and yet I still can't get enough of either. Well, when the litter lets me."

"It's almost like I have pregnancy aftertaste." He huffed, scratching his stomach as he leaned his head back. "I can’t enjoy Ketchup as passionately anymore."

Toki snorts. "Well, sometimes tastes permanently change. Lemme guess… You've got a thing for mustard now." She wiggled a brow at him.


“If I recall,” Toki grins, “You had a craving for it when you were pregnant. So… There was a time when you didn’t hate it.”

"A figment of your imagination!"

“I didn’t have that bad of pregnancy brain,” She laughs. “I remember it. Your denial is adorable though.”

Solstice stirred on her chest, and made a tiny fussy noise. “Mehh…”

“Ah, it sounds like someone wants her mother.” Toki wiggled her brows at him. “I bet she’s going to grow up to love mustard.”

"You shall not curse my daughter." He grumbled as he reached over and gently scooped up Solstice, cooing to her as he laid back and held her close to his chest. "I've got you, my little sunshine."

Solstice sniffled and quietly nestled her face into his chest, content to settle down again and sleep some more.

Toki hummed, and adjusted her own children. She wiggled her fingers at Sans. “And here’s a curse for you,” She grins playfully, using her ‘halloween witchy voice’ in his direction, “May your daughter and her children here after love mustard like you used to love ketchup.”

Grillby laughed softly in good humor, before giving a soft groan. “I sure hope not, or I’m going to be spending a fortune on condiments. Speaking of, dinner is done.”
"Food." Tenebris was the first to rock onto his feet before his jaw opened wide in a yawn.

Sans stretched following his dad, laughing quietly as he did. "Damn, he's practically asleep on his feet." He joked.

“It doesn’t surprise me. He is an older monster, after all.” Toki hums lightly. It did make her worry that having young ones around was going to run him down a bit much, but she kept that quiet to herself. He had time to adjust. Plus, coffee was a godsend, and he wasn’t a nursing mother, so it wasn’t like he would be limited on it. Toki shifts in her chair, and carefully rouses her children. “Come on, my sweets. It’s time to wake up.”

Skylar stirred quietly but little Honey gave a reluctant whine as her eyes came to open.

Tenebris and his eldest son made it to the table first, Cae sitting down with Solstice in his arms while Tenebris came to settle on the edge of the table bench. "Are we fully awake, Dad?" Cae asked.

Tenebris nodded, "Yes, yes, I’m up." He chuckled, rubbing his eyes before he folded his arms, looking back as Asgore, smiling, "C’mon, then."

Asgore hummed and joined him moments after.

Toki adjusted both children in her arms, and kissed their heads until they were up. Once they were awake, she stood and then moved them over to the chairs set up at the camping table they’d brought, and then settled them in gently.

She took a seat in her own chair with one of the spaces open for Papyrus to join her.

Grillby straightened, and began to serve dinner, humming all the while. “I’ve gotten everything cooked to what everyone’s usual tastes are.”

“Thank you.” Toki nods lightly. She started in on her salad once it was served, nibbling the lettuce quietly.

"A magnificent job, as per usual, Grillby." Aliquam praised as he sat down.

"Agreed, what would we have done without our magnificent bartender?" Cae laughed.

“Cooked upon an open flame like most normal people without access to a walking, talking, portable barbeque.” Grillby answers with utter nonchalance.

It’s with such nonchalance that it makes Toki inhale her leaf of lettuce, and she coughs on it, making it puff out her nasal cavity. “Oh my god, Grillby. You’re not anymore a portable barbeque than I am.” She laughs.

Tenebris laughed at that. "Grillby come on you're a lot more than that. You're my son's husband and the father of one of my grandbabies, you're better than a walking, talking, port-a-que."

“Right. You’re more than a port-a-que, you’re the best Grillbeque a girl could have for a brother in law.” How Toki straight faced that, she will never know.

But she was rewarded by her son softly snickering into his food, and pressing his face into his arm to hide his laugh as it started to grow.

Her smirk grew. Someone thought she was funny.

Honey however groaned, and smacked her thigh. “Momma noooo, no dumb puns.”
Aliquam groaned, but it got a chuckle from Tenebris and a loud 'HA!' From Caeruleus.

Toki beamed, completely pleased with herself. "My job is done." She leans over to smooch her husband's cheek. "Oh don't fuss. Puns ruffle your feathers. It's good for you."

"It's good to have you and your bad humor back, Toki." Asgore smiles at her sincerely. "Grillbeque. That's a first."

"Indeed." He chuckles.

"Not far off from the full name either. Grillbert." Toki hums.

Grillby pauses. "How do you know that?"

Toki wiggles her fingers at them all. "Shenanigans." Her other world boss had sworn to grump at her if she ever used it once she learned it.

"Your full name is 'Grillbert'?” Aliquam piped up curiously.

Grillby groaned. "Yes. Grillbert Fyrus the Third. I prefer Grillby though. My name is not a nice name."

Toki hums softly. "It is odd, but it's not a bad one. All the same, if you want to be called Grillby, that's what I'll call you."

"Thank you." Grillby nods.

Toki glances to her brother in law. "So... Does that make you a Fyrus by law? Or did you keep Gaster for a last name?"

"Marrying does not require you to take on the name of your groom." Cae shrugged. "At least I don’t think so... I'm technically 'Sans Caeruleus Gaster Fyrus' but I rarely use my last name anyways so it doesn’t bother me either way."

Toki shrugs. "When have we ever done anything traditionally? Anyways, I understand. I've been called a Nara-Gaster, given that I still lead the Nara clan." Since her return, it had been passed back into her hands.

"To bullocks with traditionalism, eh?" Tenebris laughed quietly. "We are all guilty of it somehow, I think."

"My very leading of the clan was my grandparents saying to heck with tradition." Toki chirped between bites of dinner. "I'm only half blooded, and a girl. By rights it should have gone to my mother's first son. My family is full of rebels it seems." They had so many people in her family who broke the mold, as the saying went. Toki adored them all, where her stepfather embraced more traditional values to some extent.

"That sounds like something worthy of a toast" Aliquam pulled a few bottles of water from the cooler and passed them around. "To rebellion and making good out of it!"

"One doesn't usually toast with water, but... Oh well." Grillby gave his water to his husband for lack of desire to actually want to have to process the water into something drinkable. But he held up his fork with a piece of slightly scorched lettuce on it. "To rebellion and making good out of it."

Toki laughed, and the sound of many plastic bottles clunking together in 'toast' was amusing. "Not
only to rebellion though. A toast to surviving, and rebuilding from the ashes like a Phoenix that rises once more." Their home had died in flames and smoke, and now had been rebuilt from the ashy loam. Nara Village was much like a Phoenix- it wouldn't ever die so long as there were people who would rebuild it.

"I'll drink to that." Tenebris laughed. "Generations to come will learn our ways for years to come." He rumbled.

“Indeed.” Toki laughed warmly, and sipped her water. “We'll pave the way for a new way of life- and we’ll be flexible to learning even newer ways if they're better than ours.”

"Monsterkind will never fall into the wrong hands with faith like this." Tenebris rumbled happily.

That slightly sobered Toki from her mirthful laughter, and it died off rather rapidly. She tapped her finger on the table, and stared quietly at her meal, appetite temporarily lost. “… You know,” she says softly, “I’m never going to die permanently. When I became Balance, the curse of remembering reincarnations became mine to bear, so… I’m going to be around a long, long time. I’m going to make sure that Monsters never face the sort of injustice again- and that history doesn’t repeat itself.”

Toki’s voice is firm and absolute- she’s sure of herself. She’s never going to let history repeat itself- she’s not going to let the incident with the anti-hearts happen again, and she’s not going to let another hate group like HAM ever rise to power again. Toki will maintain balance in the world- through this life, and the next.

Tenebris looked at her quietly before he smiled. "At least it means our generations are in good hands when we finally join the dust of our ancestors." He purred gently, reaching over to pat her shoulder. "You don’t really have to worry about the job for a few more centuries, but when the time does come, I know indeed we'll be in good hands.”

That wasn’t really what Toki was worried about, honestly. She was… she was going to miss them. She was going to miss them a lot. More than just a lot- she was going to miss them with everything that she was when they were gone and she was left to persist.

But rather than let emotions swell over her like they wanted to, and rather than letting them ruin the good mood she was so determined to keep from the day, she took a deep breath and then quietly nodded. “Yeah…” She agreed quietly. “You’ll all be in good hands.” That said, Toki returned to her meal, quickly devouring it despite her lack of appetite.

Grillby watched her quietly, but didn’t comment more. Instead, he turned and directed the conversation away from that. He was a man who had mated to a female before- he knew what hormones could do when they were pregnant. “So, Winter is finally ending. Spring is coming in. With the village still under reconstruction, what are everyone’s plans?”

Toki pauses and hums quietly. “Well, my hives are all gone… So I think I’m going to focus on just writing, mainly, and trying to sell my own honey.”

"I speak for Tenebris and I both when I say we are very excited to prepare for our future litter, but while we do that… Call me unoriginal if you wish, but I am quite excited for the mud to dry up just enough so that I can start planting flowers everywhere.” Asgore answered next, with a smile on his face that was simply excited for the prospect to plant flowers and spread joy.

"Asgore spoke my plans for the most part, but I'm also tempted to start an apiary myself to go with Asgore's flora, if Toki doesn't change her mind about it later on." Tenebris rumbled. "I don’t think it'll beat Toki’s honey though." He then laughed quietly.
Everyone shared his laugh- Toki’s honey had been hard to beat before the hives had been wiped out. Happy bees made good honey, and her bees had been happy and well cared for.

Sans continued next once everyone had quieted down. "I don’t know what I’m gonna do yet. Probably just focus on raising Sol and help out with the Bar N’ Grill... by."

And once more, groans rose from everyone as Caeruleus cackled shamelessly, smacking his knee as Sol was bounced on his chuckling belly. Excited crackles came in spades from the baby skelemental at the ride that came with her mother's laughter.

"What about you, bro?" Cae then asked his brother as he slowly came off his laughter a few moments later.

"Mnh…." Aliquam took a moment to contemplate, before he smiled slightly. "I think I can finally settle down a little. Raise the kids, prepare for any more we might have. Perhaps I'll see about getting a job driving. It would allow me a bit more usefulness to my community, no?"

"It would." Grillby nods. "Though driving jobs will take you far from your family, and you may find yourself spending more time away from home than you'd like. When you worked as a guard, you could pop in and see them whenever you liked. Driving, you'd be in a vehicle for hours upon hours, most likely from dawn until dusk. But, the pay is decent, and all you need to drive large vehicles is a different type of license." Operating machinery would require schooling on Papyrus' part, Grillby knew. The skeleton could do it, no doubt about that.

Asgore hummed. "Did you not like to cook when you were underground?" He inquires curiously. "Perhaps you could work on starting a business involving food."

Toki hated to see him feel so limited. She ground her teeth quietly and hummed thoughtfully. "I could call my editor and see if she has any openings for jobs there. It's mostly at home work, but the pay is good because it's mind numbing work, looking over someone's book, marking down corrections and making suggestions, and keeping in contact with them if they need it. Or, going off of Asgore's idea, there's my brother's restaurant in town if you want to try chef work. You do have options, Papy." She wasn't in any rush for him to run out and work anyways.

The royalties from the movie rights had her bank account sitting quite prettily, so they weren't in any financial danger at the moment. Their children were benefiting from having them both around, and it made it easier for her to work, and her to spend time with her family at the same time. Multitasking for the win.

"Oh goodness, I’m having flashbacks to all the Tupperware containers full of spaghetti." Aliquam covered his face with his hands as he laughed, before he lowered them to his lap once more, a smile on his face. "So many potential jobs, so few centuries to do everything. I wonder just where I should start?" It was typical behavior of Aliquam to look at the silver lining of a potentially dark cloud.

"Well, you can try and decide whatever you like," Toki chuckles. "Feel free to experiment with jobs. I'm stable with my writing career, so we're okay, and I'm going to work on getting my contracts going for selling my honey. I may get an Apiary again if I have time to care for it." It was busy work tending to bees, and if they were going to be expanding their family... Well. It was wrong to have something you couldn't take care of.

"I am not sure if I’ll graduate past caretaker of the children with us being so well off. There's easily other people who could use the money more than we would," Aliquam shrugged, before he gave Toki a sweet look. "Maybe I’ll stand aside to let the wife be the successful one."
Toki chuckles softly. "That's sweet of you to say, but you know you'll go stir crazy if you don't have something to do." She paused, and then smiled. "What about... When the school reopens, why don't you apply to be the music teacher?" He wasn't as musically diverse as Han, but Papyrus was good with his string instruments, and the school needed another music teacher.

Plus, if any of their future kids wanted to go to college, Toki would at least like to be able to help pay for a little bit of their college. Not the whole thing, mind, they’d need to get scholarships, but Toki would be willing to ford some of it for her children. She wanted to save up again for such a time- or if they ever wanted to travel, or vacation.

There were things to do, and only so much that could be achieved on one paycheck.

"Me? Are you sure?" He looked surprised to hear her offer that. All the same, he looked clearly pleased as a smile with the brightness of a thousand suns lit up his face. "I might not be as good as Han was. I'm a little out of practice, but that's definitely one idea, now isn't it..."

"It is indeed." She smiles. "It makes me sad that almost all of Han's instruments burnt up, but... We'll replace them." The one she valued most had survived, thanks to Aliquam. "He'd be happy you were teaching children how to play. Eventually," she pets Skylar's head gently, "you may teach our children too."

"Perhaps you could aid him sometimes and offer singing lessons." Grillby suggests.

Toki snorts. "I can't sing good enough to teach children."

"Count me out too." Aliquam laughed. "I can't sing either. My only voice is when I play."

"Lies!" Toki snorts. "You can sing. We've sung together." She smiles at him. "It's just been a long time since I've gotten to sing with you."

He chuckled quietly. "It's not the same thing, Toki. Singing for you isn't the same as singing in public."

"True, but you wouldn't be singing in public. You'd be singing with a bunch of children, who have most of the time have a tendency to hit dog whistle like tones when they hit the squeaker stage." She points out lightly, and smiled at him.

Something seemed to click in Asgore’s brain, and the goat king lit up. “You both could do Christmas shows with the children! Little choirs and music groups… Oh, I would love to see such a thing.”

"Now that's an idea." Cae agreed, before he chuckled and pecked Sol's head. "I feel like little Solly here would make a beautiful high soprano.” He purred.

"With how shrilly she squeaks…” Toki grins playfully. “I could see it though. Once she gets past her squeaky toy phase, she'll make a lovely high soprano.”

“Honey can’t sing.” Skylar hums around a mouthful of food. “It's like a bag of cats in cold water.”

“And you’re like a sad walrus!” Honey huffs. “It’s like a half a bag of cats in warm water.”

"Children,” Toki chides gently, “You both sing just fine, and you’ll make lovely musicians if that’s what you want to do. If you don’t want to sing or make music, you don’t have to.”

"Ouch." Tenebris snorted quietly. "Don't worry, children. There’s plenty of options... I bet our
children will sing just beautifully. We're a very vocal race after all." and Tenebris was puffing in pride. All of the bristles of his growing mane were standing too.

"Are you really that vocal of a race? I recall you being a very quiet and generally uptight person when you worked at the labs, Tenebris." Grillby hummed.

Toki demonstrated this by vocalizing at Tenebris, teasingly calling him a mangy dandelion. She chittered again, a more guttural sound. "Yes. Beasts are a very vocal race. They speak a lot through sounds, and through body language. There is more than one way to communicate what you desire."

That remark earned Toki a quiet hiss. "Look whose talking." He growled at Toki, "I'm still growing, you're the mangy dandelion." He huffed.

Asgore hugged him close and chortled. "No no, you two. Don’t you see that clearly I am the dandelion among us?"

His growl just made her burst out into laughter. His growl didn’t scare her anymore, and how he melted with Asgore was adorable. “Dandelion? Don’t you mean dandegoat?” She teases lightly.

Grillby chokes on an olive. “She’s got you there.”

Toki grins. “Yes I do.” She finishes her meal, and then stretches quietly with a soft sigh. Her hands wandered to her belly and rubbed it quietly, where the litter were sitting heavily. She paused, wondering if she was imagining feeling the faintest of shifts inside of her. She wasn’t sure when blaster beast pups started quickening- they weren’t behaving like skeleton monsters, that’s for sure.

"Oh no they got you too." Aliquam hid his face in his hands as he groaned.

Caeruleus barked out laughing again, giving Solstice yet another ride on the bouncing gut.

Toki quirked a smile and laughed with them, but her focus faded from the conversation as she quietly rubbed her belly. Yeah, she was pretty sure they were moving. Not... Hardcore moving, not like how she’d felt with the twins when she’d been further along, or even quite like the quickening of the twins. Though she remembered them quickening what felt like only a few weeks after her morning sickness had abated, so maybe that was a beast thing. Though instead of goldfish in a plastic bag feeling, this felt like more like she could vaguely feel the litter squirming against each other as they josted for space, for sheer lack of space inside of her while growing.

It really was fascinating, feeling something alive inside of you, knowing you were helping to make it, shape it into the being it would become. She wondered what sort of people these children would be like.

"Toki?" Asgore prompted lightly.

"Hm?" She blinked up at him slowly.

"We lost you there for a moment. What were you thinking about?" The king inquired curiously.

"Not much, really." She wanted to blow it off as something non important, but realized this was probably very important to Tenebris and Asgore. "I just... Was sort of noticing them quickening, that’s all. The rate of growth is so quick..."

Tenebris rumbled curiously and his tail rattled quietly behind him, "Ohh, they're already getting active?" He asked with obvious interest.
"Yeah. You can't feel them outside yet." She says, lest she get hands reaching for her only to be disappointed. She could already see Honey reaching, only to withdraw with a pout because she couldn't feel them yet. "But, probably a couple more weeks and the movements will be getting stronger. Pretty sure I'm at the 'second' trimester measurement, so lots of movement starts happening here."

"A few more weeks for a waiting father could be months. I'll practically be in my grave!" Tenebris grasped his chest dramatically.

"You've survived so far, Papa. You'll manage a couple more weeks, and then the months and months after that until they're born... Though, I'm going to laugh if Papy gets to feel them move before you." Toki can't help the jibe. She really can't. It would be poetic justice, truly.

"It would be fair, wouldn't it?" The elder hummed in thought, before he groaned and draped into Asgore's lap. "Oh darling, I see a light at the end of the tunnel. I need 60ccs of baby tummy." He whined.

Asgore laughs helplessly, and scoots his chair back to make space for the large monster barging into his lap. Thankfully he was done enough with his dinner that it didn't get all over him. "Oh, my sweet overly dramatic licorice snap, you simply must hold on! I'm sure if you sweet talk her and her mate, they may let you cuddle her tummy in the tent tonight after she receives some magic."

"I dunno," Toki says airily, and grins to Papyrus. "Has Papa Tenny been a good enough boy today to warrant tummy time?" She asks her husband. She's teasing of course, and her tone of obvious. She doesn't care if Tenebris cuddles her for a little bit. Bonding time went both ways for parents and children.

"I don't knooow." Aliquam hummed before looking at his father. He immediately wished he didn't. "Oh god."

The puppy look. Tenebris was using the puppy eyes.

Toki giggles. "I think that's a yes from him. Pap and I will settle in the nest near you and Asgore tonight, Papa, and you'll get your tummy time."

"Me too?" There is a hopeful look in the king's gaze. He's not a beast, but he still shares the same excitement as his mate.

"Of course," Aliquam chuckles quietly.

And immediately Tenebris smiled as he leaned his head back to look up at Asgore with a grin. "Now there's another reason to be excited for bedtime, isn't it darling~"

"It is!" Asgore beams cheekily.

Toki chuckles and gives Papyrus a lopsided grin. "Looks like you have to share me a little tonight." She wondered if he would be alright with that. He seemed agitated at times when touch seemed to linger too long anymore.

"Father and his Majesty look so excited to spend tonight with their future children, would I be so heartless as to grow jealous of that?" Aliquam countered with a quiet laugh, "I get you any other day of the year don't I?"

The quiet laugh made her wonder though. "And you'll have me from every day until my last." She smiles to him all the same, wanting to soothe anything that might have been ruffled in him. She was
not going to deal with growling men in the tent, or she was taking a blanket, and a pillow and making a den in the snow.

"That's right, so why the heck would i fuss over a few nights if it means that my father spends time with his pups?" Aliquam didn't seem irked in the slightest, simply smiling as Tenebris had a small victory wiggle in Asgore's lap

"Very true. Plus, they only need my belly, and we're going to be in one big cuddle pile anyway. You'll be there and the kids will be there, and so will Grillby and Sans and Sobek and Snuggle." Toki grins slightly. "We'll all be cuddled up. No jealousy here."

Asgore seemed to make a small face, and his hands came down to still the white monster. "Be still, my love, or you'll wake the lion," he teases him slightly. "And there are children here."

Cae grinned as there was a soft wheeze of laughter from Tenebris who did indeed quickly stop his victory wiggle.

"Sorry, dear~" He cooed softly, reaching up to bat Asgore's face instead. "It's almost unbelievable seeing you act like this Tenebris, when imagine what you were like two hundred years ago." Grillby jibed with a warm thrum to his tone, a underlying chuckle accompanying the tease.

Tenebris sat up and gave Grillby a lazy grin. "I got old, and just like my poor old pads, there were some cracks that allowed a more fun old man to come out." He countered.

"It took some work to get the fun old man out. You were such a tight-ass sometimes when I first met you... I still can’t believe you ate my hand." Toki snorted. "You did loosen up though, which is good. A sense of humor is good for you." She informs him cheekily.

"Mm, feels a lot better too, you will not believe how much it hurt to be just that. It didn't help that I was a workaholic. I cant tell you how many times James deactivated my console remotely just to get me to take a break, that clever brat." He sighed and fell back against Asgore once more. "As for the eating of your hand... I will do it again if I find it in the vicinity of my teeth again while I’m moody. You have been warned."

Toki fluffs her mane at him and grins, a tad bit of a wicked tilt to her teeth. “Oh Papa dear, don’t you know? I’ve found my claws. Eat my hand, and I might just eat yours. Or worse. I do know how to steal and hide your mint. I’ve had years of practice.” She’d had years of dealing with a moody Tenebris who was much younger. He’d rarely gotten snippy with her, but sometimes he did for the strangest reasons... and her semi-petty revenge was to hide all the mint for miles, and miles, and put it far out of his reach.

Honey guffaws. “Stealing Grandpapa’s mint is so funny. He’s gets all huffy and puffy and then he gets all sulky.”

And he was bristling again. "I will ground you.

Honey blew a raspberry at him. “You can’t ground me! Only Mommy and Daddy can ground me.”

“Don’t sass your grandpa,” Toki chuckles, and ruffles her horns lightly. “He gets even, you silly girl. He’ll hide all your toys.”

“No!” She looked aghast at the very idea.
“And all of the cookies. You’ll never find the cookies.” Toki hides a smirk, trying to look very serious.

“Noo! Not my cookies!”

The others watched on in amusement, before Aliquam spoke up. "He might just hoard all the cookies and eat them without sharing."

“Not sharing is so mean!” Honey gasps. “I always share!”

“Except with Sobek.” Skylar hums.

“Sobek steals them all. Cookie stealers don’t get shared cookies.” She puffed. She looked quite done with the teasing and the sassing, telltale by the look of a growing tantrum on her face.

Toki laughed, and tucked her daughter into her side. “No one is going to steal your cookies, Honey. But, if you keep sassing your grandpa, I’m not responsible for if he decides to tickle you until you fall to pieces.” She scoops her up into her lap, and kisses her little cheeks.

Honey sniffs and tucks her face into Toki’s shoulder. “I don’t wanna be tickled.”

“All right, all right.” Toki hummed. Someone was starting to get grumpy it seemed. Monster children weren’t exempt from the usual rules of children- if they were tired, they were grumpy, and her children had played hard all day. Toki hummed, and carefully scooped up Skylar too, before clamoring to her feet. “I think it’s bedtime for the little ones since they’re done eating. Someone is getting grumpy.”

"Aww." Aliquam stood from his chair as well, and hobbled over to his wife and children. He leaned down and snuggled his head against Honey’s. He pressed a few kisses against her skull as he cooed to her. "There, there, darling. No need to fuss~"

Honey growled the tiniest growl at her Daddy, and swatted her little hand at him.

Toki snorted, and snagged it before she could smack him. “No hitting,” she scolds her gently, and gets a grumble in return. “I think she’s had enough teasing and attention tonight.” Toki smooches Papyrus instead, and then carefully unzips the tent and crawls in. “I think I’m going to join them and stretch out for a bit.”

"Alright, we’ll clean up and join you soon." Aliquam hummed, giving her a small wave.

"Not me!" Cae got up and held Solstice close as he started for the tent as well.

Grillby gave his husband a mock dirty look, and rolled his eyes. “Oh well. I think four of us is probably too much for doing dishes, but we’ll get it all done faster.” He stood up, and got ready to clean up.

Toki smiled at Cae as he joined her in the tent. She settled her children down in a pile next to their sleeping summons, and then smiled as they settled in. Honey gave a grumpy sound, but cuddled up under Sobek’s wing.

Toki let them get comfortable, and gave them space as she draped a blanket over them, before curling up in her own little respective spot. They’d come sleep with her if they wanted- but they did enjoy sleeping alone, when they knew she was near enough for them to get to if they wanted. She wiggled her fingers at Cae and her niece, and then rubbed her belly quietly. “So… are you going to give me any more nieces or nephews?” She asks him quietly, wiggling a brow at him.
"Oh definitely. Once Solstice is older." Cae answered as he got on his back, getting comfy where he was before looking up at the roof of the tent. "We're definitely going to try again once Solly is out of her toddler stage and able to maintain her energy better. I'm doing a lot better too. I've been steadily gaining HP since she was born so I don’t think I’ll worry about a repeat of last time."

"The problem last time, we didn’t know she had horns." Toki wiggled her fingers at the top of her skull. "Next time, we’ll be aware that’s possible. Also, you know, not have Papa out of town. I really don’t want to have to deliver another one." She hadn’t enjoyed having her hand up there, or seeing that part of her brother in law. "So… How high is your HP now?" She asks curiously.

"Twelve."

"Two points higher!" She beams. "That’s good." It means he had more hope. Toki shifts and hums. "Mine is… Ridiculously high." She sighs. "Everyone seems so… fragile in comparison." She’s quiet for a bit, until her children start to snore softly. Then, Toki sighs, and glances to him. "Can I admit something to you?"

"What's up?" He looked up at her.

"When I was in the other world, everyone there was so much… I don’t want to say weaker, because that’s mean, but… If there was a power scale, this world is a ten, and the other world is maybe a three. I was so careful not to hurt anyone there. I thought… maybe coming home, I’d feel less like I’m a bull in a china shop.” Toki glances to the ceiling of the tent. "But I admit… I still feel like one sometimes. Like I could hug someone too hard and turn them to dust- though I know it’s all about intent, and I’d never intend to hurt someone like that."

"You don’t have it in you to hurt someone who doesn't deserve it, Toki." He told her. "Your heart is too strong for any of that garbage."

"I’m weaker than you think, brother mine." She closes her sockets and sighs. The future- a future without them, all of her future lives ahead of her- terrified her. She wondered if this was how Sequoia had felt, and if that’s what had driven her to insanity. "But, there are some things about me that don’t require intent to hurt. My venom for instance."

"Well yeah…” He rubbed his head.

"And on that note… My beast isn’t always nice. I mean… If she ever had a fit of temper…” She could dust one of them so easily.

That had Cae making a face as his hand returned to his belly.

"I want to ask Papa to work on an antivenin for my venom. Somehow anyway…” She closes her eyes and sighs. “Dear- that’s my beast, by the way- isn’t too bad with pack, but around non-pack… I wouldn’t trust her not to panic and hurt someone.”

"I count as pack right? Just making sure."

“Yeah. She’s not sure where you sit in the pack structure, but she counts you as pack. She sees herself as an alpha female.” Toki hums. “Pups are pups- she’ll never harm them, so there is no danger there. Her first instinct during a fight would be to take them to a safe place.”

"Sounds like her only beef is with pops..." He sighed, before he smiled. "At least she and I got that much in common."

“It’s… something between beef and not beef.” She makes a severely awkward sound. "You’re
aware of the fact I had… relations with Tenne in the other world, right? Well, Tenne and Papa are pretty much the same. So she’s… come to terms with the fact that Papa isn’t her mate, but another alpha. So… Yeah. It’s… kind of a mess, frankly. You’re an alpha too?” She was guessing so anyway, based on his response. Toki wondered if her beast and Sans’ beast would have ‘beef’.

"Nah, Beta.” He quickly shrugged off that worry. "I'm harmless to her other than a bored gnawing." He chuckled.

Toki snickered quietly. “I don’t think that’ll be a problem. Pack dynamics wise, I’m technically the only female. Though… She’s confused about there being multiple ‘breeding’ pairs in here. That’s the insectis in her though- in a hive, only the Queen breeds, and then the hive all collectively raise hundreds and hundreds of children.”

"That makes sense." He laughed softly. "We're anything but insects so we're a pack to get used too, huh?"

“Indeed.” She laughs softly. “It’s something she’s having to rapidly get used to. She’s… slowly working on it.”

"I'd love to talk to her if she has a chance." Cae hummed. "She 'n' I should get along fair enough, yeah?"

“I think so. Papa plans to do a beast night, so we’ll see,” Toki hums softly. “I don’t want to switch over tonight. Tonight is… Well, our relaxing night. Beast night will be theirs.”

"Fair enough, Until then…" He hummed, before he sighed happily and ran his hand through Solstice's fire as she got comfy in her favorite spot. "How’s it like, raising two kids?" He asked to introduce a new topic.

“It’s… Different.” Toki murmurs softly. “Well… Not different. I went from raising two kids here, to raising two kids there, but… I’ve missed a lot here.” Her sockets close for a moment and she sighs. Opening them once more, she gives him a lopsided smile. “The twins tend to entertain each other, but when they want to play with me or Papyrus, it becomes a bit more challenging balancing giving both of them equal amounts of attention. It can be very tiring. Honestly, I’m glad they’re twins- they’re the same age, so they’ve got someone to play with when they just want to sit and build a city in the living room out of all of their toys. Bath time is usually easy- they bathe together, and four hands makes it easy to scrub two kids at once.”

"I see." He sighed, before smiling up at Toki. "Thanks... I was right when I thought the best advice would come from you. You're good at that kinda stuff."

“I’ve got a lot of experience.” She says lightly. “Remember, before I had twin children, I had eight younger brothers.”

"Yeah exactly. I had Pap but that's it. I got one kid down, but if I ever wanted eight…” He laughed.

Toki arches her brows. “If Papa wasn’t taking the beast pups, I’d have eight.” She points out. “I do plan to have a lot of kids, but I want them spaced out. I was initially planning on, y’know, one at a time. But now…” She sighs. “Knowing my luck, the next time Pap and I try to have kids, I’ll end up with twins again, and we’ll be doing it by sets of two. I’m learning rather quick that beasts don’t usually have litters of one- you’re an outlier, since you’re with an elemental.”

It was pretty common knowledge that the birth rate for elementals was pretty low. It was easy to see why. They were fragile.
"Were we a regular Joe’n’John, I would have had at least two that time.” He laughed.

The sounds of cleaning outside faded, and Toki prepared to be invaded.

“Very true,” Grillby replied in her stead as he crawled in first. His flames seemed a little dim, likely from the chill, but he was content enough to go crawl over to Sans and drape against him like a living heated blanket. One arm cupped Solstice to provide her warmth. “But, fire elementals rarely have twins. We usually die when we do. It strains the mother too much to have a birth of such stress.” He kisses his cheek gently.

“Given how fast they go, I can imagine.” She snorts, and looks up eagerly for Papyrus.

It’s Asgore who comes in next, claiming a spot near her but leaving space for Tenebris and Papyrus. Tenebris was owed tummy time, after all. Asgore gives her a smile, and wiggles his fingers. “May I?”

“Of course.” She nods.

His hand settles on her belly, and pulses magic in, content to top her off while his mate and son in law get settled into the tent with them.

Cae gave a happy noise as he snuggled close to his husband, nuzzling Grillby after the kiss was given.

Papyrus came in next, carefully laying down beside Toki and nuzzling her with a loving purr in greeting as he kissed her head. He then he chuckled as Tenebris entered, purring like his own vehicle would as he zipped the tent closed before laying at Toki’s other side, nuzzling her fluff with a greeting.

He only gave her a short but warm greeting before he scooted lower to curl up around her belly, stroking the swell softly. "Hello puppies~" He cooed quietly in greeting.

Asgore had finished topping her off by the time that Tenebris squirmed in between him and Toki, and he simply laughed and curled an arm around his mate.

Toki was surrounded by monsters- her family- and she couldn’t have been happier. She laughed softly as Tenebris stroked her belly and cooed to it. It was warm to the touch, and she gave a soft, pleasant hum in response. She could feel the tiny stirrings of the little souls and their bonds- she wondered if he felt it too, give the quantity of magic he kept giving her. “They’re happy, I think.” She smiles, and pats the older male’s head lightly, before glancing up to her own mate. She fluffs her mane and settles into him with a pleased buzz. This was the life- being surrounded by family, pack, by the ones you loved.

Tenebris didn't stop the king's hand, only purred louder as he nuzzled her stomach again. "My darlings~" He purred happily.

The purring against her skin sent goosebumps over her belly. “That tickles,” Toki laughs softly. “So… have you and Asgore been thinking about names?” She asks him curiously.

"We have. Though I’ve been doing most of the work." Tenebris rumbled in respond, before he grinned at his mate. "Given I’m the only one good at that." He teased.

Asgore’s mane ruffled and the goat king ruffled at his mate. “Hey now. Tenegore and Asbris are perfectly acceptable names!” He huffs, not all that upset. He knows he’s terrible at naming things, but he tries!
Toki winces. Oh yeah. Those were bad. "Those are… lovely names, Asgore. What names have you come up with, Papa?"

"Aebris, perhaps for a boy. It is a mighty name." He answered. "I thought about it when Asgore threw one of his names out." He then laughed quietly.

“Aebris is a good one.” She smiles. “Hm… What about… Emiko or Harumi?" She suggests lightly, drawing on names from baby books her mother had when she’d been little. “Hikaru is unisex. It could be used for either physical gender.” Then, she gave a slow and wide grin. “What about Hachi?”

"Hachi... The translation for 'bee’?” Tenebris chucked, "Yes, it's a perfect idea, naming it after you."

“Oh my god, no.” She snorts. “I was sassing you. I mean, some of them might look a little bee like, but… Noooo don’t name them after me.” She smooshes a hand against his face. “Behave, you silly old man.”

He giggled against her hand and licked her palm with a wide tongued lick. "You never learn!"

“Neither do you!” She snorts, and uses his saliva to make his sparse mane stick straight up. “Now you have a cowlick for licking me, you butt.” She rolls her eyes, and sighs, shifting slightly as the weight in her belly shifts to an uncomfortable spot on one of her summoned nerves.

He gasped at the revenge and he reached up, smoothing down the fluff. "How dare you." He hissed quietly. He sounded so bitter, but she could see the laughter in his eyes as he looked up at her, at least before it faded for worry. "Are you alright?" He asked.

“I’m alright.” She hums softly and sighs. “Just a pinched nerve. The litter isn’t exactly light weight. They shift inside me and sit on things they shouldn’t.” She pokes the bridge between his eyes. “Don’t worry too much, Papa. I’m alright. Aches and pains are part of pregnancy- I know this all too well.”

He chattered quietly and nuzzled her stomach as he huffed, "Let me worry, damn it." He grumbled as he gave her a skyward stinkeye.

“Fine, fine. Worry all you like and get gray hairs.” She rolls her eye lights at him with an amused chuff. She shifts, partially onto her back against Papyrus. “… Rub? It helps a bit, and makes them move off of painful spots. My round ligaments are stretching fast as hell~” A quick glance to the twins makes sure they hadn’t heard her swear, as they were asleep, “and they ache like a son of a bitch.”

He nodded slowly and closed his eyes as he slowly began to knead in loose circles on her stomach.

Papyrus was good at massaging, when he put his mind to it. He was slow and methodical, and his thumbs worked magic most of the time. But, there was something to be said for the feline like nature of how Tenebris kneaded when he worked at her flesh. Tenne had done it too- it was familiar and soothing, and she found herself relaxing quite a bit.

A soothed sigh slid past her teeth, and her sockets slid closed as she leaned back into her husband. Her wings flexed, and then draped over him like warm, gossamer sheets. “Mmm…”

Aliquam's eyes opened a slight bit before he smiled and nuzzled her gently, giving a low hum. "I love you~" He purred gently.

“I love you too.” She says lightly, and buzzes quietly. As the chill outside presses into the tent, she
lets her magic drift into the air to keep it pleasantly warm for everyone inside.

And everyone seemed to sigh together in bliss.

Toki chuckles quietly and feels when Grillby joins her in keeping everyone warm. "Much better... Heh... Hey, Papa? Do you think my pregnancy will make it to summer?" She hadn't enjoyed summer heat waves while pregnant. She'd gotten heat sick that once and they had coddled her.

"No. You should birth them before Summer." The older man answered,

"I was figuring so based on growth. I think five weeks was roughly one trimester, so... Ten more weeks, if we follow that rout." She murmurs lightly.

He lifted his head a little, giving a sleepy, not quite coherent huff. "Sounds about right then, love." He purred quietly, "Now let this old man go senile for the night." He murmured, nuzzling her stomach.

Toki wasn't sure what she thought of that, and could feel the twitch of Papyrus' against her back to let her know that he hadn't appreciated his father's little affectionate quip for her. She reached a hand back and rubbed his hip to try and soothe him. "You're really going senile if you're calling me that." She rolls her eyes and makes light of it. "Get some sleep, Papa. Who knows when I'll move in the night for a more comfortable spot~" She teases.

He grumbled quietly and nuzzled his face into her stomach, settling comfortably while his tail looped around his feet. It was almost cute.

She watched him settle, and then quietly glanced back to check Papyrus and make sure he wasn’t too ruffled by his father’s words. Tenebris hadn’t meant anything by it, they both knew it, but it didn’t mean it wouldn’t ruffle feathers when it came to beasts and men.

Aliquam's hands didn't stray low enough to touch the older male, but they were steadily kneading her all the same. "I'm okay, Toki." He purred.

"Mmm..." She doesn’t quite believe it. She wiggles and gets comfortable against him, before quietly wiggling a hand into his shirt to twine about his rib cage. "You tensed when he said that," She says quietly, once she’s sure Tenebris is snoring against her belly. Which… tickles in one of the weirdest ways ever. “You might be okay, but Sentinel might not be.”

"Mh, it was nothing important, just a twitch." He assured her. "I'll be okay."

She sighs. “Papy. Aliquam. My Quinn.” She hadn’t called him that since she’d come back-especially since that had been his alternate’s literal name. “Don’t fib to me, please. If it upsets you-either of you- talk to me please.”

He looked down at her, and then sighed. "I'm not bothered. I'm really not... but Sentinel did react a little to the name... but I know damn well that it's nothing more than a name of adoration. My father is affectionate, and thankful indeed, but I know nothing is meant of it." He purred quietly.

“Indeed.” She kisses him gently. “Sentinel and your Dad seem like they would clash a lot.” She comments lightly. Two Alpha’s didn’t usually get along well.

"Mmm, I agree... I'd have to exercise caution, letting him out around Father." Aliquam nodded slowly as he spoke.

“Well… He’s going to be out around him on Papa’s planned beast night.” She hums. “But so is my
beast, and I’m pretty sure she’s going to keep you all busy.”

"You and your queen bee pheromones~" He purred as he kissed her neck tenderly. "We’ll be just fine, huh?"

“Yep.” She laughs. “You’ll all probably be under our spell.” She wiggles her fingers at him teasingly.

"A spell I’d happily fall under.” He cooed, before he assaulted her neck with a few more sweet kisses.

Him being in her neck meant she could literally assault him with pheromones. So she did- she released some from the back of her neck, designed to soothe and relax him in many ways. “I put a spell on you, because you’re mine~” She singsongs very, very quietly as she picks up on others starting to snore as well.

He came to stop as the scent was released and he hummed quietly before he sagged, purring as his senses became dull in her scent. "Hhhh you little witch~" He chuckled quietly.

“It is a bit of a dirty trick, isn’t it?” Toki chuckles softly and settles her head down.

"The worst." And yet he stayed in her mane, a drunk smile on his face as he settled down contently behind her. "I love you, Toki." He purred. "Good night~"

“Good night, Papy.” She stole his hand, kissed his knuckles, and then cuddled it while Tenebris spent the night with his face pressed to her belly.

It was a good night- a night they all needed.
Chapter 125

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: One hundred and twenty five chapters. This marks fifty chapters into book two. Heh. We’ve come a long way. So this one is Beast night. It doesn’t really end in the way you might think. In fact, it didn’t end in the way we thought it would either.

Part of that, as much as I don’t want to admit it, is our muses are struggling. I think for both Silver and I, we need to take a short break from TOTU. Between IRL beating the fuck out of us, and trying to find the muse for writing, these last chapters of TOTU are looking very daunting. So… We’re gonna take a month, maybe two, and rest. I know it’s a bad time to stop the story, but we should be able to resume with much more vigor when we return! TOTU is not being stopped forever, but a short hiatus is needed for both of us to recuperate. Book 1 was 75 chapters, but book 1 was not as heavy of material as book 2. Book 2 was a lot more stressful, I think, on both of our writing muses.

So. With that said… We’ll see you all on the flipside. I’ll still be responding to comments on AO3, so if you feel like chatting us up, go for it.

Silver notes; Don’t worry guys! We won’t be gone for good, just long enough to let ourselves recharge ^^

Enjoy the chapter, and see you next time!

And what a night it was.

Asgore cuddling Tenebris, who was cuddling Toki, and who was also getting cuddled by Aliquam as well, made for a warm pile of cuddles. Eventually they were joined by Caeruleus and Grillby, making the pile that much warmer. For the older males, it was a beautiful taste of their past brought with the blessing of the present. For the younger lovers, it was almost a reassurance of their bond, what they were as lovers and who they belonged with.

Everyone had woken the next morning feeling a little more alive. With the hearty breakfast of campfire eggs, coffee, bacon and roasted potatoes, even the little Solstice was glowing brighter that morning as they prepared to return home.

Asgore and Tenebris had gone for a walk, and while Grillby worked to tear down and pack up the tent. Caeruleus and Aliquam worked to clean the pans used for making breakfast. Thankfully Solstice had spent the time asleep upon her father's chest so Toki had been left with the task of watching her children alone.

They went home the following afternoon once everything had been packed up, the children sufficiently exhausted, and any and all trash having been picked up and tossed away. Upon their return, the village had cleared out and gone back to normal.

The week that came after was simpler and more relaxing. A few people were poking around here and there, wanting to see the site where Toki had gone through the void, and come back through, but
they were easily chased off and brushed off as silly tourists.

Apparently her statue had been insanely popular when it had first gone up, and people had come and gone to pay their respects. Some of them still did, believing that the woman that had returned to their world was not the same one that had gone away.

In some ways, they were right. In many ways, the old Toki had died the day that she went into that void, and the new one had been reborn in the same instant, born of the pain and strife that her predecessor, Kindness, had gone through.

Toki didn’t mind though. She survived- and that’s what mattered. She was a survivor. She could survive anything.

Even her daughter dragging her heels about going to stay the night with them at their grandfather’s while everyone got connected with their inner beast. It would be good for them to learn, while Thumper and Asgore came to spend the night at the house and babysit the summons for them.

Strangely, Sobek seemed to like Thumper. The surly bird listened to him sometimes, which was a fair few more times than he listened to other people.

“But I want to bring toys,” Honey whines.

“We don’t need toys!” Skylar huffs at his sister. “We can play with Grandpa and cuddle Solly if Uncle Cae brings her.”

"Solly might not come. She was feeling a little moody." Cae spoke up from nearby, where he was helping Toki pack up blankets for the trip to Tenebris’ home. "Usually means there's a chance she'd need more time with her father. It’s an elemental thing." He chuckled quietly. "It's okay, I've been hogging her lately." He joked.

Besides that, he’d left Grillby with plenty to feed her.

When everyone made it to Tenebris' home- which took a fair bit of effort to get Honey to leave behind her army of stuffed toys and other silly things- it seemed Asgore had already vacated. Tenebris and Aliquam were already in the front room, moving around furniture to accommodate for the pickiness the beasts will have. The couch was overturned, the cushions of it in a small pile, Tenebris' chair was pushed back, and turned over with it's back facing up and now covered for it's own protection.

Thumper was there for the moment, but he would be leaving soon to go stay with Grillby. He loved his family, he did, but if they growled and snarled, he would run, and they would chase. For now though, he was packing up anything and everything of his that the beasts could cause mayhem with, and securing it in his room, which was being padlocked so none of them got inside.

Toki smiled to Thumper as she arrived, and ushered her children in the door. She was in loose, easily removable clothes, knowing her beast didn't like clothing. "Hey, Thumper. Helping get stuff set up?"

"Nope. Just making sure Dad can't eat my headphone cords again." He gives the older man a dirty look, and then bounces over to Toki. His fuzzy nose cuddles to her swollen belly, which was growing larger and larger practically by the day, and he peppers his siblings with kisses.

"Well, Papa is a silly old man and sometimes he has to eat silly things." She pats his ears and lets him smooch her, smiling warmly. He was excited, as always. "You and Asgore take good care of Sobek and Snuggle, alright?"
"Okay!" He grins at her. He gives her belly another soft rub, before bouncing for Tenebris, and launching for his shoulders. "DaaaaaaAAAAAAAD! I'm gonna go now. Where's my goodbye hug?"

"Ready and waiting, son." Tenebris replied with a laugh, catching Thumper before purring as he gave him a squeeze. "I love you, Thumper. You be polite for your hosts, you hear?"

“My hosts?” The boy laughs. “I’m watching Sobek and Snuggle with Pops! I’ve got to worry about Sobek being rude to Pops, not me being rude.” He tickles his whiskers against the older man’s face. “I love you too, Dad. I’ll see you tomorrow, yeah?”

"Right on time, my little cottontail~" He laughed at the tickling whiskers, nuzzling him firmly before letting him go.

Thumper gave him a grin and thumped his foot. “I’ll know if you’re late!” He teases, and then hops for the front door. He gives his family a wave, and then bids them farewell.

Toki watches him go with a fond smile. “He’s getting so big so fast.” She sighs. Her hand slides down to her belly, and she rubs it quietly. Her green gaze slides to her children, who were currently attempting to see what their father was up to. “They all are."

"It’s an irreplaceable experience." Tenebris rumbled happily, following her gaze to see Aliquam pausing in his work to scoop up his pups and squeeze them appreciatively. He was clacking kisses to both their heads.

“You’ll get to experience more of it yourself in time, Papa.” She smiles. He hadn’t gotten to see Papyrus and Sans grow up- and he got Thumper when he was later in life. He would get the good and the bad with these little ones. “So. What is the plan for tonight, Papa?”

"We start slow, make sure we are all comfortable. I asked Asgore to come by with a late night meal to keep us from getting peckish." He answered.

“That’s good.” She nods. She stretches her back for a moment, and then descends onto all fours. Or all sixes, rather. Her secondary arms curled around belly as she stretched, not unlike a cat and yawning. “Mmm… So, we brought pillows and soft things.” Sans had carried them for her while she wrangled the twins. “Not sure if we’ll need them or not. What are you and Papyrus doing with the furniture?”

"Clawproofing it. We’re mostly protecting the softest sides of it, and making a small cave for Rufus.” He gestured to the triangular cave that was made of the overturned couch.

“A cave?” She inquired curiously, and then proceeded to wiggle right under the overturned couch. It was pretty spacious, save the cushions. They made it a tight fit. Her beast let out a soft, subsonic purr through her vocals. “Rufus is I’m guessing Sans? He seems like a cave type.”

“’Cause Uncle is a lazy hermit?” Skylar chirps innocently from his father’s arms.

"Oh come on, be nice." Aliquam scolded quietly.

"Yes. At least that’s what he called himself last... I’ve kept the cushions with the couch for a little, but they’ll be moved by the time he's ready to den." Tenebris hummed, glancing over as his son walked into the room.

Sans looked at the den. He sucked in his gut a little before he huffed. "Yeah I’ll fit fine."

“I dunno about that.” Toki chittered in amusement. She lurked in his eventual den, taking up space
and fluffing herself out. "How you gonna fit when I’m taking up all the space~?" She teases. Was that an invitation to play? Perhaps.

"Easy. I'll politely ask you to vamoose. If that doesn’t work, I'll push you right outta there." He huffed. "I’m like a bulldozer."

“A bulldozer, huh?” She grins, and half wiggles down like she’s getting comfortable. She can’t, not with her belly and the lack of padding, but she can fake it. “Well, mister bulldozer, I might just be a roadblock that you can’t move.”

“Ooooooo!” Honey grinned. “You gonna let Momma talk to you like that, Uncle Cae?” Was she egging him on, just like her mother did to pretty much everyone else did? Yep. Someone was just like her mother.

He folded his arms and looked hurt. "Didn't Dad just say he made that cave for me? It's like putting that roadblock in the bulldozers garage."

“Well...” She wiggled her brows at him. “Buck up and make me move~” She gave a playful buzz. Toki wouldn’t be hard to move, honestly. A nudge to the rump, maybe a small shove, and she’d move.

“Get Momma!” Honey squirmed in her Daddy’s arms. “Get herr!”

“Silly! He can’t play as rough as we do.” Skylar bumps her lightly. “Mama has babies. Daddy’s cuffed us for getting too rough with Momma.”

Cae huffed and looked at Aliquam. The younger brother gave him a calm look but it was accompanied by a small nod, and the older brother grumbled before he went around the back of the couch.

His pupils thinned as he knelt down and he huffed. "Out ya get.” He growled, lowering his head and pressing a small, ridged crown of bone against Toki’s thigh.

Toki grunted at the head pressing to the back of her thigh, and the deeper voice rumbling behind her. She couldn't do anything about it. It made her beast stir, on edge with having a foreign beast behind her, and she gave a chitter as she gave some ground, before effectively blocking up the other side of his den.

Dear gave a chittering hiss out of Toki's throat, asserting more control. It was her night, after all. The beast had been practically chomping at the bit since she learned she was going to get an entire night free. However, she couldn't turn around, and outside was the male who was not mate but looked like mate, and then first mate and pups. She was alright with first mate, but unsure about smelling so many unfamiliar beasts.

It made her hesitate in leaving.

Rufus, unaware of her inner conflict, growled firmly before he gave her a sharp nip. "Git!" He growled louder.

He dared to bite her backside. He, whom she did not know, dared to nip her and demand her to move when she had been here first? Where Toki might have been playful, Dear was not. She didn’t give him any verbal warning other than a vicious snarl. She rocked forward on her four arms, and donkey kicked him in the face with the bare bone of her heel.

It put her outside of his den, which let her turn her pregnant self around. She bristled right in his face,
still outside his den in a lack of desire to get stuck in close quarters. Her mouth opened and her teeth flared, and she was very much apparent as the alpha that she was.

Dear made it clear that being pissy with her would result in a non-pleasant experience. Playful was fine, pissy and impatient was not.

Rufus barked in pain as he got kicked and didn’t move while she did, but he promptly took the open space as she vacated the ‘cave’. He curled his lip at her before warbling quietly in what almost seemed like an apology. He set his head down on his arms, his gaze lowering as the warbling picked up again.

Rufus, and correlating Caeruleus, were most definitely Beta.

She puffed up as he submitted, and she made him hold that pose for several seconds. Dear was Queen bee, and they did not take well to insult or challenge. Eventually she dropped her head and closed her teeth over the nape of his neck, giving him a half reprimanding and half forgiving shake. It was a light reminded that she wouldn't be so kind next time he got out of line, now that he knew where he sat in the pecking order.

Straightening, she chuffed and stalked off, keeping to the edge of the room as she eyed her mate and not-mate. Her pupils were thin, her movements entirely Insectis. Toki wasn’t home.

Skylar seemed frozen in his Daddy's arms. The display alarmed him more than anything. He’d seen his grandpa like this before, but not his Momma, Daddy, or Uncle. It was new and alarming.

Honey was giving tiny baby growls at her Momma for having gotten in her uncles space, but her tiny growls shifted pitch when her Uncle bit her Momma on the butt. How rude! She'd been taught that biting was bad.

Rufus took the shake with dignity and settled down, watching the others now that he was comfortable

Aliquam slowly set the children down and carefully shed his work pants. He then carefully disconnected his leg and set it aside before he lowered and relaxed his mind, coaxing Sentinel to come out.

A moment passed as his body changed to accommodate the shift in perspective to his beast, before he gently chuffed to Dear, and he sat behind the pups.

Dear did not approach. Her green gaze flicked between Tenebris and her known mate. She opened her mouth, quietly huffing in his scent, no matter the fact she had a nose to scent with now.

Her gaze slid over his frame, eyeing his discarded leg briefly before she resumed staring at him. Slowly, very slowly, she sat down and the bristling of her mane settled some. Her head cocked, and she made a faint noise in the back of her throat.

Honey was the first to go to her mother, scrambling over on all fours with ease. She bumped into her arm and bounced until she was rewarded with a burbling coo.

Skylar for once was too much like his father. He hesitated, crouched, and was unsure about staying where he sat, or joining his twin.

There was a telltale rumble from Tenebris to announce that the eldest beast was now out, though he watched on silently.
The rumble of the elder beast made Dear tense, and her slitted gaze slid to him. Her mane ruffled and her wings lifted, quietly staking claim to this side of the room for the moment.

Sentinel leaned down to nuzzle Skylar, purring warmly as he gave him a gentle nip.

Skylar grunted at the nip and ended up hopping forwards a couple steps. He wasn't sure about this acting like a beast thing. Some part of him was eager to do it, but another part of him was hesitant. He gave a soft squeak. He'd rather be close to both parents while he was feeling unsure.

And while Skylar steadily made his way closer, Sentinel followed, steadily hopping at Skylar's side as he continued to coax him on.

Dear watched them get closer, and grunted as Honey started to tug on her shirt. It reminded her that clothing was irritating, and she took a moment to shred her way out of it. There. A proper beast wasn't covered in such... Rubbish.

Honey didn't complain, playing with the scraps of cloth that had been her mother's shirt. When her brother finally hopped into range, she batted one at him, and stuck her butt into the air, wiggling it like she had a tail to lash.

Skylar seemed perplexed with the scrap of fabric, and not at all bothered by his now naked mother. Slowly he batted it back to his sister. The older twin then yelped as his younger twin gave a gleeful shriek and pounced him to play. Hesitance or no, he couldn't ignore that. Together they tumbled through the scraps of cloth.

Dear watched them, pleased with their progress. She kept her attention partially on them, and partially on the other males in the room.

Sentinel was calm and giving Dear an admiring look.

Rufus couldn't care less what was happening, choosing to remain under the overturned couch.

Papa found himself a place to get comfortable on top of the couch, his crown, ridges, and quills growing out of his hard hide as instinct allowed him to release his alpha features

Dear mostly watched Papa. He was the biggest alpha, the oldest alpha, and by rights, the biggest threat to her pups even if she could smell his relation to them. She was understandably wary. Neither body had been big enough to take a male his size in a fight. She had venom though, and she could bite like a son of a bitch.

Dear cocked her head at Sentinel, and slowly stretched her face out to sniff his, offering him the same courtesy. They were mates, but they hadn't met before. Not face to face like this.

Sentinel rumbled softly as he watched her. He could smell that she was also an Alpha, and unlike Rufus, he knew better than to be rude. So he rumbled quieter as he bowed his head, hoping she would recognize the sign of respect and respond in the same.

At least that’s what he learned from his Sire.

It took her a moment to recognize the foreign sign of respect. Slowly she reciprocated, dipping her skull to him as she buzzed lowly at him. He had manners, which was good. He smelled of Alpha too, which was also good. She wasn't sure how she would handle being mated to a submissive or a Beta. Toki was already an Omega, while her beast was an Alpha... It would have been a mess. Less mess made Dear happy. She slowly crooned at Sentinel.
And he crooned right back, slowly closing the distance to rub his head against hers. All the while, Papa watched on and the elder beast rumbled proudly to watch them introduce themselves to each other, much better than he worried.

Dear was pleased as his head touched hers. The vertebrae in her neck rattled happily, and she chirped contently, up until the rumbles from the other alpha in the room disquieted her. Her gaze flicked sidelong to him, and to the jumble of pups wrestling towards him.

Sentinel peered over as well, tilting his head as he watched the children near the elder male. He rumbled quietly as he watched Papa shift, though was calmed only slightly as the larger beast leaned down to gently greet the children.

Dear was not so much calmed, and she tensed, rising up onto all fours as she watched him greet the children. She wanted to make sure he wouldn’t be snappish with the twins, or she’d be all up in his business.

Skylar got pinned on his back by his little sister, and let out a tiny grunt as he was stuck peering up at his grandfather. The massive beast was leaning down off the back of the overturned couch and staring at them, and he felt himself wanting to turtle and submit before him. His arms curled to his chest, and he tucked his legs up as well, eyes going wide. He’d never felt like this before around his grandfather. He didn’t like it.

Honey paused over top of her older twin, and her blue eye lights thinned as she peered up at her grandpa. She gave a tiny, squeaky growl, and then playfully leaned up to swat his nose. She wasn’t afraid to entice the older male to play. All the adults were being dumb- they could be playing, but no, they had to be all bristly and growly and be big buttheads.

He took the swat and he jerked back before he gave an irked snort. Though as he lowered his snout again, he nosed past her and groomed Skylar gently, purring softly to him as he recognized the behavior as fear.

Skylar made a soft whining sound behind his sharp, sharp teeth. He submitted quietly to let himself be groomed.

Honey however took offense to being brushed off. She puffed up, and she growled again, before head-butting him with her pointy little horns. She wasn’t supposed to bite, but her Momma never said nothing about poking them with her pointy head spears.

Papa jerked in place this time, and his muzzle smacked her backwards a few centimeters as he gave a louder growl, almost a snarl, which was a clear warning to the pup.

Sentinel bristled as the pup was bumped by the elder's reaction, but he expected it to happen. Letting the elder have that one, he got up and came over, scooping Honey into his teeth as he pulled her away.

Skylar was well under his grandfather's shadow, and he was pretty much safe there as the elder lowered his head to resume grooming the pup while taking in his scent to recognize the blood between them.

The older twin didn’t like being separated from his twin during such an odd experience however, and he began slowly, so slowly, seal crawling away with his elbows.

Dear didn’t like the growl, or how Honey seemed to wilt in her father’s teeth. She bristled, and she gathered her wilted daughter from her mate once he had returned to her side. She tuck
her, and began to groom her gently, reassuring her warmly. She then chittered softly- a clear demand for the return of her other pup as well. If Papa was going to play favorites, then he could have none of them. They were pups- they were going to play. If he couldn’t play, then he just needed to stay atop the couch of grouches and ignore them.

Papa gave her an annoyed look and his lip curled slightly before he huffed and lowered his snout to gently encourage Skylar to go to his parents.

Skylar scooted up and hesitantly scrambled for his mother.

Dear tucked him into her chest, and began to groom him quietly. She settled carefully onto her side, not at all bothered by Papa’s lip curl. Her wings lifted slightly, showing just how unbothered by it she was.

The twins relaxed as she groomed them, settled on her side like a great lioness, and her swollen belly bared and on display.

Lounging like the queen she knew she was while swollen with young appealed the beast, who then gave a deep rumble to inform the other he liked what he saw.

Sentinel thwarted his charms. Sentinel quickly moved in front of Dear and flared his shoulders, baring his fangs to remind the other that she who he was trying to flirt with was already taken.

Of course, this just made Papa grumble in annoyance, though he seemed to not care enough to get up and counter Sentinels aggressive stance.

Dear cocked her head as Papa attempted to charm her. It wasn't unlike the times that Big Daddy had charmed her, before rolling her over and taking what was his. With, of course, some minor struggle from her just because that was the nature of an alpha. He had to earn the right to dominate her. Dear remembered though that this one was not their mate, and that she should not encourage his flirts with pheromones.

Her gaze instead settled on her first mate, who blocked the path. The three limbed alpha was not necessarily a match for his sire, not in physical fighting. Dear rumbled, a soft command for both males to cease their nonsense. She chittered softly, informing Papa that she would take his words as a compliment to her appearance, but nothing more. He hadn't won her like Tenne anyways. Tenne had nursed Toki back to health, and had proven that he had wanted her despite her damage. Tenebris had been a hard won friendship on Toki's part.

Dear returned to grooming her children, content that her command for them to behave would be heeded.

Papa didn’t drag on after Dear made it clear that she would not reciprocate his message. He lifted his head only for a moment before he yawned and set it down again.

Sentinel snorted sharply, before he slowly turned and nuzzled dear, laying himself around her and the pups.

Dear was pleased as Sentinel settled down. She shifted, and partially lifted up so she could reach over and groom his bones. Her teeth snagged on his clothing and she pulled at them, having no time for such nonsense.

Slowly, the twins got back to their playing now that everything was calmer and their mother was grooming their father. Honey slowly started to explore towards the couch, playfully wiggling her rump in the air towards her Uncle in a universal sign for play since her grandfather was a butthead
and wouldn't play with her.

Rufus slowly opened one eye to look towards Honey. Recognizing the gesture, he gave a soft snort, and extended one hand to gently paw at her.

One hand was all she needed. Honey pounced and tackled it, making tiny baby growls as she chomped on him with her flat teeth and did her best to imitate her Uncle's super fluffy dog the time he stole her daddy's hand.

Skylar sat back to watch his sister play fight their uncle's hand, and then crawled off to see what he could find to make into some sort of toy. Anything could be a toy when it was done properly.

Papa's long tail was draped along the bottom of his 'throne rock', swaying slowly with the occasional rattle from the bones that formed his tail.

Skylar crept around quietly. He seemed to have better luck with his grandpa than his sister did, so maybe he'd try there.

While the playful snarls of his sister echoed in his ears, Skylar got nice and close for pouncing. He wiggled, lowering his chest and lifting his rump with his legs into a pose just like his kitties did.

When Papa's tail swung towards him, he pounced. He fell short of it, landing ungracefully. He rolled with it, and just patted the tail blade when it was in range, making sure not to cut himself on it as he did. Orange eyes darted up to the bulky backside he could see, and he darted away out of range so he could make his second strike.

Papa flinched a little as the pup struck and he slumped onto his side as he opened his mouth, releasing a loud groan like noise as his tail rattled. His tail blade lifted enough to then be laid on, keeping it safe under his weight as the rest of his tail wiggled and rattled for Skylar.

Well, Skylar could make use of a rattling link of plated bone. He pounced again, and patted it, before hesitantly chewing on the armored part. He knew his teeth were sharp, like his Momma's teeth, so biting would have to be done gently, unlike Honey who could bite all she wanted but get nowhere.

He then proceeded to throw himself down and gave another moan of mock pain as his tail stopped moving.

Skylar sprang away like someone had jabbed him with a fork. He looked up at his grandpa, bewildered, and then reached out to pat his tail. Surely he hadn't bitten him that hard, had he?

Papa sat up and looked at Skylar. He tilted his head, and then gently wiggled his tail.

Sentinel snorted at the sight, realizing just what the Elder was doing.

Dear was still a little confused as to what was happening. She couldn't really see, but her son wasn’t making distressed sounds, and the older male wasn’t making aggressive moves.

Skylar however was befuddled. His grandpa was okay apparently, and trying to entice him again. Okay… He wiggled a little bit, unable to resist the urge to pounce his tail again. He clamped on, and chewed it again, harder than before but still lighter than his twin would have.

Once more the great Beast gave a groan as he flopped onto his side, his tail wriggling in mock distress before falling limp once more.

Rather than springing back, Skylar chewed on him again, and gave a playful kick with his feet,
before scrambling away to see what he would do with that. He could imagine his tail was like a snake- one had to ‘fight’ it very carefully.

And as he started his play, Papa rumbled soundly in content.

Meanwhile, Rufus and Honey had graduated to gentle rough housing and he was getting tired again. So, he pulled a trick he knew would freak her out.

He opened his mouth, dislocated his jaw, and proceeded to gently nom around Honey's face.

Honey did, indeed, freak out. She squeaked, a frightened panicked sound as his much larger mouth closed around her skull. Her bones rattled at him and she yanked away, before scuttling quickly back to her father and mother.

Dear lifted a head and squinted at Rufus, before huffing. She bundled her daughter close, and comforted her gently, as she settled down as best she could on the pillow mound. It wasn't soft enough or big enough for her, and she found herself wanting softer things to add to it to make it a more suitable spot to lay.

Having made sure not even a molar ground against Honey's head, the round beast rumbled as his jaw closed, and he set his head down with a chuff.

Sentinel looked at Dear before he rumbled and got up, making his way to the pile of cushions near Papa.

There was a mutual rumble of respect from one to another that kept the older of the beasts where he was as Sentinel collected a few pillows, bringing them over to where Dear was laying.

Dear shifted as her mate returned with pillows, and she lifted up so they could expand their little resting bed a bit more for laying on.

The extra pillows gave some added softness, but her poor pregnant joints ached for the softness of her primary personality's bed. Dear made due, and invited Sentinel back to her side with a soft, pleased rumble. She would settle and she would doze for a while. She hadn't gotten to sleep in a long time. She didn't really sleep inside of Toki so much as go into a stasis. She didn't need to sleep inside Toki.

With Sentinel nestling up to his mate, and both Papa and Rufus happy where they were, the house reached a peaceful silence for what lasted to be a few hours.

The only time it was disturbed was when it was 'dinner time', at which point there was a gentle knock at the door that caught Papa's attention. He quickly moved from his spot to go investigate.

The door gently creaked opened and Asgore stuck his face in, giving a few gentle chuffs of greeting that Papa quickly answered with his own.

The strange chuffs woke Dear almost immediately. She had Skylar with her at that point, as he had retired from play not long after his sister. With both twins sleeping pillowed on her belly, she couldn't stand, but she could make a small growl of alarm for her mate and pack mate to hear. She could smell food and outside, and outside didn't smell nice. It covered the smell of who was at the door, making her anxious, as she couldn't see them.
Asgore gave Papa a smile, and stepped in with a warm rumble. He was no beast, but he was semi decent at communicating with his mate when he was deep in his beast form. "I've got food," Asgore announces to everyone.

Papa did a small circle and rattled happily as he could smell the food.

It roused Rufus who poked his head out and gave a low sound in his own excitement.

Sentinel had lifted his head and growled quietly, before hearing Asgore at which point the growling stopped and he rumbled as he watched Papa escort the large fluffy male into the room.

Dear's growl cut off, but so did any relaxed pheromones she would be giving off. There was the male who was technically alpha female, and who would be taking her pups. Not just sharing them as packs did for raising usually, but taking them. Dear wouldn't ever fully understand that. She didn't expect she would. She just had to deal with it, and give him sour looks as he entered her field of vision.

The smell of food roused the twins too, though they were slow in stirring.

Asgore smiled and patted Papa with one hand, before going to set the large platter on the table. "I figured a platter would be better, so we don't have you all losing the forks or breaking the plates. Now you can just take a piece of meat and eat at your leisure."

Dear lifted up as she nosed her children onto their feet. They yawned but followed her. She paused and watched Papa and the platter. Who would eat first, she wondered?

For Papa, there was no doubt that he would be the first to select a piece of meat off of the platter. Rufus didn't even move from his spot, knowing he would eat later. Such was the order of the pack- Alphas ate first, and then the beta got to eat.

Sentinel was getting up. He was slow as he watched the older male, but he planned on getting meat for Dear and the pups before the best of it was gone. He approached Papa and the platter of meat and gave a rattle, informing the other of his presence and his intent.

Having not been immediately used to children and needing to share with others, Papa gave a small resilient growl. Though a simple glance to Dear and the two children reminded him of his manners. Approaching Sentinel, Papa slowly set down the chunk of meat that he had taken for himself, a deep rumble in his chest assuring Sentinel that it was safe to take it for them.

Grateful, Sentinel collected the meat and brought it back to his mate, setting it down for her to take before giving her a gentle nuzzle

Dear gave him a nuzzle in return and a grateful warble. She didn't immediately eat though. Instead, she gave Papa a meaningful glance, as well as Asgore. She had seen the older Alpha forgetting about the pups, and she would remind him of the first rule regarding them. She barked softly to get the goat monsters attention, and then the mother began to teach them how they would care for the pups they would be 'adopting' from her, or she would be giving them different lessons. Rule number one, Pups always ate first. It didn't matter if alphas hadn't eaten in weeks, but the pups ate first.

Dear swiftly split the large chunk evenly down the center with her teeth. For Skylar, she gave him his chunk as was. He had teeth like her, and he was fully capable of biting off hunks. Honey had flatter teeth though, so Dear took a little extra care in ripping up hers into smaller, more manageable chunks for her to consume, before shoving the small pile over to her daughter.
The two hesitated, but after some encouragement, seemed to have no problem eating.

Asgore seemed to be thinking as he watched. "Did... We just get a lesson in raising pups?" He wonders out loud, voice low. He didn't mind. It was helpful.

Papa, once again with a chunk of meat hanging from his mouth, gave a rumble and a chuff as he then went to where he had been laying before, getting comfortable before he began to chew on the meat he took for himself.

Dear hummed, pupils slitting thoughtfully with words she intended to share with Toki later if she remembered, and then nosed her mate to go get himself meat. She would eat once the pups had finished, as was proper. After all, who knew if they would want more? She would need to fetch the next best cut for them. They were growing after all.

Asgore settled down into the covered form of Tenebris' chair, and relaxed there with a sigh. He was intending to wait for them all to eat so he could take the platter home and prepare another to leave all night for them to munch on. Snacks and the like, as he knew they would be peckish through out the night. He'd rather they have meals here they could eat, than decide to go ‘hunting’. That wouldn’t end well. May the gods give him strength if Papa ran into Stag instead of an actual deer.

Once Papa and Asgore were clear from the platter, Sentinel ventured forth and collected himself some meat. Only when he stepped away did Rufus cautiously approach to get himself some meat to eat.

Dear regarded Rufus lightly, but didn’t kick up a fuss. No sense in him waiting since no one else was. She hummed, and remained where she lay, quietly guarding her pups.

Once the twins finished eating, and seemed full and content to lounge on the ‘nest’ of sorts, Dear hauled herself up and approached the platter to get her share of meat.

Papa had gotten up to collect another piece of his own, rumbling as he greeted Dear as he stopped by her side, waiting for her to collect her piece as he looked to decide his next piece.

She rumbled a greeting as well, and took a few moments to decide what she wanted. The choice bits had been chosen- the choicest of them given to the children, which is what she wanted- so she settled on something with little marbling. Fat wasn’t appealing to her. Her secondary set of hands collected it, and she fluffed faintly, before giving him a nod. She’d made her choice- of what she thought was the next best cut, anyway- and she was going to return to her nest now.

He watched her go before he collected his own meat, rumbling quietly as he returned to Asgore's side, rumbling contentedly.

Asgore patted him as he came to sit near him instead of on the back of the couch. The goat monster hummed tiredly and let his eyes slide to half lidded before simply closing them as he relaxed in his chair. He wasn't sleeping- no, his ears twitched and flicked every which way so he could pick up the sounds of the beasts in the room.

Dear got comfortable, and began to devour her portion. It settled well, and the nourishment was good for the litter in her belly. She didn’t immediately go for more though, knowing she needed to both wait for the cycle of turns to go again, and for that chunk to digest lest she feel ill. She wasn't sure how a skeleton body worked, but she imagined that since it was solid, it worked much the same as when they had been a beast. So, the litter was rapidly squishing their organs. Big meals needed to come in smaller forms more often.
Papa seemed to be happy as his head was pet by his mate, and he leaned into it while slowly chewing on the meat he had collected.

Sentinel watched him for a moment, then rumbled and got up, pacing for a moment before he went for the platter again.

A soft sound rose from Papa as he eyed the younger alpha, and for a moment he stopped, staring back at the older male before he rattled and continued to the platter. Yes Papa didn't move, but his gaze was watching warily, as if the younger male was about to get tackled.

Asgore paused in his patting and eyed Papa warily. “… What are you doing?” He inquired lightly.

Dear tilts her head as well and watches the exchange curiously.

Sentinel rattled quietly in warning and turned to face Papa, his hackles raising, as did the short quills on his neck and shoulders.

Dropping the meat he was chewing into Asgore's lap, Papa rose to his feet and turned, rattling again in warning as his own quills, longer and thicker, rose to inflate his silhouette. He hadn't seen the pups get up to get a second serving. As Alpha, he was fine with having a second piece, but seeing the sub-alpha try to go for another piece before the pups had Papa unhappy.

Asgore muffled a disgusted noise at the half masticated meat chunk dropped in his lap, and proceeded to set it on a side table instead. He loved Tenebris, he really did, but he was not holding his meat while the beasts had a scuffle over something he didn't understand. No- just no.

Dear’s brow furrowed as she watched them. The twins stirred at her sides, and made small, unhappy noises as they pressed against her shoulders.

“… Is Daddy and Grandpa gonna fight?” Skylar asked.

Dear rumbled, but didn’t answer. She didn’t know.

There was shuffling as Rufus turned around in his den to watch as Papa stalked closer, and Sentinel rattled louder in warning as he arched his back. He shifted on his one hind leg and his fingers curled before he swiped at Papa, at that point the other flinched back before he lunged forward and the beasts impacted against one another with a clash of bone hitting shield and teeth snapping at each other as claws went for the other's snout for sharp, strong smacks.

The two swiped a few times before a hard head butt knocked Sentinel at his unsupported side, sending him onto his back, at which point Sentinel brought his remaining leg up and swiped at Papa's chest as the other snapped at his face, both of them snarling and Papa roaring a few bellows. Sentinel rolled over and quickly moved away, still bristling and baring his teeth at Papa, but now on one side of the older beast while the plate of meat was on the other. He hissed quietly, before his quills flattened.

That was when Papa was content and he gave a sharp snort before he turned and returned to Asgore's side, watching Sentinel. The younger was only wounded in terms of his pride, but he didn't go for the meat again, instead slowly slunk over to where Dear was, his metaphorical ears flat to his head.

The children shied away from the violence, too young to understand and clearly frightened by it, and Dear protected them as best she could from it. Part of her, and a lingering part of Toki, was thinking they might have been too young for this such thing. Honestly, there was no need for it, not with the twins being full. They had eaten a good chunk- the biggest chunk, which Papa had no doubt meant
to eat himself, had gone to them both- and they didn’t seem interested in more, so until they were, there was no need for Sentinel to be warded off like so.

But perhaps Insectis worked differently, or she shared too many views with Toki. She leaned over to groom Sentinel, and then nudged him into the bundle of bedding as she stood up. She wasn’t going to let him be bullied. She tucked the children into his side, and she approached this time, her mane bristling up as she locked her gaze onto Papa.

Let him try that with her.

His gaze came over to her as he heard her approach and he gazed at her before he snorted, a clear sign of disinterest that he wasn't going to fight her.

She gave him a look over, and then the noise she gave made it clear that she thought he clearly wasn’t a match or worth a spat anyways. She then collected two chunks, and padded back to the nest. She dropped one in front of Sentinel, and to see if the twins had wanted more.

Neither did, and instead clung to her as she returned to them. So, she shoved it to her mate, and settled to make sure he ate. She was intending to find a better location to settle down for the night-away from the males and their spatting.

He ate the meat quietly but was more than happy to express he was thankful to her, nuzzling and grooming her quietly.

Papa noticed and snorted quietly before he chuffed and turned his head, making soft snapping at where his meat was on the other side of Asgore.

Asgore picked it up between his thumb and forefinger, before passing it hesitantly over to Papa. “That is gross.” He informs him. “Next time you toss your meat in my lap, I’m going to toss it on the floor.”

Dear snorts, and lets him groom her. She sighs, her body relaxing just a bit. She took some time to enjoy the attention, but eventually got up and gathered the children with the intent of finding a more permanent spot to nest for the night. This location was too open, too close to... well, several aggressive males. Two alpha males who were very apt to get into arguments did not make for a relaxing environment. So, Dear had intentions of finding elsewhere in the house for her and the pups to nest.

Asgore glanced up at her. “And where are you going, little miss?”

Dear squinted at him, and made a nasty hiss. Like she’d tell him.

Papa took the meat and chewed a little off to eat, before he lifted his head and rumbled the same question to Dear. Just where was she off to?

Dear lifted her head and fluffed her mane. She clicked at him in sharp tones. She didn’t need to let them know every move she made- if she wanted them to know where she was going, she would tell them. She was taking the children to a less aggressive environment where they would feel safer- and they should feel terrible for making the twins feel scared during their first experience with this.

She lifted her wings and gathered the twins to her chest. She chuffs, and then ventures off to go try and find a nest.

He blinked once as she walked out, but he lowered his head slowly and continued to chew his meal.
After maybe five minutes of passively chewing up the meat, he swallowed it and went to find Dear and the pups.

Sentinel got up as well, going to make sure he didn't change his mind from her previous challenge.

Dear was nowhere to be found in the house. The upstairs was cleared, most of the doors locked to keep them inside the main house. The bathroom was left open, in case they wanted water. The tub had been partially filled, to give the beasts a ‘pond’ to drink from if they so deemed.

But the pregnant queen bee had taken the pups and disappeared within those five minutes, gone from the main part of the house. Her scent was hard to track over top the scents of Thumper and Asgore, who made use of the house much more often than Toki’s body did anymore.

The only door left unlocked was, in fact, the door to the garage, and that was entirely by accident.

And the garage is where he had gone, sniffing the air.

He knew this smell, this beautiful smell of raw, cold and metal mixed with oil, varnish, and pride.

Her name was Eclipse, he knew that much. He came closer to the old vehicle and rumbled as he smelled the car, before he slowly lifted to his hind legs, poking his snout inside the vehicle.

Sharp teeth closed over the end of his snout, and venomous green eyelights peered at him. Dear growled a clear, concise warning for him to back off and out of her chosen nesting area. She chomped harder, in a motion that was definitely not gentle like Skylar's play biting had been, and then let him go, drawing her head back to bare her teeth at him for invading her space.

Papa did quickly back up as soon as he was released and he reached up, slowly rubbing his snout as he hissed quietly.

Sentinel watched him bristle in pain, before he looked to Dear and he thrummed softly as he peered in, not leaning in as much but still making sure he investigated.

Dear didn’t bite her mate, but he still received a hiss. She wanted none of the male aggression in this little haven. She was curled around the twins, who were pillowed on her belly. It shifted every time she breathed, but it didn’t seem to disturb them. She eyed her mate lightly, and rumbled softly. Her wings were a little cramped, but they filled up the space inside the car and provided light and warmth.

He whined and cooed quietly to her, but slowly did back up out of the window, before he rumbled at Papa, a small invitation to return to the main room.

Dear listened to them start to leave, and lowered her head with the intent to sleep. It would be a long night spent with the rest of the beasts- and she knew the children were looking forward to the morning. As much as Dear was enjoying her freedom, being cooped up inside a house wasn’t true freedom. She’d rather see the outside world through Toki’s eyes than be caged up and ‘free’, in a small area with two aggressive alphas.
Chapter 126

Strider Notes: So… That last chapter ended on a slightly sour one. Papa was aggressive to Honey, but seemed to favor Skylar, and neither children liked the fighting… I wonder how this one is going to go.

Also it’s good to be back. It feels like coming home finally. Hopefully it feels nice for ya’ll too! Anyways, we didn’t get as much written as we’d have liked to, so we’ve got about 6 weeks of chapters stocked up. We’ll be resuming the 1 per week schedule, since Silverwing now has a job too. Gotta write around work schedules and the like.

When morning dawned, the house was dark and quiet. Asgore had gone and come once more during the night, bringing a fresh plate of food that only the boys partook in- the King didn’t see Toki’s beast for the rest of the night, nor hide nor hair of the twins.

They still were nowhere to be found come morning, when the beasts roused and shifted to give control over to their main personalities as was agreed.

Tenebris was the first to wake, groaning quietly before he sighed and his eyes opened. He took in his surroundings before he yawned and stretched, his claws flexing before he sat up. "Mmmh... Aliquam... Caeruleus... Wake up." He barked out quietly, waking the boys who slowly slunk out of their resting places.

Aliquam took a moment to stretch before quietly reattaching his leg.

Caeruleus stuck a hand out and waved slowly, the one sign that he was awake. Though it wasn’t much good, as it did little to keep him that way. It quickly disappeared again.

While the boys stirred, there was an echoing silence in the house. There was no Toki, no toddling children grumbling at being made to wake up at such an early hour. There wasn’t even a rumbling purr of Toki sleeping somewhere.

Just silence- unnerving silence. And evidence of several pillows having been taken during the night while they all slept.

Aliquam was the first to notice and with his cane in hand, he slowly pushed himself to his feet. "Toki?" He called gently, starting down the hallway towards a leaking cold draft.

The cold draft that the tall skeleton was feeling came from the garage, where the door had been shoved open. The garage door was still closed, so it was sealed, but the room itself was chilly, and seemed to be empty.

All save the soft snores coming from inside the car.

Aliquam perked up as he zeroed in on the source of the snoring and he slowly came over, leaning down to look into the room with a sweet smile. "Aww. My babies~" He cooed softly.

The twins were spooned to Toki’s belly, snoring into the naked skeleton’s flesh as she breathed. They
didn't seem disturbed by the rapid pace breathing of their mother as she lay curled on her side. She had pillows piled around her and in the floorboards to keep her from sliding off, as she had put the twins between her and the back of the seat.

She looked asleep, save for one, acid green eye cracked open. It was glaring at him, not quite fully awake yet. It was also quite clearly not Toki glaring at him, but the beast which had gotten quite sick of males the night prior.

Her teeth splayed, a ghastly display, but she didn't utter a peep as her sharp fingers curled into the seat she was laying on. The buttery leather creaked, threatening to pop small holes open under the sharp tips.

"Oh. Good morning Dear." He purred gently, a soft smile on her face. "Sorry to wake you."

Her single eye blinked slowly and blearily at him for a time, before it expanded slightly. Ah. This was not beast mate. This was sensible mate who didn't fight with sire over petty things. Good. Her display calmed, and though she left faint marks on Tenebris' leather seats, she didn't pop holes clean through. She rumbled quietly, a soft questioning sound since she didn't feel like being verbal. Why was he up and moving? Was it morning? It didn't feel like morning. It didn't feel like she had slept at all.

"Come on. If you want to keep resting, I can take the pups and give them some breakfast."

That made her metaphorically bare her teeth at him again. Metaphorically only because her teeth were always bared.

Take them out there? Where his sire was? "No." She rasps very, very softly at him, stubbornly adjusting so she could get more comfortable with the twins. The creak of the leather seats was loud in the car.

"Alright... Father and Caeruleus are awake and no doubt we'll have some cocoa going soon." He murmured, before he realized just what the sharp tips of her fingers were doing to the leather seats of his Father’s car. "Ah... Hon, you're poking Father's seats, he'll be upset if the leather gets damaged." He told her gently.

"So?" Cocoa was good, and something Dear knew Toki enjoyed a lot of. Dear herself couldn't see the desire to drink it. To each their own. Her gaze narrowed as he mentioned his sire being upset. She flexed her claws and ran them along the leather, not puncturing but making a point. "Good. He asshole." As far as she was concerned, a little damaged animal skin's would be worth it if it upset him for hurting her daughter's feelings the night prior.

Dear was a vengeful mother. No one upset her babies unjustly and got away with it.

"Darling please..." He whined quietly.

"He apologize." She demands and flexes her claws pointedly. Dear was not Toki- she was not so easily handled or negotiated with.

Toki was right- when she wasn’t in a good mood, Dear was not a pleasant person to be around.

"I'll talk to him, but you're mad at Papa, not Tenebris."

"Will apologize or skins get holes." Her eyes glint. "Not apologize to me. To her." She twitches her horn towards their daughter. As her father, surely he wouldn't be pleased with their Honey having been treated as such.
He looked to Honey and his pupils thinned a little as Sentinel explained to him what had transpired the night prior. "Mmh..." He sighed, and then reached inside and gently caressed Honey's head. "I'll go talk to him. Meanwhile, come out, it's freezing out here..."

She gave him a flat look to tell him just what she thought of his attempts at being smooth, and at his hand entering her little 'den' of sorts. Honey stirred under his touch, and Dear gave him an even flatter look. "Talk fast." Is all she advised, and then settled down further. "Don't want out. Want to go home. Bed is soft there." She grumbles tiredly. Dear aches. She doesn’t like pregnancy aches. The saying ‘woke up on the wrong side of the bed’ applied heavily here. She hurt, and she ached, and she wanted none of it.

"We’ll clear this up, and then we’ll go home and I’ll wrap you up in a nice hot blanket. How does that sound, Dear?" He purred softly.

"Mrrrr..." She made a grumbling sound. “Hot bath. Long soak. Everything aches.” A hot blanket was not enough. Dear wanted to soak in hot liquids until the pain went away. She chuffed. “Talk to sire first. Then home.”

"Nice hot water, and I’ll order one of Grillby's finest steaks for you." He soothed. "Raw, just the way you like it." He purred, before he rested his arms on the windowsill of the car. "Can I get a kiss from my pretty mate~?" He cooed sweetly. "A little bit of honey from my sweet honeybee~?"

Her first mate was really testing her patience. She didn’t want a steak, she didn’t want a kiss- she just wanted the apology for her daughter, perhaps to say words at this Tenebris too about his beast’s conduct, and then to go home. But Dear would humor him instead of snapping her teeth at him like she wanted to. She shifted carefully in the car and lifted up to give him a gentle kiss, as requested for a little 'honey' from his honeybee.

Papyrus was smiling happily when the kiss ended. "Thank you sweetheart. I'll be right back~" He hummed, making his way back inside with a soft sound, and the faint clicking of his cane against the ground.

Dear chuffed a soft sound for him to hurry, and then settled down once more. Her eyes closed, and she breathed out a quiet sigh.

“… Momma?” Honey it appeared, was awake. “Is Grandpa gonna be mean again?”

“No,” Dear replied, “He’s going to apologize.” She rolled a little bit, her back bracing against the front seats, and she cuddled Honey up between her arms as her youngest wiggled up against her. Skylar was still asleep, but her eldest was a harder sleeper when he was truly tired.

“Okay.” Honey nuzzled her cheek against the soft fluff of her mother’s mane, and blinked blue eye lights at her quietly. “I don’t understand how beasts work, and why Papa’s beast was mean.”

“It was not called for.” Dear agreed, and nuzzled her face to Honey’s horns. “All will be better.”

“Okay, Momma.”

Not long after Aliquam went back in, Tenebris came out. The older man was rumbling quietly. "Toki... Pups." He called gently.

Dear shifted inside his car, and the shocks of the vehicle creaked just slightly. “Here.” The beast grunts. She hadn’t yet met this Tenebris, but she certainly hoped he was easier to deal with than his beast.
Tenebris approached the car and leaned down. He gave her a sweet smile. "Hello there, Dear... I heard from Aliquam that Papa was cranky last night and was mean to my darling little Honey, so I came to apologize for that mean ol' beastly." He rumbled sweetly. "Now, have you seen my beautiful and most mischievous granddaughter?" He then asked.

He seemed more agreeable than his counterpart. Dear simply cocked a brow at his borderline babytalking to her, and unfurled her arms. "Was an asshole." She agrees bluntly, and tracks over the faint marks on his face from where she'd bitten him. Good. He wore his marks from his scolding. There was no need to play favorites with pups, and certainly no need to treat Honey like that.

"Bad word." Honey mutters, and peeks one eye out to the side of her mother's fluff. She looks at her grandpa and her little teeth turn down into a frowning pout. "You were mean." She says, her voice sad and unsure. "I don't know what I did wrong. I just wanted to play." They had told her to go by her 'instincts', whatever those were, and he had been mean to her for it. She didn't want to come again if it was going to be so contradicting like that.

"I know, and I'm sorry sweet baby..." Tenebris cooed gently to Honey before he made a small grabby hands motion, palms facing her as he gave a warm smile to her. "I was a grumpy old putty-tat. Would a nice big Grandpa hug make it up to you?" He asked.

Grabby hands in Dear's bubble space got her teeth parting in warning. She would bite him again if he got too close.

Honey stared at him, and her brows furrowed. She went to go to him, but paused. "You weren't grumpy with Skylar." She says sullenly. Her Papa had played with her big brother, but had brushed her aside with growls and grumpiness. Her uncle had played with her until he got tired and tried to eat her face, but it was only her Momma and her Daddy who hadn’t been grumpy with her at all.

Honey was well and truly upset by what happened, and she wasn’t sure a big Grandpa hug would make it better. She wasn’t sure she wanted to give him a big hug when he’d been the meanie. Yeah, he said sorry, but it didn’t make her feel any better.

"Oh Honey..." His hands lowered and he knelt to be level with the window, a small frown on his face. "I'm sorry, sweetie... I cannot speak for my beast so I'm afraid I do not know his reasoning for his behavior. But I'm not gonna be grumpy now that it's me. Why don’t you come out with your brother and Momma and we have some breakfast?"

"So it’s just you saying sorry for him being mean, but not him actually being sorry.” Honey surmises with surprising bluntness and intuition, proving that she was indeed a Gaster. She turns her face back into her mother’s mane. “That’s not an apology. I don’t know what it is, but it’s not him being sorry for being mean.” She mutters. The little girl gives a deep sigh. “Breakfast sounds nice… Papa? I don’t wanna come to beast nights anymore if everyone but Momma and Daddy are gonna be grumpy and not nice.” Yeah, her uncle had played for a little bit, but even he and her mother had gotten into a bit of a tiff at the start, and all he had wanted to do was sleep and sit under the couch.

Skylar lifted his head, proving that he’d woken sometime during them talking. “I’d rather stay home.” He mutters shyly. “I didn’t… like it. All the growling and the snarling and the mean-ness… It wasn’t okay that your beast was mean to my sister. He wasn’t mean to me, but…” He hadn’t felt safe there. He didn’t like not feeling safe around his family. The only ones who had felt safe were his Daddy and his Momma, and his Grandpa had beat up on his Daddy.

Skylar didn’t like it.

Dear’s gaze settled on Tenebris and she sighed heavily through her teeth, weary and tired. Beasts
weren’t meant to be caged. She didn’t think she’d be joining them again so long as it was locked away in this small little house. Three alphas did not fit well in such a cramped space.

Their actions had resulted in making one of the children uncertain about attending, and had made her eldest son quite sure he would not like to join them again. Perhaps, Dear mused, the beast blood ran too thin in them. She loved them all the same though- and perhaps it would be safer if they were not among beasts.

While Tenebris was worried that this was all Papa's doing, he knew as well that perhaps the blood in them was too diluted to fully embrace their beast nature. "I'm sorry, puppies... maybe next time you'll go with grandpapa Asgore and Thumper instead, and that's okay... you tried it and it wasn't your fancy. It's okay."

The twins nodded into their mother’s side, but neither of them seemed to think it was quite okay. Skylar wondered if there was something wrong with him- even his sister had gotten into it a little bit, and seemed to have fun until she’d been turned away. Honey likewise was having similar thoughts- but was wondering what she’d done to make her Grandpa’s beast seemingly not like her. She didn’t understand- neither of them did.

Dear looked up at him and cocked her head as she scented the upset emotions on the twins. Apparently sleeping it off hadn’t helped... They needed some time with Toki, she thought, or at least time at home with their father where they could unwind and feel safe. She made a chittering sound at him so he would look at her. “Tell your beast that playing favorites does not make for a good father.” She gives him a flat look. The scent of upset from her pups was not putting her in a better mood. Toki had warned them that Dear was not always a pleasant person. “He does not have practice, and he will not get the chance to practice again. You will soon have six. If you cannot promise me they get equal share in love regardless of gender, from your beast as well as you, perhaps you should rethink taking them. If I were you, I would have a long talk with my beast. And make no mistake- you can talk with him. Toki and I talk much.”

Tenebris listened to Dear speak, and as it came to be his turn to speak, he found himself unable.

He just couldn't.

However, neither could Papa. He had nosed in when he heard it was about Dear and the pups, and hearing the mother scolding his capability... It almost reminded him how out of place he was even with his own kind.

A soft sound escaped Tenebris, and he gave a slow, somber nod. He straightened and turned from the vehicle. "Thank you for coming.” He murmured. "I am sorry that Last night didn't go as I had hoped..."

"I don't think it could have. Three alphas in a small space do not mix well. Perhaps if we had not been caged in a house it might have gone better." Dear shifted and gathered her children. She moved to exit the vehicle, clamoring on top of it. "Tell first mate that I will meet him at home. I will do no good here." Toki might, but her? She would only make things worse.

Honey watched him go, and then smacked her mother's arm. "Momma! That's not nice!” She says softly. "You made Papa really sad..." She might have been upset at him, but she didn’t want her family to be sad.

"Beasts are not always nice beings.” Dear grunts. She can feel Toki wanting to rise, to go comfort Tenebris and try to soothe away the words the beast had stung him verbally with, and she squashed her down. Not now. He needed to think, to process what she had said, and decide if he could make
the change in his life and how he handled children. He didn't need soft, words from her. He needed his pack and his mate. And Dear would send him the latter shortly.

The Queen Bee left his car stuffed with pillows and left through the back door to his garage. She was more stubborn than Toki was, and she forced her body into flight, and began to track her way home like a bee to its hive.

Dear did her best to make Toki understand as she took her children home. It was early enough that no one really noticed the massive bee monster buzzing through the air.

Asgore hurried over as fast as he could with Thumper once he'd been practically chased out of the house by Toki's very non-friendly beast. All he'd gotten was that Tenebris needed him and Thumper. So he hurried, the rabbit keeping pace easily enough.

Asgore threw open the front door to their house, his mane unbrushed and riddled with tangles as he shoved inside. He was a bit out of breath from how fast he had hurried. "Tenebris?" He calls.

"Dad?" Thumper echoes him.

"In the living room, you two." Was a soft call from the very room where Tenebris slumped in his plush recliner, gently puffing at his pipe as his gaze rested half-lidded and directed to the floor between his outstretched feet.

Aliquam and Caeruleus had helped to clean up and left quietly, both having sensed that their father wasn't right after the talk with Dear. With Aliquam having seen Toki leave, he knew it'd be not long before Tenebris' mate showed up.

Asgore took in his tone of voice, and very gently touched Thumper's shoulder. "Will you make us all some tea, Son? I think we're going to need it."

"Yeah, Pops of course." The rabbit nodded, and hopped for the kitchen.

Asgore went for the living room instead, and headed straight for his mate. He took in his slumped form and nearly despondent gaze, and knelt quietly in the floor between his legs. He didn't say anything. Asgore simply rubbed his thighs quietly and waited to see if he would speak first about what was wrong, or if he just needed company.

At first, the beast didn't do anything but puff at his pipe, small clouds of minty smoke rising from his pipe and past his lips. His dull gaze lifted to Asgore after a few puffs. "Oh Asgore... The one night I invite my grandchildren and daughter to embrace their bloodline... and I screwed it up." He whispered, before his gaze fell back to the floor. "What if I'm not ready for this?" He asked, "Six pups... I couldn't even do it right with two."

Asgore sighed out his nose, and rubbed his thighs gently. Tenebris had a confidence that was hard to shatter, but once it did... Well, the pieces were hard to pick back up. "I didn't get to hear what happened before I was chased out by Toki's beast. She wasn't lying about her being unpleasant... Can you tell me what happened?" He asks him gently. "We'll work this out together, my love."

"Papa took kinder to Skylar and butted away Honey when she tried to play with him. She was upset this morning. I had Aliquam come and ask me to talk to Dear about it. I went out to apologize for his behavior and to check that Honey was alright... only for her mother to remind me just how..." He trailed off, and he slowly lowered his pipe to rest it on the arm of his chair.
Asgore watched him quietly. "What did she say to you, Tenebris?" He murmurs his question gently. While waiting for an answer, he also gives him something else to think on. "It's not hard to see why your beast would take kinder to Skylar. He's smaller in presence than his sister, she tends to bowl him over, and when they rough house she rarely lets him win." He tilts his head, aged eyes watching his mate. "He's an awful lot like a runt, isn't he?" He prompts him gently, hoping he would see what he could see.

"To reconsider adopting the pups if he could not learn to love the pups equally..." He spoke quieter, though as Asgore then described Skylar and compared his passive behavior to that of a runt. "Oh Asgore..." he murmured, pressing his face into his hands, "I'm an old fool... Do you think that is what the problem was?" He asked quietly.

The reconsidering adopting made Asgore flinch, and he felt his soul sink like a rock elemental in a pool of water. It took his breath away to even reconsider that. They had the nursery up and everything.

Still, Asgore fought past the instinctive hurt and need to curl away from such thoughts. Instead, he slowly exhaled. "I think it might have been the problem." He says softly, making sure he makes eye contact with his 'old fool'. "As much as I don't want to reconsider adopting... We might have to if he can't love them equally. There is a chance that we might have a runt, but that would be one runt, and five other children. Tenebris, our five other children wouldn't understand why he was favoring the runt and why he wouldn't play with them if he treats them like he did Honey. I'm not saying don’t give the little one more care and some attention to ensure it grows correctly, but... Blatant favoritism and shunning the rest... They would all be our children, big or small." Asgore gives him a serious look, and his eyes may have been watering. He didn't want to give them up. But they had promised that this would be the best place for them, over their home with their birth mother. Asgore did not like to fail children. Not innocent babies. "Is... Is he understanding what I'm saying?" He asks quietly.

He grit his teeth and tears welled in his own eyes as he slowly brought his form to sit properly in the chair if only to allow him a moment to lean into Asgore's chest. His arms took a moment to wrap tight around his mate. "I don't want to lose this, Asgore... This is my last chance to finally do something right..." He hissed through his teeth, eyes opening a little against Asgore's shoulder to show thin slits. "I failed them so many times... I have to make this right." He hissed as a growl rose from his throat. It was not a sound of aggression, but desperate defiance against what Dear had put into his head.

Well… Half of it was, with the other half being what fueled his beast's spirit.

She was right. He had favored the weaker of the two and not even completely realized it. He had dismissed the stronger pup to play with the other just so he could make the weaker feel like he was doing something right.

He had done everything wrong.

Asgore closed his arms around him and rubbed his fingers up through his sparse mane as his mate shed tears into his shoulder. "You know what you did wrong with the twins." He says softly. "And now... You can work to correct it. You're aware. You can train yourself out of the habit. We'll be good parents, my love. Parenting is forever a learning curve... We've still got some time for you to practice, if that's what you want to do."

Tenebris nodded slowly into Asgore's shoulder, before he sighed quietly, "can... can you say that again?" He murmured softly.
"You can train yourself." He says softly, repeating a shorter version of what he'd said. "We still have time for you to practice and get better at it. We can do this, Tenebris. We’ll be good parents.”

"We’ll be good parents..." He echoed him quietly, having wanted to hear that most of all.

There was a soft thump of a bunny foot on hard flooring, as Thumper returned with the tea. He had his ears tilted down. "... For what it's worth, Dad, I think you're a pretty good Dad. Same with Pops." The boy murmurs as he sets the tray down.

Tenebris brought an arm around Thumper and squeezed him happily.

Asgore hums, and tugs his son into his grasps. "Thank you, Thumper. That means a lot." He tells him sincerely. "We are good parents. But there is always room for improvement. Like with your science grade, mister."

"Ugh Pops no, science is boring."

Tenebris’ grasp on his son changed to an icy hold as Tenebris leaned his head back, deadpanning Thumper. "Did you just insult the great name of Science?" He murmured.

Dear had gotten Asgore and Thumper out of her den, and then gathered the pups up in the room that she recognized as their sleeping den after scrounging around in the kitchen for an easy breakfast for them. Once they had eaten some hastily made cereal, she’d made haste for the bathroom inside the bedroom, hoping to get a good soak in.

She couldn’t figure out the dials and the knobs for the bathroom, and Toki was still nagging in the back of her mind about Tenebris, so she wasn’t getting anywhere as far as a bath went.

So, she let the twins gather their summons and their toys, and she let them play. They were in the middle of constructing a very elaborate city made of blocks and strange plush toy animals, and Dear didn’t wish to disturb it.

Honey and Skylar were quiet, murmuring softly to each other and to their summons. Their summons seemed to realize that neither of them had the best of nights, and were being clingy. Snuggle was wrapped around Skylar, while Sobek was grooming Honey tenderly to try and soothe her.

There was a general air of disquiet in the house, but it was better here than at home. Dear sighed, and reached out to straighten one of the towers before it could topple and likely ruin one of her children’s days. She was tired. Sleep would not come though, and she didn’t want it to. Not yet.

There was noise from the kitchen that drew her attention, and she stirred, moving to peek out the doorway so she could see down the stairs.

Aliquam emerged from the kitchen with a tray that held mugs of cocoa and a bag of mini marshmallows. "Hey everyone, I’ve got cocoa." He called gently, putting the tray down on the coffee table.

The twins perked up as they heard their dad downstairs. Neither had realized he was home, and it made them happy to realize he had come home. Skylar and Honey abandoned their toys, and slipped past their mother’s legs to go down the stairs. They didn’t rush, because they had their summons settled in their arms.
“Daddy!” Honey latched onto his leg when she got downstairs. She nuzzled her face into his leg quietly, and then let go of Sobek so the bird could go claim Tenebris’ usual chair. When her bird scrambled off to beat the insect to the chair, she held her arms up. “Up? Please?”

Dear followed them down shortly, creeping down the stairs on all fours. She hadn’t bothered with clothes, letting Papyrus know that it was still the beast in control.

"Uppy for my baby girl." He purred as he gently scooped her up, before he kissed her head. "Hi sweetie~" He cooed to her with a loving tone.

Honey nuzzled her face into her Daddy’s shoulder and made a tiny happy sound. “I’m glad your home.” She mumbles into his shoulder. “Everything feels weird. Daddy can make it better.” She didn’t like the tense atmosphere- so she was gonna let her daddy fix it with copious amounts of cocoa and cuddles.

Skylar makes a small grunting sound, and lets go of Snuggle as he tries to grab for his cocoa. His arms are just too short. “Mnnn…”

Dear watches his plight, and pads closer so she can scoot the mug into his range. She makes a soft sound as he grabs it on his own, and then backs up to give Papyrus his space. She figures he’s not going to be happy with her for what she said to his sire.

Papyrus sat down on the couch and nuzzled her gently. "Oh Honey, my sweet baby girl... Tell Daddy what's the matter and he'll hear you out."

Honey ground her teeth and simply cuddled him for a bit while she thought upon her words. “I don’t like that everyone is upset.” She says softly. “Momma said mean things to Papa. I don’t really know what all she said meant, but she made him sad. Papa hurt my feelings, and uncle… nommed my face, which was weird but didn’t hurt, and you and Papa fighting scared Sky n’ me both last night.” She murmured softly. “It just… I don’t like it. It makes the air feel funny and I don’t like it. Can you make that feeling go away?”

Skylar glanced up at his father and cupped his cocoa close. He looked at his mother, and wasn’t sure who he wanted to sit by. “I think sissy is looking for the word ‘tense’.” He says softly. “Momma is tense and Papa is tense and it was tense last night and… Neither of us likes it.”

Dear dipped her head with a sigh, and then quietly shifted to get onto the other end of the couch. She curled up there, her aching body taking comfort in the soft plush comforts of the couch. It wasn’t their bed, but it was better than the car.

Taking in her words, Aliquam sighed before he nuzzled her gently. "Oh Honey..." He murmured. "I'm sorry for scaring you and Skylar last night... I can barely remember what happened, but Sentinel told me that Papa got territorial over the food that had been brought for us... Is that what happened?" He asked.

Honey snifflles softly and nods into his shoulder. “I guess… There was roaring and I looked away when you started to swat at each other.”

Dear makes a soft rumbling sound. “Three alphas in a small space was not a good idea. It was, as Toki might say, a ‘recipe for disaster’. Whatever a recipe is.” She says quietly. “If I join one of these ‘beast nights’ again, it will need to be out in the open where we will not be at each other’s throats.”

Skylar comes to sit between them on the couch, and looks up at his mother. “… When is Momma coming back?” He asks her beast quietly.
“When she will not rush off to soothe the feathers I have ruffled.” Dear answers him honestly. “She has seen and she knows, but it is in her nature to try and fix conflict between family.”

"Father was too excited. I agree that he could have planned it better... next time, perhaps, this will not be a problem..." Aliquam sighed, before he kissed Honey's head gently. "Don’t worry, sweetie. I’m okay, and my bond with my father is still very strong. He won't have any negative feelings after the fight." He assured her. "He's still our fluffy old grandpapa."

“Yeah…” Honey nuzzled her head against his kiss with a soft sound. “He’s still Grandpapa. But... Is he gonna be angry at Momma for what Momma’s beast said?” She wasn’t sure what to refer to Dear as. Dear was also Momma, but she couldn’t call them both Momma without confusing everyone. Or confusing herself.

“He looked upset.” Skylar comments softly. “But... I’m sure they’ll work it out, Sissy. Momma and Papa are family- family forgives each other and makes up, remember?”

“Well, yeah.” Honey pouts, her bottom jaw jutting outwards. “When we argue, we always make up. I guess you’re right Sky. I’m sure it’ll get better. Momma just needs to apologize and it’ll be better.”

Dear rolled her eye lights and sighed through her teeth. She didn’t correct her daughter though- she wanted Honey to be happy, so if believing what she did was what it took, then that’s what she would let her believe.

Aliquam let the children talk before he sighed and gently squeezed Honey once more. "It'll be okay, Honey."

“It will.” Honey agrees lightly. “We just need Momma, not beast Momma, to talk to Papa. She’ll make it better."

Dear hummed nonchalantly, and tucked her head down into her fluff. Heaving a soft sigh, the beast decided to go back upstairs and let Papyrus spend time with the twins instead of the kids subtly trying to encourage her to go back inside and let Toki out. She eased off the couch, and began to towards the stairs.

Aliquam noticed but didn't speak up to stop her, knowing she needed to have her space to cool down. Instead, he just quietly munched on a few marshmallows he pulled from the bag, before dropping a few into his cocoa and taking a drink of it.

Honey made a soft noise as she watched her Momma go up the stairs and retreat into her parent’s room. She then looked up at her Daddy and reached up to rub his cheek. “Daddy? Can me n’ Sky watch you play your puzzle game with the silly robot man?"

Skylar nodded too, and sipped his drink. “I like when Daddy does silly things with the blue and orange portals.” He chirps softly.

He blinked, and then he laughed quietly. "Yes, of course... I don’t see why not. Why don’t you go find the game in the shelf while I set up the TV?" He asked sweetly.

“Okay!” Skylar wiggled off the couch, followed by his sister as she shimmied out of their father’s lap. He set his cocoa down, and then scuttled for the game shelf.
Skylar and Honey thumbed through the games, and each one picked up a box. The younger twin pursed her teeth. “Which one do we choose?” She asks lightly.

“I ‘unno,” Skylar shrugs. “Two has the funny robot man.”

“Yeah, but he becomes a not-funny meany-butt.” Honey pouts. “One just has the robot lady and the cake song.”

“Trueeee.” Her brother agrees. “But two has the robot lady become a potato.”

“That’s right!” Honey exclaimed. “She’s a funny potato. I know! Let’s ask Daddy. Daddy!” Honey looked back at Papyrus. “Daddy! You want potato-lady or cake song?”

He laughed quietly and cupped his chin. ”Well, gee, that’s a question isn't it... How about we play them in order? Huh?”

“Ohay!” Honey waved the first game at him, before scampering over to give it to him. “That means cake song first!”

Skylar giggled softly. “This is the only time that cake comes before the potato.” Or ‘dessert before dinner’, as his mind connected. He brought the second game over and set it down on the table. Reclaiming his cocoa, Skylar scampered up onto the couch and got comfortable.

Once Aliquam sat back down, he had Honey take his lap and he began to play. “Into the heart of Aperture Science with my best two little assistants!” He lightly chimed.

The twins let out soft giggles, and settled into his side to watch him breeze through the puzzles and, to them, engaging storyline. It would entertain them for hours upon hours, until Aliquam was no longer interested in playing anymore.

It was several hours later when Toki finally fought to the surface again, and stuffed Dear into what she called the ‘naughty box’ in her mind. It didn’t do anything, but it reminded Dear that hurting family was not okay, no matter what her justifications.

Once Toki had scrambled to the surface, the tired woman had crawled into the bathroom and started up a bath, since Dear didn’t know how to do that. The bath starting was probably the first sign to everyone else that Toki had clawed her way back to the surface. Once the tub was full, with the sound of Portal echoing from downstairs, Toki slumped into the tub to let her sore body soak.

Pregnant skeletons were not meant to sleep in the backs of cars, or curled up on the floor without properly constructed padding. Just… No.

But that was just one small problem. When Toki’s body no longer felt like it would fall apart from the tightness, she would handle Tenebris and Asgore somehow. She just… hoped Dear hadn’t ruined everything for them. What she’d said and what she’d implied… Well, Toki imagined that it was a hard hit for any parent who was adopting. It was also not okay for Dear to have said.

Toki sighed, and let her body sink into the hot water, submerging up until her eye sockets to just let it all soak in.

The story would keep Honey and Skylar well happy, and after he had reached a good point in the game, Aliquam changed it over to the co-op of Portal 2 so that the children could play together.
Meanwhile, he prepared another mug of hot cocoa, complete with marshmallows, and took it upstairs to the bathroom where he had heard Toki draw a bath.

Holding the mug with his free hand, he used the end of his cane to knock, "Toki?" He called gently.

The cane on the hard wood was a strange noise, but one she was getting used to rapidly. She lifted her chin above the water and hummed softly before speaking, "Come on in." Her voice was as tired as she felt. All four arms were limply draped over her swollen belly as she reclined on her back in the tub. Her wings were curled up under her, soaking away their aches as well.

He slowly entered and gave a smile. "Hey, it’s good to see you... You doing alright?" he asked, bringing over the cocoa to offer to her.

"I feel like someone beat me with a rather large flyswatter." She informs him dryly. It takes some effort for her to lift out of the tub enough to accept the cocoa, but she does so with slow grace. Savoring it, she sighs quietly. "It's good to be back... Dear made a mess of things. Thank you for the cocoa, love."

"Of course..." He slowly sat down on the toilet, and sighed, "Atlas and Peabody have the attention of the twins for a while... we can talk if you're in the mood."

"I'm not sure what to take about." She admits softly. "But I know we need to talk. Dear was... Not nice, to put it in polite terms." The green eyed skeleton beast looks at him and makes a soft sound. "Last night was a bit of a disaster."

"Indeed..." Aliquam nodded gently as he sighed. "Father was looking forward to it so dearly."

"I was too." Toki admits. "But... Maybe having that many beasts in a small area is a bad idea... It was a really aggressive atmosphere, not even including how your Dad's beast reacted to the pups, and what Dear said to him this morning."

"There was something about him that was off... I could sense it when Sentinel allowed a moment of clarity... I wonder why he had been picking favorites." He murmured, before he looked at Toki. "I'm afraid that it was enough to shake him. He didn't look good when Caeruleus and I left."

"I don't know why he was picking favorites." She says softly. "But whatever his reason, Dear didn't like it, and she... Well... She basically hinted for him to reconsider adopting the pups if he couldn't guarantee it wouldn't happen with the litter." She says softly. "That's probably why he was so shaken..." Her hand rubs quietly over her belly and she sighs into her cocoa.

That had Aliquam straightening where he sat. "She didn't..." He didn’t look like he believed it, but when she didn’t deny it, his mouth slid open. "She couldn't possibly consider stopping this adoption from being done..." He spoke with a tone of shock. "This is something that Father would have to slowly be brought into, yes, but no one is perfect the first time..."

"According to her," She says quietly, "he already had a 'first time'. This isn't his first time being a father, or you and your brother wouldn't be here." She points out gently. "Dear... Wants them in the best possible home, like we do. Where there won't be any growling and shoving of one pup to play with another instead. Just like Honey, they won't understand why he would be doing that. So I can... Understand why she'd be upset about it." Toki murmurs. "Even if I don't like it."

He sighed, and reached up to rub the space between his eyes, before he looked at her. "Toki... He doesn't have the experience..." He told her... "He barely had enough time to learn before he was taken by the void."
"There is an age difference between you and Sans." She points out. Several years, actually. "Unless
your brother spent all his time with a babysitter... Which, actually I could see that happening with
how much of a workaholic your dad is." She frowns and sighs. She didn't know what to do. It was a
bundle of stress she didn't need or want to have to handle, but here she was.

"He had the time to learn with one child." He spoke. "I was barely crawling before he was taken." It
seemed to be a sore topic, based on the unsettled tone in his voice that had underlying emotion to it.

Toki could read the tone of his voice quite well. He seemed... Almost bitter about it. "One child
means he has some experience." She says softly, but doesn't press further than that. Dear had hurt
even people for the day. Toki wasn't going to add to that list. "Honestly, Pap, I don't know what
to do. Maybe just... Wait and see what happens, I guess. I've still got time before I pop, but..." She
wondered if Dear would let Tenebris in the room during delivery if they were still at odds with each
other.

"Papa has a lot to learn. Tenebris can learn, but like teaching a dog a trick, they learn through
experience." He cupped his chin thoughtfully. He took a moment to think as he watched her drink
her cocoa. "I want Papa, not Father, but Papa, to watch the pups when we have to run to town.
Perhaps we can have Asgore and Thumper with him, if the boy can handle it.

Toki nods slowly. "That's a good idea." She agrees. "It's going to be difficult for him, but he needs
to learn. Even an old dog can learn new- nnnng..." She paused in cocoa drinking, and lifted a hand to
her temple. Dear was raising a fuss over that- she didn't want the pups anywhere near Papa until he
proved he could behave better- and Toki had to take a minute to squash her down. Toki had control
now, and she wasn't going to give it up. "Dear doesn't approve, but frankly, her opinion in this
moment doesn't matter." Toki's voice tinged with a harsh tone, and she tried to bury it with cocoa
and marshmallows. Her sockets squinted partly closed as her beast worked on giving her a migraine.
“When we go grocery shopping... perhaps tomorrow or this weekend, we’ll leave the twins with
him. I think Sobek and Snuggle can behave well enough here. I don’t really want to come home to
find out that Papa ate Sobek because Sobek mouthed off to him."

He moved to sit beside the tub and without caring about getting his clothes wet, he gently wrapped
his arms around Toki and gave her head a few gentle nuzzles. "Wouldn’t be the first time he
threatened to eat him." He joked.

“Yeah,” Toki leaned into him, no doubt soaking his shirt, and chuckled quietly. Her head came to
rest on his shoulder, and she nuzzled her skull against his. “It wouldn’t be the first threat.” But she
didn’t want to see either of them hurt, and she’s not sure Honey could forgive her grandpa for eating
Sobek if he actually did it. Toki had forgiven him for hurting Sugar, but neither he nor his beast had
been in control of themselves at the time. Toki finished her cocoa, and then set it outside the tub with
a soft sound. “Well... you’re already half wet. Did you want to just climb in and join me?”

"Mmh...I have faith in Atlas and Peabody to keep them entertained for a while. Why not... I’ll take a
nice hot soak and in the same, get the chance to massage my wife's beautiful tummy~" He gave
another kiss to the top of her head, and then leaned back and undressed. Looking at his leg for a
moment, Aliquam snorted quietly before he rolled his eye and chuckled. He reached up and
disconnected the prosthetic, setting it by his cane before he hopped back to the edge of the tub. "So,
how silly did Sentinel look hopping around on three legs?" He asked.

Toki smiled at his enthusiasm for giving her tummy rubs, and sat up. “I’d have to be crazy to turn
down tummy rubs.” She scooted down in the tub, so he could slip in behind her. Their tub was
thankfully large- likely designed so the children could play there, or in the hopes that they’d get to do
this again if she had returned from the void- so she wouldn’t have a problem with pinched wings.
“Sentinel looked… a little silly.” She admits. “But he handled it with grace. About the only time it seemed to bother him was when he had his spat with Papa, and Papa knocked him off balance.”

"That’s cheating." He chuckled, slowly wiggling down into the tub behind her before he pecked her head, his hands going to caress her stomach and knead the tense skin.

She wiggled right back against him once he was in the tub. Her wet wings felt like damp silk against his leg and his hip. She admittedly had more space since he only had one leg, but she was missing being able to brace on both of them. His hands kneading her sore, stretched flesh felt nice though. “Mmm, very true.” She watched his hands cupping her middle, and she hummed slightly. She was now big enough that there was enough to fill his hands- and she was starting to be unable to see her feet. “Y’know… I’m gonna need t’ start wearing slip on shoes.”

"Yep. That was on the shopping list." He laughed into her neck, kissing it gently while his hand gently tapped a tune to the litter inside. "How are they doing?" He asked.

“Good to know you were noticing my lack of ability to see my feet.” She laughs in good humor. “Maybe we can get some with good arch support. Thankfully we don’t have to deal with swelling feet- we just have to deal with sore feet.” She sighed happily at the kisses to the back of her neck. “Mmm… They’re wiggling around a lot. Lots of quickening. They’ll all get bigger here soon, so everyone else will feel them move. Right now it’s just kinda like… lots of guppies in a plastic bag. It kind of tickles.”

He hummed softly and smiled. "Tickle, huh? That’s cute~" He chuckled. "I bet Father will be excited to feel them wiggle next time he uses you as a pillow."

“I’m sure he will. Considering how he reacted to the twins moving, his own children moving will probably be even more exciting.” She smiled slightly. “I don’t think they’ll be moving by then though. He uses me for a pillow quite often.” She just hoped he would continue to want to use her for a pillow- and that Dear hadn’t completely discouraged him and Asgore. “It took several months for you to feel the twins after I could feel them quickening, so it’ll probably be several weeks until anyone can feel them outside my belly.”

"I bet it'll be the best thing to happen to him, that his pillow moves under his head." He laughed.

“Toki snorts. “What’s hilarious, is I’m actually even older than you now, at least by human years, anyways. Since I spent time in the other world, I’m now… heck, what… thirty five, I think?” She peered up at him and sighed, her belly shifting under his palms with her breath. “One of us has to get some sleep. We have two generally excitable children who don’t quite understand the concept of a
“Watch us make this work anyways, eh?” He laughed quietly. "Our kids are energetic, but they are also incredibly smart. They’ll learn the concept pretty fast if we introduce it to them."

“Maybe.” She chuckles softly. “There’s not really a lazy day for a parent though. Not a complete one. Always dinner to make, or messes to clean, fights to soothe over… We’ll manage though.” Toki give him a quiet but loving look, and quietly strokes her hand over his cheekbones. Her bones are gentle on him as she simply touches him and strokes his skull. “Hey… I love you. I love you a whole lot.”

He smiled as her hands traveled over his cheeks and he nuzzled her after a few seconds. "I love you too, Toki. I don’t think I would have been this happy if I hadn’t met you."

"Your life would have been much simpler if you hadn’t settled on me.” Toki gives her husband a silly smile, recalling a similar conversation they’d had before. “But I’m glad you’re happy. I’m happy too.”

"Where’s the fun in simplicity when all the experience is in the variables of life, eh?” He laughed gently, giving her a happy squeeze.

Toki squeaked at the squeeze. “I suppose so. Also careful, Papy. Everything aches, and your arms are very strong.” His squeeze hadn’t been meant with ill intent, but her ribs were tender—everything ached. Her smaller, secondary arms hadn’t liked the squeeze either—they were very fragile compared to the rest of her bones.

"Sorry~" He let her go and gave her a few soft kisses. "How about I make it up to you and rub your tummy some more?” He asked.

She laughs softly. “I’m not going to turn down tummy rubs, love. But y’know, you don’t have to have an excuse to touch my belly.” They might not have been his, but her body was his to enjoy. And he did seem to enjoy seeing her in her ‘pregnancy glow’ as he called it.

"You’re so beautiful." He purred happily, "I love making excuses to caress your beauty." He then cooed as he kissed her neck.

Toki smiled softly and tilted her head so he could kiss her neck better. Her soaking mane was probably giving him a mouthful of wet hair, but she didn’t even care at this point. “Mmm I suppose you do. Honestly, it surprises me that you think I’m this beautiful, Pap. But… it makes me happy.” She didn’t think she was, but so long as he was happy with how she looked, that’s what was important.

"I put a ring on it didn’t I?” He snorted in good humor, and rubbed his palms over her belly. His ring tickled against her bellybutton in the hopes of getting a laugh out of her. "Of course you're beautiful enough to talk about on a daily basis~"

"You did.” She laughs warmly. Her left ring finger is idly touched again and she makes a soft sound. "As much as I love the scarf you gave me, I miss my ring.” She confesses gently, and settles back into him with a soft sound. Toki was a little afraid of burning his scarf by accident, honestly. It was not fireproof.

"If you'd like, I can save up and get you a new one~” He offered, as if forgetting just how well off she was financially, or just simply not caring.

Toki smiled softly and stole one of his hands so she could nuzzle them. A flash of her magic reheated
the water again. “You know, I can pay for rings. We could go get a new set re-forged together.” She says softly, and rubs his fingers with hers. She leaves his other hand free to massage her belly, while she cuddles his other one to her face.

He sighed and gently caressed her face. "I suppose we could. It would be fun to do it again..."

“People renew their vows all the time.” She leaned her face into his touch with a soft sigh, sockets fluttering shut. “I don’t really know why, but it’s a cute concept. We could, if you want. I’m even pregnant again, just like last time.” Too bad her wedding dress had gone up in flames- she probably could have fit in it, save the arms and the wings. And the mane.

"I think it sounds like a great idea... the perfect way to reassure the world that I still love you~"

“And that I still love you.” She smiled softly. “Do you still remember our vows?” She asks him gently.

"If not, I’ll have much more to replenish the bond with you~" He purred gently.

"With this hand, I will lift your sorrows." The green-eyed beast skeleton purrs softly. "Your cup will never be empty, for I will be your wine." On a whim, she rolls his hand over in hers, and guides his wet hand into a cupping position. Creating a flame from scratch is easier than one might think, and soon there is a harmless green flame hovering above his palm. "With this candle, I light your way into the darkness." It was coincidental that the hand she had of his happened to be his left one, but she made use of it by gently twisting his ring around his finger. "With this ring, I ask you to be mine."

"See, now I feel bad for playing coy." He laughed.

She laughed. "Honestly, I'm not even sure if I quoted them right. Kinda hoping I did."

"You did them perfectly, my love." He kissed her head, and then nuzzled her. "Absolutely perfect, like the rest of you."

She smiles and shifts in his arms, so she can curl up on her side against his chest. This lets her kiss him back easier, and lets the little green fire extinguish. "If anyone is perfect, it has to be you. You're... More than anyone could ever hope for or dream of in a husband." He still loved her despite everything- despite her coming back pregnant, despite her new looks, how long she had been gone, the knowledge that she had, willingly or unwillingly, fallen for an alternate version of his father... Papyrus was the best, no bones about it.

He gave another sweet laugh as he kissed her a few times before a sound came to his ears. He lifted his head slightly, on alert, before he realized just what it was, and he sighed before he chuckled. "Oh god... they finished already! Those children are frighteningly smart."

“They’re yours,” she laughs, “so of course they’re smart. Come on, lets get out before they come looking for us. As much as a family bath might be nice, Honey has bony knees and likes to dig them into where my kidneys would be, if I had kidneys.”
Strider Notes: So yep, Beast night was a flop, and what do you know, it doesn’t look like Toki got to make up with Tenebris immediately. Don’t you love when life does that to you?

She hadn't had this feeling in a long time. She was floating... Like she was drifting on an open ocean. Her mind was everywhere and nowhere all at once- and through the darkness, so deep, dark and black, she could see light.

It didn't take her long to reach it. Soon she could see and hear and feel, and smell the smells around her- but she couldn't move. Toki couldn't speak. Toki couldn't react visibly.

Through her eyes, she watched six pairs of hands stroking a massively swollen belly, hidden under a moss green top. The belly was much further along than her own- indeed, this one looked nearly ready to pop. They were somewhere outside, under the shade of possibly a porch. She could hear cattle mooing and the furious clucking of chickens as they chased down insects, and smell freshly cut grass which colored the lawn in front of them. The hands paused for a moment, like they knew she was watching, before a soft sigh rang through the air.

Something shifted on her back, and Toki was familiar enough with her own insect based wings to recognize the feel against her skin. However, these felt different- and Toki didn't have six hands. She had four.

"Tenne." her voice- not her voice, her mind lurched to a halt rather abruptly, but Sequoia's voice-called gently. "Tenne, can you help me up? I want to visit Toki's statue today."

"You got it, hon." Was a near-immediate call in reply by the painfully familiar voice that matched the name.

However, there was a voice that sank Toki's metaphorical heart further into her stomach.

"Momma!"

Quinn... The darling pup whom had cherished Toki with all his little heart.

Sequoia's head had turned to see the child as he came scooting out of the house. He immediately tried to clamber into her lap, failing until he was gently boosted up to lay over her swollen stomach. "Hi Momma. We're gonna go see Momma too, right?"

Her little Quinn... He had come so far in speaking since she had been gone. That was the most she'd heard him speak since she had begun working with him.

Sequoia laughed softly and rubbed his head as she scooped him higher into her arms. "You're a might bit heavy to be laying on my belly like that, you little rascal." She kisses his head gently. "Yeah, you can come see your other Momma too. Do you wanna go grab your big brother for me while your Daddy helps me get ready?"
"Okay Momma!" He chirped happily, nuzzling her gently before slowly climbing down and running into the house, while Tenne stepped outside. and Toki had to do a mental double-take.

Because she had totally forgotten how fluffy the younger male was compared to his older self.

Tenne was now sporting a full fluffy mane, a smile on his face as he gently pulled her to her feet. "How are you feeling, dear?" He asked as he nuzzled her.

"Pregnant. I suppose I can't be blamed. You on the other hand..." Sequoia reached up and caressed Tenne’s cheek, before leaning in for a kiss that he happily returned.

They seemed so happy now

It... Hurt. Toki almost was apart of this. There were a lot of conflicting feelings- feelings that she had hoped, perhaps in vain, that she was long past- that were making her feel a large variety of things that were unpleasant and painful.

"They're kicking again." Sequoia chuckles, and she guides one of his massive hands to her swollen midsection. There is movement under his palm, sharp jabbing as a strong baby leg kicks out from inside of her. Toki feels it all, and she wilts. Her beast had mentioned sister queens once before... She was sure Sequoia would have been her sister queen. "They've got your feet. I wonder if they'll have my wings or... Wings more like Toki?"

"So you're wondering if they'll be extra fluffy, or if they'll hum when they fly?" He asked with a soft laugh, his thumb gently running over the moth's stomach before he gently pressed to knead against the tense flesh with his soft pads. "Whichever, they'll be beautiful and I'll love them with all my heart. Just like you, just like Toki~" He purred. "And all the while, I'm going to be the happiest Papa, now aren't I~" He was fluffing up again, and Sequoia gave a soft laugh as she reached up with another hand to smooth down his fluff.

"Tenne, it's getting hard to see you under all that fluff!" She told him through her laughter.

It was soon accompanied with a happy laugh from Tenne, who proceeded to fluff again, before flattening his mane. "I live to spite you~"

"You're gonna suffocate me with this one night, tell you what." She sighed, before she nuzzled him. "Mmh, too bad it's such a good lure, it's so soft~ you've been using my conditioner again, haven't you?"

"Guilty as charged."

Toki's heart was simultaneously warming and breaking. She wasn't the only one who had lost them... But they were getting along. They had recovered- they had babies coming. If she could have cried, she would have.

Sequoia laughed. "Still, I think you're due for a trim, or we're never going to see your face. I used to think Toki was bad, but yeeesh, you take the cake on fluffiness when you let it get away from you. Kai is starting to look like you too. He's gonna need a trim, if I can wrangle him down for one."

"I learned from the best didn't I~" He chuckled, before he reached up to smooth down his fur. "I suppose a cleaning up is in order. Maybe I’ll shave something nerdy into it, as you so affectionately put it." He teased, before peering around Sequoia to see Quinn and Kai coming back out the front door. "How would you like to learn how to shave with a tail blade, Kai?"

"AWESOME!"
"No using your tail blade!" Sequoia reached up and pulled on Tenne's cheeks. "That's too much blade for his little face!"

"Noooooooooo!" Came the wail-like groan from the taller of the two children. As Sequoia turned to see Kai and Quinn, she could see that while time had passed there... It wasn’t much faster than here. They weren't much taller or larger than she remembered, but... They had matured. Losing their first mother would do that to children though.

Sequoia planted a fist in her lower back and smiled at the boys. "Don't even grumble at me you little ruffian. I could just clip it with scissors and ixnay the whole tail blade business all together." She threatens idly. "But c'mon. You know I can only stand for so long before I've got to rest, thanks to your dad being an absolute giant. I want to make the walk before I'm too tuckered out."

"He'll carry you when you get too exhausted and you know he'll be overjoyed to do it." Kai laughed quietly, though he took his brother's hand and stepped down the stairs.

As they did, Tenne slowly pulled away from Sequoia and closed the door behind the duo as they had forgotten to do it. He took a moment in locking the door with his house key before he turned with a light smile.

"Let's go then. It'll be good to say hello to Toki once more." He rumbled.

Though as they stepped down onto the grass, there was an aching pull and suddenly Toki was left behind as Sequoia walked on ahead, more of a sharp waddle than an actual walk. Everything partially dulled, sound, sight, smell, touch- even the feel of the sun shining through her wasn’t as palpable.

Toki was physically sucked out of her first person view of Sequoia's life, and left standing as a ghostly apparition on the deck that they had just left. She had only felt this particular sensation twice- and neither time had been pleasant and neither time meant good things. It left her bones crawling, her soul aching, and her body feeling like it was being pulled apart and put together again.

"Hello, Tokiko."

She tensed at the voice, her mind whirling.

"No. No, no, no, no, you're not here. You can't be here." She whispers sharply.

"It all depends on what your definition of 'here' is." The voice spoke again. "For me, 'here' can mean physically, or simply in the presence of your own mind. In which case, I am the latter."

Like a plume of shadows rising from the once life-filled floor, the servant of the void rose to stare at her with the white pinpricks hidden deep within his doctors mask. His sleeves met, his hands folded and hidden away underneath.

"I was dreaming." She whispers as she turns to stare at Phase as her chest constricts with emotions. His doctors’ mask irks her, because he’s no doctor and he’s creepy enough without it, but she says nothing. She drifts away from him instinctively. "I was seeing... I was seeing Tenne for the first time since I left. And... And as much as it hurt, I wanted to see- I want to know that he's happy. That they're all happy. Him, Sequoia, my boys... Why are you here? Why now?"

"Consider this like a follow-up visit from the doctor... I came to make sure all was... as it was meant to be." His gaze wandered lower to where her pregnancy was most clear. "As well as..."
another thing... though I suppose you will learn that soon enough." After a moment of observing her, Phase turned and looked to where the group had disappeared into the distance. "Oh yes... they are very happy... That is your doing after all."

Toki crosses her arms across her middle, like that will block his sight. She's not sure what her dream form is wearing. "A doctor's visit is usually scheduled and consensual. This is neither." She informs him tiredly. "Another thing? What other thing?" She demands. What more could he expect her to learn?

Her gaze followed his however as they disappeared. Part of her yearned to follow them. Part of her knew it was better to stay. "I... I hope they are. I miss them. I wish... I wish we all could be together in one world, but that's not how life works. I learned that when I met the Han there."

"Indeed, you learned... And don't worry, they miss you too. Greatly... But they cannot bend the world to their yearnings, so they simply accept and are happy with what they have... A home on the surface, a healthy partner... It is the little things, I suppose..."

For a wraith in apparent subservience to a conscious dimensional being in itself... He almost sounded a little wistful.

"It's the little things that make life worth it. When Papy rolls over to kiss me in the morning. When Honey cuddles up to me during movie time, Papa and the laser light, Sans and Serif wrestling while Grillby and Solstice watch, or when Skylar falls asleep in Snuggles' coils. You take the little things for granted... And you don't know you miss them until they're gone." Her gaze slid back to where Tenne, Sequoia, and the boys had gone. Tenne's laugh when Kai and Quinn were playing came to mind. Quinn's fascination with her mane and his love for the chickens. Kai having been so set on getting them together, and then hinting for siblings. It was the little things... They meant the most.

They also hurt the most to lose.

Phase watched her for a moment before he nodded and slowly stepped closer, "Very right you are..." He murmured, before he lifted up a hand, offering something to her. "By some sick sense of humor, this was lost during your first Fall... I thought it right to have it returned to you." He told her.

It took her a moment to look at his hand. Her gaze focused in on it, and she blinked slowly, before reaching out to take it. It was a ring- and a closer look showed it to be the identical match to the one that Papyrus wore. It was her wedding ring- the one that the Void had taken from her- it had her birthstone to prove it.

"I... I thought I'd never see it again." She murmured, finger bones rolling over the enchanted metal. She slid it home into place on her hand- or rather, her primary left hand rather than her secondary. It felt right. "But... This is a dream. A dream ring doesn't mean much." She says quietly. "It won't be here when I wake."

He tilted his head, seemingly bemused at her wistful sadness, before he chuckled quietly. "Perhaps... but perhaps not. I suppose you will have to wake up first to find out, yes?"

"I... Guess." She murmurs. "Pretty sure I'm not done dreaming though." She glanced ahead and sighed. "Can you tell me how much time has passed? She looks... So pregnant. But... Was she at the same time I was? Or after? I heard her mention them maybe looking like me."

"Once you returned to your home, the rift caused by your presence began to seal, so time began to
flow more smoothly when you returned home. I believe it has slowed down... Using the common denominator of your gestation... Sequoia is a month or so ahead of you."

"A month." She mused. "So she's... Wow. She's right up there. She looks ready to pop." Toki sighed softly. "I wish I could talk to them. Let them know I'm here. All I can do is watch and see... And I can't even do that now." Though, she muses to herself, perhaps it was for the best. It was only breaking her heart to watch it.

He thrummed in thought, before he chuckled, and offered her his hand. "I suppose I can let you get away with this one little trick." He seemed bemused that he was even offering it to her in the first place, but made no moves to take back his offer. "Lend me your magic, Tokiko."

"One little trick?" She asks softly, and hesitates in reaching for him. Slowly her hand does grasp for his offered one. "What do you mean? And I can't offer much. Everyone is struggling to keep up with my magic needs as it is."

"Think of what they would best recognize from you. It doesn't have to be much, but think... and imagine what you would want them to see to know that it was you." Phase murmured to her, shadows extending from his robes to slowly reconstruct the world around her. This allowed them to catch up to the four they had been left behind by.

Toki pauses, and she just... She knows. "Can... Can I give them something instead?" She asks him quietly. "One of my summons- you could rebind her to one of them. My small bees. Quinn... Quinn was very partial to them. It would let them know I'm okay, and that I'm watching." Her gaze slides over to them.

Statue was a light term. It was a small stone statue, but it looked more like a gravestone than anything. There weren't any words on there, but there didn't need to be. Her Beast visage had been captured perfectly, and everyone was gathered around it.

The boys seemed to be telling the statue about their day and how it had been going so far. Quinn was animated as he babbled about the chickens and made his soft 'Nyeh's.

That seemed to surprise Phase, but after a moment of thought, he chuckled quietly. It was a ghostly noise. He gave her a nod. "Yes... I believe I can do that."

Toki nodded and smiled. "Thank you." She drew on enough magic to summon one of her bees- not Stripe because Stripe was pretty much her direct link to the hive- and prepared to bring one of the queens into the... Dream for him to take.

He gently brought up his other hand and held it over her chest, and his pinprick eyes disappeared as magic began to collect in his palm to coax the bond away from her soul. A lesser queen made it a lot easier than if she had decided to go with Stripe. It also meant she wouldn't have to say goodbye to anyone else.

As the bond was coaxed from her soul, Toki did her best to impart to the Queen to please, please give them all her love. They needed it. And... To land on the statue, so they would know she was from Toki. Toki pressed those thoughts to her up until the bond was severed and gone.

The bee hummed with energy, its form shifting and crackling as Phase then turned away from Toki. He gave a soft exhaled sound, as if pursing non-existent lips to blow onto the hornet. It drifted from his hand and flew, before hitting a wall that rippled, and crackled, before pulling apart.

The air was now sweet, and there was a gentle breeze that accompanied the warm sun. The sounds
coming from around them were now more full and true to their ears- more like what Toki should have been hearing in her dream.

The Queen bee continued to drift, not even slowing as gasps from everyone around her rang out loud. As directed by Toki, she landed atop the statue and began to pipe sweetly to everyone there. Each little note was unique to each person it was meant for.

Everyone shared a surprised look, and seemed to stare for a moment.

Tenne was the first to smile. "I'll be..." He laughed quietly, "Hello to you too, Toki." He greeted warmly to the bee. She buzzed at him, and seemed to glance to the one-sided mirror where Phase and Toki stood, watching them.

Tenne followed, and like a cat, his pupils thinned as he realized what the hornet was likely looking at. His pupils widened and he smiled warmly again. "One last miracle, eh Toki?" He chuckled almost somberly, before he turned his attention back to the Queen and reached out to help her down.

She climbed onto his hand and piped a soft thanks, before flying to Quinn, and landing on his shoulder.

It both warmed and hurt her heart to watch them react to the bee she had gifted them. Toki wondered for a moment if Tenne had seen her through the tiny ripple in space... Bur probably not. She was a ghost in her own mind, left to wander and watch and see, but not to interact.

But... Now they had a part of her forever. The green hornet would live a long, long time, and keep them company so long as they took care of her.

Sequoia smiled slowly. "That's one of her summons." She says softly. "I wonder how she got here... And why she's alone." She waddled a few steps closer to the bee and Quinn, and then reached out to gently touch the hornet. "Hi there... Heh... Her magic feels like Toki's." Her voice wavered, like she might have started to cry and was struggling to stop it.

Noticing Sequoia reaching for her, the bee quickly responded and turned to nuzzle her hand, piping happily in greeting to her. Her wings fluttered a little and she piped again, a sound that made Quinn giggle again.

Sequoia made a soft sound. Moths didn't buzz or anything like that, but she did make a unique little humming sound with her wings. Sequoia smiled softly, and stroked the bee gently. "Do you think she'll stay...?"

"I don't know." Tenne answered.

At that question, the Queen bee's eyes then glowed and Quinn's soul appeared, drawn out by the insect sitting on him like a parrot. The drawing of his soul made him to squeak in surprise before his eyes widened as the Queen pressed her head to it from his shoulder.

"Y... You're gonna stay?" He asked, carefully moving the Queen to his hands to look at her.

The bee piped again, before humming her wings as a small shard slipped from her chest. The hexagonal shape marked it as her soul.

Quinn looked at it, and then followed her gaze to his soul. Gently lifting it closer to the shard, he let the hornet gently nuzzle the shard into his soul. She piped again once she was done, before his eyes widened and began to tear up. "Nyeh! Promise?" He managed weakly.
The Queen fluffed up and made a soft humming sound with her wings, and he began to sob happily. "Daddy! Daddy! She says she's staying!" He exclaimed joyfully.

Kai was rubbing his eyes, sniffling but happy.

Tenne's smile grew as he knelt and pecked his son's head, stroking it gently as he then brought a hand up to pet the bee. "Another miracle..." He repeated softly.

"We'll take good care of her." Sequoia runs her hand over Quinn's skull and smiles softly. "What are you going to name her?"

What indeed, Toki mused to herself as she watched, feeling tears gathering in her eye sockets.

"Toki!" His answer was almost instantaneous. "Her name is Toki!" He giggled, before he hugged Sequoia's legs, nuzzling her with weak, happy 'Nyehs'.

Sequoia smiled softly and let him cling to her. "Of course she is." She murmurs. "That way we always have our Toki with us, right?"

Toki couldn't handle more of it as she watched Sequoia start to cry again. She could feel it in her own eyes- her tears gathering- and turned to Phase. "I can't watch anymore... They have something from me now. Can... Can you send me home now? Or make me wake up or something?"

Phase nodded slowly, and lifted his hand to wave over the air in front of her face. He let out a pulse of magic, and the world went black, as if it were a fading television screen. He slowly released her, and stepped back. "Farewell, Tokiko." He purred, her name echoing in the now silent space.

…Until it grew louder, and came in the voice of her beloved husband.

"TOKI!"

Toki took a sharp breath in, her body feeling like she hadn't been breathing at all despite the fact that she no longer needed to breathe. Her mouth popped open and she panted, eyes sliding wide as Papyrus scared her. Her mane fluffed and she sat up from where she had slumped over at her computer, working on her next book.

"Papy?" She queries gently, shooting him a confused look as she takes a moment to focus. "What's wrong?"

"Y-You were..." He reached up and rubbed his eyes. "You were... starting to disappear... like... like you were gonna be gone into the Void again..."

"I was what?" She asks, befuddled. Toki turns in her chair to face him, her belly bumping the table. She frowns. "That... Doesn't make sense. I've never disappeared before when I dreamed of other worlds." She murmured. Her fingers tapped on the table, and she took a moment to run her hands over herself to make sure nothing had been changed. "But... Then and again, the Void's assistant hasn't even been in my dreams before either." Toki looks up at Papyrus and then opens her arms. "Papy, I'm not going nowhere, I promise. I'm gonna stay right here. No... No matter what... What I see..." Her soul throbbed, feeling torn in two directions once again, and her gaze slid down some.

He hugged her tightly and slowly regained his composure with a few deep breaths. "I love you..." He whispered. "Please don't scare me like that again."
Toki let him envelop her in his arms, and put up with how he squished her secondary pair and her wings. She simply cuddled close to him and made a few gentle sounds to comfort him. "I can't promise anything if Phase is going to be interrupting my dreams." She says gently. "The Void does what it wants, when it wants. As does its little lapdog. It... Also makes me see what it wants, I'm guessing." She whispers almost brokenly.

Skylar wheeled around the corner into the dining room so fast that his socks slipped on the floor, and he skated for a moment. When his balance was caught, he sent a panicked look to his Mother and Father, and wiggled the phone. "Daddy, I called Grandpapa what happened." He said. "But he just suddenly hung up when I said Momma kept disappearing and reappearing like a ghost. I think he's coming over but I don't know. Daddy? Is Momma... Okay now?"

Their grandpa hadn't been to the house since the failed beast night the week prior- and he hadn't wanted to immediately see Toki. They agreed it was best to give them time to think it over and cool down before talking again.

Aliquam nuzzled Toki gently and nodded. "Yes... She's okay." He murmured, before hearing the front door open. It was echoed by a bestial call, a nearly panicked one.

"Toki!?" Tenebris called out, voice frantic.

Toki was still slightly squished in her husbands arms, so she couldn't really call out to Tenebris when he opened the door. All she could do was make soft soothing sounds for Papyrus and hoped it calmed him enough so he could explain to his father what exactly had happened.

Skylar however could speak. "Grandpapa! Momma is in the dining room!" He called to him.

Tenebris was quick to come to the dining room. "Toki, are you alright? Are you seeing any signs of any other environments around you?" He asked.

Toki wiggled her face away from Papyrus, and managed to look at Tenebris. There was an uneasy twist in her stomach, brought on by her recent dream and the fact that this was the first time she'd seen him in a week, but she fought it down and tucked it away. "I'm okay, honestly." She says, curling her left primary hand around Papyrus' arm so she could slightly pry it off. Not fully, but just enough that she could actually see things and not be absorbed into his frame. "I was just dreaming of other world's. I didn't even know that I was disappearing until I started to come back to this world and I heard Papy panicking... Honestly, the only thing different was... Well, Phase came to me in my dream."

He bristled at that, before he sighed and rested a hand against the table, the other going up to rest on his chest. "At least you're alright, Toki." He sighed. "We couldn't afford to lose you again..."

Toki's finger clicked against her husband's arm in a strange way, and she tensed before glancing down. What she saw made her light headed. Toki felt faint for the first time in her life. "He... He gave me my wedding ring back in my dream." She mutters. Her hand twitches, and shows the very real, very there, once very lost wedding ring, clinging to her finger and only vaguely marred by thick black ooze.

It meant though, that Phase didn't need to come into their world to reach her. And that... Well, that was a scary prospect.

He looked at the ring and his eyes narrowed as he saw the essence. A low growl bubbled from the depths of his throat for a few seconds, filling the dining room with a rattling thunder, before it faded as he sighed and looked at her. "At least you're safe... Recovering your wedding ring was a good
fortune though." His gaze lifted to his youngest son.

Aliquam was starting to settle and release Toki. The orange eyed former-guard seemed to be quite surprised, and quite pleased, to see the wedding ring adorning her left hand, like it had never left in the first place.

"Yeah..." The more she stared at the essence on the ring though, the more it made her light headed. "I'm just... worried about what that means. If Phase ever decides to do something more to me in a dream... I'm helpless there. I can't fight back- I could summon magic, but it didn't really take form until he made it." She whispers. "I... think I need some fresh air. Or to lay down." She closed her laptop with one hand, and tried to wobble to her feet.

Aliquam's loosening grip immediately tightened and he made to support her to the nearest safe seat to settle her on.

Tenebris stayed nearby, but with the elephant in the room, he kept his distance.

Toki was settled carefully into a loveseat by the front window after Papyrus helped her hobble there. She tried not to be too heavy for him, knowing that his leg couldn't take the weight without extreme pain. Once she was settled and in no more danger of fainting while walking or standing, Toki let her head come to rest in one of her upturned palms as she closed her sockets to let the world stop spinning. It was beyond upsetting to think that her dreams of other worlds were no longer technically safe for her to wander into and explore in, especially since if the Void took interest, there was the very real chance that she would end up trapped there- or worse. "I... I'm glad I got my ring back." Is all she manages to mumble. "I just hope this goop doesn't stain my ring like Papa did my sheets when he gooped that one time..." The time he'd gotten hit by the delivery van- that had been so long ago, but sometimes it still felt like yesterday.

"I have a method of getting it out, after all my times when I destabilized... If I may borrow it, I'll have it clean and returned in a few days." Tenebris offered.

Toki nodded slightly and began working it off her finger. The goop didn’t make it easy, moving and sliding and... well, not reacting like an inert blob of goop. As soon as it was off of her finger, it was trying to reach out and slide back on. Toki made a soft disturbed sound, and held out her palm for Tenebris. "It's like the goop doesn't want it to get lost again. Just... Don't provoke the goop, okay Papa? Also... it's really nice to see you again." She peers at him from between her fingers, and then grunts as her children scurry to try and climb into her lap and make sure she’s alright.

He took the ring and his hand glowed black as he growled at the goop. His growl cut off as he chuffed. Tenebris looked at her with a gentle smile. "Likewise, darling... It's good to see you."

The goop didn’t seem to care that he’d coated his hand in black magic, and seemed content to try and wrap around his fingers like a leech.

Toki watched the goop warily, but kept a faint smile on her face all the same. “I’ve missed having you around.” She says softly. “Are... are you okay?”

He scowled slightly at the feeling of the goop trying to get cozy, but at her question, he gave a small nod. "Yes, I'm fine... I've just been thinking about you more recently..." He sighed quietly. "I want to apologize for what happened the other night. I was too eager to bond with my own kind, and I underestimated the reactions of my pack."

“Honestly, it’s me that should apologize for what happened.” Toki made a soft sound and straightened in her chair. “Dear wasn’t pleasant and what she said wasn’t... right to say. She hurt
you- and she’s not going to apologize, but I will. She shouldn’t have said that, no matter what happened.”

"It’s alright, my dear.” He soothed. “It did have me worrying, but I talked to Asgore and took some time to consider everything, but he and I are still very eager to adopt.”

Her shoulders slumped in relief. “That’s… That’s very good.” She sighed softly. “I’m glad she didn’t dissuade you from adopting. You’ll be a good dad, Tenebris. You can both learn more. In fact… Papyrus and I were going to ask if Papa would babysit the twins for us while we went to town one of these days.”

"I’d love to." He rumbled happily. "No matter what happened, they’re still my grandbabies. They’ll be in good hands." He rumbled happily.

“I’m gonna bring a newspaper.” Honey mumbles from her mother’s lap. “That way if Papa’s beast is a butthead, I can scold him.”

Skylar muffles a laugh by burying his face into Toki’s belly.

Toki has to muffle one too. “I’m sure swatting him with a newspaper will get your point across very well, Honey.” She rubs her little horn gently, and then glances to Papyrus. Toki was feeling better less light headed- so she didn’t look so much like she’d be fainting any minute. However, she was still petrified of what it meant by Phase being able to come into her dreams. For all they knew, it didn’t mean anything- but it could mean something, and that was the terrifying thing.

“Momma, Daddy,” Skylar hums into her belly once his laughter had calmed, “You two should go on a date like in the movies. Daddy should take Momma out to dinner somewhere nice.”

"I agree, just a man and his wife hitting the town, making life worth it while dear old dad watches the kids." Tenebris chortled. "I could even let you use old Eclipse to stroll the town in style.”

Toki snorts. “Pap’s car is just fine for style.” She gives him a wry smile. “Besides, I’m just getting used to fitting my wings in there. Your car is a bit… squished, as weird as it is to say for someone as small as me.” Her gaze slides to her husband. “But I wouldn’t mind dinner, if that sly husband of mine wants to ask me.”

He rumbled and chuffed softly before looking at Aliquam, giving him alight grin. "Well, when you get around to it, you know where to find me.” The old man was teasing as he stuck his tongue out at Aliquam.

His youngest blood son huffed and shooed Tenebris away. "Go on you mischievous old man!” He huffed, "If anything else comes up I’ll call you. Now shoo, quit pestering us with your old man banter!"

"Heh heh heh heh, bye~”

It was good to see Tenebris back to his usual quirky self.

Toki watched Tenebris leave, and then sighed softly in bemusement. She slumped in the loveseat, and relaxed quietly. “So… Now that my… nightmare nap ruined the day… What are we going to do with the rest of our time?” She couldn’t foresee Papyrus wanting to leave her alone after seeing her apparently disappear. Sometimes, she thought maybe he had PTSD, and sometimes he could go into a panic when he thought she was gone.

"Well... I think I’m gonna take that old man's advice- as well as my son’s advice.” Aliquam
chuckled. "Let me steal you away for a fine dinner~"

"Oh?" Toki smiles. "Okay. When did you want to go, so we can arrange for the twins to go to your Dad's?"

"Tonight. I'm getting back at him." He cackled.

Toki snorts. "How exactly is that getting back at him?" She inquires. "But alright. It's... Heck, it's already almost three. It's a two-hour drive to town, so if we leave by four, we can get to the city by six. Speaking of... Where did you have in mind for our date? I need to know how to dress." She needed to know if it was fancy, casual, or 'grab a burger and go' grubbies sort of dressing.

Who was he? Caeruleus? "For being his usual sassy self, dear. Regardless, I'm taking you somewhere good, so dress comfy but dress like you're a queen out on the town, you got it?" He purred, pecking her head. "I'm going to go drop off the kids with Father~"

"Okay." Toki smiled warmly. "Take the summons too! I think Sobek is trying to molt, and I'd rather he molt there than here. They don't have problems getting back up from being on the floor." She turned to look at her kids. "Behave you two," She says lightly, and kisses their heads before ushering them out of her lap.

"Wisdom of a mother; I hadn't been able to tell. Thank you dear." Aliquam gently went and picked Sobek up with a towel before offering his arm to Snuggle. "Come on, big boy, up we get to go visit grandpapa."

The bird was making grumpy sounds in Papyrus' arms. Snuggle however was content to crawl up into his arms and curl around him further. The grub was gaining weight, and his chitinous body was starting to lose color. He may have also been preparing to molt his skin.

Toki hefted herself up from her seat and hummed. "... See if Papa can get my ring clean before we go? I wanna wear it." She mumbles bashfully.

"Handsome boy." He cooed to the grub, before he gave Toki a nod. "Sure thing. I've got a feeling that odd essence will like him more anyhow, wouldn't you agree?"

"Pretty sure it's basically a Void booger." Toki rolls her eye lights. "It's going to drive him crazy no doubt. But yes, it's probably going to like him more."

"Nyeh! He's gonna hate it." He cackled, before he looked at his sweet children. He gave them a dashing grin. "Come on you two, let's go visit grandpapa."

The twins scurried for their shoes, and then Honey ran to fetch the days paper. She tucked it resolutely under her arm and then nodded up at her Daddy. "Okay. Lets go!"

"Awww, getting the paper for dear old dad?" He laughed gently, before leading the two pups out with a whistle, as if all was casual and pleasant, which it seem very much to be at this point.

Toki watched him go with bemused laugh, and then went to go upstairs. She opened the door to her room and paused.

Stag was stretched on their bed, legs akimbo, and seemed to be soundly snoozing in their deer form.

Toki crept in, and carefully changed clothes. Comfortable but queen like... She settled on a long maternity dress. It was white with black lace, and made her pregnant belly much more pronounced thanks to the ruffles and the frills. But she looked like a queen... And with a pair of low heels, she
walked like one too.

The look on Aliquam's face was a dead giveaway that he was falling in love with her all over again, what a beautiful woman, "Wow..." He chuckled. “Now I’m underdressed.” He laughed softly.

Toki hadn’t expected to see him back by the time that she was heading downstairs again- but then and again, he was fast despite how he walked with his cane. Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and motioned for him to come up the stairs. “I wasn’t expecting you home so soon. Must have got the kids settled quick.” Which was good. “Why don’t you come upstairs and lets see what we can do about you feeling underdressed? I know you’ve got lots of nice shirts, and you’ll look very nice in your slacks if that’s what you want to wear.” Given that he was currently in what she considered his ‘dad grubbies’, his sweat pants and a slightly stained turtleneck, it was little wonder he felt underdressed.

He nodded in agreement. "I may do a once over with the shower though. I don’t want to drag any grime into the outfit."

“Sounds about good. I don’t mind waiting while you wash up. I showered this morning.” Toki smiled. “It would probably do you good to wash up. You’re picking up your dad’s bad habits, you know.” Tenebris could forget to shower for a couple of days, and could sometimes pick up the… weirdest smell. Not like body odor- but something akin to it. It was strange to describe. “Go get those bones squeaky clean, mister, or I’m gonna have to start tossing you in the tub with the twins.” She gives him a cheeky grin.

"Oh no, I really hope I’m not getting old man smell." He laughed, "I'm going, darling, I'm going!" He then laughed as he made to get upstairs and get into the shower.

“Not old man smell, but maybe dirty bones.” She laughs. She watches him scoot off to the shower, and then quietly makes her way back to the dining room.

Toki sits down at her laptop again, and carefully pulls up a document containing all of her dreams. She’d started recording them a while ago… And while Papyrus showered, she would be adding a new one.

In the time it took her to type her dream out. He prepared his outfit, and once into it, he made his way downstairs, with phone and wallet in his pockets and his cane in hand. "Ready to go, darling?" He called out gently.

“Yes dear!” Toki chimed gently. She shoved back from her computer, typing a few last, hurried sentences, before closing her laptop. She padded back towards the stairs, and met him as he reached the bottom. Toki had her purse slung over one shoulder, and her wings fluttered gently. Her mane ruffled atop her dress, and she gave Papyrus a warm grin. “You look handsome.”

"Not nearly as lovely as you do, my darling." He came over to her and offered his arm, giving her a smile. "Let's be off~" He purred.

Toki smiled at him and chuckled. "You're too sweet." She tells him, and snags the keys to the car as she walks with him to the garage. "So... Did you get my wedding band back from Papa while you were there?" She asks hopefully.

"Yes, indeed." He purred quietly, patting her arm they walked. "I've got something special planned for it."

"Oh?" She blinked curiously, and made a soft buzzing sound as they stepped down level with the
car. She moved to the passenger door, secondary arm going to pull the latch to open it.

"Mmmhm!" He smiled at her and held the door for her to get in. "Let me get your door, love."

Her husband was such a gentleman when he wanted to be. She gave him a thankful smile, and carefully settled into her seat. The fun thing with this dress was because it was so fluffy, she had to carefully gather the ruffles around her legs and make sure they were away from the door. Once she was sure no fabric would get pinched or left hanging outside, Toki nodded to Papyrus to close the door.

He made sure he tucked the fabric carefully under her rear, since she had missed a few ruffles, and once that was done he shut the door and then went around to his side and got in, starting the car. He let it warm up for only a moment, before carefully backing out of the garage and driving them out of town. "You look so beautiful; I cant believe you aren't an angel~"

"Well, I've got the wings for it. But if you asked most people, they'd probably tell you I looked like a demon that crawled from hell." She laughed in good humor, and settled her wings over the seat. She shifted to cuddle into his shoulder. "So... You going to tell me where you're taking us for dinner?"

"Nyeh heh heh heh! Probably not~" He teased, "You'll have to wait and see." He hummed, though mentally he was hoping there was somewhere nice that didn’t require a reservation.

Ah the joys of spontaneously going to a nice restaurant.

Toki watched him for a moment and chuckled quietly. "You have no idea where to go, do you?" She fondly propped her chin on one of her secondary palms, her elbow resting on the swell of her pregnancy. Belly shelves were great. Toki knew her husband far too well.

"Heh... heh heh..." He giggled nervously. "Not a clue."

Toki laughed. "Well, do you want traditional Japanese food? Italian? We could go for Chinese, but we're a bit overdressed. Could do Italian though."

"Something traditional sounds perfect. I think I remember seeing this one place."

“Oh?” She gives him a curious look. “What type of traditional place?” Toki only knew of a couple in town, but wasn’t familiar with any new ones that might have opened during the time she’d been away.

“I think it was just a little sushi place, but it's kind of fancy. I can’t remember the name, but I remember the street it was on."

“Well, that’s good. If all else fails and we get lost, we can go somewhere that we know and have been before.” Toki hummed. She reached out and fiddled with the radio, and got a good station going for them to listen to on the long drive over.

While the music played, Aliquam hummed and tapped gently to the music as he drove.
Once they made it into town, Aliquam began to look around as he drove until he successfully found the sushi place.

"Ta-da! Told you I’d recognize the place! It’s called the...” He looked out the window, and immediately his face fell. "You've... you've got to be kidding me..."

Toki paused as they parked outside of it. She blinked slowly. “The... Guardian Angelfish?” She couldn’t help the soft snort that escaped her, and muffled her giggles in her four hands. “That... That sounds like a name your brother would have come up with for a restaurant. How have I not heard of this place before now?”


Toki spared one of her hands to reach over and rub his shoulder. “Awww Papy, it’s okay. It’s just... The name is ironic, and a pun. Are you okay? Please don’t bruise your face.” Or break the wheel.

"It's everywhere now, isn't it... I go hermit for a few months and the puns take over...” He leaned back in his seat and let his skull drop back before going ‘boneless’ in the drivers seat. "This is how I die, darling... remember me as a man who loved my people."

Toki snorted again at his dramatics and delved her primary hand down against his side to tickle his ribs. "Oh you silly skeleton you. You're not going to die. We've got a dinner date, and plans to eventually have another small hoard of children."

He squeaked at the tickles and flinched away from her hands, though she seemed to get what she wanted as he sobered up from his dramatics. "Yes dear. Lot's of babies." He chuckled, before he smiled at her. "Let's go inside then, there's a feast to be had."

“Lets indeed!” She beams. So long as she was careful about what she ate, she wouldn’t have a problem here. Toki carefully got out of the car, since she was on the side where the street was, and made her way around once she wouldn’t get run over by passing traffic. “You know, I was pretty familiar with most of the sushi restaurant’s around here... I’m pretty sure this one is new.” She hums conversationally as she reaches his side of the car. “When did it get put up?”

"Mmmh... I want to say it was put up maybe two... no, maybe three months ago...” He answered as he slowly climbed out of the car, putting some weight on his cane as he got it under him. He leaned
onto it more, his weight pressing onto it as he then locked the car and pocketed the keys. "Ready, love?" He purred as he offered her an arm.

Toki linked two of hers with his offered arm, and hummed softly. “So it was put up when I was gone.” She surmised gently. “And of course! I’m very ready.” She beamed at him, and strolled forwards to the door with him. Given that she had his arm, and he had his cane in the other one, Toki used her spare arms- since she had two extra arms to put to good use- to pull open the surprisingly heavy door for them both to go through. Having multiple arms had its benefits and its drawbacks.

"Now, I haven’t been here myself, but I’ve got a fellow who recommended something, so I’m looking forward to see what their 'dragon roll' tastes like." He hummed.

"Dragon rolls are okay. Traditionally, they're made with shrimp, cucumber, and avocado. I don’t actually enjoy the taste of shrimp with avocado." Toki murmurs to him conversationally. She blinks as they step inside- the entire building is staffed by monsters it looked like. "... The name makes sense now." She chimes in surprise.

And indeed it did, though it didn't stop Aliquam from groaning quietly into his hand before sobering up as a greeter approached them.

The greeter seemed to be an Utsuri Koi fish, her body covered with beautiful orange and black scales, her eyes large and a surprising shade of blue. "Welcome to the Guardian Angelfish. Would you like a table for two?" She asked.

Toki hid a bemused smirk, since it would technically be a table for eight, and nodded to the pretty Koi fish monster. Ironic, a fish monster working at a sushi restaurant. "Yes please." She smiles. “Ah-may I inquire if your sushi is frozen or not?” If it was frozen, it usually killed the bacteria that made it harmful to pregnant women. Some places didn’t freeze though, and Toki needed to know if it was safe or not. She knew that it was a society thing that women didn’t eat sushi or fish while pregnant.

One of her arms quietly dropped down to cradle her middle as her mane fluffed. She wondered if the woman knew who she was.

At the question, she gave Toki a sweet smile. "You will not need to fear the safety of your children while you are served by us, Ma'am. Worry is always warranted, but we want to make sure that everyone is welcome here, so we put as much effort as possible to precaution." She spoke, leading them to where they could sit down and get comfortable. "All our fish, even the local species caught, are frozen for at least forty eight hours before slowly being defrosted in a sterile environment, ensuring the most minimal contamination of any bacteria that could risk the health of our customers, young, old, and in the works."

Toki gave a relieved smile as she settled into her seat across from Papyrus. They’d been seated at a booth- which wasn’t necessarily a traditional Sushi bar, but Toki wasn’t complaining. The seats were soft and comfortable, and the back was low enough to accommodate her wings. They’d also been given an end seat, so her wings could drape over the back without hitting anyone or intruding upon anyone’s bubble space. “Well, that’s a relief. I’ve got a small immunity to most raw meat bacteria, but I’ve been careful with what raw meat I’ve been consuming.” She knew several types of fish were off the table, but salmon should be fine. “Do you have salmon nigiri available?”

"Absolutely. We have four pieces for 440 yen, or eight pieces for 900 yen." She offered.

Sushi in itself was not very filling, Toki found. Whenever she went there, she always spent a large amount of money on sushi in order to get full. Well, it wasn’t like her bank account couldn’t afford it. “I’ll take the eight piece to start.” Toki smiles to her. “And… Mnnn a ginseng tea if you have it?”
Her eye lights slid to Papyrus. “What do you want, love?”

“How much is your spicy shrimp roll?”

“Eight pieces for 650 yen.” She answered,

“I'll take that, and a dragon roll. I'll also have a green tea please.”

“Sounds good. I'll be right back.” The waitress hummed warmly, heading for the kitchen.

Toki chuckles softly. “I'll probably order another nigiri later. I really enjoy them.” She made a soft sound, and rubbed her foot against his under the booth.

“Sounds like a plan, I might not order much more than what I have, but you're free to enjoy yourself~” He purred, his feet slowly returning the favor as his orange gaze grew peaceful as his eye lights met hers.

“You might change your mind.” She laughs gently. “Sushi isn’t very filling. At least, I never found it filling. Delicious yes, but not very filling.” Her high-heeled shoe gently rubbed against his foot, and she returned his peaceful look. It was nice, being out with him and just… existing. There was peace and love and it was quiet and simply… good. “This is nice, Pap. We should do this more often- take an adults night out at least once a month or so.”

"Absolutely.” He agreed. "Just you and me, living life as we can.” He then reached and gently took one of her larger hands, pulling it for a kiss. "And have the time of our lives doing it."

“Yeah.” She smiles at him warmly, and blushes at the kiss. “When the kids are older, we can bring them with us. At this age though, Honey and Skylar are going to be more bored at a restaurant than they would at… say a park.” Toki gives him a warm grin. “So…. What are you planning with my wedding band?” She asks him curiously.

“Oh... something~ you'll have it back soon though, don’t worry.” He purred, kissing her hand again before giving a soft ‘nyeh heh heh heh’. Even now that he was much older and matured by his life experiences, he always used that adorable, childish laugh when he was happy.

Toki adored his childish laugh. She'd never grow tired of it- it was endearing to her, and it made her happy. She gave him a soft laugh. "You've got me curious. So long as you don't try to hide it in my sushi or something, I'm sure it'll be fun!"

"No, no, I know your teeth very well. One bite and that ring is history." He laughed quietly. "Not to worry my darling, I have much better ideas than that~"

“You’ve got me curious~” She cooed at him. “Won’t you give me a hint?” Toki would have fluttered her lashes at him if she had them.

"Nope." He grinned at her. "You're gonna have to wait, honey~"

Toki pouted at him and sighed. “Okay. I suppose I can wait.” She rubbed her foot against his again, and then wriggled in her seat. “So… I heard the movie is going to finish filming this summer and release by the end of summer. The one based on my book series, that is.” She props her chin onto her secondary palm. “It’s… not exactly going to be for little ones to see, but the both of us could go see it if you want. My editor can get me tickets to the premiere.”

"That sounds like fun. You and me, going to see the product of your hard work." He purred happily.
“Good.” She beams at him. Toki makes a soft sound, and idly taps her fingers on the table. “It’ll be interesting to see how they adapted it. Movies are always different than the books.”

“Well if they know what’s best, they’ll have kept it close to the story you wrote.” He laughed quietly.

“Oh,” She waves a hand, “But you know how movies are. I don’t think I’ve seen many movies that stick close to the plot. Like… Like the Inheritance Cycle. Those books- those were fantastic. But the movie… As a standalone, it was fine, but if you read the books, you just cringed. Not even Jeremy Irons could fix it.”

"Mmh... You know what did well to keep to the book? 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. Absolutely miraculous work there." Aliquam hummed. "I wound up reading the book while I recovered from the battle and ended up finding out about the movie. I watched it with Caeruleus while the pups were all asleep, and I was impressed with how few deviations from the book there was."

Toki made a soft sound. “As weird as it is to say, I didn’t actually like the book or the movie.” She admits. “I mean, it matches fairly well, but I disliked it. It bamboozles my brothers. They loved the book.” She taps her fingers idly on the table while they wait for their tea, and eventually their sushi. “Hey, Pap…?” She looks at him. “I know you don’t like to talk about it, but… What happened after I disappeared?” She asks softly.

He hesitated at the question, then reached up and slowly rubbed his neck, "Well... After the void closed, it was as if the world just died around us... Cae was staring where you disappeared, Father was sobbing, I couldn't feel anything but the pain from my hip and my soul... it felt like it was on fire." He spoke softer. "I blacked out. I woke up from what I was told was almost a week later in the New Home Hospital. Honey and Skylar were both laying next to me. For a moment, I was horrified, terrified, that they had fallen when I took so long to wake up..."

Her soul sank as she listened to him talk. Her fingers clenched, and she reached out to take his hands. “I’m so sorry.” She says softly. “I… I worried too. That… that all three of you would fall. That I’d never see you again.” She exhales softly. “But you’re here, and they’re here. We’re all changed by the things we’ve seen and we’ve had done to us, but we’re still here.” Toki’s fingers held his, and she rubbed his larger knuckles tenderly. Her hands were so much smaller than his- the fur decorating her wrists could tickle his fingers if she touched the back of his palms. “What happened next?” She asks softly.

"I had to recover from my trauma, but not before we all endured rebound. It was horrible..." He shuddered. "Everyone suffered... we almost lost Caeruleus, and I barely managed to hang on... all I had were the children to hold onto..."

Toki grimaced and held his hands tighter. "I'm sorry." She says softly. Things would have been very different if she'd have just... Not been her usual self and had instead listened to them and followed the plan. "I suffered it too. I got mine and Cruelty's. It wasn't... Fun. Deaths Rebound is horrible. Thankfully, we don't have to endure it again." She kissed his knuckles. "At least you had the children, my love, and they had you. You made it through together, until I made it back home to you like I promised."

He smiled at her quietly. "And I'm ever so relieved that you kept that promise... as willing as I was to accept the responsibility, I couldn't accept the fate of raising my children without their mother.”

Toki rubbed his knuckles for a time, quietly soaking in his words. "I know. I'm glad I got to come back... If I couldn't, I don't know what I would have done." She sighs warmly. "But I'm back, and you don't need to worry. I'm not going anywhere, no matter what happens in my dreams."
He smiled at her tenderly, and then looked up as their food was delivered. "Ah... Indeed so. And with that, it's time to eat." He hummed excitedly, straightening up and gently tugging his hands from hers.

Toki smiled at the lovely Koi fish woman who brought with her two platters of food. One had their meals, and the other had their drinks.

Two cups were placed on the table, along with two separate pots that were steaming. One was set on either side of the table, and the Koi fish used the one on Toki's side to fill her husband's with green tea, while Papyrus's side was used to fill hers with ginseng.

One platter of salmon nigiri was placed in front of Toki, while two platters, one spicy shrimp and one dragon roll, were set in front if papyrus. They were topped off with a pair of disposable chopsticks and table sauces.

"Thank you." Toki chirps, and expertly cracks her chopsticks in half so she can make use of them.

"Enjoy your food, let me know if you need anything else."

Aliquam does the same with his chopsticks and gives the Koi a sweet smile as she takes her leave, before he looked down at his food. "This looks great." He commented happily, starting with a spicy shrimp piece. "I'll save that dragon for last~"

Toki chuckles, and very gently applies a bit of wasabi to her nigiri, before dipping it into the small saucer of soy sauce that had been provided. She didn’t bother letting it drip- she stuffed it in her mouth, savoring the taste as the chef’s magic tingled across her senses. “Good idea. If you’ve never had them, you don’t know if you’ll like them. Mmm…” The wasabi was hot, and it burned a little bit, but she enjoyed it. She just wouldn’t eat too much. She didn’t want to risk upsetting her body’s systems while she was pregnant.

"My excuse is it looks so filling." He laughed gently, before popping the sushi into his mouth, humming happily as he started to chew. Which was something to see, as it was amazingly done out of sight rather than end up being chewed for all to see by the skeletal face of the man.

Likewise, Toki’s meal wasn’t chewed up in plain view. She did have her molars, hidden in the back behind bony ‘cheeks’ after all. “Honestly, sushi isn’t all that filling. It is delicious though- but what makes it so expensive is you need so much of it to get full. I still don’t mind though.” It wasn’t like they couldn’t afford one night out to the sushi bar.

"Well as long as we don’t do this all the time, I couldn't imagine we’d get in trouble for gorging ourselves on fine cuisine like this." He laughed. "Get a pleasant taste of the wife's heritage."

“Sushi is just the most commonly thought of part of it,” She laughs in good humor. “Remember, that’s only one part of my heritage.” She nudges his foot gently under the table, mindful of his bad leg. “I really need to take you and the kids out to meet my grandparents in the states. They’re up there in age, but I’m sure they’d love you. Well… Hopefully.” They hadn’t ever really reached out to her since she’d become a monster, and honestly Toki had been too busy with… everything to try and go out to visit them.

"One of many parts, and when everything's all said and done, I’m gonna learn every last bit of it."

Toki smiles at him around another bite of sushi. “What are you going to do once you’ve learned everything?” She teases. “There’s going to be no mystery left.” She comments, with a wiggled brow.

Swallowing his mouthful, he gave her a smile. "Tell you what, how about I tell you when we're all
done with our food." He suggested with a sweet tone. "Tonight... I think I want to make this more special... I don’t know if I can better it meal-wise, but I think I have something... something super special I want to do..."

She swallowed her bite, and gave him a warm look. “Okay. I can wait until we’re done.” She beams. “I look forward to this super special thing. If it’s got you this excited, I’m sure it’s going to be perfect.”

He gave a weak laugh as he looked away and he pressed his face into his hand. "Heh... Excited... it's starting to become an understatement, I’m not going to lie." He spoke through his fingers, before he sighed and lowered his hand, looking back at her with a smile. "I love you, Toki~"

“I love you too, Papy.” She smiles at him soothingly, and takes another bite of her meal. “You know,” she comments gently, “the sooner we finish, the sooner you can soothe your excitement... or nerves. Those might be nerves.” She rubs her ankle against his and hums.

"I feel like I’m going to pass out.” He laughed again nervously, reaching up to run his hand over his face, before he sighed and picked up his chopsticks. "Yeah..." He picked up a piece of the dragon roll and popped it into his mouth with a soft crunch of the tempura within.

Toki watched him switch from his shrimp rolls to his dragon rolls, and wondered how he liked the avocado with the shrimp. “Deep breaths, dear. I’m not going to eat your soul, I promise.” She jokes. Toki could feel his soul- bonded with hers, though faint from their time apart- racing in his chest. She used to know when it was racing clearly- now it was very faint. “No need to be nervous. I’m only hungry for tasty nigiri.” She winks, trying to help him relax as she pops another into her mouth. Goodness, she loved salmon nigiri. It was honestly delicious. The salmon was always buttery and savory tasting, and almost melted in her mouth.

He didn't seem to dislike it, swallowing the sushi after a little time to chew, and he hummed as he gave a small smile. "Not bad." He chuckled.

Piece by piece the sushi disappeared off Aliquam's plate, and eventually his cup ended up empty. Though now this meant he could focus more on the woman before him.

Toki had ordered and received another four pieces of nigiri, and eaten them by the time her beloved husband finished eating both of his orders. She was just finishing up her tea as she spotted him staring at her, and she nearly choked on her drink as she flushed a bit. It could be unsettling to find someone staring at you adoringly, no matter how many times you’d caught them doing it. Toki finished her tea, leaving her pot for refills untouched. “Dinner was good.” Toki smiled. They’d probably be hungry again when they got home, but they could raid the kitchen if that was the case. “Did you enjoy your geen tea?”

"I did. It was very good. Did you enjoy your nigiri? Will you be wanting any more?” He asked in reply, shifting slightly in his seat as if preparing to get up to order another round of the simple sushi.

She made a soft sound and shook her head. “I had twelve pieces- I think I’m okay for now. We could stop for desert on the way home if you wanted though. I wouldn’t mind maybe an ice cream.” She was enjoying spending the evening with him. “Did you want to get a dragon roll to take home though? You seemed to enjoy it. We could take an order of dragon rolls and a nigiri home.”

"I suppose we could, it'll tide you over for the drive home." He gave a soft chuckle. "Sure, I'll go ahead and get one more round to go home and pay the bill... Go ahead and wait here." He told her, slowly getting up to go do just that as he started for the till.
“Papy!” Toki calls to get him to look at her, and then fishes around in her purse for her wallet. She tosses him her wallet. He knew how to use her card, and it would be easier if he used his… ‘retirement’ pay, as he called it, to cover bills and left her to cover anything elaborate.

Hey, it worked.

Aliquam caught her wallet and smiled at her. "Thank you." And with that, he went to the front and did as he said he would, ordering another batch of nigiri and a dragon roll to go. He paid the bill, a price he probably wouldn't disclose to his beautiful wife as he didn't want her to worry about it in the slight case she had it on her mind. As he returned, he tucked her wallet away and kissed her cheek. "I'm going to step out for a moment... would you mind joining me in a few minutes?" He questioned gently.

Though his voice was calm, his soul betrayed him. It was starting to race again.

Toki watched him slowly, feeling the faint race of his soul through their lingering bond. “Sure,” She says gently. “I’ll wait for everything to be brought out, and then I’ll join you, okay?” She gives him a big smile, and kisses one of his knuckles. “Be careful, okay? The city can be a little rough after dark.”

"No one in their right mind would hit a seven foot tall monster with a cane." He chuckled, pecking her cheek gently before he stepped outside, out of view.

She watched him go with a fond smile. She didn’t tell him that they didn’t need to be in their right mind- some people got drunk and stupid, and there were a lot of bars in the city. Alcohol was liquid courage- or as she preferred to call it, liquid stupidity.

Toki hummed to herself as she waited, and quietly rubbed her belly. She could feel the litter shifting inside of her, twitching and stretching. It wouldn’t be too long, she thought, before they’d be able to feel them kicking through the thick skin of her belly.

It didn’t take the waitress long to bring out their order. Toki stood up with a smile, thanking her as she took the to-go boxes of sushi. She braced them carefully against her belly as she finished gathering her things and straightening her dress. Toki gave Papyrus a few more moments to calm down, before heading out the door to see what he was up to.

Aliquam almost jumped when she stepped out, before he turned to look at her. "That was quick..." He chuckled weakly, before he cleared his nonexistent throat. "So... we're good?"

"A question?" She blinked slowly as she straightened and closed up the back of the car again. She thought back for a moment. “Ah... The only one I can think of besides the ring one is the one I asked not too long ago.” She hums and walks- Toki refuses to believe she waddles at this stage- over to him and stops in front of him. She smooths her secondary hands down her belly and makes a soft sound. “So... what happens when you learn everything about me?” She asks again, giving him a warm smile.
"I'll tell you what I’m gonna do..." He reached out and took her primary hands into his, giving them a firm squeeze. "I'll learn everything, and then we'll take our children, and we'll do everything. We'll visit every landmark, every mountain. I'll break my back before I give up on this... I'm not gonna die until I've witnessed everything that made you, you." He told her, before he slowly knelt down in front of her, taking care with his hip. He still got down on one knee before her, and that's what mattered most to him.

"I'm gonna tell the world 'You did this. You put on this earth a young woman, you shaped her to love and not hate, and you gave me the most wonderful wife I could have ever hoped to ask for' and we're gonna take everything we learned and show the world what we think of it... what I think of you. But there's one thing I need to do first... it's not proposing, I already did that a few years ago... but now it's left to formalities... Tokiko Nara-Gaster..." He then fished the box out of his pocket, opening it to display her ring, cleaned and shiny for her to see. "Will you renew your vows with me?"

His words made her soul throb with warmth. Toki sucked in a soft breath, and lowered her primary left hand for him to slide the ring onto her finger for her. “Yes.” She tells him warmly, no hesitation this time. She had hesitated before, too shocked at the initial proposal. This time… This time, her eyes might have been stinging, but Toki was prepared and wouldn’t make him wait. “Yes, Papyrus Aлиquam Gaster, I will renew my vows with you. You silly man- this is what you were nervous about?” She leans down, while he’s still knelt before her, and kisses him soundly while ignoring the monsters staring at them out the restaurant windows. “I said yes once, Papy- what could have ever made you think I wouldn’t say it again? I love you with everything that I am, and you and I are going to have many, many years of exploring the world together.”

He kissed her gently in return, and then he smiled weakly as he slid the ring gently onto her finger. "I was worried it was gonna sound cheesy and you'd laugh."

As he slid the ring home onto her finger, she made a soft, pleased sound. It felt… right. “Not at all,” She murmurs gently as she remains stooped over to nuzzle his face. “I wouldn’t ever think that, and I’d never laugh at you for saying something with so much heart behind it.” She wished he could feel her soul- and that she could feel his clearly. The time away hadn’t done them any good, and they hadn’t merged souls to renew their connection.

He smiled up at her. Putting his weight onto his cane, Papyrus slowly got up and gave her a squeezing hug. "Let's go home~"

“Home sounds good.” Toki smiles. “I can wait on ice cream. I’ve got sushi to nibble on when we get home…” She rubs her hand gently along his arm, and then kisses him gently. She sucks in a soft breath, before exhaling and heading around to her door. She has to dash to get in as a car comes zipping around a corner, and she crams in, before taking the time to get herself comfortable. Ugh, she hated being on the street side.

He carefully got in and he checked her for a moment. "You okay?" He asked as he helped adjust her wings in the seat.

“Thank you, sweetie.” His help was needed, as she’d ended up sitting on her left wing in her haste to get inside. “I’m okay. Just had to hustle so I didn’t become a bony bug on a windshield.” She jokes. Once Toki is settled, her mane ruffles and releases pleased pheromones. His touch on her wings had felt nice, and part of her hadn’t wanted his hands to leave her.

Her pheromones seemed to make him happy as well, as his shoulders slouched a little and he gave a soft, happy sigh. He pulled out and started out of town, but only after an hour of driving he stopped on the side of the road. Putting the car in park, Papyrus sighed and leaned back a little in his seat.
Toki was admittedly surprised by his sudden stop in the middle of the forest. They had an hour left still to get home. Once he had pulled over and parked well off the road, Toki reached out and set her primary hand on his thigh. "Quinn?" She prompts gently, using the nickname she didn't use as often anymore since it was attached to his other self more firmly. She rubbed his thigh gently. "You okay?"

It takes her a moment to notice something hard and warm under her hand, jammed awkwardly down the leg of his pants. Was that...?

He made a muffled sound and pressed his face into his hand. "Heh... my soul's still racing." He murmured, his cheeks darkening as he peered over at her. "I guess I was looking forward to this more than I let on..." He spoke softly, his eye lighting up a little as his pants gave a strained creak of fabric against the magic anatomy that had formed there.

By golly, he'd gotten a nervous boner. Toki didn’t think it was possible for monsters who didn’t have constantly summoned genitals… But apparently so.

Toki gave him a surprised look, and then it settled into a low grin. She shifted in her seat and carefully unbuckled. “It’s called a nervous boner.” She chuckles softly. “It can happen to men who’re excited and nervous. It apparently applies to monster men too.” Toki shifts in her seat, her wings bunching up behind her as she turns to face him. “All the same… I bet that’s uncomfortable to drive with.” Her eye lights flared a warm green. “How about… I take care of that for you~?” Voice dropping several octaves into the sweet, sultry tone she knew he used to love, Toki slides her hand from his thigh up to his fly, and begins to undo his button and his zipper on his nice pants. If they got them messy, it wasn’t like Toki couldn’t get them clean. She was a laundry master.

His soul leapt in his chest and the color rushed to his cheeks. "Holy..." He didn't make to stop her, but turned his head as his hand came to rest on her head. "M-mind your stomach, darling." He spoke quietly.

Toki paused to look up at him. She fully adjusted her body, so the swell of her belly wasn’t squished. It was, unfortunately, tight quarters between her wings and the swell of her pregnancy, so she was still a little pinched, but she made do with what she had. “Don’t you worry about my stomach, love. I did say I wanted dessert, didn’t I?” She winked at him.

Toki gently freed his member from his pants. It was glowing and orange, just like she remembered from so many years ago. She was used to larger after dealing with Tenne for so long, but… Her husband was just the right size for her. Pulling on her magic, Toki blunted her teeth, and then lowered her head. Her fluffy mane filled his lap as she took him into her mouth, her tongue forming around him so she could give him a firm lick as he lit up the inside of her skull.

"Aah..." He shivered and moaned as his hand clenched a little around a handful of her fluff, his eyes quickly gazing upon the sight that was her skull glowing a mixed orange-green color with the presence of his magic. "Oh Toki... hhnn~"

Toki let out a soft thrum, letting it vibrate up through the summoned insides of her mouth. She gave a soft sound, enjoying his fingers fistedin her mane. She bobbed slowly, her teeth coming down to massage at him gently as she manipulates the blunted objects. Her hand slips past his pants, and she palms his pelvis, gently stroking him and where his magic had formed.

He gave another moan and rocked his hips into her hand. "Oh god... Ahh..." His noises were quiet, breathy, and just the cutest, sweetest things to hear. "Oh Toki, I've missed this.” His words were exhaled on a breathy groan.
Toki chuckled around his cock, and closed her eyes. She focused on bobbing on his member, taking him deep and swirling her tongue around him as she tastes him. He tastes good- like heat and warmth and sunshine, just like how his magic feels. Magic always tastes different. Thankfully, given that she could speak with her mouth stuffed full, Toki was able to speak back to him. “I’ve missed this too.” She cooed. “I’ve missed your touch, and touching you… Tasting you too. You taste just like I remember.”

"Hhhnnnn~" Holy shit... holy shit... "Oh Toki~" He keened happily as his grip tightened once more before loosening to knead her head. He pushed it down to egg her on, to take more of his cock into her beautiful mouth.

Toki gave him a bemused but indulgent sound, and eased her had down lower to suck him deeper into the depths of her mouth. She pantomimed a swallow around him, feeling her own body warm in response to his magic’s arousal. Toki basted the inside of the car with pheromones designed to arouse him simply on instinct, and was left to see how he’d react to a direct dose of that basically in his face.

The queen bee skeleton woman was swiftly rewarded with another pull to her fur as he bucked into her and gave a weak snarl as his cock gave a throb on her tongue. He hadn’t been ready for that, and was no doubt seeming rather close at this point.

It amused her to no end that her pheromones could have such an effect on monsters and people. It was… Lots of fun, honestly. Toki needed to have more fun with this particular pheromone. She let out a soft sound, and then buzzed her bones and magic around him, letting the tingles travel up his cock as she bobbed up and down on his length.

With the buzz, he was bucking and practically drooling as he whimpered and moaned against her attentions. "Oh fuck, oh fuck, T-TOKI~!" He gripped her head and pushed it down a little, a pleased tremble rushing through him as his magic gushed free from his cock, giving her a rather large mouthful of the fluid like energy as all that had been pent up was finally released.

Toki swallowed it down greedily as he came, her summoned tongue helping her catch all he had to offer as she savored her ‘dessert’. She drank all he had to give, her body processing it into a concentrated magic donation, before she gently drew up and let him pop free of her mouth once he was spent. Toki peeked up at him and drew her hand from her pants so he could take a moment to calm down.

He was shivering as he lay against his seat, his breathing steadily slowing with the occasional breathy moan. "H-holy fuck~" He managed to stutter, before he shivered and sighed, smiling over at her. "So... did you enjoy that, love?” He asked with a weak laugh.

She chuckled gently and smiled up at him. Toki leaned back towards her own seat, taking some of the pressure off her belly, and crossed her arms so she could lean on all four of them. “I did very much.” She purrs. “I do so love the taste of my husband in the evening.” She licks her teeth. “Mmm… Do you feel better?” His cock hadn’t disappeared yet, but she supposed it would take a while. She… actually didn’t really remember how long it took to make it go away. Tenne’s just sucked back into his body when he was done with it.

At this point the universe hoped she was staring, because the half-hard form of his cock twitched at hearing her statement and almost immediately began to grow hard again as a burst of pheromones surged from Aliquam, who proceeded to hide behind his hands. "Oh stars..."
Chapter 129

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: So this is sex. Sex, sex, and more sex. This is the sex that they’ve needed, that they’ve wanted- and it first starts off on the side of the road in the woods. It’s unconventional, awkward, but full of love- just like their relationship. If that isn’t enough to tell you, THIS IS AN 18 PLUS CHAPTER YOU ADORABLE FOOLS, IF YOU ARE NOT OLD ENOUGH YOU’LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT CHAPTER.

The pheromones wafted from him in a musky, heated smell, and it was one Toki would recognize anywhere. Her beloved husband was going into heat- no wonder he’d gotten an awkward boner driving home. “Oh- oh Quinn,” She laughed gently and reached her hands up to make it so he couldn’t hide behind his hands. “Come now, love. Heats are natural. I just… didn’t think you’d get one while I was pregnant. But, maybe since circumstances are different…” He hadn’t when she’d carried the twins, but the twins had been his. The litter wasn’t.

Come to think of it, his musk was rolling off of her like rain on a well oiled feather. She supposed she couldn’t go into heat when she was already pregnant… Well, this just made things interesting.

"I got so hot-headed rehearsing my proposal.. And then I just didn't cool down, but you're pregnant and I couldn't ask you to help me with this because you're already pregnant and I wouldn't want to do anything that could complicate anything... but it's just so hot, and it's been six months since I’ve had my beautiful wife do anything to me...” He went on as he wriggled his hands away from her and hid behind his hands again, his smell growing stronger as his body began to heat up with embarrassment.

Toki hummed, and grasped his hands more firmly so he couldn’t pull away this time. “Hey,” She says soothingly to interrupt his babbling, “Papy? It’s been six months for you. But it’s been two years and some change for me since I’ve had you touch me.” She tilts her head at him, and gently wafts the air with pheromones. “You can’t bring me into heat,” She says lightly, “not with me already pregnant. But, just because I’m pregnant doesn’t mean my libido isn’t up for making love. I miss your touch- feeling you inside of me. It’s been so long for me… I don’t remember what it feels like. But… we do have children at home.”

His heats lasted for two to three days on the norm. How she and Tenne had managed in the other world with kids, Toki didn’t know, but their toddlers wouldn’t give them enough time to sate his burn. Papyrus would be… well, stuck with a raging boner all day unless they made a call to Tenebris to watch the kids for more than a bit.

He pressed his teeth together and gave a heavy sound of frustration, before he looked at her. "D-Do you think we could do... something?” He asked quietly, "W-while we're here?”

Toki sucked in a soft breath and then exhaled. She gave him a slow nod. “I think so, yeah.” She looked at his lap. “I can’t fit in your lap, not with my wings, so anything we do will have to be outside… where any car passing by can see.” She blushed a bright green. “Or the back seat, but that’s cramped too.”
He took a breath, and then looked at her with a gleam in his eye lights. "You wanna... turn off the car and go rut on the grass behind it~?"

"Rut is such a non-romantic word." She rolls her eye lights at him. "We're a bug and a cat, not a stag and a doe you silly man." Still, she returned that gleaming look. "Sure." She purred. "... You still carry the emergency blanket in the trunk? We can pull the car off further and use the blanket to keep the tree grits from getting in our joints." Toki had enough of that from the pine needles Tenne had pounded her into for five days straight- she didn't want more foliage in her bits.

".... Wait really?!! for a man with a bad leg, it was amazing how fast he was up and out, using the car as a crutch as he hobbled along it's length after popping the trunk. He scurried back and grabbed the blanket out, before coming over to her side of the car with a shaky, eager smile. "I... I probably sound like a teenager. Hell, I'm acting like one right now... But... fuck... this is kinda exciting!" He gave her an elated grin.

Toki honestly had never needed the image of her husband scrambling out of the car, every limp making his glowing erection practically flap in the breeze. Now she'd seen it, and now he was standing before her, still erect and holding a blanket like it was his lifeline.

She shook her head fondly, and turned off the car for him before she got out of the car to join him. "It is exciting. But, we need to go a little into the trees or we can be seen from the road and get in trouble. Come on, captain happy, before you put someone's eye out with that thing." She gave him a cheeky grin, before kicking off her heels. They were tossed into the car, and she scooted with bare toes into the grass, padding for the thickest part of the trees and grass for them to settle down at.

He laughed quietly and with one hand carrying the blanket, he hobbled his way to catch up with Toki, before he draped the blanket down on the thick grass. "Heh~"

Toki gave a happy chirp and carefully got onto her hands and knees so she could spread out the blanket. Her dress rode up a little in the back, but she didn’t mind. She let out a soft whistling sound. “Alright~ looks like it’s good to go.” She wiggled her backside thoughtfully, her wings flicking as she pondered if her dress was going to get ruined by this or not.

Her bent over form sent a shiver up his spine and he gave a keen before he knelt and slowly pulled her dress up, his hard-on pressing against her thighs as he nuzzled her, wrapping his arms around her to squeeze her in a loving hug. "Mmh~"

This was a position she was all too familiar with. Toki laughed as he nuzzled his face between her wings, and took his weight as he leaned onto her. Her primary arms supported them both, and she gave a soft rock. “Well, going right for your favorite position, hm?” She winks. “Would have thought you’d want face to face for our first time in such a long while~” She teases and rocks her pelvis back against him. She could twist her magic, and summon her parts, but… Well, where’s the fun in making it easy?

He whined and murmured into her back, nuzzling her before pulling her back so she was on her knees and sitting in his lap instead of what it was before. "Look at me." He spoke with a soft huff.

Straddling him, Toki took a slow moment to peek up at him. She gave him a slow grin too. “So demanding,” She coos, and loops her primary arms around his neck. Her secondary arms slip up his shirt, and she strokes his ribs firmly. “What are you going to do if I don’t?” She asks, and summons her nether parts so she can gently grind against him. So much for her being a tease- she’d manage though.

He didn't reply. He only made a keening whimper as his eyes glazed. "Please?" He mewled out,
while his cock found its way to grind between her legs, lovingly against her newly summoned nether parts.

Toki gave a soft pleased sound, leaning forward to press her teeth against his. “Alright,” She purrs, “how can I deny such a gentle request?” Toki rocked her hips against him and gave him a soft sounding buzz. His member was hot and throbbing against her core, and she couldn’t resist nuzzling him as deep into her depths as she could, without actually burying him inside her. Toki’s hands slid up along the insides of his ribs- and she called upon her magic so she could stroke his enflamed soul.

His body trembled as a soft gasp escaped him and he moaned as her magic came to find his soul. His cock gave an excited twitch as a few small bucks were made between her thighs. "Haaahh~"

Toki leaned down and ran her teeth gently over his neck. His shoulders were covered, so she couldn’t really nibble the strong bones hidden below. Her middle pressed into the empty space of his abdomen as she kissed and teased him, her fingers stroking his soul inside of his rib cage. Wings fanning out, Toki eased up and gave him a teasing smile. “I know you’re ready,” She purrs, “But I’m not quite there yet…” She wasn’t wet- thanks to the fact she wasn’t in heat- so he’d have a little work to do otherwise he’d be going in dry. “Touch me? I’ve missed your touch.”

Gladly, he nuzzled her neck and pressed loving kisses and nips to her available bones, hands wandering to caress her chest with one hand, the other reaching down to run over her swell before seeking what rested above his cock's current place. "I love you~ I love you so much." He breathed out as his fingers pressed down, while his hips moving, making it so that her clit was put against his cock, to feel it drag along the smooth magic-summoned flesh.

Toki let out a soft sound and rocked against him. She enjoyed the feeling of his smooth cock rolling against her clit. Her body felt weird to have back, but it felt good and right- she rolled her hips into him with a soft groan. “I love you too,” She purred to him. “I love you so much… Mmm~”

He huffed quietly and whined into her shoulder. "Fuck... hahh~" His fingers pressed a little rougher as his hips picked up, rutting against her a little faster now. It'd be surprising to say that he was already getting close, especially after his previous climax having come so soon.

Toki chuffed softly, and nuzzled her face against his neck. He was so close- his magic was practically thrumming under her touch with the desire, the need to come, that it was nearly overwhelming. Between that and the firm touch of his hand and his shaft, she felt herself becoming slick. She gave a soft purr to him, and then gently rolled her core against his shaft. “Careful, sweetheart. A little eager- don’t want to spill too early and waste good magic for the pups, do you?” Her eye lights smolder at him lustily, and Toki shifts slowly, before lifting her hips invitingly.

He looked up at her with a shaky smile and he slowly shook his head. However, as she lifted her hips, his hips lowered as best his pelvis could against the grass, and his hand came to help his cock line up. He pressed another kiss to her shoulder through her shirt, and hummed into it before he rolled his hips upward, allowing his cock to slowly push inside of her folds. It felt right after so long since the last time he felt the sensation of having her wrapped around him.

Having him slide into her depths felt… right. Like a puzzle piece that fit just perfectly- he was neither too big nor too small. He stretched her and filled her just right, in ways Tenne hadn’t even been able to do. As Toki sank down onto his depths, their motions faster and more hurried than she might have ideally liked for their first time together after so long since she’d gotten to feel him like this. Nothing was ever perfect though- and perhaps that was what made it perfect. They took what life gave them, and made it work.

Her mouth slid open, and she gave a soft, open gasp, her tongue forming and lolling out between her
teeth as she pants. Her magic was so much more sensitive than her flesh had been—she’d missed this. She could feel every part of him inside of her, pressing against every magically created and hyper-charged nerve inside of her walls. For a moment, all Toki could do was close her eyes and gasp against him, trembling as the feeling nearly overwhelmed her.

Her soul thundered in her chest, and she drew hers out, not caring that anyone driving by would see the glow. If the orange glow from his cock bouncing in and out of her didn’t draw attention, the green from her soul wouldn’t either. She offered it to him as she let go of his own, in the hopes that perhaps, he might like to merge and make their reconnection that much deeper.

As his body became ones with hers, his form began to tremble and as he pulled her to take more of him. He squeezed her and pressed his face into her neck. "M-My wife..." He whispered. "My beautiful Toki... I missed you so much.” He whispered again, his voice rough with emotion as he slowly brought around his own soul. The weathering of heartbreak was evident, faint scars visibly lined out as markers in the soul's energy where he’d lost his connection to her. It was a heavy showing his toils from the months of mourning.

"Tokiko... hah... you feel... just like you did before... if not... better.”

Toki mouthed over his neck, her blunted teeth focusing in on the sensitive bones on his neck as she licked and ‘sucked’ on them as best she could. The swell of her belly bumped into his ribs while her secondary hands stroked over the outer shell of his ribs, seeking to stimulate him as much as she could.

With his soul offered, her own was pressed gently to his, and she shuddered against him as the merge initiated. It felt strange after being alone in her own soul, to feel someone settled deep inside of it. It was a good sort of strange though—the kind of strange that Toki most definitely missed. She could feel him, and he could feel her, and their soul connection began to reaffirm itself and reestablish into a more stable bond.

“Oh, Papy…” Toki had seen his scars before she pressed her soul to his though. “I’m so sorry I hurt you like that. I love you. I love you so, so much.”

He was shivering as he smiled at her. "Oh honey... That didn't hurt a bit~" He whispered, his soul thrumming happily in her hand. "I love you, I love you so fucking much..." He whimpered.

"I love you too.” She whispered. Toki pressed her face to his as her soul beat against his, taking in everything he had to offer and giving him everything she could in return too. "But I know it hurt. It hurt me too when I left. It felt like my soul was breaking..." She kisses him in one swift motion as she lifts up with her legs, rising up on his cock before dropping back down. Toki shudders, her wings flying high. "Ah~"

He cried out softly and gave a breathy moan, sending it skyward as he gave her legs a gentle squeeze. "Oh god yes~"

Toki's back protested a bit after she set the pace of which she began to rise and fall on his cock. As her back protested, her chest leaned against his more, and gave him a soft, panting plea for assistance. She cocooned their souls in her magic so she could keep them merged together without having to press his hand to hers. That would leave his arms free to help her. "Mmm... Ah~ Papy. Hah, help? Lift?” She rocks her hips into his on the downward slide, almost thrusting her pelvis into his.

He nodded gently, and brought his hands up to hook onto her hips, he gave a moan and pressed his face into her back as he began to move her hips quickly, moaning louder and more breathily into her
mane as he did.

His arms could move her faster than she could lift her own weight. With the girth of her pregnant belly hampering her movement, Toki could only let her breath hitch in her chest and hang on for her life as he pounded her down onto his member. What Papyrus apparently lacked in ability to thrust now, with his false leg on, he more than made up for in his ability to use his arms.

Briefly, she wondered how long he was on crutches. Then the thought was out of her head as his cock struck a cluster of nerves deep inside of her, and sent her skull reeling back, her mouth opening with a cry that thanked the heavens for all that her mate gave her, and all that she could share to him through the linked souls clutched in her palm. She panted, her sounds a silent plea for more, ever more.

Her cry brought a shout of his own as his grip tightened and he pressed his face further into her neck. "O-Oh god!" He gasped.

Toki shuddered and panted, her soul thundering against his- no, with his, in time with the rapid-fire pace of his beats- and she found herself rolling into him with every eager downward stroke. As much as she wished he could roll over and pound her into the blanket, they both knew that wasn’t going to happen. But that didn’t mean his cock wouldn’t be thoroughly plundering her with each and every motion downward. His member thumped against the entrance of her womb, and she felt herself shaking and making the neediest whines and buzzes for him to continue, to please fill her, pound her, give her everything that he had.

Every sound she made had him sighing and moaning into her, his smile never fading from his face as he eventually shifted his handles, one gently cupping her swell while the other reached up to grab and knead a breast like there was no tomorrow, "Fuck... hahh... fuck~ I love you~ I love you so much~ You're so wonderful and I'm so happy to have you back..." He’d never tire of telling her that- not ever. Ten months, yen years, a hundred years- it’d never be enough.

The sudden touch of a hand to her chest, let alone a hand to her breast, makes her startle, and then moan. Toki hadn't summoned them, which meant they had decided to appear on their own, and were now filling out her dress even more. She didn’t have much thought process to spare to put towards wondering why they had appeared now, as she panted and moaned, rocking into his member as she took over handling the bobbing on his manhood. "I love you too. I'm so happy to be back, to be home, to- ahhh~!" Words faded as the coil of heat warmed hotter in her belly. She shared it with him in the hopes it would speed up his orgasm and bring him closer to being over his heat.

"To me... to your children, to your family... ahh~" he whined into her again, "I love you~ Welcome home my beautiful, wonderful wife~"

"Yes," she panted, "yes ah, mmm~" Toki tilted her neck in offering to him, and then cried out as she came.

The surge of energy that came from her soul brought his own release, and in that moment he reached up and pulled her down to hilt himself, his teeth finding her neck to bite down as his form was wracked with a blissful tremor, as well as a few sharp twitches of his hips as his magical release filled her insides to be absorbed as a donation for the litter inside.

His teeth sunk past the thick mane around her neck and held her firm as she trembled above him. Toki panted, eyes unseeing as she rode it out.

By the time she had control of her senses again, her hand was covered in goop from their souls, and she was putting off enough warmth that she could hardly smell his heat pheromones. She slumped
into him, pregnant body exhausted and surprisingly sated. Idly she wondered how she was going to keep up with his heat. Another part of her pondered the fact that her breasts were painfully tender as they pressed to his chest, and she wanted to move but couldn’t find the urge to do it. "Mmmnn..."

He slowly rocked his hips into her as he came off his blissful high and he released her neck to sigh out a hot breath, smiling as he hugged her. "Mmh~"

Toki felt sore and almost raw as he rocked into her. She mad a soft sound, an almost whimper, and shifted in his lap. “Mmm...” With the ache between her legs, and the ache in her swollen breasts, Toki was forced to sit up. Her breasts were nearly spilling out of her top, as it wasn’t designed for... well, someone with a chest, let alone a chest swollen with pregnancy. “Look what you made appear.”

"Ahh... oh yeah?” He laughed quietly, almost breathlessly, before reaching up to knead her breasts. "Oh look at that, Nyeh heh heh~" He cooed, before kissing her mane softly. "My beautiful wife and her perfect breasts."

Toki let out a slightly more pained sound. He was a little lost in his haze of heat, and not paying attention to how hard h was kneading her breasts through her dress. A small shock of pain splintered through her soul and into his. “Ah- ow, Papy. Easy, please. They’re tender- pregnancy makes them bigger and more tender.” She gives him a pout. “They won’t go away. Also... for a skeleton, you seem to have a surprising fascination with them.”

He flinched at the sting and he let go, before he sighed and hugged her, nuzzling her. "I'm sorry..." He sighed quietly.

“It’s okay.” She nuzzled him back and let off a soft, soothing buzz. “Just be gentle and you can touch. You wouldn’t want me kneading your dick like that, would you?” She quirks a teasing brow at him and wriggles it. “… More seriously though…” She shifts her hips in his lap and winces some. Wow. He was still rock hard inside of her. “How come you like boobs?” She asks curiously, mostly talking to buy herself some time to rest before he attempted to initiate another round before they went home.

"It's... It's silly. You'll laugh." He murmured as he looked up at her.

“Hm… I’m not gonna laugh, I promise.” She wriggled some on his lap, and felt her walls twitch around him. It was a pleasant twitch, even if she felt a little raw. It had been a while.

"Hn~" He sighed and kissed her shoulder. "I've always loved boobs..." He admitted quietly. "They're soft, and plush~ I like how they feel in my hands."

“Mmm, boobs were always fun.” She cuddled up to him and sighed. “I could... keep them if you wanted. Keeping them formed ain’t all that hard post pregnancy, I just need bras that work with wings.” She sighed softly and flicked her eye lights up to his face. “I suppose that’s part of why you liked me as a human, hm? I was all soft and squishy...” She could form her full body if she wanted.

He peered up at her, and then he giggled quietly and hid his face again. "It's so silly..." He murmured.

“It’s not all that silly,” She laughs. “Admiring soft things isn’t bad. I could wear my ectobody if you’d like. Not all the time though. Muscles ache.”

"How about just when we cuddle?” He cooed as he looked up at her, pupils widening a little as he smiled innocently.
“Hmm… Could do that.” She smiled slightly. “I don’t trust that innocent smile though… What are you thinking?” She twitches her hips against his where he’s buried in her.

"Mm~ nothing. I do think we’ve got to get back home." He sighed softly.

“Very true.” She nuzzled her forehead to his with a soft hum. “Question is… Can you drive with this stick shift in the way?” She teased, and rocked against him again. She was sore and tender, but she was forever a tease until the day she ceased to exist.

He mewedled quietly but he sighed into her neck as he gave a rock before he shook his head. "Definitely not..." He murmured.

“I think I can handle one more round if you want to just let some stress out… How about you pop off your prosthetic, and roll me over.” She shifts a bit. “I can keep you balanced, and you can burn off some of the heat, just long enough for us to get home.” Her mouth finds his neck, and she runs her tongue along his vertebrae before nibbling it.

He moaned quietly and leaned his head back to accept her sweet treatment before he nodded, and gently hoisted her up long enough to disconnect the prosthetic. With the leg set aside, he settled her back in his lap and then rolled them over on the blanket. He hovered over her, her belly settling in the space between his pelvis and ribs as her legs shifted to bracket him and keep him braced upright even without his leg to help him balance.

He peered down at her for only a moment, before he dropped down and nuzzled his face into her breasts. Papyrus was clearly pleased about it as his cock gave a hard twitch inside her.

Toki’s wings splayed on the blankets, her mane rolling out and pillowing her skull as her husband loomed overhead. She blinked, however, as his face plopped down and slipped into her breasts. She laughed softly as he twitched inside of her, and let go of their souls, letting them return to their bodies as she relaxed under him. Her legs would keep him upright, and she’d be able to rock up into him as best she could. As Aliquam exhaled, it vibrated over her breasts through her dress, and very nearly gave the ‘motorboat’ effect.

After the shaky exhale was to pass, he peered up at her, making sure she was doing okay on her back and that she wasn't crushing anything important.

She peered down at him, but seemed pleased with the position. Her wings weren't too squished. If he were heavy like Tenne had been, she couldn't have done this. As it was, he wasn't heavy like Tenne had been. She gave a soft wiggle of her hips and chirped. "If you're gentle, you can play with my breasts all you like." She just couldn't guarantee he wouldn't get anything out of them. Pregnant women could lactate before they gave birth after all, and her body was under the magical version of intense and sped up hormones.

He hummed happily and began to knead her breasts as his hips began to move, his cock withdrawing before pushing back into Toki, hilting into her body to give a long grind as he moaned into her chest.

Toki couldn't stop the soft moan as his hands and face made use of her breasts, while his hips began their slow thrusting against hers. Her hole felt sore and abused, and it was only going to get better from there. Not that she minded. Her soft noises and her hands on his shoulders were encouragement enough while her legs kept him balanced above her.

And better it got. As he got comfortable, he got confident.

And faster.
He began to nuzzle, kiss, and nip on the soft magic skin that Toki summoned. His hips clacked against hers as his thrusts began growing slightly rougher. He moaned louder, a tinge of a possessive growl on the echo of his voice.

The thrusts verged on painful, but it was a good kind of pain. Toki had never minded a little bit of pain interspersed with pleasure. Toki let him use her body, and only made soft sounds of pleasure and delight to let him know he was doing a good job.

Her breasts tingled as he nipped and nuzzled them, but seemed to behave as he made use of them for his personal toys.

Her noises egged him on and his cock twitched inside her as his noises grew louder and more longing, he was close, and the fact that his hips were now faster, losing any sort of gentleness as he pounded his wife. His eyes were almost closed, pupils not able to be seen as he pressed his face into the soft plush ectoflesh of his wife's body. "T-Toki..." He moaned.

Her mind was riding the highs and lows of his thrusts, and she was lost as they sped up. Eventually Toki was nothing more than a gravid sheathe for him to bury himself in, and she enjoyed every second of it. Her mind was fogging as her orgasm drew close simply brought on by over stimulation.

If there was a way to lovingly pound your wife into a mindless state, then Aliquam had certainly gotten there. He was nearly to a state of mindlessness himself as his body didn't relent. His youth made up for the loss of his leg. Not even that could stop him. Six months without his wife, and with his heat to back him, he was going to make sure she was soundly loved and driven into the ground while he gave her what best he could.

What best he could was the ride of her life. He was lost to his heat, and he drove her through one, then two, and into a third orgasm rather rapidly. Toki's body, not in a state of heat, couldn't really handle much more than that, so she was left passing out under him as he used her for a living fleshlight.

It wasn't until long after she passed out that he came, and it was a decidedly good thing she wasn't awake to see how full she was of his cum. Ectoflesh was truly a marvelous thing to behold.

Thankfully it seemed that once the climax and afterglow passed, he was able to get her cleaned up and carefully returned her to the vehicle, leaving barely any trace of their stop before continuing home.

Without disturbing the children, which it appeared his father had brought home and gotten settled when they hadn’t returned within the specified time frame, Aliquam carefully made his way inside with his wife in his arms, getting her up the stairs, out of her clothes, and into her bed. He joined her after he stripped himself of his own clothes. He had a feeling they’d end up quickly discarded regardless when his heat was to flare up again.

Toki was exhausted- she didn’t even recall getting tooted into the house, or when Papyrus left her to get out of his clothes. She vaguely recalled when he slipped into bed alongside her, and had settled deeper down into sleep.

When she woke again, it was some hours later, sometime in the early AM’s, and she positively ached between her legs. Everything was sore, and now she understood why mated pairs usually went into
heat together. There was no way they could handle each other if they both weren’t in heat.

Toki shifted under the sheets, feeling the warmth and pheromones rolling off of Aliquam. She ached. She was also naked, and there were blankets that were tickling her private parts. Her breasts were also still here- proving they were apparently here to stay. She wondered if it was a beast thing, since animals usually brought in milk before their litters were born.

Tired green eyes flicked open, squinting in the darkness to try and spy where her husband was.

He was laying with his back to her, his form slightly curled up as he panted and moaned into his pillow.

It seemed the poor man had another flare up but couldn't bring himself to bother her deep slumber.

Toki watched him panting and moaning, and carefully rolled over. Her back was sore from laying on it so long, and the space betwixt her legs was tender and sensitive. She hummed softly, and reached out to grasp his spine, stroking it firmly. Spines were very, very sensitive, and with how keyed up he was… Well, maybe she could surprise an orgasm out of him and give him some relief?

And surprise she did. He squealed out in surprise before he cried out and curled up tighter as his body jolted. "F-Fuck! Fuck!" He cried into the pillow, having reached a messy release that lasted a few strong jolts before it finally stopped and he moaned weakly as he settled down.

Toki smirked into her pillow and peeked at his back. “Mmm. Well, that was quite the show to wake up to. Feel a little better?” She asks gently.

"Hhhh~" He gave a weak sound before he rolled over, a shaky smile on his face... As well as a few droplets of orange magic that ran down his burning face. "That was unbelievable~" He giggled.

He sounded almost delirious. She reached out with her smaller secondary hands to stroke his cheeks. “You look utterly exhausted,” She hums. “Have you tried cooling down in a cold bath?” For him, it might help. For her, she just boiled the water away.

"N-No, not yet." He sighed. "I'll need to anyways... I hit myself in the eye..."

“You...” She couldn’t stop the giggle. “You jizzed in your own eye?” She snickered, and covered her mouth, though that did little to muffle her laughter. “Oh my god, Pap. That’s... That takes skill.”

"Shush." He stuck his tongue out at her before he got up and hobbled to the bathroom.

Toki watched him hobble without his cane to the bathroom, and made a soft sound. She went to sit up, and made a soft, pained noise. Holy shit her pelvis hurt. She eased out of bed, aware of the weight of her chest as it dropped against her belly, and padded after him in the nude. “… Pap? Please tell me you didn’t forget your cane out in the trees.” He surely couldn’t have carried her without his cane. She couldn’t be tossed over his shoulder with the bulge of her pregnancy swelling out her belly. Maybe he had help from Tenebris.

"No." He replied, and hesitated a moment. "I left it in the car."

Her teeth pursed, and she hobbled after him. She was bowlegged after their… stint in the woods. “You left it in the car. Okay.” She wasn’t going to get upset at him over it. “Er… How did you get me to the car and... up the stairs, for that matter?” He surely couldn’t have carried her without his cane. She couldn’t be tossed over his shoulder with the bulge of her pregnancy swelling out her belly. Maybe he had help from Tenebris.

Oh it took him a while to answer that, sitting in the shower before he turned on the cold water, just
letting it rain on him. "I took the energy I wanted to use to fuck you and instead got you upstairs and put you to bed." He admitted quietly.

Toki blinked slowly and just… accepted that answer for what it was. Never question a man powered by determined horniness. They could do amazing things when fighting a boner throbbing between their legs. “That’s… productive.” She chimes idly. “So… How are you doing?” Toki sits down on the toilet- which was only useful really for when one of them was sick and needed to hurl- and watches him shower as she tries to hide her uncomfortable wincing. Her ass hurt. “Leg okay? How’s your, uh… heat feeling?”

"This water is icy compared to my thermal radiation..." He answered, leaning his head back to let the water clean his face.

She snorts. “So what you’re saying is… We need to let you soak in an ice bath to cool you down?” She quirks a grin at him, and scoots over enough so she can reach into the shower and tweak his tailbone. It’s hot to the touch. “Heh- maybe let you sleep in the tub. I can tote up some ice cubes. Too bad all the snow is gone outside.” She jokes.

He jumped at the touch and shivered, pressing his hands into his lap to hide what poked up at her touch. "Hhh..."

“How’s this water feeling compared to my thermal radiation?” She laughs gently. “You know, I’m usually in heat when my partner is,” She’d only gone through a couple heats with Papy, but she’d gone through quite a few with Tenne since she hadn’t gotten knocked up there, “So I don’t think I’ve ever gotten to enjoy how easily their body reacts.” She strokes his tailbone gently. “Do you want me to let you shower in peace?” She questions lightly. “I could go find an ice pack to sit on. You really gave me a good and thorough pounding earlier.”

He keened as his rear pressed slightly into her hand and he shivered at the touch. "Hhnn~" He moaned, and then he looked up at her with a shaky smile. "Do you wanna share the water~?" He asked quietly.

“As much as I’d love to, standing in a shower doesn’t appeal to me.” She laughs. “I want to sit in something cold and hope it soothes my well used bits.” Her nipples would be harder than diamonds. She glanced at the tub instead of the shower, and then cocked a brow ridge at him. “Want to cuddle in the tub and see if some true soaking in some ice water can help cool you down?”

He nodded. "Better idea." He agreed, turning off the shower faucet.

Toki chuckled, and hefted herself off the toilet. She hobbled to the tub, and got it going, not bothering with hot water. She glanced at him as cold, cold well water flooded the tub, and gave him a smile. “It’s going to be very cold.” She chirps to him. “Do you want a snack while the tub fills? I think we’ve still got that sushi… So long as you brought it in from the car.”

"It's still in the car." He admitted. "I could get my robe and make my way down." He offered.

“It’s still cold enough outside that it should be fine, I think.” She mused, peering at the water in the tub. She shook her head. “I can bring it up.” She shifts and straightens, and her wings flex slowly on her back. They make a stiff cracking noise, and she winces some. The joints are stiff and sore. “I’ll be right back. I’ll also fetch your cane. Come the morning, you’re going to be sore.” She chuckles. He would have enjoyed his evening though.

Toki shifted, and pads for the door to the bedroom so she can get her slippers on and go downstairs. She wasn’t going to bother with clothes beyond tossing a robe over her shoulders to cover her breasts since they weren’t going to go away. Since the car was inside the garage, which was… well,
mostly closed, she could slip out and back in with no problem.

It didn’t take her all that long to go down and come back up with the sushi and some disposable utensils, along with his cane. His cane was draped over her smaller set of arms, and she seemed tired and sore as she meandered up the stairs. Toki wasn’t much of an ‘up all night’ sort of person, but heats made things different and difficult, and she didn’t want to just abandon him. He’d do the same for her, she reasoned.

“I’m back with goodies!” She proclaims quietly after she makes sure the twin’s room is shut, to keep them from hearing things. She enters their room, and makes for the bathroom. “Sushi still smells good, and it’s still cold, so I think we’ll be alright.”

There were sounds coming from the bathroom before she spoke up. ”C’come on in, Toki.” Was Quinn's call from inside.

Toki made a suspicious sound, and hobbled inside the bathroom to see just what he was doing. “… Are you okay, Pap?”

He was laying in a half-filled bathtub, his face flushed once more as his cock twitched between his legs. "I've never been so self-conscious about my heats until now." He hid his face in his hands.

Toki laughs. “Well, I guess this is what happens when I’m carrying pups for someone else.” She pads closer to him, and offers up his sushi platter. “I suppose we’ll have to be aware if we ever offer to surrogate for someone, eh?” She quirks a smile at him, and drops her robe off her shoulders. “It’s okay, Papy. We might need to get creative in how we help you release some tension though. I can’t keep up without the heat to fuel me.” And frankly, she was afraid if they fucked too hard, he could knock her into labor.

"I'm sorry, darling..." He whined quietly, slowly taking the sushi from her and taking a piece into hand to nibble on.

She snorted as he ignored the utensils she’d offered, and quietly balanced on the edge of the tub. She balanced her sushi on her belly and hummed to him. “My love, it’s quite alright.” She says gently. “At least your heats are only what… three days? Mine are five, and… Much more aggressive. At least you’re not as aggressive as I am.” She leans out to tap a finger against his nasal ridge. “It’s alright, my love. I promise.” That said, she used her disposable chopsticks to nibble on her nigiri, letting her body process it rapidly into magic.

He smiled up at her with a quiet laugh and once he finished his piece of sushi, he reached up to wiggle his fingers at her. "Come cuddle with me~?" He cooed.

"Of course, my love.” She set the sushi to the side, within reach with them being in the tub, and then carefully clamored in. Her belly bumped the side as she got settled, and she gave a grunt as one of the litter squirmed inside. Toki peered at him, before plopping into his lap. It was their usual position, and she adored it, even if his member was riding up against the nearly bruised bones of her pelvis. “Mmm… This good?” This way, he could rut against her lower back if he needed to.

"Hhoooh god yes." He nuzzled her happily while he ground against her back. "So good~"

Toki grunts as he grinds into her, and chuckles softly. “You’re such a dork.” She wriggled into him gently, and lightly summoned her full ecto body, so she had some padding against his vigorous grinding. Her lower pelvis was tender after all. Butt cheeks made fantastic padding. “There. Look at that~ now I’m all soft for you. Well, mostly.” She glanced at her chest. She had diamond nipples, but nothing wrong with that. Toki reached over to fish out sushi to munch on while Papyrus ground
against her back. She could eat- he could rut.

Married life was full of strange and fantastic things like that.

"Soft..." His hips continued their rut while his icy hands came up to her chest, of course taking claim to his favorite part of her. Only it didn't help that his hands were still icy from soaking in the cold tub, so she was gonna get a nice cold pair of hands on her nips.

Toki squeaked, her formed muscles tensing. “Holy shit, Papyrus!” She squirmed against him. “Your hands are cold!” She pouts. Her breasts were warm though, and she glanced back at him to give him the full force of her pout. “You could have warned me, you butt. Well... just be gentle. If you aren’t careful, you could make a mess in the water.”

He whined quietly as he continued to rut, kissing her shoulder and neck gently. "Aah, hhahh... I love you... I love you~"

“I love you too, Papy.” She sighed contently and relaxed into his kisses. It didn’t hurt her as he rutted against her. Like the true Nara she was, Toki may end up dozing against his attentions. But for the moment, her hands found his femurs, and she stroked them gently, mindful of his prosthetic.

Her hands brought mewls from his mouth as his rutting continued, his legs lifting slightly to put a little more oomph into his thrusts while she caressed his legs. "Your touch is so addicting." He hissed weakly. "I love you so much, oh- Oh god~"

“I love you too.” She smiled softly, and rubbed his legs. She hummed softly, and increased the pressure of her touch while she nuzzled back into him. The slide of his cock against her backside was almost calming, and she soft, content sounds to spur him on.

He whined quietly and moaned steadily louder as he began to hump faster, his tongue poking out of his mouth. "A-aaahh~" One could wonder if it was going to be possible to over stimulate the poor thing while he was like this.

His hands were starting to squeeze her a little too tightly, and Toki grimaced as her breasts began to leak by proxy. It wasn’t much, but damn it, she had been hoping that wasn’t going to happen. She rubbed his femurs more vigorously, before one of her flesh covered arms twisted, and reached behind her to begin stroking his spine like one did a cock.

He cried out weakly and humped against her back as his toes curled, fingers squeezing her nipples as his fists attempted to clench before he lowered his hands to grip her hips. "F-fuck! G-gonna, hhahhh!"

"Come for me, Papy," She purrs, "come for me and let it all out." She wondered idly, if he could dump his magic into a donation and if it would leave him tired enough for the heat not to bother him.

He keened loudly in reply, pressing his teeth into her shoulder as he ground against her, moaning out as his cock twitched roughly and he coated her back and wings with his fluids, though a lot less than he had filled her with, he needed a proper sleep and refuel before he could cum with the same gusto as before.

Toki’s magic reinforced her skin by proxy, and she let him ride out the waves of his next heat wave. When his fluids had been mixed into the water, Toki hummed softly to him and drew her hands back to herself to let him recover. "There we go." She purrs.

"Uuuuhn..." He leaned his head back weakly with a weak sigh. "'Tl-time f' bed?"
He sounded exhausted. Toki hummed softly and nodded. “Mhmm. It’s time for bed, my love.” She leaned back to nuzzle the back of her skull against his chin. “If you let me up, I can get you to bed.” Then she’d finish the sushi, and... maybe get him off one more time, and see if he could pass out. Then she could sleep, until he roused in the morning, and he could put his energy towards dealing with the kids.

He nodded slowly, his hands releasing her slowly to let her go. "G-go ahead." He purred.

Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and eased out of the tub. She had to heft herself up some given the change in her center of gravity, but... Well, she managed. She didn’t think he was going to be particularly useful, given that he was shaking like a newborn faun. Toki stepped out of the tub, and dried herself off with a flash of fire magic, her mane fluffing up like it had been blown dry. She kept her ecto-body summoned, recalling his request at one point for her to keep it summoned for cuddling in bed since she was soft and warm.

She was learning new things about her husband every day it seemed.

The bee monster hummed and collected the sushi. She gave it a ponderous look, and then decided against it. It had warmed up inside the house, and she didn’t trust it. So, she tossed it into the garbage, giving it a rueful glance at such a waste of good sushi. Then, clad in only her skin, Toki turned to Papyrus. Toki was mostly a luminous green, with plush hips and legs, and strong arms. Her smaller set of arms were smaller in muscle mass, making them more fragile. “Alright, big guy. C’mon, cutie. Lets get you up.”

He keened quietly before he slowly got up, smiling at her. "God you're so beautiful, like my emerald queen." He cooed.

His words were slurred.

Toki snorted gently and propped her arm under his shoulder after popping the drain on the tub, drying him with a burst of her magic as well. “And you’re sex-drunk.” She informs him cheerfully. “Come on, my love. Lets get you to bed before you do something silly.” She sashayed slowly with him towards the bedroom.

He rattled quietly in reply and followed her lead with a smile. "Does that mean you're 'something silly'?”

That made her pause, and she broke out in muffled guffaws. “Oh my god. I’m gonna tell you that joke in the morning, and listen to you groan at me about it. Yes, dear, I’m something silly.” She snickered as she made her way to the bed. She helped him to his side, and then got the covers pulled back and got him seated.

He grumbled quietly and laid down with a thankful sigh as he reached up and took a breath, nuzzling into his pillow. "Mmmh~” Though he then looked up at her. "Could I use your pillow?” He asked quietly.

She blinked at him slowly. “Then can I use your pillow?” She gives him a wry smile. “I love you, but I can’t sleep without something to pillow me.” She shuffles around to her side of the bed, and then climbs in. She doesn’t bother with clothes, her bare breasts and belly dangling briefly as she gets settled on her side. Her hand slides out, and she rubs it slowly, teasingly, up and down his spine.

He was going to offer his pillow to her but as her hand run over his spine he shuttered and moaned breathily.
The smile on her mouth bordered on mischievous. “What was that, my love?” She purred sleepily, and stroked his spine again. She slid her hand down, and stroked the inside of his pelvis, tracing over the cradle of his iliac crests. “You were saying?”

"A-ahh..." He moaned again, before he whined. "I’m tired..." He whined quietly.

“Do you want me to stop?” Her hand stilled. If he could sleep without one more to knock him out, she’d leave him be. She wasn’t going to force that on him- not ever.

"Mmh... No...” He decided with a soft, breathy sound. “Please don’t stop..."

Toki gave a lopsided smile, and continued to stroke his bones. She slipped her hand up into his rib cage next, one of her secondary hands joining her primary. Her primary hand stroked his spine, firm strokes from the base of his ribs to the top of his pelvis. Her secondary hand roved over the inside of his ribs. “Alright. One more then.” She scooted close to him, her belly pressing close as she purred softly against the side of his skull.

His body was practically hers at this point and he whined as he clung to his pillow, mouth slightly ajar.

Toki stroked his bones gently, and slipped her head down to nip and kiss at his neck. He was hers to play with and to tease, as his bones warmed under her touch. She brushed a small touch of fire magic over his bones, and gave him a soft thrum. Her hand slid up against his soul, and she stroked it firmly. “Are you going to come for me?” She queried gently.

He moaned out as his body trembled. "F-fuck!” He keened.

“Good Papy,” She purred, “Good Papy.” She continued to stroke him, simply touching him along his ribs, his spine, and his pelvis. The touches would drive him over eventually.

And drive him over it did. His voice pitched and he whimpered, before he cried out weakly, his hips jolting a few times as his body arched into her ouch.

She watched the bright flash happen behind his ribs, and grinned slowly as his last orgasm rolled over him. She kissed his cheeks and temples, and murmured softly to him. “Good boy, Papy. Good boy. Get some sleep.”

"Hhhnn..." He pressed his face into the pillow, his request to trade having gone forgotten.

Toki smiled and pulled his blankets up over him. It had been a dry orgasm for him- he had nothing left to put out, no magic to summon- he’d came, and now he’d sleep. She settled down as well, and let out a soft, sleepy noise. “I love you, my love.”

"Mmh~” He murmured quietly before he sighed and nuzzled his pillow.

Toki watched him fall asleep, and settled down next to him with a soft sigh of her own. She let out a sleepy sound, and decided that yes, date nights needed to happen more… And maybe with some sex on the way home too. That had been fun and risky and delightful.

Fluffing her mane, Toki cuddled up and drifted to sleep. Maybe, she mused as she wafted off, they’d time it so he wasn’t in heat during their next date night. Just normal sex was extreme enough for her.
Chapter 130

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Shenanigans, drama, and silliness, oh mai. What more could you expect from a glorious chapter of TOTU? Also, guys, heads up. I done goofed somehow, so now I'm in a fully immobilized wrist brace, that also holds my thumb immobile. It is unfortunately affecting my ability to type, so if I'm not out by the time all of our reserve chapters are up, it may be some time until we can post again. I'll be keeping you all up to date with my wrist and hand problems each week as something new does or doesn't come up. Thanks for being understanding like ya'll usually are. Seriously, we have one of the best and most understanding fanbases I've ever seen. We love and appreciate you all a whole fucking lot. Hope you enjoy today's chapter before stuff gets fun!

Papyrus suffered his heat only another day and a half before his body finally had enough of their nighttime activities and considered it over. By then, Toki was walking funny, and everything ached.

She ached even after it. In fact, her backache lingered up into her eighth week of pregnancy, and Toki could find no reprieve. She found herself irate, despite her trying to keep her patience. Papyrus offered her sympathy’s as best as he could, but she got small levels of salt and sass from Tenebris, who had surely smelled their late night activities on them.

She found herself in no mood to do friendly teasing with anyone- and one too many cracked jokes about her back being sore from Papyrus was wearing on her. She was not in the mood, not with the rapidly growing weight in her belly, and the constant shifting inside of her that was not letting her sleep. Still, no one could feel them yet- but she was sleeping less and less. It leads to a shorter and shorter temper, and, perhaps, a bit if heightened emotions.

They didn’t understand her aches, her pains- the only one who did was Caeruleus. None of the others understood their aches and pains, their struggles with day to day life during pregnancy- and they didn’t understand when she tried to explain with words.

Toki was, however, given a… gift of sorts from Alphys. Apparently, the lizard woman had been watching videos online, and had… well, adapted some of the human methods for monster use.

So, Toki gathered her family members and brought them into the dining room while Alphys and Undyne practiced parenting and babysat the twins and the summons, along with Solstice. It wasn’t fair to them to deal with Toki being waspish. Her family, however, was going to get a non-verbal lesson in sympathy for pregnant people.

She stood at the table, and carefully prepared boxes, and stared at her family while waiting for them to ask the obvious question she knew they wanted to ask.

Grillby was the first. He cleared his throat gently. “So… I understand we’ve been gathered here as a sort of… sympathy experience. I gathered as much when Undyne tossed me over her shoulder and carried me and Sans here. So… What is the point of all of this- by point, I mean, what does each of these do?”

Toki glanced at him and gave him a bemused look. “You have a choice.” She chirps. “One of these
is meant to simulate a belly and the accompanying weight. You get to wear this until tonight. The other is a box of electrodes that Alphys invented. They simulate contractions by... some sort of science shit that uses the magic of your body.” She gives a warm smile to them. “You’ll go through a few normal actions of the day while having these ‘contractions’, and then you’ll get to go to what active labor is. You can pick and choose one or the other, or, if you’ve got the balls, you can do both.”

Expressions were shared between all of the men present before Tenebris spoke up. "I’ll take the belly." He rumbled.

“I suppose I’ll take the... electrodes.” Asgore mumbles awkwardly. He steps forward and takes the box for it, before grabbing the box with the belly. He grunts at the weight, surprised. “You didn’t carry this, did you?” He glances to Toki.

“No. Undyne did.” She says lightly. She glances to Tenebris. “I’m surprised, Papa. Not going for the electrodes?” She arches a brow. “It might be easier on your back.” Salt. Yep. Pure salt she was.

Asgore bites his lip and says not a word. He slides the belly down to Tenebris and then works on hooking up the electrodes to his belly, figuring out how they’re set up. “It looks like this is on an automatic sensor,” He mutters, “So it’ll go through the process of labor on its own. It’s more advanced than the ones in the human videos.” But, what could one expect of Alphys?

Tenebris took the belly and smirked, lifting his shirt before he opened the slit in his stomach, "What's another few pounds in my torso anyhow? I've been living pretty light since I lost my internals to the void." He chuckled.

Toki rolled her eyes. "Papa," she sighs in exasperation, "it doesn't go in your slit. It wraps around you, like-

Grillby stepped up and chose the belly as well, leaving the electrodes for Papyrus. With expert practice after a quick glance at the instructions, he loosened his shirt and pulled it up before strapping it to his lower back. The upper threads were threaded over his shoulders, giving him the upper back strain that he had heard his mate complain about a lot. When it was successfully done, Grillby slid his shirt back down into place, making him look late term in a pregnancy. He sighed and rubbed his lower back.

"Like that." Toki chimed cheerfully.

He looked at Grillby as he attached his own belly and he hummed in thought, before he took off his turtleneck and carefully attached the belly, "ah... okay..."

Once done, he put his turtleneck back on before looking down at his midsection, which now stood out like a late pregnancy...

"Hrm..." Was he blushing a little? Oh yes, he was, he just hoped Asgore wouldn't say anything to make him blush any harder.

Asgore was staring at him, with longing on his face. Oh yes, Tenebris looked good like that. The goat king shifted, and then clicked the electrodes on. It would take them a bit to cycle up. While they did, he padded closer so he could kiss Tenebris gently on the temple. "You look lovely," he murmurs softly to him.

Toki glanced at the last box, and then to her husband. "The last one is yours. Looks like you get to summon up that ecto body of yours. Unless you don't want to do it." She glanced at his brother.
"You and I are exempt for obvious reasons."

"Asgore please." Tenebris' cheeks darkened as he turned to hide his face, "I look silly."

At Toki's mention of his exemption, Cae raised a lazy fist. "Represent."

Aliquam smiled gently and nodded, "I will do the best I can to hold out, but will I be allowed to quit early on if I cannot make it?" He asked gently as he took the device and summoned his skin to set up the electrodes.

Toki pondered that. "Well. Neither Caeruleus and I got to quit. But," she rolled her eye lights, "I don't expect either of you to make the full cycle. So sure. If it gets too painful for you, the safe word will be 'epidural'." She claps her hands and takes a moment to ogle the muscle on her husbands ectobody while he sets up the electrodes. Golly, she might be irritable and sore, but he looked nice.

"Epidural, huh? Okay, I can remember that." Asgore nods. He smooches Tenebris again and then stiffens. He exhales roughly. "I... Think I'm having my first contraction. It's not so bad right now. A little uncomfortable and tight, and I can't really focus, but it doesn't hurt too bad." His hand rests on his belly, which had tightened up as his muscles contracted.

Immediately Tenebris began to chuckle. "Oh my god that sounds so weird to hear you say that." He leaned back and grinned up at Asgore. "But at the same time, vengeance is sweet."

"Hey now. You might be carrying the baby, but I have to labor with it." Asgore jokes and nudges him teasingly. "No vengeance here."

Aliquam took a slow breath as he turned his on before he smiled at Toki. "I do this because of my undying love for you." He laughed weakly.

Toki claps her hands once she gives her husband an adoring smile. "Alright! So, as Papyrus can contest, you're not going to be stationary during these tasks. I'm sure you all remember the week with the twins where I had several false starts, but kept on toiling on, yes? Well, that's what we're going to do. Until your contractions are too painful for you to function, we're going to do house chores! The twins oh so kindly trashed the house this morning, so all of us- myself included- are going to do normal chores. For those of us with bellies, this is quite a task. For those of you with contractions, better time it right or you could be in a very uncomfortable position when it hits."

Grillby glanced to Sans and made a faint crackling sound. "She sounds way too excited about this..."

Cae just sort of grinned at Grillby. "Just let her have this. The least we can do is give her this one..." He chuckled, straightening up to help with chores.

Tenebris laughed quietly, before he pulled away from Asgore, stretching his back before he sighed and set a hand on the swell. "Alright, let's get started."

Toki waddles off to the living room and begins the process of carefully stopping over and picking up toys. She can only get a couple before she has to struggle to her feet again and bring them to the designated toy box to drop them in.

Asgore goes to pick up toys along the wall, as well as work on detangling the first of many knots of blankets that the twins had made. He breathes heavily through his nose as the contraction ends, and looks a little anxious about the next one.

Grillby watches for a moment and then goes to bend over to grab a sock. However, he finds he can't quite get up again. "... Sans?" He questions quietly, so he doesn't draw Toki's ire or her husband's
humor. "How do I get up again? I'm stuck." How had his mate done this? Picking things up and straightening again had never seemed so daunting before.

"..." Cae wasn't going to enjoy this as sadistically as Toki, he wasn't... wasn't... wasn't... "Heh. Heh heh. Heh heh heh heh~!" He pressed a hand to his face as he started to laugh.

Grillby flushed a bright hue of embarrassment. "Sans!" He half huffed. "I'm serious. How do I get up? Do I need to move a certain way, or...?" He may need help to get upright again.

"One arm under your belly, the other using the base of your spine as a push point." He muffled his snickers and came over and showed him where to place his hands. "Take a breath, and as you exhale, lift yourself."

Grillby nodded and did as told. Holy hell the strain on his back. He grimaced. He was already hurting, and there were no magma baths for miles around. "Damn." He breathed quietly. "I don't know how you managed with Solstice. This... Sucks." He says plainly.

"I'm stout. So my weight was more centered, but yeah, it sucked." Cae patted Grillby's back. "I'll handle picking stuff up." He told him. "I don't have to bend so dramatically." He chuckled softly.

Grillby waved him off. "No, no. I can do it. This is supposed to be an exercise in us learning your struggles you had while pregnant- or in her case, are having." He watched Toki use the exact same motion he had used to straighten up, and felt a little better. She was even more top heavy than he was, honestly. Wings and many arms made her off balanced.

Toki watches appreciatively out of the corner of her socket. She had figured Grillby would be the first, so it was little surprise there. She let out a small grunt and paused to dig her knuckles into her lower back. Her bra was irritating too, but since she couldn't make her boobs go away now... She was stuck.

Toki glanced to Papyrus to see how he was doing.

Aliquam was carefully making his way around to pick up toys, but he would occasionally stop and his eyes would press closed in pain as a 'contraction' bloomed from his midsection, often accompanied by a quiet curse.

Toki watched Papyrus pause and curse and gave a soft giggle. He wasn't even at the worst ones yet. "Doing alright, love?" She questions him cheerfully.

"I hate contractions." He growled quietly. "It hurts, but I'm doing okay..."

Toki couldn't stop the soft snicker from leaving her. “I’m sorry that it hurts; but welcome to my world, Pap. It’s only just beginning for you too.” She lightly tosses a toy snake at him. “Take deep breaths and let your body do what it needs to do, love. Deep breaths will let it pass faster.”

He nodded and took a few deep breaths to relax, rubbing his stomach before he got back to work.

Toki watched him and chuckled softly, before moving over to help him. She quietly picked up things and straightened up the house until she spotted his next one. When it rolled over him, she lightly pressed her hands to his lower back. She was grumpy with them all, not cruel. Toki kneaded gently. "If you rub here, it helps a little bit in the earlier stages."

"I love you darling" he keened, putting a bit more weight on his cane, "Oh this hurts like hell..." he hissed next, before he nuzzled her gently, "Thank you for the wise hint." He made to sound sweet past his less pleasant sounds of pain.
"Just breathe through it, love. It gets better." She encouraged. "Try not to hunch over either, or it won't feel better."

Asgore made a soft grunt when one came over him, but seemed to be faring the contractions a fair bit better than the ex-guard was.

"You alright?" Tenebris checked on his mate, carrying a few dishes from the TV area towards the kitchen.

"Yeah, yeah. It's just a contraction." Asgore waved him off and stretched slowly. He took a couple short breaths, and then stooped down to pick up another thing the kids had tossed. "Wow, the twins really trashed the living room this morning." He comments.

"Never leave children unattended." He chuckled quietly, patting his back before heading off

"Apparently not." Tenebris was watched for only a moment before Asgore crept off after him to the kitchen.

"Running from responsibility, darling?" Tenebris cooed to Asgore as he noticed him.

"Nope. We seem to be working in pairs, so I'm stalking you." Asgore gave him a delighted look. "Besides, I wasn’t lying. You look lovely, darling. I wish we could bear our own pups... Pregnancy suits you."

"Mmmh... I know..." He reached up and sighed as he rubbed his 'stomach'. "If only the void had not changed me so... I wonder it would have been possible." He sighed, before looking back at him, "You deserve the chance to enjoy it... come on~"

"You could ask Toki about that, you know. She did know a counterpart that never went into the void." Asgore murmurs and approaches. He lifts a hand out and touches the belly. It’s cold but soft. He sighs and nuzzles Tenebris. "Toki and he might have talked about pups. Perhaps she knows if you could have carried before..."

Tenebris chuckled quietly and nuzzles his mate in return, pressing close and sighing gently. "Oh indeed... I don’t know personally if my slit is or was connected to the proper reproduction anatomy... but I’m an old beast." He sighed, nuzzling him again. "I don't know if I would have been properly suited for Motherhood, I mean I know I’m not now, any proper mammary glands are long gone. I could carry without complication now that I’m hollow. Give me a full litter of twelve and give them all horns and I’d still have enough room to accommodate... but as soon as they were born..." Tenebris sounded upset by this, and pressed his face into Asgore's mane, "Damn it, I’m not supposed to be getting moody; I’m not actually pregnant!" He hissed at himself.

“No, you’re not.” Asgore agreed softly. “But,” he murmurs, “you’re around a pregnant female, and sympathy mood swings are a thing. You might not be her mate, but you beast types are more interconnected and close-knit than us monsters. You all... seem to feed off each other’s emotions. Toki seems to be a center point for you all- you all gather to her. You’ve gathered to her, since before she became a beast. I think, maybe perhaps you all sensed her inner beast before she was brought to the surface.” He presses soft kisses to his temple.

The king closes his eyes and exhales softly against Tenebris’ temples. “When... When Toriel was pregnant with Asriel, I shared many of her symptoms. She dealt with... well, frankly the weirdest cravings I have ever seen. Worse than Toki’s, I think. I shared those with her. I never thought I
would enjoy eel stew with pickled radishes and tomatoes, but I did. If you recall, that was also the
time that I was most volatile. I do believe you said something that irritated me, and I threw you
through the castle window and cried about it afterward because I felt bad for doing it, even if you
could teleport right back up. So don’t feel bad, my dear. Please don’t. We’re a tight family, all of us-
and sometimes we share our emotions and other things as well. That’s what a pack does, even if I’m
not beast enough to be apart of it.”

"I am thankful you’ve such good observation skills. This behavior went unnoticed and I wouldn’t
have realized if you didn’t mention this. You might not be as concentrated a beast like I, but that
means you see instinct that goes right over my head." Tenebris reached up to comb his fingers
through his king's soft fur, a smile growing on his face.

"Eel stew with tomatoes sounds interesting, though the pickled radishes make me wonder." He
chuckled. "And between you and me, I pitted the window more than I did myself, and to your credit,
my hide’s a lot tougher now afterward." He then grinned up at him. "I wonder if you'd do it again if I
told you your wife was low on calcium and iron like I did before." He teased, smiling up at him.

"And don't worry, you might not be a pure wild beast like myself, but you're still the second most
handsome beast of a man I’ve ever seen~" He purred as he then pulled him into a kiss.

Asgore kissed him soundly, leaning into it with a soft-sounding rumble. He only pulled from it when
his entire body tensed, and the king dropped his face into Tenebris’ shoulder with a sucked in breath.
His back bowed a little bit as the electrodes took him by surprise, and a contraction stole his breath
away. “Hahh…” He exhaled. “Mmnnn yeah… Yes… A good king noooootices all the things,” he
hisses between his teeth, “I look and I listen and I watch and… Mmnn… Noooo, wouldn’t toss you
again. Never. No matter how angry.”

Tenebris cooed gently as he reached and gently pressed his hands to where Asgore's muscles were
unhappily convulsing with the contraction, nuzzling him and letting him lean against him as he
kneaded and massaged to help him through it.

"I'm glad you promise this~" He purred gently before he smirked. "Because if we go to the lake
again during the summer and you throw me into the lake I will shave your fur off and see how you
like the shock." He vowed into his ear, voice deepening with the promise of trouble.

Asgore didn’t give him a response until his muscles stopped seizing, and he could think again. When
he could breathe, he gave Tenebris a bemused rumble, voice deep and amused. “I meant out a
window, my dearest. In the lake? Well, there’s not a window in sight.” He laughs. "I'll toss you in
one hand, and all of our pups with the other when they're big enough.” To prove his point, Asgore
scoops Tenebris up in one arm, boosting him up against his chest with one arm. “I’ll toss Toki,
Papyrus, Sans… I’d toss Grillby, but he’d need to be in a water-proof bubble.” He laughed. “But
never out of anger. Only in good humor.”

"ASGORE!" He yelped initially, more or less shifting to hang from Asgore's neck with a bristle of
his sparse mane, though he was calm rather quickly and smirking up at him. "You troublesome oaf." He
laughed, kissing his chin.

The king laughed warmly and kissed his brow. ‘I’m your troublesome oaf, and you’re stuck with me
for as long as you’ll have me.” ‘Until death do them part’ was meaningless to him- it would have
been until death with Toriel, but… She proved him wrong. Now, Asgore would only stay for as long
as he was wanted, and no longer. “Do you think I’ll drop you, dearest? Surely not. At least not while
I’m not afflicted by this machine.”

He cooed happily at the reminder of the vows and he shook his head. "Not while I’m wearing this
you wouldn't~" He purred, kissing him gently as his soft toes wiggled.

Asgore lifted his free hand and pinched one of Tenebris’ toes between his fingers, wiggling it playfully. “Well, Mister Tenebris Gaster,” He purred, “I don’t know about that.” Asgore strode from the kitchen, and back into the living room. As everyone turned to look at them, Asgore winked at them, and then leaned over the back of the couch, before dropping his lover down onto the plush, soft structure. “Look at that! I dropped you.”

“And good luck getting back up again,” Toki laughs, “you’re on your back now.”

A squeak escaped him when his toe was pinched followed by a gasp when he was dropped on the couch and for a moment he just laid there, his eyes wide before his brows furrowed. "Asgore!” He grumbled up at his mate.

Asgore grinned and leaned over the back of the couch to blow a raspberry into the soft skin of his neck. “Oh, you know you love me.”

“Ah, isn’t it sweet, Papy?” Toki hummed. “Old man love.”

"It's healthy to see him so lively." Aliquam agreed, wincing as a contraction hit him. "Ow, ow, ow..."

Asgore got away with the raspberry but didn't get away entirely as Tenebris wrapped his arms around his neck and pulled him into another kiss, this time biting his lip in spite as it passed.

Toki faked a gag. "Oh gross, and now they’re kissing. Don’t you have your own couch to kiss on at home?" She teases. She rubbed her husband’s back gently and smooched his shoulder. “Starting to intensify, hm?”

Asgore gave him a fond sound and let him bite his lip, rewarding him with a soft groan instead. Yep. Asgore liked to be nibbled. “Ah… Lemme up, love. Another one is coming.” His muscles were starting to be stimulated into tensing, and he needed to straighten up, or it was going to hurt terribly.

He nodded and gave him a small push to help him go upright faster before he slowly rolled off the couch. He landed on his hands and feet and hummed before he rubbed the stomach gently, adjusting a little before he started continued to move around on all fours. “To hell with this upright nonsense. If I am going to simulate carrying, I’m doing it like my own mother did.” He grumbled.

"You say that now," Toki chuckles, "but it doesn't feel good when you have to straighten up. I'd run around on all fours if I could, but I'd get slapped in the face every couple steps if I did." She gestures to her chest and then itches her belly. Toki grimaces and rubs where she itched.

Grillby noticed the grimace immediately. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah. I've got some spots that appeared on my stomach this morning, and they're sensitive and itchy, but it hurts when I scratch them." Toki sighs. "I've chalked it up to the series of weird and whacky things these babies are doing to my body."

"You might be deficient in calcium," Tenebris replied.

Asgore paused and put his hand to his muzzle to muffle his laugh. It mingled with his groan as he handled his cramping muscles.

Toki squinted at them both. She had the distinct feeling that she was the butt of an inside joke between the two of them. She decided to roll with it though and gave him a flat answer to his jibing
remark. “I get plenty of calcium, thank you very much. Besides, I’m gestating magical babies, not human babies. They’re building their bones out of my magic and what magic I get from all of you— not from the minerals I ingest.” She sighs. Toki shifts, and then tugs up the front of her shirt just a bit. She points at one of the dark dots. It’s a slightly lopsided circle, not quite perfect— but Toki doesn’t think anything on skin so stretched would be a perfect circle. “See? Can skeletons get rashes?”

Idly, she wonders if their time romping out in the grass had… well, given her some sort of rash or something obscene.

"Sounds like we’re due to for magic donations," Tenebris piped up.

Toki rolled her eyes. “Not by the schedule. The schedule isn’t for another day or two.” She’d set a schedule, so they didn’t run themselves ragged trying to keep her up on magic. “You didn’t answer my question though. Can a skeleton get a rash? I know you can run into poison oak. Or at least, your alternate can. Could.”

"Yes it's possible. The oils of the ferns could irritate our bones, though it's a bit easier to get off; a proper oil or a lotion and a scrub to dilute and remove the oils from your bones would do the trick." Tenebris answers as he took a second to sit and rub his back.

“Well, I took a bath when we got back… But it wasn’t really a ‘scrubbing’ sort of bath.” She glances away. Hearing his back creak and pop as he rubbed it made her feel bad. For all her grump and her spite, he was an older monster, and hauling around that weight was probably hard on him. Grillby as well, in all honesty. “Maybe it’s just a beast thing. I dunno.” She shrugs.

Toki takes a minute to look around the house. Between all of them, they had picked up her house—now most of them were just idling about, straightening things and just passing time. Asgore was straightening photos and flinching every so often with a contraction- Grillby was burning away dust without harming the dusty items.

Toki exhales softly and lifts a hand to press it between her eyes. She massages the bridge of her nasal ridge, tiredly humming. She aches and she hurts and she’s tired, and it’s not fair to them that she’s bitchy. “Look… I’m sorry I’ve been passive aggressive with all of you.”

"You deserved this at least, let the guys share the feelings." Tenebris chirped to her first, smiling warmly.

"I agree, Toki... this is the least we could do to show our support for you," Aliquam then spoke up.

"Not the least but you get it." Grillby chuckled quietly,

"Still, you guys don't deserve me being grumpy." She tells them gently. Toki's hands slide to her sockets next, and she scrubs them. "You've all been great and I've been a colossal grump just because everything aches and I can't sleep. It's not fair to you. I mean, you all just went along with this! I wouldn't wish this on anyone normally and here you are doing it anyways and…"

Toki sniffled behind her hand.

Uh oh. Mood swings. From almost sadistically grumpy, to apologetically teary, this was how her moods seemed to be shifting.

"Oh... Toki..." Aliquam started coming closer when suddenly he yelled out a sharp 'FUCK!' as his prosthetic fell out of his pant leg, making him hop and waddle a little before crashing onto the floor

"Holy shit! What just happened?" Cae peered over at his facedown brother.
"Papy!" Toki squeaked with a sniffle and struggled down onto the floor next to him. Her mane ruffled and her wings flexed, and she gave a watery, uncertain noise, before grabbing his prosthetic and scooting it back into his grabbing range. "Did the electrodes do this?" She asks. Great- this was her fault. She'd made him fall all because she was being stupid and giving in to her stupid emotions again.

He rolled over and smiled up at her, seemingly not bothered by the tumble he’d taken. Likely, he’d taken many such tumbles in the time he’d been adjusting to his leg. "That was a wallop." He laughed gently, slowly sitting up to pull her into a kiss. "Come here, darling." He cooed gently and moved to collect her into his arms to comfort her, which had been his initial goal before his leg gave out on him. "It didn't hurt. I just wasn’t expecting it, and it weakened my control of my link with my leg. I’ll be fine, my love, though I think I’m gonna throw in the towel."

It didn’t take much to gather her into his lap and to let her hide her face in his shoulder. Two of her arms coiled around his neck, the other two curling around his summoned ectoplasmic chest as she sniffled into his shoulder, thoroughly upset despite what he was saying.

Asgore, seeing Papyrus had his hands full, scooted over to lean down and click his machine off for him. "There. You've had your epidural." The king chortled. "I think I'm going to turn mine off too. I'm a little too old to be doing this for too long."

"Oh, thank you so much Asgore." He sighed, smiling as he nuzzled Toki.

The pregnant skeleton beast lets off soft distressed buzzes, and... Yep, those were tears in his shirt.

Sometimes a pregnant lady just needed a good cry, and it didn't matter who was there to see.

Grillby glanced at Caeruleus. "Satisfied with what I've learned?" He queried to him gently while listening to Papyrus trying to calm his emotional wife.

"Mmh... You look good like that, but feel free to take it off, hot stuff" Cae winked at him

Grillby chuckled and started to ease it off his frame. "I suppose next time, you'll simply have to put the baby in me and not in you if you want to see more of this." He chimes almost innocently.

Asgore smiled at his lovers’ sons, one comforting his wife while the other flirted with his husband, and moved back over to Tenebris. "Maybe you can check her over later, my love. Pregnancy aches are normal, but hers might be a bit extreme? She is very small and carrying a very large litter. Perhaps she needs bed rest?" That was common practice when he had been young. He didn't really know what was acceptable nowadays for women carrying large litters. "Sounds good." Tenebris sighed, before he looked at Toki. "I suppose she's satisfied with our involvement." He chuckled as he removed the weight from his front, closely followed by a 'thank god' under his breath. Asgore arched a brow at him. "A little too heavy for you?" He chuckled. "You could have taken the electrodes." "I'd rather not. I've been electrified enough for more than one lifetime." Tenebris murmured quietly to his husband, shaking off the ghostly remnants of the weight before he stretched his back

Asgore only took a second to connect the dots before he flinched a bit at the reminder of Tenebris torture. "Ah..."

Toki sniffled loudly against her husband's shoulder. "That's not all they did." She warbles. "I saw, Papa. I saw many things, and I saw that too."

Cae was oblivious to what had been uttered as he went to his mate's side, grinning up at him with a
look that screamed 'I just might', at least for a few seconds before he looked at the couple on the floor.

Aliquam tensed up as he looked down at Toki before he reached up and hugged her more securely.

Tenebris didn't say anything at this point. He simply brought a hand up to rub his shield as his gaze lowered, tail curling tightly around his body in a motion that made him feel more safe and secure.

Toki glanced over at him as her husband tightened his arms around her. Her teeth ground slightly, making a few flinty sparks. “For what it’s worth… She regretted what she did before I was taken from them.” She says softly. “It can’t ever change the things Cruelty did, or the pains Cruelty caused… but Sequoia regretted a lot of things. Her regrets, I think, will haunt her for the rest of her final lifetime.”

Tenebris’ lips curled. "I hope it does..." He growled.

The look Toki gave him wasn’t one of understanding, or of pity. No- she wasn’t even sure how to describe her look. Disappointment? Something along the lines of that.

Toki shifted, and she shrugged out of Papyrus’ hold. She slid his leg closer to him with a sniffle so he could reconnect it and get up when he wanted to, and then she struggled upright on her own, her wings giving a buzz to help her sit upright. She tucked her smaller hands into the small of her lower back.

“I understand that Cruelty hurt you. I saw through Simmons’ eyes what he did to you- what he did with the press on your shield, among so many almost countless other things. However, to sit there and wish torment upon someone for their final lifetime is not right- I’m disappointed in you. There are a lot of things you don’t understand, Papa.” Toki says softly with a sniffle. “A lot of things. I’ve seen all of the memories Cruelty had, from the time before Balance was split, to the time that Cruelty truly began to descend into madness, and the final snap- which was, inevitably, caused by monsters and by my prior incarnation of Kindness. I’ve witnessed it all- and maybe I’m the only one who will ever understand the way I do, because I’ve seen it, and because I’m different. I understand even more now though. Do you know why I understand?”

Tenebris looked at her with thin pupils. "You know what they did, Toki! Redemption for it would take a lot more than simple regret! They broke my shield, and my ribs... and when I coughed up blood, they laughed!” He hissed.

“I think…” Asgore says softly, hesitantly looking between the two of them as his ears tilted downward. So much for a fun day- Tenebris needed to talk though. He wouldn’t talk to Asgore, he wouldn’t talk to a therapist- if he would talk to Toki, then Asgore was fine with that. “That this is something that the two of you need to talk about privately. So… I’m just going to…” Asgore quietly scooped up Papyrus, disconnected leg and all, and then ushered Grillby and Sans upstairs so the two of them were out of the mess.

Toki said not a word until it was just Tenebris and herself alone in the living room. Toki went to sit on the couch. It made her less threatening to look at, she supposed. “I know what they did.” She says softly. “I know exactly what they did. In my dreams, I watched through Simmons' eyes, I participated with his hands- I was him. But Papa… Look at me. I’m not telling you that your feelings are invalid- because they’re not. It’s alright to hate Cruelty- I still hate Cruelty. I hate Cruelty with all of my being for taking so many good people from this world, and for twisting so many people into doing his bidding- I hate him for using my body to kill all of his troops, to suck the power of their souls into my body. I hate him for a lot of things.”
She exhales softly. “But you have to realize that Sequoia is not Cruelty. Cruelty is not Sequoia. And someday… Someday, I may be just like them too. Someday,” She glances away, and it’s a surprisingly submissive move from her, “I’m not going to remember being Toki. Cruelty didn’t remember his first life. We’re only able to keep so many memories with us when we pass over- and as each lifetime goes on, the bad ones seem to stick the easiest. Someday, I may be just as twisted and broken as Cruelty is because all I’ll have are the bad memories to fall back on, with very few good ones to override them.”

Trauma, as Tenebris knew, came easy and lingered the most. Good memories were harder to keep.

"..." He puts his hands on his face and sighs as he takes a seat next to her on the couch. "I still remember it… Like it happened yesterday..." He spoke quietly. "I... I don’t wish poorly on Sequoia..." He mended his previous statement slowly. "I will never forgive Cruelty... Simmons... that bastard." He hissed lowly... "He killed so many of us... and... We never got to know Sequoia like you did. To me, they are still the same person..."

“You see parts of Sequoia every day,” Toki says gently. “I’m not the same person I was when I went into the void, Papa. I came home different- surely you can see that. Surely you’ve felt it- I react to things differently than I used to. That’s the parts of me that will always house Sequoia inside of me.”

Toki sighs quietly and puts her chin into one of her palms. Her elbow rests on her belly for only a moment, before she scoots closer to him, and reaches out to gently turn his face to look at her. One of her smaller hands rubs his shoulder, offering him quiet comforts. She knows quite well what memories must be rolling through his head. “Papa? The Cruelty we knew wasn’t the same one from my memories. I just… I want you to know that. What he did to you, he did because he was broken and bitter, and there was no end in sight for him. The only thing Sequoia shared with Cruelty was that same, despairing bitterness. She saw no end in sight- she would reincarnate, over and over again, and she would no longer be Sequoia. Eventually, she would no longer remember being Sequoia, and we would probably have separated- our souls, that is- so I wouldn’t remember her either. The Cruelty from before all of the countless upon countless lifetimes of memories and loss and corruption… Do you want to know what he was? It’s one of the few memories intact.”

Toki didn’t wish a lifetime of regrets to haunt anyone- because eventually, Toki knew she would be in Sequoia’s shoes, though the void wasn’t ever going to let her stop remembering or reincarnating. Toki would be haunted by regrets and memories for the rest of eternity until they corrupted her into something that no one would recognize from the person she once was.

He watched her quietly as she spoke, and after a moment, he sighed, and nodded, slowly shifting to turn his form to face her. "What was he, Toki?" He murmured softly.

“He was a teacher.” She says softly and shifts her hands to simply take his into her own. Her small fingers rub his massive knuckles soothingly. “He taught children, human and monster alike, how to cast protective shields and barriers to keep them safe. He wasn’t always a bad man, Tenebris. But time… Time made him into the man we came to know here. He lost hope. Boss hearts can’t fall like monsters can when they lose hope. What happens, I think… Is they become like Cruelty.”

"..." He looked up at her, his mouth opening for a moment before closing it and his gaze lowered. "I had never felt so helpless, Toki..." He whispered. "I couldn't move, I couldn't fight back... I felt like I couldn't breathe... I was so hungry..." He then grit his teeth. "They threw my son to me as if they wanted me to eat him if I really wanted to survive..."

“It’s likely that they did.” She murmured, not having the heart to tell him that they had wanted him to gain LOVE from killing an innocent child. Toki rubbed his knuckles gently, and her green gaze
searched him quietly. Her sockets were still stained with her earlier tears. “But you made it out. You and Thumper both did.” She says softly. “Papa? Why haven’t you talked to anyone about it? A therapist could really, really help. You sent Thumper to one.”

"He had a chance to put it behind him... It mattered more that he was helped..." He answered. "I don’t know if I’d be able to just... explain what I endured."

“You won’t know if you never try,” Toki says gently. “If you want to get help with it, a therapist can help, Papa. But it’s something you have to do and to be willing to do. They’ll work with you, talk with you, and it... It might help. It might help make it so you can talk to someone else about it too. Holding it inside isn’t good for you, Papa. Repressing only works for so long...” Eventually, something would happen and he could get triggered by something- and she didn’t want to know what would happen. Particularly since he’d be having small children in his house soon.

"... Do you have anyone you would recommend?” He asked.

Toki ground her teeth quietly. “There’s the therapist that... Han saw. It’s... It’s been so long for me that I don’t remember his name, but my Mom would know.” She says quietly. “She helped Han with... a lot of things. Things he couldn’t tell us about.” She looks up at him quietly. “I think she could help you too.” She’d have suggested the one Thumper went to, but child therapists were specialized in providing therapy to children usually. Children’s minds worked differently than adults. “If you want, I can get the number from Mom. I think Mom went to her to... help her handle Han’s loss, and the stress of everything happening with me.”

He nodded slowly, and then he slowly let his tail slip from his form as he relaxed. "I... I suppose I could see her..."

“It wouldn’t hurt.” She says softly. “She’s not going to dive right into it anyway, Papa. She’ll ease into it better than I would.” Toki gives him a lopsided smile. “For all that I’m good at talking to people, I’m not a therapist or a replacement for one.”

“You’re at least the one who helps people who need a therapist get to one.” He smiled, and slowly cupped her cheeks as he leaned to peck her forehead. "The best damn daughter I could ask for.”

“I don’t think you asked for me.” She offered a soft laugh and leaned into the kiss. “Pretty sure I stumbled into your life like the dork I am, and it went from there.”

"I don’t care, you still met my son and married him. And then you had his children, and they’re the most beautiful pair of twins~" He purred happily.

Toki snorts. “If you recall, I nearly had the twins, and then married him.” She chuckles quietly. Toki shifts, and then wraps her four arms around him in a hug. She went quiet, as her mind quietly simmered on what they’d discussed. “Maybe I’ll write something down somewhere.” She murmurs. “Something about everything that I experienced- so that as my lifetimes go on, I don’t forget everyone. I don’t... I don’t want to forget you all.” Cruelty had even forgotten his children- and he’d had many. She had memories of him holding newborns- ones he’d pushed out himself, and ones his wife at the time had borne for him. He hadn’t remembered their names or their faces- just the feeling of something soft and fragile, something he’d helped create.

"As long as you keep happiness and your beliefs in your heart, you will never disappear from this world, if you are to remember your past from here on."

"It’s a nice thought, Papa. One that I would love to believe in like you and Papyrus do..." Toki gives him a bittersweet smile. "But realistically, I know better and so do you, even if you won’t admit it."
She gives him a soft, sad smile. "I'll enjoy them while I have them and treasure them while I can, but... I'm very sure they won't last forever no matter how much I keep them in my heart."

"Not if you find more people to love and call your own, my daughter... When we are long since dusted, you will find others to love and continue the future, and if we are forgotten to make way for more happy memories, so it will be."

Toki leaned back and she heaved a long and heavy sigh at him. "You're not fully understanding." She mutters, brows furrowing. She'd explained it already and he hadn't understood. She'd try again. "The good memories fade easiest. The bad ones stick longest. What happens when someone is born with lifetimes of trauma and bad memories to serve as a guide for their new life? There's no guarantee that I'll be born to a loving family each time, Papa. There's no guarantee that I'll be in a good home or a good place. What I am saying, is somewhere down the road, I'm not going to remember kindness first. I'm not going to be me. I'm probably going to end up bitter and angry and broken. Why make friends you're only going to lose? Why love someone who is going to die forever while you live on as one of most recycled souls of all time? Why have children when you're going to technically outlive them?" Toki exhales quietly. "It's okay if you don't understand. Papyrus doesn't either, not really. I'm going to treat this lifetime like it's my one life... And then the rest... I don't know. I'll protect you all as long as I remember, but beyond that..."

Toki was looking forward to a miserable eternity.

He reached out and put his hand on her shoulder, giving it a soft squeeze.

Toki heaves the heaviest sigh. They didn't understand. She was repeating it and repeating it, and they were simply repeating back to her the same things they kept on saying. She's not going to fight it. If that's what they want to believe, then that's what they're going to believe.

He smiled at her gently, before he stood up, sighing. "Right... we best let the others know the air has been cleared. We are ready to return to work."

"Work." She snorts. "The house is cleaner than it has been in like... a week or more." Toki chimes lightly. She leans back against the couch with a tired sound. "I'm tired, Papa. After we tell everyone and get the kids back, I might see if I can settle them down for a nap and sleep too. I haven't been sleeping well."

"A nap sounds nice. I even brought my favorite pillow." He joked lightly.

Toki snorts. "I'm not being everyone's pillow today." She chuckles kindly, though firmly. "I'm struggling to sleep with the litter moving so much, and with everything hurting so much."

"I was talking about Asgore, dear." He chuckled before he lifted his head and rumbled. "Come, let's go see what they're up to."

Toki groaned. "I don't wanna get up. The couch has eaten me. It is hungry. Save yourself, Papa. Go on without meeeee." She moans dramatically, flailing her four hands and flopping back against the arm of the couch.

He laughed and stood up. He stepped over to her and grasped her arms, pulling her up and out of the couch so she wasn't stuck. "Come on you."

"Hhhhhgggg." Toki made a fussy sound at him. "But stairs, Papa. Stairs. You didn't do stairs with your fake belly. The pain is real." She pouts at him. She was mostly sassing him at this point as he hefted her from the couch and towards the stairs. "Then I gotta go back down when you non-
pregnant folk decide you're ready." She pouts deeper.

He sighed at her whining then smiled and let her hands go. "Then do you want to wait down here while I go get them?"

"Mmm... Noo... Carry me?" Papyrus couldn't tote her anymore. With the exception of the time he'd gotten her inside with his heat- a feat of horniness she wasn't sure he could accomplish without a raging erection to spur him on- he hadn't been able to walk while holding her. Likely he never would under normal circumstances again.

He hesitated before he sighed in a resigned sort of way. Tenebris stepped behind her, scooping her up by the underarms before he carried her upstairs. "Up we go then, my dear." He sighed quietly through his chuckle.

"... When I said carry me, I didn't mean carry me like a child with an extremely dirty diaper, Papa." Toki gave him a dirty buzz as she dangled from his grasp. It felt nice on her lower back, but her upper back screamed angrily at her the whole way up.

"You wanted me to pick you up. Next time you specify how you want to be picked up, and I'll carry you properly." He stuck his tongue out at her and set her down on top of the stairs.

Papyrus stepped out of one of the bedrooms, a smile on his face. "Hey, everything sorted out?" He asked.

"I assumed you knew how to carry someone who's pregnant." She rolled her eyes. "No tummy cuddles for you, Tenebris." She sniffs. Once she was on her feet, she made her way over to meet Aliquam. "Yeah. That's been something that's been boiling over for a long time, I think. But it's sorted."

"But things are at peace for now, yes?" Papyrus pressed a few kisses to the top of her skull, nuzzling the deep crack that had scarred her so, and then hugged her. "We were thinking about a nap. Asgore wants to visit the children, and no doubt father wanted to as well." He chuckled quietly.

"For now, yeah." She nods. "A fun coincidence. I was going to suggest getting the kids and trying to get them down for a nap. If Asgore and Papa want to try their hand at parenting for an hour or two instead of Undyne, though, I don't mind that option either." Toki pauses and frowns. "I feel kind of bad. I haven't had the energy to be a proper mom..."

"Growing a litter of six takes a lot of energy." Asagore chimes from the other room. "Let us handle some of the parenting while you handle the growing."

"We'll get our cuddles in later, you two go on ahead and get some rest." Tenebris rumbled to the two of them. "Let us take care of everything else."

"Well, alright… If you need anything, you can always give us a call and ask." Toki chimes gently.

"Or they can call us." Grillby hums. "And you can get your rest. I didn't know a skeleton could get eye-bags that deep." He taps his face under where eye-bags would be if he had them. "Get some rest, Toki. It's not bad parenting- you're only one person. You have to take care of yourself as well. The old saying 'It takes a village to raise a child' is very true. One person can do it, but it's easier and more fulfilling if more than the mother and father are apart of it. Let us help."

She puffs hot air at Grillby and deflates like a balloon with a hole in it. "Alright, alright… Papyrus and I will get some rest- or try to- and you guys can babysit for a couple hours."
"Consider the babies sat, Toki." Sans chuckled as he shooed her towards her bedroom. Toki snorted gently and gave him a tired smile. “Alright, alright.” She waddled for the bedroom as Asgore, Grillby, and Tenebris went downstairs. Her brother in law, of course, simply teleported down, and she shook her head with a bemused sigh before going to stretch out on her side on the bed.

She was joined momentarily by Gracie and Gael. Gracie sprawled across her belly, while Gael took her hips. “Well, Pap, you were too slow. I’ve been claimed by the cats.”

"I don’t even mind. I get to cuddle almost all my favorite beings at once.” He laughed as he lay down on his side, pulling her into his arms before he nuzzled into her warmth, humming happily. "My darling~” He purred quietly.

Being pulled into his arms dislodged the cats, and there was much-disquieted grumbling from them both. Gael came up to sit on Papyrus’ shoulders, his tail swishing down against his teeth as he stared at Toki unhappily.

Gracie resettled on Toki’s belly again once she had been rolled over, and stretched her feet up to knead at Toki’s breasts.

Toki winced. “We need to trim claws again, my love.” She says, and gently puts her secondary arm between Gracie’s fast kneading paws and her sensitive breast. “She’s trying to poke holes in my boobs again.”

"Oh, fun." He gave a weak chuckle, gently reaching up and pinching the base of Gracie's tail between his knuckles while giving a soft push, she mewed in disdain but quickly retreated to curl up at Toki's side and knead the blanket instead.

"Aww, you didn't have to move her." Toki chuckles. Toki couldn't pet her with her laying behind her. Toki shifts and lets out a tiny grunt. She couldn't get comfortable laying facing Papy anyways. She'd try to move after he fell asleep.

Gael leaned around and pawed at Papyrus' nasal ridge, booping it softly with plush paws. He let off a soft 'mrrrf' at him.

He chuckled quietly and chuffed back at him, leaning up and attacking his paw with kisses.

Gael looked offended at the kisses. He stood up, and then promptly sat back down, putting his fluffy little butt on the side of Papyrus' skull.

Toki snorted, and then made to roll to face away from him, so she could lay on her left side in the hopes of maybe getting some sleep.

"Catbutt." He chuckled, blowing a sharp gust of air right into the cat's rear in hopes to shoo him off as he extended his arms and got comfy with Toki.

Gael grunted at Papyrus and walked down his shoulder so he could hop off. He was offended and they had lost their cuddle privileges.

"And now you shall smell like catbutt until you wash your face." Toki decrees with faint amusement as she flops over like a whale on land. "Mnnng..." She makes a soft grumbling sound as the litter started to shift and move inside of her. The quickening was so… Weird feeling with that many moving around. She just couldn't get comfortable.
"So it shall be." He grumbled before he sighed and nuzzled into her back, his hands going up to gently stroke her stomach to soothe them, though he then realized, "... Toki..." He started slowly, "they're kicking..."

She shifted against him with an uncomfortable sigh. "Yeah, I know, they're wiggling around something fierce. They do this all night, and any time I try to sleep. It's like they don't like any position I lay down in."

He nuzzled her at hearing her complaints, cooing gently to comfort her. "Have you tried a pillow between your legs?" He asked quietly.

"Yeah." She sighs. "I've tried that. I've tried a leg tossed over you; I've tried on my back, my opposite side... All the things." She blinks slowly for a moment as his words register. "Wait, did you say they were kicking? Like... You could feel them moving?"

He laughed quietly into Toki’s mane and nodded. "Yes! I feel them and they're so strong. It's amazing, Toki!"

Toki laughs softly, and her hands drift down to her belly. Finally, she can feel the soft shifting from inside of her on the outside- and it’s less weird to feel outside than it is inside. “Their kicks will only get stronger. I’m glad you got to feel them, Pap. That makes you the first, you know?” She tilts her head to look over her shoulder and through her mane so she can grin at him. “Papa will be jealous.”

"He got to feel the twins, this makes us even." He grinned back before he nuzzled her neck happily. "It's amazing~"

“It does make you even.” She can’t help the soft laugh that leaves her. “It’s been a while since you’ve gotten to feel babies move. I just wish they didn’t move so often… I’m really tired, and they’re very fussy. They’ve been very fussy all week.” She hums.

"I wonder if today is a day where they need their Papa.” He rumbled softly.

Toki loved the sound of his rumbling. He didn’t do it all the time, after all- not like Tenebris, who rumbled every chance he got. She shifted with a soft grumble. “Mmmhh, yeah, but they were gonna watch the kids while we tried to take a short nap. If Papa leaves, the kids will come too.” And Honey hated nap time. Skylar would nap with Toki sometimes, but when Toki tried to put them down for a nap, Honey protested loudly. She had to nap when she wanted to nap, or she just laid there and was a pest for all trying to sleep.

He nodded in understanding. "And Honey will come with her resilience to the entire theory of nap time..." He sighed. "Caeruleus and Grillby should still be down there. If Father can pull away long enough, he may not be noticed enough to be missed."

“Mnn…” Toki makes a soft grumbling sound. “… Alright. You got your phone up here? ‘Cause I love you, and I love Papa, but you’re not getting me back down those damned stairs unless there is an emergency, or it’s past nap time.” And Toki’s phone was very much downstairs. “You’re going to have to call him if you want to get him up here. Or go fetch him.” The house was quiet- everyone had already left, but they wouldn’t be far. “… You know Asgore is going to want to come as soon as he hears the litter is kicking and can be felt.” Toki didn’t want to be swarmed by people during her nap- she couldn’t sleep as it was, and two people gushing over her belly was going to be counterproductive to naptime.

He laughed quietly and shook his head. "Tell you what, we'll tell him later. You sound so dead set on getting some proper rest, I'll shut up and just snuggle you while you rest." He laughed and kissed
her mane.

Toki let out a theatrical moan. “I am dead set on getting rest- I’m a skeleton, Pap. I’m dead set on everything.” Ah, her pun levels were weak. She was too tired. “My problem is, I can’t sleep. They won’t stop moving and shit hurts.” Her secondary hands began to massage her belly in an effort to get the litter to stop moving. If they could just… Not move for maybe… ten minutes, Toki could fall asleep and try to stay asleep.

He reached around and set his hands on hers, gently stroking her stomach as he began to hum and sing gently into her neck.

Toki’s wings shifted against his chest as his hands took over for hers. She exhaled softly as he began to hum and sing, and closed her eyes to listen. He didn’t sing like she did, no, but he still had a very, very nice voice when it came to singing. She hadn’t heard him sing in a long time either. She’d probably get to stay up and hear the whole thing.

The litter in her belly squirmed a bit harder at first but began to settle as the massaging kicked in. The squirms went still, and they seemed to doze off as his singing reached them- as did their mother.

Her breathing shifted, and she went limp against Papyrus. For all her lack of ability to sleep, a little bit of singing and some rubbing sent her straight to sleep.

He continued to sing gently and knead her sore body until he was damn sure that no force could disturb his wife.

With that, he smiled to himself, pressing his lips to her neck one last time.

He was the best damn husband.
Chapter 131

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: It's been a while since we've had one like this, eh?

Also hand update. X-rays had no results, so I get to wait a month, see if the pain stops, and if it doesn't, I get to go back in and hopefully we can see if there's more to be done to fix it. Also a fun-tid-bit. I'm having problems with my word documents, so TOTU is giving me problems. RIP.

By the time her next checkup came, Toki was pretty sure everyone was hoping they'd finally get the chance to feel the pups move. Of course, Asgore and Tenebris had been delighted to find out they were moving - everyone had.

But… The litter had refused to move. They didn’t budge an inch for anyone to feel, no matter how much Toki gently prodded them or shifted them to try and stir them awake. Once everyone was gone though, and it was just her and Papyrus, they were up and active and squirming where they could be felt.

It was quite vexing for everyone, truthfully.

Even poor Thumper was a bit put out over not getting to feel his little siblings kicking.

Toki didn’t really know what to tell them besides be patient - and Asgore seemed to support her on that, thankfully.

Toki shifted on the couch, where she was sprawled with her two children as they watched Thumper play a game. Thumper was supposed to be keeping them occupied upstairs so Tenebris and Asgore could come over and do the usual checkup on the litter, but the little rabbit boy didn’t seem to be doing very well with keeping them occupied upstairs.

Toki was supposed to be getting a magic donation today too, of which partly accounted for her fatigue. The never-ending exhaustion she felt came from the amount of magic that six growing babies were draining. She had no idea how they were going to keep up with the needs towards the end of the pregnancy - the litter was demanding more and more magic, and her body was trying to produce what it could to keep them healthy.

Between donations from Papyrus, Asgore, and Tenebris, it still didn’t feel like enough magic.

A pointy elbow in her lower belly makes her grunt. She drops one of her many hands down to soothe the ache away. “Honey,” Toki says gently, “if you want to lay with Momma while you watch Thumper, you can’t be squirming.”

“Sorry, Momma.” She chimes gently, and semi-settles once more in her spot where she’s draped over Toki’s hip like a limpet. “Didn’t mean to elbow the babies or you.”

“It’s alright, sweetheart. But you need to stay still.” She pats her skull gently.

Tenebris was sitting nearby, having a cup of tea while he waited for a little magic to regenerate. He
had just given her an offering for the pups and needed to recharge a little before he could properly scan the pups. He had almost dozed off as well, but with the sounds of Toki and Honey talking, he stirred again and rumbled as he looked over at the two. "Everything alright?" He asked.

"Yeah." Honey answers. "I just squirmed too much and elbowed Momma a little hard."

Toki gave him a thumbs up, before muffling a yelp. One of the pups kicked sharply, and nailed her right in the cervix, sending spikes of pain up and down her pelvis. "Mhm." She made a high-pitched hum of agreement. Was this what it felt like to get kicked in the balls? If so, she had to apologize to her brothers. That hurt super, super bad. "Just getting elbowed on the outside and kicked on the inside. The abuse for Momma Toki never ends."

He laughed quietly. "I suppose I should see what ails them, little activity followed by such aggression, I wonder if something's wrong..." He sounded worried, which of course he would. He always worried.

"Just because you can't ever catch them moving doesn't mean they don't move." Toki rolls her eye lights in good humor. "When you have enough magic to check, you're welcome to. But right now, you look like you're falling asleep. This was just an unlucky foot nailing me in the cervix."

"Mhm..." He sighed, accepting her words. "Where's my Grandbaby? I wanna cuddle my Grandbaby-girl." He chuckled as he reached toward Honey.

"Grandpapa!" Honey pouts at him, but wiggles over on the couch. "I'm here. Sky and I are watching Thumper play."

Skylar made a soft grunt. "Ouch, Honey. You're stepping on my foot."

"There may be one too many skeletons on the couch." Toki chimes. "And I'm stuck until someone digs me out."

"Heh... maybe they'd like to sit in Grandpapa's burrow instead? Let their Momma breathe a little?"

Skylar gives him an unimpressed look, and threads his small hands around Toki's fibula. "Nope. I wanna know how to beat this level."

"Good luck, Dad." Thumper snorts. "I was trying to keep them upstairs and you can see how well that went."

"Maybe on Grandpapa's shoulders instead if in his tummy hole? Then we can still watch Thumper play." Honey hums thoughtfully.

"Shoulders it is. Get up here." He laughed, extending his arms to them. "Let your dear mother breathe."

Honey leaned over to kiss her mothers tummy, and then scuttled off the couch to go hop into her grandpa's arms.

Her brother grumbled, but followed shortly.

Toki snorted. "Their dear mother is stuck on her back, with her boobs squishing her face. At least I don't actually need air." She rubbed her hands down her belly and sighed, grimacing as she itched at the spots on her stomach again.

She wasn't sure what the oblong rings on her belly were, or why they were in a straight line up and
down her belly. She did know, however, that there were tiny little lumps forming on them. She wondered if she should tell Tenebris.

"At least you're not swarmed by excited pups now, eh Toki?" Tenebris laughed gently.

“Very true. Now I’m just a stuck lump with an itchy tummy.” She chuckles contently. She stops itching the bumps on her belly, because they’ll grow more irritated if she keeps bothering them, and stretches her toes. Her wings were cramped from how she was laying on her back, but it was the best she had at this point.

"Itchy tummy?" That got his attention. "Is everything alright? Are they irritation or lumps? Have you been washing properly?"

Skylar glanced at his grandpa and bumped him with his skull. “You’re really dopey sometimes, Papa. Momma has been complaining about the spots on her tummy for a couple days now.”

“Papa has baby fever.” Toki admonishes lightly. “Even daddies to be get baby brain and forget important things often, like the manners in asking a very obviously clean mother if she’s been washing properly.” She turns her admonishing glance onto her father in law, letting him stew in it for a moment, before it softened. “It started out as those dark circles I showed you from last week, Tenebris. Now there are these little… bumps in the circles. They itch, but it hurts to itch them too much.”

"That is a little concerning... and... My apologies." Tenebris sounded a bit bashful as he slowly got up out of his seat and set the pups down in his chair before he came over to the couch. "May I have a look?" He asked.

“Sure.” Toki nods. She shifts, and looks a bit silly as she wiggles and squirms to work her shirt up. Her belly is still darker than it should be, but Asgore and Papyrus hadn’t dumped magic into her yet, so that explained it. On top of the darkened flesh of her gravid middle, there sat a two rows of oval markings, with a darker, raised bump in the middle.

Toki had to resist itching one.

He knelt and looked at the bumps, his brows furrowing slightly. "This is new..." He murmured, before he blinked and he ran his thumb over the darker bump. "Are these..." He started quietly.

Toki twitched a bit as his thumb ran over the bump. It was soft, but there was a distinct texture to the bump. “Careful please. Whatever they are, they’re sensitive, and they keep alternating between hurting whenever my shirt touches them, and itching like a bad case of poison ivy.”

"..." He hesitated, before he looked up at her chest. "I... I think you’re growing… Toki, I think you’re growing teats." He managed to get out as his gaze then lifted to her face.

Toki froze, her eye lights having tracked the progression of his gaze. “… Pardon?” She squeaked, clearly alarmed. “Teats? Like… Like a cow?”

"Like a dog or a cat." He corrected gently. "You're getting ready to nurse a litter, naturally.”

Toki slumped back into the couch, and she covered her face in her hands. She moaned a little. “This is one of those skeleton things that comes back to bite me in the ass.” Skeletons changed their body to suit their mate, after all.

“Momma!” Honey huffs. “That’s a bad word. Use butt instead.”
“This is one of those skeleton things that comes back to bite me in the butt.” She humors her daughter automatically, and then huffs a soft sigh into her hands. “I’m going to have rows of boobs. Of teats. I’m going to have to wear so many bras.”

The thought of that made her want to burst out into tears.

He chuckled gently and lifted his form to gently pull her into a hug, pecking her head lightly with soft kisses. “There, there. I’m sure that the teats will be temporary.” He chuckled again. “They’ll come when the pups are ready, and go once they need them no more.”

“You’re not the one that’s going to have to use…” She counted the rows. “Four bras! Four, Papa! That’s three bras too many!” She puffed at him. Then she crossed her arms and made an irate buzzing sound. “Nope. Nope. Screw it. Everyone can deal with me being saggy and everywhere. Fuu-aaarrggg that crap,” she curbed her swears roughly, “I’m not wearing them.” And good luck to the person who tried to make her wear them.

"My point was you wont need them." He patted her head with a chuckle. "They wont stand out enough to be noticed.”

“I guess… And if they do,” she sniffs, “then I’ll just hide in the house until the pups come.” She was turning into a homebody anyways. Everything ached most of the time, and long walks outside wasn’t her idea of fun when she felt like a whale.

"Poor dear. Well, rest assured, you're in good hands. Good hands being mine, my dearest son’s, and Asgore's." He smiled at her, and then he got comfortable once more on his knees and set his head on her tummy as a purr started up in his throat. "Did you hear that, puppies? Don’t worry, all your Papas will take good care of you and your Momma." He cooed into her stomach, his hand coming up to rest on the warm and plump flesh as he began to soul-scan her stomach, a mellow smile on his face.

Toki watched the mellow smile on his face only for a moment as he scanned her stomach, and quietly snorted as she glanced away to look at Thumper, which made her miss any change in face he might have made. He was a silly old man- she loved him. “I’m in protective hands. But, having this many folks around the house helps me and Papyrus out a lot. He tries to help out, but you know how it is.” He could only do so much before he was laid up in bed with his leg.

“We don’t mind helping!” Thumper chimes.

There was no retort from Tenebris, only the sound of his breathing slowing as he moved his hands to new spots on her stomach, scanning again.

Toki glanced down at Tenebris when he didn’t chime in. Usually he did about now. “… Everything okay?”

He swallowed, and then slowly got up onto his feet. "Yes.” He replied gently but curtly. “I just need to step out for a moment.” He murmured.

“That doesn’t sound like-”

He didn’t wait for her full response, slowly going for the kitchen while reaching into the coat pocket that he kept his pipe in. Though as he passed Aliquam, he tapped his shoulder. "We need to talk.” He spoke quietly as he passed.

The younger man heard and he slowly set his current project aside to follow his father outside.
Asgore had been in the kitchen cooking with Papyrus- and when the elder Gaster had come in and nudged his son for his attention, Asgore quickly secured the food items, and then followed them out with a worried flick of his tail. His ears pricked upwards with worry. Tenebris was supposed to do a checkup on the litter- he wouldn’t sound so upset if something wasn’t wrong.

“What’s wrong?” Is the first words out of Asgore’s mouth once the three of them are outside on the back patio and the door is firmly shut where Toki and the children can’t hear them. He can hear the loud sound of Toki struggling to get off the couch, and failing, and the children giggling noisily at her.

Tenebris rubbed his face, before he sighed and kept his face hidden behind his hand. "I... I only felt five souls." He spoke carefully. "There were six before when I had previously checked."

Papyrus didn't say anything, but his face showed that he immediately understood just what his father was implying, and he lowered his gaze to the ground. "Oh Father..."

Asgore’s soul dropped. It took him a moment to collect himself- oh no please, not another one, not another of his children gone, gone, gone, this time before he’d even gotten to know them- before he slid on his visage of a King. He drew in a deep breath, and steadied the shake of his hands. “Are you sure?” He asks softly, voice deceptively calm. “… You wouldn’t have said anything if you hadn’t run multiple tests. Alright. Alright.” Asgore’s hands came to his muzzle, and he took a deep breath in. If he broke now, then everyone would be crying, and Toki would be left confused. “Perhaps it’s because we haven’t been able to meet her magic needs.” He says quietly. He knew he wasn’t the only one who had noticed how dim her belly glow was almost constantly. The three of them couldn’t keep up with her needs- they weren’t enough. “More pressing than why we lost one... How will we tell her without putting her at risk of losing the rest of the litter?”

Monsters were not immune to stress based inductions of labor.

Tenebris lowered his hand and took a shaky breath, "I... I don’t know... She doesn’t seem to be unhealthy... but the lack of activity from the pups makes me worry. I would need to do a long-term connection to see if I can learn what was going on... but Toki... she’s anything but stupid. She’ll know something’s wrong if I asked her while this... distressed.”

Asgore grimaced. It wasn’t a nice look on him. “They’re not inactive, Tenebris. As much as you think they are, they aren’t. If you recall, Toki fusses frequently about the lack of sleep from them moving. It’s possible, that the... The smallest soul,” The king sighed, “simply couldn’t get enough magic to sustain itself or it’s body and simply reabsorbed. It happens in multiples if... not enough magic is supplied.” He scrubbed his face tiredly. “We need to tell her. And she needs support. She isn’t going to take this well- we all know her well enough to know she’s going to blame herself for this. We can’t let her focus on it- we can’t let her fall into that despair.”

Tenebris slowly gave a nod of his head, before he gave a quiet sigh and ran his hands over his face.

"I'm sorry, Father... if I was stronger..." Aliquam started, before Tenebris growled, cutting him off before he could continue.

"Papyrus Aliquam Gaster, don’t you dare talk like that. It wasn't your fault." He scolded him, before he stepped over to Asgore, resting against him for a moment. "It's just the universe doing as it will." He murmured quietly.

Asgore supported him quietly, and tipped his head down to press a kiss to his forehead. “We still have five.” He says gently. “But it’s no one’s fault that... That one has been lost.” The king inhaled gently, and then looked at Papyrus. “Son,” he says softly, “It’s not your fault. But... your wife will
need you. She’s… Toki is kind. For all of her talk about being Balance, she is still Kindness at her core. The loss of a child will hurt her badly. Toki will need support. So… My question still stands. How do we tell her?"

"As a doctor would, I would suggest that we…” Tenebris sighed. "Tell her straight… and be ready to support her if she buckles."

Asgore nods. “I agree.” He inhales gently, and nudges Tenebris gently. “Old friend, love of my life, light of my stars… you and I have seen many horrible things in our many years alive. Papyrus and Toki are still young yet- they’re going to need us to be strong. Can… Can you be strong for them?"

Tenebris looked up at Asgore, and he was quiet for a long time as he pondered his words. It took him a while, but he soon sighed before he smiled and leaned up, nuzzling Asgore gently. "Yes, I can."

Aliquam smiled gently at the sight before he took a breath and nodded. "I'll go in and... get comfy with her so she's ready."

Asgore nods. "Send Thumper upstairs." He commands gently. "Tenebris and I will explain what happened to him later. Tell him to take the kids too. Your father and I will... Finish making their lunch while you get her comfortable, alright?"

"I will, thank you sir." Aliquam bowed his head and started inside.

By the time he got back to the living room, Toki had just managed to pry herself into a half sitting position. Her bones were flushed with exertion, and her brow was puckered with irritation at having just been left there. She was still trying to get up, apparently.

"Do you need some help there, sweetheart?" Aliquam laughed quietly as he came over to the couch, hobbling carefully. "How about some nice husband cuddles?" He offered.

"If you can help me sit up, you can have all the cuddles you want." Toki grunts. "Laying down is cramping my wings."

"She's been fussing since Dad ran out, big bro." Thumper hummed.

"I see." He sat down comfortably before he reached and gently pulled her into his arms, nuzzling her gently as he cuddled with her on the couch. "Thumper, will you please take the twins upstairs?" He spoke gently.

Toki puffed at him, but melted like ice cream in the sun. She slumped into him with a soft grumbling sound.

Thumper pouted. "But I was just getting to the good part in the level!"

"Daddy!" Honey pouts. "I don't wanna go upstairs. I wanna stay here and watch Thumper."

"Children…" His voice shifted as he then wrapped his arms around Toki, holding her closer to himself. "Please… This won't take long."

"But Daddy!" Honey whined.

Thumper's ears twitched, and he seemed to read the mood. He sighed. "Okay, okay. But we're not going upstairs. We're gonna go outside and play and run off energy before lunch time.” He shuts down the game after saving, and then turns to scoop his technical niece and nephew into his arms.
They're almost comically big in his grasp. He hefts them towards the kitchen, the twins squirming the whole way.

Toki watches them go, and then fixes her husband with a serious look. "You wouldn't send them off unless something was wrong, or you needed to talk privately. What's up?"

"There's something important that Father wanted to tell you... I was asked to come in ahead of them... Get you comfortable."

"Get me comfortable." She repeats, eye lights lifting up to search his face. Toki wasn't stupid most of the time. She could connect the dots. "... Is something wrong with the pups?"

"It's... better you hear it from Father." He told her gently, his gaze lifting towards the kitchen as he waited for the older males to appear.

"Is it?" She asks, and can feel anxiety creeping up on her. What was wrong with the litter? Was it something she did? Did the vigorous sex hurt them? Were they even alright?

Tenebris rattled quietly as he stepped from the kitchen and came over. He knelt down in front of Toki. "I can smell the anxiety already, so... I suppose I should make this quick." He spoke, before he swallowed the lump in his throat; the sheer dread that he had to be the one to say it was making his voice nearly choke up. "I... I felt only five souls this time. I scanned twice to be sure that I was wrong, but... I think one of the pups was... too weak to continue development. I'm sorry."

"What?" Her eye lights disappeared as she stared at him, finding herself at a loss for words at first. It took her a moment of resting a hand on her belly, for a small foot to kick her palm, before her eye sockets watered. "No, no, no. We can't have... Have lost one. Check again." She demands suddenly, tugging up the front of her shirt with a vicious yank. It nearly rips a hole in the material. "Check again. I can't have... I can't... It's got to be there. It... It has to." She visibly wilts, despite her demands.

Was this her fault? If it was truly gone, then... Then it was. She had lost one of the pups because she... She probably couldn't give it enough magic. She had lost a pup. She lost her baby. She lost one of the babies that would become Tenebris and Asgore's future.

"Please... Please tell me you misread it. That it isn't true." She begs.

Toki had never begged them legitimately for anything.

It hurt Asgore's soul to hear the kind woman trying not to break.

Tenebris’ hands didn't immediately touch her stomach. Instead, they reached out and rested on her own hands, while Aliquam pulled her into a gentle embrace and nuzzled her temple gently.

"We all did our best, Toki. No one is at fault here. Especially not you... you've done everything right." Tenebris told her firmly, giving her fingers a gentle squeeze. "It's... It's nothing we could have avoided." He lowered his head a little, pressing his eyes closed to resist the pain of tears welling in his eyes. "Six souls... you're only a skeleton; your body wasn't made for a litter... The demand would be draining on you..." His hands slowly did release her own, letting her do as she would with them as his hands lowered to her stomach, pressing against it before stroking with his thumbs. "It's not your fault."

“I could have... I could have done more.” She’s sure of that. She doesn’t know how she could have done more, but she could have done more. Toki sniffs softly, and the tears come without her permission. As Tenebris’ hands settle on her swollen belly, Toki lets off a pained keen, and she not-
so-quietly breaks. Her beast echoed her sentiments, and the sounds that came from her were not entirely hers.

Dear mourned- She’d have begged magic from whoever if it meant they hadn’t lost an innocent soul-if they hadn’t lost one of their babies.

Asgore stepped closer and set a hand on her shoulder. His thumb gently rubbed her wing joint to try and soothe her.

The litter shifted in her belly, and a foot kicked out against Tenebris’ hand- the first movement he got to feel.

Indeed he felt it, but this time, the sound he made was a mixture between an anguished howl and a sob of joy as Tenebris and Papa both celebrated the touch of their children as well as the overwhelming pain of the delicate loss.

Asgore closed his eyes and exhaled, closing himself off visibly as he supported them. They didn’t need him to break- he could take his time and mourn on his own later. Right now, Toki needed to mourn, and Tenebris needed to mourn- after all what was one more dead child to him after so many he had come to care for- and likely Papyrus too. Thumper would as well, and so would Sans and Grillby and the twins… They needed their king to be strong. It was easier to close off and handle it as a king would, rather than a father who lost a child. They didn’t react rationally.

Toki sobbed, a wailing buzz rising out of her from the depths of her core. Her secondary hands lowered to her belly, and she cradled it, and Tenebris’ hands. Toki’s primary hands covered her face and clutched to her husband, using him like a rock to keep her grounded as her magic rippled and pulsed, filling the air in her emotional distress.

Stag appeared, the front door banging open, as they reacted to their mistress’ upset. They took one look at the scene, and shifted from their quadruped form into their bipedal form so they could make their way over gently. They paused to offer comforting touches to everyone- even the brokenhearted king- before going to the kitchen to make a soothing tea for them. They would need it when the tears were over.

Aliquam smiled up at the guardian as he came by, and as he disappeared into the kitchen. Quinn quickly took to wrapping his arms tight around Toki, curling around her as he nuzzled her. He was upset as well, but like Asgore, he knew he had to be strong, so even though not even he could hold back the tears that grew in his eyes, he didn’t sob. He simply breathed a little deeper as he nuzzled her, letting her get out her anguish.

Toki sobbed for a long time. She mourned a baby, a sweet, innocent child that could have been hers but instead would have been her sibling in law by her own choice, and those sorts of tears were tears that weren’t quick to shed.

She was still crying even when Stag brought in the tea and settled it in front of everyone on the table. She didn’t stop crying, up until she was literally too tired to cry anymore. Then, Toki simply shook and clung to whoever was closest- which happened to be her husband- as she made soft heartbreaking keens and tried to put herself back together

Aliquam pulled her closer as Tenebris eventually retreated to hide in the fluff of his mate, his own sounds quieter than Toki’s but just as pain-filled.

Toki’s stuttering breaths were hard to hear, as were his mates. Asgore took in a soft breath as he held the doctor closer, and then he began to sing softly to try and soothe them.
It didn't really help, but it gave Toki something to focus on. She couldn't really differentiate the different souls or count them because it wasn't as clear as the twins had been. More than two made it hard to keep track. She hadn't even noticed that one of them was gone. How long had it been gone? How long had they been down to five and she hadn’t noticed?

Dear spoke softly to Toki once Asgore's song ended. Toki's voice cracked as she relayed the message. "Dear... Dear says pups can... Can die without enough magic to sustain them. The... The weaker ones will... Will be absorbed by the stronger. Small mate flocks produce small but strong clutches this way."

"It's true..." Tenebris agreed quietly as Papa began to speak to him the same, telling him what his base instinct knew. "It sustains a stronger gene pool for future offspring." he sighed, "It is not uncommon... So says my beast..."

Toki rubbed her arm and looked away. "The rest of what Dear says isn't nice though." It was making her sockets well with tears again. Dear was firm in the belief that they had more than enough adult monsters in their family to have sustained the litter, if Grillby and Sans would have helped. Even others, if they had been willing, would have been beneficial.

Toki's beast could be very unkind when she wanted to be. Losing a pup made her that way it seemed.

Fat tears dropped into her shirt, and Toki couldn't muster the will to wipe them away.

Aliquam bit back a retort at Dear's rudeness and simply reached up to wipe his wife's tears, comforting her softly as he gave her kisses.

Toki sniffled quietly and turned to press her face against her husband's shoulder. "I'm not gonna be okay for a while." She whispers softly. "But..."

"It will get better." Asgore finishes for her. "It will. Why don't you drink some tea that Stag brought us, and then... Just rest. I'll handle cleaning the house and watching the children. I can hold it together for that."

Toki sniffed and nodded softly. They'd have to tell the children, but... Later. She leaned forward to grab her cup of tea and took a sip of it.

Stag made a pleased bleat, and danced their hooves on the carpet when Toki made a pleased sound.

"You are a miracle, Stag. Thank you." Aliquam smiled up at them warmly as he reached out as well and took his cup as well, blowing on it gently before taking a small sip.

Tenebris rumbled quietly. "The family guardian does his job and does it well, thank you." He praised the stag as well.

Stag made another happy noise towards their masters' mate, and then flicked an ear at the doctor. "Guard more than family. Guard people in town." They replied lightly, voice not often used and not as befitting their body as one might think. "Fire man Grillby help teach us make tea. Is good?"

"Its very good, Stag." Toki gave them a warm smile despite it all. "Thank you. Do you want to change form and curl up with us?"

"Can keep form for half clock turn more if need." The deer monster answered gingerly. Their gold laced albino coat glimmered in the light. "If two legs not need, can go to four. Four is better for cuddle says little masters."
"I think Toki needs cuddles more than anything else, and you'll be seconded only by myself."
Aliquam chuckled quietly. "Come here, Stag."

Stag made a soft bleat, and shifted forms in a gleam of light. Their golden hooves clicked on the hard floors as they shook their fur out, golden antlers gleaming in the light. It didn’t take but a moment for Stag to hop on the couch, making a high pitched “Meh!” as they bumped their nose against Toki’s belly and got a tiny kick in return. More little masters on the way made them happy.

Toki settled her hand on his head between the proud golden spikes of his horns, and she rubbed his soft fur quietly. Two of her hands cradled her tea, while her last hand clung to her husband. Toki settled down, eyes dimming as she settled into a shocked sort of mental limbo.

Aliquam kept one arm wrapped around her tightly as the other held his cup, though it was often set down to allow him to hold her with both arms.

Tenebris stood with Asgore silently, his tail wrapping around his mate's back to help anchor him a little more securely.

It was only a short time before there was a soft knocking at the front door. The knock was only a courtesy, as Sans opened the door without being invited in. "Hey?" He spoke up gently, Solstice poking her head in as well under her mother’s grasp.

Toki lifted her head as her brother in law poked into the somber silence that had filled the bottom part of the house. The children hadn’t come inside- or perhaps they had tried, but a quick look from Asgore had sent them back outside again.

The King, seeing the eldest Gaster child there, gently disengaged from his mate and ushered him to his son so he could go finish and bring lunch out to the children outside before they came charging inside. He would also do his best to explain to them the situation, so that Toki wouldn’t have to try. Asgore was good at explaining loss to family members by now.

“Sans…” Toki croaks softly. “Hey… It’s, uh… It’s not the best atmosphere right now for little ones.” She glances to her niece, her sweet little niece who was so sensitive to the emotions around her. “Maybe take her outside with Thumper, and… And we can catch you up…?”

He looked at her and then he sighed and pecked Solstice's head, before taking her outside to the children. When he returned indoors, he went to squish onto the couch.

Tenebris slowly moved to sit beside the couch, looking up at Cae as he sat down on the couch. "Did something happen to the pups?" The eldest son asked quietly once sure his daughter wasn’t going to try toddling back through the back door. "Are they okay? Are you okay, Toki?"

“I’m not okay. Not in my heart, anyway.” Toki sniffed softly. She rubbed Stag’s brow gently, and then shifted her hand to her belly. “Something happened to the pups. For… For whatever reason- not enough magic, or not enough space, or… Or something… We’re… We’re down to five now.” She says quietly. “We lost one.”

Stag shifted their head in her lap, and as Sans sat down, they stretched their back legs out over him, drawing him into the cuddle pile too. Stag made a soft, mournful “Mehhh.” As their mistress informed the shorter skeleton master of the loss of one of the little masters.

That news had Cae hesitate, before he sighed. "Ah... jeez... I'm sorry, Toki..." He spoke quietly, reaching up and rubbing his head. "I... I don’t know what to say. Can I even say anything that can help?” His voice softened as he looked up at her.
“No.” She says quietly. “Words won’t help. Just… Come here? Please?” Her tea is abandoned to the table, and she extends a hand to him, a silent request for him to scoot closer.

Stag even lifted their body for the bigger skeleton to scoot closer under them.

He smiled lightly and came closer to her, pressing his hips to hers before he wrapped his arms around her and he gave her a firm hug. "Only the best hugs for my little sister." He murmured.

“For you too.” She mumbles, and two of her arms lace around him like frail vices. “I’m not… I’m not the only one who lost them. They’re… They’re your family too, brother.”

"Yeah… I know. I know...” He sighed and looked up at Aliquam, whose eyes stayed half lidded as he looked up at his brother. "I might be mellow, but that's more for your sake so I don’t mourn harder than you. It's my job to comfort you damn it... Doesn't mean I’m not upset about it." He sighed gently.

Toki glanced down to Tenebris, who sat pressed against her knees with black tears still staining his face. “I think we’re all mourning in our own ways. Holding back and hiding it isn’t… Isn’t going to help anyone really.” She whispers. “Because I’m going to worry about all of you and worry about the litter and worry about the kids, and… And worrying is probably not… good for the litter.”

Tenebris looked up at her, and then he sighed and wiped his face as he got up. "Yes, you're right." He murmured, before he sighed again. "I... best go check on the children..." He mumbled, and padded outside.

Aliquam nodded gently before he nuzzled Toki again. "I'm staying here. I think we both are.”

Toki watched him go, and furrowed her brow softly. She closed her eyes, feeling her head starting to throb. "I've got a headache from crying." She mumbles, head drooping on her shoulders. Her mane was limp, and she seemed almost lifeless as she laid there. "I think Asgore is upstairs, so Papa and the kids will be okay... Speaking of Asgore... I still need to get his magic donation later. With the... The pup being lost, I don’t..." She didn’t want to risk losing more. She only had a few more weeks to go.

"I'll give you whatever I can..." Aliquam promised as he leaned up to kiss her head gently.

"Grillby and I have been hoping for another kid, but I think you need this more than I do." Cae then spoke as he reached out and set his hands on her stomach.

Toki stirred slightly as she was kissed and touched. "I couldn't... If you're trying for your own child, Sans, you should save your magic for that." She encourages gently, leaning her skull into her husband's touch. The litter inside shifts, and her brother in law's hand is kicked oh so gently.

The older brother smiled gently and shook his head. "It's okay, Toki. Best keep the pups already growing alive, yeah?" He chuckled quietly.

Toki's primary hand dropped down to his, and she grabbed it firmly. She lifted it from her belly, and simply cradled it. "I'd feel better if you talked with Grillby first before you made a decision like that.” She says softly. "As... As much as I would love for you to give magic to help keep the litter alive, if you're trying to make a child yourselves, I'm not going to... To... To rob you of that. I know how hard it is for you both." With Sans health and Grillby's fertility issues with him being a fire elemental, they would always struggle.

"Tokes. I don’t want you to worry about losing another pup. Even if it's just a surplus to make it through the night, I want to do whatever I can to help." He turned his hand to gently hold hers, a
smile on his face.

"I know..." She rubbed his knuckles gently. "Still..." She didn't want to make it harder for them. As desperate as she was to keep the rest of the litter alive, she didn't want to rob them of their chance to conceive. "It's... It's ultimately your choice though."

"I know." He smiled at her warmly and lifted her hands to his teeth to press kisses to her knuckles. "A big bro's gotta help his sister out."

Toki sighed softly and gave him a smile. The fur on her wrists ruffled slightly, and she nodded before releasing his fingers from her grasps. "Okay. Okay. Just... Not too much, okay? I'm already going to have to deal with Papa and Papyrus trying to give themselves Magi-Drain trying to help me. I don't need to stress over you too." Toki wondered if her stress levels had helped attribute to it. She had spent the majority of her early pregnancy very stressed, after all.

He simply smiled at her and lowered his hands to her stomach, giving what energy he could spare to her. His magic allowed a cool feeling, like Aloe on a sunburn.

"You always feel like mint." Toki comments softly. "I remember when you gave magic after we lost Han... Your magic still feels the same. You're minty and cool, and it feels very nice." She brightened considerably, the glow of her belly intensifying and turning more translucent, and she would brighten more when she got the final donations from Papyrus and Asgore.

He gave a soft laugh and slowly re-positioned to press his forehead to hers, giving her a bright grin. "I'll be your cool glass of water anytime." He purred happily. "Just give me a call if you need me."

Toki shifted to give him a faint smile. She was tired and fragile emotionally, but she wasn't entirely broken. She was strong- and piecing herself back together was second nature by now. "I'll do that. Talk to Grillby though. Make sure its okay between the both of you that you help me. It'll only be for probably another month or so given the growth rate, so..."

He nodded gently and he gave her a soft couple of kisses. "Happy to help, Toki." He chuckled lightly, "I'm sure when I tell Grillbz I'm gonna reserve as backup, he'll understand."

"Maybe fire man Grillby help. Stag's voice sounded weird coming from their deer form. "Fire man Grillby has much magic. He pack too."

Toki hummed. "He is, but he's not obligated either, Stag. I'll be content with what I can get... Hopefully it's enough. It should be enough." They hadn't managed to keep her belly bright at all during the entire early part of her pregnancy, but Sans help would improve that a whole lot now.

"I bet if he gave you magic, you'd light right up." He laughed as he leaned back again.

"Probably. Fire is conductive to fire." She manages a weak laugh. "But that is neither here nor there. Thank you for your donation, Sans." She tilted her head and bumped his shoulder in gratitude.

"Happy to help, doll." He chuckled, tapping his head to hers appreciatively.

At this moment, Tenebris came back inside with a mellow smile, looking to his sons and daughter on the couch. "Hey." He rumbled.

"Hey." Toki glanced up to Tenebris tiredly. She was beginning to go slack into the couch. "How are Asgore and the kids?" She asks quietly.

"Asgore's keeping them accompanied, heh." He chuckled. "They're braiding his mane." He came
and hugged her over the couch. "How do you feel?"

“I’m tired.” She says quietly and closes her eyes. “I’m really tired. My soul is tired… I’d like to just… sleep. But I know that’s not a healthy response.” She opens her sockets again and inhales softly. “Maybe we can… turn on a movie or something?”

"Want me to go get the pups so they can cuddle with you?” He offered. "If I don’t get them, I’d wager the sound of popcorn will get them inside fairly quickly." He chuckled softly to her.

Her first instinctive response was no, because her children didn’t need to see her in such a mess- but then Toki rethought it. Slowly she nodded. “I want a floor nest.” She mumbles, and shifts under the pile of skeletons and deer covering her. “So we can all cuddle. I don’t want to be alone right now, and none of us really need to be alone with our thoughts.”

"A floor nest it is." He chuckled. "Caeruleus, will you assist?"

"On it, pops." Immediately the older brother was up and following his father upstairs.

"A nice big nest with fluffy pillows and soft kings." Aliquam rumbled happily.

"Yeah." Toki nuzzles her husband softly now that they’re alone. Or mostly alone, minus Stag. She can hear the sound of them raiding the bedrooms upstairs and gives a muffled chuckle. "Thank you... For being my rock. I don't say that to you enough, but thank you."

"I'll be the very earth below your feet if it meant you smiled every day." He purred as he kissed her delicately.

She met his kiss tenderly, and then lifted her primary hand to cradle his face. She stroked his cheekbones, admiring the strength in the high structure. "I know you would. I’d rather you walk the earth by my side though. That will make me smile more." She gives him a soft one to emphasize this.

"A King is only as good as the Queen at his side" Aliquam leaned into her hand as his eyes closed, a soft purr rising from him as Sentinel seemed to share his love for her as well.

"Then you and I make a very good set." She smiles softly, and rubs his cheek more gently at his purr. "Now, my sweet king... Shall we make some popcorn while the nesting materials are gathered? The kids will want some... I think I want some comfort food too."

"Sure." He slowly got up and held a hand to her to help her up as well. "Will you want anything special on yours?" He offered.

"Mmm... Yeah." She let him haul her up, and cradled her belly gently in her lower hands. "I want chocolate and caramel. And maybe some ketchup."

"You want butter and salt too?" He offered, his hand looping around her back to give her a soft, supported squeeze before he grabbed his cane and started for the kitchen.

"Yep." She agrees. "I want all the things." She liked to joke that her cravings got weirder with the higher number of babies she was having. She wondered, if a bit bitterly, if her cravings were more tame now thanks to there being one less pup in her belly.

It was a cruel thought to pass her mind, but Aliquam was able to comfort her with a soft laugh as he walked with her into the kitchen, grabbing the popcorn popper and setting it on the counter before going for the kernels.
Toki watched him work, and went to fetch the condiments from the fridge. She also got down lots of separate bowls- no one really liked to share, and no one really wanted to share her strange cravings.

"We’re gonna need to make a few batches for everyone, so we’ll need a bit of butter too. When you’re done there, could you melt some please?" Aliquam laughed lightly at the list of condiments she chose for her popcorn.

Toki stuck her tongue out at him from between her teeth when he laughed at her, blushing slightly. Yes, she ate weird things, but pregnancy did strange things to her. She’d once had the desire to eat the grass growing outside, but she’d told no one. “Of course I can melt the butter.” She fetches a few cubes, and brings it closer to him. Her magic warms it so he can put it into the kernels so it can pop with the buttery flavor on them.

"You're a talented goddess of fire, that's what you are." Her husband praised as he loaded and started up the popcorn popper.

"I wouldn't call me a goddess." A goddess wouldn't have lost a child. "A fire minion maybe. Or a sorceress. I've gotten good with my fire magic in the four years or so that I've had it."

"Oooh a sorceress sounds so mystical. I like that." He laughed gently, standing by the popcorn machine to be ready for the constant switching of bowls.

Toki chuckles softly. "I like it too. It sounds like a Dungeons and Dragons character type."

He laughed at that, and gave her a warm look.

She gave him a smile in return.

While the popcorn started popping, he hobbled over and gave her a loving kiss. "I adore you, my love." He purred happily.

Toki smiled at him. "I don’t think look like a door," She manages a weak but terrible joke as she kisses him softly, "But I am pretty cute. And you're very handsome."

Aliquam cooed and enjoyed the kiss before giving her more affectionate kisses on her face. "That's for damn sure~ I've got the best lookin’ wife, no doubt about it!" He laughed warmly.

Toki gave a faint smile and nuzzled him. “I don’t think I’m the best, but I’m hopefully not the worst. I’m definitely more exciting now than when I was a skeleton, and then when I was a human.”

"You've always been exciting!" He tutted as he then gave her a warm hug, thankful that the larger bowl was being filled up at this moment.

She glanced to the larger popcorn bowl being filled up, and nuzzled him gently. “Nope. I was boring until monsters made my life much more fun.”

"Well then let's leave it at that, a good middle ground... life used to be boring... then we came along!" He decreed, looking at the bowls for a second before he went 'oh crap' and quickly went back to switch to the next bowl before it got too full.

Toki watched him popping popcorn, and chuckled. She pulled one bowl to the side, deciding the children could share the big bowl of popcorn, and then waited for him to finish popping the rest. She tilted her skull. She could hear noises in the living room. “I'd rather have you all in my life than not, so I’ll take excitement over boring any day.” She muses. “Also... I think your dad and your brother are back downstairs. Stag might be helping them make the nest- I can hear your dad grumbling about
Stag’s nesting skills.”

"I would have thought that they got along by now..." Aliquam chuckled. "They ended up spending a bit more time together, at least in meetings during the time they both patrolled the forest."

"Stag is Stag, and Stag enjoys toying with predators. Partly, I think, because Stag is not wholly a prey monster." Toki comments lightly. "They'll likely have a love hate relationship forever."

"I agree, something ever happens to make them get along, I'll be shocked." Aliquam laughed softly. Soon enough the last batch of popcorn had been popped and transferred into the bowls. Leaving his wife to her own devices, Aliquam began to distribute salt to the majority of the bowls, as they had already been popped in the butter. They smelled heavenly.

Toki did the same to her bowl and then went the extra mile. Hers was laden with many things-chocolate, mayonnaise, ketchup, caramel- and perfectly ready to eat. "Me too." She chuckles.

He looked at her popcorn bowl with slight surprise before he chuckled and picked up a few of the other bowls. "Heh... Ready?"

"Yep." She nods. She gathers her bowl and then makes use of her other hands, stealing the rest of the bowls and balancing them expertly in her arms and against her belly. She leaves Papyrus with only one, so he can hobble safely along. "Lets go see what sort of nest your dad and brother got made with Stag helping."

Aliquam nodded and walked back to the front room, but was surprised to see a rather impressive nest built with a place for everyone

Cae saw her first before he grinned widely, "Heh heh... Ta-da!"

Toki's brows rose. "I'm admittedly surprised. The amount of grumbling I heard told me I should have expected a jumble of pillow and blankets instead of this." She waddled closer, eying it with a faint and emotionally tired smile. She couldn't sit down with her arms full, but the others could get settled. She had to do it carefully- getting on all fours took time when one was this pregnant. "It looks really good though. Good work, you three."

Stag gave a proud bleat, and tugged on Tenebris' pants.

"Stag and I seemed to see more eye to eye towards the end of the construction. I’m pleased we were able to work together so well on this." Tenebris brought a hand up and warmly pat Stag on their head. "We have a place for everyone and a monster for every place, with largest in the back to serve as the pillows. Stag, if you will..."

Stag glanced up at him and gave him a sassy "Meh!" before shifting forms. Then, they went to lay at the back as instructed, and stretched out where their antlers wouldn't poke anyone.

Toki nods. "Very good. I wonder though... Do I qualify as a large one?" She asks, glancing down at her massive, in her opinion, pregnancy swell.

"Not at all. I would say you’re the VIPMM instead." Tenebris grinned.

"Very Important Pregnant Monster Momma." The older brother translated with laugh.

"Very accurate." She chuckles softly. "Well... I can’t get settled with all this popcorn in my arms. So go ahead and nestle down and I'll pass it around, and then get Asgore and the kids down here before I settle in."
Once Stag was comfortable, Tenebris cupped his chin. "Seems all that we need is Asgore and the pups and we can start." He chuckled, before he looked towards the kitchen and back door, "Asgore! Children! Movie Night with a fort nest!" He called.

There wasn’t a stampede of feet from outside. It was a subdued sound as the door opened and the children filed in, followed by Asgore. The looks on their faces were somber and sad.

It would appear that Asgore had told the children about the loss of one of the pups.

Asgore had Solstice in his arms, and was keeping the emotionally sensitive skelemental baby happy. She was giggling gently and tugging on his beard as he shut the door and padded through the kitchen, his nose twitching as he picked up the smells of cooked popcorn.

The twins made a beeline over to their mother and latched onto her legs.

Toki didn’t have the spare hands to comfort them, at least not until Thumper hijacked a couple popcorn bowls from her. Once she had a hand to spare, she comforted the children gently with a tired croon.

"Sans," Asgore approached his son in law, and gently offered up Solstice, "Someone could use some cuddles. She doesn’t understand what’s wrong, but she’s trying to make it better. I explained it to Thumper and the twins."

"Thank you, Asgore." Cae took his daughter and cooed to her gently as he rubbed her back.

Tenebris took Thumper into his arms and nuzzled him gently as he began to gently purr to comfort him.

Thumper nuzzled him with a soft sniff, and then offered his bowl of popcorn up to him. "Here, Dad."

Asgore gave a soft grunt, and then settled down into the nest. As a horned member of the family, he had to sit at the back. The only horned one who sat at the front was Toki, since she was small, and her horns weren’t as in the way. “Alright- into the nest, before the sad strikes again. Everyone, get your popcorn so Toki can have arms to sit down with."

Once Asgore settled into place, followed by Tenebris at his side, Cae then climbed in before he grinned and pointed to two spots. "That’s your spot, Aliquam, and Toki sits between us. Then we let the kids take front row."

"Sounds easy enough." Aliquam chuckled softly as he made his way into the nest carefully, distributing some popcorn to free his wife’s arms before he got comfy. Once he was comfortable, he shifted and smiled up at Toki. "Come on Toki~"

Since everyone had their popcorn, she was left clutching just her bowl. She gave her husband a faint smile, and then carefully got down on all fours. She wriggled in with him and got comfortable. Well, as comfortable as she could- it only took her a few seconds before she had the twins on either side of her belly, snuggled up as they nibbled their popcorn. Honey’s horns poked at her, but she didn’t try to move her when they were super concerned.

“… Now who’s going to put on the movie?” Toki quirks a brow at them and chuckles softly.

At that, Cae chuckled, and like that, the brothers' pairs of eyes lit up.

Aliquam, with his precision and delicacy, was able to pick up the dvd they set beside the machine.
Caeruleus used his magic to find the remotes and bring them over, turning on both the TV and the DVD player as the disk went into the slot.

Toki watched the display of magic and gave a bemused laugh. "You both are adorable. So what movie did we decide on?" She asks, nestling back and nibbling a piece of her delicious mess.

"We went with this new movie that came out. Moana." Aliquam answered.

Cae leaned over and whispered in her ear. "We both know dad likes to hum along."

"Moana?" Toki blinks, and hides an instinctive snicker at the thought of Tenebris humming to Disney songs. "I think I remember commercials for it from before I was... Taken. It came out then?"

"Yeah, and its one heck of a movie." Cae laughed.

"Its very impressive and its ability to sway emotion is powerful."

She hummed and stuffed a handful of popcorn into her mouth. “Well, I suppose we’ll see.” She savored the flavors, and munched slowly. Toki wasn’t sure how much emotion she could handle, so she wasn’t sure what effects it would have on her- but she was willing to try. She mused softly to herself that it was... Well, frankly, very sweet of them to be pushing aside their own pains to try and help keep her from collapsing into her own. It was sweet and amazing- and it embodied everything that simply was monsterkind.

Honey glanced up at her mother’s popcorn, perhaps contemplating mooching some off her to save her own for later, and then did a double take. Her face scrunched up, and she looked positively disgusted. No mooching off Momma. “Momma, you’re eating gross again.”

“It’s only gross to you, my sweet honey.” Her secondary arms cuddled her daughter and son close to her sides as they nibbled their popcorn. “Mmm… Delicious.” She licked her teeth, and then munched another handful.

Tenebris on the other hand peered over and gave a soft ‘ooohhh’. "What do you have in that, Toki dear~?"

Toki glanced at him, and then at his gloved palms. There was no chance of him eating this slurry without staining those. Her fingers that were in the bowel were already a mess. “Oh, y’know. A bit of this, and a bit of that.” She shrugged lightly and settled back into her husband’s side. “Mayonnaise, ketchup, chocolate sauce, caramel… A few other things. It’s good.”

"It sounds tasty. Would you mind if I have a sample?" He leaned over with a sweet smile.

She eyed him. “… If you retch, aim elsewhere.” Papyrus did not enjoy getting a sudden surprise bite from what she was eating, and she’d gagged him more than once. She offered her bowl out to him all the same. “Also watch your gloves. You’ll stain them.”

He noted that and delicately reached into her bowl, taking a few pieces in his claws and making sure he had pinched the sides of the kernels that had nothing on them before he withdrew and popped them into his mouth, giving a low hum.

Honey made a dramatic sounding gag.

Skylar hid his face into Toki’s side, making a face. “Icky.”

Toki watched him, and munched another mouthful herself.
He chuckled and gave her a grin, "Not bad at all." He rumbled, though he didn’t seem to go for another bite.

“Riiight.” She rolled her eyes in good humor. She settled down, watching the sweet little human girl lusting for the ocean. Toki’s sockets half lidded and she let her skull loll down to rest on Aliquam’s shoulder. She lazily munched her popcorn, letting the bowl rest on her belly.

Every so often it would bounce, as one of the pups kicked and made the kernels inside bounce.

Aliquam brought a hand up to cradle her head as he gave a content sigh. "I love you~" He purred softly, "You're so perfect to me~"

“I love you too.” Toki mumbles gently. Her eyes end up closing as she finishes her popcorn faster than she thought she might. She licks her fingers clean, and then gets comfortable. “I’m not perfect, Pap. Not anything close. But I’m glad you think so.” She nuzzles him softly.

He smiled and gave her a few kisses as he hugged her to his side. "My beautiful wife~"

"Shhh!” Honey reached over her mother to pinch her daddy’s knee. "You're interrupting the songs!"

Toki smiled slightly and hummed, falling silent at her daughter’s demand. She mostly tuned out the movie, her sockets drifting closed. She felt Asgore's hand brush her back, and his magic flow into her as she listened to the music and the silly but earnest songs. The only one she didn't like was 'You're Welcome'.

Aliquam's hand that rested on her shoulder stayed comfortably planted, his magic flowing into her as well. Tenebris’ hand was not yet present, but surely enough it would show up eventually as he came to finish his popcorn.

Toki shifted as Tenebris touched her. She peeked open an eye, and lightly pinched one of his knuckles. "No more magic.” She tells him gently. "You already gave almost too much today.” He'd donated before they'd... Learned she'd lost one.

"Ouch. Is it wrong to at least make some sort of connection with the carrier of my children?” He murmured.

"Not at all. But I know you." She smoothed her fingers over his knuckle that she had pinched, her way of apologizing for the pain, and then guided his hand to her belly. One of the litter had the hiccups, and she was determined to let him feel before they stopped. "You go overboard. Its a trait you gave to your son." Her horn was affectionately bumped against Aliquam.

Tenebris decided that hiccups in the womb was absolutely the most precious thing. Tenebris cooed happily while Aliquam leaned and pecked the base of her horn

The twitching of her belly had him enraptured well enough. She closed her eyes again as she was kissed, and let her ecto flesh brighten. With the added magic from Caeruleus, alongside what Papyrus and Asgore were giving her, her belly was almost back to normal. It hadn't been this color, or even remotely close to this color, since they found out she was pregnant. A dark, sour part of her whispered that it was her negligence in getting magic from her pack that led the loss of one of the pups. She tucked her head into her husband's neck, and tried not to listen to it.

The day had been long and sour enough already. She didn't need to let her thoughts undermine the work that her family was doing to try not to let her fall into her dark thoughts.
Chapter 132

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Sometimes you just need someone to help you lift yourself up when things seem the darkest- sometimes immediate family works, sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes you have to make that first step for yourself, before you can let others help you take the rest of them on the road to recovery. It’s okay to take however long you need to in order to recover from something traumatic- you can take a week to take your first step, you can take a month, a year, ten years- all that matters is that you make the steps to recover, and don’t let it consume you and drown out the person you were.

The first step is the hardest- the rest come easy.

Also, Silver is having some RL issues rn, so our writing has ground to a halt for the time being (on top of my hand being sore and messed up). We’ve got… Oh, I want to say 4-5 more weeks of chapters, so hopefully it can be resolved by then. If not, life situations come first, and we’ll have to wait for them to end. Thankfully, you’re all super patient with us, so thank you for that!

Also yes- this is a 'leave off' sort of chapter. It'll continue next chapter <:

A week passed in relative peace. Though it was peaceful, the atmosphere of the town itself seemed to settle into solemnity. Word had gotten out that a pup had been lost, because in a close knit community like theirs, nothing of great interest went untold for very long. As all monsters did, they mourned as one. Oddly enough, the one that let the news slip had been Thumper. Twitch had asked him why he was so upset, and he’d told her- and then it had spread across the grapevine. By the end of the school day, the whole school knew- and by the time school was out, all of their families knew.

The loss of a child was always something to be mourned, no matter how the child came to be.

In fact, near Toki’s… strangely fitting memorial- for she was not the same as she once was, and it was as if the old her had died, and the new Toki had been born from the husk of the old one- now housed a second gravestone. It was smaller by far, just a simple stone that had been planted in front. There was no name on it, but they all knew whom it was for.

It was to honor the lost child that she had carried.

Families brought over meals so that Toki and Papyrus wouldn’t have to cook, and offered to watch the children so they all had time to rest and heal. Grillby, Sans, Tenebris, and Asgore were also subject to gifts given, which left the four of them time to help Toki and Papyrus.

Toki would admit that she spent the majority of the week in… Well, depression would be the best apt word. She slept a lot, ate only really when prompted, and did her absolute best to care for her children when she could- or rather, when they weren’t being stolen away to give her time to ‘heal’- but she knew she wasn’t doing what she felt she really should be doing as a mother. She and Dear were trying to work through losing one, but it was hard. They weren’t even keeping them, but it was hard- the litter were still going to be family, and Toki felt like she had failed them. Between her haywire emotions and constantly changing body, Toki was struggling, and there wasn’t much she, or
anyone else, could do about it.

She knew during the week she was worrying everyone. Everyone who stopped by made sure to top
her up on magic. They were doing rotations with donations. Even Grillby was donating magic,
opting with his mate to wait for conceiving until Toki had delivered the litter. It would likely be
better for her brother in law’s stress levels at any rate. Among the rotations for donations, Toki was
also having checkups every other day to make sure they were only seeing improvements on the
remaining five, and not a significant loss in their growth or health.

So far, it was only positive. The positive didn’t stop the feeling of loss though, and the loss only
drove her down.

She was even worrying the townsfolk. When they would pass by the window in the living room,
often left open by Papyrus in the hopes that the fresh air would perk her up, they would see her
laying on the couch, which was more of a central hub where everyone could check on her and less
of a reclusive spot than her bedroom was.

She heard whispers of their fears- they feared she was falling. The humans didn’t understand, but her
human and monster family knew what that was, and she was pretty sure they feared it too.

So, on the morning of the end of her ‘second trimester’, Toki hauled herself out of bed, deciding she
needed to try and be better today than yesterday. She got up before Papyrus did, and she made
breakfast and left it to keep warm with a single bee to keep it toasty and as a note that she had done it
for them. She did the laundry, and got the house in order- which she hadn’t done in some time- and
then she went outside of her own accord with a cup of piping hot tea, leaving her husband and
children still sleeping.

Toki didn’t go far out into the dark chill of the early morning. She simply went out back to where her
hives had used to be. She brought a chair with her, and simply sat, looking at the burned landscape
and babbling river far behind. She leaned her head back, and quietly breathed in the noise of the
village starting to rouse.

She would try today, she decided. Maybe go to Muffet’s bakery, buy something sweet for the
children, and one of those adorable dinosaur bread-rolls she knew Papyrus secretly adored. Maybe
she’d stop by at Grillby’s, get a burger and see how everyone was doing. Toki had been becoming
more and more of a recluse even from her own people- and it wasn’t healthy. She knew it wasn’t. It
was time, she mused, that she got back out there. Sitting in the house with her own thoughts and
sympathetic or pitying glances wasn’t good for her. The worried looks would only do to stress her
more.

Quietly, Toki rocked a little in the chair and hummed to the litter of beast children growing in her
belly. She ruffled her scraggly mane, which had gone uncared for during her week in which she
struggled, and rubbed her middle with one set of hands, letting her mind quietly go blank as she
savored the sweet taste of her raspberry leaf tea.

A few faces had come and passed while she was in her little zone, but the first face to stop was the
first face to greet her as she came out of her mind.

It was Caeruleus, a small grin on his face as he seemed to simply wait for her to come back into
reality.

Toki was not unaware of the people coming and going. Any time they passed the threshold of her
awareness, her beast would let her know, and all of her fur would ruffle up instinctively. It was when
one of them didn’t leave her threshold that she finally decided to turn her attention away from her
mind.

She glanced up, sipping her tea again as she spotted her brother in law. She gave a slow, languid blink, idly wondering how long she’d been outside. “Caeruleus.” She greets warmly as she lowers the rim of the mug from her teeth. She balances it on her belly, and tilts her head at him. “Good morning.” She smiles softly.

"Hey, saw you in Wake-Man's Dreamland... thought I’d come say hi after seeing how long it took you to realize I was here... three minutes by the way. Heh heh heh.” He gave a quiet chuckle, and then grinned at her. "Nice to see you up and about before Al."

“Yeah, I’ve been daydreaming for a while.” She chuckles softly. Her gaze slides up and down his frame and she makes a quiet hum. “It’s been a while since I’ve been up this early. I’ve been sleeping for a long time.” In more than one way. She hums softly. “I just hope he won’t be too upset. I left him a note of sorts along with breakfast.” He didn’t do well when she disappeared without a word, but if she’d have woken him, he’d have wanted to come with. Toki had just needed a few moments to herself.

"He'll be fine, he's a big boy." He chuckled. "Besides, it's good to get out on your own sometimes." He sighed and stretched. "I'm doing just that myself..."

“He’s got his traumas.” She admits softly. “When I’m not there when he wakes up, it makes him upset. It reminds him of when I was gone. When I’m up before him, I try to leave him notes. Sometimes it works, sometimes he comes looking for me in a panic. We’ll see what dice we roll this morning.” Toki shifts, and then motions him closer. She sips her tea again, and then exhales softly. The area that she’s seated in feels heavy and somber, almost like it misses the garden of flowers she used to have blooming for her apiary. She missed her bees. They’d died in the fire that had wiped out the village. It felt like so, so long ago... But to everyone else, it hadn’t even been a year. “It’s good to get out and get some time to yourself. Grillby’s a competent dad- he can handle one little skelemental all on his own.”

He was standing relaxed for the most part, his arms resting on his hips in a casual pose as he heard what she had to say. He chose not to comment about his brother- there was not much he could do about it. "Damn right he is. Man, am I lucky to have him..." He laughed. "Not only is he good at what he does, but he's so understanding when I tell him that things should wait for the pups. He's a valuable addition to the family." With this he stepped over and set a hand on her shoulder, giving a soft laugh as he spoke.

"He's an amazing man.” She surmises easily with a warm laugh. "Its easy to see why you fell for him. I got to know him quite well in the other world, and they were very much alike." Toki smiles softly into her tea. "Most monster men are everything a person could want in a man, honestly. The women probably are too, but... Well, I don't really look at them that way." She chuckles gently. Kon had found it to be true though. He and Lana were happy.

"To each their own." He rumbled lightly, before he nodded in agreement. "Tell you what, I’ve seen so many videos online about how human males can be. I can say this firmly. Once you go monster you never go back." He snickered.

She snorts the most bemused snort she's done in a long time and nearly inhaled her tea. "Well, you're not wrong. That’s not to say that humans aren’t bad either. They have their good parts, and I’m sure that a lot of people find sex wit them to be very, very pleasing. However, I don't think I could find sex with a human as satisfying as I do with a monster. Skeletons are versatile creatures. Our magic can make anything.” She idly wondered if she could get her husband to make a knot. She'd grown to enjoy Tenne's knot over time, though smaller scale would feel much nicer.
Cae chuckled at that. "And you sure have the first-hand experience of that, don’t you~" He teased.

She chuckles again. “Surprisingly no.” She gives him a lopsided grin. “Your brother is very tame in the sack compared to…” She coughed. “Ah, yeah. Anyways, about the most exciting thing I’ve discovered is that he enjoys boobs.” Was this going to traumatize Caeruleus a bit? Probably- no one wanted to know their little brother’s kinks. “I certainly don’t mind letting him play with mine.”

Contrary to her belief, Caeruleus grinned widely at hearing his brothers’ interests. "He never really did kick that little interest with boobs, did he?" He knew something and he totally wasn’t telling her. "Does he still have that avid fascination with braiding hair too?"

She squinted up at him. What did he know? “How long did you know he liked boobs?” She asks curiously. “And yes, yes he does. I wake up in the morning with braids, and sometimes he’ll just sit there and braid and unbraid my mane while we’re cuddling and watching television. It’s very relaxing. Why?"

"Since always. And I thought so. He had some interesting experimental times when we were a bit younger. It seems the most of them had stuck... I think he associates the braiding like doing a puzzle. It keeps his hands busy, and often his mind if there's something bothering him.”

She furrows her brow thoughtfully and nods. “Well, that explains a lot of it.” She exhales softly. “He’s usually got a lot on his mind. Particularly as of late.” He’d done a lot of braiding, and perhaps, she mused, it had been a comfort thing too. Toki made a soft noise and finished her tea. “Do you... Happen to know what else he likes?” She knew he thought her pregnancy was lovely.

"I think he got Pop's fatherly pride. He adores the idea of siring a litter. I've heard him go on tangents about pregnant bellies, how as long a woman is willing to bear it, how it makes her look ethereal with beauty... at first I thought he just had a preference for males and was trying to hide it." Sans hummed slightly.

Toki gives a soft nod. “He does give that vibe sometimes. I think he’s just more in touch with his feminine side.” She paused, and then flushed. “Good gracious. I suspected he had a kink for pregnancy, but... not that much. Do I want to know what he says to you about me?”

"A lot of its really high praise and about how much he adores you.”

“Oh yeah?" She tilts her head and flushes. “Jeeze, I can’t believe he gushes about me.”

"You're his wife and he spent six months thinking he was never gonna see you again. Getting you back more or less gave him back that energy he needed to be happy despite what's happened; of course he's going to gush.” Cae gave a laugh. "I'd let him go on tangents just to see him smile at the mere thought of you.”

She gives a soft smile. “Yeah... It’s good to see him happy.” She sighed and looked up at the sky. “You know... He and I made a promise to each other. We promised that we’d always come back to each other. It took me two years... Well, two years on my end,” she murmurs, “but I did it. I came home. I honored my promise to him. It... it makes me happy to know that he’s happy with me as I am.”

"And that makes you the most important being to him. You fought the void itself to keep your promise.”

Toki smiled at him. “I fought...” Ultimately it broke her, and they all knew it. “I’m glad he’s happy. I’m just happy to be home with all of you. I... I missed you all so much.”
"We missed you too, Toki." He smiled and leaned down to pull her into a firm hug. "We all did, and we ain't lettin' ya go now that we got you back."

Toki hugged him back with two of her arms, moving to make sure the empty mug didn't get squished between her and him. "Good. I'm sorry I scared you all there this last week." She murmurs. "I'm gonna try and not... Wallow as much. It doesn't help anyone, really." So long as she was careful while she was out and about, she and the pups would be fine.

"Sounds good. Hey, if you want, Grillby and I can make sure to bring you out more. Have you considered pup-school for the children?" He suggested. "We could see about helping you find something to do in town. It'll be easy on you but it'll get you out of the house."

"So long as it's not sitting at the bar, that would work." She murmurs. "I was considering just taking a book and the kids to... Well, the new park, so they could enjoy themselves while I kept my mind busy." Toki made a soft confused sound. "Pup-school? You mean pre-school? I didn't know one was up in the town." It was still massively under construction, so she honestly had no idea what was available and what wasn't. "Who runs it? Toriel?"

"Yep. And Fuku helps. They host it in the park when the weather's nice." He answered. "It would help the twins meet the other children in the town more often, and it gets you and Aliquam a solid four hours of time for yourselves."

Toki considered it. She felt a little bit like it was cheating. She hadn’t exactly been the most stellar of mother during this pregnancy. Exhaustion and her beast had made her grumpy and reclusive, and her recent bout of depression had made it hard to get up to care for anything… Still, this wasn’t about her feelings though. This was about what her children needed. Pre-school would help them get adjusted to more social contact than just family, and the occasional kids they ran into at the park. They’d form lasting friendships within the community, and hopefully pave their way for the future.

Toki nodded. “I think I’d like to send them to the pre-school. It’s not so much for me and Pap to have free time either, though it would let me clean the house without little ones getting underfoot. They need the experience in social interaction, learning and playing with other kids. They’re already pretty mature for their age. At least Skylar is.” Honey still laughed every time the cats would fart and scare themselves. Her daughter was… Something special, sometimes. “What did you have in mind for us to do in town? There’s not much to do yet.”

She hadn’t even been back all that long. It still wasn’t finished being constructed. There was talk of things being added though. A bowling alley, an arcade… a bunch of other things too. The village was really on it’s way to becoming a small city with every monster now on the surface.

"Have you had any coffee yet?" Cae asked. He gestured for her to follow him as he took a few steps away from her. "If not, we could go see about having some while we talk."

Toki gave a soft grunt, and hefted herself out of her chair. She glanced at it, and at the emptiness around it. Well, she supposed she could come back and get it later. “I haven’t… really been participating in drinking coffee this week.” She says softly. She’d drank coffee a good portion of the pregnancy- not a lot, but still some. She’d avoided it completely during her first, and nothing bad had happened, but the time she indulged is the time something bad happened. Who knew the true cause, but she didn’t want to bring about any more possible issues. “I wouldn’t mind some more tea though. Home-brewed? Or should be stop by the house to get my wallet so we can go to Muffet’s and see what she’s got for sale drink-wise?”

"Sure, Muffet's sounds good." He gave her a light grin and rested his hands on his hips. "But I'm payin. Get your shoes and let's go, yeah?"
Toki glanced down, unable to see her feet. She wiggled her toes, and realized she could feel the sparse bits of grass trying to make a come-back. “Oh.” She blinks, bamboozled. “I… I forgot my shoes. I was so lost in my thoughts that I forgot my shoes. Oh goodness.” She chuckles. “Alright. Wait for me on the deck- I’ll be right back.” Toki cradles her empty mug, and waddles back towards the house. She makes her way into the house, slipping into the kitchen so she could go rinse her cup and put it into the sink for later. She needed to go get her sneakers… and she’d need help tying them too, but she could sweet talk her brother in law to do that.

As if she didn't need another thing to worry about, there was a soft hum from the doorway before slow footsteps approached behind her. "You going out?" It was a sleepy Aliquam.

Was he even awake? His eyes were barely opened as he lumped on her and wrapped his arms around her.

Toki grunted with a bemused sound as he practically slumped on her, his cane clacking against the counter next to her. “Mm… I was already out.” She says softly. “But yes. Your brother is taking me out for tea at Muffet’s.” She nuzzles him gently. “Did I wake you coming back in?”

"No..." He answered, his warm arms daring to try and lure her back to bed, though his head seemed to think otherwise as he lowered them to rest his hands on her stomach. "Had to get up." He then smiled. "Have fun, darling~" He then cooed.

No doubt her word of his brother put his sleepy mind at ease, rather than jumpstarting himself to worry over her like he normally would.

She smiled softly. “I’ll try.” She turned her skull, momentarily thankful for having no skin along her neck, and then gave him a soft kiss along his jaw. Her mane ruffled softly. The litter inside her shifted, and his hands were blessed with multitudes of kicks. “I made breakfast for you and the kids- I can bring you back a coffee if you’d like?” She lifts a hand to cradle his jaw. “You look like you need more sleep, sweetheart.”

"Could... kinda wish I had you by me... but y'know... Go have fun~" He cooed gently. "Don’t worry bout bringing back nothin’..." He grumbled, before he sighed and nuzzled his face into her mane, taking in her scent shamelessly as his hands caressed her abdomen with adoration. "I love you." He cooed softly, "Every last one of you..."

Toki sometimes wondered if her husband regretted offering the pups to his father and Asgore. But, she knew it was ultimately for the best. Toki gave him a soft hum, and nuzzled him. She twisted her magic in her bones, and called forth Stripe. Toki felt a small twinge on her magic in doing so, and felt a little light headed given she hadn’t eaten anything that morning, but ultimately could keep up two small bees. “I know Stripe isn’t as good of a snuggler as I am, but surely she can keep you company.” She cradled the bee in her hands, and offered her over her shoulder to him. "We love you too, Pap. We love you a lot. Me, and all of your… siblings.” It was weird sometimes to think that she was carrying his siblings- both in blood, and by adoption.

And immediately he gave a tired but thrilled squeal and gently took the queen bee into his hand, nuzzling her with a sweet hum. "Good~ Go have your fun with my brother. I’ll be out later after I get a few more hours of rest." He purred, pecking her one last time before he slowly made his way back upstairs with Stripe.

Toki watched him go and shook her head. She gave him a tired but loving smile, and then waddled for her shoes. She toed them on, and then carefully hobbled outside with her laces still loose. She had no idea where her slip-on shoes were. She waved to Caeruleus. “I got your brother back to bed.” She says. “I gave him Stripe to cuddle. I’m going to need something to eat though. Using magic to
summon more than one bee makes me really dizzy. Also... could I ask you to help me tie my shoes? I can't see my feet."

"Consider them tied." He chuckled, kneeling down as his hands went out of view under her stomach. There was a bit of ruffling around her feet before her shoes tightened and he gave a 'ah' of satisfaction. "Ta-da." He hummed softly.

Toki gave him a beam and a pat to the head. "Thank you. As much as I like slip on shoes, they don’t have the support I need with this belly." She pats her middle, and is kicked for her efforts. "So… To Muffet's?"

"To Muffet's." He agreed, stepping down the stairs before offering her a hand, grinning sweetly.

She took his hand, letting him help her down. She let him go, and then gave him a lopsided grin, before waddling around the house towards the road.

Cae was right behind her, wearing his usual grin. "You're peppy this morning. It's a good look for you."

"I'm trying." Toki says lightly. "I'm trying not to wallow and feel like I'm drowning anymore. I'm sure you know what it feels like. I was there once before- in the other world- where I wanted to give up. I'm pretty sure that was the closest to falling that a human soul can come." She muses. "I was thinner than Papa was after he'd been taken by Simmons and his organization. I had just... laid down and just stopped. My magic wouldn't let me die, though I didn't want to eat, I wasn't hungry, and all I really did was sleep and explore- until Tenne found me working part time for Grillby and worked to get me healthy again. I don't want to be there again- so I'm not going to let myself fall there. I'm going to try to be better. If I have to fake it until I make it, then that's what I'll do." A fake smile could go a long ways. Eventually, she'd start to feel what she was faking.

"Hardships are always a nightmare... But at least they give you a goal of self-improvement over anything else. After everything we went through, I can't imagine having to let it sink in, and then everything else you were dealing with."

"To be honest, when my attempts to come home failed, I was done." She admits. "I lay in a dark hole for weeks upon weeks with no sustenance and let myself waste away as... Perhaps punishment for my failure to keep my promise to Pap. When it didn't work, I picked myself back up and trudged onwards." She trips over a loose cobble, and her wings buzz to keep her steady. She might be too heavy to fly, but she can keep herself upright most times. "But, enough sad talk. Dwelling doesn't help." She couldn't change what happened, or the lost pup. So she would just have to deal. "So, you were thinking activities? With the town under construction, I wasn't aware there was much going on besides the occasional back-alley poker game."

He reached out to catch her before she fell but as she caught herself he backed up once more. "Nothing wrong with a little back alley poker." He laughed lightly. "Well, I think Lana would like the idea of a few more hands, word around the grapevine she's preparing something for the kids that go to the nearby schools"

"... You do know I'm not artistically inclined, right?" She glances at him with a frown. "I can't sew. Well, I can sew stitches in flesh, but not fabric. Any idea what she's preparing?"

"Gloves and scarves, hats, I think it's less sewing and more knitting." He laughed softly. "I saw her get this large delivery of wool not too long ago."

"A sheep monster getting a large delivery of wool is kind of funny." Toki snickers. She looks
contemplative as she waddles along, her pace slowing down so she can walk beside him. She’s a little winded from her almost-speed-waddling earlier. “I don’t know how to knit or crochet. Well, I don’t know how to crochet very well. I used to know how to do basic stuff, but the best I could do was knit really, really lopsided hats. I think your dad and your brother still have one.” She muses. “I could learn though, I suppose. It sounds like it’s a relaxing habit.”

He slowed his pace as to help her keep up easier while chuckling at the mental image of how the delivery would have looked if he stuck around. "I’m pretty sure she'd teach anyone who was willing to help." He mentioned.

“I suppose it wouldn’t be bad.” She mused softly. “It would give me something to do to keep my hands busy. Maybe I could get Papyrus in on it too. He likes tricky things- he’ll probably be better at it than me.” She could see her much beloved husband becoming one of those crafty people who sold handmade things on Etsy. He was good with his hands, and more creative than he thought. Toki was only good with words and writing them.

"He has so much downtime now so I could imagine him doing that, heh!"

Toki hums. “I try to keep him busy,” She says, “and encourage him to try new things and not limit himself. Just because his leg is like it is doesn’t mean that he can’t do things. If he wants to go run a marathon, he can do it- he just has to take his time and do it carefully. He’s not defined by his disability. Sometimes, though, I think it gets to him that he can’t do the things he used to. Like tote me up the stairs for the hell of it.”

"He never accepted defeat quietly. He loves you too much to kick that habit." Cae chuckled lightly.

"He did it once when he was in heat. Carried me, that is. Pretty sure it was a feat of horniness to impress even me." She chuckles quietly.

"Well pops always did way we were born with breeding champion bloodlines, in his words, 'the best damn mating instincts to offer'... But I bet he didn't expect me to end up the carrier rather than the sire like he and Pap." He laughed.

She snorts. "Well, some things do differ and each child is different. But yes. Beasts are... Champion breeders, I suppose." It was, she mused, only their primitive mindsets that likely wiped out the species. Dear still didn’t really understand what a car was, other than a comfortable nest. "Personally, I hope next time Papyrus and I have a baby, it's just a single. I mean, I love the idea of hoards of children, but when you've got to push them out and they can have horns..." She grimaced a bit. "At least I've got birthing hips though."

"That is very true, but I'm not sure if there's any genetics left in you to offer the chance of a single child..." Cae cringed a little himself. “The whole change from human to monster, and then two entire trips through the void... I can only wonder if your DNA has even maintained its double helix form.”

"Honestly I don't know. Papa hasn't wanted to do any tests after the soul goop incident and my subsequent pregnancy." Which she understood. The litter of... Five... was much more fragile than a set of twins was. "Maybe after, when the litter is grown and they're all settled in. If not, I'll ask Alphys." Tenebris usually did all of Toki's testing, but Toki could go to other monsters if she wanted. "I prefer to know what I'm made from than not made from, you know?"

"I'm sure he's just doing everything in order to make sure nothing goes wrong, but yeah, worst case scenario, Alphys knows her stuff.” Cae nodded in agreement. "I'll be able to help out too. I worked in the lab for a while so I know enough to make myself useful, so you might have to deal with my ugly mug a little but at least it'll be a familiar face." He teased.
"You're hardly ugly." She elbowed him lightly with two of her arms. "If anything, I'm the one in the family who looks the worst." Her face was enough to scare little children. Well, human ones. Monsters were more or less used to each other looking strange, outlandish, and a little scary sometimes. "You worked in a lab?" She blinked. "Somehow that doesn't surprise me from what I got to learn of Kai." She mumbles tightly. "Heh. Minus the tail, I got to see you as a kid. Well, sort of. If you were anything in personality to the one I got to know, you were an adorable, chubby cheeked little sass master." She informs him cheekily.

"I still have a tail." He chuckled. "It's just not as long as his came out to be. I've got a stumpy tail."

"I did not notice a tail when I was down there trying to deliver Solstice." She arches her brows. "And I saw everything. Everything. Which is way more than I wanted to see of my brother in law." She snorts. "So it must be a tiny stumpy tail indeed. Unless you're talking about your dick... In which case, shame on you."

"..." That had him stop as he gave her a deadpan look. "How dare. I've got a great dick!"

"Whatever you have to say to help you sleep at night." She laughs heartily. "I've seen the dick of a you in another world," She taps a clawed finger against her skull to emphasize she'd seen it in one of her world traveling dreams, "and I was not impressed. But, I can say for sure that dick size changes world to world. Pap here is smaller than in one of the other worlds. Like... a lot smaller. But, big dicks aren't everything. Too big hurts." She informs him matter of fact tone. Tenne had bordered on too big. His knot had been too big- particularly since she'd been of a flesh and bone body, not of an ecto-flesh body, which had much more give and play to it than legitimate blood-pumping muscle did. Speaking of things in general... Toki was surprised to find herself settling back into the ease of teasing her brother in law. How long had it been since they'd just sat around and teased the hell out of each other? Too long. She gave him a wicked grin. "I'm sure your stumpy little tail is enough for Grillby."

He bristled at her. "I'm not too big either. I like to think I'm perfect where I am, thank you." He grumbled as he followed, sulking behind her as he walked.

“I’m glad you’re confident in yourself.” She chuckles softly. She shifts, and itches lightly at her belly. The nipples under her shirt were growing- and despite what Tenebris said, they were starting to puff up with little mounds. It reminded her of a cat getting ready to nurse. “Confidence is everything.”

"And don’t you forget that either!" He huffed as he walked.

Toki giggled at his huffiness, and elbowed him gently. “Don’t get too huffy, or you’ll have people thinking you’ve got tail envy.” She teased.

He ‘oof’ed at her, and rubbed where he got elbowed.

“I didn’t elbow you that hard, you big ham.” She rolls her eye lights in her sockets. Toki sighs softly, and deflates some. She could see Muffet’s coming up.

He pouted at her, and then he looked up at Muffet's. "Ah, here we are." He rumbled with a smile.

“Mhm.” She hums softly. “I’m eager for something to eat, and maybe some different tea. Or a chocolate drink, if she’s got good ones. I don’t really eat a lot of Muffet’s, to be honest.” Toki mostly did her own home-cooked meals.

"Her stuff is pretty rich so small doses are called for."
“I remember that. Except for her bread rolls. Her bread is pretty good in normal bread doses.” She chuckles.

"I could eat her bread rolls forever..." he agreed with a blissful sound.

She waddles to the door, and grunts as it swings open, and the wolf monster barging out nearly flattens her. She covers her belly instinctively, and keeps the litter from being jostled.

Wolfen blinks at her. “Ah- pardon me, Miss Toki. I didn’t see you there.” He gives her a friendly smile, and then steps aside, holding the door open for her and Caeruleus to go inside. “It’s good to see you out and about getting sweets.”

“I figured it was time to claw out of my den.” She gives him a wry smile. “My sweet brother here decided to help urge me out and about.”

Caeruleus grinned up at Wolfen. "Good to see you out of yours, 'Fen. How's the missus?"

“Bo’s doing good. So is little Howl.” Wolfen gave him a lopsided smile. “Bo’s been getting on him about his grades. He’s riding the low C’s, and doesn’t seem interested in picking up on them.”

“It takes time.” Toki chuckles. “Children will have their times that they struggle, and their times that they don’t. Just keep supporting and encouraging him.”

"He’ll get there soon enough. Howl's the pup of two geniuses after all." Cae laughed.

Wolfen barked a booming laugh. “Hardly!” He cackled. “Bo, maybe, but my grades were hardly better than his. I only pulled through at the end of school because you needed at least a B’ average to become a guard.”

"I'm kinda thankful for that. While Pap was still young, I worried if I’d be able to help get him through school. His passion to be a royal guard got him out with low A’s." Cae reminisced with a soft laugh. "I just hope it's that easy again with Solstice."

“And you guys are making me feel bad. I was scattered across the board as far as grades go.” Toki blinked. “I mean… I had A’s in some classes, but in others a lot lower. I failed a couple too. Steady grades weren’t my thing. I aced writing, as you can guess, and biology.”

"Still something at least, yeah?” Cae chuckled.

“I guess.” She chuckles. “I mean… I didn’t do much with them. I went on to become a writer and a beekeeper, and a semi-sort of part time politician. Not really anything to brag about.” She glances to Wolfen, smiles, and then waddles inside. “Anyways, it was good to see you, Wolfen. I’m going to go find a seat- there’s a line, and my back is sore.”

“You too, Miss Toki. Take care.” He nods to her, and then looks to Caeruleus once he’s sure she’s hopefully out of hearing range. “She looks better today. Many were afraid she would fall. It would not be the first time a mother that lost a child in the womb would have fallen. It is a terrible feeling.”

"It takes a lot more than that to take Tokiko Nara Gaster down." Cae pat Wolfen's shoulder with a laugh. "She's one tough Mama."

"That she is." Wolfen gave him a smile. "From the time she saved our children from the fire whilst dying from the sickness, I knew she was a tough woman. But tough mother's need help too. Try to perk her up some, yeah?"
"'S why I asked her out. She was lost in space when I walked up to her." He chuckled. "Alright, I'm gonna go get in line, I'll catch you later."

Wolfen gave him a nod and a wave and let him in.

Toki had found a seat, and was, oddly enough, being attended to at her seat. Muffet was known for good service, but still usually required monsters to go to the counter for their orders and services. Given that none of the customers were pitching a fit, it was likely that it was because she was out and about, and it was Muffet's way of showing her concern and happiness that Toki was out and about.

Toki had a rather antsy and excited group of spiders skittering around her heels as she looked over a menu. There was a second menu across from her. Muffin was pressed against her side, getting soft pets and rubs with two of her hands. The odd looking spider-pastry beast was making happy chirring sounds.

Toki looked up as Sans entered and waved at him. She was keeping very still so she didn't hurt any of the spiders. "Over here!" She calls.

He carefully shuffle-stepped his way over, gently nudging through the spiders rather than risk stepping on them. Once he made it to his seat, he made sure it was clear before he sat down and smiled at them all. "Hey there guys. Is business good?" He greeted the table spiders gently.

Muffin gave Sans a greeting bark, and rolled over for belly rubs.

The spiders skittered, and there was a soft hissing sound from the collective, not unlike a specific dialect of insectis.

Toki tilted her head. "I understood that." She blinks, perplexed. Weird. Bug lingo must have been universal. "Business has been good." She supplies her brother in law. "They are constantly selling to the workers. Well, the construction workers brave enough to come in."

Sans carefully reached over and gave the spider-muffin a soft pet, before he grinned. "You realize how cool that is that you can understand them?" He mentioned with a laugh, before he looked down at the spiders again. "Well it's good to hear you've made progress to some extent. Muffet come up with anything else for her menu that we should know about~?" He gave the spiders an eyebrow waggle.

The spiders gave an excited sounding concentrated burst of noise. Several of them skittered off to go share the news to Muffet that Toki could speak spider.

Toki watched them go and hummed. "Well, I think it's just magic spiders. I certainly can't talk to the house spiders when I'm trying to gently shoo them out of the corners of places they could get hurt. It would make it much easier if I could." She muses. She listens to the chatter, and tries to discern what they're all excitedly babbling. "Something about new kinds of spider cider? Apple and many other fruits, sparkling, adult-cider, and pumpkin-spider-cider?" She casts him a questioning look, and briefly startles when a spider crawls onto her hand.

It moves onto the menu, and motions for her to flip the page.

She does, and then it dances along a page of new things.

"There is also a new page of spider-inspired French cuisine." She adds, having apparently not caught onto the part about pastries. "The crepes look good."

"Ooooh, cider and crepes, that sounds like a fun mix." Cae grinned. "Do they have lists of flavors?"
He asked.

"Yep." She nods. She motions to his menu in front of him, but reads them off anyways. Well, the crepes anyway. She'd already listed the cider. "Lets see... You've got original crepes. Strawberry, chocolate, raspberry, Bavarian cream, banana cream, and what looks like a chocolate dipped one?"

"Good stuff." He opened his menu and took a look at the list. "You could always rely on Muffet to come up with the good stuff." He laughed.

"Very true." She laughs heartily "She's one hell of a baker. Though..." She blinked and peered at the menu. "Huh. I had heard that she'd adapted a version of my honey tarts after I'd disappeared, but I never really looked for them. I guess it's true. Think they're good?"

"Not as good as yours, I'm guessing." He joked. "Wanna try it?"

"Hmm... Sure. How could sweet honey over a simple bite sized cake be bad?" She queried lightly. "There's no way, really. I think I'll get the four cakes, and... Maybe the Apple cider."

"Ill take two, and a chocolate strawberry crepe, and sparkling black cherry cider please." Cae requested as well.

The spider on Toki's menu waved its legs at them both, and then sprang from the menu, bouncing to the table and skittering rapidly from it down to the floor.

The mass of spiders along the floor moved up, and collected their menus from them. They moved more like ants, sharing the burden of the weight between them so they could carry it.

Toki watched them go and arched her brows. "Wow. They're talented little things."

"These spiders are amazing, no other way to look at it." Cae agreed.

"Indeed. It's like a less sassy and much smaller version of my bee swarm." Toki hums.

"These guys have been in the business for years now, a regular song and dance for them now. Your bees are an independent swarm, they do whatever they want and only you could stop them"

"Very true." She rolls her eye lights. "They're not completely slave to my will either. Stripe gives me plenty of sass when I summon her to do something, or if she thinks I'm being stubborn and stupid. I get a lot of sass. The only one who doesn't sass me is my wingless hyperactive puppy-hornet. She just pesters for cuddles or to play with her."

"Well someone had to be the voice of buzzing reason." He joked. "Sugar on the other hand is the sweetest thing, but a bit gullible." He cackled quietly.

"Very true." Toki nods. "She's a bundle of energy. Sweet energy, but energy all the same. She's still learning and growing though."

"Yeah, speaking of..." He rubbed his head. "Do you think she has a chance of her wings growing back?" He asked.

She shakes her head. "I don't know how time works for them there, since I spent two years in the other world but it was only six months here. But, I think it's safe to say that they won't be growing back. At least not any time soon. She gets along with her disability though."

"Please tell me she's figured out the six-legged gallop, I need to see that." He immediately put his
hands together like he was begging.

She snorts softly. “She can, but it generally isn’t as fast as when she puts all six legs into motion. When she’s bouncing around, she looks like a moderately murderous jackrabbit, to be honest. You’ll have to challenge her to a race someday and watch her chase you.” Toki quirked a brow at him challengingly. “It can be a little intimidating. She’s very fast.”

"That’s mildly terrifying." Cae snorted, before he gave another laugh. "Just don’t let her make the same faces that Clover makes while she's doing that high-speed thing, otherwise she's gonna give someone a heart attack."

"Clover is a grouch." Toki agrees, affection for her summons plain in her voice. "Do you know that Clover terrified your dad's other self?"

"I'm not surprised, you said that this took place like... Pre-Core? That’s hundreds of years ago, Tokes. He must not have been much older than me."

"He was like, three hundred and... Seventy or something." She shrugs. "He was young. Your alternate and brother were young." She says softly, keeping her voice low so she didn't bother the other patrons. Or alarm them. "He couldn't manifest more than a skull for summoning. But, no one could do full body summons beside myself. The power level in the underground was... Staggeringly low compared to the world here."

"Sounds about right. The strongest of the warriors had all died out, the genetics got thinned something awful. Pops and Asgore were kinda the odd ones out." Cae sighed as he scratched his jaw in thought.

"No." She shakes her head. "I mean even them. They were... Frighteningly fragile." She stresses.

"Yikes..." Cae made a face.

"Yeah. His health wasn't even close to what Papa has here.” She winced. "I think that world as a whole was simply... Less powerful. It gave me a new perspective on life though, and let me do a few good things with the power I had."

"How hard was it for you with... you know..." He trailed off as he looked away for a moment. "That... little voice in your head..."

"... Hard at first." She admits. "Cruelty got better. I'd like to say that we were... Some what influenced by each other. You'll find that I'm actually a challenge to play in a poker game now." Toki could lie with the best of them, and her bluffing was just as good. "Cruelty started off has horrible, but began to get easier to deal with. When Cruelty made the conscious choice to become Sequoia and change, that's when the biggest shift came. She was making strides on her own to be a better person. She was very, very broken. Her soul was so cracked and scarred that I dont know how she was functioning even as she was. She was healing... And eventually, it became a comfort to have someone else who remembered home." By home, she meant here.

"I bet you being a good heart helped her out a bit huh? Like counter-corruption." He chuckled. "If anyone could have helped the soul of cruelty, it was you."

Toki nods. She went quiet for a moment; simply watching the spiders scuttle too and fro as they worked. “I miss her.” She admits. “I got used to having three presences in my head. Dear and I talk, but Dear is not… as good of a conversationalist as Sequoia was. I’m glad she got her body, but… sometimes I miss having someone who could take the reins for a bit while I got some rest.”
He nodded slowly in understanding, before he sighed. "Yeah... Little voices in your head are no good... But sometimes they have good shit to say."

She snorts. "Not necessarily good." She chuckles. "Sequoia was... She was sarcastic and snarky. And very, very salty. A lot of what she had to say was full of sass." She supplies lightly. She pauses, and grunts as she’s kicked sharply, rubbing her belly to soothe away the sharp jab that came from a leg inherited from the pup’s father.

Muffet approached, giving them both a smile as she balanced their orders on two trays. "Four honey cakes and an apple spider cider for Toki. Here you are dearie!" She set the tray gingerly in front of the pregnant hornet, and then moved to set Sans’ down in front of him as well. "Two honey cakes, one chocolate covered strawberry crepe, and a black cherry spider cider. Will that be all for you both today?"

Toki gave the spider woman a warm look. "I think so, yes. At least for now. Thank you." She nods. "It looks delicious."

"Looks fantastic, Muffet. Thanks a lot." Cae grinned at the spider monster. "I'll let you know if I want seconds."

"Of course." Muffet nods. "If you need anything, simply speak with my spiders, and they’ll relay your orders to me. When you’re ready to leave, they’ll bring your bill."

Toki nods and gives her a smile. "Of course. Thank you." She picks up her first cake when Muffet returns to the kitchen, and then takes a bite. "Mm... It’s very good."

"Yeah because you can actually do that, Toki." Cae laughed, before he took one of his cakes in hand as well. He took a bite and made an appreciative sound. "Mmh. Not bad at all."

"Indeed!" Toki hums. She nibbles her cake for a bit, before sipping some cider. The apple cider is fantastic, and she decides she might get one to go. She’s big and generally uncomfortable, so she is entitled to enjoying a treat every once in a while. If she wants two ciders, then she’s going to have two ciders in one day.

She sips her cider again as she and her brother in law eat their treats, and then looks across to him. Her brows furrow in thought. "Sans... Thank you." She says softly. "For taking me out for a breakfast treat. And just... getting me out. It’s more of a step than I would have taken on my own. So... thank you. I needed it after last week... I’m sure you all needed it too, after... dealing with me ‘looking like I was falling’, to use the other people’s words."

"Hey, no little sister of mine is gonna wallow if I got something to say about it." He wiped his mouth, and then gave her a smile. "We’re Gasters. We’re a pack; you’re stuck with us now. And if you ever feel like that again, you come get me, and I’ll take you for a carrier’s day out."

"Carrier’s day out?" It was a much more gender neutral term than mothers day out. But who’s to say that mother and father had to be gender specific? "I like that idea." Toki smiles softly. "I can’t say that I won’t feel like that again, brother. I’m struggling right now not to feel like that." She admits. "But keeping busy, and keeping my mind busy is helping. So... thank you." She gets comfortable in her chair with a soft sigh. "Speaking of carrier’s days... The one thing I do miss about having flesh... She wondered if he’d notice she didn’t say ‘being human’, "is that spa days are much less effective. You can’t get a pedicure if all you’ve got are bones to file and massage. I wonder if ectoflesh would work though... If it does, it’s a pity there’s not a spa being built in the village. That would be fabulous."
"Pedicure and Manicure are old news. Ever had a nice boiling soak? Little bit of the right mix and your bones just feel so clean afterwards~" He sighed happily.

“I have, actually!” Toki snorts into her goodies. “You forget, I’ve got fire magic, and I tend to leak magic out gradually as I just kinda… exist. Sort of like a helium balloon, I guess. Anyway, on my heat, I fell asleep in an ice cold tub, woke up to Papy panicking ‘cause I’d boiled away most of the water.”

“What? No! You didn’t tell me that before!” He laughed.

“It’s true!” She grins. “I’m sure he must have thought I’d turn myself into skeleton soup or something. It was actually during my first heat, when I made your Dad-”
Toki and her brother in law spent the majority of the early morning together, relaxing in Muffet’s café and bakery while they talked and just spent time reminiscing over things long past. Toki didn’t have her phone on her, and neither did Sans. They ended up having to leave closer to noon when Toki got wind of Papyrus wondering where she was, and likewise Solstice wanting the attention of her mother.

Sometimes, it paid to live in a town where everyone knew everyone. Everyone always knew everyone’s business, and that meant that news spread from one end to the other before you knew it. So, Toki knew she was being looked for without needing a phone, and her brother in all but blood and marrow knew that his baby girl needed his motherly love. Likewise, it had it’s drawbacks- everyone in town also knew she was out and about today, and either walked on eggshells around her, or called to her with happy tidings that they were glad to see she wasn’t falling. There was no in-between, minus the warm business like manner that Muffet treated them with when she brought them items in person.

Closer to noon, Toki got her last apple cider- she’d said fuck it, and this was her fourth one instead of her second one- and then stood with the help of her brother in law. Then, the two of them began the slow walk back through town, with Toki cradling her massive to-go mug of apple cider.

“You don’t have to walk me home if you don’t want to, Sans.” Toki says gently to him as they walk arm in arm. Well, he walks with his usual slouch and grace, while she waddles. “I know Solstice wants you- our little ones should come first, yours included. She probably just needs some mommy snuggles- she’s at that age where it’s important to get them.” Toki had missed a lot of them. She could only hope that the love that she gave to them prior had been enough and hadn’t stunted anything that could show up as they got older.

“She’s already fussy.” He chuckles. “A few more minutes won’t kill her. Besides, it’s good for her to get space from me too, and learn to socialize and be more dependant on her dad.” He makes a soft hum. “Mmm… this morning was fantastic, though. I was happy to get to try her newer stuff, and it was healthy for you to get your outing too”

“It’s good that she’s used getting more socialization.” Toki hummed. “It’s good for her.” The pregnant skeleton wondered how hard it had been on her children when she had just suddenly up and disappeared from their lives and the soul bonds. ”Breakfast was indeed good." She nods. "I enjoyed it a lot too. It was good food, and good company... And it was good for my health. Mentally, at least. Probably not so good physically to drink so many servings of hot apple cider." She chortles in good humor.

"At least you don’t have a fleshy bladder anymore, so that's not gonna end up being an issue, eh?” He chuckled.
"True." She snorts. "More than one reason to be glad for that though. One baby is bad with bladders. Two is worse. Si- five would be even worse. I can't imagine that. It would suck so, so bad."

"Agreed." He gave a weak laugh at catching her near slip up. Moments later, he sighed and reached up to rub his chest. "Okay, little miss must be hungry or something. She's really sparking at Grillby now- very fussy-fussy." He murmured. As his gaze moved up, he made a soft noise. "Ah... Ahead of them was Tenebris. "Hey, you wouldn't mind the baton pass if he's not doing anything, would ya?"

"Well, we were told that she was fussing for you." Toki says pointedly. "She probably wants cuddles and her liquid rations." Toki hooks two of her hands into her lower back as she nods, following his gaze to Tenebris. "I can walk home alone if he's busy. I am an adult." She chimes gently.

Sans chuckled lightly. "Alright, alright." He then gave her a soft hug. "I'll talk to you later then. Don't go running back for more ciders either, you hear me~?" He teased.

Toki hugged him back, making sure not to spill her last cider as she did so. "But what if I want more?" She pouts at him lightly. "Its super yummy and makes me and the pups happy." She teases gently. "Speaking of... Go tend to your little one." She let him go and stepped away, giving him a lopsided smile. Turning, she waddled towards home, not intending to go bother Tenebris on her waddle home.

"Muffet will take all your money if you're not careful." He managed to press a kiss to her forehead before she wandered off. "See ya~ oh, heya pops."

"Sans." Tenebris greeted him with a rumble before he padded up to Toki and rumbled in greeting, walking around her to move to her side, a small smile on his face. "Good morning, Toki."

Toki stopped her waddle mid step, silently sighing behind her teeth. She gave him a smile as he circled around her to the same side his son had occupied prior, and gave him a warm twitch of her wings. "Good afternoon, Papa." Toki greets warmly. "I'm just heading home. I heard Papyrus was looking for me." Probably just to make sure she was alright since he couldn't text her without her phone. He did worry, understandably so- she was only just starting to recover, and she physically still looked like a mess. At least her mane did.

"I see... if you will have me, I indeed would like to walk you home." He offered. "Not as an escort, but simply as your Papa."

"Sure, Papa." Toki offered him one of her primary arms. "I don't mind if you want to walk me home- so long as I'm not interrupting anything, of course."

"On the contrary... I was just looking for you." He answered gently. "I woke up this morning and felt compelled to seek the company of the mother who carries my pups for me."

“Oh?” She blinks at him, perplexed. She leans into his arm, and continues waddling home with him at hand. “Huh... Is... your beast influencing it, maybe? It might be a beast thing.”

He nodded. "I agree." He murmured gently, before he rumbled. "I hope you do not mind."

“Mm…” She hums. “Not really. I’m... trying to recover. So being alone isn’t helping. If you want to spend time, then you’re welcome to.”

"I'm thankful you think so." He smiled lightly and took a deep breath, as if it had been the first deep one all day. "How are you feeling? Better? If Sans had you out and about I’d wager you're at least a
“I’m… trying.” She says, considering her words. “I’m not… better. But wallowing in pity isn’t going to bring the… the baby back, and isn’t going to do any good for my health, or any good for the remaining five.” She leans her head against his shoulder, and takes a sip of her apple cider. “Being out helped.” She admits. “It helped a lot. It took my mind off of things, and I think it took his mind off of them too. Keeping busy is… going to help me more than just sitting at home and dwelling.”

“I’m going to re-learn to knit or crochet from Lana, I think.” She muses. “Something to occupy my hands and my thoughts. I used to know how to crochet, but I wasn’t very good at it.” She recalls when he’d popped in on her attempting to crochet, and the utter fail that had been. Of course, that’s when she’d been on crutches after he’d broken her leg…

Heavens above.

That felt like a lifetime ago.

He wrapped his arm around her shoulders and started a gentle rumble deep in his chest to comfort and soothe her. "What happened isn’t your fault." He murmured. "However, I do agree. The lessons from Lana will do you some good. You will have plenty of models for what you make." He joked.

"Whether or not the loss is my fault, it still feels like it. You can't just turn off your feelings." Toki says. The rumble is soothing though, and she listens to it with a soft, content sigh. She loved when either he or Papyrus rumbled. Sans too. It was like a bunch of big cats purring. "Yeah- though I don't think I can use your feet to model baby socks." She jokes lightly. "They're a bit big."

He nodded in understanding, before he grinned as he gently squeezed her shoulders. "Not my feet; I know they're too big. I meant the pups.” He laughed lightly.

Toki grunts as he squeezes her gently, and flicks her wings to remind him to keep being gentle. He's a big man, with strong arms, and she squishes easy when she's not hardening her defenses. All the same, she snorts. "I don't think I can use the twins to measure for the pups, Papa." She cocks a brow. "Their feet are entirely different. Like... I've seen the shapes of the feet that have kicked out on my belly, and they're definitely paws. They're also your legs." Papyrus had once joked to her about her being glad that the twins hadn't inherited Tenebris' legs recessively... And, well, she's definitely glad the twins hadn’t been like these ones. The kicks can sometimes be downright uncomfortable.

"It means they will become great runners." He rumbled happily, tail flicking with his delight at the thought. "We will easily trek to the ends of our territory like the swift pack we are." He sounded really proud about that.

"Great runners when they're bigger, yes. For now, they're just kicking my insides into mush." She snorts at his fatherly pride. Her snort stirs up the litter, and she sighs as they batter her. She's glad she doesn't have traditional organs. "I wonder if any of them will fly." She muses. They were hers too, after all.

"If they do, then we will rule the skies as well." He saw her stomach shifting in the wake of the wriggling and writhing of the litter, and he cooed as he stepped in front of her to kneel down and press his face on her bump. "Hello babies~"

Toki can't help grunting as he stops the both of them right in the middle of the sidewalk so he can kneel down and press his face to her belly. "Papa," Toki huffs in good humor, "I've got to get home and see what my husband needed and reassured him I haven't disappeared again. You can cuddle the litter there once I’ve checked in, you silly old man. As for ruling the skies, well, yes. I suppose I'll
need to teach them to fly, won't I?"

He looked up at her with a slightly sulky look, but quickly returned to her side instead of blocking her path, rumbling as he walked with her down the sidewalk. "Oh, indeed. If they inherit my father's wings, they will be able to fly like the great avian packs of the mountain."

"I don’t think they’ll be able to fly like birds, but they’ll be able to fly like bugs. You haven’t really gotten to see me seriously fly, Tenebris. I’m actually quite nimble." She glances at him and cocks a brow at his pout. "I’m honestly not sure how I’m supposed to deliver wings anyway. I had trouble with the horns Honey has." There was the good chance they could run into complications during labor- she’d probably be delivering horns and wings. Ugh. That wasn’t fun to think about.

"They’re going to be my children, so honestly I am going to be happy regardless of how they come out. They’re the best thing I could have ever asked for, and I find myself thinking of ways that I hope to repay you, but you’re giving me something that... It's truly without compare." He murmured honestly.

"Children often are.” She replies lightly. “I know there’s going to be a massive age gap between the pups and your older sons, but... well, family is family, and they’re going to be loved regardless. They’ll also grow up with their nieces and nephews.” She chimes. “Also, Papa? I don’t need to be repaid. I never need to be repaid. Children are priceless, you silly old man.” She nudges him with her horn, and hopes she didn’t just tear his coat. Her horns are sharp.

Her home looms just around the corner. The fireplace was pluming out smoke, making her wonder if Papyrus had started up a fire, or if Stripe had gotten sleepy and decided to sleep in the remnants of the logs from the previous night.

"Your heart is so generous. I really am the luckiest Papa in the universe.” He rumbled happily, though he had stopped fast as he saw the smoke, his eyes widening as his tail rattled behind him. It rattled only for a moment as she waddled a few paces ahead. He shook his head and growled to himself before he returned to Toki’s side, rattling quietly. "They've lit the fireplace..."

Toki had been a bit befuddled by his sudden stop. Tenebris didn’t usually act like that around smoke and fire- that was a reaction Toki would have had before they had worked her through her trauma over the fire. “Papyrus usually says he’s lucky too, but Honestly, I think I’m the lucky one. You guys are the ones who put up with all the danger I brought into the family.” She hummed. “And yeah- I’m figuring either he got cold, the kids got cold, or Stripe decided it was nap time. The bees can sometimes light stuff on fire when they’re sleeping on a flammable surface, so it’s easier just to let them nest in the fireplace. Though... it’s not really a cold day.” She sighs. “The house is going to be sweltering when we get inside. Well, I’m going to have to find the fans.”

"Mmhm..." He took a slow breath as he walked. "Perhaps I will wait outside until it's aired out a little.”

“It’s probably not going to be too hot to you,” She rolled her eye lights, “but I have a literal oven growing from my breasts to my hips, on top of fire magic. I get a little over warm. But if you want to linger outside, you can.”

He blinked, and then cleared his throat. "I'll... I'll be fine." He murmured.

“If you’re sure.” She glances at him again, a curious glint to her eye lights. He was acting a bit odd today- more than odd, honestly.

As they made their way up to the house, Toki huffed and hauled herself up the stairs. Stairs sucked,
and would always suck once one got to the point where they had a large belly in their pregnancy.

At the top, Toki didn’t bother knocking. She opened the door, and stepped inside, leaving Tenebris to follow. Toeing off her shoes, Toki waddled for the living room to see about opening some windows. It was, to her, stifling. To anyone else, it was at most, comfortably warm in the house.

“Papyrus?” She calls. “I’m home. I’ve got a guest as well.” She hums, leaning down to slide the windows in the living room open. The fresh air felt like heaven, and it helped to keep her mind clear and light. Getting out had done her a lot of good.

"In the kitchen." Was Papyrus's reply, "Watch out! Wet floor!"

"Wet floor?" Toki queried. She opened more windows, and then waddled for the kitchen. She didn't step inside of the kitchen, instead poking her head in and peering at the glimmering, wet tiles. "Did you mop?" She asks.

"Yes I did." He answered as he gave a proud smile. "I noticed you were out so I thought I’d clean up a little while you were out.”

Toki gave him a lopsided and warm smile. “You must have been out of it this morning if you ‘noticed I was out’.” She teased gently. Definitely out of it, since she’d sent him back to bed with Stripe after he’d cuddled her in the kitchen. “The kitchen looks lovely, sweetheart. Thank you.” She looked at the wet floor, however, and pondered that she couldn’t safely cross it to do anything productive in the kitchen. So, Toki turned around and fanned out her wings, before buzzing them to work to dry the floor. Bees dried their wings by doing this, and she was large enough to act as a living fan for drying the floor.

Once the floor wasn’t completely slick, she carefully tip-toed across it, and gingerly set her cider on the counter. “Are the kids in the back yard?” She couldn’t hear them in the house, so they were either outside, or Undyne had stolen them for ‘practice’.

She and Alphys wanted kids, but were both a bit… terrified of actually having kids. So far they were adjusting by babysitting.

"I remember getting up this morning but I can’t remember much else.” He admitted with a quiet laugh, before he came closer, nodding gently at her question. "Undyne wanted to borrow them for the day. She said something about Alphys having something she wanted to try.” He wrapped his arms around her with a hum, before looking up at Tenebris. At first he thought all was normal, but then he took a look at the taller monster’s eyes. "Sire."

"Hello, Papyrus."

Toki wasn’t sure what to make of the terse greeting Tenebris and her husband exchanged. She glanced at them, brows furrowed for a moment. “Well, you were quite tired this morning.” She chimes gently. “Very out of it. Anyways, it’s good that Undyne and Alphys are practicing. They keep saying they want their own kids, but they keep him-hawing…” She shakes her head in good humor.

Her eye lights flit back and forth between them as she leans into Papyrus, fluffing up her mane and nuzzling him gently. She rubs her belly with one hand as she scoops up her cider to have another sip, before setting it back down. “So… Are you two alright?”

The beast rumbled quietly. Then, he chuckled and his form shook lightly. When it stopped, his eyes were sharper, and his crown was now growing out of his head a bit, his quills poking out behind his
"Indeed so." Papyrus nuzzled her, and then looked up at Tenebris, or rather, at Papa. "It just seems you didn't pick up Father like you thought you did."

Toki startled as Tenebris- or perhaps, Papa- began to sprout his crown and his features began to sharpen and turn more beastly. “A-ah.” She blinked. “I didn’t notice. But, my mind hasn’t been… as sharp as it usually is.” She explains. Pregnancy brain on top of depression meant she missed things she didn’t usually miss. He also hadn’t… Well, spoken in any different voice. Papa spoke through Tenebris’ voice, and she hadn’t been able to tell the difference. It was… alarming. She wondered if Dear and Sentinel could to that too. “Well… hello, Papa. Erm… I suppose it’s you who wanted to spend time around me today then, hm?” He’d felt compelled to seek the ‘mother who carried his pups’, so she figured she’d have him in her mane all day.

"Tenebris and I both were looking forward to it, however he was a little exhausted this morning so I went ahead and took over." He rumbled, scratching the turtleneck lightly over his neck. "I am pleased that I fooled you... I have been learning." He admitted proudly.

“So you have.” She nods. “Though… you’re not quite perfect yet. There was something off about you. I couldn’t put my finger on it, but there was something off.” Toki watches him itch at the turtleneck, and feels her mane fluff up lightly in response. Toki didn’t often wear them anymore for that exact reason. Speaking of her mane… Her mane was a mess. A week of not taking care of it had left the luscious green mass with knots beyond belief. She wasn’t sure if she could get them out, to be frank.

Her mane may need to be cut- sadly so. She hadn’t cut it since she had started to grow one. She loved her long mane, but it was probably too long. “You did good though, all the same.” She nods. “Anyways… What did you want to do today? I’m… sure you’re aware that I haven’t exactly been up to par as of late, so I’m not all that sure what I’ll be up to doing, but… Anything to keep my mind occupied, I suppose.”

"I suppose I’ve ideas for either scenario. Will you be staying in today like you’ve been, or will you go out again?" He asked, resting his hands on his hips as he tilted his head.

Toki ground her teeth lightly in thought. “Honestly… If I go outside again, I need to do something with my mane first. I didn’t really pay attention earlier this morning before I went out, but… my mane is a mess.” She says. “It’s… It’s not gross, because I have been washing it, but it’s tangled and knotted. I haven’t brushed it since… we found out. I kinda lost myself for a while.” She admits sheepishly. The pregnant skeleton beast shrugs uncomfortably. “I may need help detangling the knots, or I’m going to have to cut my mane to get them out.”

She’s not sure who that sentence would devastate more- her husband, with his absolute love of her hair, or Papa, and the beastly belief that a full and healthy mane is the sign of a good alpha. Or… something like that. She’s not exactly sure.

Both had their reactions, but Papyrus acted first and tutted at her. "Now, now, let's not jump to last resorts. I'm sure we can get those knots out easily, and then I'll braid them again so they don't tangle up." He chuckled.

"Normally... A fully preened mane is more impressive than braids... But if it is easier for you, Tokiko..." Papa rumbled quietly, scratching his neck again before he scowled. "Mine cannot grow quickly enough." He huffed.

"If you think you can detangle it, then go ahead. If I don't have to cut it, I don't want to, but the
snaiggles and snares I have are appalling." Toki hums. She glances to Papa and lifts a brow. "For the most part, I wear my mane loose. I enjoy it being messed with though, so it's quite relaxing when Papyrus braids it for me. I never mind. Though… Papa, your mane might never grow to be what it could have been if you hadn't gone diddling in the void. You may have to learn to be happy with what you have. What you have now does look very nice on you, if a little scraggly. A bit of grooming up, and you'd be good to go. Anyways… I can go out again once I get my mane fixed, but there’s not much to do besides visit Muffet’s again, or go spend time at the bar. And… really, I don’t want to go hang out at Grillby’s.” The smell of alcohol bothered her a bit. The grease was fine, but the alcohol stung her nose and made her queasy. “Unless there’s something you’d rather do inside…?”

Papa rumbled quietly and reached up to scratch his scruffy mane again while Papyrus went to get her hairbrush.

"Meet me in the front room and I’ll get started on your hair, Toki.” Her husband purred.

“Of course.” Toki nods to him and smiles. She collects her cider, and waddles for the living room, carefully picking her way through carefully set up cities formed from her children’s toys. She slips into a spot on the couch, leaving Papa to make himself at home, and then sets her drink on the table as she gets comfortable and makes space for Papyrus to come get seated.

Expectantly enough, Papa followed her and sat down on the other side of the couch, watching her quietly. Though his stare was unnervingly unrelenting.

Toki could feel her tangled mane starting to bristle a bit as he just… stared at her. He wasn’t even blinking. She wasn’t sure what he was doing, or why he was staring at her, and Dear was leaving dealing with him up to her at the moment, so she couldn’t even ask her opinion. “Er… you know, you don’t have to sit that far away.” She says awkwardly. They were a fairly cuddly family. Tenebris usually sat close- they were all pretty used to it by now.

He tilted his head, and then rumbled quietly as he inched closer, stopping after a few scooches.

"Alright.” Was then the voice of Papyrus as he made his way to the couch, smiling as he held the brush up, though he stopped as he noticed the un-breaking gaze between Papa and Toki and he slowly cleared his throat. "Am I… interrupting something?” He asked softly.

“An… impromptu staring contest, I think. Or perhaps a dominancy contest.” Toki chimes, lifting a hand to wave it at Papyrus. She doesn’t feel the need to back down, and shrugs, visibly dismissing her gaze from the unnerving stare of Papa. “I’m not sure. I’d say it was maybe a contest to see who could hold out from blinking, but I think I’d win. I don’t have eyelids or eyeballs that need moistening. Come, sit- there’s plenty of space for all three of us on the couch.”

Papyrus took a spot behind her and started brushing out her mangled fur.

At that point was when Papa suddenly shifted from sitting up like they were, to laying like a lion sprawling among his pride, his form now close to hers. "How did you mean... for my mane...?” He asked.

“What?” Toki glanced down at him as he pressed closer. Her fingers twitched, and she rubbed her belly lightly as she leaned back into Papyrus’ grasp, her eyes fluttering a bit. She winced as some of the knots were yanked out. “You mean, for styling it? Well… I mean, if you trimmed off the dead ends, it’s likely to encourage more growth. It’s possible that it won’t ever fully grow back again though, so you might just need to pick a style that you like, and grow it that way, instead of going for the full dandelion look.”
He rumbled quietly as he looked up at her, before he huffed and set his head down as he thought about it with Tenebris.

Toki rolled her eyes at his huffiness, and reached a hand out to ruffle his little scraggly tufts of mane. “Tell Tenebris to look up different hairstyles. Like… Sideburns and other shit.” She says lightly. “Mmm… Ouch. Try grasping the hair above the knot, Pap. It’ll make it less tender when you’re working it out.”

As she extended her hand and scratched through the fur, Papa gave a pleased groan and reared back to encourage her continuance, his head craning back as a deep purr came from him.

Papyrus gave a soft laugh at the sight of the old beast getting scratches, but he had followed Toki’s advice and gently gripped the hair above the knotted fur and brushed it out against his palm, a happy hum leaving him as he did.

It was very nostalgic for her. Toki shifted, and her hand slid through his mane to all the little nooks and crannies that she knew he loved. She wondered if Asgore even knew about these locations. In response to both her husband's hands in her hair, and the purring beast slowly wriggling towards her already full lap, Toki found a soft purring noise buzzing out from her chest.

Papa was in a blissful state as he half kneaded the couch under him, his eyes barely open as her claws went to work on his neck

Toki was bemused. The beast pressed against her lap was warm and fairly adorable. She gave his mane more scritches, her claws being gentle so she didn't puncture his skin.

The knots in her mane came out quickly under her husband's guiding hands. Soon, layers upon layers of silky mane were laying flat, and a pile of broken, knotted hairs had been gently pulled out and set on the arm of the couch.

Free and soft, Toki's mane bristled up reflexively at the new freedom, and buried her husband in soft green dandelion fluff.

Papyrus gave a 'ah!' at the sudden overwhelming of emerald fluff but laughed and gently ran his fingers through them for a moment to admire before he shifted gears and started braiding her hair with impressive stride.

"What style of braids are we doing today?" Toki asks, as had become her usual fashion when he was braiding with gusto. Most of the time it was dread braids, but sometimes he experimented. She'd worn it in a fishbone braid once, and that had been pretty.

"I've got a running braid I want to try." Papyrus answered, starting on one section of her fluff.

"Oh?" She hums. "M'kay. I'm sure it will look beautiful." She chirps to him. Her fingers idly start to play with Papa's mane, and she starts to work small braids into it. Having four hands is fabulous. She can braid and give him pets all at once.

Papa hadn't a care in the world, purring as her pets continued. He didn't even notice her second pair of hands going to work in his thinner mane. Papyrus on the other hand was amused to watch her when he didn't have to peek at his own work.

Toki was a sassy little lady, but she didn’t do Papa wrong. She Braided his mane just right, so that he’d look at least somewhat decent. She hummed softly, and leaned back into Papyrus once she finished braiding what sparse hairs there were for her to braid. Since she didn’t want to disturb her braiding, she stopped her scritching, and instead settled for simply petting the top of his head.
Papa sighed happily as he looked up at her, smiling gently. Papa was a happy beast as he looked up at her, "Thank you~" He cooed softly.

Toki quirked her teeth into a lopsided grin at him. "I’m glad you’ve relaxed, Papa. You were awfully tense when you met me outside." She boops the space where his nose would be, and then hums as she lets him pillow his head on her thigh. The litter in her belly shifts, and kicks against the head invading her lap.

He rattled quietly, but smiled as he rested his head in her lap. He gave a happy coo as the pups acted up and he leaned his head up, grooming her ecto-swell with a louder purr.

Toki blinked as his tongue lathed against her shirt, making it ride up and no doubt staining it with his black ichor-like saliva. "… You’re staining my shirt." She tells him lightly as he grooms her belly and motors at her.

Clothes are for the domesticated, Papa grumbled to himself. He gave another grumble amongst his motoring but continued his grooming, his hands kneading against her thighs as he groomed.

Toki couldn’t stop the soft squeak that left her as his grooming slid her shirt the rest of the way up, making it rest under her breasts. She slid her hands to it, and tried to tug it down so he didn’t end up… well, grooming her growing teats. Dry and itchy they may be, she didn’t want them groomed by her father in law’s beast. Nope. Just… No. “Papa,” She huffs, “you’re a menace.” She tells him, no venom in her voice.

He grinned up at her before he rattled sweetly, nuzzling her before he settled down with his head against her stomach, his crown resting against the swell to take in all the baby kicks.

Toki exhaled and relaxed once he stopped licking her swollen stomach. She was too sensitive for him to be doing that- she’d be letting off all sorts of scents and that would make things waaaaay awkward. The litter were kicking and shifting though, woken and stirred by the rumbling purr of their technical sire pressing against their home. “Look at that.” She muses, looking at her writhing belly. It was so… weird to watch- like a bunch of aliens under her flesh. “You woke them up.”

He purred happily in reply and softly nosed her stomach, chirping and cooing as he rested his head on her stomach.

She grunted as he shifted closer now to rest his head on her stomach, semi-sort of pinning her in place as he nosed at her, chirping and cooing all the while. She leaned back while he was occupied, and glanced back at her husband. “… My stomach is being vigorously loved on.”

"Indeed it is, look at how happy he is. What a silly old man." Papyrus chuckled quietly,

"Indeed. Glad he stopped licking though. My… teats…” She flushed a bit, feeling incredibly awkward about voicing them like that, “are very sensitive and I don’t really want them groomed. That’s just… No.”

"That’s my job~" Papyrus felt proud of himself for that.

Toki paused, mouth open and about to say something. Then, she found she had no words at all. "... What?" She blinks finally and turns as best she can without disturbing his braiding so she can give him an owlish look. Had he just said what she thought he said?

"Nyeh heh heh heh!" Papyrus laughed as she found herself speechless.

"Did you just..." Toki stared. Then she pouted at him. "Teasing isn’t nice, love. Don't tease about
things you won't do." She puffs smoky air at him, and then gently rolls her skull back down to look at Papa. She bet Tenebris would be mortified about Papa nearly grooming her teats. Though...

Given that the old man had tasted her breast milk not even an hour after it came in, part of her doubted it. Beasts had absolutely no body shame, and part of that stemmed from just who they were at their core. She didn't either, really, not after everything that she had been through, but she had to draw some boundary lines.

"I’m not teasing you." Papyrus leaned around her mane and pressed a loving kiss gently to her cheek. "I love you. And once Papa takes his leave…" He purred as he slid a hand around her and rubbed it over her stomach.

Toki blushed at the insinuation, and giggled very quietly. Her teeth parted again as she inhaled, going to purr something no-doubt salacious right back to him, when she was interrupted by a throaty purr turning into a hissing growl.

Papa leered at the hand on Toki’s belly, and cast a glance at his son. He rattled a growl again, crown lifting on his head as his mane bristled. Unbeknownst to him, his mane was a silly string of well placed braids, so all that stiffened was a bunch of little braids. He looked quite silly, until one saw the sharp teeth that would very easily nip his son’s hand. It was his time with his unborn pups- he didn’t get time with them nearly enough. His older son could wait his turn.

Toki tensed, instinctively wary of such sharp teeth being bared against her soft, gravid belly.

Rather than growl back, Papyrus hugged Toki and rattled quietly. "Papa, quit your growling... You're scaring Toki."

Papa’s gaze sharpened and flicked up to Toki’s face, and how tense the mother wedged between them was. He cut his growling rapidly, but managed one terse sounding word for his son. “Mine.” He says flatly.

Toki’s not sure what to make of it, and her fingers tighten a bit over Papyrus’s femur. Not the bad one, thankfully.

"Your puppies. My Mate. And you're frightening her. She wont let you see the puppies if you scare her too much." He told him stiffly, his bones stiffening and quills starting to appear and rise a little bit to bristle at Papa. "Be nice to my mate." He growled quietly.

“My pups.” Papa rumbled. He closed his eyes and seemed to huff. “Mine. Don’t… get to see them often.” His main personality didn’t like to share them with him either. He glanced at the hands now hugging Toki’s chest, where they had been on Toki’s belly earlier. “Don’t want to share. Sorry I scared you.”

“It’s alright.” Toki grimaced gently. This was between them though- if it got out of hand, she’d tell them both to kindly shove it, and go elsewhere.

Her husband settled down, and then rattled before he nuzzled Toki. "I love you." He murmured.

Toki gave him an appreciative nuzzle. "I love you too." She says gently. Her arms all fold up around her ribs. "Is my mane finished?” She asks, to chase away the last of the lingering tension in the air.

"Yes. Tell me what you think?” Papyrus admired his work as he settled his hands around her chest.

Toki’s smaller set of hands slid up. Her secondary arms were dainty enough not to mess up his work. Her fingers roved over it gingerly, but ultimately... Toki was pretty sure she looked better in
something that wasn't the utility braid for horses. She wasn't going to tell him that though. "Its great, love." She tells him with false earnestness, thankful for once for her new skill at lying that she had gotten from Sequoia. White lies wouldn't hurt his feelings, and she didn't want to hurt them.
"Where'd you get the idea from?"

"I... Saw it on this one TV show for working horses... I don't think it works for circular manes..." He murmured, taking a moment to eye her critically.

Papa glanced up and grunted against her belly. "No. It does not look good."

She flicked his forehead, making Papa snort at her in displeasure. "Don't be an ass." She huffs. "I'm sure it looks fine. Circular manes are just hard to braid and style."

"Ill fix it later; its fine for now..." He murmured, nuzzling her quietly.

"Not fitting an alpha..." The alpha cuddling her belly huffed slightly. "It would be more distinguished at full length."

"You can leave it be until tonight when I take it out to sleep." Toki hums, and nuzzles him back warmly. She contemplates flicking Papa again, but it doesn't really do much good.

Papyrus was at least happy he could snuggle his wife without Papa getting huffy, and he gave her a small nuzzle as he gave another soft apology for the mane.

“It’s fine, Papy, really.” She nuzzles him gently. “If it bothers you, you can fix it whenever you like. You know I don’t mind you styling my mane. People know you’re the one who does it for me when I go out and about.” They’d also know he was the one who put this style on her- but she’d wear it with pride if it made him smile.

He donned a surprised look, then smiled and hugged her again. "That's good to know~ I best start learning more patterns then. Who knows, maybe Honey will grow some fluff too." He laughed quietly.

Toki gave him a bemused smile, and laced her primary hands with his. “I’d definitely love more patterns. As for Honey… I don’t think so. Remember, she was born before I was a beast- her and Skylar both. Any children we have now will be more beast than our oldest ones will be.” She says gently. “I’m not even sure what ratio of beast and skeleton I even am, to be honest… Papa- Er, Tenebris technically, hasn’t wanted to do testing while I’m pregnant. Maybe after… I don’t like not knowing what I am.”

"There's been a lot of that on TV more recently. Send in a vial of your saliva and they'll dissect your DNA down to the very country you had an ancestor in." He chuckled. "It's interesting that it's become so popular more recently. You think Father will do that for you once you've had the pups?"

"Well, I know my ancestors. Somewhere down the line, a skeleton got jiggy with my ancestor, and that's how I became an HTM." She snorts. "I just want to know what the make up of my body is. I don't look half skeleton, half beast." She didn't look like Papyrus, for all the similarities they shared. She looked more beast than they did, and with her crocodilian teeth and horns and claws, she mused that she always had looked more beastly.

Papyrus laughed at that. "'Get Jiggy'. That's hilarious." He chuckled quietly, before he looked down at her. "The void probably caused some changes to your DNA when no one was looking." He suggested.

“Either that, or when I was half-possessed by Cruelty.” Toki hummed. “If you remember, my bones
were reforming almost as fast as they were breaking down. But I’m willing to bet you’re right. The
void did some hinky things to me.” She sighs. “Why else would I melt into goo when my soul is too
far away?” She considered if maybe that incident had destabilized one of the little souls in her belly,
but didn’t press too far. They were distracting her, after all. “I was a full beast before, so I know it
did do a lot of things to me. It just reversed a few of them. Left the arms, the wings, the fluff, and the
different horns. I miss my old horns. I don’t like these ones.” Toki wasn’t fond of the ram-like horns.
She just… She didn’t like them.

“They’re big enough to counter mate’s horns.” Papa rumbled quietly.

Toki hummed. “They are big enough to take on Asgore.” She does agree with that. “But, they’re
very close to my skull, even if they do curl outwards some. It’s not nearly as much as Asgore’s do.”
She pats his head gently. “Though why you’d compare them to your mates horns, I don’t really
know, Papa.”

He snorted softly in defiance before he stretched and yawned widely.

She taps the space between his eyes where his nose should be. “I’m not going to challenge him, if
that’s what you’re thinking. I know where I sit in the pack. I think.” She’s actually not sure. “…
Actually, where do I sit in the pack structure?” Was she alpha female? Beta? How could she be
alpha female if she wasn’t mated to the alpha male? She wasn’t sure.

"Your mind-mate is a vicious female..." Papa answered, before he slunk off of Toki's lap to curl up
on the end of the couch, yawning widely. "She holds high in respect, but not higher than Alpha
Beast and mate." He snorted.

Toki opened her mouth to reply- it didn’t bother her not to be alpha, truly- when Dear practically
lurched to a halt in her mind. The beast fought to have her words heard, and Toki hissed gently,
lifting a hand to clutch her skull. “While I don’t have an issue not being an Alpha, Dear… Dear has
an issue with that.” Toki replies, grimacing a bit. “She says she is the only mature alpha female in the
hive- er, Pack, that’s currently reproducing, therefore she’s the Alpha. She’s… Quite adamant about
that.”

Papa sneered and rattled at that. "She would have to fight for the title. I am Alpha, I have been Alpha
for a long time. She would also need to fight Mate." He sneered.

Toki grimaced as her braided mane bristled up under Dear’s direction. She tried to smooth it down
with her hands. Toki knew who would win if it came down to a fight, and she didn’t want to bring it
to that. “Perhaps,” Toki says gently, “It might be… safer for your health and for Asgore’s health if I
were to split off from the pack? I don’t want to hurt you. Dear will. You know the power I wield,
Papa- you’ve seen it in Tenebris’ memories, have you not? I don’t want to hurt you or Asgore, and
that’s what would happen if a dominance battle happened.” She glanced back at Papyrus with a
concerned look. She didn’t want to make him split from his birth pack, but perhaps she may have to
formally split from the pack in order for Asgore and Tenebris to… well, be safe.

Dear was not nice, as they had all come to learn. Toki’s beast was vicious and unrelenting.

"Do not be foolish." Papa growled. "You are a valuable member of the pack."

“And any good member of a pack would know that the safety and health of its members is
paramount.” She counters. “Particularly with those of an alpha like mindset, but no actual urges to be
an alpha.” Toki could maybe consider herself… something outside the pack structure. A beta is not
fitting. Dear was an alpha, but Toki didn’t know what she was. “And I know that a dominancy spat
between Dear and you, or Dear and Asgore is going to end up with someone either dusted or in the
hospital. She’s not a nice beast, Papa. I know you remember the things she’s said- she’s twice as sharp with her claws as she is with her tongue. I don’t want either of you hurt- and I don’t want to hurt my mate by making him watch my body fight his sire and his father in law.”

Papa rattled quietly in thought, and then he rumbled. "An Alpha mind paired with an Omega. As the doctor would say, it's quite a marvel." He chuckled as he looked at her. "It certainly sings why you care so much."

"Omega?" Toki questioned curiously. "Is that what I'm classified as?" She blinks. "And I care... Just because I do. I love you all and I don't want you hurt, and I know I can hurt you. I could hurt you all so easily that it's not even funny. I don't want to though." Her brow furrows. "How does one leave a pack? Do I just say I'm leaving? Or is there a ceremony we need to do? I can live on my own pack wise." It just meant she couldn't participate in pack things with them- cuddling, nesting, or the like.

Papa rattled sourly before he leaned and plopped onto her lap again, "You don't" he growled softly, nuzzling her again with gentle consideration for the remaining pups growing in her belly. He was not daft- he knew she had lost one, and he would be extra gentle with them. "You are family. You are Clan."

"And family does what is best for family." Toki insists gently, grunting as he flops on her. Her skin hardens briefly, her magic rushing to reinforce her pregnant belly in worry for the fragile young within her. Once he settles, her skin softens again. "Papyrus." She looks back at her husband, exasperated. "You can tell me how to leave a pack, right? It's not like I'm not going to still let them adopt the pups when they're born, but I'd be separate, and there would be no reason for Dear and Papa to fight. Or Dear and Asgore."

Papyrus whined quietly, and wrapped his arms around her, giving her a squeeze. "No... Don't want you to..." Was spoken into her neck.

"Papy..." She sighed. "I would be leaving the pack. But I wouldn't be leaving you." She lifted a hand to smooth it over his skull. "I'd still be living here, I'd still be your Toki, your mate, your wife... I just wouldn't be pack. I couldn't ask you to leave with me, my love." Though Dear was rationalizing that all young alphas eventually started their own packs anyway, Toki wasn't having it. He was close with his family. She had been surprised when he'd moved out to live with her, honestly. She couldn't ask him to do this too.

"My queen..." Papyrus's tone shifted as he hissed quietly. "My mate...

Papa's eyes opened for a moment before they closed again, "Hello, Sentinel."

Toki stirred for just a moment as she realized she now had two beasts to contend with. "Sentinel." She soothes her hand gently over his skull as he hisses into her braided mane. "It's good to see you out, my love." She greets him warmly. "Are you aware of what conversation we were having?" She queries, wondering if he might answer her question for her.

He nodded solemnly. "Speak of leaving... Breaking the clan..."

"Only me." She says gently, adapting rapidly to his terminology. "You were a clan before me, and you would be a clan without me. But, I wouldn't be gone, gone. I would still be mated to you, I would still be here, be living with you, be married to you... But I would just be a little solo queen bee." She reasons gently. "I don't want to fight your sire. The way things are going, Dear and him will fight, or Dear and Asgore will, and it will be bad either way. I don't want to see them hurt. Do you?" She asks him gently.
Papyrus looked at her, then sighed and nuzzled her again. "Queen cannot be alone... no guardians..." He murmured.

"I don't need a guardian. I'll have a husband who loves me, and that's enough for me." She shifts and rotates her skull around so she can kiss him. "I love you. I'm not going to make you leave your birth-pack just because you married a woman with a very aggressively dominant beast."

The aggression did make sense though. For all that Toki was fluffy like a honey bee, she had looked frighteningly similar to her hell hornets. Hornets were not known for being friendly insects. Toki had been chased by them before. Unpleasant little creatures. Sugar was an exception in her friendliness.

He tilted his head, and then huffed and he nuzzled her, his lips pressing against her as the beast immediately took what he knew of kisses to give her one. "Birth-pack will be fine without me."

Toki blinked, and even Dear seemed taken aback. "... Are you sure?" She asks against his teeth, glancing down to the alpha still curled around her belly. "I mean... You were raised there. It was difficult for you both to move out with me at first. Are... Are you and Papyrus sure?"

"I am ready. Is time to grow." Sentinel nodded, smiling into his mate's shoulder. "Is time to grow new pack."

"You want to split with me then." Toki murmurs. Something warm bloomed in her chest, coming from not just her, but from Dear as well. Their husband would leave his pack to follow her- to create their own pack- when it was usually safer for one who had a disability to stay safe within their birth pack where they would always be treasured and supported. Toki shifts, disturbing Papa with only a small apologetic sound, and turns to press her forehead to his chin. “Thank you.”

Toki wondered what Papa thought, as he lay against her listening.

He cooed happily, and gave her a squeeze.

Papa listened with his eyes closed, but he smiled up at them. "She will make a fine Alpha."

“And so will your son.” Toki chimed gently. “And just because we’re leaving the pack doesn’t mean that we’re not family. But, it does mean that if you attempt to dominate Dear once she’s sure and firm in her own little pack, and she ends up kicking your ass, I’ve done my best to prevent it and you’ll have gotten what’s coming to you.” She couldn’t prevent everything- Toki wasn’t perfect.

That had Papa chuckling. "As if I was that foolish. I know the capability of an Insectis... No less the power of a queen."

Dear was preening in the back of her skull. “Really?” She hums softly. “From what I gathered from Tenne, Insectis were reclusive, and most people didn’t know much about them. How would you know the capability of one?” She teases lightheartedly.

He didn't reply. Papa simply stared up at her with a flat look.

Toki quirked a brow at him and then wriggled it just because she could. “Well... I guess that settles it.” She sighs softly. “We’re two packs then. How do we go about doing it? Do we just... say we’re splitting, and then bam, we’re split?”

Meanwhile his own brows furrowed, before they closed and he chuffed. "I suppose tradition can be broken... Just this once." He murmured, before he yawned. "Once I’m done using your lap for a pillow..." He chuffed.
Toki huffed. “And what if I feel the need to get up and stretch? Or want to reach for my cider?” She makes grabby hands at her drink. Yes, she could use Stripe who was lingering over in the fire, but that didn’t mean she wasn’t going to sass Papa.

Toki was full of sass. She wondered if she got away with it because she was an ‘omega’.

He gave a low whine and gave her legs a squeeze.

Toki gave a grunt as he squeezed her legs. “Ouch. Gentle. I don’t have much magic for reinforcing my body all the time, and you’ve got a lot of brute strength behind those big ham-hawk arms of yours.”

"My Pillow..." He whined quietly.

Toki hummed. "Your pillow is physically fragile." She chimes gently. If she made a sound of pain, Sentinel would get huffy, and no one wanted that.

He whined quietly and nuzzled her gently. "Sorry." He rattled.

The pregnant skeleton bee hummed, and then grunted as one of the pups kicked, distorting the skin under her shirt. “It’s alright. Though I do need to move- I’m cramping up from sitting in one spot for too long. Pregnancy has its downsides. I miss being stationary for long periods of time.”

Rumbling quietly, Papa sat up again from her lap and stretched as Sentinel gently moved away as well as to allow her the stretch room.

She rolled to her feet, and then rubbed her back. Several of her joints and bones cracked and popped as she stretched, and she made sharp buzz of discomfort. The cuddle piles were gradually becoming more and more uncomfortable, as she couldn’t completely prop herself in pillows to help cushion and support as she needed. “Mmm, ow. I could use a good soak in a hot tub or hot spring.”

"Hot springs." Both father and son seemed to love the idea.

At that moment, there was a soft knocking at the door and both men jolted to attention as they looked towards the door.
Chapter 134

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So- some of you who might have been re-reading may have noticed that I am slowly- so slowly- going back through and doing edits for TOTU. Because there is... a LOT of words to edit, and that’s putting it lightly, it’s going to probably take me a long time. I cranked out 5 chapters in one day, and sort of burnt myself out since Silver and I are also still writing current things, and IRL stuff has me worn down to hell.

That said- I’m going to put it out there that I would absolutely love if some of you, our loyal readers, would like to help me go back through TOTU and edit it. It’s a tremendously huge task- but it would improve everyone’s reading experience- yours, frequent re-readers, and those new readers that we get popping in.

I would be handling the fixing of names- Silver and I decided to finally just... give up the goat and give in to complaints of it being too confusing for some people, so I’m going back through and fixing all of the Aliquam’s to Papyrus, and the same for the Caeruleus. That’s what I would be handling. Which… In and of itself is a task, because my word Document doesn’t always work right.

What I would be asking of those helping me, and it's going to be a lot, I know, would be to go through, and find all of the punctuation errors, spelling errors, and capitalization errors. Lord knows, as much as I love Silverwing, she makes an assload of them and it’s a lot for me to keep up with. However, it wouldn't be all at once- we’d be going chapter by chapter, one at a time- or two or three, whatever you’re most comfortable with.

THAT BEING SAID. I would require those helping us to be AT LEAST 18 years of age, because of the nature of TOTU and the NSFW content that it has in some chapters, along with the themes in the story itself. I can’t stop underage people from reading, but I won’t hand it out to you directly.

If you’re interested, and meet the criteria of being at least 18 years of age, leave me a comment, and I'll supply you my discord info so we can discuss more over Discord.

Toki blinked, and then sighed and waddled for it. “Well, I’m already up. I’ll get it.” She was a bit bashful of someone seeing her mane, but… Well, it was too late to back out now. Toki opened the door. “Hello?”

"Hello Toki... Ho hum..." It was hooded River, holding a paper in their gloved hand. "I opened my hot springs, and was told that you would greatly benefit from a visit there. I can see to agree. Tra la la..."

Her mane fluffed a little in surprise. She had not expected to see river there. “Er… How… exactly did you know I would benefit from a visit there?” She asks, understandably a little unnerved. She’d just mentioned it to her husband and father in law like… literally minutes ago. After spending time around River in the other world, River was bound to give her heebie-jeebies.

River tilted their head, "Are you not pregnant? Or have you simply gained weight that rather
worryingly distends rather than weigh down?"

That had both Papa and Sentinel huffing and rattling soundly from the living room.

"The former, then?"

She’d… just got called fat. “Well…” She murmurs, her brows furrowing. “I am pregnant, yes. I’m sorry- you just had… interesting timing to a conversation I was just having.” Her mane ruffles some, and she nods slightly. She could put aside moderately hurt feelings for a dip in a hot spring. “I didn’t know there were hot springs around here. I’d enjoy going. Do you have an address to the location?”

"It was not easy to find, I looked very hard, ho hum." They lifted the paper out to her. "My apologies, I suppose that was rather harsh..."

She accepted the paper and gave them an awkward nod. “Thank you. And… kind of harsh. But it’s fine. I’ve heard worse earlier in my pregnancy.” She shrugged. “Thank you again. I’m going to go see about getting Papyrus and everyone roused up to going with me.”

"How exciting. I hope to see you there, Miss Toki." They gave a nod. "I best be off then, tra la la, I have to spread the word to the rest of the townspeople, though if you call, I will reserve you the family suite."

Toki nods. “Thank you.” She says. She waves to them goodbye, and then closes the door and waddles back inside towards Sentinel and Papa. “So… We have to call and reserve the family suite, but apparently there is now a hot spring we can go to.” She says lightly, cocking her hip just slightly to the side. Her wings flicked and she hummed as she looked at the paper in her hand. “It’s a bit of a drive. Apparently there’s… a log bridge over the river now, and it’s waaaay out in the woods.”

"Guardian will drive, I will rest until we arrive." Sentinel agreed.

“… Guardian?” Toki’s brows furrowed in confusion. “Is Guardian Papyrus, or me?” She didn’t mind driving, but she wasn’t sure she could fit or see over the steering wheel. She wouldn’t mind trying though.

He reached up and patted his chest. "He was a Guard." Sentinel murmured.

“Oh.” She blinks softly. “Okay. That makes sense. Well… I’ll go make the arrangement, if… you want to let Papyrus out so he can go get Honey and Skylar from Undyne.” She glances to Papa. “Same to you. You may want to get Tenebris out, so he can go fetch Thumper, and perhaps Sans. Though… A hot-spring is likely not a good idea for Solstice and Grillby to be at.”

Sentinel nodded and once Sentinel stepped aside in the controls, Papyrus sighed and stood up, while Tenebris came out and stretched one last time before he stood.

"I'm sure there will be alternative options for him." He rumbled, patting himself off before he gave a small bow to his daughter in law. "Toki.” He rumbled, before he turned to leave.

The bow was… different. Toki nodded to him. “I’ll see you soon, Papa.” She gives him a warm smile. Pack they might not be, but they would always be family.

She waddles off to make a call to set up a reservation. Hopefully for today- or she’d have to call Papyrus and Tenebris to tell them to leave the kids where they are. She also needed to make plans for someone to babysit the baby summons, and her cats- thankfully, Undyne was usually in town.
“So, are you sure you know where you’re going?” Toki inquired lightly to her husband, who seemed to be leading the train of cars that was threading their way through the re-building town. She relaxed in the front seat as best she could, awkwardly adjusting her seat belt as it rubbed uncomfortably over her many… teats. They were sensitive, and the belt going up her chest kept rubbing on them. Toki wasn’t sure what to do about it though.

“Daddy knows.” Honey chimes from her car seat. She waved to her mother through the rear view mirror, and then went back to playing with Skylar, making noises with her mouth to mimic the sound of a jet zooming around.

“Daddy always knows.” Skylar nods in agreement. “Oh no!” He exclaims. “The evil jet has been spotted. What ever will the innocent moon cows do?”

“Become my pets!” She cackles amidst her jet noises. “I’ll dress you in tutus and make you eat kale!”

Toki glanced to her husband. “Kale?” She questions to him lightly, her claws coming up to run through her mane. The braids had been undone shortly before they’d left, since soaking in a hot spring wasn’t good with a braid. She’d have so many knots. “I’m guessing you tried to get the kids to eat something healthy while I was missing.”

"Yes, I know where I’m going, dear." Papyrus answered with a soft laugh. "And yes. But to my defense, it half worked. They like spinach now."

Toki snorts. “And yet they still won’t eat green peppers.” She gives their children a fond look. “It’s just going to take time to expand their diets. But anyways- I’m glad you know where you’re going. I didn’t know there was a ‘bridge over the river’.”

"I think it’s newer than some of the other constructs around here. It certainly looked clean enough to be new." He agreed, checking behind him for a moment to make sure Sans' truck was still behind them.

The truck was still puttering along behind them. When his brother spotted him waving, he cheerfully stuck his thumb against the bridge of his nasal canal, and stuck his tongue out, wiggling his fingers and making a silly face at his little brother through the windshield.

Toki hummed. “Well, it would make sense it’s new. I’ve never had a bridge there before, besides the mossy rocks we used to cross when we went to that pond for valentines day.”

He made a face with a lighthearted ‘how dare’ sort of look at the sass his brother was giving him, before he focused once more on the road ahead. "Mmh, that was fun." He purred quietly. "Good times... You and I will have to do that again soon~"

“Mhm. Though... I think we need to put up a walking bridge.” She chuckles. “If only a temporary one, given the river’s flooding tendencies. With kids who are bound to want to go sometime too, and your leg too, it’s safer if we have a walking path.” She rubs her belly quietly.

"I agree. Perhaps if you suggest this to River, they would consider it.”

Toki blinked. “What? No, no, no. Not necessary.” She waves a hand. “I can call my brother about it. Kohaku is good at construction- so long as he’s not on a job, I can probably hire him to do some work here. He’d need our help holding boards, but I don’t mind doing it. Well... It’ll need to wait until after I’ve delivered and weaned the litter.”
Papyrus nodded in agreement, eye lights briefly being dragged from the road to follow the curve of her hand as it massaged along her swollen belly. He chuckled a bit to himself for letting his eyes wander and looked ahead to continue driving. "I think we're almost there, my love." He announced happily.

"We are?" She hummed. Toki paused, and perked up. "Oh! I see the bridge. According to the paper, it's a couple miles out of the town down the… 'road'," She copies the quotation marks on the paper using her secondary hands to make air-quotes, "but it's a fairly straight stretch with no side roads. I guess no one lives 'in the country' yet." She jokes. "If it wasn't for the fact that our house is in a pretty good location, and it's... well, been rebuilt twice already, I'd be tempted to move further out where it's more private and I can walk naked in the house without having to have the blinds down."

"I wonder if father is considering something of the sort. If he wants to raise the pups with the gifts of their Birthright, I imagine he would want a home a little ways out of town." Papyrus mentioned.

Toki hummed softly. "It does help being farther out. But, socializing is important for beast pups too." She hums. "In the other world, when we made it to the surface and were given homes, Tenne and I were given a home farthest from everyone else. We were also put in charge of the animals- cattle, horses, goats, chickens... It was nice." She lets out a soft wistful sigh. "Since I've come home, I find myself missing being so far out. We're away from the big city, yes, but small town life is... noisier than I remember it being." Toki didn’t often like to talk about what she missed from the other world, honestly- but sometimes biting your tongue wasn’t healthy. She didn’t want him to feel like she regretted coming home, but... maybe it was time he knew there were things she missed.

"Do you want to see about setting up a chicken coop in our back yard?" He asked. "Chicken dung is a great fertilizer, which would benefit an apiary."

Toki considered that with a soft hum. "Chickens would fit better than cows." She chuckles. "We don't really have the pasture space for them." She’d been good with the cattle. "... Did you know your alternate self was basically master of the chickens?" Toki chimes lightly. "It's... just ironic that you suggested them." She laughs softly. "Quinn adored them, and they adored him. Anyway... Chickens wouldn’t be bad. Getting another apiary set up though is going to be a lot of work."

He chuckled at that. "I might just end up being so lucky as to possess my counterpart's ability then..."

"Perhaps." Toki laughs softly. "I wasn't very good with them. I did better with the cattle. Four hands made milking easier, and I knew how to be gentle with their teats. After all, I had experience milking myself. Ecto-boobs are sensitive as heck."

"Mmh~" There was a low groan from him when she said that and his fingers flexed on the steering wheel.

Toki watched his knuckles flex, and her brows lifted. Oh boy. Did that make him a little hot and bothered? Toki couldn’t stop the grin from creeping up her face. She leaned over and nuzzled his shoulder. She was forever a dork with some things, and teasing was one of them. "Maybe," She purrs, "you could help me with that sometime soon? I feel so full, Papy... It's been some time since you've gotten to practice," She nuzzles his shoulder, "But of course, I don't want you to do something you don't want to do. I can always handle it myself if I have to."

"OhmygodToki." His knuckles seemed to pale a little bit as his grip tightened. "Please, I'm trying to drive. I don't need mental images of your goddess body distracting me."

"Are you sure?" She glanced back at the kids to make sure they were still busy. Yep, they had no idea what she was up too, too invested in their game of make-believe to hear what was going on
around them. Their innocent childishness helped to enable her mischief. “It’s not like there’s anything around to run into.” She purred again, her voice quiet and just for him to hear. Truthfully, after he’d made the turn across the bridge, it was just open forest. Nothing but trees as far as the eye could see. “Though… if you’d rather not think about my warm, plush breasts being cupped in your hands, I suppose that’s alright. To each their own~”

"Oh god Toki-~" His hips squirmed a little in his seats. "You have no idea how wonderful that sounds." He whined quietly.

“Well…” She grinned softly. “If you’re quiet, and can keep your voice down, maybe we might be able to do some naughty thing together in the onsen, if it’s mixed bathing.” She couldn’t lean up to press a kiss to his cheek, but she could giggle very softly into his shoulder. “We’d have to be very quiet though. We’re not going to be the only ones there, after all.” She cooed at him.

"You and I are not getting out of this car until I have at least fifteen minutes with your boobs." He demanded quietly.

Toki pushed her arms a little bit together, making her arms press her breasts together and plump them up some. Was it juvenile? Yes. Was she subtly flirting with her husband with body language? Yes. Was she allowed to do it after the week she’d had? Yes. It all kept her mind busy, and what kept her mind busy was better than letting her wallow in self-pity. “Mmm, that might be hard to do.” Toki pouts at him. “We’re not alone here, after all.” She grins. One hand slides over to rub his thigh apologetically. “You might just have to deal with a stiff one until the children are playing drown the bunny with Thumper in the bath.”

If he had lips, they would have curled back over his teeth. As it was, they ground slightly and his thigh tensed up under her hand. "Tokiko Nara Gaster, I will pull to the side of the road and tell my brother to take the children." He grumbled.

Toki blinked slowly at first, and then giggled softly. That made her warm inside and tingly in the best ways. “Oh? Is that a threat, or a promise?” She teases, fingers teasingly sliding up his thigh. “Can’t take your sweet wife’s teasing, my sweet husband? Or are you simply eager… for a taste…?” She coos in a low and sweet voice.

That seemed to do it. He almost hit the brakes and his teeth ground sharply as he gave a low cat-like snarl.

Sans stuck an arm out the window, seeming to be waving and wondering why the hell he was swerving.

Toki’s eyes got wide as he nearly hit the breaks, and both children in the back went quiet. “So much for keeping quiet so they didn’t hear, Papy.” She admonishes teasingly in a very, very quietly murmured tone of voice.

Skylar was the first to speak. “… Daddy? Are you angry at Momma?” He asks softly.

A moment passed before he lifted his head to smile at the children through the rear view mirror. "No. I just almost hit a rabbit. It was a daring little thing."

“You almost hit a bunny?” Honey gasps. “Good job not hitting it, Daddy! I know Grandpapa probably would have ran it over so he could eat it for dinner, but you didn’t. I’d have been very sad.”

Toki hid a soft snicker, and rubbed her hand up his thigh again. They couldn’t see her hand thanks to the center console, so she was fine with her small bit of mischief. Oh yes, she was a little shit. She
was also purposefully staying away from his pelvis, all of the promise there, but no of the action. His mind could do the work for her. “Grandpapa wouldn’t run over a bunny for dinner.” She corrects the children gently. After all, a car wasn’t much sport. Beasts were about being fair and sport— that’s why you’d never catch any of them doing trophy hunting like the human big game hunters.

Skylar was giving them both a suspicious look. “But you growled, Daddy.” He comments slightly.

“Well I’m sure you’d growl too if the bunny couldn’t make up his mind about which way to dive off the road.” He gave a soft laugh.

“I suppose so.” Skylar nods lightly, and turns back to his toys.

Once the twins are busy again, Toki grins at him. Her fingers tap on his thigh pointedly, before stroking the fabric pulled taut by his tenseness. “Indeed, what a silly indecisive bunny, not sure if he should run off the road, or keep going. So glad you’re the good driver that you are, my love.”

"Mh... you know what I would have done to the bunny if she kept doing what she was doing?” He murmured quietly.

Toki leaned a little towards him, her hand slipping up higher to just very gently nudge where his bulge would be. “Oh? And just what would you have done to that poor, sweet, innocent bunny?” She purred softly to him, some part of her deep inside trembling and almost eager to see his response.

"I would make sure there was nothing to interrupt us, and then I would have grabbed it by the neck and punished it accordingly.” He hissed under his breath.

Toki couldn’t stop the green flush that spread over her cheekbones. “Oh my. That… sounds like fun.” She purred. “So… if the bunny were to keep misbehaving… would she get punished?”

"Oh indeed." His claws were tapping the steering wheel.

Her hand on his thigh proceeded to brush her knuckles against the front of his pelvis. “Well then, I guess that bunny better behave.” She turned her face back to the front, drawing her hand from his leg and crossed her primary arms atop her gravid belly, making her breasts plump up. They bounced and jigged in the confines of her bra with each bump of the car over the uneven road. It was a little uncomfortable, but it would definitely have him half watching her. “Wouldn’t want to face the kitty’s claws, would we?” She purrs. Except that’s exactly what she wanted.

He gave another sharp sound, but this one was quieted so as not to draw their children’s attention. He was successful. "I feel like you want to." He responded, eyeing her with a sharp side-glance.

"Well... Your instincts are usually always right." She replied back just as lightly, rubbing her hands against her belly. She was going to drive him bonkers. She was already being driven a little bonkers herself. There was definitely an uncomfortable tingling in her lower belly. It was uncomfortable only because she couldn't soothe the ache and need permeating her being. "Though maybe not claws, but some nice teeth..." She purred.

At that, the half-beast grinned. "Well, then that settles it."

"Settles it?” She questions lightly, eyeing him with a half wary, half curious gaze that burned with well-hidden arousal.

"You and I will have some nice time to ourselves once everyone's gotten settled down." He hummed in innocence.
“Oooo. Well, I look forward to it.” She grins. “We may have to be sneaky, if there’s no nice little dark corners to sink into. Think you can do that?” She purrs slyly.

"Felidae are the masters of stealth and silence." He boasted.

“Oh? Are you?” She grins. “Mister ‘couldn’t even keep our little verbal word-play hidden from the kids’. I guess my ‘goddess body’ is too much for a felidae.” She purrs. “The desire to worship at my temple was too much for your mortal mind~” Toki teases jovially.

"I’ll do more than worship it.” He rattled.

“Oh? Are you going to plunder my temple, you fiendish fellow?” She purrs. “Not that I’d mind… plunder away~”

"I'm going to desecrate it~"

Toki couldn’t stop the blush that took over her skull, heating practically from her cheekbones to her horns. “Well then!” She squeaked, feeling a little like he’d turned the tables on her.

And with that, nothing more was said, leaving a smug grin on Papyrus's face as he continued to drive down the bumpy road.

Toki thought he looked like a cat that got the cream, ate the canary, and got away with blaming it on the dog. She didn't really have much else to say go that, so she just leaned in her seat, and relaxed for the rest of the drive with her face burning.

The drive was pretty, but it began to slope uphill rather quick. As it began to go uphill, the ground went from muddy and slightly wet to cold and crunchy. There was still snow at higher elevation, and Toki hadn't ever been out this far at this season. The further out they went, the more she started to see trees that had their limbs bowed under the weight of ice and snow. Soon the ground was covered in snow.

Toki blinked. "This is a longer ways out than I thought it would be. But I suppose a retreat from an already remote place must be even more remote."

"Look at the snow, kids." He chuckled. "Isn't it pretty?"

Skylar nodded. "I like the snow. I like to sit by the window and color while it snows."

Honey blew a raspberry. "We just had snow." She grumps. "And we just visited snow at the lake. Why do we have to see snow here?"

"Because Mother Nature does what Mother Nature wants." Toki chuckles gently. "If we're meant to have snow, we have snow. If we're meant to freeze, we freeze. Same with rain, sun, winds, flooding... All of it."

"Albeit that last one is rather rude when it's not the proper season for it." Papyrus piped up with a puff of bemused air.

"You haven't even seen the flooding we can have here." Toki rolled her eyes. "Why do you think Grillby's bar has reinforced doors and water stoppers to keep out a lot of it?" Toki hums. She'd noticed the same things in the new bar as the ones she'd implemented into the old one.

"Waterfall got flooded once." He answered lightly. "It partially backed up Snowdin as well."
"Most of the floods here are mild. Only three or four feet of water. But, every few years we get a flood that just keeps rising, and it'll cover the bottom floor of most homes." Hence houses being two stories tall. It was more than just for packing lots of homes in- it was also a defense mechanisms against the harsh weather wrought by all the magic surrounding Mount Ebott.

"Hopefully we'll all be ready for that... Sans might stress out a fair bit over his husband and daughter's safety." Papyrus's mind thought to his older brother's husband, and for a moment grew worried. "Do you think Grillby might think this is unfair?" He asked.

"Honestly, I don't know." She admits quietly. "It's... Hard, when you've got such a large difference in the family. The only onsen he could likely dip in is true liquid magma, and none of us could get even close to that." Well, perhaps she could, but she didn't want to test it. If she died by magma, she wasn't sure how she'd go about fixing that trauma upon the load. "Perhaps before we go in the water I could give him and Solstice some of my venom so they could relax? It's not a bath, but it's refreshing for fire elementals." She would try to make it fair for them as best she could.

"That would help a bit I'm sure." Papyrus gave a nod of agreement before he looked out his drivers side window. "Whoah... You see that plume of steam?"

Toki couldn't lean forward very far, but she did her best. Vaguely, and rapidly nearing as they approached it, was several plumes and columns of billowing steam rising into the sky. "So there is! We must be getting close now." She smiled. "I can't wait to relax. I haven’t been to a traditional onsen since I was a lot younger. Toki-made ones don't count."

"Even though that's the best kind there is?" He laughed, "then again, we don’t have the raw minerals like onsen do."

"True that- mine might feel nice and be portable, but a natural made one is just as nice. Any idea what kind of onsen this one is? Given the… magma deposit down in Hotland, I’m betting that’s how they got their heat.” Toki hummed softly, watching as they twisted and turned around the trees, slowly but surely bringing them around towards the spires of steam. “Maybe sulfur? I bet it’s on the paper…” Toki pulled out the paper again, and rifled through the information to see what kinds of minerals they’d be expecting in the onsen.

"Your guess is as good as mine, darling. Take a look at that paper while I park." He answered. Toki hummed. She scrolled over it as he found the place, and then started to get parked. “It looks like it’s a sulfur based one.” She replies lightly as he parks. “Which isn’t bad. Sulfur makes fur very soft, so my mane should come out even softer if we give it time to soak."

"Soft Momma fluff!" Papyrus celebrated with a laugh, before he saw Sans park beside him. "Alright pups. Go give your uncle advice on driving; we'll catch up."

Honey squirmed out of her car seat with ease, undoing the buckles like no human toddler would be able to. She reached over to undo her brother’s belt while he held their toys for them. “Why are Momma and Daddy gonna catch up?” He asks curiously.

Toki dry-swallowed. She had an inkling as to what was coming. “Mommy and Daddy are going to discuss some things about the bath, sweetheart.”

“Okay.” Skylar nods, accepting her words easily. He scrambles out of the seat with their toys, and then hops out the door. He waddled around to his sister’s side, helping her out, and then they both scooted towards their uncles car.
Toki watched them go, and then arched her brows at her husband. “You know they can see us through the windows, right? And they’re going to know something’s going on when the car rocks on its axels.” She grins.

"Who said we're doing any of that right now?" He pulled her close and pressed his face into her neck, giving a sharp bite to her collarbone with a low growl.

Toki let out a soft squeak, and groaned gently as his teeth sunk into the flesh partially covering her collarbone. “Mmm… Not going to do any of it, hm?” She plumped up her breasts again, and toyed lightly with the buttons on the front. “I do believe you demanded just a few moments with my breasts~” She purred.

"Not yet at least." He promised, letting up with his bite before he sank his face to her boobs, pressing into the fabric with a grumble revolving around ‘remove this before I do.’

Toki snickered softly. “If you rip my shirt, then I’m going to be stuck shirtless, and everyone will be able to ogle my breasts.” She says lightly. Toki wriggled one of her hands under him, and then gently undid her buttons. “Be gentle, or you’ll lose privileges,” she teases. “Don’t want to pop holes in them, do we?” She’s not entirely certain that she wouldn’t leak if he pressed too hard on them.

He gave a low grumble and pressed his face to her skin. "You temptress... You know how much I treasure your body and yet you tease me with it." He huffed in a deep breath, inhaling her scent.

"Well, what else would I do with a body like this besides tease you with it?” She stroked her fingers up over his skull, and then down to his vertebrae. She stroked them gently. “Besides… me thinks, mister Gaster, that you enjoy when I tease you and get you excited.” She purrs. “Are you enjoying what’s rightfully yours?” Her body was his to enjoy- and enjoy she knew he did. Particularly since she’d learned of his delight with breasts. She was surprised he married a skeleton, since they didn’t naturally have them- but she supposed that people loved and married people who didn’t meet all of their kinks all the time.

He gave a soft croon in reply and kissed her ecto-skin softly. "You are wonderful~" He cooed happily.

"Are they just as soft and full as you imagined them to be?" She inquired of him warmly, her eye lights glittering in bemusement as his words sent a ripple of vibration through the soft flesh.

"So very soft indeed, my love~" He answered. "Let us join the others, so that I might claim you sooner..." He looked up at her with a soft grin.

Toki snorts. "Well, I need to do up my buttons again, to do that I need to have your face out of there first." She gives him a wily grin, and gently pulls him up to kiss him. While she kisses him, her fingers fix her shirt. "You're in charge of finding a comfortable spot that's also fairly secluded in the onsen.” She purrs at him.

"And you just keep doing what you do, being absolutely beautiful~" He purred, kissing her longingly before he backed away to let her redress as he grabbed his cane from the backseat and got out of the car.

"I'm hardly beautiful, but alright. I'll try." She chuckles and fixes her clothing before getting out.

Papyrus came face to face with his brother. Well, face to face in the sense that he was at the end of the car, waiting for them with Solstice in his arms, and a toddler on his shoulder. The other was visible behind them, riding on Thumper's shoulders and babbling animatedly to her technical uncle.
"Well, looks like that 'talk' took a bit, eh bro?” He wriggled his brows. "Helping her find some info on the brochure?"

His big brother knew about their shenanigans, and was keeping it PG for their sons’ sake.

Almost immediately Sans got the stinkiest stink eye from Papyrus. The younger brother huffed out a sharp breath and settled down and came closer, pecking his son on the head. "Indeed. Though we are done now, so let's help the older men out and see about going inside." He suggested.

"Who are you calling old!?" Tenebris heard that.

“It’s not calling you old if it’s stating the facts, Papa.” Toki laughs heartily as shuts her door. She waddles around the car, two hands on her lower back, and gives him a teasing two-handed salute. “Now come on. Lets go inside before Thumper freezes his feet off.”

“Shoes suck,” The boy sticks his tongue out and blows a raspberry, “too constricting.”

“Only for you, mister big, fluffy rabbit paws.” Toki blew one right back at him, and then opened her arms as he hopped over to give her a hug. She kissed Honey too, since honey was right in range atop his shoulders.

“I’m glad you’re feeling better, Toki.” He mumbles into her belly. “I was worried we were gonna lose you too.”

“Not gonna happen, sweetheart.” She ruffles his ears gently. “I’m gonna keep getting better, kiddo. Now… Lets go inside. I for one want to see what sort of onsen this is- just a hot spring, or hot spring and hotel. Not that we really need hotel rooms, mind you. We live like… what, was that an hours drive almost?”

“Yes.” Grillby crackled gently. “A little over, I believe. It was enjoyable though. Regardless… lets go inside.”

“Oh!” Toki paused, mouth opening for a moment as she recalled what she wanted to do. “Grillby! I wanted to offer you some of my venom to help you relax, since you can’t get in the water with us. Same for Solstice.” She smiles at him.

"I want to compare this to something humans do." Sans snorted quietly, "But I got nothing."

Toki quirked a grin. “Enough venom with a specific pheromone attached to it can induce a… relaxing effect, sort of like a big… hit of a specific herb, or perhaps a light bit of an added adult drink to some hot cocoa.” Toki choicely edited her words for the children surrounding them. “However, it’s entirely non-addictive, at least that I’ve seen, and it’s harmless for fire folk.”

Grillby nodded, and held out his arm. “We’ll hold off for Solstice. I’m not sure the effects it would have on her.”

"Of course.” She nods. Toki took his arm, and lined up her primary stinger to where his vein would be. She slid it home, and let some venom ease from her, watching Grillby flinch at the initial sting, but relax at the effects afterward. His flames spiked up a bit from the added energy, but he seemed more sedated, eyes gazing up to watch the steam curl.

Toki drew her arm away before he had too much; just enough to relax him, but not too much to make him a danger to his daughter. “Alright. Shall we go inside now?”

"Yes, before you inspire Sans to make more bad jokes.” Papyrus groaned quietly.
He could see the grin on Sans' face as he collected his husband. "You're runnin' warmer, babe. How you feel?"

"Mm... It's all good." Grillby hummed, and leaned over to scoop up Solstice from his husband’s arms. "...Wow. Her flames are so... blue." He mumbles.

"My god, he's zonked." Sans quietly pulled out his phone to record him.

Toki’s mouth twists and pinches, and she giggles. “Okay, I might have given him a bit much, but he’ll burn through it quick. It’s designed to be metabolized quickly.” Toki gave her brother in law a smile, and then waddled for the front door. “He’s probably going to be entranced with her flames for a while.”

“No harm in it.” Asgore chuckles softly. “Well, let's go inside. We have to get dressed down, and read the rules of the onsen.”

Tenebris rolled his eyes at his eldest boy, before he chuckled deeply. "At least Solstice is not in danger of a secondhand effect.” He rumbled as he passed by the crowd, tugging his mate along by the hand as he did. "Come on, Thumper, let's be out of this blasted cold."

“Yes Dad!” Thumper hustled after him.

Toki led the swarm inside, and found it warm and dimly lit.

Lo and behold, behind the front desk was her younger brother. Kon’s neon green hair was limp like sad seaweed from being in and out of the steamy air, and he seemed to be avidly texting- or perhaps sexting knowing him- someone on his phone. He looked up when they came in, and blinked. “Oh. It’s you guys. Oh shit fuck- ah, hello!” He greeted cheerfully. “Welcome to River’s Retreat and Onsen, powered by the geothermal power of Hotland in the ground far below!” He chirped. “My name is Kon Nara, have you made an appointment today?”

Toki smirked, and then snickered. “You got a job here, Kon?"

“Shut up, Toki.” He gave her a tight smile. “You had an appointment?” He turned to his much more professional brother in law.

"More like a reservation, dear brother-in-law." He answered. "This location is an onsen and an overnight hotel, yes?" He asked.

“Indeed.” Kon rubbed his hands together lightly. “It’s an onsen and overnight hotel. Let me look up your reservation.” He didn’t recall making it, which meant his lovely coworker had to have made it. He looked it up in the computer, and made a pleased sound. “It looks like you’ve registered to reserve the royal wing- wait, the entire royal wing? Holy fuck- for... the next three days? Is that right?”

"We did kind of bring the whole family." He gave a soft laugh.

Meanwhile Tenebris was grumbling and was pulling his arms out of his sweater sleeves, the humidity already getting to him.

“Indeed you did. Ah, well, the royal wing comes with six fully furnished rooms, an outdoor garden maintained with magic all year round for your pleasure, two outdoor royal sized hot springs for you to use should you decide to segregate by gender. Tea and food is available from five in the morning until midnight, but you’ll have free range of the kitchen after that.” Kon glanced at Toki and coughed gently. “Particularly with your, ah, cravings, sis. Anyways... You can pay once your stay is over.”
He motions to the left. “Please bathe yourselves thoroughly before you enter the onsen. We’ve got magical measures to help keep them cleaner than ones humans would have, but still, please don’t dirty them extra. Go ahead and go get comfortable. Robes will be provided for you to choose from inside of your suite.”

Toki nods. “We’ll wash thoroughly before we enter. Thank you.” She glances to her family. “Shall we go before Papa strips too much further?”

"Indeed. Come along everyone." Papyrus agreed, leading the small family of beasts along to the deemed 'Royal wing'.
Chapter 135

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Everyone loves a hot spring. Including skeletons who don't even technically need to use a hot spring.

Also fun fact- I broke my toes the other day. It's just not my week. Anyway- we're slowly running out of chapters (as in, two left as a surplus for posting) so it may come down to post as we finish them. With Silver and I both working (increased hours for me, WOOO!), and her being easily distracted by her family and girlfriend during the times that we both do have off, it makes writing difficult. Not impossible, but difficult.

NSFW warning? Ish? It's at the end, so most of the chapter is safe, I promise.

Toki waddled along, sighing softly as she explored the place with her eyes. The group made it to the Royal Wing, and stepped through the doors to the suite, where Toki hummed softly in surprise. "Ah. Shoes off, everyone. We've got slippers to wear, and robes to dress in. Well... We've got to find our sizes."

The rooms were large and well spaced, with tatami mats covering most of the 'halls' between them as well as the common room between all of the rooms where the inhabitants might relax. There was no step up like there might have been in other places, but there was spacing between the hardwood floor, and the softer tatami mats that made up the rest of the floor. There were also lockers for shoes, and plush and fluffy slippers in a variety of sizes to keep their feet warm.

The walls weren't made from rice paper, but a thick and hardy wood designed to survive the harsh winters of the area. The walls were carved with intricate designs however, and seemed to have been painted with a metallic paint to make them shine, or perhaps inlaid with a type of metal.

Inside the rooms were large and plush futons, the flat mat like beds thicker than the average one a human might have used. It was likely to compensate for the fact that most of the monsters were large and weighed a fair bit, and wouldn't have found comfort in ones a human might have traditionally used. Considering that most of the patrons were likely to be monsters, it made sense for River to have catered to it being a mostly monster based society. There was also a full sized table in the room, with tall, standing chairs likely to account for the many tall monsters whom would surely visit.

Toki wasn’t going to complain. She wasn’t sure she could sit in a traditional seiza, or even get up if she had to sit on a zabuton.

Not far from the futons were the closets, tastefully hidden behind a folding screen so that one may change in relative privacy without the risk of someone walking in.

Toki hummed, and slipped her shoes off. She toed them up into her hand, and carefully put them into the provided lockers, before shuffling into a fluffy pair of slippers that looked to be her size. Oddly enough, they were. Now that she looked, all of the slippers seemed to be sized specifically for everyone. “Huh…” She wondered how they knew their sizes.
Once in her slippers, Toki waddled ahead of the two packs, and peeped into the rooms. She hummed, and quietly chose the one across the hall and common room from the one with three beds. No doubt the children would nest there, so it would be easy for the twins to find them if they needed them. She waddled in to check it out, and made a surprised noise. "Oh! Yukata- I was expecting robes. River really did go all out." She made a pleased sound, and selected one of the... Well, rather large woman's yukata. The large sleeves meant both arms could fit in them, and she could secure it properly around her pregnant swell. She examined the light pink fabric covered in beautiful floral patterns, with silky bees and butterflies, and made a pleased sound. She didn't like to wear kimono, but yukata were lightweight and much more comfortable, even if they weren't even half as pretty as a traditional kimono.

Papyrus hummed contentedly as he entered the room, and began to change his clothes as well. He smiled at her. "You look so cute in that yukata~" He laughed gently, changing into his own to take a look at it. It was almost gunmetal gray, but the markings made it very clear. He was wearing a suit of armor, albeit one made of soft, exposable fabric. "Heh... this is cute~" He chuckled quietly. "Do you think they're all made custom like this?" He asked.

"I have no idea." Toki chuckled softly. The tightened the obi lightly, and tied it in the front before sliding it around behind her in a traditional bow. She used to be able to tie it behind her, but she'd since given up on that skill. Besides, why do that, when she could make sure it looked nice in front of her before sliding it around behind her? "We're going to need to help the kids with theirs though. Come on, handsome." She gave him a warm smile. He looked good in his- it reminded her of the armor he no longer wore.

They hadn't even left the room when Skylar started calling to them. "Momma! Daddy! How do you wear these things?"

And then there were two naked little skeletons bursting into their room, holding two yukata. Both were flamboyant colors- obviously two little girl’s yukata based on the obi.

Toki gave them a resigned but endearing sigh. "How do you manage to get naked so fast?" She asks no one in particular. "Alright, come here, children. Get on the chair, and I can help. Thumper?" She calls. "Do you need help too?"

"No, I've got it!" He called back.

Papyrus came over to help the child that his wife didn't, Skylar in this case, his hands moving quickly to upright the yukata in his pup's hands before putting it on him, he secured the wrap around him before he smiled. "Ta-da"

Toki watched Papyrus and hummed, before smiling at Honey. Toki wasn't going to comment on her son wearing a little girl's yukata- he could wear what he wanted to wear. "Alright, sweetie. So, I know you like to be a big girl and get dressed on your own. I'm going to show you the first time though so you can do it on your own next time, okay?"

"Okay." Honey nods, eager to learn.

"Alright. So, first thing. When you wear a yukata, it's folded left over right." She explains gently, and folds the left side over the right side, securing it loosely with her secondary hand as she grabbed the obi. "And then-"

Honey interrupted her. "Why's it left over right, Momma?"

"Well," Toki began, "left over right is used for living people. Humans sometimes bury their dead,
and if they're buried in yukata or kimono, they're folded right over left to signify that it's a corpse. I don't know why it's like that, but it just is.

"Ohhh." Honey blinks. "Okay. That's really cool to know. What do we do with the string thing?"

"The obi," Toki holds up the aforementioned 'string thing', "is tied like so." She ties it in a lovely bow in front of Honey, and then twists it around to her back. "You don't want to leave the bow in front." She says gently, knowing her daughter would ask, "It's not something I can explain to you now at this age, but it's very inappropriate."

Honey nods, and once she's straightened out, she hops off the chair to twirl. "I feel so pretty!"

Toki giggled gently and straightened up, glancing to her husband. "Someone likes yukata." She laughs.

Skylar was soon finished as well and Papyrus got up to let his son get a feel for his outfit. "Indeed so. It suits her... How does it feel, Skylar?" He asked gently as he set a hand on his son's head.

Skylar flapped his arms for a moment, and then made a pleased noise. "I like it. It's so loose! It's like being naked without being naked. Why don't we have these at home?"

"Mostly because your Momma is silly and never bothered to get any made." She laughed softly and patted his head. "Alright, go make sure Thumper knows what he's doing, kids. We'll be in the common room." She had every intention of going into the hot spring from here, but they had to wash first. She wondered if the showers were segregated or not.

"I wonder if Father and His Majesty received their own Yukatas as well... Oh goodness, imagine a toddler sized one for Solstice!" Papyrus got a soft giggle at that mental image.

Toki giggled gently. "I'm trying to imagine your brother wrangling his slightly stoned husband into a yukata. It's definitely an image. Solstice is going to be adorable though." She linked her arm gently with her husband's once she had put their clothes away, and then walked with him out towards the commons. "It's most likely that everyone has yukata. They're fairly common at onsen." She explains.

"I certainly plan to shake the hand of whoever had made these in the short time before we arrived, this is so comfortable it is as if it was made with my very measurements." He hummed happily.

"Well, considering that they were likely commissioned by Lana, and knowing how Monsters think that there is probably exactly one fitted for every monster in existence, its safe to say that yes, she would know your exact measurements. Though that's not exactly hard." She teasingly pokes his hip. "Other than your very broad chest and shoulders, you've a pretty slender set of hips, my love." She giggled.

"They aren't child-bearing like yours but at least they can take the likes of your lovely form." He teased.

"You enjoy my childbearing hips," Toki teases him lightly, her voice low so she didn't disturb everyone else. Her eye lights flicked around the room. There were couches and a big table surrounded by chairs for everyone to enjoy meals at. From the commons was the door out to the showers that lead to the hot spring, as well as the door that lead to the outdoor gardens. The gardens had a glass wall so that everyone inside could look outside. "It's... Lovely here. Wow." She mused gently.

Papyrus looked around the room. Sans and Solstice were already in their robes, the small skeelemental twinkling cheerfully in her mother's lap.
Tenebris and Asgore were just stepping into the main room as well, Asgore combing his fluff out to over his yukata while Tenebris was chirping happily at how his even had the accommodation for his tail in the form of a matching wrap for around his tail blade.

Toki shuffled her wings uncomfortably under the yukata. That was the only thing she didn’t like, was her wings were pinned to her back, and her yukata only had two arm holes. They were perhaps custom in pattern, but they were traditional in design. Except for Tenebris, but he did have a foot long butt knife attached to his backside.

"Sans? Where's- never mind." She spotted him within minutes.

The fire elemental was staring out the window making soft mystified noises. He didn't seem as out of it as he had a few minutes prior, which meant it was wearing off, but he was still not nearly as stoic as he usually was.

She'd dosed him way too much. Apparently this Grillby was a lightweight compared to the one in the other world.

Thumper came out with the twins laughing behind him. He was flustered, and his ears were pinned. Toki arched a brow. "Everything okay?"

"Yes." He huffed. "I just had my yukata on wrong. It's embarrassing to realize you put it on wrong and get called out by a bunch of kids."

She ruffled his ears as he wandered past, her brood trailing after him like ducklings. "That it is, that it is. At least you’re sorted out now. So! Are we ready to go bathe while Grillby relaxes with Solstice?"

"It was your first time, you'll get it right next time." Papyrus assured Thumper, before looking to Sans as he got up. Papyrus smiled as his brother walked over to his husband to pass off their precious daughter.

Tenebris and Asgore approached with smiles on their faces, "I am indeed quite ready~" the beastly scientist rumbled happily.

"As am I." Asgore nods. "It has been too long since I have soaked in a hot spring."

Toki nodded, and waddled her way to the shower door.

To her mild dismay, it was a mixed bathing bathroom. She pursed her teeth and sighed. Well, no privacy. Just open stalls upon open stalls, and the room was hot and steamy for whatever reason. "Well, it looks like it's a mixed bathing showering room. So, we'll all be nude and cleaning together."

"Oh good heavens." Asgore blinked. "Well... This is going to be interesting. I've never done mixed bathing before. Well, not publicly at least."

Toki snorts, and waddles over to the baskets of clothes. She pauses however, as she spots someone else in the room with them. Her mane fluffs up in surprise, and she realizes exactly why her brother worked here.

"Not like I have anything to hide." Tenebris snorted, though Papyrus saw his wife staring and he followed her gaze, before doing the exact same, gawking.

On the other end of the room was a light pink sheep monster; at least, that's what everyone would guess from the cloven hooves and the wool on them. But rather than the curly mess that usually
adorned the familiar monster, her wool was weighed down by humidity, hugging her frame and bringing her true shape to light.

Her form turned as she heard the group come in and her light green eyes gleamed before she smiled and gave a soft bow. "Welcome!"

"Certainly explains the perfection with these yukata." Tenebris was the first to break the silence.

"Mostly perfection." Toki muttered mostly to herself, her wings again twitching against the silky surface. She stared a moment longer, because wow, one would not expect those curves to be on Lana under all that wool- and then she had to stare for even a moment more when she realized the sheep was in a bikini, and likely had been cleaning or doing maintenance. When she could blink and look away, she coughed and elbowed her husband. "It's good to see you, Lana. I wasn't expecting to see you working here though." She hums, and continues for the clothing baskets, taking both her husband and her brother in law with her.

There was a soft ‘oof’ from Papyrus, before he trailed along after her.

Her children were already stripping so they could shove their yukata and obi into the baskets.

Asgore elbowed his mate, and took him towards the other side, Thumper joining them.

Lana gave a soft giggle. "It is good to see you as well, Miss Toki! I hope you have been enjoying the onsen in the time you've been here. How does your yukaaaataaaa fit?" She asked.

"Well, so far everything is beautiful." She smiles to the seamstress. "It was a pleasant surprise to see that Kon got a job here. As for my yukata, it's lovely. I chose the biggest size that was in my closet, so it fits nice and loose around my belly. It also has enough room to fit both pairs of arms in the sleeve, so that's nice. Only thing cramped is my wings, but what can you expect from a traditional yukata?" Toki wondered idly if she'd grabbed the wrong one, but honestly she didn't know. There had been dozens in the dresser to choose from.

Lana tilted her head before she nodded in understanding. "A simple fix. I have finished my duties so I can easily maaaaake some openings to aaaaaaccommodaaaate your wings." She offered.

Toki blinked as she reached behind her to work on undoing the knot holding it together. "What? Oh no, I couldn't possibly ask you to edit one of the communal yukata for me. I'll be fine, I promise."

At that, the sheep shook her head "Communal? I made these ones myself." She announced. "I knew you would be coming, and so I preppaaaared aaaaaccordingly."

Toki blinked. "But... Once we go home, won't these be staying?" She asks, hesitating to shrug off the yukata itself while Lana was still there. Her beast family had all seen her belly nipples, but she didn't really want to flaunt them outside of that. "I mean, if you want to edit slits in the back, I can't change your mind, and my wings would certainly thank you."

She gave a smile. "Only if you waaaaant. They are your yukaaaataaaa's..." With that, she gave a small bow. "I will go and collect my sewing set."

Toki nodded back gently. "Thank you, Lana." She gave her a smile. "Take care... And go flaunt it, girl. Make my brother drool." She grins at her.

"Would it be expected for aaaaanything less~?" She winked at her with a soft giggle and strode out of the room like she was on the runway.
Toki wasn't ashamed to say she watched her go. Damn, his brother had landed a looker. Shaking her head, Toki shrugged out of her yukata and undergarments, leaving herself naked. She lightly rubbed her belly, noting that her teats were swollen along her belly. She waddled for the shower after kicking off her slippers and stuffing those away too. "Alright kids, let's wash up. Papy, careful with your cane. The floor is a little slick."

"Noted, thank you."

The children undressed and followed her to the showers, with Papyrus trailing behind at a slightly slower pace to make up for his cane, thankfully his had a rubber base so it wasn't sliding around too much, as long as he didn't put too much weight on it he seemed to be fine.

Toki kept a watchful eye on him as they went, and tried to keep her back away from. Her father in law and Asgore. Unfortunately, in turning around to help her children wash, she got a very unfortunate view of Asgore's hairy sheathe as he helped make sure Thumper was as thorough as he needed to be, and she got to learn more about her monster family than she ever wanted to.

Toki carefully cleaned her kids bones until they were spotless, and then had them wait for her as she rinsed and washed and made sure she scrubbed every crevice in her ectoflesh and bones. She read the rules sign while she did so. "So it doesn't look like cloths and towels are allowed in the water, but we can take towels out to let us dry off to walk back in."

"Sounds about right." Papyrus nodded in agreement.

"Does that mean I should remove the tail-wrap?" Tenebris would then ask, "I think that's a safety measure to keep it covered, Pops." Sans then piped up.

"I'd keep it covered." Toki hums, and works to get the areas under her breasts clean. Everything had to be cleaned to go in to prevent bacteria from growing in the pools. "The twins are going to play, and we'd all panic if they run into it when it's un-blunted." She says, turning and lifting and rotating her wings so they could be rinsed and rotated.

Skylar grabbed a wash cloth, and began to wordlessly help her scrub the bottom tips of her wings and her ankle furs.

"Aww, thank you, my boy." Toki gave him a warm buzz. "You're such a sweet child. Thank you."

"You're welcome, Momma!" He hums. "I know you can't bend down to get them."

"Meanwhile, I'll get up here." Papyrus announced, putting some soap on Toki's mane before he started to lather it up, a smug look on his face as he happily laid claim to her fluff.

Sans immediately caught on and laughed from his spot where he was scrubbing up. "Wish you were here, babe; your fire is like fluff so I wouldn't feel so left out." He joked to the absent Grillby.

Tenebris rolled his eyes, but smirked shamelessly as he did the same with the back of Asgore's fluffy mane. "Aren't they being silly, Asgore?"

"Extremely." Asgore chuckles gently, and turns to lather up Tenebris as well. "Such are young ones though. Ah- Thumper, come here." His attention slips from his mate to their furry son. "You're missing the soap on top of your head. Let me help."

"Okay!" The rabbit shook his head, soaked ears flopping and slapping at their arms as he got the water out of them, and he offered the top of his head for him to scrub.
Toki watched her brother in law mostly talking to himself, and laughed. She reached over, and gently tugged him under the spray with herself and her husband. “C’mere, brother. Just because Grillby isn’t here for you to enjoy his fluffy fire, doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy some fluff. Papy’s got claim to my mane, but you can work on my wrists while I help you. A mutual cleaning, if you will.” She wriggles her wrists at him playfully, and then reaches up to assist him in cleaning his shoulders where he couldn’t get by himself. They may not be pack anymore, but he was family- and familial grooming was pleasing her beast. “Just don’t poke yourself on the stingers. They’re retracted, but if you poke your fingers too far into the housing you’ll probably get pricked. I don’t think you’ll enjoy it half as much as Grillby does.”

Toki pauses, and glances back at Papyrus. “I’ll scrub your back after you’re done with my mane, love. Gotta get all the hard to reach places, so there’s no bacteria in the hot spring. That’s how people can get sick.”

"Ayyyy, Sister's lookin' out for me!" Sans laughed, carefully cleaning her fur as she returned the favor with his bones. "You're good to me, Tokes~" He hummed happily.

“You’re family, Sans.” She gives him a warm smile. “I always try to look out for my family.” Her fingers are smaller than his, and she slips them under his shoulder blades and into other crevices, cleaning them out swiftly and effectively between switching hands as he massages her fur. “Speaking of- you’re aware of the split in packs, right?” She questions gently.

"Whoooooo." He gave a loud sigh as her fingers delved into his bones. Her words made him twitch, before he looked back at her. "A split in th' packs?"

"Yeah." Toki nods softly. Her first digits worked his spine next, hoping to keep him relaxed. Well, sort of. She was half bumping into his tailbone with the swell of her belly, so she couldn't imagine that was comfortable. "Papyrus and I are branching off to make our own pack. The way things were going, it was going to come to blows with Dear and Papa, or Dear and Asgore if Papa pressed the alpha female issue." She hummed. "Its safer this way, because... Well, Dear will hurt them. I'm not mean by nature- you saw that when Grillby was trying to teach me to fight. You saw how much he had to push to get me to snap. Dear doesn’t need that push to do so much worse. Considering she has access to all the power that I have..." It would be one lone beast monster basically getting a beat down by a beast wielding the power of Kindness and Cruelty- of Balance itself.

There was a sort of noise of surprise from Asgore as he overheard it. "I hadn't considered that point." He mumbled. He nudged his mate gently as he finished helping Thumper rinse. "Had you considered that?" A dominancy spat with Toki would probably be fatal. No wonder she had wanted to split so bad to keep them safe.

"Huh..." Sans looked at her, before glancing up at Asgore and Tenebris as they came to discuss it as well.

Tenebris rumbled at his mate, before he gave a nod. "I remember my beast telling me what I had ended up missing in my rest... and indeed it makes sense." He answered. "Rather than who runs the pack as a whole, as we run different clans, we simply lay claim to this land as neutral territory. There is no tension if peace is kept, which should be very easy to do."

“Exactly.” Toki chirps, adding to Tenebris’ words. “That being said, I know it’s not fair to you to be torn between both, so... you’re welcome to pop back and forth, at least on our end.” She smiles at her brother in law. “To me, you’re all my family first before my pack. To me, family will always come first- the safety, the care, the health, everything. That’s why we split the pack- because the safety of my family was threatened by pack politics.” She leans her head down and bumps it to his shoulder. “Anyways... The only thing this is really going to change is pack cuddling.” She explains
gently. “Perhaps pack grooming too. Nesting and grooming together is going to be different.”

“How so?” Asgore asked, looking to his mate for answers on that.

"Cool, soft boundaries." Sans grinned at that. "Least you aren’t making me choose. That’s awesome."

"Being that we will be of different packs, normally they would keep to their own, though I think with us being family, we are sibling-clans, which might allow some leeway on that rule." Tenebris explained to his mate. "At least... I’m sure it can work like that."

“IT just means we have to respectfully share the lead in any activities,” Toki hums, “instead of just assuming one or the other leads. Or concede to let one of us do one thing while the other does another. We’ll make it work.” She finishes scrubbing down Sans, and then gives him a playful splash of water over the top of his head. He’s short enough for her to actually do that. “And I would never make you choose.” She huffs. “That’s wrong. Anyway... you’re clean. Papy? Your turn. I think my mane can be rinsed now, and I need to get your back clean so we can go sit. Speaking of, will your leg be able to soak okay?"

“Sharing activities does sound like a good way to do it.” Asgore hums lightly. “You’ll make it work, I’m sure.”

“It’ll be okay!” Thumper giggled. “We’ll make sure of it.”

"IT'll be fine. Keeping the connection with my prosthetic while I soak might just help me with the connection link." He hummed.

Toki nodded, and then turn him around so she could quickly and thoroughly scrub his back clean. “Good. I’ve noticed you’ve been struggling with it a little less.” She hummed. Progress, however slow, was still progress.

“Daddy hasn’t fallen in a long time.” Honey chirps, and latches onto his good leg like a limpet. She rubs her horn against his knee affectionately. “Which is good. Daddy gets pouty.”

Hilariously enough, Papyrus reacted immediately. “I do not.” He huffed, though his sulk was slowly soothed away as he began to purr and hum under Toki's scrubbing.

Honey grinned, and chomped her flat teeth on his kneecap. “Daddy gets very pouty. Daddy gets pouty when you point it out too.” She giggles.

Skylar giggled too. “Maybe you shouldn’t mention it, Sissy.”

Toki chuckled, and spared one hand to pat her son’s skull. “You do get kind of pouty when you go splat, sweetheart.” She smooches his shoulder, and kneads her fingers up under his shoulder blades. “But that’s okay. I love you anyway.”

"Mmh, I have a right to be pouty. I look silly when I fall over. It's embarrassing." Papyrus grumbled, before grunting as Sans pat his back.

"Don’t even sweat it, bro.” The older brother hums. “We all have a fall at some point in our lives.”

“Embarrassing moments too.” Toki chimes. “How many times this past week have you seen me stuck like a turtle?” She inquires, lightly nudging the back of his hips with her belly. Toki hummed and got him clean, before making sure she was fully rinsed off. The downside, she mused, to all this mane was it took a while to rinse the soap out. “Alright. I think we’re all good to go for the hot
spring. Papa? Asgore? You and Thumper clean?”

“Squeaky clean.” Asgore nods, and ruffles Thumper’s ears. “We’re ready to go when you are.”

“Good.” She smiles, and then goes to fetch a towel. She wraps it around her body, securing it under her arms, before waddling for the door out to the private hot springs. “We’ve got two separate pools of water to soak in, so we can split up and relax. I don’t want the kids alone in a pool by themselves though. The twins might not need to breathe, but that doesn’t mean other accidents can’t happen.” Thumper needed to breathe, and she didn’t want anyone having any accidents while they were on ‘vacation’.

"We’ll take the children off your hands. You take some time to relax." Tenebris assured Toki as he got up, grabbing a towel but draping it over his shoulder rather than hide his slit with it.

Sans snorted quietly as he saw the older beast do that, amused by how shameless their father was. He knew all too well where he got his own sense of pride from, and tossed his towel around his neck. His genitals weren’t on display though, so it’s not like it was as big of a deal.

Papyrus on the other hand gave a small face palm, the bone of his palm making a noisy clacking sound as it thumped against his face. He sighed. "Yes, that will do nicely, thank you, Father."

Toki eyed his shameless self and rolled her eyes. "Somehow I married into a family where my father in law is a yoga crazed nudist. At least it's all hidden behind your slit."

Asgore bashfully tucked a towel around his waist. Thumper chose to mimic Tenebris, and tossed his over his shoulder.

Toki held towels for the twins, since they didn't even bother. She rolled her eyes at the frolicking naked babies, and followed their excitable selves out to the dual hot springs.

They were both shaded, the edges free of the snow that covered the paths leading to the edges. The waters were murky and steaming, and there were several large boulders that gave the appearance of 'sections' to each particular bubbling pond. The cold air made Toki's nipples harden almost immediately, and she shivered.

She made a beeline for the farthest back pool, covered by the shadows of trees. It was also the most ‘tight’ pool, with less open spaces for the children to play. If she laid claim to it, it would be better suited for… Well, her and Papyrus to do shenanigans. Toki hummed, and paused, realizing she’d have some trouble trying to get into the water on her own. The water was murky, and she couldn’t see her feet to make the step down. “I might need some help into the water.” She admits awkwardly. “I can’t see my feet or the steps to go down.”

"Alright." Papyrus carefully got into the water, setting his cane on the snowy side of the hot spring along with his towel before he reached up to her with a warm smile pulling his teeth upwards. "I'll get you down, my dear."

Tenebris dipped his toes into the water, and made a pleased sound at the heat. Bemused at Thumper copying him, he scooped up the rabbit, and strode forth into the opposite pool from Toki, the rabbit laughing loudly over his shoulder.

Toki gave Papyrus a sheepish smile, and took his hand. Her wings lifted up so they didn’t drag on the snow, and she let him help her down the steps. They were fairly slick, and she ended up slipping a little on the last one, crashing into him with a startled buzz. “Ah!”

Sans stepped in behind her to assist his brother in getting her back on her feet. “Careful now. Water
looks deep enough that you should be fine, but better safe than sorry.”

Asgore had settled into the other pool, and had the twins in his arms as he toted them to the shallower end of the pool. “Everything okay over there?” He called, worried about the litter in her belly.

"Oh yes, your majesty!” Was Papyrus's reply. "Toki just slipped a little on the last step, but Sans and I have her, safe and sound!"

"Yep! Toki's in good hands!” Was Sans' following response.

“Alright.” Asgore nodded to them. He turned to focus on the children, and getting them to a spot they could play where he could keep track of them.

Toki straightened, and gave them both a sheepish smile. “Thank you both. I’m alright now.” She gently wriggled from her husbands arms, where his rib had been pinching her nipple, and then waddled through the deep water towards the back corner of the hot spring. It was deeper there, and the hot water was warm and almost heavy feeling. Toki found it to be lovely.

While Sans strayed off to nap, finding a nice cubby where he could soak and not be bothered, Papyrus followed his wife and sat down beside her, a gentle smile on his face. "How do you feel?" He asked. "Does this help you take off stress and the weight of the pups on your bones?"

"I'm better. The hot water feels great." She gave a low groan, and sank down under the surface, leaving only her head out. Her soaked mane disappeared under the calm water. She relaxed on the stony bench, and made a soft hum that vibrated the water. "It does make me feel lighter. The weight is coming off practically and the knots are going away.” She sighs in relief. "How about you? How do you feel?"

"Do you want the long version or the short version?" He gave her a teasing smile before he sighed and scooted around to face her.

"I'm content... I'm happy, I'm so warm that it like I'm wrapped in your magic from head to tow, and with you in my arms there's no happier for me to be." Papyrus looked up at Toki, a smile on his face. "I have the most important woman in my life standing before me in her grace and elegance. You're more than I could have ever asked for in a wife, and as the mother of my children I know that it will forever be my duty to keep you safe, comfortable..." He slowly reached up and rested his hands on her sides, a smile on his face as he leaned down and rested his head on her stomach

"You don't need my help to stay warm, however~" The skeletal monster then joked lightly, a soft laugh rising from the barrel of his ribs as he grinned up at Toki.

She had to rise from the water so he wasn't gurgling his words at her from under the murky surface. She giggled gently, and brushed her hands over his skull as he nuzzled her belly. "It's my duty to keep you safe and comfortable too, my love. And, while you might not be able to keep me warm, I can keep you warm." Her eye lights glimmered with sudden mischief. "You forget though, Papy." She purrs lowly to him. A warm shiver skids over her belly, making her teats tingle. "You always light my fires in the best way, so in a way you do keep me warm."

Her shudder passes through to him and he gave a shaky sigh as he pulled her close, trailing a line of kisses up her form until he was able to give her a loving kiss. "Mmh~ speaking of…” He then started, glancing at her mischievously.

The line of kisses prompted something warm to bud in her chest, and she met his kiss almost feverishly. "Oh? You're still frisky from the car ride, I see." She grins. Well, it was her fault. She
probably should help him. Her fingers dance down his ribs, along his spine, and then stroke along his pelvis. "You didn't get enough time with my breasts, did you? Well, lookie here. They're out on display, and ripe for the taking."

"Hhh~ don't sound like that's not your fault, my love~" Her husband hissed quietly, his hand trailing up her body to gently cup one of her breasts, his thumb rubbing over the soft magic-summoned tissue carefully. "You're so beautiful, and such a tease. What's a poor man to do when you go cooing in his ear?"

"Hmm, I really don't know." She let out a soft gasp as his hand cupped her breast, his thumb rubbing over her swollen mammary. It was heavy in his palm, full and ripe like she had said it was when he was teasing him to frustration in the car. "Mmm... I suppose, a poor man just has to wait until he has his lovely wife all alone... And then have his way with her, won't he?" She purrs. "I'm soft, and full, and swollen with young... And I'm all \textit{yours} for the taking." And she launched an arrow right at his kinks.
Almost immediately Papyrus shivered as a predatory gleam grew in his eye lights. "Oh the things I want to do to you would make even my father gasp." He replied sharply, giving her breast a soft squeeze as he pressed his face to her neck, giving her vertebrae a long kiss before he opened his teeth and gently nipped the bone.

Toki couldn't stop the tiny mewl that escaped her as he squeezed her breast and nipped her neck. Her flattened mane gave him the ultimate access to it, and she found herself making a tiny eager sound as her legs parted to let him scoot closer to her, even if her belly would be slightly in the way. "Mmm~ and what's stopping you f-from doing those things to me?" She tempts with a purr, her words stuttering only once.

There was a warm tingly feeling in her nipple, and then his hand was damp. He'd made her leak the first milk of her pregnancy.

"My sense of respect for you as a woman? Worry for hurting the pups? Who knows... But I’m finding myself losing the ability to care anymore." He purred happily. As Toki began to leak as a
result of his groping, Papyrus withdrew his hand in surprise as he came to find the new warmth upon
it. Finding the warm, green fluid that was his lover’s way of nourishing young, Papyrus purred and
leaned up to clump his mouth around her nipple, summoning magic where needed to create a suction
to draw it’s sweetness into his mouth.

He was a sly bastard to take advantage of that situation.

One however that Toki didn't mind. Her mouth fell open, and she lifted a hand to rapidly cover her
mouth. There was a distinct difference in a child suckling her breast verses her mate. A child brought
no arousal, only motherly feelings of love. Her mate, on the other hand, sent a curl of arousal down
to her loins that no doubt he could scent as the hot water carried it into the air in the form of steam.
"Oh god- ah... Mmm... I'll let you know if you go too far. But please, feel free to take me." Her hand
fisted on his spine, and she stroked him like she would a weeping cock. "I'm yours, my love."

He gave a loud groan and his grip on her love handles clenched in sweet appreciation for them as he
moaned, his mouth moving gently around her nipple while his tongue swept over it. His gaze for a
moment lifted and moved wayward as he examined their surroundings, searching to see if his brother
was still around. He was, but he was immobile, a tired smile on his face while his eyes were closed.

Yeah, he was asleep. Good~

Toki kept a hand clamped over her teeth to try and muffle her sounds as he teased her nipple with his
tongue and gripped her love handles. She felt tingly and warm, and Toki stroked his ribs with her
secondary hands as he remaining primary rubbed the back of his skull. She was at least making
some effort to keep quiet. They weren’t far enough away to be as loud as they usually were, and the
adults in the other pool had keen ears. “Mmm… Shhh, can’t be too loud, or your dad will hear us.”
She groans gently behind her muffling hand. “Hah- your mouth feels so good, Papy~”

He hummed in reply, looking up at her occasionally as he continued his steady pace of taking in
what her beautiful body gave to him. His hands would continue to knead though one began to travel
between her legs to help egg her body on.

The hand that delved down into the warm water would find her core even warmer. Toki’s magic
bubbled and churned with desire for him, desire that hadn’t gone away in the time that had passed
between the car ride and the hot spring. Fire was all consuming, but fire was also passion- and now,
her fires burned with a fervor befitting any roaring blaze, and it burned for him. The hand that slid
betwixt her legs drew a soft muffled sound from her, her eye lights expanding and flashing with love
for him. Between his hand stroking teasingly up her thighs and to her core, brushing his thumb
against her button, and his mouth ravishing her breast, Toki was feeling quite thoroughly pleased and
relaxed.

He knew it was good for her. He barely needed to ask- the look on her face told him all he needed to
know, and it's with that confidence that he continued his treatment on her body, moaning and
humming into her flesh.

She shifted in her seat, her legs sliding up to gently hook over his hips and tug him closer. Well, as
close as her belly permitted. She wanted, in that instance, for there to be nothing between them, so
she could press him flush to her and feel his bones against hers, feel his life mingle with hers. Toki
gave a soft huff and dropped her hand from her mouth, letting herself pant as quietly as she could.
This freed all four of her hands to assault his bones, stroking them with a tender touch and just a faint
tingle of magic to stir and arouse him. Her instincts urged her to release pheromones to help
courage him, but she resisted. No pheromones would be needed for her to arouse him- she hadn’t
had them before when she had been just a simple skeleton, and she didn’t need them now. This was
her husband, her mate, the other half of her being and soul- she could bring him pleasure with words
In fact… “You’re so good,” She purred, her voice trembling with each pulse of pleasure his dexterous digits brought to her, “god, Papy, please- you feel so good touching me.”

As she mewled and pleaded, his mind further numbed and he gave a low moan into her breast as he gave a slightly rougher suckle, his hand coming to give her other breast a soft squeeze.

She nearly whined as his fingers abandoned her button. Instead, she nearly squeaked as his fingers glided up her belly, stimulating all of teats running up the front of it. Their areolas tightened, and she wondered if they might be leaking- her thoughts stopped as his hand found her other breast, and she sighed pleasantly as he gave her a soft squeeze. Her nipple was pinched between his knuckles, but it wasn’t entirely unpleasant as he rolled the malleable flesh in the palm of his hand, stimulating the entire globe of magical sensitive flesh.

It did not feel the same as when she was human- as a human, her breasts had never felt like this. But these, as an extension of her magic, felt everything. She adored it, and let him know with every soft, subtle sound, and every clench of her fingers over his bones.

"You’re so beautiful." He spoke around his mouthful, caring little of how it sounded garbled by his next drink of sweet sublime milk. "You're wonderful and beautiful and I feel like I'm high off what you do to me~" He moaned happily, caressing his handfuls of her body with utmost care, cherishing her for all that she was.

She sighed blissfully as he practically worshiped her, and let out the softest little groans and moans. “You feel high off of what I do to you?” She asks. “God… I feel like I could combust into flames with what you do to me. I need so much more, but yet this feels like enough…” She hissed softly, and her toes sliding over the backs of his legs as she tugs him closer. The pressure in her breast was abating, but she knew it would be back. “Mnnn…”

"Mmh~ shall I move to another teat, my love~?" He cooed, running his tongue up her nipple again.

The movement of his tongue against her nipple made her squirm, and she wriggled under him with a soft mewling sound. “Please?” She pleaded. “It’s so full, Papy, so full and tight and ready just for you…”

"Guide me then~" He teased, withdrawing his tongue into his mouth.

Toki huffed at him, and lifted a hand to her breast. The full one was cradled gently, taking it from his hand, and she stroked her nipple teasingly with a damp finger. “Over here, my love.” She purred in offering. “All yours to enjoy~”

He popped her nipple into his mouth and gave a loving suck, moaning as he pressed his tongue against it to give a tickling vibration.

Toki nearly squealed at the sensation, her legs twitching as her core gave a needy pulse. “You’re evil.” She groans dramatically, hands clutching at him with need.

"And you're addicting." He purred in reply, slowly closing his teeth to loosely hold the nipple in his teeth before he pulled back to stimulate a flow.

Toki gave a soft needy keen to him. “And you’re not?” She gave a needy squirm to him. “I need more.” She pouts at him. “I need you. I just don’t know how we go about doing that while you get to play with my breasts. I mean, there are my teats, but they’re not the same…” She makes a soft wriggle, and his leg bumps against her core. She rubs against him teasingly, letting him feel her
warmth—how heated he’d made her.

He cooed happily until there was a shot of pain right up his leg where his artificial bone was, and he gave a low sound that was muffled by the breast in his mouth. Rather than reaction outwardly, he slowly withdrew and kissed her again as he wrapped his arms around her. At this point, he then slowly shifted to roll them off the bench and into the water.

Toki let out an alarmed noise as he clutched her to him, keeping her from squirming as he held her firm and rolled them right off the bench.

If not for the fact that the massive blob of flesh in her belly acted like a buoyancy device, she’d have sunk like a rock. As it was, she floated down almost gracefully in the murky water, almost unable to see him. She was thankful that they didn’t need to breathe, as she chuckled against his kiss. Her wings settled on the bottom of the hot spring, leaving her resting below him in the water as he loomed over her. Most of her ecto flesh floated somewhat.

Her eye lights glimmered at him contently, pleased with this development despite her initial alarm.

His own orange glow illuminated in the water and he smiled adoringly as he shifted to a comfortable position, pulling her along with him as he went. He settled so he was leaning against one of the sloped edges that they could rest against without emerging from the water, his beloved wife in his lap, straddling it as his cock added to the glow in the water, he was indeed hard, his wife having done wonders to him.

She couldn’t see his cock, but boy, she could feel it. It was pressing against her belly, hard and warm and casting a glow against her flesh that she couldn’t deny seeing, even in the murky gloom. Her hands settled around his shoulders, and Toki settled more firmly on her knees, knowing she’d need to ride him if his leg was bothering him. She shifted, and slid forward some to tease his shaft against his core. He’d need to help her—she couldn’t exactly reach down to guide him in, not with the massive lump growing from her belly.

A plus side to being upright underwater though—her breasts floated, and were practically right in his face.

That made him happy and he gave a pleased sound, muted by the water, as he pressed his face into her chest while his cock twitched between their bodies. A small bout of bubbles rose from him, no doubt him releasing a needy moan for no one to hear.

Toki most certainly couldn’t hear his sounds, nor could he hear hers as he nuzzled her chest and his member twitched against her. Her wings shifted in the water, spreading out and helping her maintain balance as she carefully lowered down on top of him. She was going to have to get used to this position, she knew— the cowboy position was what she’d have to do often on account of his hip. But, that was fine—she could do the work for them. It was good exercise and—ohhh. Her train of thoughts stopped as she slid down, the throbbing heat of his cock sliding into the depths of her core. Her walls fluttered around him, pulsing with each throb of her soul, and she took him slowly, so slowly, so that she may enjoy the first sensation for that much longer.

Bubbles trailed from her teeth as she exhaled a needy sigh of relief.

Her sigh of relief was his near howl of satisfaction, and though he took great consideration for her pregnancy, there was little to stop Papyrus from wrapping his arms around her and pulling her down as he rolled his hips up, the water muting his moans as his body trembled with excitement.

She pressed to him as fully as she was able to, her belly slipping into the space between his ribs and
his pelvis. His bones rubbed against the sensitive teats that had grown there, and Toki couldn’t stop her buzzes from vibrating through the water and making the liquid almost hum. As soon as she hilted him, she took a moment and simply rocked her hips on his, enjoying the way he felt inside of her and how he pressed into everything that felt fantastic.

His void was the space she needed and it made him happy, so, so happy, that she fit in his lap so perfectly. "I love you." He mouthed into her flesh as he gripped her hips and lifted her up to lower her down once more, every time feeling better than the last.

“I love you too,” She mouthed back to him, her soul singing as she translated his words with almost ease. As he lifted her up on his shaft, Toki opened her mouth, soft groans vibrating out of her mouth and into the water. Every stroke of his shaft against her walls tingled in the best ways, and the sulfur in the water was aiding in it too.

Her soft moans, she thought, would be passable as the sounds of water. Or whale songs, if someone was trying to listen for them from above the water. They’d be fine, unheard by anyone above them.

Oh the buoyancy did more than just help her, it caused her breasts to bounce at an odd pace right in his face.

It was with that, that Papyrus gave her a squeeze and locked his lips onto one of her nipples again, suckling as he brought her down quickly on his cock, the sensations no doubt driving his beloved insane.

Toki was glad that her lungs didn’t exist anymore, because she sucked in a big breath as he took her nipple into his mouth and sucked down a mouthful of the tightness plaguing her breasts. She exhaled it again, the water rushing right back out like she had been created with gills instead of artificial magical lungs. She moaned, and let him have his way with her, her legs trying to help him as much as she could. Toki was at his mercy though, her walls fluttering around him as she nearly whined and pleaded to him for more.

Her hands were not idle, stroking and clenching at his bones. She stimulated him, stroking the bones and teasing him with great need. Her soul pulsed in her chest, tugging longingly at her magic for the release an orgasm would bring.

At this rate he would cum and only hope that she was going to reach her release with him. Papyrus sucked and nipped and moaned into her flesh as he rolled his hips. He was so close he wanted to beg, though of course his words would be left unheard by his love's ears.

Toki was close, telltale by the pulsing green light of her soul hidden behind the flesh of her breasts. It pulsed faster and faster with each and every suckle and bounce, and her walls mimicked each pulse around them.

In truth, Toki fell over before he did. Between his suckles and his nips, and his member stroking against the deepest most recesses of her core, Toki had little else to do but to fall over the edge. Her magic spiked under the water, and she clamped down over him as he hilted her, her eyes flashing and blazing with heat as she latched onto him. Her cry was just audible to him in the close distance in the water, and it sounded vaguely like his name.

Her hiltion on him had him jolting under her and he cried out as he wrapped his arms around her, rooting her in place to thrust his hips into her as deep as he could get. He wanted to fill his wife- he so dearly wanted to- he just needed that last bit to send him toppling over into the abyss of bliss.

Toki's hands slid down against him, and one of her hands brushed her fingertips over his spine. The
others stroked his ribs like one might stroke a cock- she never stopped, even as she rode out her orgasm, seeking to drive him to his edge and over, so he might fill her.

He jolted and his cries of ecstasy were lost to the water as he pulled her into a final grind before he tucked in his good leg up to pin Toki as he filled her body with his magic, completing the blissful release that they both needed.

Toki trembled against him, her hands slipping as she went nearly limp against him. Her body sucked in his magic, absorbing it for a donation that she sorely needed with her body producing external nutrition for the litter that would be arriving eventually. It colored the lower part of her belly an interesting hue, and would make an interesting tale for them to try and hide, since everyone was naked.

What a greedy little thing~ Papyrus moaned quietly as he held her close, his form shivering as he settled down with his beloved wife.

Toki settled her head on his chest, her mane free floating in the water around them. Her furry wrists came to loop around his neck, and she exhaled water against his neck with a soft sigh. She nudged him gently, wondering if they should go topside again. The bottom of the hot spring wasn’t exactly comfortable on her knees, and couldn’t be nice on his bare backside.

His grip loosened slowly and he looked up to her as she gestured towards the surface, and he gurgled a sigh, before he nodded and smiled as he let her go to let her float up first.

Toki gave him a wide smile, and gently pushed herself up with her arms and legs. She drifted up a bit, and got her balance, before bending over to help pull him up to his feet. Once she was upright and her upper body was past the surface, she went to speak, and found her ‘lungs’ bubbling out a fountain of water that she had inhaled. She found the experience very uncomfortable, and gave him a bemused look all the same. “Bleghgh. Sulfur water tastes gross.”

He did the same and coughed a little before he smiled at her. "Thankfully I had a mouthful of something that tasted better." He teased, before pulling her into a kiss.

Toki blushed, knowing exactly what he meant. She met his kiss, and gave him a languid purr. "I would certainly say you did." She grinned. "More than just a mouthful though. More like several mouthfuls." She teased against his kiss, her arms curling around his ribs so she could cuddle him close. "I feel very empty now~"

"A pity I couldn't give you more, my love~" He purred. "But at least now I can offer you my body as your bed to rest and relax in this lovely onsen~" He cooed to her as he shifted to sit with her on the stone bench, before laying back, stretching his legs out before he sighed contentedly.

She giggled gently, and settled next to him instead of on top of him. She wriggled right up there and hugged him close, looping both sets of arms around him as she let out a soft, pleased rumble. "I don't need a bed, my love. I simply need you in my arms to be happy." She smiles. Toki shifts, and one hand wanders down to her writhing middle, where they had woken the pups with their shenanigans and basically a magic bath. "Jeeze, between the warmth of the spring and the romp we had, I think we woke the litter. They feel displeased." She gives a hearty laugh.

"Sounds good to me~" He settled happily in her arms but gave a soft laugh as he began to rub her stomach. "Hello puppies~" He cooed to them.

They squirmed and kicked against his fingers. Tiny feet pressed outwards, and made tiny lumps under his fingers. “They’re saying hello, and thank you for the magic donation.” She giggles softly.
He laughed quietly at that and massaged her belly gently. "Hello my sweet little siblings~ look at how healthy you are!"

Toki smiled faintly, though it was a tighter smile than before. "I hope they’re healthy.” She says, her hand coming to rest on top of her belly, out of the way of his hand as he massaged her swollen girth gently. The litter rolled, pleased by his motions. “We lost one already… I don’t think I could handle losing another one.” She exhales a soft sigh, and nuzzles her face against his neck. “Mmn… No more pessimistic thoughts. They are healthy- they will be healthy.” She huffs softly.

"They are definitely healthy. They're all moving quite a bit, whether to say hello or to fight for space." He laughed as he nuzzled her warmly.

“It’s a bit of both.” Toki laughed softly. “I’m not sure how I can keep getting bigger, and yet every day I find that I do keep getting bigger and bigger. But, they’re still quite thoroughly squished, so they’re fussing for more space.” She smooches his cheeks gently. “As much as you enjoy how big I am,” and boy, thanks to her conversation with his brother, a lot of things had been clarified and brought to light for her, “I look forward to the next time you and I can have kids, and I can be smaller. As much as I’d love to carry a single in a normal pregnancy, I’ve little doubt I’ll probably pop out another set of twins, but I’d still be vastly smaller than I am now.”

"I'm going to enjoy getting to fuss over them even more than I do now. I can only do so much as their big brother, you know~" He teased. "I can only praise their existence in my life so much before it would set off Father." He then snickered.

Toki snickered right along with him. “Indeed. Which is ironic, considering it’s my body, and I can encourage whoever I want to fuss over my belly.” She bumps her forehead against his cheek, and hums softly. “He does get possessive though, doesn’t he?”

"You've not only made yourself a place in the family he created, but you're bearing him children that are closer to his base genetics than even Sans and I am... and we're grown from his very DNA... That's special.”

“Well, yes.” She hums. “It is.” She sighs softly. “It’s still... awkward. You know Tenne and I were... Intimate.” She says softly. “Your dad’s possessiveness sometimes makes Dear long for things from the other world- for things that could have been, had we been stuck there. She’s explained that Queen bees have multiple mates, and she respects my wish to remain monogamous, but... Sometimes her instincts get the best of her. I think that’s part of why she’s not fond of Asgore, and maybe... partly why she’s so aggressive with both him and your dad.” She hoped Papyrus could see what she meant by that- she didn’t want to outright say that her beast saw his dad as a second mate that she wasn’t allowed to have.

"Yes... I know." He took in her words and considered his carefully before he nodded slowly and nuzzled her. "I'm sure once the pups are born and no longer dependent on you to survive, they will both settle down when he comes to have custody. When he has his new generation of beasts, and when she sees that he's already made a life for himself here..." He rumbled gently. "Perhaps then Asgore and Darling will have the chance to properly grow to be friends.”

“Darling?” Toki queried of him, bemused at his new pet name for her beast. She was anything but ‘darling’. “Maybe. You’ve seen what she’s like, my love. Dear is not forgiving nor is she friendly. She’s nice to you because you’re her mate, and she loves you by proxy.” Toki exhales softly, and nuzzled him gently. “She is spiteful, she is mean, she is... She is a beast. She can be protective and loving, but I think the term ‘Queen Bitch’ applies to her better than Queen Bee.”

He winced a bit at her words. "At least I know to save all my truest of affection for you if she really
feels so indifferent by the likes of me.” He chuckled quietly as he kissed her head. "She might like Sentinel more if at all, I suppose.” He sighed lightly.

“She’s not indifferent to you, my love.” She nudges him gently. “She does love you- but it’s a love she inherited from me. She hasn’t gotten to be around you long enough to form a love for herself. She knows you from our memories, but she grieved your loss- she never got to love you, not until we returned home. And when we returned, it was bittersweet for her- for she lost one mate to gain back another.” She lifts a hand to stroke his cheek gently. “She loves you and Sentinel, just like I do. But she’s more… bitter, I suppose. She’s everything I am, and everything I don’t let myself be. I try not to wallow in the bad emotions. This last week… was rough. But I’m trying to get better. Dear… I really don’t know what Dear is trying to do, but it’s not productive.”

He hummed quietly as he nodded in agreement. "It’s sad… but it’s true. I suppose it can’t be helped for one so adamant as her. But, I still love you, and in the same I love her, so even if she doesn’t love me in the same as we love each other, it’s okay, because I will love you anyways.” He purred.

“And I love you.” Toki nuzzled her forehead to his, her scar grating gently against his bones. “I love you, and Sentinel- and I love you unconditionally. Maybe in time, I’ll be able to soothe Dear like I did with Cruelty. Maybe in time, she’ll change, and the bitterness will heal. She mourns Tenne still, I think.” She mourned Tenne in ways that Toki couldn’t let herself- to Toki, it felt like she would be betraying her husband, who was right here, in her arms, if she mourned the man she had fallen for in the other world. “Time turns all wounds to scars, and all scars fade with time. Well, most of them.” She snorts, and rubs her scar against him again. “I can’t seem to shake this one, no matter what form I take.”

"How interesting indeed. Then again, it was a key role in your existence so perhaps it's supposed to be there.” He suggested as he brought a hand up to rub her skull, his fingers ghosting over her scar.

“Perhaps. I mean, it came from the fire that changed me. Well, the beam that fell on me, anyway.” She giggled gently, and nuzzled into his hand. “At least it doesn’t hurt so much anymore.”

"I'm thankful to see that it healed properly. It would have been quite worrisome had it not...” His thumb stroked her skull gently before he came in for a kiss.

“Well, a big gaping hole in my skull would have been very alarming.” Toki hummed gently, and blinked up at him. “But, it did heal up, so that’s one good thing.” She lets off a content buzzing sound, and meets his kiss happily. She cups his jaw, buzzing gently as she relaxes into him with a content and happy noise.

As she grew comfortable in place, he did as well and gave a sigh to commemorate such a relieving position between the two. "I love you so much~" He cooed to her gently.

“I love you too.” She smiled adoringly up at him, and then settled her head on his shoulder. “You- all of you, the kids, your brother, your dad, my family, everyone- you're all my world.” She sighs softly. “But I’m a giant sap.”

"Well then this crazy life of ours is the tap and we're the bucket.” He giggled, seeming proud of himself for being so clever.

He was clever enough to make her laugh, and she gave a wholesome laugh, making the water ripple. “My love, some of the things you say are positively the best things to hear.”

There was a childish shriek from the other side, and then a maniacal cackle of equal impish quality.
Toki cocked a brow, her laughter fading off. “… Do you think we need to go check up on them?” She questions. “The twins and Thumper can be a handful- I wouldn’t put it past them to have probably flooded your father’s chest cavity.”

"I have faith in father, they'll be fine." He answered as he shook his head. "Only if something sounds off do I vote we supervise.” He then mentioned. "Deal?"

“Sounds fair. If we hear your dad shriek, I’m sure we’ll need to help him.” She nods softly. “Speaking of shriek- I thought the beasts were going to come back out once we were here? Or are they waiting until we’re settled in our rooms?” She shifts, stretching her legs out as they start to tingle from her belly compressing down on phantom nerves that no longer technically exist. Toki glances to him, and then quirks a soft grin. With a soft hum and just a small tug of her magic, she’s covered from the neck down in full ectoflesh. Her soft thighs bump against his bones, and she cuddles against him, green and glowing and plush, and very cuddly. “I think I did promise you that you’d get full body cuddles sometimes. I’m sorry I haven’t kept that promise until now.” She hums to him gently.

"I cannot speak for Sans or Father, but Sentinel is excitedly waiting for when he might be free to enjoy his mate at her finest." He answered, before he gave an excited thrum, pulling close her fully summoned body with a thrilled coo. "Oh god look at you! You're so perfect~"

“He can have me whenever you feel like sharing.” Toki giggles, and leans into him. “I doubt I’m perfect, Papy. But I’m glad you enjoy it. I’m certainly soft enough for you, I think.” She pinches one of her thighs. She’d retained most of her form from when she’d been a beast, meaning her thighs were toned, and her body padded to a healthy level.

And when she pinched, his wandering hands did the same and he cooed as he squeezed her thighs. "Oh wow, feel these muscled beauties. I bet you could effortlessly pin someone between these~"

Toki laughs. “When I was a beast, I could squash a watermelon between them. A small one, mind, but all the same.” She shifts and drapes a leg over his lap with a cheeky grin. “If you enjoy my thighs, you should feel my calves. I was very active in the other world, and it looks like my ectoflesh preserved my muscles from there. Or at least the equivalent. My legs looked like your dad’s legs over there.”

He liked the sound of that and began to pat her calves as the leg came to rest in his lap, a long ‘oooh’ coming from him as he took in the sights.

Toki gave him a wide grin. “I know, right? I’ve never been this fit ever. Or plush. Being a female beast gives you equal parts layers of fatty tissues and muscle- Tenne said something about the fatty tissue being a thing to make females soft for cuddling, and more protected when they fight since most of them don’t sprout the same armor that a male can.” She explains cheerfully. “Y’know, you and I could go— never mind.” That idea died in its cradle, and she mentally thumped herself for even pondering it. She couldn’t just suggest jogging to him now- not with his leg. That was a sad thought- she would be able to do things that she didn’t enjoy, but he did. And he’d never be able to really do them properly again.

Unbeknownst to her, her scent had soured with the sad thought, despite the smile she kept on her face so he wasn’t aware of it.

He picked up quickly on her scent and he cupped her cheek gently, resting his head on hers. "Hey... hey... Are you okay?"

“Yeah.” She sighed. “I just… I was gonna suggest something stupid, and then I realized and remembered that it was super insensitive and it made me sad that you won’t get to do it anymore.”
Papyrus was a very active person. She could see him lifting weights and doing more arm related things, but he used to love 'cardio', but his bone graft, unless it became less painful and more stable against sudden jarring motions, wasn’t going to let him do that.

He tilted his head slightly, as if pondering her words. His sockets widened as he realized what he meant and he sighed, giving her a gentle hug. "Oh Toki... You thought about us going running, didn't you...?" Damn he was good.

He purred gently, before he smiled into her shoulder, "Would it make you feel better if i told you that father and I are considering looking into a weight-lifting set? I might not be able to run anymore, but who needs speed when you can be an unbending force for your loved ones instead?"

Toki nodded finally. "I did yeah. I remember how much you loved running with the wolves, and it just... Breaks my heart that you can't any more. That you had to retire from your dream job. That you can't do a lot of the things you used to do." Her teeth grind, and it's only because they're wet that they don't send sparks across the water top. "I'm glad you've found something exercise like that can help keep you fit. Arm strength would be good for you to work on." She gives him a hesitant smile, still smelling of sadness. There went her dreams of them running together. Or flying while he jogged. It wouldn't be fair to him. Maybe she could put him on Clover with one of the kids though and stretch her wings?

"Hey... hey..." He smiled and withdrew as he cupped her cheek. "It's okay, Toki... I'm a Gaster, and we adapt to survive. This leg of mine is just a minor setback, ya' hear?" he chuckled, "Trust me, I'll find a way to run with you, my love~ Even if I have to break myself to do it, I will find a way~"

Her teeth pursed, and she reached up to flick the space between his eyes, eying him with a bit of a grumpy look. "No breaking yourself." She huffs firmly. "That’s against the rules. If it happens, it happens, well, I guess I wont be running and we'll need to keep these legs in shape some other way." She puffs. "Running on my own is boring. I guess I could run with your dad, but I don't have legs designed to run like a beast anymore, so I can't keep up." She rolls her shoulders slightly, and then deflates like a popped balloon. "Though, I don't mind having my normal legs back." She hums. "I only had three toes, and then a dewclaw. Balancing was awkward."

"Father makes it look so easy." He agreed with that last statement before he sighed and nuzzled her, "I'll try to be careful, I promise~"

"Good." She huffs and nuzzles him. "For him it is easy, though. The tail helps with balance. All I had was wings. Teaching myself to walk had been a task in itself when I was supposed to be pretending to be a blaster beast." She comments idly, and stretches out her leg. She wriggles one of her fleshy toes above the water, the glowing limb winking at them with an emerald light. "I may have to test movement on all fours once the litter has been born and I'm no longer limited in what I can do."

"A task indeed it sounds like, I'm proud of you for holding out" He praised, before nodding to hear her explain her future plans. It's a wise plan, and i will be there to support you all the way, we'll find a way" he assured her with a 'we-can-do-it' tone.

She hums and nods. "Running on all fours was significantly easier. Part of me misses my beast body for that- it made flying easier too. I just had muscles, I didn’t have to use magic to help me fly. My wings are a lot smaller now than they were before- I'm sort of like a bumblebee in the sense of 'how the heck does it fly?'" She chuckles lightheartedly.

"No, but when they're fluffy and round and you adore seeing them flutter by, you end up not caring as much as to how they do it." He assured her. "And you, being the lovely, fluffy bumblebee you
are, I dare not question for even a moment~"

She snorts a bemused plume of smoke. “My love, I might be fluffy like a bumblebee, but I’m hardly as cute as one.” She gives him a crocodile grin, pointedly wriggling her more than eerie teeth at him. “But I suppose you’re right. Besides… if I want to go flying, I can toss you and the kids onto Clover, and take you with me. Her saddle is fully functional.

"I might not be fully capable of running, but I am still your valiant knight."

“You are.” She reassures him very quickly, and leans up to kiss him. Toki takes a moment to simply nuzzle her face to his. “You’re my knight in shining armor no matter what you’re wearing- or not wearing, for that matter.” She gives his naked bones a pointed look, and wiggles the bony ridges that make up her eyebrows. “Nothing will change that.”

He nuzzled her back, and gave her a loving look, his fingers sliding up to card through her mane in the way he knew she loved. "And that would make Clover my eccentric steed, wouldn't it-?"

“Indeed!” She laughed, leaning her head into his attentions as his fingers massaged into her mane. She loved when he did that- it relaxed her like no other, and always felt fantastic. “She makes quite the grumpy steed though, doesn’t she?”

"I'm sure if it brought you happiness she would endure the likes of me." He chuckled.

Toki snickers softly. “Despite what you think, Clover likes you.” She nudges him gently. “There’s a small list of things she doesn’t like- rain, mud, snow, pretty much anything cold and uncomfortable for her. A lot of her grumbling is her putting on a show, I think. She doesn’t genuinely dislike any of you, or you’d know it. Summons aren’t afraid to show what they feel.” Such as Sugar, who took so long to get over her fear of Tenebris and whom had used to cower and run until she got used to the fact that the beast was not who he was all the time.

"Speaking of the girls... what do you say to letting them out to join us for a little? They’re part of you, after all, and I want to love every last inch of you by the time this trip is over~"

Toki gives him an adoring look, but shakes her head. “I would, but it’s too wet of an environment.” She says. “The air is very moist with the steam- just like it’s not good for Solstice and Grillby, it wouldn’t be good for them either.” She gives him a gentle reminding nudge. “Besides: summoning them takes too much magic at this point.” She teases. “I can barely manage to summon a couple small bees without feeling exhausted. The litter are taking a lot of my magic, alongside the magic I get donated from all of you.”

She didn’t blame him for forgetting- she often forgot she was supposed to be limiting herself. If she pushed too far, she’d hurt herself and the children- but she was used to what felt like a limitless wellspring of power- but not anymore. She had si- FIVE. She had five little souls sucking her dry to make themselves grow big and strong.

"Ah..." He nuzzled her gently as he took her words to heart, though it wasn't long before he changed the topic. "How do you feel when it comes to your magic reserves?"

“I’m a little short, but it’s about how I am on a daily basis. Maintaining my body isn’t any more draining than normal- it’s just making corporeal what usually fills out my clothes anyways.” Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and then stretched out fully. She let herself float in the water, her flesh buoyant in ways bones weren’t.

He gave a soft hum, and then hugged her with his hands on her stomach.
Was he about to? Oh yes he was~

“… What are you doing?” She squinted at him, and wriggled some in his lap.

"Just giving you a little leg up, my darling~" He purred in reply, his magic seeping into her gently.

“Leg up?” She queried, lightly lifting her leg out of the water and wiggling it. When the air proved too chilly for too long, she tucked it back under. “Really, my love, you all gave enough earlier.” She let him give just a bit more, and then drew his hand up to her teeth and kissed it, disrupting part of his flow. “I don’t want you to get too low.”

"I will be careful, my darling." He purred. "I know when to stop, and so I will." He assured her.

“I know you do,” She smooches his fingers resolutely, “But I don’t want you being empty. After all… If you’re empty,” Her voice dropped low, and she gave him her best impression of bedroom eyes, “then how will you have the energy for us to fool around tonight? I can hardly suck you off if you’re falling asleep on me, now can I?”

Oh fuck me, his train of thought ground to a halt. His magic flow stopped as if she had literally grabbed it by the throat.

She grinned at him, and formed her tongue to lick one of his fingers, sucking it into her mouth playfully. Men were easy to play with- human men, and skeleton men. “That’s what I thought.” She purred softly, eye lights glowing warmly at him.

He hesitated before he hid his face in her fluff, his hands going to her chest as he murmured into her back.

Her mane was still soaking wet, so there wasn’t much fluff to hide in. She simply grinned and nuzzled him. “You’re adorable when you’re flushed.” She let his hands hide under her breasts, and she giggled softly at him.

"You make my soul flutter when you talk like that.” He blushes.

She giggles. “I know I do. And I love how you respond when I get you so flustered.”

He grumbled quietly and kissed her on the back of her head. "I love you~"

“I love you too.” She laughs heartily. “Doesn’t mean I’ll ever stop teasing you though.” She beams. “It’s too much fun.”

He chuckled quietly before startling as there was suddenly panicked yelping from the other pool, closely followed by evil cackles from the children.

Toki blinked, and exhaled softly. "I’d bet money that they’re trying to drown your dad.” She sighs. "We should probably go help him."

"I agree. Sans will be fine- it’s not like a skeleton can drown." Papyrus agreed as he began to get up.

Him getting up dumped her right out of his lap. She squeaked, and disappeared under the surface for a moment until her ectoflesh brought her back up. "Ruuuude." She rolls her eyes, and de-summons what flesh she can.

"Sorry.” He gave her a small smile, reaching out to help her up.

Toki let him haul her up, and gave him a lopsided smile. “It’s fine- it’s not like ectoflesh didn’t let me
float.” She waddled with him to the entrance stairs, sloshing through the warm water. She fetched his towel for him, and his cane, and held them up to him so he could climb out and put them on to travel to the other hot spring. The towel would help keep the heat in, since the air was chilly.

Towel around his waist, Papyrus took up his cane and followed his wife to the other pool. Tenebris was sitting on the stairs, his nose hidden in a rag as he gave coughs that were the telltale sign of water up the nose. Held in his magic were the skeletal children and Thumper. Skylar and Thumper were lightly worried, though Honey looked shameless.

"Told you he has nostrils!" Their daughter crowed.

Toki sighed. “Looks like they tried to drown you, Papa. You alright?” She gave Honey a sharp look, and made her way to the stairs. She fiddled at the edge, waiting for Papyrus to go in so she could get assistance in. She had diamond nipples from the cold air. “You may have went a little far, Honey.”

"I have never felt so outsmarted by a child." He growled quietly, leering at Honey, who continued to look proud of herself even as Papyrus plucked her form out of the air, using his own magic to shoo away Tenebris’ grip on the child’s soul.

"I tried to stop her!" Thumper defended himself.

“And what exactly did she do that got water up your usually hidden nostrils?” She asked curiously, and glanced at Honey again. The severity of her daughter’s punishment would depend upon what she did to her grandfather that had him coughing.

"They tried to drown me and failed. Then, Honey came and kissed right over my nostrils... she had water in her mouth.” He admitted bashfully.

Toki furrowed her brows at her daughter. “Honey,” She says, her tone already shifting towards scolding as she got settled into the water with Asgore’s help, since her husband was wrangling their daughter. Once her towel was on the side of the tub, and she was in the water, she crossed her secondary arms over her breasts, and put her primary arms on her hips. She was the epitome of pregnant, disappointed mom. “When we get home, you’ve got four days with none of your shows, and no video games. Same for you, Skylar- you didn’t stop your sister, so you’re in it as well. Thumper, your scolding isn’t up to me, so that’s on your parents.” She eyed the bunny, but mostly fixated her stare upon her children. “We’ve talked about this, children- and you’re smart enough to understand. Creatures with lungs and flesh can’t get water up their noses, or it’s bad and they can drown.”

“But-” Skylar protested, his orange eye lights flashing with upset.

“No buts.” Toki quipped. “No shows, no video games. If you have to do something you can play with your toys, read a book, or go outside.” Toki sighed and deflated, before moving over to take a seat on one of the benches. “Really though, Papa. Shame on you for being fooled by a toddler.”

Granted, they were scary smart toddlers who were more akin to a kindergartener or first-grader in intelligence, but a toddler none the less.

"How was i supposed to know she'd pull a trick like that!?” he grumbled softly in reply. "Your children are frighteningly clever."

"They get it from my husband." She replied flatly, and arches her brows. "Should tell you what to expect from your own litter, no? My mischief and your smarts.”

He rubbed his nasal holes, and then sniffled quietly and grumbled. "I'm tired, hush."
"You're tired, huh?" She arched her brows. "Poor old man, so tired. Do you need a nappy?" She coos at him, amused and teasing sarcasm thick in her voice.

"Shush up, you." He stuck his tongue out at her.

"Stick it out for too long, and someone might decide they can keep it." She replied almost automatically, before flushing and realizing just how sexual it sounded. "By keeping it, I mean grabbing it with some pliers and giving it to Asgore." She clarifies, so she hopefully doesn't set off sentinel and make him possessive.

His tongue slithered back into his mouth and he simply stared at her with a pout, before he grinned widely, "I mean I give it to him anyways in all manners." He spoke softer as he grinned at her.

"And that is inappropriate to have around the children." She splashes water at him, despite the fact that splashing was frowned upon in an onsen, save by young children. It wasn't like there was anyone but family members in there after all.

He chuckled and slipped into the water once more as Papyrus settled down with Honey and Skylar in his arms. Thumper was deposited with Asgore, and the beast sighed, dipping the rag he held in the hot water before he draped it over his eyes. "Mhhh~"

Toki watched her family settle down and relax, and snorted softly. They’d just need her brother in law to wake up, and then he’d probably pop over. For now, she settled down with a soft sigh, and was content to semi-doze in the hot water as her body set to absorbing the heat, and perhaps, converting it to energy.
Chapter 137

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: True to word, two months and a day (which is the closest Sunday to the first) after the start of our hiatus, we’re back. While I might have liked to prolong it given my family situation, it’s not fair to you guys who aren’t up to date. That said...

It’s good to be back- and I’m happy to be back, honestly. We’ve both missed you guys a whole lot, and we’ve missed posting. It’s been… Hectic since we took a break. Mentally, I’m in a better place than I was before, but things have had their ups and downs as they always do.

Right now, for instance, my grandmother is in the hospital, having broken her hip and having to have had a partial hip replacement, and she’s caught pneumonia, so she’s in a bit of a mess and my family is a bit of stress and chaos right now.

One of the good things about this break, was it actually gave us time to just… write or rp at our leisure. We actually had days where we didn’t write at all, and we simply enjoyed each other’s company and played games together or Rp’d other stuff that was TOTU AU related.

Tbh, not worrying about meeting a deadline was loads off of my stress levels, and when I wasn’t stressed, I wasn’t frothing at the mouth and stressing out Silver.

Not stressing also let us finish book 2 for TOTU, so there’s that. Y’all have quite a few chapters to look forward to. The next arc is a long one.

Thank you guys for being patient with us and for having stayed with us for so long. We appreciate all of you who have loyally stayed, those of you who have come and gone, and those of you who are just joining this crazy bandwagon that is this fucktrain.

Silverwing Notes: -KICKS IN THE DOOR- WHATS UP FUCKERS WE'RE BACK.
It's good to be back too! Like Strider said, our lack of a deadline totally kicked us ahead, we've got chapters into next year, WHOO!
I'm real glad ya'll waited for us, because MAN are we getting to the coup de' grace of this fuckfest of a story, and here you guys sit reading the entrance into the next chapter, I'm so honored~ So THERE YOU GO.

fuckin ENJOY Chapter 137 and WELCOME BACK TO TALE OF THE UNDERGROUND!

Enjoy the chapter~!

With the lack of owning a new and untrained puppy, they all thought they were free from such a
disaster, but what they did not count for was a very huffy and puffy, and very irate bird, who did what ever he damn well pleased.

And so when Tenebris came to discover his shoes chewed and torn to pieces with a familiar beak mark, there was a bellow of anguish and rage that made it well into the home of Toki.

As if to escape the punishment he knew was coming, Sobek squawked and proceeded to high-tail it upstairs to hide under the bed in Honey's room.

After a relaxing weekend at the onsen, Toki had come home to her house in order. Surprisingly, Undyne had even cleaned it when she’d agreed to look after their pets and the summons for them.

However, all good things weren’t meant to be. The roar that echoed over the village made her cringe, and it only took her seeing Sobek scampering upstairs to know just what he’d done. The little asshole had no doubt gotten himself into some sort of trouble over at Tenebris’ house, and had escaped Undyne to do it.

“He’s such a shitlord,” Toki hissed quietly to herself, as she prepared for the inevitable teleportation in that her father in law would be doing. She wondered just what got chewed up, and how expensive it was. She rubbed her belly, and braced for the incoming.

Oh Tenebris was pissed, definitely. His wonderful new shoes hadn't seen the dawning of a full year before Sobek got into them. Indeed he teleported, but not into her home.

The front door was knocked upon, nearly rattling on its frame.

Toki grimaced as he rattled the front door. She ushered the children into the living room with her husband, and approached the front door and opened it with a nearly innocent smile. “Hello! What’s up?” She asks, casually leaning on the frame so he doesn’t just barge in and murder the hiding bird beast.

Sobek was going to get a scolding. Oh, the bird was going to get a scolding. Toki was going to have words with him.

"Hello, Toki darling.” Her father-in-law had a deathly calm tone and a unwavering smile on his face that was almost sugar sweet. "Tell me, have you seen Sobek? I do believe I have plans to use him tonight as dinner, as he seems to have taken kindly to do that to my rather expensive pair of shoes."

Toki gave him a sunny smile in return to his false sweet smile. "Now father, I'm sure eating Sobek wouldn't be good for your insides. You'd also make Honey cry. He ate your nice shoes?" She queries. "Why don't I pay for a new pair?"

"I adore the child but the bird has to pay for this." He growled quietly as he held up the ruined shoes. Toki gave him a saccharine smile. "He'll pay." She promises with a nod. "He'll definitely pay. But, how about we let him sweat it out, worry about when he’s going to pay, and while he's worrying and fretting, we take a trip to town and go get you another pair- or in fact, how about two pairs of shoes? Maybe even some baby booties for when your new little ones get to running around?” She could guess and estimate the size needed- and it wasn’t like they couldn't strap them on early for baby pictures.

Toki could butter someone up like a piece of toast when she wanted.

At her offer, he cleared his throat quietly. "I... suppose we can reach an agreement." He was a lying bastard- and obviously trying not to say yes immediately, but his tail was wagging behind him.
“Well alright then.” She gives him a smile. “How about you go get your car, and I'll get Papy and the kids ready? I wanted to take him to the game store anyways.” Honey was still grounded, but she could still pick out a game to play once she wasn’t grounded from them. "He's played Portal and Portal 2 to the point that I can quote them verbatim in some parts. We can take one car, so it’s more gas efficient. Though… How many can your car seat?” She questions. It would need to seat the driver, and four passengers.

"Five. Six if I’m not driving." He answered, before he gave her a wry and bemused grin. "No going into labor away from home this time, okay?" He laughed quietly.

“Looks like us and the twins will fit.” She hums. "Thumper’s got school, so he’s busy- Asgore will be fine with the house to himself, yeah?” She blinks at him slowly and then giggles. Her hands drop down to her belly, and she strokes it as she leans away from the door. “Despite the fact I look like a planet, I get the feeling it’s too early. I think your seats are safe from my waters breaking on them this time.” She gives him a mischievous grin. "However, I know who to call if your litter decides they want to be late to their own due dates, don’t I?” She teases.

"Don’t jinx it." He stuck his tongue out at her.

She reached up and gripped his tongue between her fingers, giving it a gentle tug. “I'm not going to jinx it, you silly old man.” She grins at him. “But, if we're off to town, be prepared to make some stops. You recall Lana took some time on our vacation to teach me how to properly crochet while you and the boys were having your… I don't know what you want to call it. Your yukata verses skins wrestling match out in the garden? Anyways, she was at least reminding me how to properly crochet, so I could be on par with her class. Well, anyway, all my yarn and needles were burnt up when the original house and shed were firebombed, so I need new yarn.” She let his tongue go, and wiped her fingers on her dark pants.

“So we will be stopping by the crafts store as well. That's fine, I was hoping to pick up some things there as well, I needed an excuse." He laughed.

Toki nods. "That's fair." She gives him a cheeky grin. "Your children," She pats her belly, "have also been making me crave a milkshake. A banana and Oreo milkshake- and I haven’t been able to satisfy it here. Grillby, for once, can't match the flavor I'm craving. So, I may heckle you into stopping at the Dairy Royals for milkshakes for everyone."

"Consider it done." He chuckled, "I could use one myself."

"Alright. You get the car, I'll get my kids and husband, and meet you outside." She gives him a lopsided smile. "Might be a few minutes, but I'll go as quick as I safely can."

"Can do." He answered, taking his shoes with him as he left.

Toki watched him go, and then closed the front door, padding back to the living room. She exhaled with a soft sigh, and glanced at her husband. "Well, the good news is, I managed to keep Sobek from being turned into a turkey-dinner.” She says lightly. “Bad news is, he ate your dad’s shoes, so now we’re off on a family trip to town."

"Don’t let Honey catch you saying that first part." Papyrus chuckled quietly. "Though indeed, he seemed too well behaved today... I was expecting some sort of disaster.”

“Chewed shoes is disaster in itself.” She snorts. “Though, we'll make a trip of it. We're going to stop at the,,” She paused, and whispered, so the kids didn’t hear, “the game store, so we can pick up some more games for you, and some games for the kids to play too. Also going to stop at the craft store, so
I can get yarn and crochet hooks. And... *Milkshakes.*

Well didn’t he look excited to hear that. "Ooooooh!" He cooed. "What a trip this is going to be."

“Mhm! We're taking his car. So... You go get yourself ready, and I’ll wrangle the kids. Meet here in ten?” She hums up to him.

"You got it." He kissed her head and went to get ready.

She went to get the kids and herself ready as well.

Lo and behold, ten minutes from the time they parted, Toki had both kids downstairs and ready to go with their travel bags of toys, and an extra set of clothes in a diaper bag for her. Children were messy, after all. She’d also wrangled Sobek into one of the bedrooms, as a ‘timeout’ of sorts, and left Snuggle with free reign of the house. Both kids clung to her secondary hands, while her primary hands held her purse and the diaper bag of kids clothes. Toki also had her husband’s wallet and keys ready for him. He’d need to carry the car seats and get them set up in the back of Tenebris’ car.

She could hear his car outside. “Your dad is outside, Pap!” She calls to him. “I’ve got your wallet and keys, if you don’t mind getting the car-seats for the kids.” She wasn’t supposed to carry them anyway. They’re heavy.

"Thank you Toki!” Papyrus piped up as appeared at the top of the stairs, making his way slowly but carefully in his usual town attire.

Toki watched him come down the stairs, and then head for their garage. She hit the button on his keys to open the garage door for him so he didn't have to walk back through the house. While he got the car seats, she tugged the kids outside.

Honey waved at her grandpa. "Papa!" She shrieked happily, nearly deafening her mother. "We're gonna go to town! Isn't that exciting?"

"Hello, Honey." He laughed gently. "Oh yes it's very exciting." He laughed.

Honey wriggled away from her mother, and half popped through his open passenger window to beam at him. Her horns clacked against the car briefly, before she ducked inside partially. "Momma said we're gonna get milkshakes." She grins at him. "Can you get a brain freeze? If you can, do your little nose holes open?" She asks.

His granddaughter was ever the questioning individual.

"I am still bitter about what you did, my dear Honey.” Tenebris rumbled quietly. "Therefore, I am not going to answer your question." He leaned across the passenger seat to pat her head gently before he turned his gaze upward and looked up at his granddaughter’s mother. "Are you ready, my dear?”

Honey pouted at him. "I said I was sorry." She wilted a bit. "I didn't mean to make your nose hurt." Her mother had explained to her the risks of what she'd done- and yeah, there was no guarantee she wouldn’t probably do shenanigans again, but they wouldn't be maliciously intended shenanigans. She didn’t want to drown anyone- she’d just heard rumors her grandpa had a nose, and everyone she knew had a nose except him, so she wanted to see if it was true. Even she had a nose- well, a nose hole. Undyne had a nose too- well, her gills were a nose. Sort of. Honey wasn’t sure how it worked,
but she was sure it was a nose!

"We just have to wait on Papy with the car seats. These two are a little too small to be sitting in their own seats." Toki rubbed her son's head, and was pleased at the soft purr he gave in response. Months away, and he was still a big Momma’s boy.

And as Tenebris momentarily felt guilty, Papyrus loaded the car seats into the vehicle and got them set up.

When he was done, the tall skeleton smiled at his wife and mate. "Alright, I’ll sit in the back seat so we can go ahead and start loading them in..."

"I can sit in back, sweetheart." She gave him a smile. "I don't mind- i know your leg does better when you can stretch out. Now... Skylar, you're up first." She gives him a soft purr, and helped her son up into his seat. "You've got your buckles?"

"Yes, Momma!" He chirps softly.

"If you’re sure you’ll be comfortable back here. Though if you change your mind let me know and we will switch." Papyrus pressed a kiss to one of Toki’s horns, before helping Honey up into her seat as well, and then scooting around to the front seat.

"My love, I'm almost as big as I am tall." She jokes. She wasn't, really. But she was exactly as big as one might imagine some one pregnant with five babies would be. "There is no seat that is comfortable for more than ten minutes. I'll deal." She promised. She helped get her son settled, and then moved to waddle to the empty passenger door behind Tenebris. "Looks like I get to sit behind you, Papa. Mmm..." She wondered, idly, if she should keep calling him that since that was his beasts’ name. She could call him Dad. It wouldn't be that different. Maybe he wouldn't notice? "So, have you told the twins the story of how your car had to get the front seat and floor board completely redone yet?" She teases lightly as she gents in and works to get settled and buckled.

"I have not. And I do not plan to, lest I make them think they can get away with it again, daughter of mine." He answered with a bitter look on his face, before he sighed. "Let me know if I need to move my seat forward for you, okay?" He then told her with a warm tone.

“What happened?” Honey naturally chimed, and waved her hands at her grandfather. “How come you had to get the car fixed? Did you drop a whole lotta food on it?”

Skylar hummed. “I dunno- maybe not him. Thumper maybe?”

Toki gave him an unapologetic smile through his rear-view mirror, and then giggled. “I’m alright on leg room, Tenebris. It’s not my legs that need space.” And her lap was mostly full of her belly. She looped her arms over her belly and stroked it gently. Really, the only things squished were her wings, but it wasn’t the end of the world. “So long as you don’t slide your seat back or lean it back, we won’t have an issue.”

"Duly noted." Ignoring the banter of the children, Tenebris started out of the town and onto the long road to the city.

"Would you like us to stop partway to let you stretch?" Papyrus then asked.

"That'd be nice." Toki chirps to her husband as the kids huff and begin digging out their toys to play during the car ride. Twins were the best thing ever- at least highly intelligent monster ones- for entertaining themselves. "Instead of umpteen dozen pee breaks, you get stretch breaks for the pregnant skele-beast.” Toki paused, and decided she liked that term. She wasn't a skeleton- not a true
and pure one any more- but she wasn't a visibly pure beast.

"Mmh, that's a nice name for you." Tenebris piped up. "A skele-beast. It's simple, and yet it speaks all that must be heard."

"I’m a breed all unto myself.” Toki jokes awkwardly. “To be honest, I’m still trying to adjust. Every time I get used to a body, something happens, and suddenly it’s not my body anymore. It’s a very disorienting feeling sometimes. Hopefully, this will be my last body."

"Indeed... Your soul is quite strong though to last through them." The older monster hummed.

“I just have important people to give me the strength to hold myself together.” She admits sheepishly.

Tenebris rumbled happily at that, while Papyrus smiled at her through the rear view mirror. "We love you too much to let you fall apart, darling Toki." He laughed softly.

She glanced at the twins, who were quite lost in their own world. Something about an evil owl man trying to eat a dragon man or something- her children had the most active imaginations she'd ever seen. Seeing as they were occupied, she shot a hesitant smile back at her husband. “Well, this last couple weeks have been proof enough that sometimes you guys aren’t strong enough to hold me together- that sometimes I have to hold myself together, or pull myself back together. There’s probably going to be more than just a couple days like that in the future."

"Even if you’re the one doing the pulling, we'll still be there to help along the way." He laughed. "Knowing father, he would even make some sort of bio-friendly adhesive to ensure you're kept in one piece."

Toki snorts, and leans back in her seat. “Before he makes a bio-friendly adhesive, I’m still waiting for him to make soul-condoms.” She says lightly, trying to lighten the mood before it could drag her down. She was going to fight with that for a long time- the dark emotions that was- before they stopped being a problem.

Tenebris laughed at that. "Have you not tried a rubber glove over your soul-?" He teased.

“Given the fact that you can only grasp a soul with magic, or touch it with something infused with magic...” She cocked a brow at the scientist. Then she puffed air at him. “Alright, yes I tried it.” In the other world, mind, but she had. At least once. “Not a glove though, but an actual condom. And no, it didn’t work.”

“Momma?” Skylar paused his game to glance at her. “What’s a condom?"

“I’ll tell you when you’re older.” She pats her son’s head gently. “Play with your sister, sweetheart. You don’t wanna listen to the adults talk, do you?"

“I dunno, do I?"

“We might talk about kissing and making babies.”

He made a face. “Blech. Nope.” He went right back to his toys.

Toki grinned successfully, and then turned her gaze back to her father in law.

Tenebris rumbled softly as the child was quickly persuaded away from their conversation and once Skylar had returned to playing with his sister, he looked up at her. "Perhaps there is something I have yet to try, I will revise my notes." He announced.
"I will offer what help I can, Father." Papyrus spoke up, glancing back to Toki before he gave her a loving smile, "If it means progress brings Toki that much more happiness..."

"Well... Not just me." Toki says lightly, and leans forward and lowers her voice so only Tenebris and Papyrus can really hear her. The kids would be none the wiser. "Remember, there are hundreds of thousands of Human Turned Monsters out there in the world, and more making the change every day. Eventually, they're going to run amok of soul play, and it's going to be beneficial for there to be a contraceptive out there in the world. People enjoy soul play, and humans don't have a choice in getting pregnant or not. Consider it the next great scientific leap. Though I guess I could go to Alphys about it. You're going to be busy on baby duty... And after all, you haven't figured it out in all this time, there's no way you could figure it out before the litter is born." Was that a dare in her voice? Perhaps it was.

Tenebris stiffened as he shot her a look through the rear-view mirror. "Now listen here, missy." He started with a grumble, making Papyrus laugh.

“What?” Toki gives him a big grin over his shoulder. “I'm just saying you probably can’t do it in time. That’s what, a couple weeks? A month from now? You're smart, Papa, and I know you've been thinking about it idly for a while now, but you're not thaaaaaat smart.” She grins. She was baiting him, definitely baiting him.

"I will fight you on this, darling daughter of mine." He growled quietly.

"Fight me?” She gave him an innocent look. "How ever do you plan to fight me? I think your fighting competition lies in the brilliant Alphys. She's quiet the scientist, you know- after all, I'm sure with you being mostly retired," she grins with pure innocence to her tone, "that you're out of practice."

"I am not out of practice!” He huffed. "I am still very capable of performing my duties as a scientist!”

Toki grinned. “I dunno, Tenebris, you could have fooled me. Have you even been re-reading childbirth and the like? Of course, I understand you’d rather nap at your age.” She wriggles her brows at him, enjoying sassing him. "I don’t blame you for being out of practice at all for both science and doctoring. Naps are irresistible."

His tail rattled quietly, muffled by his backside, before he huffed and turned his focus more on driving. "My chair is too alluring when it comes to napping..." He grumbled.

"Riiight.” She grins. “Still- the subtle dare is there, Papa. If not... I'll chat up Alphys. Maybe she’ll schedule a consultation with you for help on small matters.” She chirps cheekily, and then leans back to enjoy the ride, her eye lights idly tracking the line of dark SUV’s that were driving down the other side of the road. Black, dark green, dark blue- so many people drove them, she mused.

“You know, Dad,” She hums, “you’re going to need a bigger car. Than what you've got. Car seats take a lot of space.”

"I like my little blast of the past, but you are right. Perhaps today we might also be able to stop by where I can purchase a vehicle to accommodate our growing family.” He gave a soft chuff, before he smiled at her through the mirror. "You are right though. This can be for when I want to go out as an old man having his retirement joy rides, but when I need to take all the pups somewhere, it would be quite a problem.” He chuckled gently.

Toki gave him a bemused smile. “It'd definitely be a problem if you tried to fit... five car seats back here, alongside Thumper.” She hums. "Though, maybe not car-shopping today, Dad. That’s
something you, Asgore, and Thumper need to do- cars are big purchases, and you all need to agree on something you all like, and can handle being seen in together.”

"I would not make a final decision today. I’d rather simply take a look around and see what is available so that I might have a place to start once Asgore and Thumper are both available to look with me.” He explained his train of thought to go with his previous statement. “Indeed I would want to make sure that there would be enough room for my children, as well as space for my dear mate's horns.”

"Still, it's best to go all at once- because if you see something you really like, you’ll be tempted to get it. Temptation is a terrible thing, and becoming biased is even worse." She hums. "But if you want to look today, we can. It's our trip out to town, after all." She stretches her legs a bit, and then shoves her feet up between the center console like a rebellious teen. She might not have fleshy ankles to turn into cankles unless it was summoned, but her bones hurt and elevation helped. She did her best not to bump her father in law or her husband with her shoes.

Neither beast seem to consider her feet where they were as a problem. Instead of kicking up a fuss, Tenebris tucked in his elbow, and Papyrus reached out to gently rub the feet that were now beside his hands.

"Would you rather we simply listen to the sounds around us, or would you like to see what might be on the radio?" The older male questioned.

Toki couldn't stop the soft, sinful moan that slid from her teeth as Papyrus' fingers sunk into her bones and began to massage them. She wriggled out of her shoes, and gave him a soft coo. "Hm?" She glanced to her father in law. "Music would be good, Dad."

With a nod, Tenebris lifted a hand from the wheel to start flipping through the radio channels, watching Toki's face in the rear-view mirror with hopes to recognize the potential of a song or a channel she might like. "Just let me know if something catches your fancy.”

Toki nodded. Her face lit up several channels in, as something happy and cheerful sounding popped up. "Ah- this works!" She chirps. "I like this well enough." Her loose mane fluffed up, and her shoulders gently bounced to the beat. It didn't take long for her to start singing along with the song-something she hadn't done much of since she'd been back home. "Nah, nah, honey I'm good. I could have another buy I probably should not. I've got somebody at home. It's been a long night here, and a long night there, and these long, long legs are darn near everywhere." She nudged her husband with a playful wink through the mirror. "Hold up now- you look good, I will not lie, but if you ask where I'm staying tonight, I gotta be like oh baby, no baby, you got me all wrong baby. My baby's already got all of my love~"

Papy lit up as she grew much more energized with the music and he laughed softly, while Tenebris rumbled in amusement, his thumb tapping softly against the wheel as he hummed to the tune. Skylar and Honey didn't know the lyrics, but both seemed to hum along to their mother's singing once they too caught wind of her energy.

Toki ended up singing along to most of the songs all the way into town, breaking only for commercial or when the children had questions that they needed answered. As they delved into the city and traffic made their travels slow, Toki rolled down her window to try and get some cool air into the car, since the city itself was fairly warm, though with a breeze.

“You remember the way to the shoe store?” She glances up to Tenebris as the radio went to commercial again.
"Oh of course. They're a wonderful business and I would consider it an insult to forget where to find them." He responded with a soft chuckle.

"How are you feeling?" Papyrus asked finally, glancing back at her. "Any urge to stop for a moment?"

"I'm fine." Toki hums. "I've already lost feeling in my legs, like almost an hour ago, so it's no big deal. I can make it to the outlet, and then I can stretch there." In all reality, she'd simply forgotten to ask for breaks- singing was very distracting, and did well to occupy her time.

"The pins and needles are going to make you keel over." Tenebris mentioned with a soft chortle. "Don't say I didn't warn you."

"Thankfully, the only flesh I have on me is my torso, so I think I'll be alright to escape the pins and needles in my legs. If not, well," She cocks a brow at him, "I've got two strong men to keep me from falling over. I mean, I know I must weigh as much as a brick house by now, but if you each take an arm-"

"And we hold her legs!" Honey chirps helpfully.

"-and the kids keep my legs steady," Toki continues seamlessly, rolling with her daughter's addition, "then I'm sure you all can keep me from keeling over."

"I suppose that's not beyond reason." Papyrus nodded in agreement with his father's words, before he smiled at Toki. He then kissed his fingers and reached over to tap her teeth, passing on his kiss. "I love you~"

"I love you too." She gave him a dazzling grin as his fingers tapped against her teeth, and then blew him a kiss, since she couldn't really lean forward enough to press a finger-kiss to his teeth. Her gaze is distracted though as they drive past one of the many down-town milkshake places. Her stomach twangs with a heavy need. Cravings were painfully annoying. "Looks like we're getting close now- the traffic is thinning out too. Downtown is good for that though." She sighs and leans back, looking out the window again. She licks her teeth to try and distract herself. "Excited?" She glances to her husband, obviously meaning the video game store instead of the shoe store.

"A little bit. Though moreover, I am more looking forward to resolving what our pet had done to our dear father's shoes."

"Sobek does sometimes make it hard to remember that he's a summons and not actually a particularly wily pet, huh?" Toki giggles. "I'm actually excited for when the kids can open their gates to let the summons visit their realms." She knew the summons needed to be there for trust to develop, and for the children to grow up knowing their summons, but Toki was ready for a time when her wood furniture wouldn't be eaten by the god damned bird.

"I wonder if one day we're going to send in the little larvae and have Snuggle come out fully grown. Imagine the most terrifying hell hornet you've ever seen, and it spends ALL DAY snuggling with a small child." Papy brought up the insect summon and laughed at the mental image.

"Meanwhile we're going to have a beautiful bearded Vultarian bird, sleek and elegant, and it's going to be the spawn of demons." Tenebris snorted.

“Well… maybe Sobek will mature by the time he grows up?” Toki suggested.

“Nope.” Honey chimes in from playing with her brother. “My little birdy is a dumb birdy, and he’ll be a big dumb birdy instead of a little dumb birdy when he grows up. I love him even though he’s
"The dumb and eats grandpapa’s shoes.”

“So, looks like Snuggle will be the smart one… though.” She glanced at Tenebris, “I pity you. Two blaster beasts were bad enough. You’re going to have five in your house once our summons bring the new summons through.”

"Blaster Beasts don't have summons." The older monster mumbled, shaking his head. Tenebris explained his statement when he caught several confused looks in his rear view mirror, and opened mouths ready to correct him- because they’d seen his summons. "Usually we are more like the summons ourselves. Our race is very powerful in the ways of magic. However, unlike humans and monsters, we utilize it in ways that do not require incantation or summoning gestures. We simply will it, and it becomes." As he spoke his mind had wandered to that which he spoke of, and his throat had began to glow slightly as magic vapor leaked from the corners of his mouth.

"Father... You're fuming." Papyrus spoke quickly.

"Do I sound upset, Papyrus?"

"No... You're..." The skeletal monster gestured to the corners of his father's mouth.

It took the older man but a moment to realize just what he was doing before the glow faded. "Ah, my bad. That's one of the downsides of our magic... sometimes if our emotions will it, it could happen at rather... inopportune times."

Toki tilts her head and hums. “Well… I do recall most monsters needing gestures to do a good portion of their magic, or at least touch depending on what it is, so I see what you mean. The vapors are… interesting. I don’t recall having that problem as a beast. The only problem I had was keeping warm while constantly putting off heat.” Toki pondered magic for a moment. “Though I don’t think anyone uses incantations. Well... I don't, and technically I have a human soul. I do usually use gestures… but I think that's mostly out of habit.” Sometimes she didn’t, but most of the time the gestures were out of habit from when she’d been learning her magic.

"Mm... To each their own. I don't usually utilize more movement than I need to." Tenebris snorted quietly, shaking his head lightly. "Gestures are simply a way to warn your enemies of what your next move is going to be, especially if you are unoriginal with said movements."

"Considering most of my magic is either summoning fire itself, or ripping open the fabric of space and time to unleash a swarm of hell bees or hell hornets upon the world, I don't think there's really much my enemies could do even if they understood what my movements meant anyways." Toki snorts, and then grunts as she's kicked in the ribs. "I'm going to laugh at you though, if you expect not to get a houseful of baby summons, and you end up with them anyway. Remember, they're half of me too, at least genetically. That's at least bound to do some super wonky things to them.” Plus they had technically traveled with her through the void. Who knew what sort of weird shenanigans went on inside her womb? She just hoped she didn't deliver a large quantity of living slime-balls once they stopped drawing from her magic.

"You make me worry, my dear, if the spirits choose to follow your words” Tenebris looked at Toki with a light grin. "I'm gonna be jinxed and I'm going to be left with a gaggle of children and I'm going to be dancing on the gamble of whether I get a bunch of snuggles or a mess of Sobek-look-alikes!” He laughed.

"Well, that's what happens when two beasts bump uglies, and one comes from another world.” She snorts a bemused laugh. "Believe me, Dad, I wouldn't be surprised if you end up with a gaggle of them. But, it wouldn't surprise me if you got a mix of creatures. Perhaps some dogs, cats, maybe the
odd lizard or two- we'll have to see if anything is summoned forth, no?" She quirks a grin at him through the rear view mirror. "Though... I'm not going to replace your shoes if your kids summons- or your kids- eat them. They'll be on you and Asgore for leaving them out."

"You're cursing me for disaster." He shook his head and laughed softly, before he realized there was something off about her speech. "Hang on..." Slowly, he pulled the car to a parking spot, and looked back at Toki, "You've been calling me 'Dad'..."

She glanced up, and hummed. He'd pulled in to park at the shopping outlet, and hadn't even realized it. She shifted her hand to undo her buckles. "I have." She nods. "It's just... I dunno. Papa is what your beast goes by." She tilts her head to look at him as he turns around in his seat, and then leans over to work on undoing the buckles for the children. "Now that I'm more in tune with my own beast, it's... I dunno. Strange, I suppose- I figured it would be better if I called you dad instead of Papa, since that's what your beast goes by. If you'd rather I stick with Papa, I can." She'd call him by whatever he preferred- and technically, since they weren't pack, she could just call him by his name if he preferred. She'd leave it up to him, ultimately.

He gave a sweet smile as his pupils widened. "I... I wouldn't care one bit if you called me 'Dad'... If anything... heh... I love to hear such a name coming from you~" He chirped happily.

Toki gave him a lopsided smile, warmth filling every toothy bit of it. "Alright then, dad. Lets get you some shoes. Well... Gotta get the kids out first."

"And make sure Momma doesn't fall." Skylar adds and gives her a pointed look. He sets his toys aside and helps his sister with her belt buckles while his mother gets his undone, and then he's climbing out of his seat, opening the passenger door to scamper out. Just like his mother taught him, he sticks right up flush to the car, and he walks around it until he's at her door. He opens it for her. "Ready, Momma?"

"In just a moment, Sky." She pets his head lovingly, and is rewarded with a warm grin that is nearly identical to her own. The only thing that changes it is the orange tinge to his bones, like his father had. "I want your daddy here to make sure I don't turn you into a pancake. Then we'd have to scrape you up and serve you up on a plate!" She jokes.

Honey made her way around as well, and gave her mother a petulant grin. "Cannibalism is frowned upon in most societies." She quotes cheerfully. "What does cannibalism mean?"

"Ask your grandfather." Toki chimes cheerfully, shuffling it off onto him. "It's good practice for him for the upcoming events in his life."

"Grandpapa!" Honey turns beseeching blue eye-lights to him through the back door. "Grandpapa! What is cannibalism?"

Hearing the children bicker as he himself got out had Papyrus laughing, while Tenebris paled a little, before he cleared his throat, "It's... something a child should not learn about... So... Ask me perhaps in a few years."

"Really?" Honey tilts her head at him. "I heard it in a movie with kids in it though. Kids and a scary rainbow boat ride." Her bones clack as she shudders.

Toki snorts. She knew which movie she'd heard it off of- Undyne had watched Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory with the children while babysitting them. Honey had nightmares about the chocolate river and the scary boat ride. "When you're older, your scientist grandpa will tell you all the things." Toki hums. "Not now though. We don't want you having more bad dreams."
The pregnant woman swung carefully around and hissed softly. Her legs tingled unpleasantly. Not quite pins and needles, but close. "I am numb from the hips down. So. Who's ready to steady the living boulder with legs?"

"Called it!" Tenebris got out as Papyrus came around and they both moved into position to catch her when she came out of the vehicle.

"No need to worry, we've got you" Her loving husband assured her with a warm smile.

Toki formed her tongue just to blow a raspberry at Tenebris. "You know what, just for that, I am cursing you to a house full of blaster beast summons." She wiggles her fingers at him and lets out a witchy cackle, before carefully getting to her feet. Her knees wobble, and she latches onto both men. "Pins and needles, holy heck."

"Tooood yooouuu." Tenebris teased, pecking her head as he supported his side of her. Her 'curses' went beyond him in this one moment of enjoyment to rub in his dadly-decreed 'he was right' bragging rights.

Papyrus boosted up his own side and pressed a kiss to her hand, "I've got you, my darling." he assured her, the charming knight as ever, he was~ How lucky she was to have such valiant males at her beck and call

How lucky indeed. Toki made sure not to lean on Papyrus too much, or she'd upset his balance with the cane. Perhaps she babied him a bit much, but... Well, he was her husband, and she was allowed to be concerned. Toki was a worried. "Thank you, my love." She smooches his cheekbone valiantly while the twins latched onto her legs like limpets.

When she could feel her toes again, She made a couple shuffling steps. "Alright, my sweet kids. I can't see you to move. If you want to ride on someone's feet, you'll have to ask your daddy or grandpa." Disability or not, only Papyrus could decide if he wanted to try and handle the kids clinging to him.

Skylar hopped off without complaint, and was content to walk on his own. When he gave his twin a look, she too moved to join him. "We can walk." Skylar chirped softly. "When do we get to have milkshakes?"

"After shoes and games and yarn." Toki laughs. "Otherwise I don't doubt there will be a mess in a store."

"Once I get my new shoes ordered, I will see about potentially giving foot rides if you two behave." Tenebris spoke up with a light grin as he looked down at the children, "Though only before milkshakes, if you earn them. That, my dear children, is up to your mother and father."

"And thankfully we've already granted you one easy step by leaving Sobek home. Lord knows what would happen if we took him into the shoe store..." Papyrus shuttered at the thought.

Honey pouted at him, and gave him puppy eyes just because. "We always behave!"

"No we don't." Skylar snickers, and reaches up to take his daddy's fingers in his own.

Toki let's her son take over her husband's free hand, and instead takes Honey's hand. "Alright, little ones, let's go get your Grandpapa's shoes ordered."

As Tenebris was freed of responsibility, he got ahead of them to get the door, a mellow smile on his relaxed face as he looked back at them. "After you."
"Thank you." Toki gave him a friendly smile, and waddled through first, guiding Honey after her.
Chapter 138

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And thus returns the nice shop keepers from chapter 74! It’s been a long time since we’ve seen them! Also- Silverwing and I gave up on editing the names. Ya'll are gonna have to deal with Cae and Aliquam. We like the names, so they're gonna stick. Though, I'm too lazy to go fix all the editing I've already done for all of the chapters, old and new, so... Yeah. Not a stress I necessarily want to handle. Anyway! Hope ya'll enjoy the chapter!

The sound of shoes being shined was loud in the quiet building. Shimada’s was much the same as it had been the last time Tenebris had been there- walls upon walls of shoes, the occasional display of socks, and several places where work was done out front. There were shoes in the process of being made, leather being dried and lacquered, and fabric based shoes that were in the process of being carefully sewn together.

Held in vice clamps to keep them steady and stable were shoes that were having soles of varying types molded and glued on. Shimada’s did more than just the basic shoes after all- they did custom creations, among other things. On the rack of things that were being resoled, several pairs of stilettos were visible, combat boots, even a pair of obviously dearly beloved flip-flops that someone wanted to keep.

Along one wall was a row of shoes that were sent in to be repaired- most of them had rips in them, or there was a spot where a seam wore out. One was a set of steel-toed boots that had been entirely squished in on the front of one shoe. A few of the shoes had been chewed on by pets, but none to the extent of the shoes that were being carried in by Tenebris.

Those had been mauled completely from front to back- and there was a good chance they couldn’t be saved. None of the shoes on the repair rack had nearly that much damage done to them.

There was a cough from behind the shoe-covered counter, and then an elderly woman's voice chimed clearly to them from behind the stacks. "Welcome to Shimada’s. I’m Yuri Shimada, how may I help you find the perfect pair of shoes today?"

"Good afternoon, Ma'am..." Tenebris greeted, "I was hoping you could make a pair of shoes like this pair. These ones were unfortunately left where my granddaughter's... Pet... Could chew them up..."

He explained, placing the ruined shoes on the counter.

Honey puffed her cheeks indignantly. "Grandpapa!" She complains, "Sobek isn't a pet. He's my birdy."

Tenebris gave Honey a small and doting smile. "Don’t make me think about if that would make things worse, my dear grandchild..."

Yuri leaned back and squinted up at him for a moment, before she blinked. "Ah, Mister Gaster! Yes, yes, we still have your measurements. Hanzo and Genji will need to double check and make sure
they are correct, but if all is good, you'll have new shoes inside of a week.” She took a glance at his boots, and sighed softly. “That is a bit beyond saving, I’m afraid, or I would offer to fix it instead of making a new pair. It’s cheaper- but that is... beyond saving now. You must have one heck of a... bird... to chew up a pair of shoes like these.”

“She does have an... interesting bird.” The larger monster gave a tight smile. “He’s unique.” He then shifted to face Yuri, giving her a gentle bow. “Much appreciated, my lady. What shall I do with these... old shoes?” He asked, grasping and holding up what remained of the first pair in his possession.

Yuri toddled around the counter, and gave a rough cough, before clearing her throat. “Keep them if you wish- use them to distract your granddaughter’s bird from eating your new set. There’s not much we can do with leather and steel that is that... torn.” She tsks, and then whistles for her grandsons.

Again, it was Hanzo who came out. However, this time he appeared to be different than the last time they had seen him. Hanzo had completed his change. Where the man, before, had been covered in skin with bright eyes and a slowly forming tail, he was now covered in hard, dark scales, and seems to have a long, scaly tail hanging behind him. His legs were shaped a bit differently as well, looking similar to Tenebris’ in structure.

He even had similar shoes on- it was likely that he had borrowed the design he had made for Tenebris, and simply shrunk the size down to fit his much smaller human turned Monster foot.

Hanzo’s tail flicked and coiled as he cleaned his clawed hands on a cloth, and dried sweat from his brow. “Genji is on his lunch break again, Grandma. He’ll be done in just a minute or two though, and be back to work on working the leather for Mrs. Izuna. What is- Oh!” His bright blue eyes went wide at the gaggle of monsters in his shop. “Mister Gaster! Hello again!” He padded closer with a wide grin. “Here for more shoes?”

“He is. I know you still have his model, but I want to make sure his measurement is the same, and his bones haven’t shifted. Will you check them for me?” Yuri motioned to his feet with a hum. She glanced at their other patrons, and then did a double-take at seeing the heavily pregnant skelebeast. “Oh my word- can I get you a chair, miss?”

“No thank you,” Toki laughed softly, “I sat enough on the drive up. Thank you for the offer, however. That was very kind.” She gave her a warm smile, and wrangled Honey away from the counter covered in sticky shoes as the curious child tried to get grabby with some of the items along the top.

Hanzo blinked, watching her for a moment before going to grab his measuring tape and the stool. He brought it over, set it down, and motioned for Tenebris to put his foot on top. “Are those your grandkids?” He asks owlishly. He didn’t think it had been long enough for them to be that big. Or for her to be working on another batch, frankly- this was hardly the era where women were expected to keep pumping out children. But maybe monsters worked differently. He wouldn’t really know- other than his brother, he wasn’t really around other monsters. He hadn’t even been up to Nara Village before.

"Indeed, young man." Was the elder beast’s answer as he lifted his foot and took his temporary shoe off so his foot could be measured. He pressed it onto the stool, his pads pressing and his claws momentarily flexing as he made to adjust his footing. He wanted to be sure that he was comfortable when he was fitted as to ensure the best fit for his future footwear. After all, if he had to wear it, it was damn well going to be comfortable. "They grow quickly don’t they?"

“Uh... Yeah.” He had to blink owlishly at the children again. “It’s... Been what, a year and a half?
“A little over, since we last saw you?” He glanced back to him, and then set to measuring his foot. “They certainly grow faster than human children. Though… I’m surprised you’ve got another round of grandchildren going already.” He’d seen pictures of his daughter in law when Tenebris had come in to pick up his shoes- pictures of her with her newborns. Yeah, she looked a lot different now, but he’d recognize that crocodile grin anywhere. “Twins again? And, uh… Hopefully not due again, right?” Hanzo remembered the story of her ruining Tenebris’ car.

The old man had complained about it, despite being utterly thrilled about his new grandchildren being here. According to what Hanzo had been told, Tenebris’ front seat and floor board had been entirely ruined, and the ‘stink’ hadn’t worn off for weeks, even after Toki had paid to have the entire front part of the car redone.

He supposed, though, that for a monster with a sensitive… Nose? A sensitive nose even without having a nose, a lingering smell in a car could be horribly, horribly unpleasant. Hanzo frankly wasn’t sure how Tenebris smelled things, but he wasn’t about to ask. That was rude.

Toki went to answer, but decided that nope, this was not her conversation to have. She moved over to Aliquam and cuddled up to his shoulder.

Papyrus wrapped his arm around her and gave his wife a gentle squeeze as he listened to his father have a moment of mourning for the original leather seating.

It didn’t take too long though before he picked up again and continued to speak. "I suppose there isn’t really stopping my son from doing as he wishes with his wife, it just gives me more grandchildren to dote over.”

"Except these," Toki felt the need to interject and correct, because these weren’t grandchildren and it would be awkward if he had to assume they were up until they were introduced as little baby Gasters, instead of Gaster-Naras, "aren't his grandchildren. Not yet, anyway."

"No?" Hanzo gives her a confused look and pauses in his measurements.

"Mhm. Dad here," She motions to him, "wanted more kids of his own, so Papy and I decided to surrogate for him since neither he nor his mate can carry their own. When these are born and weaned, they'll be his- and Papyrus’ little siblings."

Hanzo supposed that adopting explained how none of his children looked like him- he had been wondering how a beast like Tenebris could produce a skeleton. Initially, Hanzo had chalked it up to monsters being weird, but apparently they were normal just like people. Hanzo gave her a warm grin. "That's really kind of you. I bet you're really proud to be a Dad again, huh Mister Gaster? Do you know how many you're having?"

"Oh indeed... Five healthy young newborn pups. It makes my soul swell with joy to know my son married such a wonderful woman~" He responded joyfully. "And even better, Toki's starting to call me 'Dad'. It's just the best feeling!" He flushed a bit with a gleeful grin.

Toki snorts as his face darkens with a happy blush. "Dad stop, you're embarrassing." She covers her face and giggles.

Hanzo laughs, his dark scales crinkling along his cheeks as he smiles, showing his teeth had sharpened alongside his fingernails. "Five, huh? No wonder you look fit to burst. I don't even wanna know your due date- that'll probably jinx it and ruin another pair of his seats. Will you be bringing them in for shoes here?" He inquires, peering up as he marked off a few changes in the size of the shoes that he would need to make for his feet to be comfortable. His claws had grown, and keeping
Tenebris happy would make for a continually happy customer who would return.

"I wonder about that, I really do. I will be raising them as I would a pack, and yet I have certainly wound up domesticated, haven't I?" Tenebris cupped his chin in thought, before he groaned and pressed his face into his palm. "Oh, I'm sure my dear daughter in law would love to ruin my seats a second time." He chuckled weakly.

Toki gave a bubbly snicker at his complaining. "I would never intentionally ruin it, Dad." She rolls her eye lights. "And there's nothing wrong with domestication. Maybe you could raise them like you were raised? After all, if they're simply raised like a pack, then they wouldn't know the pleasures of tea, or honey tarts, or anything like that." She hums. He did have non-wild family after all- and if he raised his children to be completely beast, well... Frankly, she wasn't sure how they would fit in with the world. But, mingling the beast with 'domesticated' habits wouldn't be bad. Tenebris would miss his tea if he didn't get to have it anymore. "Speaking of... I need to confirm an order. I kind of caved and was... going to get a single bee hive for leisure reasons after the litter was born, but I need to confirm the order once it comes in through my e-mail." She shuffled her hands into her purse, and then frowned. "Darn it. Dad? Keys please- it looks like I left my phone in the car."

"Ah, sure... Papyrus, would you go with her?" He asked. Though he turned to find his son had not heard his words.

Papyrus had stepped away from Toki and was currently trying to wrangle his mischievous daughter from trying to steal the shoes off the counter again.

Toki let him take over managing their mischievous daughter, and gave Tenebris a big smile. "I'm a big girl." She held out her hands for the keys. "I'll be right back, I promise."

Hanzo laughed softly, and took a moment to measure the new growth of the claws on his feet to accommodate for them and estimate for any further growth within the next year or so. "Best just let her do what she's gonna do, big boss man. Pregnant women get feisty when men try to limit them because of their 'delicate condition'."

"I do not think I could stop her even if I tried... Toki is not a woman to take orders..." He procured his keys slowly, holding them in his fingers as he contemplated going with her.

"Well..." Toki managed to grin at him and snagged the keys from his fingers once he procured them. "Not all the time anyway. Sometimes I'll take orders, but only in special locations and usually only for Papyrus." She wiggles her brows at him, before waddling out of the store.

Hanzo paused, and flushed a bright hue under his dark scales. They changed to a lighter color, reflecting his blush. "... Did she... just mean what I think she meant?" Dear lord, he wasn't used to such forward women.

Papyrus pressed his face into his hand with a quiet groan. That was his wife, good gracious. Of course she would pop off with something like that- she had become so much bolder since she had come back from the other world. It was refreshing, but it had it's moments where it was embarrassing as all get out.

Tenebris cleared his throat quietly. "I... have.... no comment on this." He murmured.

"Momma says funny things and it makes people turn fun colors in the face. Usually it's only Daddy though. Sometimes she says them to Uncle Sans, and he says them back, and then they both turn fun colors and laugh." Skylar observes cheerfully. "She told me they're 'dirty adult jokes' and I shouldn't repeat them." He nods firmly. "So I don't." He was a good boy- he listened to his mother. Mooooost
of the time.

Hanzo snorted. "That... Is very good. Listening to your mother about such things is very important." He straightened, and tapped Tenebris' knee. "Alright, Mister Gaster. You can put your shoe back on- I've gotten the measurements I need. I can assume you want it made from the same leather, same color, and same sort of sole along the bottom? Or do you want a more durable sole, so you can do more outdoor running in them? I'll be sticking with the steel-toe at the end either way, so it will keep any further growth from your claws from wearing through the leather and poking holes too fast."

Tenebris nodded slower to the smaller Human Turned Monster, before he smiled at him crookedly. "Oh the second one please! A running sole sounds perfect." He answered. He had started putting on his shoe when his phone rang. "Oh is that me?" He wasn't expecting it to be him, and it took him a few moments to abandon putting on his shoe so he could pull his phone from his pocket. He awkwardly thumbed at it for a moment, before he got it to answer. He held it up to the crook of his neck, and rumbled softly. "Hello?"

Toki's voice was audible, which in itself was enough to be alarming. Toki was usually very quiet over the phone- one had to be very close to the speaker in order to listen in on her side of the conversation. She was loud enough with her initial exclamation that the children even turned to look at their grandfather, giving him a perplexed look.

"Dad?" Toki's voice was tight and uncomfortable, borderline pained. She panted a bit on the phone. "Dad. Dad. Tenebris." She pressed, obviously gathering her thoughts. "I need help. Please. I just- I'm having a contraction- or a Braxton Hicks- I don't know what it is, but it hurts and I can't get back up and I don't remember the twins feeling like this. Dad- what if there's something wrong?"

She was babbling- panic spurred on by the prior loss of one of the pups- and wasn't giving him much room to get a word in edge wise.

He couldn't even reply. He just let out a half-panicked bellow as he turned and hauled ass outside of the shoe shop, one shoe on while the other dangled in his grip.

"Father?!" Papyrus managed a startled gasp as he gathered his children close.

Tenebris didn't even stop to answer him, and had made it outside with a few long-legged steps before he ran for the car. "TOKI!?" He bellowed.

Toki was hunched over at the passenger door where she'd had to fish the phone out from under his seat where it had slid sometime during the process of driving. Her wings were flared up behind her and trembling as she breathed deeply. Her mane was ruffled and raised, terrified of the pain plaguing her middle and lingering in ways she felt it shouldn't. "I'm here." She squeaked in a panicked voice. Her primary hands had her weight supported, while her secondary held her phone and her belly. "Tenebris- check them, please."

"I'm here, Toki. I'm here." He quickly went to her side and knelt beside her, his hands coming up to caress her stomach as he quickly pulsed his magic into the tissue, taking in what he could with his senses. He roved over the litter as best he could, and breathed a soft sigh of relief. "It's okay Toki. It's okay... They're okay..." He told her gently.

She exhaled roughly through her teeth, and let out the tiniest of pained whines. The tight, cramping sensation that had her and Dear alight with panic began to fade off. As it faded off, the litter stirred up and kicked to life again, and with the motion, she felt less inclined to hyperventilate into a deep grave. "What... What was that?" She asks, wary of straightening and triggering another one.
Her legs were starting to ache though, and he needed better access to her belly. She straightened slowly, hands gripping the dark painted metal of his car probably hard enough to leave marks, and then turned around so she could face him and he could get a clearer scan of her ectobelly. "I don't remember Braxton Hicks being like that. Is... Am I in labor?" He had smelled it last time- she couldn't smell her own scent, but he would know if she was in labor.

"No... No... Not labor..." He answered quickly. "Your scent hasn't changed... you're still... You still smell... pregnant." He didn't know how to word that without it sounding... odd. He rubbed her stomach with both palms, healing magic pulsing up into his hands to try and soothe some of her pain while he gave another pulse of magic to assure himself that they were okay. Once he was completely certain, he closed his eyes and sighed. "They're okay. They're a little squished given the circumstances, but they're okay. All five of them are fine."

Toki took a shuddering breath, and sighed. "Well obviously I'm still pregnant." She says, with no venom or bite to her words. Just worry and anxiety, which makes her usual sweet honey and smoke scent more acrid and bitter. "If I'm not in labor, I must have just stressed a Braxton Hicks out of me." She grimaced. "They're rapidly running out of space, so when their limited space tightens... I guess that's why it hurt. Maybe also because of the position and it being too soon." There was a lingering ache, soon soothed away by the healing pulses of his palms, but nothing felt world endingly wrong. "Nothing ruptured, right? I didn't pop an ecto-spleen or whatever organs I've got in there?"

"No. No rupture." He assured her. He pulled her into a hug, and crooned to her warmly. "It was just a Braxton Hicks contraction. They're okay. You're okay too." He whispered, reassuring both him and herself.

Toki tried not to give in. She really did. She tried, and she was doing fine- up until he looped his arms around her and hugged her tight.

She burst into relieved tears. "Oh thank the gods." She gasped into his shirt, her mane ruffling with her emotions. She was trying to get herself back under control again. Her husband and children were inside, and Tenebris had one shoe on for some reason and the other was by her foot, and she needed to not be crying. Nothing was wrong- it had just been a scare, but there was no need to cry. "I'm so sorry I called like that. I just panicked. It hurt and I thought we were gonna lose another one..."

"It's okay... I want you to always call me if you feel like you want me to check, my dear girl..." He told her gently. "Never hold back from calling me if you feel like you need me to check on them... please don't hesitate. You're in a delicate condition right now, my dear- your body is stretched beyond the capacity it should probably be capable of at your size, and there are certain activities that will cause you more strain. Bending over should probably be avoided now- please, keep your phone on you and call me or my son if you need anything. Please."

She nodded into his chest again, and then leaned back to fish around in her purse. She pulled out a dark green handkerchief, and used it to dry her sockets. "I won't hesitate. Thank you." She nods softly.

Once she's certain she's under control again, she passes her phone into her purse and massages her secondary hands into her belly. Her gaze slides down. "Dad, you have one shoe on and people are staring. Lets lock up the car and go back inside. Do you... Mind explaining that I just had a small scare over a Braxton Hicks?" Toki wasn't sure she could verbally explain why she had been so freaked out- and people were naturally curious and would want to know.

He nodded slowly. "Yes. Go ahead and get a head start. I'll lock up and put my other shoe back on." He told her, getting started on the latter of the two jobs he mentioned.
Toki nodded and waddled back towards the shoe store. There were people in other cars staring, and she fluffed up her mane and let it devour her face to hide her embarrassment at drawing so much attention.

She made her way back to the shop, and slipped back inside.

The twins, which had stayed with their father so they didn't get underfoot of their grandfather, perked up once she entered and returned. "Momma?" They chimed together. "Are you okay? What happened?"

"I'm okay." Toki said. To only those who knew what she sounded like after crying, it would be telltale what she had been doing. "Your Grandpapa will tell you what happened in a little bit, okay?" Toki simply wanted to make her way over to her husband and become apart of his side.

Papyrus met her half way and reached up, stroking her cheek as he tucked her against him. Cane or no cane, pregnancy swell or no pregnancy swell, he was large enough and balanced enough to envelop her and tuck her into his side like he could hide her from the world. "You've been crying." He spoke quietly, his voice a mix of concern, and the desire to know if there was someone he needed to give a stern thumping with his cane.

Tenebris came inside shortly after, it not having taken very long to put his shoes on. "Forgive us for that sudden... scare." He rumbled gently. "Toki was scared after an especially nasty Braxton Hicks contraction. She's alright, as are the pups."

"Ah... I see." Papyrus rested his head on Toki's with a frown. "Are you doing better now?" He asked, his hand wandering down to her belly to cup it. Healing magic pulsed over his palms, and he soothed her formed muscles in long strokes.

Toki leaned into her husband, letting his fingers stroke over her cheeks and then her belly. His magic felt nice- warm and soothing against her muscles as he tried to ease some of the ache. It helped a lot. "Yeah." She says quietly. "I'm better now. It was just a painful one, and it scared me. The twins weren't like that. They were much more... Subtle."

The children latched onto her legs and gave her hugs. Hugs made everything better after long enough, so they believed, so they would hug their mother for as long as they needed to.

"Every pregnancy is different, and each one comes with it’s unique pains and struggles." The kindly old woman behind the counter coughs roughly, and turns warm eyes on her. "Being scared happens. So long as you and yours are alright, that’s all that matters."

Hanzo nodded. "Well... We're mostly done anyways. If you want to head out and rest, I'm sure Mister Gaster and I can finish things up while you get off your feet."

Toki gives a tiny noncommittal hum to see what the others thought "We could go to the game store while Dad finishes up his order."

Tenebris gave her a soft touch to her shoulder before he smiled. "Go on then~ Don’t let me slow you down, my dear... Just don't check out before I get to see what's new in stock~" He chortled lightly.

Papyrus gave a soft laugh at that. "I wouldn't dream of it, Father. don’t you worry." He chuckled lightly in assurance, waving off his father's worry. "We'll see you there." With that, he looped an arm around his wife's back, and gently led her out.

Once they were gone, Tenebris turned to Yuri and Hanzo and bowed respectfully. "Thank you so much for your patience and understanding."
Hanzo bowed back, and gave him a smile. "It's no trouble at all, really. I'm just glad everything is all right."

"Though really, may we inquire as to why she was so spooked? Poor woman looked like someone rattled her pretty hard." Yuri gave a rough cough behind the desk, and had to take a moment to cough into a handkerchief and then dispose of it. "I know each pregnancy is different, but surely she would know the difference between a stress based Braxton Hicks, or an actual contraction."

"Haaaaa I don't know much about pregnancy, so..." Hanzo gave an awkward smile, and worked with his paperwork to get the new price for Tenebris.

He nodded slowly as he came closer to Yuri. "She has a much larger litter growing inside of her than she did the first time, and sadly... we discovered that one did not make it past a certain point in growth. A miscarriage, if you will. Toki feared the potential loss of more of them. After such an event, we all fear such a loss. She was just trying to get over it as well- I am hoping it doesn’t set back her personal recovery."

Yuri tilts her face up to look at him, and then sighs softly. "You poor dears. That does explain her worry." She shakes her head gently. "I'm sorry for your loss."

Hanzo wasn't even sure what to say. How did you say something to that? "I'm very sorry. Hopefully the rest of her pregnancy is safe and stress free, for her and the... litter's sake." He says softly. "When is she due this time?"

"Well, she's eleven weeks along and we suspect she's in, if not nearing, her third trimester. I hope that I am right when I guess that she is going to be due in about a month, if not less."

Hanzo nodded. "A month leaves a lot of time for flexibility. Just try and keep her relaxed- a month isn't very long to go. You guys can do it. You've made it this far- what's four more weeks?" He gives him a grin. "I'm sure you can."

"Indeed. Thank you, Hanzo... If you so wish to, I've got a feeling you'll become a fine father in your later years." He rumbled softly in praise.

Hanzo snickered softly. "I probably would- but I don't really want kids right now." He waves a hand. "Maybe in another ten years. Anyway, I've got the price calculated. Want to finish and pay, so you can get back to your family, and I can go rouse my brother into getting started on the shoes?"

"I am surprised he did not come out with the ruckus that happened out here." Yuri mused. "Though he probably has those little music buds in his ears again."

"Of course. Thank you very much for all your help." He rumbled gently to them. A soft laugh followed it. "He missed out on quite a bit, didn't he... Oh well, I suppose."

"It's alright," Hanzo laughs. "My brother is not much of a people person. Everyone is unique though." He sets up a square on his phone, and holds it out for Tenebris to run his card through.

He did just that as Hanzo offered the phone, swiping the card before signing for the transaction with his claw.

Once it was done, Hanzo gave him a smile. "We'll stick with the same deal as last time. We'll give you a call once the shoes are done."

"Perfect. I'll see you when such time comes around."

He rumbled, smiling at them before he turned to leave.
They both waved to him as he left.

Yuri's rough coughing followed him out as he went to seek out his family.
Strider Notes: So some slightly serious talk, with some slightly adorable chatter. And of course... Pickles on the side.

The rest of Tenebris’ family had invaded the game store just down the sidewalk on the outlet.

Toki was visible inside, playing a Nintendo switch that was being sampled, while Papyrus and the children browsed the store. Toki was sunken into the plush couch that the shop had, and was taking the advice to heart- to rest.

Very faintly, music for Stardew Valley was audible as she seemed to be enjoying herself on the demo game.

Skylar and Honey were debating what games to get, and figuring out if they wanted to play older games too, which would involve trying to sweet talk their parents into buying older consoles.

Tenebris had stepped inside and made a gradual beeline for where Toki was checking out the demo game. "Ooh, Stardew." He rumbled as he realized just what she was playing.

"You know video games?" She inquires, glancing up from the machine that was propped up on her great gravid swell. "I didn't know you were up to date on video games. You don't seem the type to do much more with computers than use them for science and reports, dad."

"I have two grandchildren, one son in school, and am about to have five children more who will all grow up in the age of video games and electronics. If I didn't learn, I would be left in the dust." He countered with a chortle. "So... what are you doing there?" He then asked, peering at the screen.

"Planting turnips." Toki chirps. "I'm working towards getting my first barn. I want to buy a cow." She shuffles her feet over, and then scoots down. "Sit with me? If I lean on you, you can watch. I'm tempted to get one of these for myself. Papyrus took a peek at me with his magic- since he does know healing magic- and mentioned that I just strained my body trying to get my phone." She murmured. "I'm a lot bigger than I was with the twins- like, if I was the size of the Earth with the twins, I'm the size of Saturn with this litter. That puts a strain on my body- which is decidedly not big enough to house a litter of this size without being 'babied'. Your son was suggesting maybe I should take the next few weeks- until the pups are born- and go on bed rest of sorts."

The busybody woman heaves a huge sigh- the idea thrilled her about as much as a sandpaper dildo and a cactus butt plug. "Like... Just do nothing, basically. No sitting and writing for hours on end, because the kitchen chairs are not conducive to supporting a pregnant woman and straining my neck over my laptop and fretting about my plotline would be stressful. Like... Absolutely nothing stressful like chores or mopping or 'nesting', and no 'adulting' basically. So I don't trigger more cramps and Braxton Hicks. I mentioned that I would get bored- and the nice lady behind the counter said a Nintendo Switch is good for boredom." She hums. "They even have a Zelda game on it! One that's open world! I want to try playing it, even if the puzzles are hard."

Without a word, he agreed to her conditions and settled down behind her for her to get comfy. He
nodded at her words before he rumbled gently and he smiled as he rested his head on her shoulder. "An open world Zelda hm? How fascinating." He purred, before he gave her a sweet grin. "Perhaps I'll buy one of these 'switch' consoles myself."

"It probably wouldn't be a bad idea. I heard they're going to do an online mode for the switch, so people can play certain games together." She hums. As she continued with her game of Stardew, Toki sighs. "You know... One of the things I didn't think I'd miss from the other world was... This." She motions to the switch. "We became farmers there. I miss my dairy cows. We don't have room for a farm where we live, and most of the monsters would probably complain about the stink. Not to mention the winter snow storms and flooding." She sighs softly. "Anyway. What do you think about what Papyrus said?" Her husband knew healing magic, but he wasn't a doctor. Tenebris was a scientist and a doctor, so truthfully, Toki would like a second opinion on the whole... Bed rest thing.

"When it comes to keeping you off your feet, you're much like a cat in the way that you utterly refuse to." He started, before he tilted his head to the side, looking at her with a soft gleam in his calm look. "But if you were to take it easy, invest in something to occupy your time until you were able to go back to being up and about, it might end up being more beneficial for your health in the long run. So, in that I agree with my son. Take a break."

Toki made a face and then glanced up at him over her shoulder. Her mane fluffed a bit and she huffed softly. It took her only a moment to deflate however, her mane going lax once more. "I know I need to rest. But... I just... I feel like I already don't do anything as it is." She sighs. "I feel like I'm hardly a mother to my children because I simply can't do what I need to do, and that I'm not being a helpful wife because Papyrus has to do all of the stuff that I normally do. Playing video games all day isn't going to make those feelings go away." She sighs through her teeth. "But I guess if that's what the litter needs... I was going to get a Switch anyways..."

He reached up to gently stroke down her mane once it settled. "Dear Toki, you do what you can when you can do it. Just because you have to take it easy for the welfare of your growing young does not mean that you love those who grow outside of your body any less. You are a wonderful mother."

"I know." The air she exhales smells vaguely of smoke. "I know. Logically I know. But emotionally, I can't really stop feeling what I feel, you know?" She leans her head back into the fingers carding through her mane. "God, this pregnancy has me emotionally up and down. I feel like I'm constantly at a high or a low, and it's driving me nuts. Ergh." She grumbles. "I'll do the bed rest thing. Without the actual bed resting though. If I'm stuck in a bedroom for the next however many weeks, I will flip my tits. All..." She did a quick count. "All eight of them. I'll probably spend my time outside, inside, wherever, but I'll take it easy."

"We'll work everything out, my dear. Perhaps you can spend some time outside, and then return inside and go play Zelda to your hearts content, and repeat that cycle until you no longer are on bed rest." He spoke as if it was a plan.

"Jeeze, if only all women had such doting people caring for them when they need the help." Toki gave him a teasing nudge, and hummed at her game. "It sounds like a plan though." She made a pleased noise as she got a barn ordered. "I'm going to name my first cow Tenebris." She decides. "Because its black and white and absolutely adorable. Just like you when you get flustered over something, Dad."

He chuckled at that, and hid his face in her fluff. "You're adorable too, Toki. I just don't have much to compare you to in retaliation." He laughed, a sweet and jolly sound rising from him as he gave her a sugary smile.
"I suppose you could compare me to a cotton ball?" She suggests and fluffs her mane pointedly with a giggle.

"If somehow you gave a cotton ball grass stains or soaked it in some green vegetable juice." He joked warmly.

She laughed. "A cotton ball in green food coloring." She grins. "The good kind of green though. Not the kind that makes the ooblek look sad."

Tenebris, she knew, had a fun incident involving his own living ooblek, which was the void booger that had come back with her ring. Which was, as she understood, locked up in a jar to keep it from molesting his fingers. "Speaking of ooblek. How is blobby?"

"Oh good lord you actually mean to call it that." He chortled, before he pulled out his phone from his coat pocket. "He absolutely hates me." He answered, showing her a picture of him that he took earlier. It was of Tenebris with the jar, the blob of void matter completely pressed up against the side nearest his face.

"Awww no." She points to it. "See there? He loves you. That blobby part there looks like a heart. And yes, I mean to call him that. It's either that, or we call him Ooblek, and then he gets called Ooby for short." She grins. "I mean, if you don't want him or need him for more study, my house is already a mishmash of chaos. I could take him back. The kids would love play-doh that actually plays back."

"Nah... He kinda glows at night. I use him as my nightlight." He chuckled quietly.

"Really." She gives him a deadpan look. "Do you even take him out to play? Does he get to stretch his little blobby lumps and get proper exercise? Of course you don't. You don't own a pet- you're a silly scientist who keeps blobby in a jar. Blobby is going to be sad. I may have to steal him for playtime."

"He... it... Is not even sentient, Toki." He lowered his phone, fixing her with a firm stare. "Nothing was alive in the void. No doubt it's simply a parasite seeking those of similar magic. It would be exceedingly unwise to let him loose."

She glanced at him and then went back to her game. "There is life there." She says, voice falling flat and serious despite the lighthearted nature of her game. "All joking aside, I'm not entirely unconvinced that the blob is not some part of the Void itself, which is very sentient and sort of an asshole, or apart of the Void's little scrub worker. I got to be uncomfortably familiar with the Void talking to me."

He sighed and shook his head. "I have my doubts. Though, perhaps you might be right. I suppose we could test it once we get home and simply see to it before it gets put aside for the rest of our lives."

"I wouldn't let you just put it aside anyway, Dad." She rolls her eye lights, and then wheezes as a foot knocks the switch unstable in her hands. She pauses it, and takes a moment to just rub her belly. She was sore still from earlier. "You know how I am, Tenebris. I can't let something go without kindness. It came into the world on my hand, so if all else fails, I can keep an eye on it." She says lightly.

"Momma!" Honey bounced to her side, the little horned girl practically vibrating with excitement. "Daddy said to ask you if Sky and I can get the game cube they have. They have a game called Harvest Moon, Momma! Its got cows in it! I want a cow. They look so cute!"

"I dunno..." Toki hums with a grin. "What do you think, Daddy?" She calls to Papyrus. "Have our
"Kids been good enough to warrant a couple game systems and games?" They didn't come to town often, mind, and her kids were asking for older systems. Which honestly was for the best. She wasn't going to let her kids play high graphics war games until they were teens.

"That's a great question. What I want to know is if they just going to play it all day until bed time, or are they going to remember that there is an outside world for them to go romp around and play in?" Papyrus replied with a laugh.

Honey stuck her tongue out at him. "Well yeah, but why do we wanna go outside, when Momma's gonna be stuck inside all the time?" She chirps. "Unless Thumper comes over."

"Thumper is fun to play with outside." Skylar agrees. "He's really fast, and it's really fun trying to catch him."

Toki quirks a lopsided grin. "He's also fun to play video games with, isn't he?" She giggles.

"Well, yeah!" Skylar exclaims in surprise. His orange eye lights practically sparkle. "He's so cool! He knows all the tricks and short cuts in the games we play."

"Uh-oh. It sounds like someone idolizes their uncle." Toki grins, and winks at Papyrus. "I think they'll manage some outside time. If all else fails, they can weed the flowers you planted for me, since I can't get down and do it myself."

Honey made a face. "Uck. Chores."

"Chores are good for you." Toki reaches out and gently boops her nasal ridge with a finger. "It builds character and makes you strong, like your Daddy."

"Who does all the chores now that Mommy dearest is pregnant, after all?" Papyrus hobbled close to Toki, and Tenebris moved out from under her and vacated the couch as the younger male slipped behind her and hugged the fluff around Toki's neck, "I am not beyond confiscating your games to keep you from getting pudgy like your dear Uncle Sans did." He teased as he looked at the children.

Toki sat up with a grunt to make space for her husband as he traded spots with his father. She settled back against him on the game-store couch with a soft pleased noise, and let him loop his arm around her fluffy neck. "Your Daddy does do most of the chores now that I can't see my feet." She chimes softly.

Honey puffs softly. "Well... I guess we could clean up our toys more."

Skylar cocks his head at his dad and makes a soft buzzing noise, not unlike his mother made. His crocodile teeth cocked in a crooked smile. "You know, Daddy, all you need to do is ask and we can help. I know we get distracted by stuff, but I can wrangle my sister into helping with chores too. We won't get pudgy- even if being pudgy is soft and cuddly and good for napping on." He eyes his Momma. "Momma is good for cuddles when she's round and soft."

Toki simply smiles. Their children were young, yes- very young- but their maturity was visible from time to time in how they reacted to things and acted. Their son was also very much like his father in liking her being 'round and soft'.

Papyrus laughed lightly at that, and gave Toki another nuzzle. "If you're so sure about that, my children, then maybe we'll see how fast you can clean up your rooms." He announced. "And if you really mean what you say, my little ones, we shall invest in the games that you want. And if your rooms are clean by this time tomorrow, then we'll help you set up your gaming systems." He then smiled down at them. "Deal?"
"But," Toki warns, "if we buy them and you don't clean, we'll have to take them away." They were young- and her human instincts cried that her babies weren't even three years old, so responsibility shouldn't be a thing yet. But here they were, advanced children giving them puppy eyes as they laid out the rules.

Honey nods. "Uhuh! We'll clean and put all our toys away."

"And make sure all the blankets and pillows are picked up and put in the cuddle corner." Skylar adds.

"It's a deal then." She nods. "Go pick out your games. No more than four apiece. That's for both systems." Which theoretically, would let them get two for each game system that they personally wanted to play, if they did it right. Besides... Toki could afford it. Old games, at least the ones they were looking at, weren't as much as new games. "When you've made your choice, we'll go get the systems."

The twins ran back along to choose their games.

As they did, Toki exhaled and relaxed into Papyrus. "Do you think we spoil them?" She questions, knowing they did but honestly not caring. Her kids were learning morals- and she didn't care if she got them goodies to play with. Toys could only be so stimulating to rapidly advancing minds, after all.

"We do, but we do not spoil them rotten without teaching them morals and that earning their rewards is what keeps their spoiling done in pure intentions." He explained to her quietly. "Now you, on the other hand; you don't get any preset limitations. You pick out any games you want and you get to play them on the way home because mommy dearest deserves some relief in this trying time."

"Oh-ho, do I now?" She gives him a lopsided and crooked crocodile smirk, pleased at what he said about their kids. Spoiled, but with morals. Yes, good. "You and your Dad both are determined to have me on bed rest. But, I suppose I don't mind if I get to cuddle you and play games." She smiles. "I'll get a couple that can go multiplayer so you and I can play while the kids overtake the television."

"Sounds like a plan... Shall we let you up to go select your games then? I think Father is eyeing the collectibles." Papyrus gave a soft snicker as he saw Tenebris' purple gaze wander to the merchandise section of the store.

"I wouldn't mind if you want to come with me. You found a couple more puzzle games for your X-box, right?" She asks him curiously, and shifts to try and sit up on her own. She needed to return the demo-switch to the counter.

"Not a lot, but a few." He agreed as he carefully helped her up. "I didn't pick out that many, though I heard that a few games would end up cross-compatible with a console model coming out later this year so I was going to do a little research as to which ones were just that, lest we want to upgrade."

Tenebris gave a soft coo of interest as he pulled out his phone, tapping at it before he grinned a little and reached up, pulling from the shelf a box with a bright pink lion within it. "Asgore's going to love this~" He chortled softly.

"Well, I know the upgraded version of your console should be allowing cross-platform play with a switch." Toki smiled as he helped her up. She kept her grip on the demo-console, and once she was upright, she waddled to the counter. She set it down, and then carefully took a peek at what was
behind it. "So, I think I want Zelda, Stardew, and... Mario Kart?" She glances at him. Minecraft would be fun too, but she wasn't sure how well split screen would work on a tiny, tiny console screen. Her eyes were good, but not that good. "What do you think, Papy?" Her eyes drifted back a bit to watch her father in law, and she hummed curiously. She wondered what he was after.

He nodded in agreement, "Sounds like a good collection of games, yes?" he piped warmly.

"Sounds good." She laughs gently, and gave him a lopsided smile. She flicked her eyes up to the sales clerk and gave him a smile. "So... I definitely want the Switch alongside the gear for carrying it safely so pregnancy butterfingers don't let me drop it, and there's three games I'd like to get. Two have the little disks, and one is a download- do I have to buy the download through the shop, or can I buy a card through your shop?"

"You can buy one from us. You'll simply need to enter the code into your switch manually. Do you have a rewards card with us?" The clerk asked.

"I do." Toki nods, and fetches her wallet from her purse. "Though, we need to wait to finish the transaction until the children pick their games, and we pick up the systems they decide on." She smiles. "I'm glad I can buy a card through here though. You've got fairly excellent services.” Except shipping to her home.

"I'm glad to hear this!" The clerk smiled at her. "We are working on extending our delivery services to the new monster residential districts now that they are growing, so soon enough we might just be able to start delivering to your doorstep rather than you needing to worry about coming into town every time you want something from us." He explained.

Toki let out an ironic laugh. "The last time I picked up an order from you guys that was supposed to ship to my house but didn't, I was pregnant with those two-" she motions to her eager children, who seemed to almost have what they wanted, "and I went into labor on the way home. It'd definitely be good to open up the venue for delivery to monsters. It's a long drive from Nara Village to the city."

"I apologize for your inconvenience, but I am relieved that your children were born without complication."

She gave him four thumbs up. "Thankfully I had my doctor with me that day, so all was well." She grins.

"Momma!" Skylar reaches her first. "I have my games."

"I have mine too!" Honey chirps.

"Good." She praises warmly. She glances to her husband and emotes for him to go grab his chosen games. "We'll take these, as well as what my husband grabs, and... One of your Gamecubes, and a Playstation 2."

"Appreciating the older model consoles eh? You got it." The clerk stepped away to collect the consoles she asked for.

While he did so, Papyrus collected the games he wanted and returned to Toki's side. He knew he didn't have to wait for his father; he would no doubt be paying for himself.

"I'd rather start my kids gaming on older things before sticking them in the newer games." Older systems had a lot of games based for children. A lot of them. Some of them were games even Toki enjoyed though.
She glanced to Papyrus as he returned, and gave him a smile as she leaned on his shoulder. "I know I wanted to hit the yarn store today," she says quietly, "but I think after that Braxton hicks earlier, that I just want to get us all our milkshakes and go home."

"That sounds like a good plan to me, my love." Papyrus wrapped his arm around her and gave her a gentle squeeze. "We'll have you take it easy and enjoy your shake on the way home."

"Mmm, yes." She gave a soft pleased noise. "I may trade with you on the way up and sit up front so I make less of a mess with the milkshake."

"Deal." He enthused warmly.

“Great!” She beamed back.

He gave her a smile and nuzzled her as the clerk set down the collected consoles, taking her rewards card and starting on adding the prices together for her

"Alright, if everything looks right on the screen, the total at the top will be your cost for today." The clerk announced.

"That's fine by me." She beamed. With everything gathered, it was a hefty sum, but still not as much as buying a used car from someone. She slid her card out and ran it through, signing her name with the supplied pen when it flashed for her to do so. Then, she waited for her receipt. "We're going to need help carrying this. I doubt you're going to let me tote most of this after earlier, even if I have the most arms." Toki gave her husband a teasing look.

"Nope." Skylar chirps and nudges her leg. "You don't get to carry it."

"Grandpapa can carry it!" Honey volunteered loudly, eyeing her grandpa with a cheeky grin. "He has the biggest muscles!"

"I'll carry the consoles." Her husband answered as he gave her a smile and a hearty laugh. "The games should be light enough for you to carry as long as the children mind you." Papyrus then peered over at Tenebris. "It looks like Father's going to have his own things to carry."

She glanced back at him and arched her brows. "What... Exactly is he buying?" She inquires curiously.

Her father-in-law was holding the figurine from before that he had been ogling, as well as a few games in one hand. He had a goofy smile on his face, though at her looking at him, he gave a small wave.

"Uh-huh~" He answered warmly. "I wagered that it would do some good to invest in a common console so that the children might be able to play together." It was clear by his tone that he was lying- Tenebris was also investing for himself. It seemed that watching her play had caught his attention, and the massive monster intended to buy one of the monster model Switches.

Papyrus chuckled lightly, before he pressed a kiss to his wife's head. "Well, that's that then... We better invest in the protection plan, yes?"
"Good idea, Dad. Though... You can play too." Toki teased. She paused, and nodded thoughtfully to her husband's kiss and words. "I suppose... Though," she eyed the twins, "they shouldn't be handling the switch outside of its console form. Handheld is for Momma."

Skylar made a face. "I don't wanna play that." He says, eyeing her oddly. "Our games are much cooler."

Ah the innocence of youth. She was glad her children were easily mystified by the older games rather than the newer ones— it would surely be easier on her wallet.

"Even cooler than Splatoon 1 and 2?" Tenebris asked coyly as he held up the disc cases. "Complete with DLC's?"

Honey peered at him and then nodded seriously. "That game is laaaame." She motions to the bag that visibly holds a copy of an older Spyro game. "Now this is cooler! You get to be a purple dragon!"

"..." He had to squint a bit and crouch down before he could see exactly what she was talking about. When he saw the Spyro game, Tenebris laughed proudly. "Now that is a good game!" He praised, "That's my grandgirl!"

She grinned cheerfully. "See? Our games are cooler. We don't need your big kid games."

Skylar nods. "We have plenty of games to play alone or together. We like to watch each other just as much as we like to play together."

"That much is true." Toki ruffled his smooth skull gently.

"I'm proud of you kids for having such great taste." Tenebris rumbled as he reached out and pat the children on the head. "To your credit, they are fantastic story-mode games. I eagerly await to watch you play them."

They beamed at him.

Skylar shuffled his feet some. "I also got Harvest Moon... Two of them." He grins slyly. "I like them."

"The music for those will make you nap, Dad." Toki laughed. "Come, my sweets. You can tell him about your games in the car. Let him pay, so we can go get milkshakes, hm?"

"MILKSHAKES!" Honey's volume went a little high in her obvious excitement, until her brother elbowed her sharply. "Sorry. Milkshakes! I can't wait!"

Papyrus chuckled quietly. "We'll get these out to the car and wait for you there. Does that sound alright, Father?"

"Oh yes, of course." He pulled his keys from his pocket and tossed them to his son, who caught them and gave him a thankful look before turning back to his wife

"And with that, let's get a head start so that we can leave as soon as we can." Papy announced.

"That's fine with me. Heaven's knows it takes me several minutes to get in and out of a car now." She agreed cheerfully. Toki shifted all the bags to her primary arms, and offered her secondary arms to her children as they stuck their hands up to her.
Since Papyrus had his arms full with his cane and the game consoles, it fell to her to escort their kids. She didn't mind.

The three of them made it to the door easily enough, and held it open for him to go out first.

He gave her a kiss on the head to thank her and looked behind to see Tenebris starting on checking out as well. He had an excited look on his face. Oh the rare treats in his life to give him excitement. It was so precious to watch his father get excited like a child over things.

Toki saw him distracted by Tenebris, and rolled her eyes gently. She lifted one of her wings, and used the glowing gossamer surface to gently usher her husband out. She followed after the children went, and gave a soft pleased hum. "You know... I'm kind of excited to get past this next month, or however long I'm still pregnant for." She comments, and gives her wings an experimental stretch as she waddles across the parking lot.

After she got his attention once more, Papyrus followed her quietly. Though as she made her comment, he tilted his head curiously. "Is that so?" He asked. "And why is that? Is it because you've now got your hands on a new console and get to spend all the time you like playing your games?"

"Not at all. Well, only a little- but that's something that will entertain me over the month, not all the time past it. At least, not until we try for more kids later." She laughs heartily, and bumps her wing gently to his shoulder so she doesn't disturb his odd hobble-step walking he was doing with his one free arm full of consoles. "I'm excited to get past this month or so, because it should probably put me past having the litter- and then I should be able to fly again. I miss it." Despite taking a bit more effort to fly, Toki found it freeing and enjoyable.

"Ah, flying." He chuckled. "Indeed that will be a sight to behold- my darling wife taking upon the skies like a free bird... for as long as your stamina lasts, of course." He teased at the end.

She grinned cheekily at his tease, knowing what he meant. In all of his time knowing her, Toki had never been a very athletic woman. Coming back from the other world, she was definitely a different sort of beast. "I'll have to get back into shape." She chuckles. "I didn't get much of a chance to exercise here before I was too heavy to fly." Seriously- she'd ballooned up like this in... a little less than three months. Eleven weeks sounded like a long time, but in reality, it was one week shy of three months. Toki had grown horribly large, horribly fast. "But, even you should be able to fly with me. Clover still has her saddle." She gives him a soft nudge again.

"Can we fly too?" Honey inquires.

"Of course, sweetie. Either with me, or with your father- it wouldn't be your first time flying, but you might not remember flying before." She replies warmly.

Skylar however frowns and makes a considering noise. "... You mentioned more babies." He hums. "Will they be our babies?" He asks, and snaggs the keys from his daddy so he can open the door for him, because he's a good boy and he prides himself on being a good boy. "We'll get to keep them?" Their eldest glances at Toki's belly, and then between his parents with keen, intelligent eyes. "More babies would make me happy, Daddy. Would it make you happy?"

"Come the day that father receives his litter from their beloved surrogate, I will indeed seek to father my own litter once more so that I might give you guys some younger siblings." He answered with a soft laugh.

"Well... Maybe not the same day." Toki gives him a side-long look, and moves to carefully put
games in the back of the car once the whole thing was unlocked. "I remember how sore I was with
the twins- it took weeks upon weeks before my pelvis stopped hurting enough for you to even touch
my hips at night."

"Really?" Honey cocked her head at them curiously and peered at them over the back seat from
where she had crawled.

"Mhm. Having babies is hard work. Plus," Toki finished putting away the games, and helped
Papyrus load up the consoles as well, before reaching through the back of the car to tweak one of her
daughter's ever-growing horns, "your horns gave me a fair bit of trouble. I was very, very tender.
But, it was worth it because I got to see the both of you, and the both of you are my world." She
chirps. "So, long story short- it might be a couple months before your Daddy and me try to make you
guys a sibling or two."

"It doesn't mean we wont try, though. Isn't that right, Darling?" Papyrus was smug as he leaned in
and whispered this to his beloved wife, grinning at her in the one moment he knew he would barely
have to enjoy her reaction before she would undoubtedly smack his arm.

She gaped for a moment, and then smacked his arm firmly, just as he expected. "You insatiable
letch!" She laughs. "No! Absolutely not! Not at least for a month, if not two months. Not until the
litter is weaned."

"Alright, alright!" He laughed gently as he kissed her head gently. "I tease~" He assured her with a
soft chuckle.

She rolled her eye lights. As she closed the back of the car, sealing them off from the kids prying
ears, she leaned up to whisper to him. "Riiight. You tease." She purrs, belly brushing his hip. "For
someone who practically worships my body when it's heavy with life, so soft and supple and plush,
I'm going to have to doubt your tease for being just a tease. Just a little bit." She gives him a saucy
wink, and then waddles away for the front seat.

Let that fluster him. Toki was a tease.

"Doubting me when I eagerly await when the young you carry is my own, my darling?" He was
ready for his body's reaction to her words, and managed to keep her from seeing it. Papyrus watched
her go before he started for his own seat.

He didn’t even have his buckle on before his Father had caught up, and soon everyone was in their

"I doubt you were teasing, my love." She laughs, and gives Tenebris a lopsided smile as he reaches
the car. "Daaadaaad. She fake whines, making her kids give her the strangest of looks to hear a tone
that they often used when they were getting on each other's nerves, "Papy's teasing me about not
giving me a break between litters."

"... That's so weird." Honey whispers quietly from the back seat. "Is that what we sound like when
we argue?" She asks her brother as she gets into her car seat.

"I think so." His crocodile teeth twist into a frown. "I don't like it. Even if Momma's faking it, it's
weird to hear adults do it. Let's try not to do it anymore- Momma doesn't need to learn bad habits
from us." He concludes with squeaky seriousness.

The whine had Tenebris laughing quietly. "Oh Toki, you sound so childish. Papyrus, my son, don't
tease your wife. You know you would break the poor thing if you tried to mate so soon after she
weans her litter."

"He was talking about not even letting me rest." She pouts at him playfully. "Like, daaaaays after they were born." She teases. "That's way too soon."

"Really?" Tenebris looked at him with a raised brow.

Papyrus flinched a little bit, and a guilty flush covered his cheeks to contradict his words. "Uh... Not days after, no."

"Okay, maybe not days, but like... weeks." Toki snickers. "He's insatiable, I swear. Like father like son though, I guess." She hums knowingly, and gets herself comfortable in her seat. "Oh shoot. I was going to play my switch- I forgot to grab it out of the bag. Oh well- it's probably best if I wait until we're home."

"We're still stopping for milkshakes, so I can grab it once we stop to order." Papyrus brought up before he reached up to the front seat and pinched her cheek gently between two knuckles for all the sass she'd been giving him. "Which game would you like?" He asked, giving her cheek a playful wiggle.

She opened her mouth to make it easier on his knuckles, because soft and flexible bone was still bone, and grinned at him crookedly. "We'll get there whenever Dad gets the car going." She chirps cheekily. "And I think I'd like... Mario. It doesn't have much plot, so it doesn't matter if I'm distracted or not." She beams.

"Mario it is." He answered with a warm smile.

Toki nods, and then gave Tenebris a grin. "Mario and milkshakes, and a day out with a good portion of my loving monster family. What more could a pregnant skelebeast ask for?"

"Pickles on the side of your milkshake?" Skylar chimes helpfully.

Toki can't stop herself from breaking into great wheezes of laughter. "Yes. Pickles on the side."

"Pickles on the side!" Tenebris announced with a laugh, starting the car before they pulled out of the lot, onward bound for milkshakes before they would be returning to the comfort of their home village
With bounty of games and milkshakes in hand— with a few pickles on the side for the pregnant mother and her odd needs— the vehicle carrying Toki and her family had left the urban city, starting out into the peaceful countryside between city and beloved Nara Village.

With her new console in hand, Toki had enjoyed the trip in her own little world, lost to the tuneless humming of Tenebris, as well as the bickering of the children and her beloved husband in the back seat.

For a time, everything was perfect.

Toki's attention was summoned to reality when she felt the car lurch and she looked up at her father-in-law as he growled quietly.

"What in the world?" He muttered.

His gaze remaining locked forward had her following his line of sight. It didn’t take her long before she saw what had his attention.

Roadblocks. Roadblocks, with Nara Village over the horizon.

What happened?

There was nobody guarding the roadblocks, which were big and made of eye-searing colored steel bars. They were spaced tightly to keep cars from going between them. The roadblocks were, however, just that— on the road.

Toki frowned, worry blooming in her chest. She had family in there— human and monster. She had saved that morning, so there was no reason to not go ahead and see just what they were doing.

"Drive around, Dad. The shoulder and the dirt on the side of the road should have enough space."

"What is this mess?" He grumbled as he slowly pulled around the roadblocks. "I hope everyone is alright." Tenebris then sighed as he pulled back onto the road. "Alright, back on track."

Toki turned off the switch, and tucked it into its case. It was carefully set down on the floorboards by her purse, and she leaned forward in her seat. Her mane ruffled as she scoured the town with her eyes.

The cranes and construction equipment, which were mostly visible above the houses, weren't moving. This was the time that it would be the height of construction.
Something was very, very wrong.

Something that was made apparent as they pulled into the start of the complex, and the front two tires of Tenebris' car were blown out, dropping the front end roughly onto its rims and making the slow moving rig screech to a halt.

Tenebris gasped out sharply as the front of the vehicle suddenly sunk, and he quickly had hit the brake before any further damaged could be caused to the vehicle or risk the passengers. At first he was stunned, and checked everyone else to see that they were okay. Once he saw the humans appear next to the car, his pupils thinned to slits and he bared his fangs at the closest human, growling ferociously as his tail rattled loudly.

Four people had appeared on each side of their doors. Four humans; each had a large gun trained on them.

The one at Toki's door spoke first. "Step out of the vehicle, and put your hands up."

"Momma?" Honey's voice was frightened. "Momma, he has a gun."

"There are children in the car," Toki calls, alarm and fear for her children piercing her. "Don't shoot-please don't shoot. We need to get them out."

Papyrus quickly moved himself over the children, "I am a member of his majesty's royal guard, let me move my children and pregnant wife safely and we can settle this without the need for violence!" He spoke over his sire's aggressive snarling.

The man nearest Papyrus glanced inside and nodded. "Exit the vehicle, slowly. Make no moves, use no magic. Magic may be fast, but a bullet is faster at short distance, and there's no need to traumatize those kids of yours."

"This one's baring teeth- he's got a knife." One stated, raising his weapon warily as he eyed Tenebris.

"Tenebris stop." Toki's smaller secondary hand clenched on his thigh, before releasing him. "Please. We don’t need to get shot." Once was enough for her. "It's not a knife. It's his tail- please, he won't hurt you, just... Give him space to get out."

The gunner took a step back and gave the beast space, but the gun remained trained on him.

Toki slowly, very slowly, opened her door. She made to turn towards the side, and eased her way out, moving carefully and slowly so she could stand and not... Well, aggravate the gunman. "Papyrus." She whispers in a hushed but harried tone as she 'adjusts' her weight to get up, letting her whisper back to him. "Worry about the children. Please. I can't protect them like this."

The one watching her seemed to squint behind his helmet and think, his face twisting into a scowl as he looked over her body.

"We're not going to resist... Just... Lower the weapons... You don’t need to threaten my children." He told them, nodding subtly to Toki before he spoke quietly to the twins. "Come on, children. Come out my side with me... Stay close..."

Tenebris watched the guns warily but helped Toki as best he could before he unbuckled and opened his door, leg extending to anchor himself and pull his form out of the vehicle. He was posturing aggressively, his eyes glowing as he considered vaulting the car to protect Tokiko. But unless it came to be necessary, he would behave.
His tail rattled and moved between himself and the gunman as he looked back to where Papyrus was climbing out of the vehicle.

His son was putting more weight on his leg to act as if the cane in the vehicle was not his. He knew he wouldn't be able to hold that facade for long, but as long as he maintained his professionalism, he and the children were safe.

Papyrus’ gunman spotted the cane, but didn't say anything. After all, who wasn't to say it wasn't for aesthetic? Once the kids were out of the vehicle, the man tilted the gun so it was mostly on Papyrus. "There we go. Be good for your dad, okay kids? Move around the other side of the vehicle, sirs." He instructed both adults. "Go slow, keep your hands where we can see them. Tail too, big guy."

Toki eased to standing, and wobbled until she found her balance. She didn't put her hands behind her head, which was nearly consumed by her ruffled and fluffed mane. But she did keep them splayed so he could see she had no weapons. No visible ones, anyway.

The man in front of her was murmuring very, very quietly into his collar, and listening to the earpiece tucked in his ear. He talked with his supervisor for some time as the other monsters made their way around.

Skylar clutched onto his Dads leg, trying to help keep him steady as they made it around to his Momma. His free hand held tight to his twin, seeking comfort. He wanted nothing more than to rush to his mother, but it would probably be bad and he'd be shot, or worse, his Momma or Daddy or Sister or Grandpapa could be shot.

Toki was relieved when her family was able to join her, and though her mane didn't relax, her wings did give a soft flick to express her emotions. Strength in numbers. "What do you think they want?" She asks in a soft, nervous whisper, her belly tightening with anxiety and stress.

Papyrus kept his hands on either of his children's backs as he made his way around the car, and once he made it to Toki, he quickly pulled her protectively into his arms, his children pulled to between their parents' legs. They made a cage around them, keeping them safe.

Then, and only when Papyrus had made it to hide his children and wife, did Tenebris relax. He growled quietly at the humans, but slowly lifted his tail blade to his hand as they ordered to keep it visible. He gently grasped it and held it up with his other hand, though that did not stop the vertebrae of the tail from rattling furiously as he stepped around his vehicle to join the others.

As Papyrus had done, he was slow and patient until the time that he made it to the others, and at that point he moved to join Papyrus to dedicate his broad form to protecting the smaller, younger forms. His arms wrapped around the others as his tail, now freed, came around their front to continue rattling protectively.

Papyrus felt reassured when Tenebris joined them and took on his protective stance. The tallest skeleton reached up to rest a hand on his shoulder to put him more at peace- though as Toki spoke to him, his other arm tightened around her. "I don't know... but as long as they don't aggravate Father further we should be safe..." He answered quietly.

Toki swallowed nervously and nodded. With how they were currently standing, she was caged by her husband and father-in-law, and under her was her children. They’d have to come through all three of them to get the children, or go through the heavy metal plating of Tenebris’ car. “Just… stay calm.” She says anxiously, keeping her voice hushed. “Humans get trigger happy when there’s a threat around. Dad is… frankly, frightening when he wants to be.”
“Momma?” Honey tugged gently on the bottom of her shirt. “Did we do something bad? Are they going to take us away? I don’t wanna be taken away from you and Daddy and Grandpapa and Sobek!”

“No, sweetie, no.” She reassured her gently. “None of us did anything bad. I’m sure this is just a huge misunderstanding. We’ll find out what’s going on, okay? Just… stay here, and no matter what happens, don’t leave your father’s side, okay?” Come hell or high water, Papyrus would protect their children, no matter the cost. “No one’s going to take you away.”

“Okay.” Skylar murmurs softly, and his fingers reach out to cling tighter to his father’s leg.

“Tokiko Nara.” The man who had been mumbling into his collar spoke up once more. “Or Gaster-whatever your last name is, I need you to step forth please.”

“Either is fine.” She doesn’t feel like correcting him that it’s Nara-Gaster, and tightens her hold on her family. “Why?”

“Mrs. Nara then. I need you to step forward so we can explain the situation to you.” He lowers his gun, and opens his hands in a motion of peace. “Please- we mean you and your family no harm so long as you cooperate. You can go right back to your family in just a moment- I promise.”

Her magic reacts, pulsing with sluggish wariness along her bones. She swallows, and nods. “Okay…” She didn’t really have a choice- things would get violent if she didn’t comply, and they weren’t in a position to fight. She was pregnant, vulnerable, and her children were easy targets. Her husband would try to protect her, as would Tenebris, and it would result in them getting dusted, she was sure.

She was backed into a corner, with the only way out being going into the lions den.

“Dad… you need to let me out,” She touches his shoulder gently, “And keep the children safe, please. I’ll be right back- he promised I would.”

He gave a low growl in reply, glaring at the soldier as he quickly read over his posture, before his arms slowly lowered. "One step.” He relented. “Stay right here beside us…” He growled quietly. "Do not let them reach for you, do not let them touch you... Show that you are staying with your family because if they are honest, they will not demand further.”

“Alright.” Toki nodded softly. Once she was let out, she took a couple small steps- which equaled one of Tenebris ‘large ones’, to meet the man on equal ground.

Thankfully, he seemed see what she meant, and he moved to step closer to meet her half way. He kept his hands up at his shoulders as he approached, his gun hanging around his shoulder and out of his reach. “Thank you for meeting me half way, Mrs. Nara.” He said softly, and gave her an eye smile.

She shakily returned it, and kept a respectable distance between them. There were still a few feet between them, just as there was between her and her family- equal ground, equal risk. She could ‘kill’ him before he could shoot her, and so on. “Right. You said you would explain what’s going on, right? My family and I- none of Monsterkind in Nara Village in fact- have done anything wrong to warrant the action of the united governments.”

She recognized the uniform- it was the same sort as when the governments had unified to deal with Humans Against Monsters- when they had tried to help against Cruelty, until it was proven that they couldn’t because they had men inside that were working as agents of HAM.
The man didn’t seem surprised that she recognized the uniform. He offered her a kindly smile that contradicted his words. “I understand your confusion, Mrs. Nara- but in fact, you and all of the Monsters have been committing a crime. You’ve been committing a crime for a long time- and you even denied us access and aid in pursuing fixing the issue.”

Her brows shot up, and her hands dropped lower. Shock slid through her, alongside confusion. “What? What did we do wrong?”

“Refused to offer aid to the other worlds across space of darkness.” He answered, and his smile dropped.

Toki had only ever seen a man moved that fast once or twice in her life, and it had been back when Han had been freshly retired from the service. He had been dicking around with her and her brothers, and it was a speed, a fluid sort of motions in his limbs, that she would never forget, not even long after he had been dead and gone.

Toki didn’t have time to react before the non-civilian man had grasped her by the shoulders and spun her, nearly throwing her already precarious balance off. He didn’t grab her by the arms, or by the ‘hair’ as many villains often did.

His hands found the joints of her wings in one hand, and he grabbed a firm hold of them, using them to yank her back and away from her family. He crushed the gossamer surfaces together, igniting her back in pain as he yanked and strained the joints where they connected.

Unlike her arms, her wings did not pop on and off.

His free hand drew a knife, and the sharp point rested on her belly as she was left reeling. Her hands tried to bat it away, but when he pricked her through her shirt, drawing up the green that was her ‘blood’ to the surface, she stopped struggling.

“You’re coming with me, Kindness,” He says firmly, “and you’re going to help us make contact. And you,” He addressed her family, “Are going to behave, or you’re going to watch her belly split open like a ripe melon, and watch her insides hit the ground. We need her, we don’t need the fetus. We also don’t need her pretty, pretty wings. I wonder if they’ll reattach once I rip them off.” He commented dryly, as if talking about the weather. This was just a job for him- these were just targets, not people, not living things.

"No!" Papyrus shouted in horror.

Tenebris flared in rage and roared viciously, his tail lashing fast behind him, but with the knife by her belly... by his beloved children.

His tail swung before it flew and sank hard into the ground by his tensed up feet, lashing and curling to leave a mark into the paved ground.

"Please! We're cooperating! You don't need to do this!" Papyrus spoke quickly, a hand extending to his father's chest to keep him where he was. "Let my wife go; we're not going to try anything... just please... Don't hurt any of them." He pleaded. "I'm begging you.”

“Don’t hurt my Momma!” Skylar cried, trying to reach out for her between his Daddy’s legs.

“Don’t hurt her!” Honey shouted. “Let her go you meanies!”

“And if you all comply,” The man continued smoothly, voice calm and even like he wasn’t threatening infanticide, “then there won’t be any blood shed. Well, any more blood.” He glanced at
the green sliding down his knife. He flicked it off, splattering it on the ground.

“We won’t.” Toki gasps softly. She keeps her hands still; she could sting him, could end him right there, but the knife was too close to her belly. She didn’t care about her wings—fuck her wings, she could live without flying—but while they were in her belly, they were her babies, and he was threatening them. “We won’t be any trouble.”

“Good.” His grip tightened on her wings, pulling a whimper from her, and he gave her a rough shove forwards. “You four—you’re coming too. Walk in front of us, real slow.” He didn’t worry about the kids—what could a bunch of children do to them after all?—but the big one that was basically growing rabid worried him a lot. The man refused to turn his back on him.

Which was very, very wise—that tail had a long reach, and he didn’t doubt he’d find it buried in the back of his skull.

“Come. We’re headed into the inner sanctum—or as you know it to be, your… memorial, Mrs. Nara. Walk.” He gave her another poke with the knife to urge her family to move, and drew another bit of blood. “Oops. I may have sharpened this just a little bit too much. Best not make me wait, hm?” Cool eyes leveled onto the monsters by the car.

Tenebris snarled again but a soft ‘father’ from Papyrus quieted him for just a little longer.

With a disgusted sneer at the human, Tenebris pulled his tail from the ground and hooked it on his hip before he gently scooped up the children, allowing Papyrus to focus on himself and his wife.

“We're going... just move the knife away from her. You don’t need to hurt her anymore...” He spoke softly, slowly picking up his pace to stay at his father's side. Oh his leg was hurting now, definitely so, but he needed to keep up a facade.

“The knife is staying right here.” The man smiled crookedly. “It makes pretty good leverage, and it keeps you all moving. I think it’s got you more nervous than your wife losing her pretty, pretty wings. Maybe I’ll just keep those anyway, as a trophy for a job well done when all is through. She doesn’t need them to keep breeding.”

Toki’s magic surged under her bones, and her eyes flared greener. She took in a rough breath, and focused her magic down to where the knife was bumping against her, leaving tiny little paper cut like marks that stung like a bitch. She felt woozy as she forced her magic up to defend her in ways it felt like it didn’t have the capacity to do—so she did the one thing she wished she didn’t have to. For the safety of the babies in her belly, she reached down her connection to them, and forced it thinner—she cut off as much magic flow to them as she dared, and threw it all into her defense. When the knife glanced off her skin instead of cutting it, and the litter thrashed in protest, she knew she’d done her job correctly.

She glanced up to her children, and watched the twins cling to Tenebris and sob with stress. Her wings tensed under his hand, aching to break free—but she held back. She wasn’t bullet proof. But her belly was was knife proof—and he didn’t seem to notice it yet.

The men guided them to where her statue stood—or rather, where it had once stood. It had been toppled over, along with the grave for the baby that had been lost. All of the flowers had been trampled, and the statue and grave had been shoved roughly to the side of the inner gardens. There were a bundle of machines there now, sparking with electricity—she didn’t know what they were for.

Out one side of the four pathways that lead into the inner sanctum of what was once an almost hallowed ground, through a chain link gate that was hastily erected with barbed wire and heavy
chains, every adult monster and human worker in the village was visible. They were bound and tied, and forced down on their knees- and not a single one of them was free of some form of injury.

They had not gone quietly.

Men with guns lined the walls, keeping them all down, and keeping the visibly armored, and visibly heavily sedated guards, down and out.

Down another path, the ‘gate’ was open- and inside was walls, upon walls, of children. They weren’t chained, and very, very few showed any signs of having been handled roughly- but they were crying and upset.

Thumper was there too, holding Solstice. The toddler didn’t look happy, and was visibly crackling with fussy blue flames as she chewed on her fist and babbled at her companions. The bunny holding her was roughed up, and one of his eyes was black and swollen shut. With him was his little pink love interest, Twitch, and Wolfen and Bo’s son Howl- and they were huddled together in the ‘child cages’ nearest the front entrance.

The third ‘entrance’ had all of the cabling leading to it, and heavily armored guards standing at the gate, blocking most of their view of what was down the third entrance. All they could vaguely see was Grillby in a cage- and he wasn’t moving.

“And here,” the man spoke again, his voice rising so they would all hear him over their stunned and likely angry stupor, “is where we start to separate you just a bit. See, because of your power levels, the both of you gentleman will be escorting Mrs. Nara here over to Zone A. You’re just a bit too strong to send to Zone B- the guards couldn’t keep an eye on you there. So, you’ll get to have a front row seat of the excitement. Now- your kids, they’re just innocent little gumdrops. So they go to Zone C, with all the other little ones- we don’t want them getting hurt, would we? There’s a lot of dangerous equipment in Zone A.” He soothes, voice silver-tongued like a rattlesnake.

Tenebris had stopped for only a moment when he saw the ruined memorial for the lost child, and his eyes glowed brighter as his tail rattled and lashed with pent up rage- but he had continued walking, lest they lose the rest. "And by escort, you mean we're going to walk there as you continue to threaten the unborn in what you think is your advantage of power?" Tenebris growled, but continued to walk regardless.

Papyrus turned, his gaze darkening from fear to show more anger. "Where is my brother?” He questioned. "What did you do with him?"

“Yes, Doctor Gaster, that is precisely what I mean.” The man rolls his eyes. His gaze turned to the tall Skeleton when he stopped, and the knife slid up, slicing through Toki’s shirt, baring her belly, nipples and all. “Your brother is just ahead, Mr. Gaster. You’ll get to see him shortly- he’s in one piece, I promise you.” He gave him a pleasantly sweet smile- a liar’s smile. “Physically at least. You should be proud though- during the entire roundup today, not a single life was lost. Neither human or monster. We took great care not to kill anyone here. Should everything go as planned, and you comply without a problem from here on out, we won’t have to get out the dust pans.”

Toki swallowed, and felt her stingers clench in her wrists. Her eyes burned as she stared at her husband.

“Now… Please, give us the children before we can proceed.” The man smiled pleasantly. “They’ll be just across the way from you, and no harm will come to them so long as they don’t fight.”

A guard stepped forward, motioning for Tenebris to give him the twins.
They cried harder. “No!” Honey shrieked. “No!”

And yet Tenebris did not lean down nor did he move to offer his grandchildren... Rather as soon as the guard got close enough, he turned his form and roughly bucked his leg, kicking the guard away. "You are not taking my Grandchildren!" He snarled.

There was a lot of force behind his kick- the guard went sailing backwards, and crashed head first into one of the brick walls. There was a crunch, and then they were down to three- two of which raised their guns up to point at Gaster, and clicked the safety off.

The man holding Toki tsked, but didn’t order for them to shoot. “Now, now, Doctor Gaster.” He says, setting level eyes on him. “That wasn’t very nice. I do believe you killed my guard.”

The guard wheezed just slightly.

“Oh, nope. He’s alive. He probably won’t ever walk again though.” The man hummed. “Oh well, no loss. He’s easily replaceable, as are we all that have no names among the corporation. But... is your son so easily replaced?” The man arched his brow, and glanced back at Thumper. “I would suggest behaving, Doctor Gaster. I won’t ask twice.”

“Can’t- can’t he just take them with him?” Toki asks, and shifts her hands. Her magic pulses tiredly, and she winces as the knife bites again- she could smell her own blood. It bothered her- her belly shouldn’t be bleeding. “It’ll keep them all calmer- please.”

“Hmm...” The man hummed. “I suppose so. For now, keep walking- No, no, leave him there. It’s his fault he got kicked in the first place. Just leave him alone. We’ll pick him up later.” The man waved off the woman who tried to go to the fallen man, and nudged Toki forwards towards Zone A.

Inside of Zone A were walls of ‘cages’. Reinforced custom chain link fences, with the tops sealed. Past the cages were seven tall tubes with doors that hooked to the electricity, and then a set of computers in front. People were bustling here and there, securing everything. And everywhere- absolutely everywhere- were guards with guns.

The cages that they had to go past were ‘custom’ for the people kept inside.

Grillby’s cage had a fire hose pointed at it- and he was unconscious and looked to be barely breathing. Next to his cage was Alphys, who sat trembling in the corner, her eyes flicking back and forth as if seeing things that weren’t there. Next to Alphys was Undyne, who sat slumped in a corner. She was covered in bruises- she hadn’t come quietly, and had been obviously sedated. She had a few fingers through her cage, trying to comfort Alphys before she’d lost consciousness. Muffet was the last cage at the end, and she was coughing, spattering the ground with lavender colored blood spots as routinely a can of something was sprayed into her pen.

Across the path from Grillby sat Sans- who was slumped over in his cage and trembling from time to time. Soft whines echoed from his cage, and flashes of color would illuminate his closed sockets. Next to Sans was Toriel. Toriel was peppered with darts, and had obviously been sedated for a long time. The goat woman slept deeply, unaware of the happenings around her.

In the last cage, Asgore was bound, hands and feet. One of his mighty horns had been deeply cracked, nearly broken clean through, and from time to time he would let out a soft moan. The smell of burning flesh floated from him- there were cattle prods pressed to his stomach and legs, keeping him awake and aware, despite the drugged look in his eyes. Next to him, there was a man with a gun to his skull.
“How do you like our collection?” The man hummed. “We’re only missing one boss monster-Mettaton. Unfortunately, he was too elusive to get hold of- but he’s far out of the country, so he won’t be interfering.” He beamed as he guided them past Asgore. “We caught the King first. We had to, you know- to make sure everyone else gave up. We caught the King, and then we took the skeleton and his baby- we had to use a fire extinguisher on his elemental, and he hasn’t woken up since, but he’s not dust so I’m sure he’ll be fine. Your brother put up quite a fight, until we put a gun to your nieces head and threatened to remove that cute little skull of hers. He was trembling something awful for a while in that cage, and we had to sedate him when he started to let off some interesting colors. Poor guy.”

The false sympathy made Toki feel nauseated.

Papyrus had stopped at his brother's cage while Tenebris stopped at Asgore's, his tail lashing back and forth.

"How could you do such a thing!?” Papyrus demanded furiously as he turned to face their ‘guide’ through this abhorrent scene. "Do you not realize what could happen if you were not careful!? You could have killed someone!"

Asgore’s drugged gaze slid to him, but he couldn’t speak. His mouth was muzzled shut- all he could do was utter a low, exhausted moan.

The man laughed softly. “We gave them an option to go quietly. The ones who fought back were punished. If they didn’t fight back, they weren’t punished. The ones who fought did so knowing they risked death.” He flashed Papyrus a grin, and left him and Tenebris to be guarded as he moved Toki onward. “Let that be a lesson. Fight back, and you’ll be punished.”

Toki squirmed, and he gave her a sharp poke, making her give a yelp. Her magic strained against the knife- it was very sharp. “What… What is all of this for?” She asked, her eyes sliding to the tall tubes, as that was the only place she wouldn’t have to see people suffering. She was steadily being shoved towards it, away from Papyrus and from Tenebris, though she tried to make her steps go slow so she didn’t have to go. She needed to think- she needed a plan, and she needed one now. Where- Where was Stag? Stag could help, couldn’t they?

He followed her gaze. “Those, Kindness? Well, Mrs. Nara, those are for you. We have to hope you’ll fit though… Or I might have to shave off a few inches to squeeze you in- like I had to do with that deer beast of yours when we locked him up. A real wild one, that one- but he won’t get out of your house.” His knife caressed her belly like a lover might, and he hummed as he noticed he didn’t shave off any skin like he should have. His hand tightened on her wings. “Oh my. You’re using magic to protect yourself. That simply won’t do- we need you to have all the magic you can.”

His hands tightened on her wings, and he pulled, until one of her joints popped. It dislocated, and she shrieked. He had to loop his arms around her and hold her up, cradling her close like a lover might. “Shhh, love, shhh. You didn’t listen- we said not to use magic, didn’t we? I think we did. If not, I’m saying it now. No magic, or the other wing gets dislocated.”

Toki sobbed.

It was when he made his beloved shriek that Papyrus snapped. With Tenebris protecting his children, it was up to him to protect his wife, and now the human had gone too far.

"GET YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF OF MY WIFE!” He roared. He teleported closer and lunged off his good leg and used one hand to sock the other in the face roughly, his other hand grabbing hold of the wrist that held the knife
The man reeled back, keeping his grip on Toki with his free arm as she wailed at the jostling of her dislocated wing. He managed to keep his feet even as he spat out a tooth.

The man didn’t need to use the knife though- or even his gun.

Papyrus made one grave error- the man accosting his wife wasn’t alone.

There was one quick pop, and then the prosthetic that made up Papyrus’ leg exploded in a hail of false-bone and real bone.

Chapter End Notes

Strider Notes: And then it changed, when the fire nation attacked. MUHAHAHAHAHA. On a more serious note, we get to see how Toki handles a new conflict. Will she handle it in just one chapter- or will we have another 90 chapter arc to deal with the enemies brought about by this chapter? I suppose you’ll have to read and see how Balance Soul Toki handles things differently than Kindness Soul Toki did.
Chapter 141

Chapter by AutobotNightStrider

Chapter Notes

Strider notes: OOOPS LOOKS LIKE IT’S A MULTI PART CHAPTER AND THE SAGA CONTINUES.

I’m sorry, I couldn’t resist leaving you guys with a cliff hanger for good times sake.

Anyway, sorry for the belated update. Migraine had me down last night, so I had to wait until I was up and around this morning to post.

The pop and explosive hail of bone was echoed by horrified shrieks from the twins in Tenebris’ arms.

Toki’s shriek of pain turned to one of horror as she watched what she hadn’t gotten to see before because of dealing with Simmons- the destruction of her husband’s bad leg. One shot was all it took then- and one shot was all it took now, and the shrapnel peppered her hip like sharp white glass flecks.

The man holding her knew it too- and his face stretched into a grin even as the shards stuck into the thick material of his clothing.

A choked sound was torn out of Papyrus as his leg was destroyed and it was when he hit the ground that he screamed, loud and agonizing as he gripped what remained of his leg. "Fuck! Fuck! You bastards!" He howled. "My leg!" He grit his teeth, shakily attempting to put his remaining leg back under him. "You’re gonna pay for this..." He hissed.

Toki tried to drop down to him, to lunge for him, but her dislocated wing was twisted and she muffled a cry again.

“That’s what you get when you misbehave.” The man said dryly. He rubbed his tongue along the inside of his cheek. “Mmm, you knocked out one of my teeth. Should I take one of your wife’s teeth to replace it? Maybe even two teeth? I’m sure I would look fearsome with a grin like hers.”

Before he could antagonize them anymore, an annoyed voice interrupted them. “Zankoku. Behave.” A woman behind the computers glanced up- and it was the woman from the government that had been there during Asgore’s announcement, and Toki’s explanation of where she had been. She’d been the one that had pressed about the void. “You’re being rude to our guests. Let her stand on her own two feet, and just leave him there. A cripple with one leg can’t get far.” She dismisses him flatly. “Bring her here. We need to get her hooked up.”

“Fine, Susa.” He sighed, and pulled her away.

Four hands reached for Papyrus, and green eyes yearned to go to him. She didn’t understand- why was the government doing this? Why had they turned on them? Why? Why, why, why? Her magic lashed inside of her and bubbled up, burning at the back of her soul in a way she hadn’t felt in a long
“You must be wondering why this is happening.” The woman- Susa- smiles.

Toki half listened to her words, consumed by the fire bubbling in her soul, and burning in the back of her skull.

“You see… We figured out a plan. You may have told us no, but we don’t answer to you. In fact, we don’t answer to anyone anymore but ourselves- we’re our own independant section of the governments.” She shifted, and lifted a little jar. Inside the jar, was the little void blob that had come through on her ring. They had raided Tenebris’ house for it. “We figured out that if we have one of each of the colors of the souls, we should be able to reach across the darkness, and make contact with the other worlds. You’re the last piece of the puzzle we need, Mrs. Nara.” Susa gave her a false motherly smile.

“All of this…” Toki rasps. “All of this… Just to reach the Void? To reach a place that I forbade you from going?” Like a child that’s told no, waited until it was time and then acted out in the worst way possible.

“Yes.” Susa smiles. “There is untold riches across the darkness- I just know it. Just because you said no means nothing, little girl. You’re one person- one soul. We have the power of six other souls behind my machine- boss hearts and anti-hearts alike. Even little Frisk is here.” She motions to the farthest machine.

When Toki focuses, she can see faces inside- they’re floating inside liquid with air-masks over their faces. The glow of their forcibly extracted souls illuminates the liquid inside.

Her rage grows. For them, for Papyrus- for everything.

“You’re Balance- whatever that means.” The woman scoffs. “You have power. And that power is going to help Mankind reach new heights today!” Susa exclaims jubilantly. The jar with the blob was set down, and connected to the electrical flow coming from the six activated tubes. The blob lit up inside of the conductor. “Just like walking on the moon was the greatest achievement of that age, this will be the greatest achievement of our time. And you- all of you- your names will go down in history for helping us. And if you die… Well, you died for your country. You showed patriotism.”

The burning feeling in her skull snapped.

Fire lit up her body, and magic rushed down her body. From head to toe, she felt it consume her, and the magic pressure grew.

Zankoku let out a cry as he was forced away from her, his hands patting at the flames that tried to consume his skin. Toki turned, and she took one of his hands- and she stung him sharply with her stinger.

She watched as he howled- he screamed and wailed, as her venom coursed through him, and she watched impassively as he burned from the inside out. He died vomiting up his own blood and entrails, and fell into a puddle that was rapidly dissolving.

Toki felt disgust and empathy for his pain, though he’d deserved it. He had just been doing his job.

The woman standing behind the computers felt nothing.

“No.” Toki said simply.
“No?” Susa arched her brow.

“I don’t think you understand.” Toki said, her voice rising in time with the flames spiraling higher from her body. Her magic flowed hot and hard, flaming like a falling star, just as hard and just as fast. “I don’t think you understand at all. Boss hearts and anti-hearts… Their power is nothing in comparison to a complete soul. Nothing at all. I try to treat everything with kindness first, because that is what I was for almost all of my life. I’m not kindness anymore.” Her arms lifted, and she braced her legs. Her power flooded the village.

Where once, it could have been considered a lake, her power was now an ocean, deep and unending. It wasn’t like the power she’d had in the other world, where she’d been so omnipotent she could have been considered damn near a god- but her power here, as Balance, was something to be feared all the same. Whatever had snapped open in her, whatever they forced awake in her, they had brought it upon themselves.

Balance had awoken, and Balance would bring the world to heel.

The heat in the air grew, and the guards began to gasp in their uniforms. The guns began to steam, and the ends melted, rendering them useless. The chains holding the gates shut melted off, followed shortly by the cages themselves as the heat of the sun, directed solely upon the humans who had drawn her wrath, melted them until they bent.

“I’m done standing idly by. I’m done trying to find the peaceful way. I’m done being backed into a corner with only one way out. I am doing what I should have done with Cruelty- I’m nipping this in the bud before this is a problem that can blossom into an infestation. I am Balance, Susa, I am the only complete soul in existence within this reality. There is no number of Boss hearts or Anti-hearts that could compare. You should have listened to me. Instead, you brought shame upon the governments you work for, upon the human race- you shamed them all.” She bore her teeth at the woman, and her fury showed no bounds. The tanks behind her creaked and cracked, and the doors began to melt. Liquid began to leak.

Susa’s confidence fled faster than a flock a birds before a cat. “Stop!” The woman shrieked, turning and trying to plug the leaks. “Stop! Stop in the name of everything! You were human once! At your core, you are human! You should be on our side, not on the side of these Monsters!” She whips back around, eyes frantic. “Stop, please! If you destroy the tanks, we’ll have to start all over!”

“That’s where you’re wrong.” Flames curled at her teeth, and bubbled from her eye sockets. Toki looked nothing like a human. Damaged and sore, pregnant and swollen, spewing flames like something not of this world, she looked like a demon come from the pits of hell to take vengeance. “I’m not Human. I’m not Monster. I am **Balance**. I control the tides of time, and I will protect as much of Monsterkind from the corrupt cruelty of Humanity. If I have to, I **will** bring the whole fucking world to heel.”

Toki’s hands came together in a loud clap, and the sky tore asunder.

She felt her magic drain, and in the sky opened a massive, monumental portal.

Sugar was big, but Clover was bigger still. And yet, what Toki called forth was even more titanic yet.

The Hell Hornet Queen that came forth dwarfed the largest plane that Toki had ever seen. Her eyes alone were the size of cars, her legs as long as the necks of construction cranes- her stinger rested in a permanently extended state brought on by her armored, gravid girth, and was larger than Asgore was tall. She was truly astronomical in size.
Following the Queen was a swarm befitting a proper hive—hundreds and hundreds, spanning the size of Sugar to Clover and larger—and they invaded the city, their buzzing deafening and rousing those drugged to stupor.

“I AM BALANCE!” Toki roared above the buzzing. “AND YOU WILL HEAR ME NOW! IF THIS EVER HAPPENS AGAIN, I WILL LAY WASTE TO EVERY LOCATION HOUSING YOUR BANNERS! I WILL TRACK YOU FROM LIFETIME TO LIFETIME, FROM MY LIFE UNTIL MY NEXT, UNTIL YOU, YOUR DESCENDANTS, AND THE DESCENDANTS OF YOUR DESCENDANTS REPENT FOR THE DEEDS YOU HAVE DONE.”

The massive Queen bee let out a shriek that shook the skies.

In the silence that followed, the humans could only stare at her in utter terror.

This was the true monster that the Monsters had feared on the battlefields hundreds of years ago, when the Monsters and Humans had once battled. This was the true beast that had plagued them, had cut their numbers down by the millions to the scant handful that they had now.

And now, the united souls of Kindness and Cruelty stood for Monsters, stood against Humanity, in a Balance that could not be contested.

And Humanity could only tremble.

“Get out.” Toki hissed. “Get out of our Village. Get out of our city, get out of our country—get out and don’t come back. Bees—Take them, take them far. Take them out to sea, dump them in the ocean—I don’t care. They made their bed—they’ll lay in it.”

There would be no mercy, no kindness this time, for people who treated innocents like this, who frightened and threatened children and unborn babies to get what they wanted. No mercy or kindness at all.

The Queen didn’t move, but as one, the collective swarm moved in.

Suddenly, there were no humans. There were no guns. There was simply a massive, massive swarm carting screaming, howling humans away towards the nearest port—listening to the order of their other Queen.

And then it was just Monsters and the melting smear on the ground. Toki’s flames guttered, and she wobbled.

To say the least, Toki's performance of power had both Tenebris and Papyrus staring in shock and fear. They were both thankful that such a terrifying monstrosity was on their side. Neither had the nerve to move as Toki made an example of her enemies, summoned a creature that was far more than a simple hornet of her capability. As the swarm of insects lifted the humans, Tenebris ducked and quickly made his way to Toki, setting down the pups to catch her. "Toki, oh my god..."

Skylar and Honey were momentarily stunned as they were quickly set down, but as quickly as they were stunned, they snapped out of it and both quickly ran for their father, who was crawling closer with strained breathing of his wife’s name.

As Toki’s legs gave out under her, she landed in Tenebris’ arms, and it jostled her wings. She let out a pained cry, and her arms instinctively curled around her bleeding belly. She hurt—she felt hurt and drained and empty. She wasn’t a powerhouse behemoth anymore. She didn’t have the omnipotent sort of power she’d had in the other world, though the power of Balance was nothing to scoff at
either. She wasn’t the monster that would bring the human world to heel to keep the balance- she was just Toki, and she was hurt.

The massive Queen came down, but was unable to land. So titanic was her girth that if she were to land, she would crush the monsters that lay prisoner, or squash the houses that lay around them. Neither option appealed to the massive Queen. However, one absolutely gargantuan eye was shifted and focused on Tenebris, burning with a bright emerald color. It spoke without words for him to take care of the one who had dared to summon her.

Toki exhaled a shaky sound, eyes squinting open. “Papy… Papy… His leg…” She swallowed. “We need to help everyone… Frisk… Frisk is in the tank…”

Honey reached her Daddy first, and she got down on her hands and knees to try and help pull him closer to her Grandpapa.

Everyone was hurt- the only ones not hurt were the ones restrained in ‘Zone B’, and the children in ‘Zone C’.

Tenebris looked up at the massive hornet before he slowly spoke up. "Please... Protect us while we try to free everyone else..." He pleaded, before he turned to see Papyrus as he made it to the ground beside their feet.

The massive Queen hovered, but moved to a more central location over the general populace. Her long legs sought out open spaces, and she landed fully, towering above them as she kept watch.

"Father, give me Toki... Go and help the others... please." He was hurting. He was scared; but he knew that he was the least of their problems.

Tenebris nodded and slowly moved Toki to sit beside Papyrus, before he grabbed his tail blade in hand and took for the tanks, growling. "Frisk, protect your head!" He ordered.

Frisk couldn’t answer Tenebris. Their eyes were closed, their body limp in the draining tank- they weren’t conscious. The oxygen mask was still functioning, but there was obviously a reason the magically gifted child- and other boss and anti-hearts for that matter- weren’t fighting their confinement.

Toki was trembling as she was lowered down to her husband. She had to be curled onto her side on account of the dislocated wing, and the cuts bleeding on her belly. Sitting wasn’t safe- she was too dizzy. Laying curled on her side was the safest. Her eyes were closed by the time she was settled, her breathing shallow as she reached for her magic again. She reached for the bonds to the pups in her belly, and carefully opened the bonds again, letting her magic flow in unhindered again.

The well inside of her was draining- she couldn’t feed the pups and keep that massive hell-portal in the sky open at the same time. But after this, they needed those people as far away as possible. They needed... They needed more help than she could give.

Stress put pressure in her skull, until she felt like it would explode. She was probably bleeding from her nasal cavity…

“Papy…” She rasped, eyes opening again. “Papy…” Shaky hands reached for his own. “My babies…” The twins bundled into her chest, and she had to bite down on a choked cry at the jostling. Her arms looped around them, assuring herself that they were completely unharmed, and once she was sure, she locked exhausted and dimming eyes on her Husband’s eyes. “Are you okay…?” It’s the first thing she asks him- because of course it is.
No matter how scary and horrifying she had been, she was still his Toki at her core.

"I'm more concerned with you, Toki... you've really got to restrain your magic use otherwise you're going to bleed yourself dry." He told her as he pressed a hand to her stomach, a rough breath of air passing his teeth as he tried to offer her his own magic.

He was momentarily distracted from her by the sound of glass shattering and he turned his head to see Tenebris using the hook on his tail as a pick to break the glass of the tank and drain it.

Frisk bobbed as the water drained. Once it was past their face, their ruddy eyes opened just a crack, and they wheezed weakly to Tenebris. Whatever was in the water itself kept them immobile- it reacted to their magic, but didn’t seem to bother normal humans, or the Monster currently trying to clear the glass from the tube.

It would be best not to let Toki touch it.

Toki couldn’t even react as the sound of glass breaking sounded out across the village. She didn’t even blink as the big Queen shifted, and seemed to set down one sharp-barb covered leg right in the middle of the cluster of people who were tightly bound together. Her entire focus was on him and their children.

Toki gave a soft groan. “I know…” She whispers. “I can’t stop… If I do, they won’t be far enough away. They could come back.” There is fear in her voice- utter terror there. She is not strong enough to do that again- to fend them off like she did. Not without a break and weeks of rest. “The Queen… She protects us…” She whispers tiredly. “She keeps us safe.”

“Don’t let the bad people come back.” Honey sobs against her chest. “Momma please. Please don’t let them come back.”

“They shot Daddy, Momma. They shot Daddy, and they hurt so many people- Please don’t let them come back.”

"Stay strong, my love." Papyrus squeezed her form gently as he continued to share with her his magic.

As soon as the water drained, Tenebris roughly punched out the glass, carefully collecting Frisk in his arms before tucking them into his coat. "Child, do not try to speak..." He told them. "Focus on breathing..."

Frisk coughed, hands clawing the air mask off their face. Their hands rested on their chest, and they took deep, ragged breaths. They weren’t naked- they had on a soaked black t-shirt and shorts, and lay barefoot in his arms.

Toki kept up her magic for as long as she could- until even the help of his magic couldn’t keep up with the strain. The big Queen above them gave a low groan as her source of power and magic began to give out. She took a moment, and squashed all vehicles brought by Susa, before lifting into the air again.

She flew to the rift in space, and waited. It was only a few moments more before the hornets returned, with no humans in their grasps. They all left through the portal, and the unbearable heat died off.

Once the portal closed, Toki gave a shuddering breath, and fell unconscious.

“Momma? Momma!?"
Frisk’s hands moved against their chest after a few minutes of watching the bees leave. Their gaze was drawn to the frantic twins trying to wake their mother. ‘Free the others. I need to help Mom. She’ll wake when the darts are out. I can walk. I’m just tired. Mom can help the others.’

Papyrus held Toki close and continued to pass his magic into Toki's body. "Stay strong my beloved..." He whispered against his skull.

Tenebris nodded to Frisk's signing and he brought them to join Papyrus and Toki, leaving them in a nest made of his coat.

With that, he quickly went to Toriel's cage and he used his tail blade to finish knocking down her half-melted door. "Tori..." He came to her side and began to carefully remove the darts.

Frisk made a frustrated hand motion at the back of Tenebris’ head- because this was not what they meant! They huffed. They had meant for him to keep opening the tubes while they went to go help their Mom. They sighed though- perhaps it was for the best. As they tried to get on their hands and knees, they wobbled like a newborn lamb. They were helpless.

They glanced to the sobbing children, and to the fallen Papyrus. Frisk clicked their tongue gently to get his attention. ‘Comfort children- what?’

Their gaze was drawn away.

At the entrance, Monsters were walking in.

Royal guards were being supported by civilians, but they seemed to be on their feet. The civilians were visibly splitting forces- some were going back to the children, and the rest were coming to them.

Wolfen and Bo were leading the pack to come help them, even though their children were on the other side. “Oh dear…” Bo was more lucid than her wolfish husband. “Tenebris, sweet man… Let us help. You’ve done so much already, I’m sure.”

“The big bee let us free,” Wolfen slurred a bit, “Had s’me really sharp feet. Cut the ropes real nice, n’ we got free on our own the rest o’ the way.”

The people were flocking them now to help- civilians coming and uniting to help and try to take care of them. Several worked down the half melted doors, and got to work rousing everyone with what healing magic they had.

Monsters flocked to Papyrus and the fallen Toki, hands fluttering anxiously, awaiting his words on what they needed to do.

With Tori supported over one shoulder, Tenebris looked out with wide eyes, before he smiled weakly, "Wolfen… Bo... Thank you..." He purred, before he frowned, and looked towards Toki. "We need to give Toki magic. The humans hurt her, and she drained her magic setting us free. Please, if there's anyone who has enough magic to donate, even a little bit, please do so! We cannot let her go into magi-drain!"

“Let us take care of her.” Bo nodded.

The monsters formed a circle around her and Papyrus. There were still groups of monsters running at the edges, helping to free and rouse everyone, and working to open the remaining tubes housing the boss-hearts and Anti-hearts. For the most part, the monsters collected around the fallen pair, and anyone with magic to spare joined hands with the person in front of them, creating a linked circle.
The few at the core crouched down, and laid their hands gently upon her and Papyrus.

“We don’t have the skill to heal her wounds,” A little rabbit woman said gently to Papyrus, “But we can fuel you if you’ll heal her.”

He couldn’t set her wing, but he could heal her bleeding middle. And even if he didn’t- he could funnel magic as well.

The magic washed from the back of the crowd upwards, in small, soothing waves that carried every flavor and spark of life as they worked to breathe life back into the one they hailed as the Guardian Angel, funneling it into her and into her mate at her side. It came in waves of soothing light, pulsing comfort and well wishes with it- and it was, as anyone could describe, and awe-inspiring scene.

Papyrus smiled weakly as the magic came to them in waves and he took a deep breath before he rested his hands on Toki’s stomach, focusing the magic he was receiving from the people to heal his beloved.

Tenebris carefully brought Toriel to join the small pile of the wounded before he quickly started out to get Asgore, a worried whining picking up as he seemed to be more frantic to break the cage and binds of his beloved.

Slowly, under his hands, her stomach started to heal. The knife wounds knit themselves together carefully, and slowly sealed up without a mark.

Her wing wouldn't set itself to heal, but that was fine. The rest of the magic went to filling her stores. It felt like trying to fill an ocean with a bucket- the progress was slow, and seemed to be getting nowhere.

It was enough however for the steady stress bleed from her face to cease, and for her eyes to open just a smidge. She was awake, briefly so before her sockets slid shut again.

Toriel stirred once she was brushed over with magic. The motherly Monster wasn’t harmed or wounded in any way, and had been unconscious for a while. Her magic was at full strength- and she made her way to the center of the circle to check on her child first and foremost.

Frisk gave her a mollifying pat when she scooped them up and nearly split them in half with a hug. 'Later Mom. Others need more help. I'm just hungry and tired.'

As the healing circle continued, Tenebris put all his strength into tearing apart Asgore's binds. The prods had been the first to go, followed by him pulling off the muzzle and pulling his form close after breaking off his handcuffs. "Asgore... Asgore please speak to me." Tenebris spoke urgently, running his hands through the larger male's fur in hopes to find if he had any darts. "Please, Asgore..."

There was one lodged in the mane of the King that Tenebris dislodged quite easily. Asgore opened his eyes and groaned softly. "I'm here..." He whispers with great pain his words slurring slightly, but clear enough to be understood. "Is everyone... Okay? Sans... They tormented his mind... Alphys too... I failed them as their Ming..." He choked softly. He hadn't protected them. "Thumper... Oh gods, our son... They hit him when he fought back..."

"No... You did not fail us, my love. They made sure you were trapped too well to fight back. Thumper was strong. They did hit him, but he was strong and he didn't give in to fear and pain. He stayed strong, like you..." Tenebris stroked his love's head gently and whimpered before he turned to look out over the crowd. "There's a healing circle, my love... We just need to get you into it and you can regain your strength..." He told him. "Can you move?"
“They did so much to us in such a short time…” The King whispered. “They came not even half an hour after you left… They did so much to us… This was planned for a long time…” Asgore shifted in his arms, and his exhausted muscles strained. He lurched upright, wobbled, and half crushed Tenebris under his weight before he got his other leg under him. “I can try.” He said, determination in his wobbling voice. “I just need you to guide me. I can’t see very well- everything is waving.”

The crowd of monsters was growing as the children were brought in. Everyone crammed in, and began to haul the worst of the wounded to the center of the healing circle. There was an outcry for more healers to come forth to the center of the circle- there were only so many who knew the craft, and they could only focus on one person at a time. They needed more- everyone would help with magic, but they needed more hands to wield the craft.

“They need you.” Asgore mutters. His blurry vision focused in on Thumper, and their boy was zeroing in on them after he’d dropped off Twitch with her mother. Thumper still had Solstice, since Sans and Grillby weren’t quite up and about yet.

“Dad!” The rabbit calls, and bustles under Asgore’s other arm. He reaches out a small hand to help steady him, squinting hard to try and see out his swollen and bruised eye. “Dad, come on. We’ll get you fixed up- Both of you.”

Solstice was whimpering, but seemed to be temporarily mollified by shoving one of Thumper’s ears in her mouth and gumming on it.

Tenebris winced as he supported his beloved to the circle, "I do not need the healing. The healers need to focus more on Asgore and yourself." He told Thumper firmly. "Let's get with Toki and the others. I need to get Sans..."

“Alright.” Thumper nodded. He kept Solstice under one arm, and helped both of his parents hobble to the healing circle.

The healing circle opened up to draw them in, and it swallowed them up into the hoard. The human workers who had been kept hostage with the monsters were creating a protective barrier around them- Kon was among them, though he was sitting more to the side with Lana hovering worriedly around him.

Toki’s twinkish brother had put up a fight, and come out worse for the wear. He didn’t seem interested in getting healed, however.

Near the wall of humans, the boss hearts and anti-hearts had been brought. They were unknown variables- and for their safety, they were being kept away from the already anxious Monster population.

At the center of the healing circle, Toki had been joined by many more. Muffet was resting next to her, her smaller form laid flat as Toriel healed her. The spider woman’s breathing was ragged- whatever they had used on her was clearly toxic to her respiratory system. Next to Muffet lay Grillby, his flames dim and pale. He still hadn’t woken- at his side was Sans.

Undyne and Alphys were both awake and aware, and were leaning on each other. They were mostly alright now- though very shaken.

Toki had fallen back unconscious again, and hadn’t stirred. Her children hadn’t left her side, and her one-legged husband hadn’t either. Her wing still hadn’t been set, but there were few who were confident in setting a skeleton’s bones.
Children were being funneled into the circle and scanned over for wounds. If they were alright, they were being handed back to their parents.

Tenebris used his strength to pull to the middle the ones who most needed the healing, though it was clear now that he had calmed from his aggression that this whole event deeply shook the elder male. It was especially clear once he had finished, as he curled up tightly around Asgore, cradling his head and running his fingers through his beloved's fur as a soft whining picked up from his throat.

Sans was scarcely awake, his breathing shallow in panic as he both feared someone's touch and so horribly yearning to be held. His eyes were half-lidded, pupils barely visible as he gave shaky breaths accompanied with quiet whimpers. He wanted his daughter. He wanted his husband. Sans could hear Tenebris' mutterings as well and knew his poor father was as much a mess as he was.

Thumper spotted his adopted brother’s eyes peeking open, and shifted Solstice in his arms. He kept shaking off the hands reaching to heal him- he had a job to do first before he could have people fussing over him. He’d been entrusted with his niece, and he was going to escort her safely now that both of his parents were safe.

Someone was tending to Asgore as Tenebris held him tight- healing the King would be beneficial. While Asgore couldn’t heal, his fire magic was powerful- and he could surely help rouse Grillby.

The bunny made his way over, very, very carefully stepping around the frightfully still form of Toki, and making his way over to Sans. He crouched down, his single free fluffy ear perking. He spoke softly as he tried to peek at him through his swollen eye, and keep his niece from flailing out of his arms to crawl across her unconscious father.

“Brother?” He says softly. “Solstice is here. If… If you’re ready to take her. If not, I can keep watching her.” The bruised bunny boy mumbled. “I don’t mind. Everyone is here for you… Everyone is here for everyone.”

"P-Please... Please..." It was all he could muster. But, it was very clear what he was pleading for.

Please give me back my baby.

Tears were growing in Sans' eyes, as was the magic that pooled in his left eye, blue and yellow with frantic fear. He wanted his baby, he wanted to know she was okay. He wanted to hold her as Grillby held him when he needed him most. “Please..."

“Alright.” He nods softly. Thumper gently pulls his ear from her mouth, and he shushes her gently as she starts sooking unhappily at him. His slobber soaked ear flips behind him and out of her reach, and he bounces the blue flaming baby for a moment, before settling her against her mother’s chest. Solstice babbles for a moment, before she seemed to realize where she was. She let out a delighted crackle, and a little twinkling giggle of delight. “Ama!” She coos, her flaming skeletal hands coming up to plap against her mother’s frantic face. “Amaamamamamuuuu.”

With that, Thumper took a step back and batted away the hands reaching for him. “Nooo stop.” He huffs. He hops back towards his parents. “My Dad can heal me just fine- he’s a doctor!” Only one side of his cheeks puff up in indignant pride, the other side tender with his swollen face.

Tenebris had heard Thumper's words and for a moment was in disbelief at the sheer pride in his boy’s voice- but his purple gaze traveled to his youngest, before his lips curled into a smile that refused to fade as he reached out to him. "My son..." He spoke softly.

Thumper didn’t vault into his arms, but he settled into his father’s side, soft whiskers tickling at
Tenebris’ cheek as the bunny nuzzled his stressed face. His plush fur was soothing in ways he only knew a prey-based monster could be at times. He made use of it then. “I’m here, Dad.”

Sans curled around his daughter, cradling her form as he resisted his urge to cry into her. Instead, he kept one arm around his darling child and the other, rattling with how horribly it trembled, reaching for his husband. "G-Grillbz..."

Grillby… Didn’t respond to his husband’s touch. Nor to his daughter’s babbling coos. Grillby was silent and still, save only for the soft, wheezing sound of his breathing, and the crackling of his dimmed flames. In a few spots, blackened skin was visible, where the fire extinguisher had put out his flames.

Grillby could not offer the comfort his mate needed- not any more than the warmth of his hand might have simply provided as it was. He wasn’t the only one comatose, however- the fire based skelebeast laying not far from them hadn’t stirred again from when she’d fallen unconscious.

The night had been long and stressful- but the aggressors were gone, the guards were up… and it was time to heal, and be wary of any more that may come. If they were brave enough to challenge the word of Balance, that was.
The darkness was pervasive. She had been sucked down, and down, and down so deep into the abyss that she feared she would never get out. She had been given a brief glimpse of the world outside, and she knew that her family was safe. Well… her monster family.

Thought faded from her for a time. She floated in the darkness for a time, only the faintest glimpses of sound reaching her. She felt a flash of pain across her back- a steady agony that burned even after. It was a feeling she got used to rapidly- something to hold on to.

Another thing she became aware of while floating in the darkness was the one, constant thing that never left her side. Alongside the echoes of voices she might have known if they weren’t so distorted, there was an invasive glow.

She recognized it easily.

[SAVE.]

[LOAD.]

Those were the two that stuck out to her the most. But… for the duration of her stay, of which she really wasn’t sure how long it was as time was fluent in a place like this, in the place where the broken button for [RESET] had once bloomed…

A new button was fizzling into existence.

[REBIRTH.]

Toki wasn’t stupid. She knew what it meant.

The darkness that she was floating in was a limbo then. She was floating between life and death- or she had already died, and was hearing the echoes of voices long past, and the pains her body had endured. She… She wasn’t sure, honestly. Toki had likely pushed her body too far beyond the point of saving- and she was already dead. She’d felt her magic draining as soon as she’d summoned the Queen. Toki had felt like a nuclear bomb that had gone off.

The true kicker was… a bomb only ever went off once.

Toki was hesitant in even looking at that button. She knew what it meant- if she pressed it, she, Toki that is, would die.

Toki would die- and Toki would be born as someone else.
She didn’t want that. So she didn’t touch it, she didn’t look at it- she just kept her shadowy arms to herself, encased herself in the darkness, and drifted among the haunting echoes.

Eventually though, she knew she needed to just… accept that she had died. Lingering in the darkness was doing nothing but no doubt delaying the rebirth of Balance into the world… and the world would surely need it. She needed to get back to everyone as soon as she could.

She wasn’t sure how much later it was when she turned, her hand slowly reaching out to the button.

A hand reached out through the darkness, and skeletal fingers laced with hers, before banishing the buttons from the dark plane. The hands soothed over hers, and then gently tucked her hand back to her chest.

“Rest, Toki. Rest. It’s not your time yet, you silly girl- the world doesn’t need a new Balance. Your world still needs you. But you need to rest before you can come back.”

Toki rested.

Her first real moment of awareness came with her first inhale. She inhaled, and nearly sucked in some sort of vapor. She didn’t cough- her shoulder was in too much pain to do that.

But Toki did open her eyes, just a crack. Light blinded her for only just a second before the dark blob of… something covering her chest caught her bleary attention. Her mind felt fuzzy and heavy. She wasn’t sure what was on her, but it was heavy. Gracie, maybe? The gray cat was dark enough to be there, and usually found home on her chest.

She wheezed softly to try and make her go away.

Gracie, it turns out, wasn’t on her chest. Well, she hadn’t been at the time. The blob of gray fur had been the cause of the warm sensation on one of her four hands, up until Toki wheezed- and then big green eyes were in her face as Gracie peered down at her, shoving the dark thing off her chest in the process.

Spotting Toki’s conscious state, Gracie did the only thing she knew how to do- meow loudly about how happy that made her, and proceed into turbo kneading Toki’s intensely sensitive breasts to display her joy. A purr soon followed.

Toki couldn’t stop the pained moan, and her dry-boned attempted words at telling her to get off. It sounded nothing like words. She didn’t know skeletons could get dry mouth until now- but it was a thing. How long had she not used her voice? She didn’t know.

As the cat took her rightful place upon her owner's chest, indeed the shadow that was once there was hastily chased off. It let off a displeased sound as it retreated instead to a different lap- which was the only other one in the room with her.

A skeletal hand slowly lifted to rest in the middle of the shadow, which chirred happily at the touch and condensed to form an odd-looking creature with milky white eyes that looked up to the tired soldier giving it attention.

Papyrus never looked down at the creature demanding his attention. He only sighed shakily as he continued his vigilance. Thankfully, Gracie’s yowls had caught his attention, and ever so slowly he turned from the window, gazing upon his wife with the faintest gleam of hope in his eyes.
"Toki...?"

Her head rolled with the weight of a thousand boulders, her long stiff neck giving a few cranky pops as she turned her head to look at the voice.

Bleary green eyes blinked slowly in her sockets, and then her eyes opened wider so she could try to focus further from the edge of the bed.

She wasn't in her room, obviously, but at first glance she couldn't tell where she was. Her teeth parted, and she rasped softly again, her tongue forming and magic pulsing to lubricate cords that hadn't made sound in far too long. Toki was a vocal woman- she was never silent for long.

How long had she been silent, she wondered.

"Papy..." She rasped. She was here. She was home.

It was unclear if this was truly her Papyrus. He looked so tired, as if for as long as she had slept, he had not so much as closed his sockets to blink.

"Toki..." He spoke again gently, before a faint smile came to his teeth. "You're awake... I'm so glad."

Her sweet husband looked so tired- but it was him. It had to be him.

She shifted on the bed, her primary arms coming up to gently remove the cat from her chest. Her hands bumped into wires that were connected to her chest with little sticky squares, and she let out a puzzled sound.

The more Toki moved, the more she could feel wires connected to her by small, sticky cloth squares. They gave off a faint magical pulse- and when she tried to follow them with her eyes, she was lead to a slew of machines covered with screens that meant nothing to her.

She strained to sit up, her dislocated wing feeling stiff. When she tried to twitch it, she found that it had been bound carefully to her back to let it heal as naturally as it could. One of her feet were trapped too, but that was only thanks to Gael as he napped on her.

Toki only made it to a slightly elevated position. She was so tired… her magic stores felt painfully empty, like she had nothing left to give, and her entire body ached.

There was a shift against her middle, and a sharp kick nearly stole her breath away. Good- the litter were safe. Good… She couldn’t have been asleep for too long. “Papy… How long have I been gone…?” She asks, and lets her gaze roll back to him now that she could see him better. She froze, spotting what he was sitting in. “Oh…” Oh no...

He watched her as she spoke and as she stopped, he knew she saw it.

He smiled weakly, before he sighed and his hands lowered... to the wheels that were attached to either side of the chair he sat upon.

He slowly pulled away from the window, and brought his form closer, ever so slowly as he was rusty with the wheelchair he sat in. He made it after a few jerky motions, fueled by his own lack of practice and his visible exhaustion. Once he was next to her bed, he reached out to set a hand on her cheek. "You were asleep for a week, my love... We feared you would never wake..."

Her eyes followed the wheelchair. This wasn’t a pair of crutches- this wasn’t a cane. This wasn’t him walking on his hands and one leg until he had another replacement leg… Toki wasn’t sure if it was
the same for humans, but… She hadn’t seen his other leg move while he’d wheeled over.

Was her husband… Paralyzed? Had… had shrapnel hit his spine? He’d dragged himself to her-
dragged himself with his hands and elbows and any part of his arms, but she hadn’t seen his legs
move- when she’d been set down. Had… Was he…?

She swallowed, and her eyes burned. But her body physically didn’t have the magic to spare to
allow her to well up with tears. Instead, her eye-lights quivered and were all that more telling.

Some part of her longed to pull up the load screen, and load back to the morning prior- so they could
shore up and make it so this… This couldn’t have happened. But… maybe things might not have
gone as well as they did.

Instead of doing anything that might have jeopardized their current fate… Toki reached up, and
curled a shaky hand over his. Her next breath was rattling, and it made her soul quiver, which set the
machine next to her into a fritz until her soul stabilized again. “I almost didn’t.” She admits shakily.
There is no bravado that she can summon- she can’t bring herself to say ‘you should know better, I
always come back’. She can’t. Because she had been so, so close… “But I’m here now. I’m awake.”
She inhales softly.

His thumb ghosted over her cheek as Papy smiled at her. It was so hard to see the smile without the
life and love in his eyes, and yet there it sat on a damaged face. "Everyone was afraid you were
lost... you saved us, you know..."

Her heart broke for him, making her soul monitor give a few unsteady beats and shrieks in response,
and she shifted in the bed. Toki was trying to scoot closer to him, with little success- she was too
tired, too stiff- she needed help that he couldn’t give. She wanted to make that look on his face go
away- her Papyrus shouldn’t be smiling like that. Her husband smiled with such life and love and
ferocity that it felt like basking in the sun- this smile on his face was cold and hollow, like someone
had taken his fire and doused it in water.

She nuzzled into his palm. “I know.” She whispers. “I did what needed to be done. I’m sorry… I
wasn’t strong enough to hold up after it though.” Her hands trembled, and then she reached for him-
for both of his hands, and what was that on his lap? Regardless, she ignored the strange thing that
looked too much like blobby, and her green gaze bore deep into his, trying to find him under all of
his pain and exhaustion. “Papyrus… My love… Are you okay?” She asks him, concern sliding
through her voice. “Is… Is everyone okay…?”

Though her eyes searched and looked deep within his own… her gaze found nothing.

"Yes… and no.” He answered softer still, before he looked out the window again, his oh so wrong
smile fading to a frown. "In your absence, decisions were made, and we have taken measures to
protect our people." He spoke softer.

Toki did not like the sound of that. She didn’t like the sound of that at all.

So… she sucked in a breath, and let out a pained noise as she forced her body upright. She trembled
like a shaking leaf as she moved to try and sit at the edge of the bed. The monitors pulled and tugged
at her skin, including the ones at her belly, and she gave an irritated buzz before weakly yanking
them off.

The machines began to scream- for obviously without her soul responding, she must have died.

Toki’s feet touched the floor, and she began straining to try to get up. “What to do you mean ‘taken
measures’?” She demands shakily, fear driving her body to try and see what he was looking at. She recognized the window now- it was their dining room window, and it had a perfect view of the front part of the entrance into the village. What did he see that she couldn’t? She needed to see for herself. “What has happened? What’s going on? What did Asgore do?” She knew only the king could put into place true measures- what had he done?

The sound of her panic was only amplified by the frankly anxiety inducing screeches of the machines that had been monitoring her- and it was certainly not helping her remain calm.

He reached out and gently stopped her with his hands. "Toki... stay down... you need to recover your strength." He told her gently. "I need to turn off the machines, otherwise they will keep going off. Stay down, and I will return in a moment to answer your questions.”

Toki’s breathing didn’t slow, and her eyes flickered frantically over his hands as they held her own, caging her wrists and keeping her down. The Papyrus she knew wouldn’t have held her so impersonally- not even bound by a wheelchair. His tender touch to her face was one thing- but… There was a lack of affection. Even at his most exhausted, her husband, her mate, was never like… this. She’d gone to sleep with a loving husband, and woke up to a cold shell- the world felt turned upside down, and nothing was right.

She could only stare at him in mute, dumb silence, her soul alight in her chest with panic- and wait for him to turn off the machine.

There was the rushed pattering of feet across hard tile floor- and then Skylar poked his head around the wall.

Her usually quiet son’s expressive eyes got huge, and he turned back to the rest of the house, and cranked open his mouth. “MOMMA’S AWAKE!” He shrieked, spooking Gracie and Gael out of the room with his noise.

His announcement made, which stirred up a whole slew of noise that roused the house to life, Skylar made a bee-line for her. He tried to get past his Daddy, intending to fling himself into her arms regardless of whether she could physically hold him or not.

And yet as he made to pass Papyrus, the older skeleton reached out and stopped Skylar. "Gentle, my son. Your mother is awake, but she is still hurt. She has recovering to do. Don't jostle her.” He said firmly.

Skylar’s head ducked down almost timidly, and he nodded. His father had been a lot firmer since his mother had gone to sleep after the mean humans had been taken away. His father still smiled, but it was empty smiles, and it made him feel uncomfortable. “Okay, sir.” He mumbles softly.

Skylar waited until his dad let go, and then scrambled up onto the bed. He was careful as he sat next to her, and cuddled into her side. He tucked his face into her side, and sniffled. “I didn’t think you were gonna wake up…”

“I did though.” Toki soothes. “I woke up, baby. I’m here now. It’s okay.” She soothed softly, and held him tightly. Toki glanced to Papyrus, before looking to the door. The wailing of the machine couldn’t cover the sound of her daughter coming downstairs, nor the larger footsteps following.
The larger pair of footsteps revealed to be Sans, who looked to Toki as he entered the dining room, his daughter close to his chest and his niece clutching his fingers as she tugged him into the room. "Toki... oh my god..." He sighed with relief.

Toki exhaled a sound that bordered on near euphoric relief at seeing her daughter and brother in law. Like Skylar, she made space for Honey, and Honey squished in on her other side once she helped her father unplug the noisy screaming machines. Toki clutched her trembling children close, tired eyes searching over Sans to see if he was different like his brother. “Well… that isn’t my name, but if you want to call me that…” She manages to crack a hesitantly teasing smile, hoping to see if his humor was still in tact. “I’m up, brother. Papyrus was just… telling me about everything that’s happened.” She swallows. “I’ve heard things have changed in the week I’ve been unconscious.”

He gave a weak laugh at the lame joke, but it was when the happenings around them got mentioned did his smile fall once more. "Yeah... I’m not sure the best way to tell it to you..." Sans sighed, before he stepped over and gently hugged her tightly with one arm. "I'm just... really... really glad you're okay, Toki..."

“... hope I’m okay.” Toki lifts one arm from her son- earning a fussy whine- and hugs her brother in law back. “I hurt. I’m... exhausted. And...” She was afraid. She wasn’t sure how to say that though, when her fear felt so much lesser than theirs was. “Yeah.” She finishes lamely. She glances at the children, and drops her hand down to gently caress Solstice’s cheek. “Solstice looks okay...” Toki paused. Okay… Her gaze glanced down, and her primary arm dropped to her belly. She went silent, feeling the kicks of the tumbling litter. She swallowed thickly. “… How many did we lose?” She asks, voice heavy. She was under no illusion that her cutting off her magic to them hadn’t had consequences.

She would have lost Tenebris another child. Or two.

Guilt made her body tremble more.

The brothers paused for a moment, before the younger gained a smile that was a little more sincere

"None...” He said. “Our people refused to let them die... so many people came in every day to give you magic..." Papyrus spoke gently.

"Though...” Sans looked down as he squeezed his daughter again. "Grillbz... He's not doing so good..."

Any relief she might have gotten at the fact that she hadn’t lost any babies was swiftly squashed. She raised a hand, and set it on her brother’s arm. “Take me to him.” She pleads gently. “Please. I can… I can’t do much, but I can help. Fire elementals are the one thing I know I can help, magic or no. Please.”

She didn’t even know what was wrong- but there was a desperate part of her that needed to help with something, to help heal something. She needed something she could do, something she could fix. “I can’t… I can’t walk.” Her legs were shaking. “I need… help.” She mumbles. “But I want to help him. I... I need to do something.”

Surely they could understand her plight… She may have just awakened, but Toki was Toki- Toki would die for them, just as they would die for her. But giving him venom wouldn’t kill her. It wouldn’t take much to help him- or get him started healing at least.

Sans slowly looked at Papyrus, who sighed, before he reached out to her. "Come on, into my lap. I'll get you there. Don't have to go that far. This is the only fireproof house in Nara Village anymore...
Toki didn’t immediately leap for his lap. Her children sidled away from her as he reached for her, but she hesitated, staring at him. She didn’t even rise to his joke about it being the only fireproof house— it was fireproof for a reason. Her. “… I don’t want to hurt you.” She says softly, and shakes her head. “If… Sans can just… make sure I don’t fall… I can try to walk on my own…”

Papyrus reluctantly wheeled himself backwards to get out of the way as Sans came around to her. "I would have agreed with Pap to use his lap... If you're really feelin’ heavy..."

“It feels like there is two of Asgore hanging off of every limb, on top of looking and feeling like I’m ready to pop.” Toki says mildly with a pointed rub of her belly. She earns a giggle from her children, which was the whole point. “But…” She eyed her husband. “I don’t want to hurt you, Pap. With your leg…” And pelvis, she mused to herself. “I’m not exactly as light as one of the twins or little Solly there. Though… She’s getting pretty big too, isn’t she, Sans?”

"Mmmm... Yeah..." Sans nuzzled his daughter, before he sighed. "I think you should take Pap's offer, Toki..." He told her. "You're not gonna be a problem for him to wheel around."

With that, Papyrus slowly wheeled closer once more. "Come on, Toki..."

Toki stubbornly sat there. “I don’t want to hurt you.” She says. “If you can promise me that I won’t hurt you, not one single bit, and not lie to me, then I’ll ride with you.” But she wasn’t going to hurt someone to help someone. And not… Not after he’d lost his leg trying to save her. All because she hadn’t bucked up sooner, and her power hadn’t come out earlier…

Papyrus looked at her, before he sighed and his gaze sharpened as he looked to his brother. "Sans."

"... Yeah, okay Pap." Slowly, Sans set Solstice down nearby, where her cousins flocked to in order to keep an eye on her. Once she was occupied, he came over and pushed his arms under Toki. "Up we go.” He grunted as he hefted her up into his arms.

Toki’s initial thoughts had been ‘That’s what I thought’ when her stubborn husband had given in and called for his brother. She kicked her feet a bit as he lifted her, and felt her vision swim a bit at the sudden change in height and elevation. Her vision went dark for a moment as her body adjusted, feeling far too much like a human that had far too little blood in their body, but she remained steady in his arms. “Thank you.” She mumbled blearily.

He watched her face for a moment, as if deciding if she really could move on her own or not, and then turned and carefully lowered her into his brother’s lap. Apparently he decided not.

Papyrus wrapped one arm around her and locked her in place with the other as Sans picked Solstice back up from her cousins, before he gripped the wheelchair handle that Papyrus himself did not man as they then wheeled out to the front room, which had been a lot warmer than the rest of the home.

Her entire living room had been ripped apart. Her floor was in tatters, all of the tile peeled back to the bare cement all the way back to the hallway. Furniture was stacked in the halls itself, and there was absolutely nothing in the living room that made it a living room.

Toki was initially at half a mind to shout at them for utterly wrecking her house— the claw marks on the floor could not have been made by a human hand. However, the smell of smoke coming from the living room stopped her.

Grillby lay inside, resting on a bed of coals. They had a couple of fans turned on low facing him, keeping the coals smoldering and blowing the smoke right out the open window.
He was still, his body blackened in many places, and very dim. The fire extinguisher had done terrible things to him and it seemed to still be poisoning him.

Toki’s hands came over her mouth. “Oh Grillby…” She whispered. “Oh… Oh dear… Can you safely take me to him?” She asks, fearing them getting burned. “I can crawl if I have to. He needs venom.”

Papyrus nodded slowly, but looked over his shoulder as he heard rattling.

His brother was trembling, his sight locked on his husband as tears welled in his eyes...

All those genocide runs in the past timelines, and never once did Sans have to see Grillby in such condition. It made Pap's heart hurt to see his brother in such a state. He had done so well to ebb his anxiety before all this happened.

"Sans... Do you want to go wait with the children?"

"No... No... I-I'm okay..." No he wasn't.

And yet he stepped forward and set Solstice down beside her father, before he came back to wheel Papyrus and Toki over... When close enough, Papyrus locked his wheels and leaned back to allow Sans the room he needed to gently grab hold of Toki. He gave a soft 'one... two...' before he gave her a soft boost to the other side of Grillby. He carefully set her down, before he went around to his daughter, taking his husband's hand firmly as he peppered it with kisses. "Grillby... Are you awake?"

His breathing was raspy, mouth slightly ajar as he took slow breaths, but as Sans spoke up, his eyes stayed closed. One had to worry if the elemental could even hear his spouse's trembling voice.

"Grillbz... Toki's awake... We're... we're gonna fix you." Sans' voice was breaking as he spoke, squeezing the elemental's hand tighter.

Grillby didn’t so much as utter a crackle at his husband’s trembling.

Toki pulled herself closer, the paper gown they’d put her in igniting in the hot coals. It wasn’t long before she was shaking like a naked poodle next to him, covered in soot and probably a weeks worth of bone dust from not bathing.

Toki didn’t hesitate though- she lifted Grillby’s arm, and turned it carefully to find his wrist. When she’d located his ‘veins’, where his magmatic blood flowed slowly, she slid her stingers into his wrist, and let her venom flow.

There was more venom to give than one might think. While yes, it was tied to her magic, her body couldn’t reabsorb the venom that it had already made. While she had expended a little bit of venom in killing The Man, of whom she refused to name, her stores had remained un-depleted, and simply sitting inside her bones while waiting to be used.

Color flushed back into the arm she injected, and she smiled softly. She shifted her other hand, stretching shakily across his chest, and then shoved a stinger right into his bare chest. Her venom flowed in, hot and heavy, and color bloomed there too. It was spreading, slowly, and picking up the pace as more of his body heated.

Toki stopped before her stingers emptied though. She needed to keep some just in case he suddenly got worse. Slow treatments would be best. She sat to watch the color blossom.

It spread from his chest, where it was initially brightest. As it spread all over his body, it dimmed- but
the over all color of his body itself brightened. Darkened patches of flesh that had failed to be re-
ignited with the king’s magic were beginning to repair and relight themselves. It was progress, slow
and steady.

Probably the best progress was the low groan Grillby let out, as his ember like eyes flickered open.

"Grillby!" Sans sounded too desperate in that exclamation. "Oh thank god, you're awake."

Grillby didn’t speak, but his hand tightened over his husband’s. His eyes blinked slowly, and his
thumb rubbed Sans’ soothingly. His mouth panted soft, shallow breaths.

Toki wondered if it hurt to breathe. She grimaced, and leaned over to give him a bit more venom
around his chest, pushing her stinger deep so it might penetrate deeper than just the surface tissues. She emptied one wrist into him, and then shuffled away. “Sans,” She says softly, “I’m going to give
you some time with him, okay? Papy too. You and Solly need time with him. That should help… We’ll just have to do regulated doses until he’s better, but my venom is going to be limited.”

It was a sad sight to see the heavily pregnant woman shaking as she crawled away, attempting to go
around Papyrus’ wheelchair. She needed to wash the soot off so she could rest. And… Find out
what happened.

And why Asgore and Tenebris weren’t around.

"Thank you, Toki… But I can’t leave you to crawl around." He carefully set Grillby's hand in
Solstice's lap before he slowly got up. "Let me help you at least get your feet back under you…”

“I can try standing, but I don’t really know how well that will go.” Toki murmured. “I’m also naked,
and the window is open, and I’d really rather not flash all of those guards I can clearly see outside
not far away.” She hobble-crawls until she’s at least out of view of the window, before exhaling
sharply. Her back hurt crawling like this. Her wing hurt, her belly made her lower back hurt… She
ached. “I need to wash the soot off before I can go rest and make some calls. I need answers.” Her
stomach also growled with the need for food. She likely hadn’t eaten in a week- and that wasn’t
good for her magic stores. “The lower bathroom shower will work fine… Unless…”

Stag had been trapped in that one- presumably Snuggle and Sobek too. “Are Stag, Sobek, and
Snuggle okay?” She asks worriedly.

Stag felt alright- they weren’t in the village at the moment, not that she could tell. She could feel
them, but they felt like they were far out, patrolling- so presumably the deer suffered no wounds that
couldn’t be healed, besides a wounded pride of course.

"They were bruised from the forceful stuffing into the bathroom, but they were not as badly harmed
as some..." Was Sans' answer to her question, "they didn't take long to recover afterward…"

With her question answered, Aliquam focused more on her, and spoke up quickly as opportunity
arose. "I say you sit back down and take a second to regain your breath, Toki." he insisted, having
watched her wobble her way around him like a drunkard. "If you fell, I wouldn't be able to catch you
quickly enough and you could get hurt."

"I'm with Paps on this." Sans agreed as he carefully helped Toki up, holding her against his form to
support her to the nearest seat. "I'll bring you a damp rag, but you should take a second to make sure
you're not going to pass out on us."

“I’m okay as long as I’m… not…” As it happened, being helped to her feet was enough to very
nearly make her pass out. Sitting was fine- crawling on her hands and knees was fine- but her body didn’t have enough in it yet to keep her stable on two legs. As Sans helped her up, her eye lights went dark for a moment, and her sooty-self slumped into him.

Grillby- who had been watching as best he could from the corner of his very tired eyes- made an alarmed crackle.

She wasn’t out for more than a few seconds in total, just enough to go completely boneless against Sans and no doubt scare the bajesus out of him and Papyrus. “I need to sit down…” She mumbles blearily, fingers shakily clutching at his soot covered coat. She needed to go lay down and rest. She wanted to rest with Papyrus- she wanted to curl up with him and their kids and have everything be okay, if only just for a little while.

Sans had freaked a little but had been ready to catch her and kept her close until she stirred again. "I've gotcha, sis..." He murmured, getting her to a nearby seat to sit her down.

Papyrus wheeled over soon after, a worried frown on his face as he reached out and set a hand on her cheek. "Take it easy." It didn’t sound like a request that time. "You are very weak right now..."

Toki leaned on the couch she’d been seated on, complaints of getting it dirty far from her mind. Sans had obviously been sleeping on it based on the sooty body prints covering the creamy leather- it was the closest place to where Grillby was after all. She leaned her head into her husband’s hand and breathed heavily. “I’m okay.” She mumbles. “I just got dizzy… Standing maybe isn’t so good right now.”

She took a moment and for once followed his obvious orders to take it easy. When she’d caught her breath, and her eyes could focus again, Toki glanced up at her husband. “I’d… like to wash the soot off, and maybe get dressed in something not made of paper before I get shipped back to bed. Please.”

Without her magic to keep her warm, Toki felt cold, even with the heat pluming from the ruined living room.

The twins had been watching everything happening silently, worry plain on their faces. But, this was something they could help with.

Honey bounced forward, and gently touched her Daddy’s arm. “I’ll get Momma a wet cloth or two from the bathroom, okay? Then you can help Momma wash up. Her wings are dirty.” She blinks up at him, and then loped up to the upstairs bathroom.

Which coincidentally let Toki know that her downstairs bathroom had indeed been ruined.

“I’ll get you clothes, Momma.” Skylar gave her a shy smile, and then moved to follow his sister.

She watched them go, and then turned to Papyrus. She eyed him quietly as the sounds of the children rummaging around upstairs echoed in the quiet house. They were all shy around him- and that wasn’t something that would have happened for no reason. Her kids were mostly quick to forgive- except for the incident with Papa when he had hurt Honey’s feelings. That had taken some time to smooth over.

What had gone on while she was asleep?

Before she could gather the gumption to demand an answer again, the kids came thumping down the stairs again. Skylar had a surprisingly well-matched pair of clothes, and Honey had several soaked cloths.
“Momma,” Skylar hummed, “Since the couch is dirty, I’m gonna put the clothes on the bed in here, okay? If…” He glanced to his father, “If Daddy can help you roll over to the bed once you’re all squeaky clean, we can get you dressed.” He dug in his pile of clothes, and pulled out a pair of socks. “I even got your favorite socks!”

“Thank you.” She gave him a warm smile. “You’re such a good boy- you’re both good kids. Thank you both so much for helping- you’re growing up so fast.” She sent him into the dining room with a happy smile, and it warmed her soul. She needed her children to be happy- that’s all she needed. With Skylar off in the temporary bedroom, she shakily took one of the wet cloths from Honey, and pressed a kiss to her little horns. “Thank you, sweetheart. I can hold them- why don’t you go help your brother while Momma washes?”

“Okay.” She nods with a quiet smile, and drapes the washcloths on her mother’s knee.

Toki exhales as she goes, and then glances to Papyrus as she tries to scrub the soot off her arms first. “You don’t have to help.” She says softly to Papyrus. “You look tired. I’ll manage.”

"I do not mind assisting if you change your mind..." He let her do as she wished while Sans returned to Grillby’s side.

Toki nodded softly. She made quick work of washing most of herself, getting the soot off her breasts and lingering a bit on washing her stomach. Her teats were tender there, and the nipples had swollen up quite a lot in the week she’d been unconscious. Toki got almost all of her clean, but her wings and back were dirty. The bindings holding her injured wing flush to her body probably needed to be changed too- they were sooty, but there wasn’t much she could do about it either.

“Can you do my back?” She asks him quietly. “I can shift to your lap to make it easier. I think I can handle that without falling.” He was level with the couch almost, and transferring would be easy if he scooted closer.

He nodded gently. "Take it easy. You can just turn your form, you do not need to move off the couch." He told her gently as he wheeled a little closer.

“The couch is covered in soot.” Toki complained softly. “Pointless to clean up when I’d just be getting gross again.” She says softly. She shifts as he wheels closer, and Toki leans forward to touch the armrests of his chair. She sucks in a soft, hesitant breath, and then pushes herself upright. A quick wash with one of the towels ensures her butt is clean from soot, before she’s turning and carefully setting down on his lap. She kept low, and to her credit, she didn’t get lightheaded in moving.

“See? Nice and easy.” She said, freezing once she was seated in his lap. She didn’t want to hurt him, to she wouldn’t move just in case she made him more uncomfortable. As it was, it was awkward sitting on a lap that only had one leg. She offered back a cloth to him, her tangled mane ruffling nervously. Her free wing twitched slightly. “I didn’t even get dizzy that time.”

He sighed gently and wrapped his arm around her to keep her on his lap as he then began to gently wipe over her back. "You still should not take the risk in the first place, my love..." He told her gently. "Please be more careful until you feel better..."

She sighed softly as he scrubbed her back. She flinched a bit as he touched tender, bruised flesh. Her dislocated wing needed time to heal. “It’s going to take time for me to heal, Pap.” She says quietly. “My magic containers are… horrifyingly empty. I feel like I’m running on fumes.” She sighs. “I’m surprised Tenebris isn’t here. Or my family- human family, that is.” She mumbles gently. “When I’m dressed and settled into bed- maybe after I get something to eat- I’d like for you to fully explain what’s happened. Or just... Call Dad or Asgore, so they can explain if you don’t know how to put it
"... It was a good thing that Toki wasn't looking at Papyrus' face, for as his father was brought up his gaze darkened considerably. " Father and I are not on good terms right now. We are not speaking."

She stiffened in his lap. “What?” She turned to look at him, her eyes wide. She spotted the dark look, and swallowed. Well. “What happened to cause bad blood between you two?” She asks quietly. While he washes her back, she leans her primary arms down and grasps his wheels. After undoing the brakes, she turns to slowly wheel them back to the dining room. Or… her bedroom now, until she could get upstairs with Papyrus.

The kids had laid out her clothes, and now were seated at a television she hadn’t seen before. It seemed they’d set up the game system in her room- perhaps so the familiar sound of the games would rouse her back to awareness. She wasn’t sure.

"He thought performing an atrocity would save your life at the cost of something he knew you would not give up." He answered tartly. “Needless to say, I grew upset at him and quickly dismissed him until he could convince himself otherwise."

Toki frowned. “An atrocity?” She asked, not sure what he had meant. When her back was clean, Toki gave a soft grunt, and wheeled herself and him closer to the bed. She reached for her clothes, and worked on getting dressed once he was done scrubbing her. “What did he suggest, Pap?” She had a sinking feeling what it was- something she’d have never condoned, particularly so far in her pregnancy- but confirmation was better than assumptions. There was that saying about what happens when you assume, after all.

Toki got her underpants and pants on, before carefully transferring to the bed. Then, she worked her shirt on, hissing softly in pain as it pressed in on her wings and sensitive teats. Her body ached- her back was cramping, and she wanted to lay down. She needed to eat though… She couldn’t subside off of nothing, and neither could the children.

"He thought sacrificing the pups would allow you to recover and awaken sooner." There was anger curling in Papyrus' voice; he wanted to snarl at the very thought, but Toki was right in front of him, so he kept his voice steady. "I told him to cast the thought from his mind, but he insisted that it didn't matter; that the world needed you more than he needed the pups..."

Toki’s breath caught in her throat, and the ache in her back escalated. She leaned forward with a soft wheeze, her eyes wide as she stared at him. “He really…" She whispered. “He was wrong.” She murmurs. “I… I am not worth more than five innocent lives. I am one soul- they are five not yet born. The price- the worth- is not even up for debate.” Her primary hands fist so hard on her knees she thought they might bruise. With how her body was right now, the bone probably would anyway.

“I would die over and over again if it meant my children would live. They’ll be his once they leave my body- but here…” Her hands slid up. “Here, I grow them, I protect them… If I had to die to bring them into the world, I would do it.” She met his gaze. “I would. For ours too. I will be reborn, Papyrus- I come back. They don’t.”

She exhaled in a soft whuff, the wind coming out of her sails rapidly, and then she moaned softly, lifting a hand to her skull and letting it drop in her palm. She could feel a stress headache starting to pound. Everything was a mess and nothing was right. “Ugh, my back… I need to have words with Tenebris, my love. He needs to know my standing point on this… But first… I need to know more.” She peeked at him. “Tell me everything. Please.”

He slowly reached out to take her hands. "Are you sure you're strong enough to hear it? I fear that
telling you now will only make things worse.”

“Not telling me will only make them worse, Pap.” She says gently, her secondary hands squeezing his as firmly as she could. Which… amounted to about as hard as Honey could squeeze; so not very hard, frankly. “I’m sitting here, and not knowing is making me stress. I don’t know what’s happening- I feel like I went to sleep, and I woke up in another world. I feel like I’m in a world where just enough things are close to home to make me feel safe, but there are enough things different that it’s setting me off.” Her mane ruffled, and her pupils expanded. She was going to work herself into a right panic again. “I once told you I feared being taken away again.” She says. “I feel like it happened, and I never even knew it. Please. Tell me what’s happened. So much has changed- please, please tell me.”

He looked at her for a short time, before he sighed. "The first night, we spent in fear. We did not know if you were going to wake up in the next morning, nor if there would be a second strike to finally wipe us out... We never went back to our homes. We stayed together. When dawn came... Asgore... He... well...” Papyrus leaned back and sighed softly.

"He invoked law against humankind." It was a simple way of saying it, and yet it was the most painful words on the skeleton's tongue. "Humankind's presence in our village is now controlled, and enforced by every guard with the same lack of mercy that they showed us. We permitted the builders entry, but now they are monitored, and are given a strict schedule and curfew." He couldn't bear to look at her face, simply squeezed her hands and kept his gaze low.

It was for the best that he didn’t see her face- because he would see the steadily blooming horror growing on her face, and the stress lines deepening in her mouth. Toki couldn’t believe Asgore would do that- would police the humans. Putting up a guard, yes- because they used to have a guard force before, when Cruelty had been a menace upon society- but... But policing them, monitoring them, and putting them to a curfew? What did that mean for Todd’s human children? What did that mean for her brother, who lived with Lana? What did that mean for her family, if they ever decided to visit? What about others who had friends outside?

Her soul sped up in her chest, and she was glad the monitors weren’t on her to pick up on it. She could feel the ache increase in her body. But there was more to hear, she knew, so she said nothing, and waited until it was bare for all to hear.

"He put to use the structures left behind from the governmental assault and used them to make enforced checkpoints." He then started once more, without looking up once. "Asgore never once considered separating the innocent children from their kin. That's one thing that gives me faith that our king's heart is not forever darkened." He smiled a little at that, before he sighed.

"But... otherwise... If not monster, builder, or family, they are cast away at the gate. Even our shipments of food stop at the gate... the humans aren't allowed inside. Only the monsters move the shipments.”

"Unfortunately... This does not mean life is any easier for those who are allowed to stay." He hated that he had to say it, but he knew there was nothing worth gaining in hiding the truth from his love. "They are now monitored as well, and must abide by the curfew as well. Though... There is one place where everyone, human and monsters alike, are forbidden from entering. They both risk severe punishment if they were to are to delve past where they’re not welcome."

There was a growing pain in her back, trailing down from her skull. It was spreading along her hips, and made her feel lightheaded and breathless, like all of her muscles were pulling tight at once.

Asgore had shut them off from the world, effectively. He’d shut out visitors, he’d shut out anything
that might have shined light upon the atrocity that the governments of the world had caused. He’d done exactly what the monsters had done centuries ago- he’d segregated them, with the exception for trading and families already there.

Her first lifetime as the true soul of Balance, and she feared that she was already going to fail in keeping the past from repeating itself again.

She hadn’t even gotten started on the humans living in the compound being monitored. The monitoring in itself was… Was just unacceptable. She didn’t know how it was being done, but there were innocent children, and her own blood relatives being monitored. It felt too much like the reminiscent memories of something Cruelty would have done in a past life.

She needed to talk to Asgore. She needed to talk to him, because this needed to be fixed now- this severe punishment for breaking the law, this… This… everything needed to be fixed. This shouldn’t have had to happen- if only she’d been strong enough to wake up sooner, it… it could have been prevented.

She sucked in a shaky breath, and her words came out laced with as much pain as she felt. She needed to lay down, to process this- it was too much on top of everything else, on top of all of the changes, the physical pains… Everything. But she couldn’t stop now. “Where can’t they go?” Is all she says to prompt him to continue.

Papyrus, his eyes still lowered with guilt, lowered his head to press to her hands. "The Memorial Garden..."

The image of that which he spoke of flashed in his mind and he trembled. "In the rage and the hurt... The anguish and wrath bleeding from both his heart and my Father's, Asgore summoned forth a magic none of us knew he possessed. With this magic he brought forth a crown of thorns that sealed away the garden. No one is allowed inside- not even the children."

She audibly choked. The garden that held her memorial and the gravestone for the lost baby had always, always been a place of refuge, and of peace. They walked there all the time, humans and monsters- everyone paid their respects, and everyone had always been free to admire the flowers that had bloomed and the little baby trees that had been growing.

Toki felt anger and rage blossom- rage that this had to happen, anger that it came to this, and above all, utter and total despair that Asgore had given in to those feelings and sealed away such a precious place from… From everyone.

Her breathing hitched, and everything felt like it was rolling into one compiled ball of stress. “I need to talk to Asgore- I need to talk to him right now. Right now, Papyrus. I need-“ She needed to talk to Asgore, she needed to talk to Tenebris, she had to deal with Papyrus’ issue with his Dad, with healing Grillby, and everything was mounting in to one BIG MESS-

A rippling pain crossed her abdomen, starting from her navel and feeling like it was ripping her apart from the inside out. It tore downwards, pulling at her pelvis, and she ripped her hands from her husbands as she looped her arms around her middle. She hunched around her gravid belly with a pained gasp, eyes flinching shut. Her mane bristled, her free wing lifting, as it stole her breath away. This was not like the Braxton hicks she had felt- which to her, merely felt like it had been only hours prior. The pain was fresh in her memory- where that had been a tight, squeezing cramp that had been painful, this was a crippling, rippling agony that left her unable to breathe, unable to move- she could do nothing more than curl up in a defensive ball and whimper while she prayed for it to end.

His eyes lifted as her words cut off, his eyes wide in but a moment. "Toki... What's happening? Are
you alright?" He asked, hesitantly reaching for her stomach where her hands now clung.

She shook like a leaf in the wind, and whined, deep in her throat. His hands weren’t impeded from their travel, but his fingers didn’t get to touch the usual soft, semi-pliable surface of her belly. Under her shirt, and under his fingers, it had tightened and warmed, like her entire uterus had knotted up into one ball of stress. Her knees started to hinge up as best she could- she was curling completely around her belly.

Skylar, ever observant, ran to get his uncle to come help his father with their mother, while Honey saved their game and hovered anxiously near the door to the kitchen.

"Toki... this isn't just a Braxton Hicks, is it?" His voice was starting to waver, as a nervous fear sparked up in his soul.

Chapter End Notes

   Strider Notes: ... Or can it?

   Silverwing: DUN DUN DUNNNN
Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: I can’t say I have any good AN for this. I have an announcement- and ya’ll ain’t gonna like it. We’re going on Hiatus again, and it’s because of me again. I don’t know how long- a month at least, two months at most, maybe three.

My Grandma is dying. As in, she may not be here tomorrow, so ya’ll are getting it now because I don’t know if I’m going to be mentally capable tomorrow to handle anything. I’ve been crying on and off all day with my mom. Grandma’s shutting down and… Yeah. It’s… It’s bad. My family is a mess, and I’m trying to hold everyone together. I’m mom’s pillar, and mom’s holding everyone else together- it’s… Yeah.

I didn't want to just disappear on you guys and... Not post until i was able to. We both try to keep you all in the loop as much as we’re able to, and communication makes for good relationships between readers and writers.

I’m sorry, I’m rambling- I’m trying not to cry again. If there’s errors, I’m sorry, I don’t have it in me to edit right now. I’ll try to reply to comments like normal, but please don’t be upset if it takes me a couple days.

So long story short for those who don’t read my long notes- Grandma is dying. TOTU is hiatus until my family is stable again. Silver is the best because she’s here for me through all of this.

Silverwing Notes: We really appreciate you guys being patient with us, you are all wonderful for coming back to keep reading our story when we update it.

Enjoy the chapter

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Sans, being called to the room by Skylar, quickly looked at Toki before he tensed up. "Oh no..."

He didn’t hesitate to simply shortcut over to her, and where Papyrus had hesitated in fully touching her, Sans’ hands reached out and ghosted over her stomach, feeling how tense it was and recognizing the feel and difference between a practice contraction and a true one.

The bulky skeleton grit his teeth. "Not now... It’s too early…” He hissed between sharp clenched teeth. His cerulean gaze darted to his younger brother. "Help her focus on breathing.” He ordered. “I need to go get Dad." He left no room for discussion as he quickly moved away and fast walked out of the room to take a shortcut to find Tenebris.

Papyrus was upset about the idea of seeing Tenebris again on such short notice, but he knew that in the same his opinion didn't frankly matter right now; not when Toki, and the lives of the children growing inside of her, mattered so much more.

"E-Easy Toki." He slowly set his hands on hers, slowly stroking with his thumbs to try and soothe her. "Please... focus on breathing. Breathe and tell me what you're feeling; is there anything I can do
to help?"

Her breath hitched, and she sounded as if she might cry if she could. She hurt in ways she didn't think were possible with ectoflesh. It felt like being stabbed with Honey's horns all over again while delivering, but all over her belly and back instead. She hardly noticed who's hands were coming and going, until the pain dulled away from sharp knives gutting her, to simply someone dragging them over her skin.

When she could breathe and focus on him, she cast panicked eyes up to look at him. "I... Think I need to lay down." She whispers. "It hurts... Like knives in my uterus and in my back. It felt like someone was splitting me in half from the bellybutton down." Thankfully, the litter were still kicking and moving, but it didn't mean much when they could be born far too early.

Toki shifted, and she was shaky as she tried to lie down, shifting to lay on her side. "I don't think you can help... I... I just want to be held," and told that everything would be okay even though she knew it wasn't okay, it wouldn't be okay until she could make everything better again and get it all sorted out, "but I don't think I can lift you onto the bed." And moving her onto his chair would be a no-no. Toki didn’t have the physical strength to lift him out of the chair and onto the bed.

Skylar and Honey hovered for a time, reunited after Skylar had gone to fetch his Uncle, before the twins decided on going to go watch Solstice while... While the scary things happened to their Momma. They could keep an eye on her- their Uncle Grillby was still sick and still needed to rest after all.

Skylar ushered his sister on first, and hesitated a moment so he could go to his mother’s side. He looked up at her, and to his father, who was bound to the wheelchair since he couldn’t move his leg. Without saying a word, his little eye gave a pointed flare of orange, and then he was gone from the room with a small clap of displaced air.

Toki hummed almost blearily. "I wondered when he would start doing that." She mumbled in discomfort. “He’s so much like you…”

Papyrus watched as Skylar disappeared before he looked at the bed. A shaky breath came from him before his eye lit up in the same shade of orange as his dear son and he used his magic to teleport from his chair to her bed. He landed with a sharp grunt, before he winced and gave a sigh. "Th-that worked...!"

“You seem surprised?” He had landed behind her, and Toki’s back was a mess of agony. She didn’t really want him at her back. So, she shifted, and rolled over onto her left side so she could face him. She took a moment to bundle the blankets between her legs, since he didn’t have a leg on that side, and tried to alleviate some of the pain in her pelvis. She took short, shallow breaths, and tucked her face quietly into her pillow for a moment. Hesitantly, she reached for him. She didn’t demand to scoot into his grasps- simply asked. “Why do you sound surprised? You’ve always been able to teleport- you just usually choose not to, since it was the ‘lazy way’."

"You're not the only one drained of magic, my love." He answered, moving his leg out of the way before he rolled to hug her gently. "I was worried that I would pass out when I landed, if it didn't fail and I passed out anyways..." He sighed, stroking her stomach gently.

Her brow furrowed, and she burrowed her face into his chest. She breathed in his scent. He smelled like him... if he hadn’t washed in a week. It made his smell slightly stale, a little dusty, but still him. He had truly been worried, hadn’t he? As his hand stroked her stomach, she gave a soft whine- her muscles ached, and his hands felt so nice, but also unpleasant as it made all of the stressed parts of her sting. “You were among the numbers giving me magic donations, weren’t you?” She asked him
quietly, fingers lacing through his ribs as she grounded herself on him. Her mane was a little greasy from being properly unwashed, but thankfully she didn’t stink, so when it ruffled up near him she wasn’t too embarrassed. “You silly, silly man… I love you so much. You risk so much for me… Sometimes I wonder if you risk too much.” She looked up at him, and one of her secondary hands came up to stroke over his cheekbone and jaw.

Under his fingers, the litter hesitantly kicked and stirred. Every kick seemed to make her wince a bit- her womb was still tight, still tense, and it was uncomfortable.

"If it meant you would survive, I would do anything..." He spoke gently as he continued to gently stroke and knead her distressed stomach. "Keep breathing..." He then told her, kissing her head.

Toki gave a soft keen as he started to knead her stomach. "Hhhh." She made a soft and pained noise. His kneading made her belly feel like it wanted to tighten again. "Its Hard to breathe." She whispered. "Its like... Its like if someone grabbed your dick and just squeezed as tight as they could. But it's all over my belly."

It didn't take long for his massaging to trigger another contraction. The giving flesh under his hand hardened until it gave no more than the bones she clung to. Toki let out a soft cry, muffled by his shirt. "Oh god. Ow, ow, ow..." She tried to breathe through it, but she struggled to find a rhythm.

The second one came alarmingly fast- and should have been enough to frighten Papyrus. This wasn't calm like the twins had been. His wife was in pain.

It wasn't long before the front door opened and closed, and a pair of heavy footsteps quickly came into the house. It was only a few moments before the long legs of Tenebris stepped into the makeshift bedroom. "Tokiko!" His relief at her being awake was mixed with his obvious anxiety at her being in pain. He quickly made his way to her side and knelt at the side of her bed.

"Father..." Papyrus' voice was tight in his throat, as if straining against a hand that wasn't there. "Please help her. I don’t know what's happening."

"Take it easy, Papyrus. Let me help." The elder spoke gently as he set a hand on Toki's stomach. "Easy now, my daughter." He focused and began to stimulate the muscles in Toki's midsection. As painful as that sounded, to add onto what she was already enduring, he was tweaking deeper into the roots of the upset nerves to aid them in encouraging her muscles to loosen and relax and hopefully cause the contraction to end early. He needed to get them to relax for him to be able to help her. "Toki, what happened?" He asked gently.

It was incredibly painful, and Toki's teeth audibly ground as she grit them. She wasn't able to focus on answering Tenebris- she couldn't even greet him when he arrived- until her contraction began to ebb and her muscles began to ease up.

When she no longer felt like a watermelon with too many rubber-bands tightened around it, she went limp, trying to catch her breath.

"Contractions." She wheezes. "I demanded Papyrus tell me what happened while I was... In my coma." She didn't like those words. Her eyes flicked over to him, dim and exhausted. Toki didn't have the magic to survive a birth right now- and the babies were too young to survive outside of her even with support. Maybe a few weeks from now... "Stress. Everything is wrong." She stresses. "What Asgore did was wrong... Hhhhh, babies please, stop kicking." Her head dropped back down onto her pillow, and she moaned unpleasantly. "I think it all just... Caught up with me." She mumbles. "I've been stressed since I woke up. I think it...” It had triggered an early labor. "Can you stop it?"
Tenebris grit his teeth as he heard that she knew everything, and he swallowed the rough lump in his throat before he nodded gently, "I will do everything I can... and hope it is enough..." With that, the hands on her stomach slid down to her sides and he pressed delicately as he scoped out the best place to do this... it was going to take a fair bit of energy, but it would help greatly in the long run...

"Now... you may need to lift your hips a little... but this might do the trick."

She made a confused noise, and lifted her hips as much as she could. She trembled. "I'll try. I'm not... I woke up very weak... Papyrus and Sans had to help me around to check on Grillby." She explains, nervously clicking her tongue. She could feel his magic invading her body- her empty coils ached to drink it up like a dry plant suddenly thrust into an oasis. She resisted. "You may just have to move me as you need, or ask Sans for help. I don't think I can hold this position for long." On her left side with her hips lifted? Awkward indeed, and hard to hold up.

"Just for a moment was all I needed." He moved his form above hers and anchored his weight more firmly on his knees, before he reached down and took her hips into his hands. "This is perfect." He told her gently before he slowly flexed his fingers. He pressed his fingertips into her back on either side of her spine, massaging gently to find the right location as he eased her shirt up with his tail as to access her bare flesh. "This might sting a bit," he warned once he found where he needed, "but here we go..."

He slowly rubbed her magic flesh as his magic prepared, pooling in his palms before they gathered in his fingertips. Without warning, Tenebris sank his claws into her skin, releasing his magic with the concentration and speed one could compare to that of a viper releasing it's venom with a bite. The magic shot from his fingers into her body, spreading through it like lightning to ease her pains and hopefully slow her early labor to a resounding stop.

Toki let out a pained sound as his claws stabbed into the soft skin of her back. Her breath hitched, her eyes flinching closed- but her muscles began to ease. The pain began to relax in her lower back, and she eased, her breath came easier. "It's... Its not hurting." She gasped softly. "It feels so much better..." It was like someone was washing ice over inflamed muscles. It was heavenly. The spasms, the pain, was ebbing away.

The only thing that hurt was where his claws had popped clean through her skin, proving just how defenseless she was. Her ectoplasmic blood clung to his claws, but she didn't complain.

As she settled slowly, no longer in pain, Tenebris slowly withdrew his fingers and ghosted over them with healing magic. "I'm sorry, darling..." He murmured, though he smiled as she started to relax. "What do you feel?" He asked gently.

"I feel... Better." She murmurs. "Like... Like everything is calming down. There is a lingering ache, but it's not bad and it's going away. Whatever you did..." She breathes a sigh of relief, and her fingers release their death grip on her husband's ribs. "It helps. Will it... Continue to work?" She asks him quietly, her mind clear of pain finally and letting her think. "Or is this something we need to keep doing?"

"We will leave it for now, but I will probably check in on you regularly. If... this is alright with you, Papyrus?" Tenebris glanced to him hesitantly.

The other Gaster didn't immediately reply. He was too busy gasping in discomfort as his ribs were freed at last. As he steadily calmed down, he looked up at Tenebris. "If it keeps her and the children alive, fine." He hissed, half in pain, half from his still bitter feelings at his father.

His bitter hiss reminded her that she needed to have words with him. "I need to have words with you
about that too." She says softly, and fixes him with a firm look. Toki rolls over, giving Papyrus an apologetic touch and pressing her pained wing against his chest as a way to say 'i didn't mean to hurt you'. Once she was facing Tenebris, she gives him an exhausted but firm stare.

"Tenebris Gaster." She uses his full name that she knows, and exhales sharply. "I'm disappointed in you. I'm not angry, not anymore, but I'm disappointed. You know me very well by now, I think. I would die for any of my children. While they're being grown in my body, they're mine to protect and give my life for- and I would have." She says firmly. "I am doomed to an eternal damnation of life, death, and rebirth. Any children I create only get one life. Lets do our best to make sure they get to live to see it and grow as old as Asgore, okay?"

She didn't yell, she didn't shout- but she spoke with the disappointment of a mother who had been extremely let down by a beloved family member. Was that worse? Probably. "For these children or any children hereafter, there is no question about the value of life. Theirs is the one you should choose to preserve and save, every time. Any mother worth their salt would tell you the same."

She then sighed. "Thank you for helping me though. For helping us." Her hand rested on her belly, and she exhaled tiredly. "I fear we may have lost them if you hadn't known what to do... And I would have had to reload to try and prevent it." She mumbles softly.

Tenebris took her words with silence, his head low as he was scolded but lifting just slightly when she thanked him... He nodded slowly in reply before he smiled weakly. "I’m sorry, Toki..." He spoke softly. "I wanted to make sure you survived. I hadn’t remembered just how omnipotent your existence is now..."

She gives him a dry smile. “I’ve told you many times just how omnipotent it is, but sometimes I wonder if you really listen to what I say. And my existence isn’t even omnipotent, really. I can quite easily die- I’m essentially a one-time use bomb. If you guys hadn’t been there, I’d have gone off and there’d have been no putting me back together again. You’d have had to wait until I was old enough to make contact with you.” She comments quietly.

Toki shakes her head and sighs. “That’s beside the point though.” She mumbles. “If I’m no longer at risk of going into labor... I need to have words with Asgore about his actions.” No, she didn’t- her body was screaming for her to consume some nourishment to replace lost magic, and for her to rest. Her mind was what was demanding her to act- before anything could get any worse. Her body’s physical demands were growing louder though, and the stubbornness of her mind wasn’t going to win over it.

She was doing too much, too soon. She had just woken up. She needed rest.

"You still are at risk."

"You're still at risk!"

Papyrus and Tenebris had spoken at the same time, and they both cast each other a look- Papyrus a surprisingly vehement one to his father, and Tenebris a guilty one at seeing his son’s temper.

His son can forgive many things, but suggesting what he had… Well, he’d crossed a line, even with his heart in the right place...

"You need to rest until you’ve built up enough magic to move without anyone's help, and from seeing Grillbert awake, I know you have gone and used your venom stores on him," Tenebris spoke sternly, now back into his doctor mode.
Toki rolled her eye lights visibly. Her venom did him more good than it did her. She didn't sass him though, knowing he meant well.

"What do you suggest I do to... Keep that risk down? I still need to be able to get up and do things. I have to cook to feed my husband, my kids, and myself. I love Sans, but I can't eat hot dogs and burgers every day until I can walk again. Or frozen pizzas." She eyed Sans, recalling the time he'd made them a frozen pizza shortly after her first heat.

Sans made a slight face as she put a jab on his cooking and he huffed. "It's not that bad anymore." He commented quietly with a huff.

Toki could only offer a slightly bemused smile to her brother in law for her jibe to his cooking. She knew he was better, but he was no chef. He had married one after all.

She sighed and then continued. "Until you and Papyrus can work out your differences peacefully... I don't foresee you being able to be here besides medical checkups." She stared at him flatly. "What do you suggest we do, Dad? I'd call on my brothers to help, but..." Her brows furrowed. "I don’t want any more of my human family to be marked and tracked. I refuse."

"I want you to take it easy," Tenebris answered. "Preventing another labor does not mean you're stuck on bed rest... simply stay down until you can get your feet under you and stay on them. At no time before do I want you straining yourself..." He then growled quietly and sighed, sitting on the floor and resting his fists on his knees. "And if it means I can take care of you as a proper doctor does, then Papyrus and I will talk out our differences here and now." He insisted.

"If it means I can take proper care of you, my sons, and my in-laws all the same..." though Tenebris then stopped, "Tokiko, your family is among the delicate exception of those we track, your family is forever welcome in the land once your own... Did..." He then looked up at Papyrus, who looked a little guilty.

It was obvious that he hadn't known that and hadn't delivered such information to Toki.

Her gaze settled on Tenebris and she nodded slowly, her brows furrowing. "So rest until I can walk under my own power, basically." She says lightly. "Avoid stress... Which is going to be pretty damn hard given the state of the village right now. And of all of you. At least I've got a Switch to entertain me." She sighs softly.

"I think it would be best if you two talked. If you can't at least be civil in each other's company, I'm going to end up stressing more because I worry for you both." She shifted on the bed, and settled onto her back, a soft pained hiss leaving her as she lay on her healing wing.

"He left that out, yes." She sighed roughly. "But it doesn't matter. My blood might not be marked, but others are. Felix. Rosie. Their grandparents from Todd and Vikki." Crazy woman she might have been, her parents were absolutely splendid people. Sometimes the apple could fall far from the tree. "It is not an okay system and I will be talking to Asgore just as soon as I am able." She closed her eyes and exhaled. "But I have to rest first. Rest, and eat so I'm not taking other's magic to fill my stores."

Tenebris had to suppose that this was agreeable enough. At least she was staying down long enough to recover some of her health. All other matters were severe indeed, but not as imperative as her health was. He gave a small nod to her demands before he looked up at Papyrus.

The younger man had since wrapped his arms around his wife, closing his eyes as he sighed and relaxed at hearing she would settle until she regained her strength.
Toki rubbed her husband’s hands gently, her fingers stroking his arms as they looped around her gravid belly. She flicked her eyes to Sans. “Sans?” She asks softly. “Could I have some cocoa, if it wouldn’t bother you too much? You’re very good at making it, and while I do need solid food to fuel my body, chocolate is food for the soul. I think your Dad and your brother could use some tea for their chat too.” She gave her husband a pointed tug on his pinky finger. She didn’t pull hard enough to yank his finger off, but she let him know that exhaustion or no, they needed to come to some form of agreement.

She glanced at them again. “Unless this is something you’d be more comfortable without me here for… if that’s the case, I’ll steal my husband’s… wheelchair…” She still couldn’t believe he was paralyzed, truly. It was… hard to swallow. “And go with Sans myself. I’ve laid in this bed for a week. Sitting in a chair with wheels won’t kill me.” And most importantly, it wasn’t standing- and they’d get privacy to have their talk.

"I suppose the use of a wheelchair counts as taking it easy while still getting around." Tenebris gave a small nod. "Very well. Go ahead. While your presence is not something we would stop if you wished to stay and rest, your utilization of the able equipment around you is commendable and we will not stop you if cocoa is what you wish."

Sans looked at Toki as she called to him and he gave a smile, straightening up to head to the kitchen. "No problem, Toki." He responded. "I'll see you in there, then."

Toki gives Sans a nod, and waits until he disappears, before shifting to sit upright. She exhales, and her limbs tremble. “I don’t think I can transfer again on my own.” She admits, feeling shame rise in her chest. “I’d like to go get cocoa though. Maybe see if I can badger your son into helping me cook something, or at least making a sandwich. He can’t burn a sandwich, after all.” She looks at her husband, and then at Tenebris. “If I come back in here to find you at each other’s throats, I will bite one of you. I’m not joking.” She clicks her teeth. “I might not bite very high, but your ankles are at risk. Omnom. Now… Help? Please?” She held out a hand and gave Tenebris a silent plea to lift her into the wheelchair. She wasn’t heavy- not for a monster of his size.

"We won’t get into it that badly, I promise." Tenebris took the opportunity to do more than just move Toki. Once she was brought into his arms, he took a good minute to hug out his emotions, giving quiet whines as he practically held her like she was a cracked china-plate. "I’m so glad you’re okay, darling Tokiko." He purred quietly after he felt better enough to let her go and be carefully put down onto the seat of the wheelchair.

She’d endured his cling with as much grace as she could, seeing as she was basically used for a pregnant-stress doll, minus the squeezing and the stress on her part. She simply patted his arm and cooed to him softly until he could let her go. Once she was situated in her husband’s chair, she gave him a warm smile. “I’m not okay.” She says softly. “Not yet. I don’t think any of us are, really. But… we’ll heal together.” She thrums soothingly to him and then rolls her way into the kitchen. It takes more energy than it did to roll her and Papyrus to the bed, and she muses that she’s doing too much once more.

Nothing to be done for it though- she was already here and moving around. Toki wheeled to the table and slumped against it as she watched Sans putter at her countertop. “So… how many hugs do I have to give you in order to beg a sandwich from you alongside that heavenly cocoa? I haven’t eaten solid food in a week. Momma-Toki is a hungry-hungry-hippo.”

He chuckled quietly. "Don’t even sweat the hugs… Just go ahead and tell me what you're craving right now, and you'll get whatever I can make of it.”

“I wasn’t joking about the hugs- shit, I’d give a blowjob for a Twinkie at this point, and I don’t even
like Twinkies.” Toki stared at his back quietly. “Brother, my brother- what I’m craving, you don’t have the cooking skill for.” She assures him. “So, a middle ground. Do you wanna make me a *saaandwiiiiich?* It doesn’t have to be a *saaandwiiiiich.*” She teasingly sing-songed at him, hoping to get the desired laughs from him. They both had a dislike for the ovie, but could appreciate using the meme on each other. He needed more smiles- particularly after this week.

That got a groan from Sans, his face pressing into his palm before he began to laugh quietly. "*Oh-kay,* *fiiiiiiine.*" He sang-song his reply after a few moments of some hearty chuckles.

She grinned successfully against her folded primary arms, and let her secondary arms slip down to massage her stomach while she chuckled with him. She closed her eyes, breathing softly as she rested and listened to him move around, feeling the litter shifting and kicking inside her. They weren’t happy about their almost forced-eviction notice and were letting her know. “It’s good to hear you laugh again.” She says softly. “It’s something normal.” She sighs, her breath fogging up the table. “Thank you. For the laugh- and the meal.”

"No problem, Toki." He began to collect everything he would need to make her a meal. It only took him five minutes or so- maybe six if he was really honest, before he had a plate with a sandwich and a warm mug of cocoa to set down in front of her. "Ta-da!” He hummed gently.

In the minutes that he’d taken to prepare her a meal, Toki was ashamed to say she’d ended up dozing, face down on the table. The sound of the plate and mug being set down startled her awake again, and she blearily blinked her eyes open to give him a thankful grin. "Mmm, thank you. It smells delicious." Her nose focused in on the cocoa, and she scooted the mug closer to take a slow sip. Hot chocolaty goodness slipped down her throat, tasting like the nectar of the gods itself.

“Mmm…” She sighs, pleased, and then straightens to lift her sandwich up. She takes a bite, and then blinks, pulling back to eye-ball what’s in it. “Well,” she says around a bite of bread, sauces, and what is definitely not bologna, “that’s definitely not lunch meat. It’s still good though.” Proving so, she gobbled down the first bite, and set in for another, feeling ravenous.

He gave her a soft smile. "I had a thought about what might do your cravings a favor, so I did a little bit of a meat switch. Hope you don’t mind.” He mentioned as he sat down across from Toki with his own mug in hand. From there, he could focus on her, as well as see Tenebris and Papyrus talking.

That was a good thing about his family... They could have the most ruthless of fights, and yet love for family always brought peace in the end. It was... reassuring.

Toki was too tired to pay attention to both conversations, so she had to choose the one most immediate to her needs. Besides- her husband had some serious anger over Tenebris considering attempting to abort the litter if it might save her. It wasn't something she wanted to see or really focus on hearing.

So instead, she snarfed down her sandwich like it was the only food she’d had in a week- *oh ho, that’s right, it was* and gave Sans her full attention. Once she’d scarfed the whole thing down and licked her finger bones completely spotless of any sauces and juices from the deliciously moist sandwich, she sat back to cradle the hot cocoa mug to her chest and sip at it.

"Good choice on the raw cutlets." She hums approvingly. "My body is going to need a lot of nutrition to stock up on what I lost. I might even need to see if eating some of my stored up honey might help.” She sighs. "I need to get back up to healthy levels before the litter decides to come though." She’d probably not make it through delivery otherwise. "Mmm..." She sips her cocoa, and inhales the fragrant steam it lets off. "So... What was that black thing that’s running around the house? Kinda looks like if a charcoal blob grew legs and misty-wispy things and started walking..."
Glad you thought so." He answered with a grin, before he looked to said creature as it began to sit in Tenebris' lap. "That’s Smudge. Pop's new pet voidling." He answered, "Turns out that’s what was whatever was in the jar... And it really likes him."

"Huh." She sips her cocoa and thumps. "So when that woman plugged blobby into the machine, blobby changed…" She mused. "I guess the whole experience was good for something then. This 'Smudge' also apparently likes to sleep on coma patients. Gracie booted him off when she needed to announce to the world how happy she was that I was awake, and then knead my boobs. She needs her claws tipped, or she’s gonna poke holes in me next time. I’m glad Dad has a pet now though. However… Why was Smudge here, and not with him since he wasn’t allowed over?"

"I ‘unno. Probably because it wasn’t Smudge in trouble." He shrugged. "He got in one day and Pap just let him stay."

"Oh." Toki hummed thoughtfully. "Well, he’s cute at least, for a little dust mote. Any idea why he’d want to stay? Hopefully not just… sitting on me the whole time." She wondered if Smudge had been what had guided her back, or at least helped her return to consciousness after Phase told her not to press the button.

"True... maybe that's why he was so quick to take vigilance over you while you slept." Sans hummed thoughtfully, "Though as to his motive, i am as clueless as you."

"Maybe?" She gives a tired shrug, and sips her cocoa. She notes with almost a sad trill that it’s nearly empty- but it’s for the best. If she takes in any more food, she’d probably make herself sick. “It would be one explanation. Mmm... Hey, Sans? Do you know where my Switch and games got to? I don’t want to have to hunt for it later. If I’m going to be mostly bed-bound until my magic is up enough for me to get around without riding in… Pap’s lap everywhere… I want to be able to do something with myself. My phone too- oh. Hm.” She frowns. “I wonder if the heat fried it…” She’d had it in her purse, and it had been in his car- but she had… well, heated the air hot enough to melt the computers.

She didn’t want to think about how many monsters’ phones she ruined.

"Ah... We got lucky. The car was far away enough that the car only got warm but it didn't cook what was inside." He explained. "We brought everything inside and set it up in your room to keep the children distracted."

She nods. “They did have two new consoles to play- but from what I saw as a quick glance over, they haven’t done much playing. They seem... very timid around Papyrus.” She frowns. “I’m going to need to work on that.” She exhales softly, and finishes her drink. “But not now.” Setting the mug down, she leans back in the wheelchair and rests her hands on her belly. Now that her stomach was full, she felt… utterly exhausted. Her mind was awake, but her body was dragging and aching for rest and sleep.

“Mm... I definitely am going to want the switch set to hand-held mode.” She wiggles her fingers against her belly, stroking over her gravid swell as it shifts under her shirt. Her swollen teats were sore, but the shirt was thankfully soft. “The kids are gonna be clingy, and want to be close most of the day- which is just fine. I really don’t want them far. Not after…” Not after those people had tried to take them. Knowing her kids were in the same house was enough for her right now. “Anyway. They’ll be taking the television most likely.”

He nodded in understanding, before he sighed. "I know why they're so, well... unsettled around Pap.
If I don’t tell you, I don’t think you’d really get an answer anywhere else..."

She tilted her head and her gaze sharpened, looking at him with the expectant and protective ferocity of a mother bear. "Tell me. Please." Her soft ‘please is the only thing that keeps it from being an outright demand. His words made her feel paranoid- and as much as she didn’t want to, her thoughts were racing to dark places for what could have happened.

"We were all in a bad place mentally while we were recovering. Pops was having some time with Pap, healing him where he could, numbing the rest where he couldn’t, y’know. From what I learned, they had done some talking that quickly went to shit..."

"There... How do you feel?" Tenebris asked him quietly.

"I cannot feel my legs... or my hips..." Papyrus sighed. He didn’t seem comfortable with it, but no feeling was better than complete agony. "Thank you, Father...."

"Of course..."

The younger skeleton didn’t say anything more, his gaze drifting away and towards his slumbering bride. "..."

"Papyrus... My son, I was thinking... About Toki "

The younger monster didn’t hesitate to butt in, intruding upon his sentence with three simple words. "She’s stable, right?"

"As stable as she can be in her condition, yes... But... I want to propose something that... it would allow her to recover faster... at a price..."

Papyrus’ gaze slid back to him finally, and he stated at him with an almost exhausted flatness. "What price do you speak of, Father?"

"I... I’ve been wondering that if Toki was to no longer be tied to the responsibility of growing the litter within her, if she would wake s-"

Tenebris had not gotten the chance to react, or even finish his sentence, before Papyrus had suddenly lunged downward, biting hard into the older male’s shoulder as bones summoned, one of them gazing his father’s head and tearing a pain filled howl from Tenebris. Quickly Papyrus was grabbed and pried off as Tenebris quickly made some distance between them.

With that distance, the doctor could see his son’s unbridled rage bubbling up where there had nothing but a blank slate almost mere moments before.

"I’ll take care of my wife without your help, but if you come close to her after you dare suggest such a thing, then I will kill you myself!"

"Papyrus! You must understand why I would suggest-!" Tenebris had barely gotten his share in before the other fired another round of bones at him, lunging out of his chair only to hit the ground hard with a snarl of pain.

"GET OUT!" Papyrus' howl was of anger and pain all wrapped in one, and he fired a final round at his father that had him quickly making a break for the door.
Tenebris dodged the final flurry of attacks before he was gone, leaving Papyrus to breath roughly and furiously as he sank his fingertips into the floor

"Daddy?"

He hadn't heard the children come in. Almost immediately Papyrus' fire went out and he looked at Honey and Skylar, who were staring on with fear "Pups... please... come help your father back to his chair..."
charcoal, ignition fluid, and ketchup. It wasn't a flattering mix. "I'm glad I'm awake too." She says softly. "So that's the plan. To help him get better, we get Grillby and me better. I have a lot of healing I need to do... My wing needs to heal, and my magic needs to recover so I can stand up without feeling faint... I also need to not feel so tired..." She sighs.

"You may need to talk to your dad about getting some syringes and vials that are immune to strong acidic venom, and then you can help with Grillby recovering. I don't think it's wise for me to be getting up and down so often, and he's gonna need multiple doses a day. So long as you move quick with the venom after I give it to you, you can help him. We just have to be careful that I don't run out too fast. I don't know how fast I'll produce it at this rate." Honestly, she wasn't sure how much magic it would drain to make venom. Her body was trying to make magic, but she had a lot of things that were draining it.

He nodded in understanding. "I'll stoke the charcoals a little hotter for him until your next batch is ready." He rumbled, before he turned as the doorbell went off. "Huh? Stay here." Sans straightened up before he started for the door.
Chapter 144

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: It’s good to be back. Thank you for being patient with us— I lost my grandma the same day I updated that chapter, so it was… rough. It didn’t help that the holidays loomed ahead, and we always did holidays at Grandma’s house. So… Thank you for being patient. I’m sorry we do hiatus so often, but I’m glad you trust us all enough to know we ALWAYS come back.

On this note, we’re back on a non-sunday because, well… Good news. Totu has finally reached it’s conclusion. Silver and I have to discuss our posting schedule, but it’s possible we may go with a two-posts a week like the way TOTU used to be.

I’d like to hear your input for our posting habits— please, leave a comment with your preference in posting. Once a week, or twice a week.

Silverwing Notes: AN: I had fun trying to come up with a traditional Asian breakfast, because my loony self kept forgetting that these guys reside in an Asian location so it’s supposed to be that rather than our western cuisine

Whee. Enjoy the chapter

Toki watched him go for the door, and then casually rolled backwards. She took her mug and plate to the sink, feeling at least somewhat useful for getting her dishes in the sink. Once she’d ‘cleaned up’ for herself, she ‘cleaned up’ his mug too, before parking at the door way to the dining room where she could see her switch case on a box.

It looked like the switch hadn’t been set up despite what Sans had said— which was fine, she didn’t have the gumption to take it apart.

She settled the portable case in her lap, and glanced up, waiting either for Sans to come back from the door- and to give her a peek at who was there- or for Papyrus and Tenebris to let her know it was alright for her to come back and get settled in bed.

It seems both Father and Son had finished their discussion as they had given a firm shake of each other’s hands before Tenebris went to the door as well.

Standing outside was Todd and his children, as well as Kon and Lana, Fuku, and Bo.

"Hey Sans, Tenebris.” Todd greeted with a smile. "We all got together to make you guys some meals, and give some magic to Toki. Has she woken up yet?” He asked.

"Heh… you guys aren’t gonna believe this..."
Toki was able to hear a commotion coming from the front door, most of which being repeated calling out of her name from multiple voices.

Toki’s interest was grabbed as the voices raised, and her name was called. She could hear a few she recognized quite well- Todd, Rosie, Felix, her brother, the wooly duo, Lana and Bo- and then many more rising up with it.

Toki rolled into what was now her room, and headed over to the bed instead of going to the door. She didn’t have the energy to pacify the masses, and she didn’t want them to excite her too much and put her at risk of labor again.

So she just rolled over to her husband's side, abandoning the two elder Gasters to keeping the mob from flooding her home. "So." She mumbles softly, settling at his side and reaching out to take his hand. She set her Switch case on the bedside table, and realized this was a heavily juxtaposed view- him on the bed, her in the chair. "It sounds like quite the party going on out there... I'd go join, but I think I'm a little tired. Got room for one more?" She asks him almost timidly. With a bit of food in her system, she was thinking maybe she could get on the bed on her own. Maybe.

But that depended on if he was in the mood for company after his talk with his father.

It was when Toki asked to join Papyrus on the bed did he grow active, cooing as he reached up to collect his dearly loved wife. "Come back to my arms, my beloved wife~" He cooed happily.

The mob at the front seemed to be well enough controlled by Tenebris. The elder beast had squared his shoulders and he spoke with a firm sharpness that kept them from trying to squirm past them. "Yes, Toki is awake, but she is JUST awakening. She's weak and she does not need more stimulation than necessary." He decreed. His glance went to the fox, his children, and then to the little green fire elemental. "Todd, you and the children may come in. Fuku, your father will do well with your fire magic until Toki recovers to properly give him venom. As for the rest of you... we do not want to overwhelm her, or Papyrus. I'm sure you understand..."

The collective of monsters seemed to nod. Multiple dishes of food and other goodies laden with magic to help replenish lost stores were placed into the arms of those granted entrance though.

Even the children- poor Rosie, with her little marker bracelet, was weighted down with trays up on trays of food to help those inside.

Those welcome slipped under Tenebris' arms, just in time for there to be a loud clatter and a soft feminine curse from the dining room turned bedroom.

In Toki's attempt to transfer to the bed on her own, she had forgotten to lock the wheels on the wheelchair, and it had rolled out from under her, preventing her from simply sitting back down. She'd made it half way onto the bed, before her legs had given out, and she'd semi-slid to the floor. She was on her knees, looking no worse for the wear besides some jostling and perhaps some bruised kneecaps and pride.

The small fox HTM had his arms full, and was a little too small to lift her off the ground, but Sans or Tenebris were not.

Hearing the crash and clatter, Tenebris turned to go see what happened. As he did, Sans respectfully bowed to the others who Tenebris had dismissed, giving them a respectful farewell before he too turned to go check on Toki.

"Fallen from your chair, dear girl? You must have forgotten to lock your wheels." The elder male
teased lightly as he gently collected Toki from the floor to gently settle her beside her beloved husband on the bed.

Toki flushed as she was lifted back onto the bed. "To my credit, I've never had to use a wheelchair honestly." She says levelly as she gets comfortable on her back. She sees Todd and his kids tromping to the kitchen with armloads of food, and hums thoughtfully. Well, no one needed to cook for a while. "The only time I used one was when I was a teenager messing around at the doctors with my brothers. So... Yeah."

She settled on her back, sighing quietly as she cuddled into Papyrus' arms. "So... It looks like some of the swarm got in." She hums. Her hands find her belly, and she strokes the rotund surface gently, grunting softly as the slightly aching surface is peppered with kicks. “Mm… So long as Todd and the kids don’t mind if I get some rest, that’s fine. I’m… tired.” She admits quietly. “I ache- my wing hurts like a son of a gun- and I’m tired.” Her mane ruffled, single free wing twitching under the confines of her body. The bound one didn’t budge in its bindings, but it was throbbing painfully. Oh how she wished they had full body painkillers that pregnant monsters could use.

It was with that complaint that Todd perked up in the Kitchen. "Oh, your wing is still hurt?" Once he was free of his armful, he came over to her side and gave her a warm smile. "I took some time to learn wing anatomy and how to treat it." He told her warmly. "Might I have a go at seeing if I can heal it a little bit?"

She watches him and gives a warm nod. "Yeah. During the whole... Incident last week, one of the men handling me was a little rough. I think he was trying to tear my wing off, but it just dislocated instead." She shifts, and gives a soft grunt. "I don't mind if you give it a go. Just... Be gentle please. It hurts."

With some effort, she rolled onto her side. Her belly was tucked safely into Papyrus' abdominal cavity, and she cuddled close as her back and bound wing were offered up. "This is the best I can do right now. I'm a little too tired to try and get back in the chair."

Rosie made her way out and patted Toki's foot. "It's okay. Daddy's worked with people who can't move before." She gives her a sunny smile. "It's good to see you up again! Felix and I are gonna go play with Skylar and Honey, but we both did miss you while you were sleeping."

Toki gave the sweet girl a warm smile. "Thank you, sweetheart." Once the two kids had left the room, filing into Grillby's 'room' with the other kids and Fuku, Toki sighed softly and glanced back to Todd, letting him know he had her full attention for orders and the like.

Todd gave a considerate nod as he got to work.

Papyrus wrapped his arms around his beloved and nuzzled closer. "My beloved..." He whispered, before he sighed quietly and nuzzled her fur. It was slightly oily from not having been properly washed all week, but it was still soft and it smelled like her. The only problem was… "Oh my love... You're so cold..."

Papyrus hated it.

She said it herself, one time so long ago that it felt like an entire lifetime had gone past.

*She was always warm.*

But she wasn't now.

Toki's arms wrapped around him, and held him close. While her body might have been lacking in
physical warmth, the emotional warmth was not. So in a way, she was still always warm- just not in
the way they were expecting.

"I know." She grimaces. "It's like that time I gave myself Magi-drain... I was cold then too. But this
is deeper than that- and will take longer to recover." Her mane ruffled as Todd worked on her wings,
and Toki's dim green pinpricks focused on her husband. "I'll recover in time. We both will." She
assures him warmly, pressing a motherly kiss to his brow.

He wanted so much to smile at her words, and yet he couldn't find it. His smile never came as he
simply pressed a kiss to her chin. "Indeed we will, my dear." He murmured, though the second half
of that statement went unasked.

Her secondary hands cradled his cheeks, and she gave him a warm look. He didn't smile, not even a
twitch, but that was okay. She could smile for him. Her forehead came down to rest against his, her
scar rubbing against his smooth brow. Toki peppered him with soft, tender kisses. "I just need you to
hang on for me, okay?" She whispers. "For me, for our kids, for your brothers, your dad, for your
oodles and oodles of in-laws. We'll all make strides to get better together." Her tiny, fragile thumbs
massaged his cheeks. "I know we will. And- ow." Whatever else she was going to say derailed as
Todd fiddled with something on her wing.

He had grown concerned when she exclaimed her pain, before he sighed and gently pressed a couple
kisses to her teeth. "Y-Yes... Of course..." He murmured, before glancing over at Todd, "Hey, is
everything okay?" he asked

"Yes. I believe I found what I need to set her wing properly... Though this may hurt a bit, I am going
to be able to pop it more comfortably into place." The fox answered with a small smile. "What do
you think, Miss Tokiko?"

"More properly into place?" She blinked, and then glanced to Tenebris. She squinted at him. "You
set it without properly knowing how? Shame on you." She teases. "Alright though. Go for it. It's not
like it's going to feel any better if it heals improperly." Toki’s mane tensed in preparation, and she
sucked in a breath, holding it and getting ready for the sharp sting she knew would be coming. He’d
have to re-dislocate it before he could fix it, after all. She only hoped he was physically strong
enough to do it, or Tenebris would have to do it- and hopefully not rip it clean off.

Tenebris folded his arms. "I did what I could, but I do not often treat insect based wings. Or wings in
general." He huffed.

Todd looked at Toki, before he exhaled slowly. If he did this right, it wouldn't fully dislocate the
wing, but would simply jerk it slightly out of place before it immediately could sink back into place
on it's own. He placed his hands in the proper places as shown by the books, and slightly squeezed,
before he jerked his wrist and pushed into her back.

The following sound was a nasty crack and a pop, but the momentary pain would hopefully follow
with inexpressible relief for Toki as the wing was put back into place.

The pain was indeed shocking- her mouth slid open, and she might have taken a bite of Papyrus’
shirt to muffle her sounds of pain. It didn’t last long, though it did ache even after. The relief that
came was worth the pain, and she relaxed into her husband’s arms, her breath hissing through her
mouthful of his shirt. She spat it out, and gave a soft groan. “Ow... but that feels much better.” She
mumbles. “How long until it’ll fully heal?”

"With the occasional ice pack? Not long at all." Was Todd's answer, a smile on his face. "Way to
hang in there."
“Ice pack.” That’s where Toki balked. “But that’s… cold.” She nearly whined. She was cold as it was- she didn’t want to be colder. “And yeah- it wasn’t as painful as earlier. Tenebris had to stop me from going into labor. Now that was painful.” Her belly twinged as if remembering, and she sighed, snuggling deeper into her husband and into the blankets she was under. “Would a heating pad work instead to help my wing recover?” She asks, a bit of hope in her voice, though she knew it probably wouldn’t. Heat helped pain, not swelling.

"The heat won’t help with the swelling, but it might relax your joint a little more, so… whichever you think works best." He answered. "You’ll be able to lay on it less painfully now." He explained.

“Thank you.” Toki gave him an honestly thankful smile over her shoulder. “I think I’ll stick with heat for now. I’m really… cold.” She says awkwardly. “And I’m alright on my side. Being on my back for too long makes my legs numb- the litter are too big for it. Pregnancy, y’know.” She waves one of her secondary hands idly. “It makes everything awkward.” The only thing she could use for comfort at this point would be a pillow between her thighs.

“Mmmn… A heating pad would be nice though- Or a heating blanket. I don’t think I’ve got one though- not since the magically enchanted ones from Muffet. Man, it feels like we got those a lifetime ago... I don’t know if they survived the firebombs- I wasn’t the one who packed them.” She sighs softly. “Oh well. It’s alright. I think I’ll just get some sleep, if you guys don’t mind giving me and Papy some time to rest. Unless there’s more things you need to check up on now that I’m awake and not writhing in labor-induced agony, or being stubbornly squirrely?”

"As long as your wing is comfortable, we should be good. I’ll talk to Tenebris and see if I can leave him with any instructions. As for a heated blanket, I think I have a spare in one of my closet cabinets. I can bring it over next chance I get." Todd offered kindly.

Toki nodded softly. "That would be greatly appreciated, thank you." She mumbles gently. She snuggles closer and sighs. "I don't mind if the kids come in to game, but can you ask them to keep the noise down? I need to sleep- and I'm not in a coma any more. Noise will definitely wake me up.” She gives a morose chuckle, and proceeds to practically burrow into her husband and the blankets to try and warm up and get some rest.

She was starting to shiver now that she wasn't moving much.

Her suggestion to go to sleep again had Papyrus grunting as he grew slightly more stressed. "Sleep... Are you sure?" He asked her quietly.

"Getting some rest would be very wise for Toki." Tenebris agreed, though his gaze softened as he looked towards his son and watched the worry in his gaze. "She’ll be okay, son.”

"Mhmm." She closes her sockets with a soft sigh against his chest. "I'll be okay, Papy. We both need some rest." She mumbles. "It's been a long... Long week for us all. Today we've made the first steps to recovery. Speaking of... Dad?" She called to Tenebris. "If Grillby needs venom, don't be afraid of waking me. I can put some in a..." She shivered and yawned at the same time, her bones making an eerie rattling noise, "in a vial for you. Now... Mmm... You're warm, Papy. You feel so nice..."

When she called him 'Dad' once more, Tenebris smiled in relief that their relationship wasn’t entirely ruined, before he sighed gently and gave a firm not. "Yes, of course... I will let you know if it is so needed for Grillby." He told her. "Until then, I'll go and get you something to feel comfortable.”

“Something to feel comfortable?” She made a curious buzz. That was enough to get her to come out of her ‘burrow’ and peek out at him. “… More pillows and blankets would be nice if you’re gonna raid my bedroom.” She wanted a pillow between her thighs. Normally she'd use her husband, but…
Well… He was down a leg.

"Trust me, I know just the thing." Tenebris winked at her before he stepped out.

He came back after a little while with an armful of tributes. He started getting her comfortable with a plush pillow between her legs, a soft blanket around her back, and on top of them…

"I Treated this myself, my dear. Tell me how it feels." He flipped the last of it over, before he draped over them a soft, plush blanket.

It was... fluffy?

No.

It was woolly.

"Father, is this your sheep pelt?" Papyrus asked.

Tenebris nodded at that before he smiled at them both.

Toki gave a small and wry smile, and basked in the weight of all the blankets. The pelt was heavy and fluffy, but had obviously been washed. With Tenebris’ sensitive nose, it made sense for it to be cleaned. It smelled like lavender oil, and she felt her sockets drooping as the scent forcibly relaxed her body more.

“It’s warm.” She lets out a soft, pleased moan. The pillow between her thighs was helping her comfort astronomically skyrocket, and the blankets were helping to keep what little body heat she had trapped inside. She was warming up splendidly. “Mmm.” “It’s so nice~ But we shouldn’t let Lana see it.” She mumbles sleepily, her words starting to slur as comfort won out over having a decent conversation. “’S probably offensive to sheep monsters, n’ I like Lana. She’s a good crochet teacher."

"On the contrary, my dear girl, she helped me preserve it and wash it safely with oils to make it smell nice." Tenebris laughed gently.

"Oh." Toki seems to make a surprised sort of buzz, and shivers again as she tucks more firmly against Papyrus. "Mkay. She's different then. S'good."

He is graced with a sleepy, thankful yawn, as Toki settles to sleep, her bones rattling in a muffled manner as she shivers under the covers. There was a green flush just faintly dusting her cheekbones, reminiscent of her first time having Magi-drain. It seemed now that she simply had an extreme case of it- severely extreme.

Her breathing evened out, and she went to sleep against him, exhaustion winning out against her desire to talk to her family.

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Toki was aware of a few things when she woke with a start. First, was an eerie feeling of something making her bones crawl. She wasn’t sure what it was- but when she shivered, she thought perhaps it was because she was still cold when she woke up. Her awareness grew to include the three warm blobs on her feet, two of them purring and one of them making a sleepy little warbling noise. That
was the warmest things she could feel, sadly.

The resting skelebest next noticed how quiet it was. She couldn’t hear anything save the animals and the breathing of her and her husband. When she focused, she could hear the rumbling snores of Sans upstairs. Her children were probably in bed.

It was probably late- or very early.

The next thing the skelebest was aware of was that she hadn't moved the entire time she slept, save soft twitches of her hands and wings. She was stiff and sore from not moving. As she nuzzled against the bones of her forearm, she noticed her face was a warm spot too.

Bones of her arm...? Wait, where was...?

Toki gave a sleepy sound, and dim green eyes opened. Her cold bones were faintly flushed a fevered green along her cheekbones. Her pin pricks spotted a figure sitting next to her in the darkness of the bedroom, just out of the reach of her hands.

She glanced up and noticed a piercing orange gaze staring at her without blinking. It unnerved her, and her mane ruffled in response. She’d found what had her bones metaphorically crawling. All she could see was orange in the dark. Her body was too dim to illuminate the room like it might have before. "Pap...?" She mumbles a whisper. "S'tha you?"

It was when she spoke, the orange light gleamed before Papyrus spoke. "Tokiko... you're awake..." His voice was rough, and drained. He was exhausted.

Had he stopped sleeping the very second she closed her eyes?

Toki had to wonder if he’d gotten any sleep at all with how exhausted he sounded. "Pap..." He never called her by her full name. "Yeah. I'm up... You're up too. S'late. Or early. Should be sleeping." She mumbles softly. "Why're ya not sleepin'? N' so far away too..."

"I can't sleep... I don’t want to... I'm so tired... but while your eyes are closed, mine stay open to ensure that you will open yours again..." He spoke quietly. "My wife must wake come the next dawn."

Her fevered brows furrowed, and she roused herself further. She shifted to scoot up some, and shivered again, using one hand to hike the sheep pelt over her shoulder. She was so cold… "Papy...” She says softly. “Not sleeping isn’t healthy.” She mumbles. “Come here.” Her free hand pats the space next to her- he’d scooted over quite some ways so he could keep watch over her. “Come here, my love. You need sleep… Let me help you sleep. I’ll be awake when you get up."

Her invitation was momentarily declined but as his body painfully reminded him of his condition, Papyrus groaned softly before he shifted to lay in her beloved embrace. "B-but... if you sleep... you might not... wake up again... I cannot sleep, my beloved..."

“Then I won’t sleep.” She says simply, and tucks him against her chest. She cradles his skull against her breasts, and exhales a soft sigh. He was so tired- she was tired and cold, but she could stay awake. She’d slept for… Who knows how long. She could do things to entertain herself. “I can’t be too loud or I’ll wake up everyone else, but do you think you could sleep if I talked to you and played a game?” She asked him quietly. “You’ll know I’m awake, and you can listen to me even in your dreams.”

Toki’s primary fingers stroked from the back of his skull down to his neck, and massaged there gently. He was a mess of stress and anxiety, and he was going to dust if he kept pushing himself so
He gave a quiet moan as his face nuzzled into her mane and his tired eyes lulled as her hands danced across his head and neck. "Ah... You feel so good..." He purred quietly. "I do not want you to stay awake... when you must rest..."

“Staying awake isn’t an issue.” She mumbles gently. Her fingers knead along his shoulder again, and she disturbs him only long enough to lean over and grab her Switch case, glad it hadn’t been moved. She settles it on the swell of her belly, and smiles as she notices that someone- likely either her children or Sans- had plugged in for her so it could charge. “I’ve slept long enough. You need rest, my love. It stresses me out to see you like this.” She admits quietly. “I want to see you healthy again. I need you healthy- just like you need me healthy. Sleep for me, okay?” Her teeth press against his forehead. “Listen to my soul, listen to my voice- listen to me move and know that I’m awake. Let this be your lullaby.”

She carefully switched out games, using her secondary hands to operate her Switch. Her primary hands were busy- one arm cradled and caressed him, and the other massaged at the swell of her belly, working out a muscle cramp that came from settling on her back. She booted up her Switch, and got Breath Of The Wild set up, before starting it up.

The music wasn’t loud- but it was loud enough for the music and voices to be heard by the both of them, and Toki hummed along softly to the new but familiar tunes.

As she had began to hope, the mix of the music as well as every soft sound from within his beloved's chest lulled the large monster, and Papyrus had quickly fallen into slumber, breathing slowly into her mane as he used it as the one anchor to keep him at peace in his sleep.

And so Toki let him sleep. The longer he slept, the better he would feel. She hummed along to the tune of the music, and kept her fingers rubbing over his skull. She would shift occasionally, stretching her limbs and shivering as she tried to keep warm, but otherwise she stayed stationary.

She made her way slowly through the breathtaking open world game of Zelda. Toki swiftly discovered that free climbing was one of the best things to ever come to Zelda, and she was climbing everywhere, trying to see everything for as far as she could zoom out. She died- a lot- but she had fun.

Toki explored too- she went everywhere but where she was supposed to, tried to climb down the cliff edge just because she could, failed at doing that, and then died trying to fight with some angry little red goblins.

By the time the corner of her Switch told her it was into early morning- past eight in the morning- Toki had finally just got started on doing the little shrine quests. She took time to explore and lollygag and see everything- and yes, she got lost too. The world was big and it looked so strange from the ground. She could find markers from the tower, but trying to get to them by the ground was harder, because everything looked different.

Toki hummed all the while, not even stopping as she heard quiet footsteps approaching the bedroom.

As the role of the doctor, Tenebris would come to check on them a soon as he had started his day- yes, even when it was at the crack of, or even before dawn.

There was soft tapping of claws on the wall as the large form entered the dining room turned bedroom, and he gave his daughter a small but startled smile. "Toki. Good morning..." He greeted gently, sitting at her bedside as he peered over her shoulder at the game while he spoke. "I'm
surprised to see you awake. You weren't up all night, I hope…?"

“Good morning, Dad.” She whispered softly so she didn’t wake her husband. She pulled his blankets up some so he was kept warm, and shivered again.

Her bones were flushed green around the face, but everywhere else looked frightfully pale. Even through the copious amounts of blankets, Toki’s bones felt cold- there was no warmth radiating out to Tenebris as he sat next to her.

“No- I wasn’t up all night. I’ve only been up… Three hours, I think.” She rubs her husband’s skull gently. “Maybe four. I’m not sure. I got him to sleep on the condition that I stay awake and play games. He needs his rest too.” Her dull green pinpricks flit up to Tenebris’ face, and she tilts the screen so he can see better as she scuttles around and tries to properly place the blocks of ice inside the ice puzzle shrine. “Did you sleep well, Dad? And did the rest of yesterday go okay? I know I kinda just… slept… through most of it.”

Tenebris nodded softly. "Yes... things worked out in the end. They always do." He chuckled, before he reached down to touch her stomach soothingly, letting his magic seep into her stomach. "I slept fine... better now that you were awake, but that balanced out once more once the worry sank back in." He rumbled delicately.

Toki shivered as his magic seeped into her belly, her trembles coming harder. His magic was deep and cold feeling- it did nothing to make her feel warmer. She had to pause her Switch and set it down, because the shivering made it impossible for her to angle it properly, or safely hold it. "T-t-that’s good." Her teeth chattered slightly, clicking together and effecting her voice. "Worry happens. I’m glad you got some sleep. I don’t plan to go back into a coma again any time soon.” She shudders. "Are the pups okay?"

He nodded gently. "Yes, They're okay... all of them..." He assured her, before he realized that she was shivering harder and he slowly lifted his hand. "Ah, I’m sorry. My magic might be strong, but you haven't any strength to counteract the cooling that comes with it." He murmured.

Her shivering continued even after. "Usually I find it soothing. I'm usually so warm that the cold feels nice." She mumbles. "But I just can't get warm. Even after sleeping under the blankets and the pelt." Her free primary hand slid out from under the blankets, and icy bones slid around his fingers. She was colder than the last time he had touched her, and her body seemed to be trying to suck in his warmth, instead of the other way around. "Save your magic, Dad. If anything, I'd rather you give it to Pap, or use it for remaking his leg."

That was something indeed- she was so, so glad Sans had let it drop that her husband wasn't paralyzed. That would have devastated him. It had devastated her for the short time she thought he was.

"We’re already in the metaphorical woods for replacing what he lost.” He clarified. "Magic can only help him so far now..." He sighed. "When his new prosthetic is ready, the magic will assist with fusing it to what bones of his hips remain." He explained.

"Will he be able to walk like before?" She asks quietly. "Or... Will the cane no longer be an option?" Permanent crutches would be a blow to him as well. She felt her sockets closing into a grimace. Some part of her so badly wanted to reload- to the time before the invasion happened she wanted to get everyone up at arms, and... And prevent all of the hurt and the trauma and the pain- and yes, it would prevent Smudge, but... Some sacrifices had to be made.

Her hand shook as it clutched his thick fingers, so desperate was her need to just load back to a time
when everything was okay.

"I'm afraid that I don't know the answer to such a question. It is unfortunately left up to fate, and while we can try to improve the total outcome, we can only do so much. Do you understand?" He squeezed around her hand gently. "I love my son... but we are just monsters. We cannot perform miracles in such dark times. Being able to walk as he was able to before will depend entirely on how his body takes to this implant, and to how determined he is to get better."

She exhaled softly, despite her desire to do it roughly. "I do." She says. "If... if he's unable to walk..." She says quietly. "I'll reload. I... can't say the outcome will be as good. It might even be better... Or worse... But I can reload and make sure all of this is only a bitter memory for those few of us who are cursed to remember."

Toki sets her switch back on the side table, and then takes a soft, shuddering breath. "If... if I only knew how to access healing, I could just re-grow the bone and it would be good as nee." She murmured. "It's there. It's in my soul and deep in Cruelty's corrupted memories... But I can't... I can't figure out how to do it."

It was a horrible, horrible irony. The person who would use healing for the best purposes in the world was locked away from it and only skilled in destruction and death— in things she never wanted to do.

Toki shivered and lifted a hand to her face, scrubbing it as her stomach grumbled. There was no use getting stressed and upset over it. She needed to keep Papyrus asleep so he could rest, and stressing was counterproductive for her too.

"Your soul might be balance, but your mind has still not yet unlocked it's full potential." Tenebris gently wrapped his arms around her and his son both, a tender smile on his face. "My dearest Toki, please get some rest. I will watch over you both so that your mutual rest with your husband is in peace." He told her with a deep purr that seemed to vibrate his arms around her.

Toki gave him a faint smile, and tilted her head over to press a kiss between his brows. "I've unlocked a lot of things lately." She says. "A lot more power... But at a cost. I don't think I can do a display like that again and survive." She mumbles. "Anyway... I can't sleep. I'm too cold, and I promised Papyrus. I don't want to break a promise, Dad." She nuzzles her face to his as he squishes on the bed with them.

It's telltale how tired Papyrus is that he doesn't even wake up.

"Honestly, I could really go for some breakfast. It's about that time." She gave him an awkward smile. "And your kids," she taps her secondary fingers on her belly, "are hungry. All I had to eat yesterday was a sandwich and some cocoa. Not really enough if I'm gonna work on bulking up my magic again."

"Do you think a hot bath would help you feel better short term while we work on ways to help you while meeting your demands?" He asked with a teasing smile. "I would hate to have a disgruntled Toki in a time where it is less then recommended she get out of bed, especially to fight and be a pain."

She returned his teasing smile, and gave a soft laugh. "Oh gods, a hot bath sounds divine. Like... If I had a choice between having the best sex ever and a hot bath right at this very instant, I'd take the bath without a second thought." She sighed blissfully. "But... I'd take food over a bath. And I promised your son," she brushed a finger gently over Papyrus’ skull as he drooled in a brainless sleep into her breasts and mane, “that I would be awake and here when he woke up. I want him to be
able to keep sleeping- so maybe a bath once he wakes up? And I can drag him in with me? He kinda…” She fans a hand in front of her face to pantomime blowing away a stench.

Musty and unwashed bones was a stink, and she’s sure they both smelled like it.

“You don’t have to worry about me fighting though. After yesterday… Until I’m in better condition, I don’t have much in me to fight.” She shivers. “Now... I may fight you for the last cookie or something, but that’s an entirely different matter.” She teases again.

Such jokes had Tenebris chortling as he gave her a pleased smile. "It's so good to have you back, my dear. I'll go start on some breakfast... I wonder if we have any thick-cut bacon left." He was purring to himself as he got up and gave her a pat on the head as he skirted around the bed to head to the kitchen.

"It's good to be back, Dad." Toki gave him a kindly smile as he moved around the bed and went for her kitchen. "I love that you know more about what's in my kitchen than I do at this point." In good humor, her eye lights roll in their sockets and she nestles deeper into her blankets, tucking herself into Papyrus. "There's always the pre-prepared meals that everyone sent over, but I doubt they include breakfast meals."

"Well yes, though I think there might be one or two to suffice as a 'dinner for breakfast' meal." He disappeared into the kitchen for a little while, though after a few minutes came the familiar and wonderful sound of something frying on a skillet that was accompanied by the aroma of that which her father in law had hoped to seek.

Within seconds of the aroma washing over them, Papyrus took a deep breath before he groaned and slowly opened his eyes. "Mmmh..."


Three- maybe four or five as she honestly wasn't sure about the time frame- hours of sleep probably were not enough for him in the long run. She would need to lure him to sleep later today if she could- a nap during the day.

Still, Toki greeted him with a warm smile, and leaned down to nuzzle her teeth against his brow. He had drooled all over her mane and chest, a testament to how deep his sleep was. "Hey there handsome.” She mumbled tenderly. "Good morning. Did you sleep okay?" Her voice being the first thing to greet his ears would hopefully set it into his mind that he could sleep without waking up to her being in a coma.

He purred gently in reply as he leaned up to kiss her, despite the line of saliva running down his jaw. "It was a relief to have you." He purred as he gave her a squeeze. "I love you..."

She kissed him despite his sleep goobers, and lifted a hand to clean his face of his saliva once they parted. "It was a relief to see you sleep." She laughs gently. "I love you too." Toki nuzzles into him with a cold shiver. "Your Dad is here making breakfast. He was teasing me earlier with a hot bath to keep me from getting into mischief." Toki wriggles a brow at her sleepy husband. "Think I could sweet talk him into getting us both into the tub to warm up and clean off? Sponge bathing is nice, but what I reaaaaaally could use is your fingers deep massaging my mane."

"Mmmh... Let's take a shower, and I'll massage for as long as you want me to, my love." He purred, taking a deep breath of her scent before he slowly pushed himself to sit up.

As he sat up, Toki took her newfound freedom and stretched. She ended it with a grunt as her back
twinged, not appreciating the stretching like the rest of her had. "A shower sounds fantastic." She chirps. "So long as it has hot water, I don't care what we do." She just wanted warmth and to be clean. "But... Food first for both of us." She sat up after him, flailing a bit as she struggled to get up. Being top heavy had its disadvantages. "How are you feeling?" Her gaze roves over him, trying to see if there was any improvement or not.

"Numb." He answered honestly. "It's still sinking in that I have you back and this time you might just stay that way." He sighed, before he smiled up at her. It was weak, very faint, but a smile. "Breakfast and a shower... as if nothing's changed."

There's a spark of hope in her dim eyes when he smiles at her. It's not one of his forced ones, or one of his bemused ones- but an honest to goodness gentle and loving Papyrus smile. "Stuff has changed, but there's no reason some things can't be the same." She kisses him softly, her sharp teeth flexing against his own as she peppers him with a tender kiss. "I'm not going anywhere, my love- not for long. Remember, I made a promise to you. Just because I'm back now doesn't invalidate that promise."

She sighs and relaxes against him with a soft sound. "Breakfast and a shower indeed though. I'm starving. And... as much as I love you, we both are in dire need of a good cleaning."

He nodded in agreement before he smiled up at her and leaned up to kiss her where he could. "Alright... I'll get my wheelchair and we can look to getting washed up." He agreed quietly.

"Well... We're gonna need help, so I was thinking after breakfast when I can heckle your Dad into helping." She looked at the chair, which was on her side of the bed. "Chair's on this side, and the only non-trashed shower, from what I can gather, is upstairs. I haven't seen the extent of the damage done to the house, but I can't imagine that Stag went quietly when they got stuffed into the bathroom with Sobek and Snuggle."

"Yeah..." That was going to... well... suck. "I suppose we will fuss about it later, we shouldn't let it ruin our meal that father is preparing..." He decided, before he sighed and laid against her.

She leaned into him with a soft sound and pressed a couple kisses against his temple. "Don't get all huffy because your Dad has to help us." She mumbles against him, looping her arms around him and flopping the bulk of her belly gently against his ribs as she did so. "We both need the help- besides. Consider it making him exercise and get into shape for his impending fatherhood. We have a hard enough time trying to wrangle the twins into the bath sometimes- he's going to have to do that with five. I pity the man just a bit." She blew a raspberry on his temple and gave him a playful smile. "When we get around to having more of our own, if you put another litter in me, I'm gonna have words at you."

Talking about the future would remind him that despite everything, they still had a future to look forward to- they had more children to anticipate, more laughs, more love. They had growing old to look forward to, to all the aches and pains that came with being an old skeleton- he just needed to be able to see it all again.

As she had hoped, the threats pulled a smile onto his face as he sighed and nuzzled her again. "I love you, but I'm going to put so many litters into you before I die." He purred as he smirked up at her.

She rolled her eye lights in good humor. "What ever happened to having just a handful of kids?" She asked in false dramatics. "I go and get pregnant with five, and now my husband wants a whole school's worth from me." She laughs, and nuzzles her face to his. "Good thing monsters live a long time- we'll have our own branch of the clan if I keep popping them out by twos and threes."
The smell of breakfast cooking made her stomach grumble, and she blushed a bit as her mane fluffed.

He laughed quietly. "Maybe just one or two litters..." He reasoned as he kissed her a few times.
Tenebris came out with a platter in one of his hands, and chuckled warmly at the sight of the two being mushy again. It just meant things were going back to normal. Toki was good at that. "It's good to see you two acting like your old selves"

Toki glanced at Tenebris and gave him a quirky grin, giving Papyrus another kiss. "And here comes big daddy Tenny, with breakfast for us sleepybones." She shifts to sit up, figuring she could balance a plate on her belly well enough. "Breakfast smells heavenly. Mmm. What all did you make besides bacon?"

"Well, among the countless meals from our neighbors, I found we have eggs, cheese, and green onions, so I went and made this clever 'cheesy tamago'." He explained. "I made some rice as well. Then the thick-cut bacon, and some toast with butter on two slices, and peanut butter and jam on the other two slices"

"Oh father, that sounds delicious." Papyrus moaned happily, making small grabby hands for the tray.

"Ooo, yummy!" She fluffed her mane and chirped at him from under the thick sheep pelt, rather like a baby bird. Toki looked a little silly covered in blankets, but it wasn't keeping her any warmer- why not keep them on and feel less cold than if she were without them? She pushed them back to make space for a plate to be balanced on her belly. She shifted better upright, and gave him an eager look. "It looks delicious, Dad. Why don't you sit down, and we can eat before you're back on kitchen duties for the kids?" She gives him a warm look. "Though- I actually wanted to talk to you about after breakfast. If we have time, do you think you can help Papy and I upstairs to shower?"

Tenebris sat down after safely depositing the tray of food with the lovers and he listened to them before he smiled and gave a soft nod. "Yes, of course. I can easily see to it that you are taken upstairs to be cleaned up. Although I might need to make two trips." He laughed gently.

Toki gave a lopsided smile and laughed heartily. "Two trips is fine." Toki settled the tray half way between her lap and his lap, and she scooped up a strip of bacon to nibble. "I definitely would like to wash though. Musty bones is a stinky smell- and I smell like musty bones and unwashed mane fur."

"No doubt your loving husband would be willing to help with just that." Tenebris chuckled, looking down at Papyrus, who was eyeing the peanut butter and jam toast something with something that was obviously hunger.

"And I intend to wash him too." She sees him eyeing the peanut butter and jam covered toast, and scoops up the piece in one of her free hands. She holds it diligently up to his teeth- he needed to eat too. "I love you to death and beyond, my love, but you... stink." She gives him a cheeky smile. He'd always prided himself on his hygiene and fitness- if she ruffled his feathers by telling him he stunk, then she'd have succeeded.
Papyrus didn't grow too upset about her comment of his scent. "If I was my father, I have a feeling that I would make some sort of comment based around the whole musk thing as beasts would." He chuckled quietly.

Though indeed THAT got a reaction, an insulted huff from the older male. "Excuse me." He huffed.

"As a pregnant woman with a sensitive nose, I can confirm there is a huge difference between stale bones and musk." She rolls her eyes. "And musk can stink, there is no doubt about that. You can get pretty ripe sometimes, Dad." Toki finishes her piece of bacon, and then boops the toast against her husband's teeth again. "Open up, you. I saw you eyeballing it. Go ahead and eat it up- babies have no desire for peanut butter right now, so it's not hurting my feelings none."

He looked up at her, before he hummed and opened his mouth, taking a hearty bite of the crunchy offering. "Mmh~" Papyrus most definitely liked it.

Toki made a soft, pleased noise, and locked her arm there so he would be able to keep eating his toast. She used her free hands and began to munch other things in earnest, setting the toast aside for him. Easily, she made him a breakfast sandwich with the buttered toast and bacon. "You've got to eat more too, my love." Toki smiled at him. "Gotta have energy for cuddling."

He eyed the breakfast sandwich and gave a soft sound. "What about you? You need to eat too..."

She motioned to the rest of the spread. "Dad made plenty, and it's not like we're out of food." Tenebris always cooked big, so there was plenty. "C'mon. Eat the sandwich, love, I know you're hungry." She scooted it to him and set his unfinished toast on top of it. Toki picked up her utensils and started to nibble the tamago, making a point that she would eat if he would eat.

"Alright..." He carefully readjusted, and then picked up the sandwich and took a small bite of it, sighing contentedly at the taste of it.

"Thank you." Toki leaned over to kiss his temple, and then resumed devouring her tamago. Honestly, tamago reminded her a whole lot of western omelets. The only thing that was hugely different was the fact that omelets had much more items in them than tamago did. Omelets had tomatoes and onions and mushrooms and all sorts of strange things that one wouldn't think taste good in cooked egg, but actually do.

Toki hummed contentedly and glanced at Tenebris. "So... what are the plans for today besides us getting clean, and maybe changing the bed-sheets?" Bed-sheets hadn’t been an initial plan, but she’d laid in these for a week- she wanted clean sheets, damn it. She was entitled to feeling clean and nice.

"I was going to defrost some of the meat in my freezer that I had hunted previously for dinner tonight, as well as see how your venom production is doing so we can aid Grillby. Good news is that he's still doing okay; Sans is sitting with him and he seems to have enough in him to speak the occasional word now."

"Sans is up?" Toki tilted her head curiously. "I could have sworn he was still asleep with the children. Huh." None of the kids were up yet- or the 'bedroom' would be full of loud kids wanting breakfast and games and all the like. "I've still got three mostly full wrists, and two full ankle stingers." She wriggles her toes under the covers and stuffs another bite of egg into her mouth. "I'm glad Grillby is doing better though."

"He's taken the habit of being up early since Grillby was hurt." Tenebris explained as he gave her a low smile. "I'll go get my bottles and we'll see about giving Grillby some injections to help him pick himself back up."
"Alright." She nods. "That gives me and Papy time to finish eating." She nuzzles into his shoulder with a content sound. "Make sure to get the ones that won't melt, Dad."

"I know~" He patted her head and got up to go get the vials.

Toki watched him go, and finished snarfing down her tamago. She hummed, took a drink of her tea, and then settled for calmly nibbling her cooling bacon. "Mmm~"

Papyrus was steadily going through his breakfast sandwich, a mellow smile on his face as it steadily fueled his weakened form with energy that he so needed. "I wager this meal tastes better now that I'm eating it with you, Toki." He soon spoke.

"Indeed." She smiled. "A meal can taste all the better based on the company that you keep." She assured him warmly. "And I do so enjoy your company. Breakfast in bed, too- I feel spoiled." She joked slightly.

Papyrus chuckled at that, kissing her cheek gently. "I love you so much..." He purred gently.

"I love you more." She grinned cheerfully and nuzzled him happily. Toki finished her tamago, and was still hungry. But... she'd get more food after a successful shower.

It wasn't long before Tenebris returned, venom vials in hand. "Alrightie, are you ready, my dear?" He asked her.

"About as ready as I'm going to be." Toki gave him a lopsided smile, and shifted the tray carefully onto Papyrus' lap. He still had toast to finish, and since she ate all her food, he had to finish his too.

"Alright. Do you want the venom from my wrists, or do you want to drain my ankles first?" She inquires, peering up at him. " Ankles will require help. I can't see my feet to hold the vials or know when they're full, so it's on you to tell me when to stop."

"I'll go ahead and start with your ankles." He answered, taking his place down by her feet. "Can you go ahead and bring forth your stingers?"

Toki shuffled the covers off her legs, and was rewarded with a body wracking shiver that rattled her bones, and jostled her husband's shoulder. "Sorry, Pap." She apologized automatically. With her feet free, she ruffled her fur, and glanced at him. She extended the stinger on her right leg, and it was lost to the mass of fur around her ankles. "Try not to poke yourself, Dad. I can avoid injecting you, but it's still gonna hurt."

"I'll be very careful." He promised as he slowly rubbed down her ankle until he found her stinger. "Here it is..." He brought the vial up before he carefully stuck it into the bottle. "Alright, go ahead."

She gave a little wiggle, and stretched out her senses to her leg. There was a rush of warmth to her foot- the freezing cold bones literally heating in Tenebris' hand- and then her venom started to flow sluggishly into the vial. Her ankles hadn't been tapped in... forever, really, so they just sat there and kept building and building, and building... "My ankles haven't been emptied since I came home. At least, not that I remember." She mumbled. "So they should be plenty stored up. One doesn't often think to go after the venom near their feet."

"Then this might be enough if this is from before this all happened. We get to save the rest for later depending on how this vial will do for him" Tenebris rumbled happily

"Most of this venom is from before." Toki chuckled. She waved one of her secondary hands. "This is the only hand I emptied completely rousing Grillby yesterday. The others still have some venom
that predates all of this mess."

"Then we should be well off for a while.” He hums. “You can stop leaking now, this should be enough."

She cut off the flow as he commanded, but didn't remove her stinger until she felt the last droplets slide out. Her body acted sort of like a soda machine. You wanted to leave a little bit of space between the rim and the liquid, because there was bound to be excess that spilled out after it was done.

"I hope that helps." Toki smiles at him gently. "Small doses multiple times a day should be more beneficial than big ones less frequently."

"Indeed. Thank you for this. You two take it easy now. I'll go and treat Grillby and come back so you two can go have your shower."

She gives him a cheeky salute. "Don’t take too long, or we might get up to mischief. You never know with us kids." She jokes in good humor.

"I have my speculations about that." He teased back before he got up and started to the living room, a small smile on his face.

As he left, Papyrus chuckled quietly. "Dads know a lot more than you think, whether you like it or not."

Toki glances to Papyrus and nudges him with a lopsided smile. "I know Dads know a lot. That's one of the best things about Dads- their wisdom and answers seem bottomless. Even if the answers are just a poorly worded dad joke." She giggles. "Our kids ask you a lot of things. I think they ask you more than they ask their Grandpa."

"I grew up ambitious, I wanted to be number one in answering everyone's questions. I learned many things simply because I wanted to, and I think the children see that in their Dad." Papyrus laughed gently.

She laughed and kissed his cheek gently. "I think they do." She nuzzled his shoulder. "Now... On the topic of children..." She peeked up at him. "Can you reach out to them?" She asks him quietly. "When you feel up to it, of course- but it... It bothers me to see them so nervous around you. They're good kids, my love- but they're young, and they get scared when people get angry. Particularly after..." After last week. "If you talk with them, be warm with them like you're being with me right now, things will get better."

Papyrus sighed faintly before he gave a nod to his wife. "I owe them an apology... My poor children; I wish they did not have to see what they did..."

"Seeing anger is something that is unavoidable." She says softly. "However, you did handle it poorly. The situation was understandable, but..." Toki leans up and cups his jaw, giving him a warm look. "I don't know what the future holds, and what will happen then- so I want you to make me a promise. If something happens, don't close down on them. Don't shut down, don't grow cold- don't become the stranger that I woke up to. Hold on to your love, hold on to your hope. It is hard- god do I know how hard it is- but hold on to it, hold on to them- because through them, you have pieces of me. Just like through them, I have pieces of you. Honey has your smile and my horns, and Skylar has your smarts and my grin."

She cocks a grin at him. "They're good kids, Pap. They'll forgive you, I'm sure of it. Lets just try not
to let it happen again, okay? Or at least let it sit and stew for so long."

His look softened before he nodded and nuzzled her gently. "Once we have had our shower, I’ll talk
to them."

"Thank you." She nuzzled her face to his, and felt a tight coil around her soul ease up as a piece of
stress she hadn’t realized was there literally melted away.

It was as Papyrus slowly sat up again that Tenebris returned with an empty vial, a small smile of
satisfaction on his face, and a growing welt on his face that showed heat damage. "That old bastard.”
He seemed very satisfied.

"Ah... Father... He land a blow on you? What did you say?" Papyrus smirked at him.

"That he did," Tenebris grinned, "and nothing you need to hear, my son."

Toki blinked. "What on earth did you do to make Grillby hit you?" He was one of the most level
headed monsters in the village most of the time. "... Please tell me you didn't try to give him the
venom in a suppository."

That had Tenebris wheezing into his hand. "Oh wouldn't that be cruel?" He cackled.

She rolled her eye lights at him. "Daaaaaad. You're terrible. Seriously though- it's got to be given as
an injection for it to be helpful. If it's taken orally, it just makes him high. I don't... Want to know
what happens when it's taken anally."

Another wheeze, and Tenebris nearly staggered under the force of his restrained laughter.

Toki huffed at him, and then looked at her husband. "I broke him." She says calmly. "Do you still
have the receipt? We might be able to exchange him for one that doesn't die laughing at giving a fire
elemental a suppository."

Papyrus' face was hidden in his hands as he laughed as well. It would seem Tenebris wasn't the only
one broken.

Toki's mane fluffed up, and she huffed at them both. "You're both horrible for laughing about that."
She decides. "You better hope you never have to take suppositories, either of you, because neither of
you have butt-holes and I am a creative individual."

"I love you but I do not fear you, my love." Papyrus pulled her close and gave her some soft kisses, a
smile on his face.

Warmth bloomed in her chest, and she lifted her hands to cup his face, giving him a few firmer and
deeper kisses. "I hope you mean that." Her voice drops more calmly. "I really do. Particularly after
what I showed off to the those people." Toki was something to be feared- there was a reason boss
hearts and anti-hearts had been so terribly feared back in the war.

He gave her a warm smile. "You're my wife, not a malevolent being. I love you and I haven't got a
single ounce of fear for you." He promised with a sincere tone.

She cracked a small smile. "I love you so much, y'know that? I really do." She nuzzled him again, a
soft, pleased buzz bubbling from the back of her throat. Her gaze slid to Tenebris after, and she gave
a smile. "So... about that shower...?

"As soon as you're ready, we'll head upstairs and get that shower started for you." Tenebris


answered with a light smile.

Toki clapped her hands eagerly. "I am beyond ready to get clean. If you're ready, Papy...?" She glances to him.

There was a thundering of footsteps down the stairs, and then Skylar and Honey reached the bottom floor, both bedecked in their pajamas, and accompanied by their summons.

Skylar had the top part of Snuggle draped over his shoulders, dragging the rest of the ever-growing grub along behind him like a feather boa.

Sobek was right at Honey’s heels, his talons slipping on the tile. He didn't seem eager to leave her side, shaking out his blossoming baby feathers as he tilted his head to regard the room, and take in anything new that might have happened.

Both kids seemed to light up at seeing their mother awake- still awake, like yesterday wasn't just a dream- and they made a bee-line for the bedroom without fail. "Momma!" Skylar exclaimed in delight. "You're awake! Did you already have breakfast?"

"I am and I did." Toki smiles. "I was just about to go get a shower with your Grandpa's help. I think though, if you're very sweet about how you ask, you can go ask your Uncle Sans to warm you up some breakfast, or make you some breakfast."

"Mmmn..." The twins shared a look, and seemed to contemplate. "Okay. Maybe just warm up breakfast. He's not a good cook like Uncle Grillby." Honey's the one that answers with a soft chirp.

Toki nods, and sends them off into the living room with a gentle motion. "Alright." Her gaze slides to Tenebris. "Let's go shower." She wiggled her fingers at him and raised her hands to him in the traditional 'uppie' position that the twins usually used on him.

With the gesture for uppies, came the actual uppies. Tenebris carefully scooped Tokiko up, smiling as he put her into a comfortable carry. "Are you comfortable?" He asked gently.

She shifted some in his arms, her wings twitching. The one that had been relocated ached, but not nearly so bad as before. She was settled in a bridal carry, but his hands were a little high on her knees, and squishing her belly into her chest.

"If you can scoot your hands down my thighs just a bit, I'll be less squished." She couldn't fold over for a proper bridal carry, so they'd have to make due. "If not, I'll be okay. Upstairs isn't far."

"Mind your hands, Father."

"Unneeded warning, my son." Tenebris replied, slowly moving his hands lower to carry Toki more comfortably. "I'll be back in a moment." He then rumbled, starting upstairs with Toki.

"Mind your hands, Father." Toki mocks lightly once they're out of ear shot of her husband. She shakes her skull in good humor. "Does he really think you're going to cop a feel of these bones when you have goat booty to feel up whenever you like? Or is it just a male beast territory thing?"

They were technically two alphas of two different packs- and it was known somewhat that Toki's beast had seen Tenebris as a mate at one point.

"A fine question, though in the same one I would rather not delve very deeply into." He snorted quietly as he entered the upstairs bathroom. "Nonetheless, let's get this shower underway and I'll go grab your husband before I clean your bed."
Toki lets out a soft buzz. She motions to the toilet in her bathroom. "Go ahead and just set me there for now. I don't have shower chairs, so just sitting on the tub floor should be okay." Her gaze flits to his face. "Thank you. For helping us. I'm not... Used to being this helpless and frail. Thank you."

He nodded gently as he carefully set her down on top of the toilet lid before he picked up the shower head, undoing it from it's frame before he brought it down. "I'll bring this down for you to start on warming up the water." He rumbled.

She nods, and hums as she watched him. "Thank you, Dad." She thrummed to him warmly.

He gave her a nod and left her be for a short time until he returned with Papyrus, who was grumbling in embarrassment at being carried by his father.

Toki did her best not to laugh at him, and it helped sober her to see the single, loose leg of his pants flapping and tangling against Tenebris' legs. His grumbling might be amusing, but the cause of it... it really wasn't.

Toki shifted, and made wiggly fingers at him. "I'm wondering if you should have been brought up first." She gives him a lopsided smile. "I don't have a lap to share. Your siblings are taking up all of it." She rubs her ever blooming belly gently. "Maybe the counter top? Just until Dad gets us situated in the shower?"

"It will suffice... Father, if you'd please."

With a mute nod, Tenebris set him down on the counter top, before he went to the bathtub and tested the water. He plugged the tub. "So how much of this do you want me to help with?" He asked, turning to the duo.

"Focus more on Toki, Father." Was Papyrus' answer.

"Go ahead and leave the drain unplugged, Dad.'" Toki eyed the water, and hummed. "As for us... If you can get us both in the tub, I think we can handle washing ourselves and each other, and getting the water turned off. It’s moving on our legs that we’re unsafe with doing- not using our arms." She gives the both of them a four-handed jazz-hands to prove her point. She also clips her funnybone on the counter that her husband is seated on, and gives a sharp hiss as she cradles it. "Motherfucking."

She bites off. "It’s never a humorous time when you whack your funny-bone."

She puffs air through her teeth, and then shifts her weight, starting to wiggle her pants and underpants down over her hips so she could undress. No use in getting into the tub with clothes on, and she could get undressed while sitting. Though- getting naked was making her shiver harder, her eye lights dimming slightly as her teeth chattered with chill.

Papyrus groaned at the pun and shook his head.

Tenebris went and carefully helped her undress, hiding a bemused snort poorly at her pun. "That sounds like a plan... I'll set you two into the bath together face-to-face and give you... well let's see... an hour sound good to you?" He offered with a soft rumble.

Toki wiggled, and let him help her undress. Once she was completely bare, she folded her bare arms across her breasts for modesty's sake, though it was mostly useless with the quite obvious rows of nipples running down her belly, like a beast readying for birth. "An hour works." She nods. "If we want longer, we'll let you know when you come up to get us." Toki’s secondary hands itch at her teats, and then settle at her side, her mane ruffling upwards. "Me first, so Pap can be settled on my legs?"
"You got it." He rumbled before he gently scooped her up once more, moving her to the tub where the small inch of water sat before he promptly unplugged the water as she previously suggested. "There you go. Adjust as necessary, and I'll put Papyrus in there right with you."

Toki gives him a cheeky salute, and settles back into the tub with a soft hum. She stretched her wings, and adjusted her legs so he could settle between them, before giving her father-in-law a nod. She settled the shower head on her end of the tub, and motioned for him to bring Papyrus in- or rather, help her husband unclothe and then settle in.

She rinsed under the hot water, and shivered in something between delight at the heat of it, and the chill she constantly felt. There was also anxiety in her- she would be seeing Papyrus bare for the first time without any prosthetic on- and she had a feeling this wound was worse than the last one.

"Father, would you help me?"

"Of course."

With Papyrus leaning against his father to maintain balance, Tenebris helped him carefully undress. He was quiet and compliant for the most part, but still there were soft groans and grunts from the younger male as it came around to removing his pants.

He didn't want his beloved to see it either, but at this point, she would anyways.

His right leg, luckily, was mostly unharmed. There was bruising in his bones, but otherwise it wasn't too severe.

But his hip- and the complete lack of his left leg... a gruesome sight it was.

His left ilium was almost completely destroyed. His sacroiliac joint was barely hanging onto what remained of his sacrum. Were he not numbed by his father, one would imagine that the pain he would be in from such severe wounds would have been horrendously excruciating.

The lack of his left leg was clear now; there just wasn't anything for the leg to hold onto without being dramatically out of place.

To her credit, Toki did a tremendously good job of hiding her reaction. She didn't flinch in disgust or rage, or gasp in outrageous horror. She went quiet, her eye lights dark and ominous as she watched him.

He didn't need her pity, and he didn't need her sorrow for him. Her husband needed her support and her love.

And that is what she would give, even if the sight of his leg made her wish she hadn't made the bees carry all of the humans away.

It made some deep and dark part of her, an ugly, desperately angry part of her, wish she had brutalized them worse than they had her Monsters. She wished she had done so to make them learn their lesson not to touch what was hers ever again or to even look at them again and think about disobeying her. The dark part of her wanted to roll back time, and bathe in those people's blood before they could hurt anyone- to make the streets run crimson with her promise, her obligation, to keep her Monsters safe and the Void location unmolested.

There may have been a glimpse of that darkness that crossed her face, but she is not sure that either of them saw it before she stuffed it back down, deep inside of her where it should remain. She was Balance now in truth, and that came with managing the cruel impulses as well as the kind ones.
Kindness would always be her first answer. It had to be; or the monster she would become would be something that would raze the world to ashes just to prove her point.

She stretched her hands up to him, and gave him a tender smile, pulling on her kindness to cover the darker parts of herself that she wished no one to see. Monsters were inherently kind- they would not understand cruel impulses. "Come here, love. Lets get you settled and washed off. I'll be gentle, but you'll have to tell me where its too tender to touch."

Luckily neither her husband nor father in law saw her dark look. They simply took note of her kindness and gazed upon her with admiration and love of their own.

Carefully, Papyrus was lowered into the tub and a shaky sigh came from him as he was nestled in the lap of his beloved.

"There... that will do." Tenebris rumbled, before he smiled warmly at them both. "I'll leave you be for now."

"Thank you, Dad." Toki save him a tender smile. Her husband fit nicely in her lap- without his clothes in place, he had no abdominal cavity to prevent the swell of her belly from invading. It let them sit close, so she could clean him, and he her- and it helped that he was so much larger than her as well.

Toki's hands settled on Papyrus' remaining leg, and she gave him a firm but loving look. "Papyrus Aliquam Gaster- if you lie to me about my touch hurting you at any point, I will deny you cuddles tonight." She warns him, utter seriousness in her voice.

Her warning said, she brings the shower head over and starts to clean his remaining leg, grabbing the bar of soap so she could soap up his toes and massage the balls of his feet.

He looked up at her with a small smile. "I... I'll do the best I can." He spoke quietly. "I’m... rather used to keeping it quiet for the sake of my friends and family." His voice slowly quieted and trailed off as she started to clean him and he sighed softly, not in pain, but with great relief.

She kept careful attention of his reactions as she cleaned him. She couldn’t care for him bodily as she ached to do. But, Toki could do this for him. Bathing between husband and wife was something that could be shared- and he had no reason to hide from her here. Assisted bathing from another family member was something much less intimate.

“I know.” She says softly, and rubs her fingers between his toes to clean between them. He wore socks often enough that the fuzz liked to cling between them. Toki shivered, her body chilling more without clothes on or the hot water spray on her. “You like to keep things quiet so you don’t worry and alarm people. It’s something we’ve got in common.” She soothes quietly. “But you and I… We’re husband and wife, Papyrus. Hiding things and keeping secrets doesn’t form a good relationship, and can lead to strife. With the exception being Christmas and birthdays.” She amends, her hands moving to wash his ankle.

“I’d be a hypocrite if I said I never kept anything from you. I’m… Trying to be better about it. I’ve seen what happens when secrets are left unattended- they come back to bite you.” She says quietly. One of her secondary hands comes and touches her belly- which had been her guilty secret she’d hoped no one would ever find out. But- pregnancy wasn’t something one could hide. Sex could be hidden to a certain extent, but when it usually leads to pregnancy… no.

“And when you feel that you’re mentally able to handle what secrets I do have currently, we can talk about them. The same goes for you- when you feel ready, we can talk about any you’ve been
keeping.” Her hands massaged his shin, careful of his bruises. “But pains and worries are less when shared with those you love- especially when someone can do something to help lessen them.”

When he wasn't watching her hands, he watched her face, watching every shift in her expression, her words passing through her closed teeth to try and reassure him that everything was, and was going to be okay.

Oh he wished it was that easy to believe her. But when she spoke of her own secrets, his soul sank a little bit. He sighed as he nodded. “Y-yes... I understand. It's not going to be... easy... but we'll- yeah, we'll get through it together... right?” He smiled up at her. "When things have calmed down, and we're both doing better, we'll talk it out. Everything will be put out there... Okay?” He spoke gently.

Toki lifts her head, and her closed teeth tilted up in a warm smile for him. “We’ll get through it together.” She promises. “You and me- we can handle anything if we put our minds to it.” Her hands reached his knees, and she softened her cleaning.

The bulk of his bruising seemed to be around his femur and knee, along with… well, obviously upward- so she would be gentle. Her crocodile grin slips away, and she sighs softly focusing on cleaning him as she shivers with him in her lap. “We’ve both got a lot of recovering to do, don’t we?”

"Indeed... Thankfully myself more than you..." He reached up to cup her cheek. "S-Steady there... it starts to be more sensitive the closer you go to my pelvis..." He murmured.

"Based on the amount of bruising here, I would say so.” She says softly, and eyes his pelvis gently. Her fingers are very, very gentle as she soaps his femur up and runs water over his bone. “To be honest, Pap… It kinda looks like you survived an attempt at death by Snu-Snu.” She tried to make light of it by giving him a quirky grin, and smooching his palm as she wiggled her brows at him. She didn’t venture further than his femur- the damage was clear, and soap wouldn’t do good there. Water though, might be fine.

He took that in for a moment, simply staring at her in apparent awe for the joke he’d never realized and no one had the balls to crack, and then he groaned and pressed his face into his hand as he laughed gently. "You know what, that's exactly what happened... Life tried to fuck me to death but I lived to tell the tale." He joked in reply.

She’d taken a huge risk in cracking that joke, she knew- it could have been received well, or horribly, and she was glad that the husband she knew and loved was back enough to see the humor she’d put out there. “Life does that to the best of us.” She laughs gently. “At least we’re in a place where we can help you get put back together after the worlds worst round of Snu-Snu.” Toki gave him a soft look, and then lifted a hand to touch his elbow. “Speaking of… I know you probably don’t want to, but the bone probably needs to be rinsed. Why don’t you rinse your pelvis off with the shower head while I soap up my legs?”

He nodded gently. "Alright... Then it will be my turn to wash you. I'll make sure you're glowing as much as you did when we married." He purred, taking the shower head.

She purrs at him warmly, and gives him an adoring look. Her mouth opens, and she wiggles her teeth at him in bemused humor. "I'm about as big as I was on our wedding day, aren't I?" She glanced down to her incredibly dim middle. He probably couldn't manage 'glowing', but clean and fresh smelling would work.

"We've still got our vows to renew..." She muses. "I think I want to wait until after all of... This." She waves a hand at her middle, and then starts soaping up what she can reach of her legs. She gives
up on those when ultimately she realizes she can't reach far enough to touch her toes, and with Papyrus there she can't curl her legs. She instead starts to soap up her belly, massaging her fingers against the tender flesh quietly. It aches some, but there is no pain, no tightness, that warns of any episodes like the day prior.

Papyrus nodded in agreement. "Once you've weaned the pups, and once I have the ability to stand again... if I ever do..." He gave a weak chuckle, running the gentle stream of water over his beloved wife's shoulders. "Even if I don't... I'll still pull myself to the alter. I'll be your wine, your lit candle, and with a ring, ask you once more to be mine..." He promised.

She smiled at him softly as he instead rinsed her shoulder. She shivered roughly, a soft relieved sound leaving her as her body drank in the heat. She was so, so cold... There was no describing how cold she felt, and how cold she kept felt like she was getting. Cold was just a word, but it was so, so much more.

"You'll stand before you know it." She's sure of it. Toki gives him a firm and loving smile. "We'll renew our vows- though really, you should know that I've always been yours."

Toki's toes flex a little, and she rubs his hand gently, tenderly.

"Oh... I knew... I just... I can't really explain just how good it feels to hear you say it, Toki..." He chuckled quietly, his hand slowly lifting to take hers before he gave her fingers a soft squeeze. "I love you so much..." He cooed softly. "When you and I get out of the bath, we'll go to the bed and we'll lay down, and we'll wrap ourselves in all the blankets we have to our name... just to warm you up."

"That's a lot of blankets. Hopefully it's enough. I'm quite chilled." She chuckles in good humor. "And my love... Never doubt that I love you and that I'm yours." She guides his hand up her belly to her breast, to where her soul was able to be dimly seen beating below her flesh. Softly, like the mushy romantic she was, she began to sing. "My heart's a stereo; It beats for you, so listen close, hear my thoughts in every note. Make me your radio, turn me up when you feel low. This melody was meant for you, just sing along to my stereo."

There was a soft scratching of feline claws at the closed bathroom door that went unheard by Toki.

Papy hummed a few soft notes along with her before he smiled and he turned his head to the door. "Seems we have someone who wants in on the fun." He chuckled quietly. "Do you hear that?"

Toki cut off her singing rather swiftly. She tilted her head, and blinked slowly. "... That sounds like a cat who wants in." She hums. "Think it's Gael or Gracie?" She queries lightly with good humor as she lets his fingers go. She doesn't make him move them though- soapy boobs were fun to play with.

The scratching was soon accompanied by a grumpy meow, verging on a feline yell.

"Ooh... Gracie?" He laughed gently. "Who's the kitty at the door?" He cooed out gently.

A fluffy gray foot stuck under the door and swatted at nothing to demand entry- showing that yes, first time was the charm. Gracie's grumbling turned to a yowling demand.

Toki couldn't stop the soft snort of laughter. "She's going to yell until someone lets her in, and neither of us can move to do that. What a conundrum we've got, eh?"

He hummed in thought, before he leaned his head back. "Faaaaaathheeeeeeerrrr!" He called out, sounding not unlike a howling dog.
Toki cupped a hand to her skull and reached out to flick one of his ribs. Her ears were ringing. "Good lord, Pap. You forget, bathrooms have the best acoustics in the house."

His howl had made Gracie go quiet though, so there was that.

He gave a quiet 'nyeh heh heh' of victory as Tenebris soon opened the door, allowing Gracie entrance as he poked his head in. "Yes?"

"The cat wanted in." He replied with bemusement. "That's all~"

Tenebris made a face of mock insult, before he chuckled."Clever boy. Carry on." He chuckled, closing the door once more.

Gracie moved to sit on the toilet seat, and she simply loafed and stared at them in squinty smugness.

Toki rolled her eye lights hard. "You are too much sometimes." She laughs. She's glad he's got his sense of humor back though. "So... Shall I wash your ribs? Or do you want to give it a go washing something on me?" She quirks an easy going grin to him.

A soft gray paw reaches out to pat at the tub, making a soft 'plap plap plap' as Gracie purrchirps at them both.

"I would love to, though A; I don't know if it's appropriate and B; Our cat was watching us." He laughed gently.

He made her blush bright green. "I hadn't meant anything perverse!" She exclaims, bemused. "Golly-gee, you silly Skeleton." She shakes her head slightly. "Wait, wait, wait. Hold on. So we can have vigorous hot spring sex with your brother only a couple rock inlets away... But you can't wash me with the cat watching?" Toki can't stop her brows from raising at how silly it sounds.

"That's not what I meant." Papyrus chuckled in reply, before he leaned up to kiss her head. "If I start kneading your boobs, Gracie might get jealous." He teased.

She rolled her eye lights. “Gracie doesn’t own my boobs.” She snorts. “They belong to me… and you.” She cocks a brow at him. “After all, you enjoy them most, don’t you, my dear?”

"Heh... well... I suppose so~" He leaned in to give her a brisk kiss as his palms rested over her upmost set of breasts, kneading them tenderly.

Toki gave him a cheeky smile, and chuckled as his hands settled on her soapy breasts, kneading them slightly as the water from the shower head ran down between her breasts. It slid over her belly, warming soft paths as it moved. Since he was distracted, Toki set to work cleaning her arms, her sides, and her belly, content to let him cop a feel and enjoy himself.

"You're so beautiful... Thank you for letting me touch you, my beautiful wife, my elegant goddess..." He purred as he rolled her breasts in his hands, fingers gently kneading the tender ecto-skin to his hearts content.

Unlike before, where she had lactated, there was no milk to be let down. At least, not at first. The more he worked them, the more sensitive they became- and soon they budded with warmth.

"My love... I'm yours to touch however you will." She beams at him adoringly.

He gave a weak giggle before he brought an arm around to pull her into a soft, loving kiss. Oh he loved her so much, and just the time with her consent to feel her body under his palms had Papyrus
showing his true colors, and just how much those colors screamed his love for his wife.

Skin to skin was good for more than just newborns. It appeared that skin to skin- or skin to bone was the better term to use- was also good for husbands and wives. Particularly husbands who’d just had their worlds and realities shaken, and for whom everything was in turmoil and upset.

Toki met his kiss tenderly, and ceased washing herself so she could instead run her soapy fingers up and over his ribs. “I love you.” She murmured, smoothing her fingers over his ribs as she cradled him close. He wasn’t overly heavy, but she did need to move his hand that held the shower head, so she could press his chest to hers, and scoot him closer. He folded over her belly nicely, and this let him rest against her chest and shoulders easily.

Her hands came to massage his back as she hugged him to her, and nuzzled her face to his. Her mane hadn’t been cleaned yet, so it was still dry as it fluffed up to pillow his scull.

He was thankful it had not yet gotten wet; her fur was so soft and her scent was so sweet he could hide himself away forever and never tire of that which his hid his face within. "I love you... I love you so much and I could never feel anything less than my upmost adoration for you, my beloved.”

Toki laughed gently, and gave him another soft kiss. “And I love you too. I love you with my everything, Papyrus…” She sighs softly against him, content and tender. She shivers under his warmth. “I think I’d like to finish showering though- or I’ll be content to cuddle you forever here.”

"I wouldn't complain!” He told her. "Sitting here for forever with you would make me so happy.” He laughed gently, before he hummed and grabbed the shower head from her. "Let's get back to it then, darling.”

She let him have it back without a fuss, and gave him a smile. “I think I got most of your back clean, but I need my wings and my mane done. Mind helping me shampoo and condition?”

"If it means I get to touch you and your wonderful body that much more." He agreed happily.

She gave a soft pleased noise, and reached out to gather her shampoo. She offered the bottle to him. “Alright, love. I’m yours then.”

He happily gathered his share of shampoo in his hands before he dug his hands into her fur, cooing happily as he began to start up the lather. "And I'm all yours~" He cooed gently as he got started into the washing process. "Such beautiful fur, I love it so much~ and I love you. I'll always love you and I'll always love... this..." his hands had withdrawn, a look of terror on his face at the green that now covered his hands...

It was...

"Fur... T-Toki...?”

Toki blinked as horror crossed his face, and looked down at his hands. Her hands automatically slid to her mane and ran through the strands- she came away with fistfuls.

Her eyes flinched closed and she sighs. "It doesn't hurt." She addresses first. "Its... Maybe it's a stress response. Or because I don't have enough magic to keep it growing and healthy."

She rinsed the soap off the handfuls, and set them draping over the side of the tub. She gave it a mournful look, and then checked her wrist fur.

With the soap, that too was coming out.
"I'm not falling." She says softly with a shiver, her voice losing some of it's luster. She had loved her mane since she had gotten it- hence never cutting it. She'd missed hair as a human and this was as close as she got. Losing it again was making her feel like it was her change into a monster all over again. "So it must just be stress. We'll just... Have to see what's left when we're done washing."

It wasn't like calling Tenebris would fix anything. He couldn't staple it back on.

He whined quietly as she listed off ideas of what the problem might be, before he nodded weakly in defeat, knowing he was unable to prevent the unpreventable. "Of course..." He still loved her, and he knew just how much she loved the mane alongside him, so thus he had nothing to say that could offer comfort.

Toki's hands slid down, and she leaned forward again, clear permission for him to finish scrubbing the shampoo through while she did her wrists, and tried for her ankles. "It'll grow back in time, Pap. It took two years and some change to get this long." Of course it had been created on her already fairly long, but nowhere near this fluffy.

"But will it grow back the same?" He asked, gently putting his hands back at her collarbone to resume scrubbing what was left of her mane.

"I don't know." She admits quietly. "It might come back curlier, it might come back straighter, or it could come back a different shade of green. It will come back though."

Under his fingers, her mane fell away, and a thin layer of soft new fur was felt. It was shorter than their cats hair, but it had likely grown in during her week of being unconscious. All wasn't lost- she wouldn't be entirely bald, but she would be even colder for a while.

With her promise of her mane returning, Papyrus stopped fussing as much, though he still looked like he was mourning her beloved fur. As he felt the layer of new fur underneath, his hands ran over that before he gave a soft sigh. It wasn't an upset sigh, just a relieved one, and a similar look came to Papyrus' face as he ran his hands through her fur, taking along the suds to clean what remained.

Not all of it came off- there were a few patches that remained long, but it looked... scraggly and mangy. She looked sick, for the better term. Toki gently tugged on the longer locks, which were dry from the shampoo. "We'll need to trim these." She sighs. "We have scissors in the bathroom cabinet. When Dad comes back, we'll ask him to get them- and you can help me trim them down flush with the rest...?"

He nodded slowly. "Of course, darling... I will do my best to save what is left." He ran his fingers through the patches again, mourning in silence but thankful at least some survived.

The patches were thin and wispy, and looked quite ready to break off if pulled on too hard. A few did so, shedding off and sticking to his fingers.

Toki gave him a wobbly smile. "Don’t worry about saving them." She says softly, and fetches the conditioner for him. "I’d rather my mane be cut down to a uniform length, and then just let it grow out again. It’ll be back to where you can braid it soon, I’m sure..."

He nodded gently. "Of course..." He rumbled. "In time it will return. I’ll cope."

Toki gives him a shaky but loving look. "I'm wondering what everyone else is going to say." She laughs weakly. "The last time all my hair fell out, I was 'dying' from my change into a monster. I'm pretty certain your brother is going to shit bricks, and your Dad may panic. He has a thing about manes, you know."
"As soon as they all know that you're not dying, I'm sure they'll settle down enough to accept the current consequences as they are." He answered. "Indeed your mane will be missed by all, but as long as you yourself are alive and well we will not be distraught." He assured with a few soft and tender kisses.

She met his kisses lovingly, and then opens up the conditioner bottle. "You're right." She agrees softly. "Alright... Well, lets make what fuzz I do have soft, yeah? Might as well make it cuddle worthy." You might not be able to hide your face in it, but it'll be soft and snuggly."

"And that's all I could ever ask for, my love." Papyrus took the bottle and gently deposited a good amount of the soap into his hand, rubbing it in his palms before he combed his fingers through her fur.

The new, virgin fur soaked it in, becoming silky and soft under his fingers in ways her long mane had never done. If cared for properly, it was possible her mane could remain this soft even when it grew out.

Toki smiled, and tilted her head forward to give him a purr, letting him comb his fingers up behind her neck, and along the top of her skull, where her mane had previously covered her scar. Now her scar was barred to the world again, and it almost felt sensitive after so long of not having seen the light. "I love your hands." Toki murmurs almost in a daze as he massages gently. "You have such nice hands. Strong hands. Gentle hands. They feel so nice in my mane..."

"They will forever stay strong for you, my love." He told her. "It will be hard... It will be painful... but forever they will stay strong to keep you safe." He told her as he stopped scrubbing and simply took what suds he had and began to slowly roll them in her fur to bring her bliss.

Toki let her sockets close, and she slightly slumped as she relaxed, a soft bubbling purr rolling from her. She leaned forward some, simply basking in his warmth. Toki shivered as she let him massage her short mane, her fur soaking in the attention that it sorely needed. She let her mind go blank, and simply purred her bliss for him to hear.
Chapter 146

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: In which falling asleep is bad, so what can a husband do... but sing and do highjinks to annoy you into awareness? Also Merry Christmas to all of you. Posted this early as a gift to you all. <: 

It was cold.

It was so cold. But it was always warm in the house because of Grillby recovering in the next room, so what the hell was so fucking cold?

Papyrus gave a low groan and curled up in his covers, trying to warm up just a little. Maybe the power had gone out, or someone had left a door open? His eyes opened and he rolled onto his back, his arm reaching for where his wife laid. "Toki." He groaned. "Toki it's freezing in here... are you alright?" He spoke softly as he turned as best he could to look at her.

Her sockets were closed and dark, her neatly trimmed mane barely visible through the cluster of blankets that had been piled on top of her. She didn’t respond to him, didn’t seem to hear him, but she seemed to be making noise all the same.

A steady rattling was coming from her- she was shaking, like wind-chimes in a strong breeze. Toki was cold- so, so cold, that it seemed her body was exuding cold instead of warmth.

Her belly- warm the day prior- had dropped in heat drastically, and now felt like someone who had been soaking in cold water for too long.

The source of the chill in the room was the fire based skeleton that had sucked all the heat out of it, to no help for herself.

"Toki... Toki!" He pushed himself up to sit so he could turn his form to set his hands on hers. "Toki... holy fuck... Toki, wake up!"

Her brows furrowed as his hands set on hers, and her icy fingers snagged his hands, and tugged them to her face. "Mmmmmmnooooo..." She made a fussy noise. "It’s too cold…” He was so warm.

"Toki...." He pulled her close and immediately tried to close his warm form around her. "You're so cold…” He informed her shakily.

She tucked her face into his chest, and it was like her body was sucking out all his warmth. Where before, she had exuded warmth like a campfire and radiated heat like sunlight, Toki now sucked in heat like she was starving for it.

And, perhaps, her body was. There may have been something wrong- more than just her magic being drained.

"It’s so cold...” She whines softly. ‘”S so cold Pap… m’ so tired...” Her face nuzzled into him with a
trembling sigh, and she basked in what little warmth she could glean from him.

"Don’t fall asleep, Toki... Stay awake for me.” He told her, before he growled and looked around for his phone. Damn it, where was it!? ”Toki, stay focused on my voice, don’t fall asleep.”

Toki’s sockets peeked open at him for nary a second, before she shook her head slowly, and nuzzled against his chest. She was too tired, too cold- sleep was easier. She couldn’t feel the shivers, the cold biting at her limbs and making her feel numb.

For once, Toki ignored his desperate words and soft pleas, and let the rumble of his voice lull her to sleep as she tried to savor his warmth.

... No of course that didn't work... lord Toki please forgive him.

He took a deep breath, then he began to sing in the most god awful pitch.

"ON TOP OF SPAGHEEEEETTTIIIII! ALL COVERED IN CHEEEEEESE!"

Toki’s attempt at peaceful sleep was interrupted, and she moaned pathetically into his chest. “Nooo. No meatballs. They’re not lost. Shhhh. Sleep. No cheese.”

"I LOST MY POOR MEEEEAAATBALLLLL! WHEN SOMEONE NEEDED TO GO GET MY FATHER AND HIS MAJESTTYYYYY!" He knew his caterwauling would be heard by at least one other person, so hopefully Sans was off to get said elders.

Toki wriggled a hand free of her cocoon to try and physically shush him. She failed, and all she ended up doing was stuffing her fingers in his mouth instead of muffling him. Her eyes closed again. “Shhhhh.” She moaned. “Shhh. No. Nnoooooo. No meatballs and majesty. So loud. Just sleep.”

"You'll thank me for this later." He told her as he then spat her hand out. "AND SO I'LL KEEEP SIIIIINGIIING, UNTIL FATHER COOOOOMMESSS! AND NOT IN THAT VERSION, I KNOW THAT YOU THOOOOOOOUUGHT!"

Toki let out a whiny whimpering noise, and lifted a hand to pull her blankets up. She tucked them over her face, letting it muffle his voice, and then tried to settle back down again. She was cold- why didn’t he understand that she was tired and cold? She needed sleep…

Seeing his first tactic was failing, he switched to another, more annoying song. "THIS IS THE SONG THAT NE-VER ENDS! YES IT GOES ON AND ON MY FRIENDS!” He sang as he began to pull the blankets from her hands, knowing it sounded like god awful screeching.

Toki hunched up under the blankets, but didn’t seem to have the strength to hold them to her as he pulled them from her hands. Her sockets didn’t open when he exposed her to his voice, and she seemed to be able to almost tune him out now. She was tired- why didn’t he understand that she was tired and cold? She needed sleep…

He stopped at this point, simply held her tighter. "Toki, don’t fall asleep!” He pleaded. It was a losing fight, and he wasn’t sure what else to do- before he heard the door open. He lifted his head as Tenebris entered, a little winded and in his pajamas.

"Toki...!” He gasped.

Toki let out the softest, most quietest of whines- it was the basest of sounds, from one beast to another- a sound that tried to explain everything, but couldn’t, and only left everyone more anxious.
Anxiety it did indeed induce as Tenebris came to her side. "She's nearly frozen..."

"She burnt out, Father..." Papyrus' voice was hoarse now as a result of his reckless singing, but his worry was more than evident as he spoke.

Toki shifted her head just a bit to peek up at him with a grimace. Too many people, too much noise-she couldn’t sleep. “N’less you’re here to cuddle up f’warmth, go away.” She grunts. “I’m tired. ‘S cold. I wanna sleep. You’re all being loud.”

Toki was beyond burnt out- it was becoming horribly clear that her inner fire, what all fire based monsters had, was nearly gone. She was in a severe ‘fever’ of sorts- and her delirium was understandable.

"Toki, you're basically experiencing hypothermia!" He told her sharply, carefully picking her up. "We need to get you to a fire..." He turned, intending to go to Grillby’s room, and then looked up to see his mate enter.

"Oh dear..." Asgore looked worried as he came to the younger couple's side, reaching out to set a hand on her head. "Oh dear, oh dear, she's running a fever..." His tone was soft, and a deeper rumble. He was probably still tired as he was in some clothes hastily put on in his summoning.

"I-Is there anything you can do to help?" Papyrus asked weakly.

"Indeed... I might need to take her somewhere fireproof, however... this won't be pretty, but it should do the trick..."

Toki's head lolled and she squirmed as she was pulled from the covers. The noise she let loose out of her mouth was not unlike a distressed beast.

Her eyes focused on Asgore as best she could, and her brow furrowed. "You... Gotta have words with you." Delirious by a fever or not, it seemed Toki wasn't going to forget that she had words to say with the king.

Even if she couldn't remember them. She was too cold and out of it to remember much.

"... Too cold." She complains, her legs kicking fussily as she squirmed in his arms. "Please stop." She begged softly. "Sleep... No hyoi... Hypo... Big word..."

Big words weren't usually an issue. She was clearly out of it.

"Later." He told her, slowly picking her up before he held her close, his hands starting to heat up where they touched her.

Toki squirmed and keened in delirious irritation, until she felt Asgore's palms start to heat up. Then, the heavily pregnant skeleton gave a shuddering sigh and a soft moan, and slumped into him.

"Warm..."

Her body sucked in the heat, desperate for it. Her soul pulsed brighter in her chest, trying to draw most of the heat there so it could ignite once more once it warmed enough.

He held her a little tighter as his hands continued to eat up, quickly growing warmer and warmer until they suddenly burst into flames against her.

Toki went slack as he warmed her clothes and avoided catching them on fire due to millennia of practice in safe magic uses. She curled into the king, her arms curling over her chest, and she
groaned softly into his mane. “Warm...”

She didn’t have the magic to reinforce and protect herself from the fire, but her body was resistant to it regardless. All her body did was draw on the heat, and try to cover herself in it as much as she could. The bright pulsing of her soul grew, until her soul slid out of it’s own accord, approaching the flames born of magic, not unlike the time that Grillby had re-lit her fire and warned her not to let her magic get too low.

The green of her soul was a sickly color, lacking the vibrancy it usually did. It reached for his flames, desperate to latch on and devour his magic to heal her body.

Thankful that he made progress, Asgore lifted his hand and closed it around her soul delicately, before he gave another surge of magic to envelop her soul in fire.

The color of her soul began to increase as Asgore fed raw flame magic directly into her soul. As he did, Toki’s brows furrowed, and she began to squirm some. Her limbs tingled uncomfortably. It wasn’t unlike someone’s limbs thawing out from being too cold- the tingly feeling of icy needles crawling over skin. This time, it was over bone, prickling and pressing as Asgore thawed her out and warmed her body and nursed her internal fires back up from the fleeting and dying embers to the roaring blaze they should have been.

Toki gave a soft whimper, her eye lights blossoming to life in her sockets. They were clearer now, less disoriented with fever. Her head lolled to the side, and she sucked in a soft breath, her hands clenching. “It hurts...” She whispered.

She’d gotten too drained, too empty- her flame had nearly gone out. It had been going out until Asgore stopped it.

Tenebris sighed in relief.

Papyrus spoke up, partly reaching for his wife with one hand from the bed. "Wh-what happened to her?” He asked softly.

Toki reached back for him, and gave a pained keen, a soft warbling sound that was more beast than human- a plea for her mate to make the pain go away.

Asgore could do no more to help her levels of pain with his hands busy- he couldn’t rub her limbs or stimulate her joints to get his magic flowing smoothly through her, or work the chill from her bones. He could, however, bring her to her mate.

He shifted to sit down where she had once laid, cradling the pregnant skelebeast to his chest. It left her in range of her worried mate however, and left him able to explain while he tried to soothe her.

“Her fire was nearly gone...” Asgore spoke softly. “There are... There are hardly even embers left for me to nourish.” His eyes close, and he sighs, a great tremendous sigh through his nose. His hand continues to pump magic into her soul. “We were nearly too late. A few hours more... And she would have been beyond saving.” He says gravely. “I am surprised neither of you caught it. From my understanding, this is not the first time her fire has been depleted- Sans took her to Grillby once before.”

"I had not thought her condition would be this severe...” Tenebris answered softly, his gaze lowered in shame. "I was not prepared for proper treatment, I am thankful you were here, my mate..."

Papyrus lowered his head as well. “Oh Toki... I’m so sorry...” He spoke sadly.

Toki’s hand reached out, and she found her husband’s hand. Her fingers held his, and she
whimpered at the sensation- like knives, jabbing into her bones. She didn’t blame him, she wasn’t upset- she hurt, so, so badly…

Asgore sighed. “Were there signs?” He asks. “Prior to this morning’s… mess.” His fingers shifted their grip on her soul, and he pumped another flood in. Her body was so empty, even he, with his great stores of magic, felt like he was filling an ocean with baby spoon. He was warming her, though. Her embers were now a small flame- and he just needed to keep it going long enough for her body to heat up again. “Shivers, fevers, chills- anything of that sort?”

"I... I don't know... She never got this cold physically. We kept her wrapped up and Sans often brought her some cocoa..." Papyrus was shaking in both body and voice as he answered Asgore. "Every time she picked up a tremble, I'd cuddle with her and she would stop trembling after enough time." He answered.

Toki’s sockets closed, though her mouth opened. “Didn’t want to worry you.” She mumbled. “You were warm… I could take comfort in your warmth...”

“Your body was craving heat.” Asgore supplied gently. “All of the measures you did, all of the heat you kept trapped in her body, it prolonged her life, or she would have died hours ago.” He answers flatly. He shakes his head with a sigh.

“F-feel like I’m dying now.” Toki groans. “Everything hurts...”

“Everything was shutting down in preparation for death- we’re lucky your belly was still warm enough to sustain the pups.” Asgore sighs. “For monsters with fire based magic, if we get cold, or feel cold, it means our fire is low. We need another fire monster or equal or greater power to simulate it. Anyone can help a child, normal monsters can help normal monsters, Bosses can help normal monsters, but only Bosses can help Bosses.” He supplies. “Fire elementals are the most fragile of the fire magic group- and require specific physical care to reignite. Or special venoms.”

Asgore glanced at Papyrus, and then at Tenebris. “Toki was dying.” He said slowly, enunciating his last word to press upon them the severity of what happened. “I understand you both were relieved when she woke… But her shivers and trembles should have tipped you off when they didn’t get better. However- now you know better. And now, you can help prevent this from happening again. I can’t be here all the time now- not with everything that’s going on. There is a chance Toki can relapse again. You’ll need to watch her and contact me to prevent it. She needs warmth- bodily warmth. Putting her near Grillby would harm them both though.”

Tenebris nodded as he took in his husband’s words before he sighed, “Grillby is still sick, too sick to keep her warm... My magic is insufficient; it would drown the heat out...” He growled quietly.

"What about Tori?" Sans then asked from where he had entered from the living room, holding Solstice in his arms. Thankfully his daughter was still asleep.

Oh his brother had a point there...

"Tori could keep her warm, right?" Papyrus asked, slowly rubbing circles into Toki's hand to comfort her.

Papyrus’ hand felt like glass shards stabbing into her hand. Toki keened, but handled it.

Asgore makes a considering sound. He still was not on the best terms with his ex-wife, and that was frankly most of the reason he very rarely got to see Frisk. “If you can convince her to be pulled away from Frisk, yes.” He nods. “The house has too much of a smokey smell from the coals for Frisk to be
safe hanging out here for long. Human lungs are not monster lungs, after all.” There honestly wasn’t enough smoke to be a bother- the cats were still healthy and fine, after all, and they kept the house ventilated. But Toriel worried, he knew- and there would be no stopping her. Frisk was her first priority. Anyone else was second.

“If not,” he continues, “So long as you don’t try to give her any magic, you won’t do any harm to Toki. Physical warmth- the touch of a palm, skin to skin contact, a hot bath- it all works to help fuel a flame when the monster’s magic is low. Her flame just got too low for any of that to be more than a crutch for prolonging the inevitable.”

“So… So like… Like a family cuddle pile?” She asks, eyes flinching slightly as she feels her feet twitch reflexively. “With lots of blankets? Would that be warm if Toriel says no?”

“Yes.” Asgore supplies, and soothes her with a careful pulse of magic. “Hot cocoa,” he glances to Sans, “Is also good. Hot meals, hot packs, heated blankets- for all intents and purposes, treat her like a hypothermia victim.”

"Sounds like a plan. I'll go see if Tori's awake and see if she's willing to help us... Pops, I say you go and get your spare blankets, and I vote we set up a nest for Toki.” Sans spoke firmly.

Tenebris rumbled and gave a brief nod in agreement. "I agree... Thank you for your help, Asgore…” He rumbled, leaning over to nuzzle his mate.

Asgore nuzzled him back quietly in return and gave him a soft look. “Of course. No one is perfect, my dear. I am glad I was able to help.” He gives a soft hum, and then glances at the stairs. “In fact… I wonder if moving her upstairs would be beneficial. Heat rises.” He glances to the living room, where the hottest part of the house was, to the upstairs. Her bedroom was very nearly right above it.

“Nest would be nice.” Toki could feel Dear try to stir at the idea, rousing up just a bit before dying down due to lack of strength to keep herself surfaced. “Upstairs too… Papy and I can stay there and it’d be away from a less… Publicly accessible room. I mean… It’s not like you really go far from me, eh?” She gives him a weak look.

Really, he didn’t. They were downstairs for his ease of access, and yet he didn’t leave her side. She also would relish having a space they could talk and cuddle in that wasn’t the main walking path for everyone who came through the house.

Asgore nodded. “We need soft materials organized, and then I can carry you up. I’m afraid your father may need to carry you.” He looks at his mate’s son. “She is not stable enough yet for me to remove my hand from her soul.”

"That's okay... I know she is safe with you and Father. If we go upstairs, we can use the bathtub more often.” He mentioned softly.

“That you can.” Asgore nods quietly. He glances to Toki, watching as Tenebris and Sans take their leave, and hums quietly. “I... know we have a lot to discuss...”

“Yes.” She says. “Now that you’re not hiding from me. But... I think I’m going to wait... Until I don’t feel like I’m covered in razor blades.” Toki gives a soft grumble. “But you’re not off the hook. I’m not happy…”

“I know.” He sighs. “We’ll talk when you feel better.”

“How long will that be?”
“Not long once her flames are restored.” Asgore answers. “Once her fires are fixed, her body will be able to naturally restore magic- and not focus on trying to feed her flames.” This was mostly said to Papyrus, despite Toki having asked the question. “You just need to keep her warm, keep her body fed, and make sure she relaxes and rests. Her body will do the rest- with only the occasional need for magic donations to feed the litter.”

"We can still rely on the people." He murmured. "Our village was not excused, we have so many people willing to help us… We won’t run short of magic to feed the pups.”

“Despite being busy with preparations for the coming events, the village will step in to help.” Asgore nods.

Toki makes a soft noise. “Dare I ask what the preparations are for?” She asks- and there is the sharp edge of a warning in her tone.

Asgore’s mane ruffles, and lifts at her warning. He straightens instinctively in response to the easily irritable woman in his grasp. “Nothing bad, I assure you. It’s a joyous occasion- even in these troubling times, our people find small measures of joy. We have decided to… For lack of better terms, say ‘fuck the human rules’, and Kon and Lana are getting married.


Papyrus grew momentarily worried at their fluffing up at one another, though as it settled down and Toki was given the notice of the new to be wed, he snickered at his wife's reaction. "It took her a minute to realize!" He gave a quiet laugh. “Yes- they decided to get married. They’ve been engaged for a while, but the rules against humans and monsters, you know… They decided to say fuck the rules.”

Toki’s brows furrow, and she can’t even laugh at her husband’s joke. “Well… Then we need to fix the village before the wedding, because there’s a lot wrong with it right now.” She says firmly.

Asgore’s mane stiffens again. “We’ll discuss that, when you’re better.” His tone brokers no arguing.

“Yes, we will.” She says, and her tiny mane bristles right back at him. The tension between them could have been cut with a spork.

And then, awkward silence descends between the two of them.

Toki rolls her head back over to her husband, and she sighs quietly as she waits for Tenebris to come back with nesting supplies, and for Sans with Toriel. Maybe Toriel. “My bones hurt.” She informs him gently, with a soft sigh. “Did you know that bones can get a pins and needles feeling? Except it’s like the pins are razors, and the needles are knives.”

"Heh... Unfortunately yes..." Was Papyrus’ answer, before hearing a thump from upstairs. "What in gods name was that...?" He spoke quietly, leaning his head back, before he made a face. He couldn't call out after that god-awful singing…

Toki blinked at him, and quirked a brow. “It’s probably Tenebris. Daaaaaaaaaaad? ” She called, looking up at the upper floor.

“Grandpa…?” The kid’s voices floated down, answering for Toki.

“Yep. It’s your Dad.” Toki hums. "He must have gotten back already…"
"I wouldn't be surprised, that old man moves fast." Papyrus snickered, knowing all to well that his dear old dad would sulk at his words. "Ah, your Majesty, do you think you could give us a lift upstairs?" He asked. "I have no doubt that father's already in the works of making a nest for my beloved."

“I think so.” Asgore shifts Toki, and looks at her. He shifts his grip on her soul to just the arm holding her, and then he stands, making use of her diminutive size to cradle her like a small child in one arm. He makes his way around the bed, and leans down to do the same to Papyrus. “You’re a bit larger than your wife.” He says. “If you can, put your arms around my neck so I don’t lose my grip on you.”

Toki wasn’t going to trust him not to drop her, so her fingers slunk around his neck, and sunk into his fur, inviting her husband to join her with a shaky smile. The motion drew needles of pain up her limbs. At least she was coherent again.

He nodded once and reached up to lock his arms around Asgore’s neck. Were Sans here, Papyrus could smell a bad joke in the works, though thankfully this time it went un-smelled. "I've got a good grip... careful with my pelvis." He told the king cautiously.

Asgore nodded, and was careful to support him. Once he was sure he had a grip on both of them, he grunted and made his way to the stairs. It was still dark outside, obvious by the colors of the windows as they passed by.

Grillby gave them an odd look as they passed by, having been woken from sleep no doubt by Papyrus’ delightful caterwauling.

Asgore gave him a nod, and then tooted the duo upstairs, his fingers momentarily tightening on Toki’s soul and making her gasp in a definitely unpleasant way as he nearly lost his grip on her and dropped her. Once he fixed his grip, he plodded up to the top, and made his way to their room. He tipped his head forward, and tapped his horn against the door.

"Come on in!" Was Tenebris reply from within the bedroom, before there was the squeal of children echoing behind his words. It was no doubt the twins falling prey to their grandpapa's idea of fun by trapping them in blankets.

"His hands are full, Father." Papyrus spoke up.

"Ah! In that case..." There was a grunt before the door opened and Tenebris smiled up at them both. "Come on in."

Asgore padded in with a grateful smile for his mate, and smiled at the pile of blankets both twins were struggling to get out of. “It appears you have help.” He hums gently. He pads further in, and glances at the work in progress of a nest. “Is it completed enough for me to set them down? Or do you have a seating spot I can rest them since their bed is downstairs?”

Toki gave a soft sound through her teeth, and the twins ceased their rough housing to try and squirm out and get to her.

“Daddy?” Honey lifts her head to to look at him, the first out of the blanket. “Daddy? You were doing scary singing. Are you going crazy? Do we need to take you to the funny farm like in that silly song?”

Papyrus groaned quietly. "Honey, no. That was me trying to keep your mother awake for her own sake..." He told her.
"The nest is ready, all it needs are those who are to inhabit it." Tenebris rumbled in reply.

Toki can’t stop her quiet and tired snort at his behest. “I dunno… From what I remember, you sounded like you needed to go to the funny farm.” She says.

Gracie peeked at them from around the corner, Gael at her heels. Both cats fluffed as they heard Papyrus, and they stared at him with big eyes.

“Look at that, Daddy.” Honey points. “You traumatized the cats.”

Toki laughs.

Asgore shakes his head, and he made his way over to the most completed edge of the nest. He eased down Papyrus first as he knelt at the edge, and then worked on lowering Toki down. This room was much warmer than downstairs, and he could already feel the improvement in Toki’s bones. “In a few moments, she should be stable enough for me to go downstairs and make a hot pack for her to rest her head and help keep the heat in. If you all want to pile in with her and keep her warm, she’ll hold until I can return- or Toriel, if Sans returns with her.” He partly doubted his ex-wife would come, but one never knew.

Immediately Tenebris took his place and set up the blanket that would cover the younger couple up snugly.

Papyrus slowly climbed into place before he extended his arms to his wife. "Come on~ It's already so warm~" He purred to her.

Toki shifted awkwardly as she was set down. She didn’t move from Asgore’s side at first, looking at her soul. “Not until he lets go. I don’t want to goo.” She says awkwardly.

The King fluffed a bit, and carefully guided her soul back into her chest. “Sorry.”

Toki nodded to him, and got shakily onto her hands and knees. Her palms had warmed enough that they weren’t too bad with pain spikes now, but her legs hurt something horribly- and it was visible on her face as she took a few shaking steps deeper into the nest.

Her kids made their way to her side, and made sure she didn’t fall until she was at their father’s side. When she’d settled on her side, Skylar sat down at her knees and started rubbing her legs. “Daddy-” In his anxiety over his mother, he’d fallen back to his pre-Papyrus freak out title. “What happened?” He asks anxiously. “Why does Momma’s bond feel like she’s hurting when she moves? She’s so cold.”

Asgore looked at Tenebris. “I’ll leave her in your hands while I get a hot pack. Use your body heat, all of you.”

Honey nodded, and wiggled up to try and warm the bottom of her mother’s belly.

"Thank you, Asgore." Tenebris smiled up at Asgore, before rumbling as he nuzzled his face into his daughter in law’s shoulder with a hot snuff of air.

"Mommy is… hurting really badly after the mean humans attacked us. She's recovering as best she can but she can only do so much by herself. She needs help from all of us if she wants to recover to her best..." Papyrus explained carefully to his son, speaking with a low volume and, to the best of his ability, a mellow tone.

Skylar frowned softly and noded, accepting that he wouldn’t get more information than that.
Toki settled more firmly on her side, and shifted to nestle into her husband. She settled Skylar into her side, and rubbed his shoulder gently. “Let the adults worry, okay, baby?” She says softly to him. “I’ll be okay. Papy? Dad? I’m cold...”

Skylar puffed his cheeks and sprawled against her hip, trying to warm her as best he could. “Grandpa. You’re big- warm Mama’s back.”

Asgore chuckled, and left the elder twin to boss around his mate as he turned to go downstairs.

"As you wish, my dear Sky." He rumbled in reply, sitting up a little before he grinned and shifted around a little behind Toki. "Toki darling, put your hands above your head and don't freak out." He told her.

"Father, what are you planning?" Papyrus spoke before he turned his head and saw what he was planning. He then chuckled and shook his head. "Father you're going to spook her by wording it that way." He snorted.

Toki was indeed wary, and she tucked her head a bit. “So… Yeah, that definitely does freak out the pregnant lady in pain when you say it so ominously like that.” She says dryly. Slowly, shakily, her arms raise above her head as best she can. “I can’t hold this for long, Dad. Please be gentle with me.”

With that, there was warmth around her as he carefully pulled Toki into the turtleneck he had returned in. It was no doubt a clever move on his part to start making some warmth to offer his daughter in law. "Welcome to sweatertown, my dear." He purred, relinquishing his sleeves to let her use her upper arms as the lower pair were gently overlapped by his own arms.

She thrummed softly at the warmth, and being allowed to use her upper arms. Her hands were eaten by the ends of his sleeves, but it allowed her to reach out and cuddle her children and husband as they moved to not be squished by their grandfather.

His arms got to curl around her belly as he pinned her lower arms to her stomach in a hug. While this did put his massive hands right over her sensitive and swollen nipples, that tingled with cold pains, it also let him feel the first tentative squirms of the litter as they finally started to warm up to acceptable levels again.

A slow cramp tightened over her skin under his fingers, but it didn’t seem to pain her badly, nor did it seem to alarm the litter. It was likely just a faint tightening of her uterus in response to warming up again.

"Sweatertown is great." She decides. “Wings are a little squished, but I’ll take squished over cold.” She makes a content face, even as the neck of his turtleneck threatens to inch up over her chin and swallow her face like a warm welcoming snake. She’s tempted to burrow in and not come out, but she wants to see her family.

With the vocalized approval from Toki, Tenebris proceeded to grin like an idiot as he tightened his grip just slightly. What he was most interested in was the sudden sensation under his palms; such movement from the pups made his soul soar and for a moment he was lost to the bliss and he let a thrilled crooning howl escape him, slightly spooking Papyrus in the process.

"Oh there they are, there's my puppies!" The older male cooed happily. "My beautiful, beautiful sons and daughters to be. Every last one of you five survived; you're going to make our pack so strong~"

The look on Papyrus' face was initially surprise, but as Tenebris celebrated the strength and resilience of his future children as he cradled them, it mellowed him and he smiled happily in his enjoyment of
how things went from near-tragedy to such heartwarming sweetness in the span of a half-hour.

The loud noise spooked the litter, netting more squirms for his hands to enjoy, and a few cramps for Toki, but they settled at the talking and the petting, and the large, warm hands handling their mother’s belly.

Toki hummed softly, letting him have his time feeling the shifts and squirms of the litter within. He was happy- and based on his reaction, the remaining five pups hadn’t been lost, so there was good news among the bad of the day.

Toki’s hands slid out, and the needle feeling wasn’t so bad as she took her husband’s hands in her own. “He’s exuberant.” She gives a lopsided smile to him, and tiredly lets her skull sag in the turtleneck. It’s pulled tight enough that it offers her support- she doesn’t need a pillow, even if her legs feel cold. “I’m glad the litter are okay.”

“Come closer?” She asks softly as the kids flop across her legs with a blanket and Gracie- and their summons. Snuggle is horribly warm, so she allows his invasion with a warm thrum. “He might have my belly, but I could use some husband cuddles- and I think you need some wife cuddles.”

Toki can’t stop the yawn that escapes, and she feels bad because she knows that her yawn is probably going to amp up her husband’s anxiety.

In the arms of his father, the yawn was witnessed with less fear than it would have taken any other time and Papyrus smiled as he quickly found himself a place in her embrace, a loving purr rising from him as he settled in place. "I love that I married such a strong willed woman. Fear always drags me down and yet here you sit with a smile on your face, surrounded by the people you love..." He chuckled quietly. "God I love you, Tokiko Nara Gaster." He purred, leaning up to kiss her.

“I was always thinking I married the stronger willed man,” Toki says as she meets his kiss with a soft purr, “Fear may drag you down, but it doesn’t control you.” She says warmly. Toki nuzzles into him and loops her arms behind his neck, sighing into him with a soft, almost content noise. He was warm- warmer than her at least. “I sit here with a smile on my face because I love you all, and I’m happy to be with my family. I might hurt, I might feel cold, and I might not feel all that great, but it doesn’t stop me from loving you and feeling happy.”

“Ewww.” Honey groans. “Stop being sappy. It’s so gross.” She whines at them. “I don’t wanna hear your kissy sounds.”

Toki snorts. “So we’re sappy, but your Grandpapa is not when he’s loving on my tummy?” The litter squirmed under his hands again, and she grunted at the tiny feet battering her insides. “Though the litter don’t feel like they’re loving the kneading you’re doing, Dad- and my nipples are definitely not.”

"I apologize, daughter of mine, but I simply cannot resist such a joyful reaction... To feel their paws under my hands after a whole week of fearing for your life and theirs in the same, and then the scare with you this morning... I am surprised that I am not crying already. Perhaps the chance I was given to envelop you in a life-giving warmth is all that keeps me from shedding tears." Tenebris’ voice was soft now; it wasn’t rumbling, or even purring. It was as if he was whispering his words.

She sighs softly and nods. "I understand, Dad. It was probably doubly scary with me getting so chilled with my internal fire so gone." Her secondary hands shift, and move away from his kneeling so she could rest her slightly cool palms against his hands. "I'm not saying stop kneading. Just ease up just a bit. All of me is still thawing, and that includes them, and they're very fussy. Their kicking is giving me cramps when in the right spot. They've definitely got your feet."
A solid thump along one of her ribs had her wheezing quietly. "Maybe your tail too."

He chortled at that and carefully moved his hands to a more relaxed part of her stomach. "My tail is a good asset to have. They will indeed be very well balanced with such a limb." He rumbled. "Do you think they will inherit my tail-blade? Or do you think they will end up with a feature more like your own?" He asked.

His hands resting lower on her belly makes her relax with a soft sigh. “There is perfect. Gods, your hands are warm.” She relaxes a bit between her father in law and husband, listening as her children settle down to get more sleep against her legs. “I think they might get both? Not sure. If they’re going to get anything from me, they might be venomous. If that’s the case, you’ll need to be careful of tantrums.”

They got to see what her venom did to living flesh that didn’t use her venom for healing.

He rumbled quietly. "So true. I hope it does not cause trouble later on." He agreed.

“There’s always the chance, but we’ll have to wait and see.” She hums. “You should have time to work on an antidote in either case, since my venom should work for a base.” She gives a tired yawn.

Asgore steps back into the room, his arms full of heating packs. He pads over, seeing the burrito around Toki, and gives a soft hum. “Papyrus, if you wouldn’t mind packing these in between the three of you and the children, this should help maintain her body temperature. Is she feeling any colder?”

"She doesn’t feel colder.” Toki confirms. “She can speak for herself. My feet are cold, but the rest of me is warming up steadily. The hot packs would be welcome though.” She lifts a hand eagerly for one, the other looped around Papyrus and unable to raise. “More warm is always good.”

Papyrus accepted the other two hot packs and gently placed them where they would best warm his wife, or at least aid the heating further. "You can never have enough warmth at a time like this.”

“Very true.” Asgore agrees. “I’m going to go wait for your brother- or perhaps call and see what is taking him so long.”

Toki settled the first hot pack against her neck and the inside curve of her horn. She sighs as the other packs are settled on her body. One is slid under her shirt, along the lower curve of her swollen belly, while the last is set between her thighs. The moan she lets out is a little sinful. “It’s so warm.” She mews softly, eyes closing in bliss. “I think I get Dad’s happy noises when I cover him in warm fire magic feelings.”

Papyrus gave a soft nod to Asgore as he left before he cooed and nuzzled as close as he could to his wife. "I love you." He purred happily. "I love you and I love our children and our family and our home... And I don't think anything could ruin this moment of just perfection we have right now~"

Toki smiled at him and purrs loudly, a pleased rattling sound deep in her chest. “Nothing indeed.”

Well, maybe one thing.

Perhaps a few moments later, Toki jolted with a startled and pained squawk, her legs pressing together with an uncomfortable motion as her hands slid as low on her belly as they could. “Okay maybe getting kicked in the cervix by fetal monster legs can do that. I don’t think they appreciate my legs resting together. Loose pillow? Please let there be a loose pillow, holy shit that was like a light lightning bolt up my bits. Thank god I don’t have a human woman’s bladder anymore, or we’d be in trouble.”
"Not the first lightning bolt I'll bet you've gotten up your bits~" Tenebris murmured with a chuckle.

"Oh you smooth motherfu-"

"Loose pillow!" Without warning, a plush pillow flew in through the doorway and promptly hit Toki in the face with a soft, sweet-smelling 'POMF'.

Sans entered with a grin, a smiling Toriel on his heels.

"Hello Toki, dear~" The lovable goat-mom greeted sweetly.

Any fuss Toki might have made at Tenebris ended rather quickly as she stuffed the pillow betwixt her legs and relieved some of the pressure and angry kicking that Tenebris’ litter were fussing up. “You’re an ass for hitting the sick pregnant lady.” She informs her brother in law. Then, she offers a wave to Toriel. “Hi Toriel. I’m surprised you came, honestly.”

She didn’t expect the goat mom to leave Frisk with, well, anyone besides a heavily armed battalion of guards after the events of the past week or so.

Sans gave a playful grin, not at all bothered about being called an ass.

Toriel approached. "Frisk was still asleep so I was able to move away for a moment long enough to come see you... How are you doing, Tokiko?" She asks.

Yep, it surprised her that Toriel left Frisk at home, but she chose not to say a word.

Toki sighed softly. “I’m tired.” She admits softly. “Still cold, but finally feeling like I’m getting warmer. Asgore said my flame was almost gone.” She shifts, and nestles further into the turtleneck she’s sharing. Some part of her instincts are wary, wanting her to shoo away the intruder from her nest while she’s not feeling so well. Instead of giving in to baser instincts and what her beast wanted, Toki motioned the motherly ex-queen to come closer. “You can come in the nest, Toriel. I’m sure you probably want to check progress too and make sure my flame hasn’t lost any progress.”

"Of course..." she came and gently took an open spot by Toki's legs, "You certainly look comfortable, I would hate to disturb what you’ve got going for your comfort" she laughed gently.

"It's a temporary comfort." Toki replies with a bemused smile. Toki's legs were the only mostly open spot. The twins and the summons took up most of her thighs, but her shins were open. When Asgore had said bury her in warmth, they took him literally. "I can't stay comfortable for long with as big as I am. I, ah, also don't have the magic to call out my soul for you, so..." She motions her to have at her. She glances back at her brother in law. "Are you going to go back to Grillby and my sweet Niece?"

"Yeah... I'll go soon. Asgore asked me to hold on for a moment. He said he's got a good method to help Grillby but it wasn't recommended I stick around. He mentioned it could be lethal to any non-elementals."

"Ah... At least at long last he proved his father wrong..." Toriel spoke up softly, a relieved smile on her face.

Toki made a confused buzz, and dropped her arms. She supposed Toriel didn’t need to check her soul, which was fine. She really didn’t need so many people handling her soul, frankly. “I’m a little lost, but I’m getting used to that feeling. Doesn’t mean I like it though. What does him helping Grillby have anything to do with his father? And why didn’t he do it sooner if he could have helped him?”
"It's a long story, but the shortened version of it is Asgore's father possessed a magic that many deemed 'hellfire magic'. It was a dangerous fire magic that was never seen outside the wills of the strongest fire elemental monsters. For one not of the natural element, it's severely draining on magic stores. I would bet he needed time to build up magic for the sake of not passing out after this." She sighed.

Toki nodded slowly. "That would make sense. And I see... It should restore Grillby back to full health though, correct? And not harm Asgore, beyond leaving him a fair bit tired?"

She still needed to talk to him, but she would feel bad about kicking a metaphorically dead horse- he would need time to recover, as would she, before their conversation could happen to get Nara Village back in order.

She nodded gently, "If not full health, then no more than a few scratches left... but it will do the trick." She answered. "Meanwhile, I suppose I've got some magic for you as well, my child." She hummed, holding up her hands with a smile.

Toki nodded slowly, glad Asgore wouldn’t be too harmed, and motioned to her frame. “I’m not going to turn down magic at this point. They need it.” She said, meaning the litter in her belly.

She gave a nod and sat on her knees as to reach and comfortably rest her hands on Toki's stomach. "Let's get these puppies warmed up." She hummed gently.

“Yes please. Though, you might need to dodge hands.” Toki laughs. “Tenebris is in kneading mode, and my secondary arms are stuck down there too.”

Toriel laughed gently and set her hands where she would not interrupt Tenebris, and steadily began to let her magic flow into her.

Toki sighed softly at the rich and aged fire magic flowed into her. Grillby was old, and so was Asgore, but there was something about Toriel’s magic that made her feel like it was a mother’s touch and so much more. She relaxed into the hot pads, her sockets drooping tiredly as the litter began to settle even under their father’s gentle but persistent kneading.

While she did that, Asgore came back upstairs. In one arm was little Solstice, and in the other... Well... Sans got up pretty quickly to take to the other side of his husband, "Grillby...!"

"Was it wise to disturb him from his resting place, Asgore?" Tenebris immediately spoke.

"I thought so at first indeed, though when I refused to help him, he tried to get up by himself and refused to let me touch him unless it was to get him up here..."

"You stubborn bastard..." Sans chuckled weakly as the Elemental’s arms tightly wrapped around him.

"I have better things to do than be dying on a slab in the front room." Grillby grunted firmly.

Toki glanced up as the weakened fire elemental spoke, and she made a soft, tired noise that translated in rough beast for them to join the pack in the nest if they were able to. There was space- she would allow them in her nest.

“Well spoke, Grillby. We’ve all got better things to do than be dying on a slab.” She yawns. “So come live with us in a nest, and be one with the warmth.”

"Now that neither of you are on death's door, it's certainly peritable." Asgore agreed gently.
"Come on, hot stuff." Cae smiled up at him and pulled him towards the comfortable looking nest.

Grillby gave a muted grunt and a crackle, and hobbled for the nest. He eased down onto all fours, and crawled up to settle into the spot above Toki’s head, resting against the backing of the nest with a soft, sore sigh. Healing he was, but everything ached, and he was still weak.

“lt’s good to see you looking better.” Toki murmurs to him softly, and thrums warmly, a soft pleased noise that her family was gathered close.

Sans joined him behind Tenebris and smiled as he quickly nestled up against his mate, before he reached up for Solstice. "Come to Momma, Solly~" He cooed.

Asgore chuckled and gave the skeleton the chirping skelemental. "Here you go..." He rumbled, giving a respectful nod to Toriel, who graciously gave one to him in return.

Toki made pleased chirping noises, a low buzzing bubbling up in her chest as everyone settled in. With all of the children here, with the cats slowly creeping in and the summons settled in, she was finding herself content and happy. She wasn’t in a wide open space, she didn’t have someone unknown at her back- even if it wasn’t a pack mate, they were family, and family trumped pack.

“Is she… piping?” Grillby asks, his gaze wandering to her as he cuddles up to his mate and his daughter. “I haven’t heard that pleased of a sound in a long time.”

"lt’s amazing what you can get with the power of family." Tenebris rumbled softly, leaning down to affectionately nuzzle his daught- in law. "A lovely young Queen piping her happiness for the world to hear~

Aliquam on the other hand, was celebrating his own way just how thrilled he was to hear her making such a wonderful sound. He had tightened his grasp on her, hidden his face, and was making his own version of piping, though it was deeper in tone and from the very depths of his chest. Papyrus was very happy. Very, very happy.

Toki’s pleased piping didn’t stop. She basked in the magic Toriel was giving her, and in the utter warmth she was surrounded in. She basked in the family she was surrounded in, and in the small bit of relative peace she had, even with the two here that she would instinctively rather not have close by.

Hearing the more feline version of her noise that her husband was emitting, Toki lifted her hands to pull his face flush into her bosom, and she cuddled him to her with the most content look to cross her face. She was warm, they were warm, and for a time she could let herself forget the bad things, to let the stress melt away and let her body relax enough make her almost completely complacent.

“lt’s a good noise.” Grillby agreed warmly. “Let us take our rest… I need sleep, and I would like to spend time here with my family now that I am able. Will Toki need more monitoring? Or will we be enough?”

"I have a feeling Tenebris will not waver his surveillance." Asgore assured Grillby, averting his gaze as Papyrus was rewarded with that which he would not admit was one of his favorite parts of his wife’s body.

"Pap holy crap, save some for the rest of us~" Sans teased with a muffled laugh.

Papyrus didn’t even care, he threw all restraint out the window and gave a blissful hum as he was enveloped by his wife’s perfect-sized breasts, and for a split second could be giving his prayers of thanks as his arms locked around Toki’s back, trapping her so that he could continue to use her as his
His fingers starting from where they rested to slowly crawl up and instead start to ever-so-gently to begin rubbing the bases of Toki’s wings. The soft, delicate joints were no doubt sore after the previous abuse, but he would knead in hopes to bring her relief.

Relief he did indeed bring her. She didn’t even respond to Grillby, her piping kicking up several notches. She sighed almost euphorically, and went limp in Tenebris’ turtleneck, her wings relaxing in his touch. The one that had been dislocated hurt, but his hands overrode the pain and made it damn near euphoric to have them touched.

She didn’t even mind him invading her turtleneck like so.

Asgore gave a quiet cough, and looked to Toriel. “Perhaps we should give them some time to themselves.”

"I agree. This is their time, we've done our job. I must go home anyways to go check on Frisk." Tori agreed quietly, slowly moving away from the nest to leave the bedroom. "Did you remember to open the windows after you cast hellfire?"

"Yes d-... Yes, Tori, I remembered…"

Old habits died hard, long, miserable deaths, Toki knew, and it made her soul cringe to hear Asgore nearly call Toriel ‘dear’. She remembered the Asgore and Toriel she’d grown to love in the other world, and her soul wept for the love that could have been, if not for the loss of two beautiful, amazing children and the anger that had drowned Asgore.

Toki peeked a socket over to watch them go, and then exhaled softly when they were gone. She thrummed softly, her piping quieting down as she tuckered out just a bit. “I’m glad we’re all okay.” She murmurs softly. “That we will all be okay.” She also couldn’t believe Kon was marrying Lana. Just… wow. He’d worked up the guts to ask her. “It’s been… a whirlwind of a day. Lows and highs and lows and highs…” She yawns.

"And hows and Lighs." Cae chuckled quietly where he laid.

"We're all going to be okay..." Tenebris rumbled warmly, ignoring Cae’s terrible joke. "And come the next dawn I sense we will wake up all with a sense of relief and peace upon us.”

“Mostly.” Toki yawns. “Once I’m back up and around, there is still one more task I have to handle.”

“Besides birthing your litter?” Grillby inquires, eyeballing her. “Which should be soon, I’d wager.”

“Besides that.” She agrees, not even willing to let labor anxiety take over her mind. “I have a discussion to have with Asgore, and a city to fix before I bring children into it.”

"That's going to be our concern, Toki dear." Tenebris rumbled quietly. "You are going to take it easy and recover, as well as take care of the pups when they're born." Toki sighs quietly, and her piping goes silent. “Tenebris, if you guys can’t handle it, then I'll have to.” She says. “You’ll have until I’m really up and about, but I want this done before the pups get here. I don’t want them born in what the village I love has turned into, you know?” If she had to, she’d deliver elsewhere. Digging dens wasn’t her skill, but instinct was instinct.

She rubs her fingers over her husband’s skull, which was still buried in her chest. “By what my body is telling me, it will be soon. Within the month.” She murmurs. “If you guys can handle it, and get
the village back to what it was before Asgore locked it down, then that will be one more stress off my mind, and he and I can resume not being awkwardly tense with each other, and hopefully the birth will go smooth.”

Tenebris nodded slowly in understanding.

Aliquam slowly lifted his head to look up at his wife. "We will try our best..." The younger male spoke gently. "But everyone is scared... they're afraid of the humans and his majesty's invoking of law is the only reason they sleep at night..."

“I understand they’re scared.” She says quietly, and her eyes droop shut as she sighs. “Everyone was terrified when they came topside. But shutting off from humanity, and making sure that every human is recorded when they come in... It’s not the right way. We functioned for close to two years with a legal terrorist group actively hunting us, killing us and HTMS and other good humans who supported us, and we never went into lockdown on a scale like this. This was a rogue group of the government...” Toki murmurs.

She cups his jaw and opens her sockets again. Toki’s fingers gently stroke her husband’s cheek bones, and she absorbs every defining feature of him that she can, drinking him in through her gaze. “And I made it clear what would happen if they moved against the Monsters again. But drawing back, tucking in and treating every human like they’re a threat is not the way to do it, and is only showing that we have something to hide. Not to mention the grave...” She sighs. “There is a lot you’ll have to do.”

Aliquam closed his eyes when she caressed his face, and he sighed quietly, before looking up again at his father.

Tenebris was looking away, a frown on his face.

"Father... do you think you could talk to him? If he just took long enough to think this through..." Papyrus spoke slowly and with a quiet voice.

"Y-Yes... I will try." Tenebris nodded gently.

Toki sagged quietly at Tenebris’ words, and exhaled with a tired relieved sound. “Thank you.” She mumbles. “I know you’re busy with my husband’s leg, but... If you can find the time, it would mean the world to me...”

Tense muscles began to relax, and exhaustion was taking hold. She was struggling to keep her eyes open. However, Toki wasn’t shivering, so there was no threat to her not waking up.

As she began to fall asleep, Tenebris started to hum a soft tune, one that would make his very form vibrate with his tones... he wanted her to be at ease and to fall asleep quickly.... so he worked to ensure it.

The humming lulled her down, and her breathing slowed rapidly. She fell asleep with one arm looped around her husband, and the other limp below her. Toki didn't take long to lull to sleep- nor did it take her long to slip into a deep and restful sleep, her temperature slowly but steadily climbing as she lay surrounded in all sans two members of her immediate Monster family.
Chapter 147

Strider Notes: It’s good to remember now that Toki is not a natural born beast, and does not have full control over her instincts. Shenanigans abound when nesting instincts strike~

Just another day and she would be considered thirteen weeks into her pregnancy. She’d been pregnant for a little over three months- and while Toki wasn’t sick of the pregnancy, she was certainly tired of the demands her body wanted of her and her family.

She still needed to heal, so the magic demand was twofold on top of what her children needed to continue developing. Thankfully, their demands were lessening from the start of her gestation, but it didn’t make much difference when it came to refilling her magic stores.

Through her lack of enjoyment, Toki at least had company when there was no one else. Dear would sit with her in her head, having come out of her seclusion. They would converse in their own magic way of doing it, and they would ponder about their mate, their pack, as well as their children, both those within and those already born.

But with Dear's presence came a knowledge that Toki had not cared for. It brought maternal instinct that would cause her to be more aggressive and territorial, despite her current workload of the pups and trying to keep her spirits up for her mate and family.

And who else to become the victim of said territorial aggression than the family Toki knew and loved?

At least the twins were free to come and go as they had wished.

But poor Sans, who had no clue, had just started upstairs to let Toki and Papyrus know that Tenebris had shown up with what he would need to properly install Aliquam's new prosthetic hip and leg, which had been constructed over the past nearly two weeks as Tenebris' special project between managing the health of his patients.

His footsteps alerted Toki from her state of slumber at Papyrus' side and sluggishly she moved to a position to stand defensively facing the door. A growl rumbled up from the depths of her throat.

As the door swung open to reveal a seemingly excited Sans, Toki flared her barely-there fur and began to buzz threateningly.

Immediately the aggression was picked up by the rounder beta beast, and with a fast 'ohshit !' he quickly backpedaled out of the room. "Sorry! I'll come back later! Just letting you know that Pops is downstairs with Pap's new prosthetic!" He called through the door after clicking it closed to prevent her pursuit.

With that, Papyrus groaned and opened his eyes, taking a deep breath as he spoke. "Father... wha...?" He moaned out tiredly.
Toki was bound mostly on all fours, as the stress of standing upright was causing more pains to ripple through her when she tried to stand on two legs. Her short, bristling mane stood on end as she growled at the closed door for a few moments more before her mind soothed enough for her to turn back.

She swayed back to her mate, and shifted to curl into his side. Her face nuzzled against his temple, and she groomed him gently as she kept an ear out for anyone invading her nesting space.

"Tenebris has your leg done." Toki answers him with a warm sound, her soft tongue rasping over his temple and along the top of his skull. Her eye lights were blown wide with how deeply she was sunken into her instincts. "Did you get enough rest?"

The grooming spurred a pleased churr out of him as he kneaded and stretched in response, and he gave a low groan before he sighed and smiled up at her. "Indeed... I hope you did as well, my love~" He purred, leaning up to offer her a gentle kiss.

She met his kiss with a warm sound, and then gave a tiny chittering hum. “I didn’t sleep too soundly, but I’m fine.” She couldn’t settle to sound sleep- not for the past two days. Her instincts were in over drive, and they were screaming that her mate was weakened, he couldn’t protect her when she needed it, so she needed to be vigilant for them both. “I’m glad you slept well though.” She gave a soft thrumming purr, and nuzzled her face to his.

Her mane twitched and stiffened, and she looked to the door as she heard foot steps again. Her eyes squinted and she leered at it.

Aliquam peered over as well before watching the door open a crack... though he was surprised to see a white hand with a mug of steaming cocoa be the first thing to poke into their space.

Toki’s growl bubbled up, until she spotted the cocoa and the steam intruding first. She inhaled and scented it eagerly, before rising from her spot next to her mate and approaching. Her growl died off as her mouth watered at the scent of chocolate deliciousness.

Her smaller secondary arms came into play here, reaching up to grasp the door and pull it open. “Is that cocoa?” She asks, eyeing Tenebris’ hand holding the mug as she debated on if the cocoa was for her, or his drink. The set of her wings didn’t look aggressive- it looked more receptive at the idea of being presented a pacifying food item to be allowed entrance to her nesting den.

"Yes dear. Do you want it while I come and see if everything is shaped correctly on Papy's prosthetic?" Tenebris thrums softly.

She squints at him, and then nods. She pulls open the door, a clear invitation, and then waddles her way back towards the nest. She takes a seat at the edge, so she doesn’t make a mess, and rocks herself upwards so she can actually drink the cocoa like a civilized beast. She makes eager fingers at him, eye lights still blown wide, and clearly not entirely processing everything going on like she normally would be. “Please?”

He stepped into the room with a hum and offered to her the steaming cup of cocoa. "Here you are, my dear Tokiko~" He cooed warmly. "I hope you enjoy it~"

She closed her eyes as she took it with a most sated look. She raised the mug to her teeth, and took a deep inhale of the sweet, sugary chocolaty goodness, and then took a sip. Her pleased buzz spoke measures. “It’s very good.” She approves. “Thank you.” She adds, remembering her manners. Toki watches him for a moment, and then nods her head towards her mate. “Be gentle.”
"I would be nothing less for my son." He promised, coming to his son’s side.

After a moment to wake a little more, Papyrus rolled over to expose his broken hip to Tenebris. The elder knelt down beside him before he pulled out what looked to be the new prosthetic hip made for his son.

Toki relaxed as Papyrus was tended to and she drank her drink. She didn’t sip it like other people might have- she slurped it down steadily, and found her mug empty before she expected it to be.

She eyed her mug with a sad buzzing noise, and poked her tongue out to lick the last bits of marshmallow from the rim. Thankfully, by the time her mug was empty, she seemed to be more or less back to herself. “Dad,” She says, telltale of her mental state, “would it be better if I left the room so you could do this without me hovering? I can go busy myself by raiding the fridge and apologizing to Sans for scaring him.”

She felt bad about it now, but there was no telling how long she’d feel bad about it. Hormones and instincts were strong in her, particularly with a litter of five influencing her hormone balance.

"The fit was rather close so I will be putting it on him today. If you'd like to go downstairs, I say go for it. This might end up being rather..." He paused.

His pause lingered for longer than Toki would have liked. "Unpleasant to listen to..." Tenebris was making a face. He was most definitely making a face.

Toki paused, and her short mane bristled anxiously. Her worried gaze slid to her husband, and she scooted closer, lifting her fingers out to touch his gently. She’d ask her husband- it was his body and his choice if he wanted her to witness this probably painful experience. “Do you want me here for this?” She asks her husband, her gaze setting on him.

"It's... better you not be here for this. For your sake..." Papyrus responded quietly. “And theirs.” His gaze slid to her belly.

Toki’s fingers slid to her belly briefly, and she nodded in understanding. She was still a labor risk-stress needed to be a non-factor as much as they could. “Alright.” She leaned down, and pressed a kiss to his temple. “I'll be here when you’re done though, okay? I love you.”

“I love you too.” He replied back with a soft smile to her, and then ushered her on with his hands.

She kept the mug in her secondary hands, and rolled out of the nest. She swayed for the doors, her primary arms grumbling at keeping all of her weight, and she opened the door to go out.

Toki looked back at him for a moment, ground her teeth, and then left the room. She waddled for the stairs, and carefully rocked onto two legs so she could go down them. She wasn’t deft enough to go down on all fours- so she would deal with the crippling back pain that rippled through her when she forced herself upright.

When she reached the bottom, she was back down onto all fours. She padded for the kitchen, her bones making a ruckus that she knew would likely bring Sans to see what was happening. Her children were busy playing their game system in the refurbished dining room that had become a ‘bedroom’ that Grillby and Sans were using while Grillby finished recovering, and they didn’t notice her as she waddled past for the kitchen.

Though Sans did and he slowly hefted himself up to follow her. "Toki." He spoke softly as he entered the kitchen. "Is everything alright?" He asked. "Did Pops kick you out? How the hell did he
go about doing that?” He then laughed quietly.

Toki’s tiny mane fluffed at him and she chuffed, straining and stretching up to put the cocoa mug on the counter top. “He didn’t kick me out, you dork.” She rolls her eye lights. “He appeased me with cocoa, and then Pap gently asked if I minded waiting down here since the stress would be bad for my health. I’m considering raiding the fridge...” Her wings flicked, and she eyed the fridge with a huff. “I’m sorry I was grumpy with you earlier. My instincts don’t want anyone near while my mate is...” She waved a hand awkwardly. “They’re in defensive overdrive since Pap and I are technically in our own pack with two pups already. I don’t mean to be a grump.”

"It's okay... Really." He assured her as he came to give her a hug. "You might not be part of our 'pack' per say, but you're still family. And family is more important any day. If you're comfortable, then I'm happy.” He rumbled as he gave her a grin. "Take it easy until you feel ready for anything life is ready to throw at you, and when you're ready, we'll be there for ya."

Toki had to strain up to give him a hug, and so she wiggled out of it as socially acceptable. Once on all fours again, her secondary hands gave a small shrug. “I know you will be.” She gives him a warm smile. “I’ll take it as easy as I can, but instincts are playing hell on my body. Like... right now, I want to go foraging for nest materials, but I’m also hungry, so the mixed feelings are making me feel hangry.” She sighs. “Hormones suck.” She nods to the only one who could sympathize.

On that note of foraging, though- her eye caught the glint of something through the slightly cracked back door, where the cats had been let out to roam a little bit. Her mane fluffed, and Toki abandoned the fridge, turning her attention away from her brother in law to move to the door.

Outside was Tenebris’ car- the incredibly, incredibly nice and expensive one that he’d bitched about her ruining his seats. There were drag marks showing it had been moved back behind her house forcibly to get it out of the way of people who needed to come in and out. The tires were ruined, and the front rims were as well, but the body was sound. And inside were seats. Soft seats that were beckoning her out there like a sirens song.

“Good nesting material.” She appraises and imparts onto her brother in law wisdom for making his own nest as her wide eye lights search along the bottom of the passenger seat to try and get it out. “Firm backing, soft and plush. Good for structural foundation. You want ones like these for your next nest.”

"So you steal it from Dad's charger?” He laughed gently. "Here here, let me help you disconnect it
so it can at least be saved at the end. Okay?” He offered as he came closer.

Toki stiffened as he came closer, and she turned her head to look at him. She rattled the seat. "This is mine." She presses firmly. "I found it. It's outside. It's mine now, not 'dads'." She pointedly leans over and licks the seat, marking it as hers. "You can't have it either." Her tiny mane fluffs at him to make her point.

Once she's sure he won't take it, she shuffles to the side with a soft grumble. "Help would be nice. It won't come out." She grunts. "Too small to make a nest in thus. Too out in the open, not enough defense."

"I'm not gonna steal it, dork." He rolls his eye lights with a bemused sigh. “Now, if you want me to help you borrow it until you've had the pups, then I can do that. But no frilling at me and licking things just because you think I want it. If I want it, I'll let you know. Okay?” He chuckled lightly.

She frilled at him anyway and chuffed deeply. "Okay." Toki did understand that, and motioned her head at the seat as she scuttled around to the other passenger door to work on loosening the front seat. She needed multiple braces, if she wanted to build the walls up and work on an overhead covering to her nest. "Thank you." She adds, remembering manners. "For helping."

"Of course." He replied softly. "As long as you keep them intact and in good condition, I'll help you borrow them anytime." Sans paused, and then chuckled. "Well, just as long as Pops isn't looking, of course." He winked at her with a soft laugh.

Toki's wings buzzed at him, and she gave a bemused sound. "Not his anymore." She trills in smugly pleased happiness. Her instincts weren't quite grasping the concept of borrowing, though her logical mind knew she couldn't keep them. "Wont damage though. Need them whole for building walls."

Her hands worked under the seat, and she got the front passenger seat looser, a pleased croon escaping her. "Nest needs air coverage." She explains to her companion in car-seat thievery. The pregnant skelebeast grunts, and gives a tug, but the seat is not fully free yet. "Too open, lets the heat escape and can let invaders in easier. A cold nest is stress. One entrance lets mate guard the front, and keeps me and the pups safe inside until they can go out."

She pauses, and her mane flattens. "Mate inside." She corrects, and her wings give an agitated noise as they rub together, not unlike a crickets legs. "Have to protect mate. Mate can't keep us safe now, and there are many non-pack around our house. Friendly packs, but not pack."

It said something about loyalty though, that even though her instincts recognized her mate as lamed, that even her more beastly side was willing to simply lump him in with the pups and protect him.

It also explained to her brother in law right there as to why she had a more heightened aggression compared to other females.

He nodded quietly as she went on and on about how she wanted her den to be and as she finished he gave her a soft smile. "Hey, Papy's gonna get better... Tell you what, I bet the next time you hear from him, he's gonna be celebrating his-"

Unfortunately, Sans couldn't be more wrong.

The next sound to be heard, before he'd even finished his sentence, was a scream from the upstairs bedroom.

It was loud and agonizing with what must have been the most unimaginable pain, even muffled through the unopened windows.
Toki had finished unlatching the first seat by the time the scream rang out, and she sat bolt upright, her four arms yanking the seat out and to her chest as she lurched to attention, not unlike a Meerkat on alarm. The noise had her tiny mane frilling upwards in consternation.

She gave an alarmed bark, and twisted on her toes, her secondary arms dragging the car seat behind her as she tried to fast-skitter back for the house. Her mate was hurting! She had to help! She shouldn’t have left him alone.

"TOKI HOLY SHIT WAIT A SECOND!" Cae quickly went after her, wrapping his arms around her. "Toki wait a second!" He told her. "Take it easy! Take a second to think about this!"

Her breaths came quick as he scooped her into an upright position to keep her from skittering off. The car seat fell out of her hands, and she made an upset warbling keen as her back cramped something fierce. “He’s hurting... ” She whined, her wings twitching against his chest. “I have to go to him... Don’t I?”

"Any other time, I would say yes. But this is a very delicate procedure and I know it sounds like it hurts for him, but it’s going to do a lot of good for him as soon as the procedure is complete. You have to remember, the one doing the procedure is his own father, and after everything you've been through I know he would not disregard the circumstances out of the blue, he is doing as much as he can to reduce Pap's suffering... Okay?" Sans spoke carefully as he gently pulled Toki into the seat she had been holding moment ago. "Okay?"

Toki let out the tiniest of sad sounds as she was made to sit on the detached car seat. The position made her back hurt less, certainly, but didn't lessen the fact that she knew her mate was hurting. "Okay." She echoes, knowing he was prompting her for it.

She did understand that it was necessary- but she didn't like to hear him in pain, and it bothered her immensely. It made her upset that she couldn't help him and make it stop- and reminded her of her failure in being unable to use healing magic to restore his leg.

Toki let Sans keep her seated for a few minutes without fuss to allow the anxious tightness in her torso to go away, before she finally looked up at him and made a quiet requesting noise. Her mate in pain had taken the wind out of her proverbial sails, but she still needed something to do to keep her sane, or she would sit here and stress. “Can we... Keep collecting?” She asks softly. “Or go get something from Muffets? I need a distraction. If I can focus on something, I can ignore it. Food would work too.” Muffets was a bit of a walk, but a walk would give them distance- and she couldn’t hear the sounds.

It would appear that Toki was not the only one bothered by the noise. As it happened, Grillby hobbled out of the back door with Solstice sobbing in his arms, and the twins sniffling at his sides.

Toki’s attention perked to her children, and she didn’t need to say a word. All she did was open her arms, and they rushed to her, jostling her as they clamored into her lap. Toki clutched them close, and crooned softly to them, her mane ruffling up. She wished it was longer so they could take comfort in it- but as it was, they took comfort in the plush softness her chest had to offer, and she curled them as close as she could.

Grillby looked at his husband, and crackled quietly. “It would be good to take a walk,” He says over top his daughter's loud wailing, entirely unaware of their prior conversation, “maybe somewhere quiet, and relaxing. Or for food for the little ones. Fuku is running my bar, correct?”

Sans nodded once as he gently took Solstice in his arms, cooing softly to her as he stroked her head. "Oh sweet Solly, it's okay darling." He spoke gently as he pressed soft kisses to the flaming crown of
her skull, his mouth brushing her warm little horns. "It's okay sweetie... it's okay... Mommy's here..." He spoke gently, before he looked up at Grillby. "Toki was thinking about Muffet's..." He explained.

Grillby was doing a lot better after Asgore’s help in healing him, but he seemed to droop just a little bit at the idea of a long walk like that. He took in a deep breath, exhaled, and then nodded. “Muffets works.” He says slowly, and brushes his fingers over Solstice’s head.

She hiccups, and sniffljes. “Amaa.” She whines. “Ouuud.”

“I know, my love, I know.” He soothes. “It was a scary noise.” Grillby pats his pockets, and thrums. “As luck would have it, these pants have my wallet. I don’t mind paying for us.”

“My purse is in my bedroom...” Toki murmurs softly. “I’ll pay you back.” She offers softly, and shifts. She nudges the children off her lap, and rolls onto all fours again- and then motions them to clamor on. They hesitate, but when she grunts at them, they scramble up between her wings instead of going to their uncle to hold his hands. They cuddle down into her back, and she stands on all fours with her back aching a fair bit.

It’s a good ache though- one she feels is right. “Lets go.” She says, wincing as she hears another scream. Her face says they need to go, or she’s going to turn right back around and go into the house and make the screaming stop.

Sans slowly nodded in agreement, taking a slow breath to settle his nerves as they started away from the house. "Come on..." He growled softly. "The sooner we bail, the better..."

Toki moved at his side, looking not quite unlike he was taking a very pregnant animal for a walk. “I want an apple cider or a strawberry-banana shake.” Toki decides softly, trying to change the subject. “And some of her meatloaf if she has it today.” Meat in a loaf- what could be better?

“I just want a chocolate milk.” Honey says softly, and plays with her mother’s wings. “Maybe a cookie?” That’s said while glancing to her uncles. “Please?”

“I want one of the teas with the weird boba thingies in it.” Skylar mumbles softly, despite his twin making a face and muttering about those being ‘alien eggs’.

"Of course, honey..." Sans smiled at her, before he cooed and gently kissed Solstice’s head. "Hey sweetie... Do you know what you want?" He asked her gently.

“Muhhk.” Solstice stuffs her fist in her mouth, and tucks her face into his neck. “Chomuhk.”

“Chocolate milk.” Skylar supplies the answer easily.

Toki hums, and bumps her shoulder to Cae’s leg. “And what are you getting?”

"I might just have a cheese croissant..." He answered. "Not really feeling much else of an appetite..."

“Neither am I, but I know I need food, or they’ll kick up a fuss- and then your Dad will grumble at me for not eating.” Toki sighs.

Sans gave a reluctant nod before he sighed. "Pops is so tired and yet he continues so resiliently to ensure everyone else is alright before he considers caring about himself.”

Toki’s steps hesitate long enough for Grillby to bump his knee into one of her folded wings. Then she continued after, her primary arms picking up fast enough to keep up with her brother in law. “He
does.” She agrees quietly. “This whole mess has been one huge stress for everyone involved. He needs to rest. Maybe… Once this is all over, I’ll invite him into the nest and just make him sleep.” She sighs. “It seems like the only time he’s able to sleep soundly anymore with the stress he’s dealing with from talking to Asgore is when he’s draped against my belly.”

"At this point I can see why. We've already lost so much, and he's this close to having what he has truly wanted for so, so long..." Sans leaned against Grillby with a quiet sigh. "Hopefully after this, you can relax, he can relax, and we can all get some more sleep.”

“Hopefully.” She exhales softly, and her gaze slid up to Sans. “I’d say he and I could go cuddle in my living room and let my husband rest, but my living room is thrashed.”

Grillby makes a flustered crackling noise as he supports his husband. “Honestly...” He mumbles softly with a sigh. “I’ll have it replaced. Probably not until after the litter are here, but I will replace it.”

Toki nods and sighs. “I’ll talk with him when we get back.”

“We’ll play our games.” The twins chime in quietly. “It’s easier than all of the… Adulty stress.”

Toki’s mane sinks flat. “Kids… my sweet children… I’m so sorry you’re caught in the middle of this. I didn’t want this to be your first experience with me bringing more children into the world…” She sighs softly. “I’m sorry.”

Their little hands rubbed her back, and Skylar nuzzled his teeth to her wing joint. “It’s okay, Momma.”

Toki still feels terrible, but nods quietly. Her gaze slides to her brother in law, and she exhales softly. “I’d say he and I could cuddle in my nest, but I think your brother is going to need time to rest.” She hesitates, and there is obvious discomfort in asking this, in trusting someone else around her mate while he’s weakened. “Do you think you can… Help me with Papyrus? At least until the litter is here? Walking upright is painful and dizzying, and he might need the support that I can’t provide.”

"Absolutely. All you had to do was ask, Sis.” Sans gave her a smile. "Maybe when we all gather to nest together, Pops can bring over his own personal switch, so when you guys are settling down, he can play until he passes out from sheer exhaustion.”

“That would work.” She mumbles softly, and nods quietly. She pauses though, and makes a soft awkward noise. She may have to move her nest locations if they continued to gather and use her current nest for a communal one. Her instincts were demanding some place private. Dark, quiet, and secure. Some place where not everyone would constantly be barging in.

“When we get back, we can talk to him about it.” Toki nods instead of letting them lapse into silence during the duration of their slow walk to Muffet’s. “Between family and pup cuddles, I’m sure we can soothe some of the stress down.”

They spent several hours at Muffets. Once they got there, the spiders sort of drew them in, got them settled into several luxury booths, and they got food galore- with no real wait on their order. The entire trip was free of charge, as Muffet- who was still recovering- joined them for food as well.

Muffet said thanks in her own ways- and stuffing you until you felt fit to burst with sweet confections, nutritious bread, and liquid goodness was her way of saying ‘thank you for making sure
I didn’t die’. As well as actually gracing you with her company.

Toki didn’t complain- the entire trip had left her feeling more like herself, and less like the beast being trapped in the house with nothing but her instincts was making her feel like. It also might have helped her mood that she was returning home with a gallon jug full of apple cider, to which she could savor at her leisure, and her children had plates of their favorite cookies. Sans had a massive container of ketchup, and Grillby had a massive cup of cinnamon hot chocolate.

The group was content, and returning home full and more relaxed than they had been when they left.

It helped that as they arrived, there didn’t seem to be any discernible screaming going on.

Toki offered her cider container to her brother in law as her children dismounted from her back. “Can you put this in the kitchen please?” She inquires of him warmly. Her back was glad for the reprieve. She wanted to go lay down and rest it. The litter were putting on their last and final pounds, and her body was not enjoying any of it. “I want to go check on Papyrus.”

He gave a nod. "Make sure to knock before you come in. Hopefully they're done and you can hold Papy again."

Toki nods. Once he’s taken her cider, she makes her way to the stairs, and goes up. She goes slowly and methodically, hearing the children start up the video game console on the television behind her. The melody to Harvest Moon is soothing, and helps give her the courage she needs.

Courage or not, Toki still hesitates when at the door. She lifts one of her smaller secondary fists, and knocks gently below the door-knob.

When she receives no answer, Toki assumes he finished, and left Papyrus to rest and recover like anyone else might have. Toki reaches up, and opens the door.

The first to greet her was Papyrus’ muffled howling and screaming into a literal pile of pillows- which explained why they hadn’t heard a sound through the thick concrete floors and the closed doors. Yet with the door open, he so loud and so desperate that he was still very much understandable through the fabric.

"F-Father... oh god.... I-It hurts...!” His breathing was fast paced and undeniably in agony.

"I know... I know... Please hang in there, my son. We're almost done. Just one last screw and I'll be done...” Tenebris' voice was level; but it was shocking how level he sounded. "Your hip was so damaged that I need to secure the anchors properly so that your bone will heal into it..."

"P-Please.. D-Do it quickly!"

"Alright... take a deep breath."

There was a soft sound of whirring before the sharp sound of a drill being activated, closely followed by a grotesque sound and another bout of screaming that was quickly muffled once more.

Tenebris slowly looked over his work, tracing the line where the prosthetic met near his son's tailbone, before checking the coccyx connection. "Well done... Well done..." He praised gently as he worked, giving it a final pull to ensure that the new prosthetic was going nowhere, though it tore a final yelp out of Papyrus before he slumped against the bed, pushing away the pillows and blanket so that he could gasp frailly at the cooler air.

"Alright... The worst has passed, my son... I'm so proud of you..." Tenebris slowly got up from
where he had knelt to be level with his project, before he sighed and slowly lowered the last of his tools to rest on the floor beside the rest.

It would be hard to see at the angle from Toki's point of vision, but there sat the high-powered drill next to a bone saw, and a small pile of bone strips shaved from the bone now covered by the metallic prosthetic.

It didn’t matter the angle, and it didn’t matter how upset and tired Tenebris looked- because Toki saw and heard every last bit of it, and by the time that he was lowering his tools, it was already too late.

She could smell the pain, smell the agony, the scent of bone dust was filling her nose, and all Toki could see was a faceless threat looming over her wounded mate- and she had to remove it. She could only hear the muffled screaming pleas of her mate, and the gasps that came after as he was left in lingering agony.

To the thing Toki had become, there no Tenebris; he was not family, he was not pack- there was only a threat that had to be handled, by any means necessary, to ensure the safety of her mate.

There was no warning, no sound, not until the door she’d shoved banged back against the wall with force enough to dent it, and her mouth gaped open in a snarl. A bellow left her mouth, and heat scorched her teeth as her wings mantled up behind her. She had no magic at her disposal, but she had her body.

Sockets devoid of light seemed to suck in every droplet of light they could absorb as her mouth clamped on to the back of his calf. Crocodile teeth snapped shut on tough flesh, searing through it and ripping at him as she snarled and shook her head. Her clawed hands braced on the floor, and she began to beat at the threat with her wings, keeping her belly carefully under her and out of his reach as she ripped and savaged at his lower leg.

Thick black blood stained her teeth as she ruined his pants.

He hadn't smelled her, hadn't heard her, and most definitely didn't see her until it was too late.

A new pain-filled scream echoed out, belonging to the older male as he tried to reach down to pry her off, his tail had quickly swung into action. In restraint, he grabbed it with a shaking hand and tried simply to grab her and pry her off. "T-TOKI!"

Papyrus heard his scream, and with that, he weakly extended a hand, gasping the name of his beloved wife before his magic blinked, with it, snaring her soul for all but a second and turning it a deep blue color as Aliquam made to stop her in any way he could.

He just wasn't strong enough.

Thankfully, where Papyrus failed, Caeruelus prevailed.

The scream had him upstairs in moments and upon seeing the gruesome scene unfolding, he snapped his fingers and grabbed Toki's soul in one hand, the other reaching between her wings to grab her by a horn and pull it upwards. "Toki, let go!" He barked.

As her horn was yanked, she gave a garbled snarl- and with the yanking came more than just a little hunk of flesh as she tried to adjust her grip and failed. She didn’t take the whole width of her bite radius, but Tenebris was now sans several ounces of flesh. The mouthful of meat disappeared down the darkness of her throat as she turned her attention elsewhere.

In the wake of the new enemy in her radius, and the heavy weight of her soul that made her want to
put her chest on the floor, Toki whipped her head around in the grip of the hand restraining her horn as her wings flared up and battered at him. She gave him a snarl, teeth painted as black as her sockets, and lunged for him as quick as she could with her jaws agape and her claws out to rake at him.

Sans easily dodged her blows before he grabbed her by the primary forearms and swung his foot under her feet to pull them out from under her. With his victory, her body buckled with the lack of support and was effortlessly landed on the ground. Praying he didn't do too much damage, he teleported back before he put more weight in his magic. "TOKI!" He then snarled. “Snap out of it!”

Her hip and shoulder took the brunt of the fall, and they blossomed with bruises with the combined force of her fall and the heavy oppressive weight of his magic.

The fight was not out of her though. Her claws raked across the floor, her stingers lashing as she tried, and failed, to get to her feet again, instincts making her panic about being knocked onto her side and displaying her vulnerable belly. Her wings beat against the floor to no avail.

So much was her fight that the blood from Tenebris turned basically into a sticky, foamy froth as she snarled and roared, ruining her bedroom floor without a sane care in the world.

Seemed the whole house was going to need to be remodeled.

Sans grit his teeth as he held onto her with his magic. "You need to calm down, Toki! Think about Pap!" He told her loudly, before he heard a sound from the bed.

"Toki..." Aliquam couldn't move. He could only gasp, before giving another shaky sob as he looked to where his father had collapsed against the wall to hold his leg. "Toki...!" Was his next weak whimpers. "Toki...!" That's all he could say, all he could make out through his pleading- her name.

It wasn’t the shouting from Sans that snapped her out of it, or even her mate calling her name. Instead, it was the sobs that she could hear that sank in the deepest, and left her reeling- that calmed the rage like a flash flood over a fire, and urged her instead to comfort her mate now that the threat had been warned off.

The black abyss of her eye sockets lit up again, and the frantic thrashing faded off into sore, semi-pained panting as she went limp, submissive, under Sans magic.

Toki, as she came back to herself, was first and foremost aware of the sour almost acidic taste in her mouth. She felt like she had deep-throated the worlds biggest battery, and it had leaked all over her mouth. The second thing she was aware of was the smell of anxiety from her brother in law, and the pain and wary fear from Tenebris. Fear blanketed the room from her mate.

She sucked in a shaky breath, and keened softly. “… What happened?” She rasped. She’d last consciously been outside the door, and she’d heard things- terrible things- but it had gone dark and then she was here being restrained, and she hurt, and the room smelled horrible.

"Tokes... Toki... Toki..."

"Tokes... I... I think you snapped... All I heard was Pops screaming, I came in here and... fuck..." Sans’ voice was shaking as much as his hand was as he let her go, before he immediately went to his father's side to treat the wound that was now on his leg.

As for Tenebris...? He wasn't even looking at her... he had one hand grasping his leg tightly, the other gripping his tail for dear life as he pinned it against the wall. His leg was bleeding into a small pool under his leg. "Fuck... fuck..." His breathing was rough. He was in so much pain from that bite,
though his mind also considered the irony. How long ago had it been since he had done the same to her? He felt this was appropriate... even if it was a tragic incident.

It didn’t take much for Toki to connect the dots. Particularly when she shifted at being let up, and a clump of bleeding white flesh fell from the tight clamps of her teeth.

She looked at it for a long while, and then her gaze slid to Tenebris. She felt something heavy in her stomach that shouldn’t have been there, and horror wasn’t long in settling in. She snapped- she’d gone unhinged, feral- she could see the bite marks on his leg and there was only one other monster in the village with her bite pattern, and his bite was not nearly big enough to do that.

Toki felt her stomach throb, and she skittered up onto her feet, frantically scampering into the bathroom. Toki didn’t make it to the toilet before her stomach tightened and she retched loudly. Chunky black ooze hit the floor, mixed with the green magic from their earlier feast at Muffet’s, and Toki gave a soft moan.

*What had she done?*
Sans could hear her getting sick. He heard it and he hated it, so what he did instead of continuing to panic was reach into his coat pocket and pull out his phone, quickly dialing Asgore to get him over as soon as possible.

It was after a few minutes that there was a gentle knock at the door and Sans slowly entered. "Toki... You... doing okay?" It was a dangerous thing to ask, but watch him ask anyways because of how he worried.

During the minutes that he’d taken to call Asgore, and in the time that it took for Asgore to get there, Toki had managed to move away from her initial collapsing point.

There was a puddle of black tainted sick a few feet into the bathroom, but it appeared that she hadn’t just continued to sit there and heave. She’d moved to the toilet finally. She had her back wedged between it and the tub, and she felt like the back of her throat was burning from... From the blackened blood she’d thrown up.

The noise that answered his question was the sound of apple cider turned to magic splashing into the toilet bowl as the usually vibrant green woman turned more into a pale green skelebeast. She covered the top of her skull with her primary arms, her secondary arms curling around her heaving belly as it cramped and tightened.

The magic block was still functioning, but the stress levels had exceeded the healthy amounts to give her some mildly annoying Braxton Hicks, which did nothing to alleviate her nausea.

Her position at the toilet spoke numbers to the amount of shame and horror she felt- as did the fact that she wouldn’t even look at him. She was literally cowered in a corner with her bruised side facing out, and hurling up the contents of her stomach over what she’d done.

Toki was not okay- she was not doing okay by a long shot, but she deserved it for going savage like that when Tenebris had only been trying to help. She was horrified by it- and surprised they hadn’t reacted with utter and complete terror at her response.

“How is Tenebris?” She croaks finally, not answering Sans question as she coughs and retches again. Less liquid slides up into the toilet than before, and for that she is thankful- there surely could not be much more of Muffet’s amazing pastries and drinks left in her system for her body to violently reject.

"He’s bleeding pretty bad. They were about to see if cauterizing the wound was the best idea. What... What the hell happened?" He asked in great concern.

The thought of them cauterizing the wound, of hearing his pain and smelling burnt flesh, made her
stomach clench, and Toki learned that yes, she did indeed have more she could hurl up.

When the next wave ended, she gave a pitiful sound. “I just… I knocked, and no one answered, and I thought they were done… They weren’t.” She rasps softly between shaky breaths. “I snapped. I saw the bone shards, I heard his pain and smelled everything- and that’s all I remember until I came to with you pinning me and my body hurting and my mouth feeling like I’d sucked off a couple of batteries.”

"I guess your beasty didn't take to the idea that Tenebris is a good doctor, even if his methods are less than painless..." Cae gave a weak chuckle as he moved to kneel beside her to rub her back.
"Batteries huh?" He then snickered quietly. "You think that's what Pops tastes like, huh?" He asked softly. "Not sure that's the greatest taste on the tongue…"

At the mention of the taste, Toki found herself retching again, her sockets watering with the force of it. She spat to clear her mouth, and shifted a little bit, trying to shamefully shy away from her brother in law’s help. She didn’t deserve the back rubs after savaging his Father’s leg like that. After Tenebris had been lost for so long, he’d worn a muzzle, even after- it was unrealistic not to expect the same of her.

“It’s not the greatest taste.” She moans. “It’s batteries and acid and dark and very gross.” She makes a soft sniffing noise, and her wings hitch up on her back some. Her bruised shoulder and hip throb, and she massages her tight belly with her smaller hands. “It wasn’t even just my beast. I… wasn’t even there. I was feral.” She says shakily. “I think everything finally culminated together, and I just snapped… and I hurt someone. We’re… We’re so, so fucking lucky I didn’t use my stingers, or we’d have to reload.”

Toki’s shoulders trembles, and her breathing quickens with shame’d tears.

“We can’t keep doing this.” Her voice is high with stress and tears. “My beast is volatile and unstable, and with my instincts and hormones riding high over the fact I’m surrounded by family that’s not pack, I don’t know if it’ll happen again. I don’t want to hurt anyone again.”

For a moment, Cae's soul-rate picked up a little in stress at the mention of reloading, before he sighed and he shook his head, pushing those thoughts to the back of his mind as he made sure she didn't think for a second that his care would disappear.

"Tokes... What if you revoked your independence from Pop's pack... just for a little while? Live out your pregnancy with your pack, and diverge when all is said and done, okay?" He spoke gently after giving it enough thought. "Think about it. You wont feel unsafe around me or Pop's... or Asgore, no less... He would be able to visit more often to keep your fire going... It would also let Pops get close to Aliquam to check on his prosthetic as he gets adjusted into it..." He then smiled. "Hey... now that I think about it, it looked really, really good..."

Toki sniffled quietly, unaware of the brief panic she’d given him at the mention of a reload. “I didn’t really get to see his leg, and I don’t… Know if I can handle going out there and facing your Dad after I...” The shame was basically radiating from her. She shifted one of her hands, and rubbed her face to try and dry the tears that were dripping down to mix with the sick. “Leaving the pack was supposed to fix the issues.” She made a gross sounding sniffle, and then blindly groped along the top counter across the toilet for a dry wash cloth so she could try and clean up a little. “It doesn’t seem like I can win for losing with choices. It would make it safe for you and Tenebris and Grillby, but...”

Asgore was another story. She had issues with him outside of pack issues- issues that Tenebris was still trying to address.
“Maybe rejoining would work. But… would he even…” Take her back after she’d savaged his leg like that? Toki didn’t believe in an eye for an eye- and Tenebris hadn’t even been able to **look** at her.

"Of course… He might have been the victim in the attack, but he doesn't hold things like this to a grudge… how much do you want to bet he blames himself for this?" He joked, but his voice was shaking against his wishes. "I know this sounds selfish… but I'm relieved that you didn't load. It would have restarted the day... and... it would have ended up doing more harm than good.”

“Rebound.” Toki surmises with a slow nod, and looks away quietly. “It's not his fault.” She whispers softly. “I've been volatile for days now- you've all been dealing with it, and Dear is encouraging it despite what my logical thoughts are thinking.” Instincts were strong- so, so strong. She sighs, leans over to spit one more time, and then flushes the toilet. The lid is closed, and she just cowers into the corner as best she can, quietly whining as she does. "Despite what you say… I don’t know if I can handle going out to your Dad. I just… I feel ashamed, Sans. He was helping Papyrus, and I just… Went berserk.”

Toki sighs. “The only other monster I can ever recall hurting was Grillby, and I did the exact same thing- tore a massive chunk out of him with my teeth. I just… I don’t know how to go out there and apologize and expect him not to be afraid of me. When he… When he wrecked my leg with the twins and sent me into early labor, I was terrified of him. For a long, long time. I can’t expect the same thing not to happen here.”

There was a guttural shout of pain from the bedroom that had Toki flinching, and pressing her hands over her skull. The sound of fire searing flesh echoed through the wide open bathroom door, and then the smell of burning meat followed. Low groaning moans floated in.

Toki buried her face into her arms as she dropped the dried wash cloth and keened, knowing that was entirely her fault. Even Dear was feeling guilty over it- Despite what Toki had said about the beast encouraging her savagery, Dear didn’t want to see her savage her family members. The beast was just as shocked and appalled as Toki was that they had gone feral on Tenebris, and that this was the outcome.

Cae turned slowly, before he sighed and got up to push the door closed before he came over to her to collect her quickly in his arms. In the process however, he did not force her from her hiding place, but rather fell into place around her. "Hey... Hey..." He spoke softly to catch her attention onto himself.

Toki felt nauseated again as the scent invaded her nasal cavity, but she was momentarily distracted by the bodily discomfort that came from Sans literally trying to drape around her when there was perhaps one or two inches of space between her back and the bath tub thanks to her belly. She made a soft uncomfortable noise and looked at him as he asked for her attention. Her green sockets were watering with upset again. “He’s hurting...” She says. “Tenebris is... And it’s all my fault.”

He stroked her head gently as he offered her a weakened, but gentle smile. "Tokes, come on. There's no good in wallowing here by yourself. Papy needs you more than your shame needs you. Let's get you back out there so you can at least do your husband some good.” With that, he gave her no room to resist as he used his magic to very carefully move her out of her constricted corner to instead be boosted into his arms.

Toki didn’t fight him- she didn’t even squirm. She let him draw her out, her limbs going submissively limp as he pulled her forth, and then tucked her into his arms. Her belly cramped, and she grimaced a bit at the position, but she made no fuss.

“I… I know you’re right.” She whispers quietly. “I can at least do that for Pap.” Her eyes glanced
down and she refused to look at him, but she still opened the door for him as they approached it.

Asgore was in the bedroom, mane ruffled from running. Based on his clothing, he was obviously previously spending time with Thumper. He was kneeling next to Tenebris, and had taken one of the soft and clean blankets from Toki’s nest, and ripped it into long strips to bind Tenebris’ leg until he could tend to it with proper bandages and padding. He glanced up as the door opened, and his brows furrowed at the pair in obvious confusion and upset.

Toki wouldn’t meet his glance either, even if her tiny mane bristled up against her brother in law’s chin in reaction to Asgore defacing her nest. Logically, she knew it was for a good reason, and thus kept quiet.

Tenebris had taken a position on the edge of the nest. Of course, it was more like he was hanging off the nest so Asgore could access his leg. His breathing rough as he bit into what appeared to be his wallet to muffle himself as his mate did what he had to in order to treat his wound. "H-Hff... Hhnnn..." That didn't mean his noises were any less than pathetic, though.

When Cae entered, his gaze lifted to his son, before his eyes pressed closed again and he turned away, kneading the edges of the nest with great stress. He hadn't once glanced at Toki.

His noises were enough- Toki didn’t need his glances on top of the sharp-eyed glances that Asgore seemed to be throwing her. She tried to focus on the soft, continual sob of her mate- it didn’t sound like he had stopped since she had retreated to be sick, and her soul hurt for having left him. He was rasping something that might have desperately been her name.

Asgore finished wrapping Tenebris’ leg, and reached up to gently rub his thigh. “Rest easy.” He murmurs. “When you have the magic, you can heal it. It is a deep wound.”

When Sans reached the nest, she gave a firm squirm to be set down. Once he set her down, she didn’t slink onto the bedding, or even walk- she belly crawled onto the nest.

Well, as much as she could belly crawl with a belly like she had. She still got down low, her belly scraping the blankets, and her head and wings were carried low so as not to attract attention as she made her way past Asgore and Tenebris, to try and make her way to her mate without upsetting either of the other two.

It was as soon as he felt first touch of her that Papyrus immediately lunged to grab hold of her, his faint sounds picking up to become an undeniable whimpering of her name. "Toki... Toki..." He was no longer as disturbed from what he had endured with his father. Now he was more shaken and looking to hide within the loving touch of his wife despite the events that had brought her the guilt.

Toki didn’t even grunt as he lunged and yanked her to him. All she did was brace so he couldn’t yank her flat down on her front, and then moved to curl around his upper half. She was still anxiously petrified of the pant-less portion of him, terrified of hurting him even though he now had a shiny new metal prosthetic where he’d used to have a bone colored one.

She cradled his head and shoulders, and tried to keep him still despite the desperate clinging he was doing. “Shh...” She croons softly. “Shh... I’m here.” She murmurs softly. Her teeth are still a bit of a mess- a dry wash cloth is not enough to fix it, but Sans hadn’t given her time to clean the smell of sick from her. “I’m here, Papy...” She whispers quietly. “I’m here... I won’t... I won’t go away again, I promise...”

Asgore looks at her quietly for a moment, and then heaves a tired sigh. He shifts, and glances between Tenebris and Sans. “Do you need me to take him home?” Him being his husband. Marital
problems or not, he still loved him, and he still wanted to care for him. “Or do you need to stay here to make sure that his prosthetic settles properly?”

"I must stay..." Tenebris answered quietly, reaching down to stroke Asgore's hand in response. "I must make sure I did not fail." He carefully shifted over on his stomach before he looked over at his son and daughter-in-law, and yet it was when he went to speak that his voice hitched to silence. He wasn’t sure what he could say.

“All right.” Asgore nods quietly. “I’ll head back to Thumper then... You and I can resume our… Talk... later if you want.” Asgore sounds tired of this ‘talk’, but knows he’s resigned to hearing it anyway. That said, the king stands, and moves toward the door, casting one last glance before disappearing through it and leaving them to their own devices.

Toki nuzzles her mate again, and her mane settles back down once Asgore’s tension leaves the room. She still doesn’t look at Tenebris, but instead quietly speaks to her brother in law. “If you can just leave the mess for me in the bathroom, I would appreciate it. It’s not your problem to clean up. When Pap is feeling better enough for me to leave him to rest, I’ll do it.”

Her body was thanking her for laying down. Her bruises hurt less, and the tight feeling in her belly was lessening, making the rapid, semi-alarming pace of her breathing start to slow. The visible bruise was showing on her shoulder, given the tank top she was wearing today in lieu of all of her turtlenecks being dirty. Recovering she was, but her body was not up to the rough beating she’d put on her father in law.

Her smaller, secondary fingers kept rubbing soothing circles on her middle to keep her muscles relaxed.

It was as Asgore left that for a fraction of a second Tenebris showed the attempt to reach up to stop him, but too quickly he was already out of reach. His fist curled as he pulled it back under himself and he sighed, taking a second to clear his mind and recover.

Aliquam pressed his face into Toki's chest, his bones rattling as his remaining leg attempted to curl under him. "Toki... Toki... To..." His words faded. They turned to teeth clicking, before it quieted further as he simply settled with soft snuffles.

Toki’s words shifted into soft murmured beast speech, and she comforted him as best she could when he went entirely nonverbal. Her arms held him, and she stroked over what parts of him she knew didn’t hurt. Switching back to the non-beast common tongue, she sighed softly. “You’re okay.” She murmurs softly. “It’s going to be okay...” His good knee curled up to bump her belly, and she grunted at the sharpness of it, before dropping a hand to massage it gently and let him know on more than just an audible level that he would be okay.

Her gaze slowly, hesitantly, slid to Tenebris. If it was going to be okay, she needed to say something... She couldn’t keep the gaze there for long, but she tried. “Tenebris...” She whispered softly. Not ‘Dad’. Just Tenebris. She had lost that right by eating his leg, literally. “I’m... I’m sorry. There’s nothing else I can say but that. I’m sorry.” She wasn’t even asking forgiveness. She was just letting him know that she was sorry- she never wanted to hurt him.

"I wish I could have done better, Toki..." Was his quiet reply. "I wish I knew how to make it hurt less, how to make it so he could have easily slept through it while still getting the responses I needed to ensure I put everything on and in correctly. My inability brought forth a mother and mate's wrath, and for that I am the one who should apologize." He looked up at her, before he looked away again and sighed. "All I ask is that you stay with him until he recovers and let him remember that he can be weak as long as you are there to nurture him in his time of need."
"In that case... since she's already doing that, might I be able to discuss something important to us all?" Cae spoke up, getting Tenebris' attention.

"What is it, Caeruleus?"

"Well... Toki was wondering about how we could prevent this from ever happening again... So I was thinking, what if, even for a short while, we become one pack again, rather than sitting as two packs apart...?"

Toki swallowed quietly. “It wasn’t just a mother and a mate’s wrath. A lot of the problem with this... came because my instincts are... in over-drive, basically.” She mumbles softly. “Logically, I can see you as my family. Me, as myself, sitting here talking, knows that we’re all family and that we love each other. Dear knows this too. On a more base instinct level though, my instincts register you as... Well, not as pack, so enemy and rival pack. And with me having to stand in to protect my mate instead...” Toki’s hands tightened gently, and she nuzzled Papyrus quietly.

“This all culminated from stress building and building and building- and you were just the snapping point. I know we separated to prevent problems with Asgore, but... There already are problems with him, and we’re not pack. Being pack.. At least for a little while,” for surely he would not want her back forever, “would mean a safer work space for you. I shouldn’t... Shouldn’t be as prone to bite.”

"Then it seems all that is left is to put on a leash on your instincts. I agree. Let us become one once more, Tokiko." Tenebris agreed, slowly pushing himself a little closer. "Toki, come here..." He purred gently.

Hearing Tenebris summon Toki, Aliquam, or Sentinel- it wasn’t clear who was currently behind the wheel- tightened his grip a little before he picked up a quiet whining.

Toki shifts, and very gently strokes her fingers over her husband’s clinging fingers. “I need up, my love.” She murmurs softly. “For just a moment, no longer. I won’t leave the nest. I’m going to make it safe, okay?” She nuzzles her face to his, and tries to slowly, very slowly, ease up so she can belly crawl over to Tenebris.

Her instincts were demanding she crawl- while she’d been defending her territory, she’d savaged another alpha who had only been trying to help.

Make it safe... Make it safer... Slowly, the younger male let go and hugged himself as he listened to the happenings around him...

Slowly, Tenebris pushed himself up and as he did, his forehead grew harder as his crown slowly grew out of his head, now more beastly as he 'stood' before Toki, and yet his gaze was gentle.

He leaned down and slowly set his forehead on hers, before he exhaled a deep purr as his snout trailed down along what would be considered the hairline on a human, it went around her horn and scar and down her skull as he moved to press his jaw to her head, as if a cat rubbing it's head upon hers.

And just like that, even he seemed to settle as the scent of the entire room changed.

It had been so quick... Even Aliquam needed a second. But he stopped shaking and he stopped holding himself so tightly... And as if he hadn't been able to breathe, he collapsed against the nest, taking a breath so deep one would wonder how long he had been needing it. It was safe. Toki was safe. Papa was safe...

He was safe.
Toki wasn't sure what to make of the whole process, but it seemed to settle the restless agitated energy of the room, and made everything feel... Right. Dear rose up in the back of her skull, and there was a guiding feeling as she instinctively plumed her stubby mane, and filled the room with pheromones that would act as her half of the acceptance deal.

The alpha female drew back when it was socially acceptable- because she'd entered it as an equal, not as lesser- and then went to curl around her mate’s upper half, a grimace covering her face as her body ached and throbbed. She hurt, and Braxton hicks weren’t fun, even if they were necessary for eventual delivery.

She didn’t even need to be told that was it, that everything was okay now. It simply was- and she felt her insides easing a little bit. There was still that prickling unease of too many beasts surrounding her and her wounded mate, but it soothed slightly with the fact that they were now pack, and not considered enemy beasts.

She eases down onto her side again though, and hissed gently as she massaged her hands into her middle. The smell of her stress lessened, but her discomfort and pain did not. Nor did her guilt. She was still guilty over Tenebris’ leg. “Papy...?” She questions softly, and uses her knee to block his from bumping her belly if he moves. She’s unpleasantly sore, but not ‘labor’ sore. There is a difference. “Are you feeling better...?”

As the duo moved apart, Tenebris quietly laid down and sighed as he purred in content.

Proud of himself, Sans began out to start making some tea for everyone.

Once back in Toki's arms, Papyrus nodded slowly, and reached up to wrap his arms around her. "W-Well done, my love..." He whispered into her form.

Toki rubbed her face quietly against his, and gave him the softest rumbling purr she could. She was uncomfortable and upset by everything that had happened still, but she was glad she could comfort her mate. “I didn’t do anything ‘well’, my love.” She replied with quiet solemnity. “The one who deserves the praise is Tenebris, and you. You made it- and now we can let you begin to heal so you can walk on your own again.” The ‘hopefully’ was not implied, and left wholly unsaid verbally. She pauses as she sees Sans start to go, and gives a soft trill. “Sans... Can you get the seat for me please?”

She still wanted it, and it was a shame for it to sit outside. She wanted more than just one, but one would work for now in creating a cubby within the nest. She really needed two for effective cubby making, but one could work to start if she built between the dresser and vanity.

"You got it, Tokes, I’ll be back in a snap." He winked at her and stepped out with a hum.

As he left, Tenebris rumbled gently. "Were I any other creature, I would have been very afraid. But I am thankful indeed you used your teeth alone. Well done, Toki." The older male had a smile on his face as he looked upon the younger pair.

Toki watched Sans go, and gave Tenebris a slow thrum. "There was no well done about it, Tenebris. We're lucky I used just teeth. You're not a fire elemental, and if I'd have gotten you with my venom..." She shakes her head. "We haven't seen the effects on monsters yet, but we know what happens with beasts. I wasn't in control. I was gone moments after I opened the door, and I only came back when I was pinned on the floor."

She shifts in her husband's grasp, and makes a tiny uncomfortable noise. Her muscles were relaxing, but she was cramping and sore. Throwing up hadn't helped. "But that aside... I'm hoping we can
keep it from happening again. When we left the pack, I didn't count on my instincts being this much of a problem concerning the beast pups."

"Instincts are an amazing thing... They are unpredictable and inexpiable, they simply exist within your mind and influence you from the shadows before you even realize it." He rumbled. "Your instincts told you to protect your mate, and as a human turned into a monster, I can easily see how you were lost to them..."

"Tenebris, I'm not too sure I wouldn't have bitten Papyrus if he'd have been able to physically grab me." She sighs softly. "But yeah. My instincts have been in hyper-drive. I should have had a proper secluded birthing nest weeks ago, I was, previously, surrounded by non-pack beasts, and in a weakened state alongside my mate... Everything, now that I look at it, was one huge slow building feral snap waiting to happen. Just... I'm sorry in advance if I growl at you. Hopefully we can avoid another one, and I'll try to not be so snappy, though I can’t promise I won’t. I can say that now with a clear head and mean it. I don't know if it'll stay that way."

Her feral bout had sort of exhausted the majority of her instincts, though some of them were still active. Such as the nagging need for her birthing nest. Her body was recognizing this nest as a sleeping, communal nest- but she didn’t have a birthing nest.

In all actuality, Toki would very likely build her birthing nest between the dresser and the vanity- which was just two feet or so behind the communal nest. She would only need a few more blankets and pillows, and she could connect them- and then her pack could be close, while she had her little haven to retreat to when she needed solace or when the time came for her labor to start.

There was no telling if she would actually give birth in there. Instinct said beasts only delivered with their mates but logic said she was going to be delivering five pups that were far too big for her to be doing this without assistance.

“I know you built this nest for us,” She brushes her fingers over the blankets as she changes the subject away from upsetting things, “and I really do enjoy it, but I will be adding to it. I’m thinking… Probably just behind the nest between the dresser and vanity for practical reasons instead of giving in to instinct and hiding it in one of the other rooms."

He seemed willing and able to roll with her sudden subject change, and other than nodding to show her he accepted her apology, he didn’t continue the prior conversation. "That sounds like a plan... you deserve to make it so everything is perfect, my dear..." Tenebris replied as he stretched in place, before he sighed and rested where he was, watching his son carefully. "Once I have healed up enough, I will be out of your hair and you will be free to accommodate to your heart's content..." He rumbled.

She visibly flinched in Papyrus’ arms and glanced away as he mentioned needing to heal. She’d already apologized though- so there wasn’t much more she could do besides doing a formal apology with her skull touching the floor, and she wasn’t sure she could physically do that with her belly in the way. “Well… I don’t have much hair left to be in the way of.” She says quietly. “And if you want to be here, you can. You’re family- and with everything going on, you deserve a safe spot to relax too. But I understand you still have things you have to take care of at your home before the litter arrives. And if you’d rather not… after what I did to your leg.” She mumbles quietly.

Toki’s wings shift along her back, and she rubs her fingers over her husband’s skull as he rests against her quietly. She’s not sure if he’s drifted to sleep, or if his body is just resting while he listens.

Papy seemed to be a bit of both of Toki's pondering thoughts, a weak moan rising from him as he nuzzled further into her cleavage, content on staying there.
"My leg is of no concern. The only concerns I have are for you... I do not matter nearly as much as you do right now." Was Tenebris' answer that carried his honesty. "You are pregnant and your mate is recovering, and as an alpha of our clan it is my responsibility to do everything I can to make you as comfortable as possible..."

There was a grunt of effort from outside the door and Papyrus momentarily peered out to see Caeruleus hauling something through the door.

Tenebris looked, and immediately his face fell.

"Is... That one of the seats from my car!?”

Toki had been right about to reprimand Tenebris for saying his leg was of no concern- she could smell the blood and burnt tissue from here, and it was making her stomach churn and bubble- when her brother in law brought in her prize.

She immediately perked up, and wriggled right out of her mate’s grasp, giving him a soothing smooch before moving to the end of the nest and down into the room proper to meet him half way. “You brought it!” She cheers. “Did you get the other one too? The half-loosened one?” There is a hopeful glint in her eyes as she reaches up with her secondary arms to take it, not at all perturbed by Tenebris’ forlorn sounding words.

By the scent on the seats, yes, they were most definitely his.

"Almost." Sans answered. "Grillby went to get it.."

"But... what... wha!?" Tenebris was making various noises and none of them made any sense.

Toki made a pleased trill, and nodded to him. “Please express my thanks- and maybe ask him to grab the drivers seat too.” She took the seat, and scampered carefully to the back of the nest, wedging it between the dresser and the vanity, creating a boosted out wall. Then, Toki made a soft, sad trill. “I need more blankets and pillows.” She pouts.

The seat made a massive wall though- multiple seats would give her all the wall coverage she’d need, given the size of the monsters they were created to seat comfortably.

Toki buzzes quietly, and creeps back into the nest. “Tenebris,” She chirrs softly, “What are you trying to say?”

His mouth opened slightly, before it closed, and he sighed in defeat. "It's... it's yours." He rumbled, slowly setting his face down in the blankets once more.

As he slowly sank into a face-plant of utter defeat, Toki slowly reached over her husband to gently pat the top of his head. “You left it out in the back yard to rot.” She says smugly. “So yes. It’s mine. For now.” She sniffs softly. “I’ll try not to wreck it. We were careful in pulling it out.” Toki’s words pause as her back cramps, and she sighs. She shifts, and doesn’t settle down yet. “I need to go clean the bathroom. And my face. The smell is making me nauseated.”

"Do as you wish to it, my dear.” He sighed, lifting his head. "I'll see about buying a new car I wont be afraid to use more often…”

“Buying a new car would be beneficial, since you’re going to have five kids who are definitely not going to be trained in car manners to haul around.” Toki says quietly to him, and then makes her way to the bathroom.
It takes her roughly twenty minutes to clean it—mostly because the sight and smell of the black ooze on the floor makes her sick again, and makes the process longer.

Still, she finishes, and then when she’s done, she heads back out to the nest to check on them, and see’s that Grillby had brought up the other two car seats. She gives them a slow look, but looks too fatigued to try and move them yet. So they sit by the door, and she slinks tiredly into the nest, and checks over the two alpha males resting wounded there, worrying all the while.

Papyrus was asleep, getting some much needed recovery rest, while Tenebris was laying on his back with his leg raised as he examined the score of the bite-marks... It seemed his magic was doing it’s job as the bandages looked to be the slightest bit strained. When she came back to the nest, he peered over at her, before he lowered his leg and extended a hand to her.

Toki hesitated at Tenebris’ extended hand, and then slowly moved around the nest to approach him. His makeshift bandages were stained, and she scent of his blood made her empty stomach clench with nausea. She settled slowly at his side, smaller secondary hands coming out to brush his fingers, before checking his temperature and making sure he was okay.

Even though she’d rinsed her mouth, she had little doubt he’d heard her getting sick again. “You know… You taste like battery acid and bitrex.” She says, shifting to settle sorely onto her side. Her bruised hip and shoulder face him. “Tenne didn’t taste like that.” She muses lightly. She shakes her head and sighs. “Anyway. How are you feeling?”

"Better... not the best but I'm doing better." He rumbled in reply, before he snorted. "Battery Acid and bitrex... I fear how you know the taste of said chemicals." He rumbled, though he then looked at her with an amused grin, "I suspect Tenne tasted... 'Better'?'"

Toki simply quirked a brow at him, and then chuckled. “He did taste vastly better.” She agrees. “And he thought I tasted pretty good too.” She sighs, and settles her head down against the pillows. “But that's what got us into this mess in the first place. Mnn...” Her legs kicked a little uncomfortably, as she tried to get comfortable without triggering another motion-based Braxtion Hicks. She doesn’t want to ask for his help in relaxing her muscles, not when she can’t offer help for his leg in turn, so she suffers in silence.

He looked at her with a knowing look before he hummed and slowly rolled over onto his side. He adjusted himself carefully to move to lay beside her, before reaching up to gently touch her swell and roll his thumbs over it soothingly. "An accidental miracle regardless, my dear. I'm going to be a daddy to beast pups and it's all thanks to you~" He purred.

Toki paused as his thumb rubbed over her swell, soothing the tender muscles. Then, with a glance back at her softly snoring husband, Toki scooted closer until her belly brushed against his, and she could curl closer, seeking and offering what comfort she could even though she was physically uncomfortable. “I'm glad you're still excited to be a Daddy again. Little ones are definitely a challenge.” She sighs, and leans her head forward to let it bump against his shield. He is warm, and it feels nice. “You're warm.” She announces softly. “It feels nice.”

Her response to his warmth had him smiling and he rumbled quietly, before he chuckled and wrapped his arms around her, pulling her close carefully before he rolled onto his back, a light grin on his face, "A challenge worthy of a retired scientist... though I'm still working, I assure you~" He joked lightly.

Toki made to squirm to try and free herself as he rolled onto his back, because this position left her with her stomach compressed. Surprisingly enough, her belly didn’t get squished- it compressed down, stretching his abdominal cavity wide as her girth invaded his body without permission. His
turtleneck cradled her, and she made a soft surprised noise, before letting her body slowly ease down. Her breasts were uncomfortable pressed to his shield, but she blindly groped for a soft enough pillow to cushion those, and then that was that. “Soul condoms are still a thing I desire.” She says almost idly as she shuffles against him to get comfortable, before going limp.

The weight on her back vanishes as his shirt cradled her middle, and Toki felt the air rushing from her lungs in relief.

He chuckled lightly before he draped his tail over her legs to secure her in place as he laid back. “That's the next thing on my to-do list... Soul protection for all the soul merging you can perform before you're as weak as Aliquam's spaghetti noodles.” He purred.

As she adjusted to grow comfortable, he hummed in thought before he chuckled, noticing the perfection of how her swell fit in his midsection cavity. He carefully boosted her hips a little before using a claw to pull his turtleneck and underlying tank top up to the base of his shield, cushioning her further as her swell fell into the warm, open airspace of his torso.

"Oh, Toki, look at that. I'm pregnant~" He sounded so smug.

The pulling of his shirt tugged hers up too, and left them with skin to skin contact. The litter didn’t appreciate the rolling motion brought on by the shirt, and Toki got a painful kick to the outside of her womb- which she knew pressed right into where her middle was distending his abdominal cavity. However, his smug little grin made her furrow her brow at him, and she huffed, reaching up her primary arms to bat at his head.

She succeeded in gib-smacking him. “You’re a colossal dork. You’re not pregnant. You’re second-hand pregnant.” She corrects with a bemused grin, and then slumps to drape across him, and wait for his response to feeling actual movement from inside himself. Provided he could feel it, of course.

"Secondhand pregnant." He snorted, though the happiness in his eyes was unmistakable. "Aah, I felt them kick~" He cooed softly. "This feels wonderful~"

Thankfully Tenebris' happiness didn't steal from Aliquam, as the younger male was now comfortably snoring in his section of the nest.

Toki smiled slightly at him, and closed her eyes. “It does feel wonderful.” She agrees. The litter squirm at their new dangling position. He offered her more relief than Papyrus did- at least in belly hanging distance, anyway. “The weight is off my back. Though, your shield is a little uncomfortable.” She adjusts the pillow again to shield her chest, and then taps on his chest shield. “But pillows help solve that. Really though- you don’t mind the kicking? It freaks out Papyrus occasionally to feel things move against his spine. I try not to do it too often unless he initiates it. This really does feel nice though.”

Under his hands, her back was relaxing, the constantly tense muscles softening and knots trying to come undone as her instincts relaxed in the presence of her alpha. Kneading would probably help even more at this point- though he’d have to go around her wings.

"On the contrary, it excites me~" He cooed, "My spine is not as exposed, so the kicks are dulled, but I still feel them, and to know that there is such beautiful life growing within the flesh... I get so excited I just want to cry." He admitted as he nuzzled her head. His hands indeed ventured around her shoulders, tracing over her wings before settling to knead her back carefully.

As his hands settled on her back, Toki exhaled a smoky smelling breath across his chest, and her sockets closed with a soft almost sinful moan. She wasn’t going to protest his kneading now like she
usually did. “I’m glad you enjoy feeling them move.” She mumbles in almost a daze, enjoying the feeling of his hands on her back and the almost weightlessness as his abdomen flexes around hers and keeps hers still and supported. It’s nice to give her teats ‘air time’ too, with no fabric scraping on them. “It’s definitely a magical feeling getting to feel your children move inside of you. This is probably the closest you’ll get- so I’m glad you’re enjoying it. A little jealous you get to enjoy it with none of the pregnancy pains though.”

Minus his leg, of course.

"First course of action, making your soul condoms... second course... Make pregnancy painkillers." He rumbled quietly.

"Pregnancy safe painkillers will be a hit. So will the condoms, but I shit you not, I will buy boxes of the damn painkillers if you can make them." She groans softly into his chest. There’s a sharp kick that makes her flinch, but she knows he’ll adore it. “Boxes, I tell you. Particularly since Pap keeps teasing me with litters. As in plural of them. I have the memory of an elephant sometimes- that’s not something I’m going to forget.”

He had to say it. He had to say it. "Toki Darling, I love you, I truly do. But your memory is not the only thing comparable to an elephant at this time." He fucking said it.

She paused, and lifted her head at him. Her tiny mane fluffed at him, and she glared at him. She shifted, and one of her bony knees caught him between the legs as she made to pull herself up slightly to adjust herself up to swat at his head. “You’re an asshole.” She huffs. “And y’know what, an alternate version of you did this to me, so by proxy, my elephant status is your fault.” She puffs at him.

He took his just deserts but as her kneecap shoved between his legs. He gasped in pain and slightly pushed his chest out. "A-aahh!" He gasped out sharply.

Toki blinked as he gasped and shoved his chest up, making her grunt as her breasts and stomach tingled at the sudden pressure, feeling warm and suddenly sticky. Was that…? Was she…? Yep. Lactiating. Again. Except this time, from all the teats. Lovely. She shifted, and tried to move her knee. “Did I hurt you?” She asks with nervous befuddlement. “You’re like a turtle. Your dick is tucked up inside. How did that work? I mean- I know freezing your slit would be unpleasant, but I didn’t think kneeing it would work.”

"O-ow...!" He gasped again, reaching down to carefully boost her hips and pull her knee from his slit. "The outer muscles are strong but if you get between them, say, with a humanoid kneecap on the other side of a pair of boxers... It would upset the inner lining a bit.

Toki blushed brightly. “I didn’t mean to… fuck, basically fist you with my goddamn kneecap, dear god.” She shifted, straightened her digigrade legs, and flexed her beastly toes. “Though, um… I ah… I think we do have another problem.” Her blush deepens, and she plants her four hands on his chest, and lifts up. “I have sprung a leak again. Which I mean- it’s good! It means I’m finally recovering and healing, and lactating normally again except this time it seems it’s coming from my stomach teats too? But um… I leaked. In your stomach cavity.”

He looked down a little, and then he chuckled and set his head down. "Ah... well... insult to injury." He hummed as he reached up to gently ruffle what little fur she has left around her neck once her knee had been moved out of the way. "Oh well... I need to shower anyhow, it's no different, you know." He purred. "It's simply I rinse my torso out as much as I would the rest of me.”

“He looked down a little, and then he chuckled and set his head down. "Ah... well... insult to injury." He hummed as he reached up to gently ruffle what little fur she has left around her neck once her knee had been moved out of the way. "Oh well... I need to shower anyhow, it's no different, you know." He purred. "It's simply I rinse my torso out as much as I would the rest of me.”

“Insult to injury upon injury, you mean. I... savaged your leg today, I kneed you in the giblets, and
now I’ve leaked into your stomach. That’s a triple whammy.” Toki sighs softly, and slumps into him. “I’m too tired to move.” She whines. “I don’t want to go get the maternity leak pads. Throwing up makes me tired. Going feral makes me tired. Worrying makes me tired. I want a nap before I worry some more and finish my birthing nest.”

"Does laying on your favorite pillow make you tired? Because if so then take a nap, I’m not going anywhere~" He rumbled gently as he reached up to give her horn a soft rub around the base.

Toki gave a soft, sleepy thrum at him, and squinted her eyes slowly as she purred, her head tilting into his hand. “Mmm… I may just have to do that.” She mumbles. “You okay to just… Be laid on? And not move? Because I can’t guarantee you won’t be stuck here for the next hour. Maybe two.”

"Do you realize how heavy Asgore is? Moreover how heavily he sleeps?" He asked. "I am QUITE fortunate that my life experiences have made it that my lungs work off magic otherwise I would have been smothered quite a couple times now."

“Really?” She gave him a curious look, her sleepy eyes quirking one of her brows high at him. “Huh. Your lungs work differently than Tenne’s did then- he got choked unconscious by the Asgore there in a miscommunication induced anger fit. And, you know, when I don’t want to take a chunk out of Asgore’s arm and beat him with it for being a fool, I’m totally going to tell him you called him fat.” She yawns in his face, and seems to go from a mostly solid state to a semi-liquid state as she goes limp and just slumps into him, her body invading his. Her wings drape over his legs, creating a safe buffer around his bite mark so nothing bumps it.

As she slumped into him, she missed the new look on his face... his playful grin fell to a frown, and he sighed quietly under her, completely washing over the comment of her ratting him out to Asgore, and more how she continued to bring up his counterpart.

Toki sighs softly, and exhales against his chest. “Tenebris…?” She questions quietly, her eyes not on him to see the look on his face. “Is... Is the differences between you and Tenne because you went through the Void? Is that... why you were so terrified when I pulled it open and fell in to avoid Cruelty detonating all of those souls?"

And the question he was not sure she would ever ask.

He was quiet for a moment, but hardly able to summon a reply. He reached up and his arms wrapped around her tightly. "It destroyed me without a chance to fight. It left me to suffer and rot for centuries until it grew bored of me and spat me out again, regardless of my condition. I didn't want the same to happen to you. I... was so relieved when you came out after only six months..."

Toki shifted her skull and looked at him quietly. She sighed softly through her teeth. "I think it does that as punishment for those who cross where they shouldn’t.” She murmurs softly to him. “The Void is... vengefully omnipotent. Like... Like a god without a conscience with an unlimited multitude of ant farms to experiment with, but if the ants step out of their box to visit another farm, the ant is put through hell.”

She watches his face for a moment, before sighing. “I wasn’t in the Void for six months, Tenebris. I was in it... I want to say, maybe a grand total of five minutes at the start, where in it completely liquefied me, turned me into something else, and then spat me out to be found by your counterpart, right about the time I got hit by the worst case of Death’s Rebound known to man. The next time I went back through, it maybe half an hour, though was a much gentler process, and I know why. The reason is in both of our bellies right now.” She murmurs softly. She lifts a hand, and strokes it gently over his cheek markings. "The proof that the Void changed us is undeniable though." She murmurs quietly. “My soul can’t go too far from my body, or I destabilize, not to mention this is my third..."
body. And you’ve got changes of your own. It doesn’t mean they’re all bad. They just are.”

He pressed his face into her hand and gave a quiet purr as he took in her words, letting them soak in as much as possible. "It’s a true relief that you did not stay in such a realm for long… It’s such an awful place…”

“For some, it is.” She agrees softly, and settles against him with a soft, content sigh. There is a shift, and then she grunts as her middle is kicked. “But, without it, they wouldn’t have came to be.” She yawns again, and her ecto tongue pokes out between her teeth as she settles her chin flat on his chest with a sleepy buzz. “Everything has it’s small blessings. Mnnmn…”

"Every cloud has it's beloved Silver Lining." He agreed, combing her fur with his claws as his smile slowly returned. "I cannot thank you enough, by the by... you're doing a wonderful thing for me and Asgore…"

Toki makes a soft agreeable noise. “You’re a good dad.” She mumbles. “S’ not nice ya didn’t get t’ have more...” Her sleepy mumble fades off slowly, and she sighs into his chest, before starting to snore softly.

He smiled at that, and he sighed, curling around her as he pressed a tender kiss to her head. "At least you're giving me the chance…"

It had been roughly ten minutes since Cae had departed downstairs, and he quietly stepped into the room to ask if anyone was hungry, though the sight awaiting him had him stop and smile warmly.

Tenebris had fallen asleep with Toki in her place on his chest, and at some point in time, Aliquam had rolled over and snuggled up to his father's side, a small smile on his face to announce his growing comfort on his side... the very side that had just gotten the metal prosthetic.

Cae's smile grew a little as he saw that special little tidbit, and he used his magic to drape a blanket over them before he turned and stepped out again with a satisfied sigh.
Chapter 149

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So, Toki finally gets to have a talk here.

Papyrus was up and around within three days. Well, up and around as much as two crutches and no wheelchair was- meaning he was up and down the stairs just because he could, and he was hobbling all over the house and getting into who knows what sort of mischief just because he had his own mobility again.

Toki spent a lot of the following days constructing her nest. She cannibalized Tenebris’ car for seats, and even stole the passenger seat from Papyrus’ car as well. However, at the end of the day, and after raiding her home and several of her family member’s homes for all the spare pillows and blankets they didn't want, she had the beginnings of her birth nest done.

She spent a lot of time in there- but not nearly as much as she did simply just spending time with her family. Once it was done enough for now- there was no telling if she’d find something that she just felt needed to go in there or not- she was free enough to relax and enjoy as much as she could of her final weeks of pregnancy.

That is to say, not enjoy them very much at certain points. Lactation was horrible with two breasts, but two breasts and six teats was eight too many to be experiencing it before birth. She changed clothes often, when she leaked through her pads. No matter how good a sign it was that her body was up enough on magic that she was producing again, it was still annoyingly irritating.

She was also big and comfort was impossible, no matter where she went or what she did. However… Pain was unavoidable sometimes.

Such as Papyrus’ crutch stepping on her fingers when she was walking at his side through the back yard, when they were meant to be wandering over to Tenebris’ ‘lab’. “Ouch!”

"Ah! Sorry!" He quickly put more weight on the other crutch and lifted the crutch that squished her fingers, giving her a small apologetic smile. "I'm still getting used to that, I'm sorry..."

Such energy coming from Aliquam was indeed a surprise, given his previous condition and how lethargic it made him during his time being wheelchair-bound. He was unfortunately very skilled with crutches, but it was quite good indeed to have the skill as once given enough time to get down the stairs, he could keep up quite well with the others without aid.

When he asked his father how long the prosthetic limb would take, he was given a time to come over so they could measure out everything they would need for the new femur, Papyrus had grown after all, it was only due he be re-measured for a new prosthetic.

"I must admit, I'm a little excited..." He gave a weak laugh. "This might fix not only my current damage, but revert me to a physical state that is better than I had been when you disappeared..." He then looked up again, a growing smile on his face. "It was not easy... I know it was hard for both of us... but this new hip is wonderful. I am so thankful to have such a skilled father."
"Tenebris is skilled." Toki agrees, her wing brushing his crutch as she waddles at his side. Her back feet crunch slightly over the grass, which was drying out. April was turning out to be hotter than rainy, which meant they’d have a hell of a summer. "It was rough though. I’m glad that we’ve… avoided other such incidents, and that he’s healing up alright."

Tenebris wasn’t even limping anymore. Healing magic was an amazing thing.

The pregnant skelebeast grunts, and moves towards the re-planted clan tree, sniffing it gently. It was just a sapling now- hundreds of years gone up in a blaze. But… it would be grown anew. "Do you think he’ll have your leg done before the litter is here?" She asks curiously. "He’s working so hard, and also dealing with Asgore…"

"Knowing him he'll make the prosthetic his first priority." He chuckled lightly. "He's gonna be thrilled to see me doing so well with this prosthetic progress. Watch this, I bet he'll be hardly contained to measure out my femur for the prosthetic."

Toki laughed. "That does sound like Tenebris." She shifts, and moves around his front. "You’re wandering again, love." She reminds him. "We needed to get your leg measured. So- lets go get it measured. You’ll get plenty of walking miles on the trek to your Dad’s house. I just hope he’s not going to overwork himself. When he comes over for naps and cuddles, it seems like he passes out harder than I do most of the time anymore. Have you heard if he’s made any progress with Asgore yet?"

"I am hoping that he did talk to him, and this is your chance to talk to him as well. While I'm busy with Father, you can talk things out with Asgore... Hopefully Father has been talking to him some, so it's going to be a little less painful."

"It’s not the painful that I’m worried about.” Toki answers him honestly. “I’m more worried about him making me angry and me going feral again. As upset with him as I am- and don’t doubt that I am upset, because I am beyond upset with Asgore about how he handled it, even if I know his reasoning- I don’t want to go feral on him.”

That was a new and niggling fear that Toki had now that she knew she could go savage on someone.

Toki made a soft grumbling noise and shook one of her palms, her secondary hands picking out a piece of glass that wedged between her bones. “I need hand shoes.” She grumps. “… Gloves. I meant gloves.”

Her foot-in-mouth moment went unrecognized as Papyrus focused more on the first thing that she said.

His brows furrowed a little at that and he stopped. "Tokiko Gaster." He started sharply. He was using his scolding-tone. "No one makes you angry but yourself. Addressing important issues is more imperative than anything right now, and you will not make things any better by going in there with the assumption that things might go bad. You either go in there expecting the concerns to be resolved, or you wait with me and nothing is resolved." He told her.

Toki hadn’t expected the sudden stop, and ran right into his crutch. She ran into his crutch, and smacked the wrist of the hand that had gotten squished. She let off a muttered curse, and hobbled several steps away. They had a habit of gravitating close when they walked, and they paid for it now.

His sharp tone had her looking up at him, and she cocked her head, looking briefly startled and then alarmed. Her brow furrowed at him, and she looked a little hurt that he’d think she meant it like that.
“I’m not… I’m not going to go in there assuming I’m going to be seeking blood, Pap. I’m… I’m not like that… That’s not how I work. I’m going to be going in seeking to resolve this- but I’m not going to go in like a naive fool either. I won’t take the risk of… hurting someone again.”

She says evenly, despite how his words bothered her. “I’ve never been one to leap to anger unless pushed there, and even then I don’t like it when I am angry. I try not to give in. Hell, I didn’t think I was capable of going feral like I did, but lo and behold- your dad paid the price in blood for my assumption otherwise.” She glances away from him, and tips her head down submissively. “If I get angry, I’ll step back and calm down. I just have to hope that Asgore will as well.”

Toki shifts, and starts to walk again. “And make no mistake. Asgore has a temper. He’s just got a fuse that’s several miles longer than either of ours is.”

He was watching her as she spoke, and as she concluded he let his shoulders drop a little. Clearly, he felt a bit bad. "Ah... I'm sorry." He caught up to her and put his crutch out to stop her. Once she stopped, he reached out to pull her into a brief hug, pecking her cheek. "I love you~" He purred sweetly. "I always will~"

She makes an irritable buzz at him as he pulls her upright, but humors him long enough to give him a kiss back. But Toki doesn’t linger, pulling away quickly as the weight of her front throbbed painfully. She was rapidly growing grumpy with the number of times people were pulling her up onto two legs. If she could walk on two legs right now, she would be. Still, it was easier for her to meet his needs than it was for him to crouch down and meet hers. “I love you too.” She says softly. “Now lets get going. And if you pull me onto two feet again in the next hour, I’m going to steal the nubbins off your crutches and replace them with one of Serif’s squeaky toys.”

"Sorry~" He gave her a smile and continued on. "Come on, then…"

She let him lead on towards his dad's house, content to let him set the pace.

A short time later and Aliquam had made it to his father's house with his beloved in tow. Though rather than going for the front door, he brought her around to the garage, rapping his knuckles along the door itself until he made it around to the side entrance, "Father, are you in there?" He called gently.

The door opened quickly and Tenebris peered out with a grin. "Hello my son." He greeted warmly, before he peered over at Toki with a lighthearted look. "And the lovely Tokiko~ I've been waiting for you, come on in." He rumbled, stepping aside for them to come in.

Toki waited for Aliquam to go in first, and then followed him in, making a soft, confused noise. "You have all your lab equipment in your... Garage?" She asked. Truthfully, Toki hadn't ever been in his lab before. It had previously been up at the castle, and then it had been moved when he permanently relocated down here with Asgore, but Toki hadn't ever looked for it. His lab was his private space, sort of like her laptop.

She glanced around to see what it looked like.

It seemed after he got over the stages of grief over what had been his first vehicle, he got back into his passion and cleaned the garage up to turn it into a proper lab.

"Absolutely! Vehicles, pah. A good investment but I was fussing over the wrong one, you know what." He huffed. "An old model worth appreciation indeed but I'm a doctor dammit. I'm too busy
for that fuss." He started.

The Garage- no, his Lab- was clean, and smelled clean, and partly still like a garage. But this was not unlike the area he had in the underground.

There were long tables along two of the walls covered in lab equipment, with expensive equipment that either came from his lab prior or were purchased for the sole purpose of being used in this lab itself.

On the far wall where the garage door would normally lift was a patient seating area, as well as what looked to be casting equipment.

"I've already gotten everything ready for you, Papyrus."

Naturally, Toki had to investigate everything as Papyrus went to go get seated. She sniffed here and there, and whuffled in the new scents. "Well, when you got your car, you didn’t plan on being a father to five new babies.” She says lightly. “So, it was a fine enough investment. There are human doctors who drive Lamborghini’s after all. But, as a dad, your car doesn’t work. In fact, if your son and I want more children of our own, we’ll have to upgrade and get a family car, because there simply isn’t enough room in the back for more than just one more child. I mean… If we could guarantee I’d have one, then we’d be solid- but it’s probably not going to happen, alas."

She lifted up a little bit, and shoved her nose against a set of empty beakers, sniffing them intently. "Oh my god, you utter dork. Those smell like honey. You made some venom samples into honey. You know, you can just ask, and I can make you jars of it once I’m better. Anyway… I should go inside so I’m not in your way. Is..." She glances at him. "Is Asgore inside?"

"So accusing." He stuck his tongue out at her playfully. "The venom cooled when my work was done and I just happened to enjoy the honey afterward.” He informed her with a soft laugh, before he gave a nod. "Yes, he and Thumper are cleaning up the house while I work out here. Do you want to talk to him?" He asked.

Toki gave a soft snort at his whole ‘just happened to get to enjoy the honey’. She flicked her wings slightly. "I do need to talk to him, yes. Have you made any headway with him regarding the problems...?"

"I talked with him, yes... He was working on alerting the guard about his change of heart last I heard... but he is still reluctant about releasing the garden... and... admittedly I am as well..." He murmured the last bit as he looked away.

It took Toki a moment not to instinctively bristle at him for that murmured comment. Instead, she sighed through her teeth. "I'm glad you managed to get him to change his mind about marking all humans and tightly closing the borders like they have been." She says softly. "But I will handle the garden."

She gives Tenebris a nod, and moves over to rub against his leg, sort of like a big, pregnant cat. If that cat were a bee instead of a cat. "I'll be out when we're done talking." She says, and then heads for the door.

He thrummed happily at the rubbing against his leg, and he purred to her gently as she took her leave.

She opens it, and then goes inside to track down where they were. She could hear Thumper upstairs cleaning his room, but Asgore sounded like he was downstairs. She made a soft buzzing noise, and
went to find where the massive goat King was.

Asgore was working inside, humming as he mopped the kitchen quietly. Hearing her come in and the sounds of her bones across the floor, he turned and hesitated slightly, before he smiled gently. "Ah... Toki…"

Toki offered him a slow smile, and stopped in the doorway of the kitchen of the home she had lived in for quite some time in more than one world. She glanced around quietly, humming softly, before moving in to pick up a cleaning cloth and going to clean under the table for him. “Asgore.” She greets, wings buzzing faintly. “You’ve been busy, I see. The house looks great. Nesting?”

Toki had the urge to clean too- but her house was literally in too much of a shamble to do anything to, so even attempting only distressed her and made her have to sit down and have a good cry. Her floor was ruined, her living room was ruined, and she couldn’t even reach the pictures on the walls to dust them. Life was rough.

"A little bit busy, yes." He rumbled softly. "Nesting has been one of the newfound activities we have taken up, especially when Tenebris has his paternal moments." He chortled gently. "I suppose this is just a little spring cleaning.”

“It’s good to be able to clean.” She smiles quietly. “I can’t clean right now- my house is literally in shreds, which… Kind of sucks.” She had hoped she’d have had a whole home to give birth in, but she only had a safe upstairs. Toki grunts softly, and scrub a stubborn dirt stain. “Cleaning is good though- the litter will be here within a couple weeks, and they’ll be in your home before you know it.”

Her gaze slides to him from under the table, green and unintentionally ominous as she watches him while she scrubs. “Are you excited?”

He gave her a sweet smile and nodded. "Thrilled. I am looking forward to being a father again~" He admitted happily. "I'm sure that once we've all recovered, we will see to putting your home back to the way it was before, if not better.”

“I won’t be too worried about it later.” Toki shrugs, bumping her skull against the bottom of the table. “The only reason my house bothers me now is because I’ve got the need to clean, but I can’t clean. I can’t even stand upright to use the vacuum right now.” She shifts and then slips out from under the table. “All clean under here.”

She sets the dirty cloth in the sink, and then shifts to look at him. “So… Tenebris says you had a change of heart regarding some things in the city.” Her tone is not aggressive or argumentative- simply conversational.

He hesitated at the topic change, before he gave a nod. "Yes... our talk was long but indeed he was right when it came to the grit of it... I was fearful of the past repeating and jumped too quickly to the solution I did.”

Toki nods slowly, and seems pleased with his answer. “I’m glad you realized that it was wrong.” She says softly, and shifts to take a seat in one of the chairs. Being upright and sitting is not totally comfortable, but better than on the floor and so much lower than him. “Tenebris mentioned you were still unmoved on releasing the garden for everyone to have access to again.”

Toki could understand restricting human access to it- but not access from Asgore’s own people.

"I wanted to lock it away from anyone who could hurt it, or be used to hurt it.” He says quietly.
“Tenebris was so broken when both your statue and the memorial for our pup were damaged…”

“I know.” She says softly, and watches him with understanding eyes. “I understand, Asgore. I do. But… At the same time, I still don’t believe locking it away is the answer. Humans and Monsters alike used to go there for solace. It was a place of comfort and peace, of serenity and harmony.” She folds her four arms on the table in front of her, and quietly hums to him.

Toki considers him quietly, and hums softly. “What I would propose instead of simply just taking down the blood magic wall and leaving it at that, however, is make it different than before. Before, there were no guards. People and monsters could wander in as they pleased, whenever they pleased, and were unsupervised for the entire duration of their visit. Perhaps instead, have twenty four hour guard rotations on it- two on each entrance.” Toki’s fingers tap on the table. “Not only would it provide ample protection for the memorial garden and for the guards themselves, but it would open up more job openings for the guards in training up at the Castle and there in boost the village economics.”

He looked to consider her words before he smiled gently. "Yes... That is quite an idea isn’t it..." He rumbled quietly, before his smile fell. "Unfortunately, I don’t know about extending the guard past Monsterkind…"

“I didn’t say we had to, I don’t think.” She blinks slowly. “Though it would be a good idea to actually have a mix. Monsters are… fragile against humans- even if we could get some HTM’s on the guard squad, that would be perfect.” She shakes her head with a slow but curious sigh. “Though, I understand your hesitation. I know Cae can see souls, though to what extent I don’t know. He could be used to filter people, if you decide to open it up to non-Monster guards.” She shrugs. “But...” Her gaze settles on him quietly. “Whatever you decide on, I want the blood magic gone. Stag is proof enough that blood magic is bad news. Three hundred years from now, I don’t want to be dealing with it becoming sentient on it’s own.”

He gave a slow nod. "Ceasing the blood magic is... agreeable. Indeed it could get out of hand if left unattended.” He agreed softly.

Toki gave a soft, pleased thrum. “Yes, it could. Blood magic is used only in times of war and with no choices left. So that… I think solves everything. Once you’ve implemented the fixes, Nara Village will be back to the place that I love.” She leans back in her chair, and pauses as the litter kicks. She strokes her fingers over them quietly, and then looks to Asgore. “They’re kicking. Do you… want to feel?” She asks gently.

It was her way of extending a peace offering to the King. His touch hadn’t been openly welcomed in a while.

"Oh..." The offer had given him a soft exclamation of surprise, but as quickly as he had been stunned, he smiled warmly and gave a nod. "Y-Yes of course! Let me wash my hands and I would love to feel them!" He laughed happily.

Toki gave a warm smile and nodded towards the sink. She was moving towards making peace with him and within herself. Holding onto anger wasn’t worth it. “Alright.” She smiles at him quietly, glad they had resolved it. Dear seemed soothed slightly too- though Toki wasn’t sure why.

In the same, Asgore felt better as he washed his hands, and as he dried them off, he gave a thrilled hum and came back, sitting down beside her quietly. "Would you like to get comfy first, dear?” He offered gently. "If I get this chance I might not want to let go immediately.” He admitted with a quiet laugh.
Toki gave a soft snicker as he sat down next to him. “Comfortable for me involves stretching out on my side on a plush surface. I’m at the point where nothing else is comfortable.” She pauses, and then corrects herself. “Except tummy time with Tenebris. His abdominal cavity makes a great cradle for all of this weight, and I can get some sleep without as much pain. So…” She flails her four hands. “Yeah. The best we could do is give you a lap full of me on the couch.”

It would be quite awkward to find the most comfortable position without any idea of where to start, so Asgore simply nodded briefly. "I suppose if that will suit what you would enjoy." He rumbled. "I do have a rather fluffy lap, you might just like it." He then joked lightly with a soft laugh.

She snorts in bemusement and gives him a lopsided smile. “To the couch then. If all else fails, you can simply do as Tenebris does- stretch out, and I can settle near your face, and you can have a couple hours of tummy time. Or at least until my husband is done and ready to go home.”

She shifts in her chair, and climbs back down to the floor. Her swollen middle sways under her as she pads across the floor for the living room, climbing up onto the massive couch. She had plenty of space to curl up on one of the cushions and offer her middle to the king.

He was their father too- it was his turn to catch up on all of the cuddles he’d missed.

He took his spot on the floor by her stomach and he carefully lifted one of his droopy ears to drape it over her stomach while he pressed his ear canal over her stomach. "Hello my children~" He greeted warmly, reaching up to touch her stomach.

Under his ear, there was the muffled sound of little things shifting under her skin, limbs bumping together in the thick fluid cushioning their growing bodies as they began reacting to his voice as he spoke to them. It had been a long time since he had spoke to them proper, but it didn’t seem like they had forgotten him or his voice.

Toki gave a tiny wince as a sharp kick booted out and caught Asgore in the nose. Her secondary hand massaged the spot slowly. “They missed you.” She says softly, reading her bonds to them slowly. “They’re grumpy that you haven’t been around as much to talk to them. That’s what the kick was about. Ouch…”

He grunted in pain and rubbed his nose before he laughed gently against her stomach, "Darling puppies, it's okay~ Daddy's here now~" He purred, before he rumbled happily. "My word, I think I hear someone flapping around in there~"

As he tucked back against her belly from rubbing his nose, Toki lifted her fingers and quietly investigated Asgore's horns. She hummed softly. "It's entirely possible that they have wings, given that I'm their biological mother. If you do end up with some fliers, I'll teach them, no worries." She promises gently.

The kicks in her stomach worsen for a time, spreading an ache to her lower back. The flesh under his face tightened with a Braxton Hicks. "And before you panic, yes, those are normal to have when I'm this close to popping. It was just a Braxton Hicks."

"Oh, I knew. Toriel used to get them when she was pregnant." Was the king’s mellow-toned reply. "It simply means your body is strengthening itself for the sake of a proper birthing."

She nods slowly. “Yes it does.” She gives a quiet chuckle, and then sighs. “I know you know- so does my husband and your husband, but that doesn’t stop them from tensing and freaking out whenever they feel it. After the early labor scare, I think anything involving my actual due date has them a little bit...” She flails her primary hands, and makes a rude noise. “Yeah. Aliquam is just
starting to sleep a little bit when I sleep, but he bolts right awake if he feels one, so it starts the whole process over again. At this point, they could probably be born and be fine, but I’d rather risk over-cooking the turkey than under-cooking it.” Toki sighs gently. “It’s nice to have someone who isn’t immediately freaking out over it. They’re uncomfortable, but not painful right now.”

"It is very understandable. Young Papyrus has been with you through thick and thin, and my darling mate is so excited to have packmates- even if they are simply the puppies he raised.”

Toki nods softly, and gives a soft laugh that has his head bouncing against her belly. “I’m excited for you guys to get your kids.” She admits. “I’m also really excited to see my feet again, and to move normally again. I ballooned huge in like, three and a half months, if that. That was probably one of my favorite parts about having the twins- all of this,” She pokes at her shirt covered pregnant belly, and grunts as one of her swollen teats tingles, “will literally just fall off once the litter is here. Well… Hopefully.”

She wasn’t sure if it would be leaving since she had teats… She hoped it would, but there was no knowing. “But yeah.” She back tracks in the conversation. “Aliquam has been with me through thick and thin… Honestly, I didn’t think he’d stay when I accidentally got pregnant. That’s usually a deal breaker for humans- but… he stayed- and our love grew. Though… Heh- him panicking over labor is nothing new. When my due date came for the twins, he was a bundle of panic then too- but a week of waiting wore him down until he was calm for the actual event.”

“The litter is a larger weight upon you, though for a tad shorter a time. A fair trade I would hope.” He rumbled before he looked up at her. "Though I cannot blame him with the anxiety. Indeed we have not been the luckiest bunch... But no matter what we have gone through, Monsters do not abandon those we love. It... takes the most unmentionable acts to be abandoned..."

He quieted a little at that last bit, obviously thinking about Toriel. He didn't linger long though, or let his thoughts dwell. Asgore’s eyes focused back on her and he continued speaking. "You've been through so much; Aliquam's thoughts about staying with you could be considered the very most last thing he ever remotely considers a possibility of not doing. Even this whole mess with otherworldly shenanigans, and you coming back carrying… His other-world-father's litter. He stayed- he loves you." There was a lot of dad-attempted emphasis on that... look at him go.

"To be honest, I think it would have been less harsh on my body if the litter would have taken longer to grow. You know- less demand for magic and all." She blinks up at him slowly as he shifted to look at her. Without his weight on her belly, the litter shifted again and seemed to settle heavily to one side, making her look visibly lopsided.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. Monsters operate a lot differently than humans. I've spent enough time with you all to have learned that by now. Not to mention the years in the other world where most everyone thought I was a monster.” She hums. "Honestly... I'm more at home around monsters than I am with humans now." Toki pauses and pats her belly. "And that's not just pregnancy hormones talking. Though dear isn't comfortable around large numbers of humans.”

Speaking of... Toki paused and blinked. "Dear isn't growling in my head about you touching my belly." She says, bewildered.

He looked at her with a briefly surprised look, focusing in on her last sentence. "Is that so?" He asked with the shared bewilderment. "That's quite a surprise. Have I finally earned her trust? If at least enough to rest against your stomach like this?" He rumbled. "I'm quite honored if so." He then gave a jolly smile up at her.

"I don't think it's trust." Toki closes her eye sockets with a curious noise, and patted Asgore's
forehead. "It might be because we worked things out. I do wonder..." If Dear was pleased because Asgore had given in to the way things should be- and technically given in to Toki's orders. A roundabout way of 'submitting dominance'. She shakes her head softly and smiles again. "It's a thought for another time. Right now is belly cuddles and baby snuggles while Aliquam gets measured. Have you been thinking about names?"

"Oh indeed. We had a few ideas pass over, though... we agreed that we name one of our sons-to-be after Tenebris' father." He answered happily. "He was pleased to have my agreement on such a matter."

Toki smiles with soft mischief. "Well, here's to hoping I don't give you a litter of five girls then, huh?" She snickers. "I'm sure that would drive him absolutely batty. Though... it would be his first daughters, so maybe he'd enjoy it." She gives a belly bouncing laugh that has Asgore's head going for a ride as the litter squirm unhappily at her joy. "I could see all three of you- Tenebris, Thumper, and you, all getting dragged into doing tea parties and playing house."

"We will both fall victim to the innocent eyes of the pups who want to get their way/" He chortled. "I had my son and a wonderful flower come into my life. This will not be the first time I face the puppy-look." He assured her.

She laughs softly. "I've got you beat. Eight little brothers begging for big sister Toki to play with them, and the accompanying puppy eyes. I am more immune than Papyrus is to the twins' puppy eyes. And believe me- little miss Daddy's girl gives him puppy eyes often." She shifts, and then made a soft uncomfortable noise. "Most of them have Tenebris' legs." She says. "And they are pressing up against where my spine is. Gah. Pap used to tease me about when the twins would kick because it was unpleasant but at least 'they don't have legs like father', and damn him if he wasn't right."

Ironically, if any of their future kids had those types of legs, it would be Toki's fault and she could blame no one but herself.

"Do you think they're eager to come out? If at least for the granting of more leg space." He joked lightly.

"Probably." She gives a soft laugh at his joke. "They're probably eager for more space. I'm surprised I haven't laughed them out yet, to be honest. They're absolutely massive it feels like. I am so, so ready to be at a point where I can comfortably walk on two legs again. Though I will admit, I'm not looking forwards to delivering five. Two was hard enough as it was, but five... I'm just glad we've got doctors on hand in case I need help like last time. Did Tenebris ever tell you he had to help with Honey?"

"I heard that her horns gave you a workout and he indeed had to play a slightly greater part in her birthing." He answered. "I'm thankful that everything went right. I would hate for anything to be any less than it is now..." He nuzzled her gently before he smiled up at her. "Are you going to want a warm blanket while we wait for Tenebris to finish with Papyrus' leg?"

"I'm just hoping things go smoother for this litter and that there are no... snags." She winces at that. If they had her curling ram like horns... Yikes. The offer of a warm blanket though makes her smile and nod. "Yes please! Not going to turn down the ability to leech warmth from something. Just because I'm on the highway to recovery doesn't mean I don't get a bit chilly from time to time. Not a 'my flame is going out and I'm dying' kind of chilly, but an 'I can't move properly to warm myself up and I still don't have all of my magic' chilly." She clarifies so he doesn't panic and flood her with magic.
He rumbled at that and got up. "Always good to clarify." He chuckled lightly. "I'll be right back." He disappeared for a short time before returning with a blanket in his arms. He unfolds it and tosses it over her, covering her in the wondrous feeling of warmth.

Toki had gotten settled on her side in the time he was gone, and when the blanket settled over her, she made the most pleased of rumbling noises. “Ah~” She croons happily. “It’s so warm. Mm… I may nap while they do their measurements. Unless you and Thumper need help cleaning?”

"You nap. Thumper and I will be fine." He answered. "Get your sleep and we will continue our conversation later." He pat her head gently, and then went to go continue cleaning, leaving Tokiko to her devices.

Toki nodded, and rolled over to get comfortable again. She took a few minutes to go to sleep, simply feeling all of the shifting, the signs of life in her belly, and quietly wondering to herself if she’d have been larger, heavier, if there would have been six in there. All the same, Toki eventually fell asleep, curled at the edge of the couch.
Chapter 150

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Sorry for the un-steady update schedule, folks. We’re not trying to be inconsistent, but it’s about the best we can do with what we’ve got time wise.

The only comment I have for this chapter is sometimes people cockblock you, sometimes it’s a situation, sometimes it's a time... and sometimes you're the one who cockblocks yourself. But that's okay too- sex ain't required for intimacy.

She was dreaming of chasing something. Something warm, and something smelling like pineapple and teriyaki. It was mouthwatering and fresh, and it was right in her mouth-

She woke with a soft snort, the thing in her mouth hard and dry, not soft and juicy pineapple scented with teriyaki. She made a half asleep confused sound, her teeth chewing lightly on the thing in her mouth. What…?

There was a dim pair of orange eye lights staring down at her.

"Toki, I love you... but please stop chewing on my arm... that hurts..."

It turns out she was chewing on her beloved husband, who had come to cuddle with her while she slept.

She made a confused buzz, her teeth moving again, before she let him go. She blinked at him with the same sleep lethargy of someone who had a really good dream interrupted. “You’re not pineapple and teriyaki.” She sounds super, super disappointed too. She makes a soft, whiny groan, and rolls over to snuggle her face into his chest to apologize for gnawing on his arm. “Mmmnnnnnoooo I almost had it.” She whines. “I can still smell it..."

"Well you're smelling it, that's for sure... it's just not yet within chewing range." He wrapped his arms around her with a mellow smile. "Though I'm sure once Asgore hears you're awake, he'll serve you a sneak peek of what's been made."

She made a tiny fussy pout at him and shifted to peek at him, her slow growing mane ruffling against his hand. “Mmm… I kinda wanna go see if he’s got any I can get in the kitchen. I just want whatever smells like pineapple and teriyaki. It smells so good…” Her teeth nibbled at his shirt just a little bit, and her stomach practically rumbled. “Mmmm. Would you mind terribly if I returned for cuddles after seeing if the kitchen has anything raid-able? I need it.”

The way she said need was definitely a ‘I have a pregnancy craving need, and I need it now’ kind of need.

"But I just got heeere." He whined quietly, before he smiled and leaned in to nuzzle her gently. "Yeah... okay... I cant move my legs that great so if you want to go ahead and just squirm yourself free, go for it.” He told her with a warm smile.

Toki went ahead to do just that, before she paused. “Wait... Legs?” She tried to sit up to see what he was talking about with legs- because they had to take measurements damn it, she hadn’t been
sleeping that fucking long- but sitting up was proving fruitless with the couch eating both of their bodies. “What do you mean legs?”

He slowly rolled over and smiled at her, allowing her to sit up and have a look at his new leg; or perhaps what was the first prototype. It was a pale orange color between the natural stain of his bone and the bold orange glow of his magic.

"What do you think?" He asked, "I asked him to make it orange if it was possible without damaging the structural integrity of the bone... He said yes. so... ta-da~"

Toki blinked, and hesitated before reaching down to touch it. “… It looks like an orange creamsicle.” She informs him lightly, and smiles faintly. “I didn’t think you’d be getting a leg today though. I was under the impression that today was just for getting your leg measured out for a new prosthetic. This one is a prototype?”

The one she had seen when she came home was nearly seamless. This one… stood out. Quite a bit.

"Oh yes. It's made of plastic with some reinforcements while he smelts the new one." He answered. "But this is basically what the new one is going to look like when it's ready. Isn't it great?"

Toki nods slowly and looks it over. “I like it.” She smiles. “Will you have full sensation in the new one like the last one?” Toki rolls to sit semi-upright, and gives a soft grunt. She rubs his ribs, and then gets down on all fours, not even bothering getting up to stretch. All that would do is shoot pain through her and stretching wasn’t a good enough reason to lure her onto two legs.

The pregnant skelebeast tucks the blanket around him, but leaves her corner un-tucked. Clearly she plans to return for cuddles until he’s cleared to hobble home- but she needs her prize first.

"Oh indeed. As soon as the nerve threads properly integrate themselves into my magic I'll be able to use it like I never lost the original.” He announced with a smile.

"Good." She smiles softly to him. "I hope this prosthetic works better than the last. As dapper as you look with a cane, I can tell you and your beast aren't comfortable with one." A visible weakness was bad. Even Dear didn't like their skull scar on display.

Toki shifts, and takes an antsy step toward the kitchen. "I'll be right back, okay Pap? I'm gonna go find that smell."

"I'll be better once I can go without it..." He agreed, before he shooed her off. "Go on, sweetheart, go seek your prize~" He laughed gently. "And see about saving me a sample too, yes?"

She gave a loving smile, and leaned up to steal one more kiss. "I'll bring enough." She promises.

Toki waddles off for the kitchen, and peers in. She sniffs deeply, inhaling openly through her mouth by habit. She spots Asgore's back in the kitchen, along with Tenebris, and notes that they're both cooking. Thumper is nowhere to be found, but she can hear their shower running upstairs.

She hesitates only a moment before waddling into the kitchen proper. "Good evening." She says as she tries to locate which of the two older monsters is working on the part of dinner that has her prize.

"Good evening, Toki." Tenebris greeted warmly.

"Did you sleep well?" Asgore inquired as he gave her a friendly smile.

“"I woke up chewing on Aliquam's arm- but I did have the best dream, and he was very warm.” Toki
hums softly, and offers them a hesitant smile. She sucks in a deep breath, and then pads closer.
“Something smells… Good. Really good.” She can’t bounce up high enough to see what on the
counter, but it smells like Tenebris is the one handling it.

So she goes, and sits at his feet, and peers up at him. Were her eye lights big and round? Yes, yes
indeed. Puppy eyes were a go. “What are you making? I smell pineapple and teriyaki.”

"Well you're not that far off. I'm making a mix of Hawaiian rice and stir fry since I know you've
been craving pineapple as of late." He answered, before he smiled and picked up an uncooked strip
of marinated pork, letting it drip a little before he dangled it over her head with a teasing 'hoo hoo~'.

Toki’s eyes followed the pork strip for only a moment, before she dismissed it with a soft buzz. Toki
did eat raw meat, but there were two raw meats she still refused to eat, beast or not- pork and
chicken. Too much of being raised that ‘it has to be cooked done or you’ll get sick and die’ for her to
even attempt. “You have my attention with pineapple and some of that teriyaki smell most definitely.

She ramps up her puppy eyes, hoping he’ll part with a little bit he doesn’t need to cook with so she
could sate the instant need she had.

He raised a brow at her refusal of the cooked pork, before he chuckled. "How about a slice of
cooked pork and a ring of pineapple to sate you until dinner?" He offered.

“A slice of cooked pork… and two rings of pineapple?” She haggles, a hopeful perk to her mane and
an extra glimmer in her eye lights. She had to have enough to share after all. “Maybe dipped in
teriyaki sauce?”

"I get to see your reaction here in a second and it's a deal.” He grinned at her.

“My reaction?” She tilts her head in confusion, trilling questioningly. “But okay. Deal!”

She wanted her goddamn pineapple.

And with that, he leaned his head back and took a hearty bite of the raw pork strip, hearing it give a
hearty squelch from the mix of blood and marinade.

Toki felt her stomach lurch, and she may have audibly gagged a little bit. “What the fuck, Tenebris?”
Her mane bristled. “That’s fuckin’ disgusting! Gross! It’s on your mouth and- BLEGH!” She
covered her face with her secondary hands and made a thoroughly repulsed piping. “When you get
trichinosis, I’m going to laugh and try to figure out how to cure your ass.”

He swallowed his pork strip and grinned at her. "As agreed, a strip of pork and two slices of
pineapple." He spoke as if nothing just happened.

Though true to his word, he soon held out a bowl with said pieces of the meal.

She made a grumpy look at him for his utter disregard for being a gross mc-gross face, and took the
bowl. She peeked into it, and made a pleased trilling sound, her disgust being wiped away by her
pleasure at a ‘successful hunt’. “Thank you! I’ll let you cook now.” She chirps, and then waddles
away, pleasantly and adorably smug about her prize.

She may have been ‘strutting’ as much as a heavily pregnant and penguin-waddling skelebee could
strut as she made her way back towards the living room with Papyrus.

"I love you, Toki~" Tenebris called after her sweetly.
Papyrus was laughing quietly from where he sat, having been able to see nearly all of the interaction that just happened.

Toki made an obligatory grumbling under her breath that she didn’t really feel, and made her way back to the couch. She hauled herself up, her belly wobbling, and then flopped against her husband’s chest with a pleased croon. “I got my prize.” She says, fluffing up to match her audibly sounding intensely pleased with herself. “It was quite the battle.” She gets comfortable, and then offers the bowl to him. “Pork? Or a ring of pineapple?”

He giggled lightly as he pulled her close, petting her head. "I'll enjoy the pork if you'd like." He offered.

She makes a face at the idea of eating pork, and nods to him. “Yes please.” She scoops up a pineapple ring, and tucks it, sauce and all, into her mouth, letting it sit on her tongue so she could savor it. She only had two- and the intense rumbling purr that sprung up and filled the living room let the entire lower part of the house know just how much she enjoyed that first pineapple ring.

He had his enjoyment of the pork strip and hummed in content as he chewed it, though he occasionally glanced at his wife to admire just how cute she was.

Toki’s first pineapple bite was savored for some time, and then she swallowed it down. The second garnered the same amount of enjoyment, and she snuggled up to him with a pleased wiggle of her wings. Once her mouth was empty, she made the tiniest sounding sigh of happiness. “It tastes just like I dreamed it would.” And just like his arm had not.

Aliquam seemed to enjoy the strip of meat and he gave a content hum, smiling to Toki admirably. "I'm glad you're enjoying what you got from the kitchen... did you sneak it or had you bribed father somehow?" He asked with a soft laugh.

Toki beamed at him. "Children's puppy eyes are not the only weakness your Dad has." She smiled and nuzzled closer. "I totally won my prize."

He laughed and pat her head gently. "You can be such a mischievous delinquent sometimes." He tutted gently as he pet her head. "But you're enjoying it, so I'm happy."

"Yeeees." Toki made a pleased noise, and nuzzled him as she settled against him happily. "But you're enjoying it, so I'm happy."

"We can very much go home and have our own dinner, or we can stay with... my... parents..." Such a realization of her words had him smiling brightly. "I'm sure they would LOVE to have you."

"Well, what do you say?" He asked. "We could very much go home and have our own dinner, or we can stay with... my... parents..." Such a realization of her words had him smiling brightly. "I'm sure they would LOVE to have you."

Toki gave a warmhearted laugh. “I know they would. But, I think if you’re up to it, I’d rather go home and simply have a feast of fruit and maybe some meat strips while we snuggle in my birthing nest.” She pauses, knowing he hadn’t yet been welcomed into her nest, and that he would hear her offer. “Maybe no meat for me. Tenebris kinda grossed me out in the kitchen. I don’t think I could look at a pork strip without feeling sick tonight.” She shifts and flicks her wings slowly. “But that depends on if you can walk.”

"Father suggested I take it easy, but I can walk home if we have to... of course we could take some delicious dinner with us if we wait long enough." He answered with a smile.
Toki snickers. “I’d feel bad just dining and dashing though, Pap. Plus, I doubt they made enough to
feed everyone at home- and you know the kids will want some too.” She rubs her fingers gently
against his collar bone, and smiles softly. “We could ask though. But really- I just want a couple cans
of pineapple and to curl up in the nest with you while the kids run amok downstairs and drive your
brother batty.”

"Remember that Father and his majesty are large creatures; they could make enough to feed the
village simply by making their usual ration twice.”

“Are you calling me fat?” Asgore poked his head out of the kitchen and mock squinted at his son by
marriage.

Toki snickers and tucks her head into his chest. “Busted.” She wasn’t gonna bail him out at all.

"No, Father is almost ten feet tall and you surpass ten feet with your horns! You're not fat, you're
both just freakin’ HUGE!” He laughed.

Asgore laughed. “You’re not wrong.” He gave a bemused grin to them both. “Dinner is done, by the
way. Do you want to eat here, or shall I have Tenebris walk you both home so you can eat with
everyone over there?”

Toki looked up at Papyrus and tickled her chin against his sternum. “Your call.” She was ready to go
home and hole up in her nest again, but she’d stay if he wanted to.

"I say we stay long enough for first course..." Papyrus chuckled, before giving her a squeeze. "And
we head home with leftovers... if there are any.”

Toki sighed very softly through her nose, having got her fill of socializing for the day already. She
hadn’t even done a whole lot of it, but she wanted to go curl up in her birthing nest and not be
bothered for a while. “Y’know… I might take a rain-check on dinner with the family.” She reaches
up and kisses his chin. “I just kind of want my nest right now. But, you go ahead and stay for dinner,
okay?”

Asgore tilts his head, and looks back at Tenebris quizzically, wondering if they’d upset Toki
somehow. Pregnant women could be fickle- Toriel had gotten upset over the silliest of things.

Tenebris poked his head out as well and carefully watched Toki as she spoke, before he smiled.
"Give me five minutes and I'll be ready to help you home with your dinner." He spoke up warmly.

Toki looked up at her husband, and then at Tenebris. ‘You don’t have to,” she says awkwardly. “If
you want to stay, Pap, you can. I’ll be okay walking on my own and getting something to eat there.”

There were three or four cans of pineapple with her name on them. And if they’d been eaten, well…
There would be an angry Toki rummaging in the cupboards.

"You can’t have a birthing nest without your ever vigilant mate to keep it safe from intruders, now
can you?” Papyrus asked with a warm smile. "I don't have any problem with doing what you want,
Toki.”

Toki blinks slowly, obviously processing what he’s saying. “You… Feel up to keeping watch?” She
asks hesitantly, her small mane ruffling uncertainly. She’d gotten used to the background stress that
came from having to ‘guard’ her mate, her nest, and her ‘territory’. She wasn’t sure how to react to
having a mate that could… Well, do as a mate should be doing.

"Of course! Absolutely!” He gave her a smile filled with energy that he had not expressed for... god
how long has it been... too freaking long that's what. "You need the final days of your carrying to be as peaceful as we can make it, so that's what I'm going to do..." He purred, kissing her head softly. "I'm gonna make it as peaceful as possible.... by taking my role once again as your guardian."

There was a soft hitch in her breath, before she began sniffing with soft, relieved sounding buzzes into his chest. Toki had been running with that low-key strain of stress constantly burning in the back of her mind for weeks now- and now her Husband could finally begin to soothe off that final twisting strand that had her snarling at everyone and everything when she got too overwhelmed.

“Aww...” Asgore gave a soft smile, seeing her a little emotionally overwhelmed. “Don’t cry, dear. It’s okay.”

“I don’t mean to, I’m sorry-” Toki blubbered softly, and worked to compose herself. The tears didn’t last long, thankfully- she was drying the last of them off by the time that Tenebris had gathered the dinner they were sending over, and was ready to go. She sniffed softly, and nuzzled her face against Aliquam. “I’m okay, I promise. Are you... ready to go?”

"Of course... Let's be off, my love." He kissed her head, then reached down to beside the couch to pick up his cane. Using it, he slowly got up to go collect his crutches.

Toki let him get up first in case he fell, and once he was up, she slowly shifted down onto all fours. She sighed softly, and padded at his heels, peeking over to momentarily look at Tenebris while her secondary hands continued to dry her cheeks. “Are you sure you’re alright sharing dinner?” She asks slowly. “I can just make something at home...”

“Don’t stress,” Asgore tuts, “you’ve got a hard enough job as it is right now during the last weeks of your pregnancy. We’ve been with you this far, haven’t we? We’ll see this through to the end.”

Toki dips her head slowly and nods, and then moves to the door. She hears Thumper start to come downstairs as she opens it, holding it open for Papyrus, and for Tenebris who had his hands full.

“Where’s Dad go- Ohhh. He’ll be back soon.” Thumper seemed to have answered his own question, and proceeded to thump into the kitchen.

“Wash your hands!” Asgore huffs and scuttles after him with warm amusement.

Toki shakes her head with a weary sigh. They were cute- the little gray bunny monster fit right in, oddly enough.

Tenebris gave a happy chuckle at how cute his mate and son were and he gave Toki a pleased smile. "I'm pleased that our meal is what your palette craves. It's not often we hit it on the mark.” He told her. "Sharing is our pleasure."

“I know. I still don’t want to intrude- even if what you’re making smells like heaven.” She says, closing the door behind him. She accidentally steps on his tail with her back leg, having not been able to see past the swell of her chest and belly. “Ah shoot- sorry Dad.”

Tenebris jolted for all but a second before he smiled and gently lifted his tail, hooking it into his belt-loop before he gave her an indifferent smile. "It's quite alright, my sweet... accidents happen and my tail is quite the tripping hazard...”

“I also can’t see my feet.” Toki glances directly below her and makes a face. “I haven’t seen my feet in weeks.” She sighs. She starts waddling on after Aliquam, and makes a soft grumbling noise. “Well, it’s a jaunt to home. Hopefully the kids have been behaving for Sans all day. They’re going to want to cuddle us before I retreat to the nest- but I may get spared their pouncing with you coming
along. Grandpa visits are always more exciting than boring old Momma coming home.”

"I think if I go in first. You'll be able to take Papyrus upstairs before they even realize it." Tenebris suggested.

Papyrus nodded slowly before he smiled lightly. "I will at least let it be known that we are home, but if I tell them that their mother has already gone to bed, they will give her peace if Caeruleus continues his visit long enough for us to put them to bed as well."

Toki chuffs in soft amusement. "I think it’ll work just fine. I don’t mind if they come up later, but if they’re rowdy, I’d rather they wait until they burn through their energy."

Toki was wanting quiet mostly- she’d been wanting it for days, but kids didn’t allow quiet, so it wasn’t something she got often. She huffs in a soft breath, and cuts down a back alley, leading them on a bit of a short cut to the back yard. “I’m going to have to stick around long enough to get plates though- you can’t carry up dinner on crutches.” She looks to her husband with a soft thrum, wings flicking.

"True, but Father can teleport, so if we get to sneak upstairs, then he can teleport upstairs with plates when he's warded off the children." Papyrus suggested. "He could get what we need in a matter of seconds of us suggesting it to him.”

“True.” She nods in agreement, and flicks her gaze back to Tenebris. “Though that depends on if he wants to do that. Technically, he could teleport us straight upstairs- but then you’d miss out on the whole walking experience.” Which she knew her husband was drinking in now that he wasn’t wheelchair bound.

She gives a yawn as the back yard comes into view.

"Who needs to walk when I can just teleport and make everything both easier and go a fair bit faster than all else in the world?" Tenebris chuckled in counter as he pat Toki's head. "It'll help with stealthily providing everything you need."

“True that. Though this one.” She motions a wing at her husband, “doesn’t like to teleport because it’s the ‘lazy mans’ way of traveling.” She shrugs, and makes a beeline past Tenebris’ ruined car- though not necessarily ruined, so much as salvaged and taken apart to build her nest- and up towards the back door. She glances back to make sure they’re keeping up okay, since Tenebris needed to be the first one in, or she and Papyrus would be swamped.

"I could make an exception." Papy spoke quieter as he rolled his eyes innocently.

Tenebris moved ahead with an amused rumble.

"Come on then..." Papyrus hummed. “The children await..."

"Indeed they do..." Tenebris agreed before he stepped inside the home, listening carefully. It was quiet.

If one listened closely, they could hear the soft sounds of children snoring- atop the roaring rumbles of Sans grumbling in his sleep. Grillby was silent- but it was presumable that he, and Solstice, were likewise asleep in the front room.

Toki crept in and wasted no time in scuttling quietly for the stairs.

She did note, however, in her hurry, that there was no bed in the dining room. In fact- there was a
table. She nearly ran into it. She scurried around it, and made a waddling beeline up the stairs, her hands and feet making very little noise on the tile as she scooted her way up, waiting for her mate to join her.

Tenebris stayed behind as Aliquam followed his mate upstairs, but came up later on when the food had been prepared on plates.

At this point, Papyrus had already taken his position, half-guarding Toki’s self-made birthing nest, half-cuddling his loving wife in said nest.

"Tokiko. Papyrus." The elder male spoke gently from the doorway of the bedroom. "I have your dinners... may I come in?"

By half-guarding, half-cuddling, that meant that Toki’s front half was out of the nest, cuddling her mate while he lay just outside the entrance to the birthing nest. She hadn’t let him in yet, knowing dinner would be coming soon, and not wanting that possible mess anywhere near her sanctuary. She also didn’t want to have to untangle herself from him and risk hurting him- if they were going to curl up, it would be all night.

As Tenebris knocked, she cocked her head, lifting it up from where she had been quietly nuzzling up to Papyrus’ shoulder. She took a whiff of scent in through her mouth, and rumbled her consent so her loving husband didn’t go on the offensive.

“Come in, Dad.” She calls, and carefully shifts to pull the rest of the way out of the birthing nest, so that she could eat her meal without risking a mess. “It smells good.” She fluffs as much as she can, pleased.

Tenebris entered with a mellow smile and he slowly made his way to the nest to offer them both their meals.

"Thank you, Father..." Was Papyrus' reply as he took his meal.

Toki sat upright, crossing her legs under the girth of her belly as she accepted her plate. She dipped her head to him with a thankful smile. “Thank you oodles.” She quietly stuffed a piece of pineapple in her mouth, savored it, and then eyed a pork strip. Hesitantly, she put one in her mouth too, found it oddly palatable even if Tenebris had utterly revolted her with the raw strip. She made a soft, pleased warbling deep in her chest, and munched another strip. Alright, maybe pork was acceptable and she may have had a craving for meat too, but she wasn’t going to tell anyone that. “Go enjoy dinner with Asgore and Thumper, Dad. We’ll be okay from here.” She gives him a cheeky salute with her secondary hands.

"I'll get out of your fur before I overstay my welcome." Tenebris gave them a warm smile. "If you need me, just give me a call and I'll drop by to help." He rumbled as he took his leave as quickly as he came.

Toki watched him go, and nodded, before shifting to lean against her husband’s ribs. She thrummed softly while they ate, a soft, pleased purr that vibrated into his side. “So...” She hums to him warmly. “How do you feel being on guard duty?”

"Like it's the beginning of something more as soon as I progress to my prosthetic..." He answered happily.

“Your permanent one, you mean?” She inquires, her eyes flicking over him as she munches through her meal. The pineapple and the pork was well received- but the peppers in her meal were not this
time. Usually she wasn’t a picky eater, but her stomach detested them, so she subtly shunted them off onto her mate’s plate. “I’m excited for you to be able to walk. You were always an active man, and it’ll be good to be able to see you walking around and being more active with less pain if all goes smoothly.”

He nodded, before he sighed, and he laid on his back. "You know what I'm going to do when I get my leg?" He asked. "Like... the very first thing I'm going to do?"

Toki grunts as he rolls over and unbalances her. She very nearly spills her dinner, and shoots him a bemused look. She glanced at him, and nudged him with one of her many elbows to remind him to actually eat his dinner. “If you can stand it, I imagine you’ll be jogging laps around the court yard.” She chuckles softly. "Am I wrong?"

"No you're right. I'm going to run. I'm going to run until I fall over breathless.”

“In the theoretical sense...” He laughed gently. "I don't need to breathe, but in the sense that I do not plan on stopping until I fall over.”

Toki chuckles softly. She’s nearly finished scarfing down her dinner, and she pauses to hum at him. “Depending on when you get your leg done, I may steal you for a dance, if I can.” She smiles slowly. She may even steal one if she’s still pregnant, back pains be damned. “But, it will be most amusing to see you run until you’re just too tired to keep going. I have to wonder...” She gives a slow smile. “Has your stamina gone down any since you haven’t been running? I suppose we’ll wait and see.”

"Dance, ah yes." He gave her a bright smile. "We're going to dance. We'll dance and we'll have the most wonderful time dancing to make up for all that lost time." He promised. "It's going to be wonderful, Toki~”

“I’d like to dance.” She sighs softly, a happy sound as she shifts and finishes the last of her dinner. She moves away from him to put the plate where no one will step on it, and then shifts to stretch on the nest. “Y’know...” She looks across the room and hums while he debates his dinner. “Neither of us noticed. Grillby and Sans moved the bed upstairs.”

"I suppose it wasn't completely recognized since it's supposed to be up here... but you know what, more bedding for you, right?" He gave a soft chuckle as he took a bite of his food.

That made her rumble in thought. “You’re very right.” She blinked, and then waddled off the nest. While he ate, she completely stripped the bed, including the pillows, and toted them over to the nest. The pillows were tucked carefully into the birthing nest, with one more blanket laid over top to make it a little darker and ‘safer’ feeling inside, before the rest of the materials were used to line the nest proper and make it a soft place for the litter to be raised.

Toki hummed softly. “You know, I have no idea what we’re going to do with all of these once my nesting instincts go away.” She chirps softly, and takes a moment to primp a pillow that needed primping, before continuing to methodically tuck blankets. She wasn’t good at nesting in the woods, but she could make a hell of a blanket nest.

"Use half of them on our beds... put the other half away in the closet perhaps for a chilly day?" Which wouldn't be until fall of course but hey... watch him try.

“I'm pretty sure a good portion of these aren’t even ours.” She leans down and takes a good sniff.
“Yeah. Somehow I’ve got some of Grillby’s blankets? And your Dad’s? They’ll probably want those back.” She snorts. “But the rest, we’ll surely keep.”

Papyrus didn’t immediately reply, as he was eating his dinner with a newfound appetite, but when he swallowed his mouthful and responded, it came with a warm smile. “All in all I’d say we at least are lucky to have such generous folks to loan us their spare bedding.”

“Very.” She nods warmly. And then Toki flushes slightly with an embarrassed noise. “Though, for some it wasn’t entirely willing. If you recall, up until I lost my shit and took a bite out of your Dad’s leg, my beast and I demanded a sacrifice to enter the room. Pillows and blankets were easier than making food any time anyone wanted inside.”

He looked at her for a moment before he gave a soft chuckle and shook his head. “Oh Toki, I love you, but Dear is quite the extortionist, isn’t she?” He laughed gently.

“You’re not wrong.” She snorts a bemused laugh and settles down to watch him finish his dinner. She shifts, and tugs at her clothing, which is chafing where she had leaked through and stained the dark material. Toki shifts, and then strips into the buff, foregoes clothes for the sake of naked comfort, and lets her body stretch out as she tosses the milk stained clothes out of the nest for later washing. “Mm… Much better.”

Toki watches him for a moment, before creeping backwards into the birthing nest. While he’s still eating, she starts making soft, low crooning noises to start luring him in.

The noises caught his attention before he turned, and nearly choked on his meal. "T-Toki... holy crap~" He coughed quietly, before he smiled. "I... should finish my dinner before I help myself to dessert~" He purred sweetly.

She settled half out of the birthing nest, and crosses her secondary arms under her chest, boosting her bosom out as she leans slightly on her forearms, her backside lifting in the air. She gives him a half-lidded grin, and wiggles her eyebrows. “You have to admit, the temptation is there though. I suppose I wouldn’t want to spoil your appetite too much.” She brushes her fingers gently against her breasts, and watches him with a throaty purr. “Though I am so very, very full…”

He peered at her with a soft ‘hhhhhh’ sound coming from him before he looked away again. "A-And you think I would have something to offer for relief?" He asked semi-innocently.

Toki’s sockets brightened as she thrummed at him. “Well,” She purred, “you’ve got two of the most amazing hands I’ve ever felt on my body… or you’ve got a pretty talented mouth.” She licks her teeth, and lets out a soft, pointed moan to draw attention to all of her assets. Sans had doomed him from the moment he’d let on that his brother had a thing for her pregnant body. “I wouldn’t mind feeling that on me~ if not,” her grin turns sly, “I suppose I can sit here and pine for a talented, strong male to assist me with my problems~”

“Fuck this”, Aliquam muttered. The last few bites of his dinner was abandoned as he slowly moved to her side, trailing kisses down her chest before he pulled her close and sighed happily into her chest. "You do things to my resolve, Toki~ Such awful things.”

Toki giggled happily as he crawled right into her trap. She braced her legs, and began to slowly draw him into the birthing nest with her, crooning all the while. “Oh, do I now?” She lets him burrow right against her breasts, her body supporting his weight as she brings him in to the surprisingly spacious area. It looked cramped from outside, but there was plenty of space inside for… Things. “Well, it’s good that I can still test your resolve now. Tell me,” She purrs, “Do you like the inside of my nest? And your… accommodations~? A birthing nest is the best, but the best nest is a breast nest, breaster
He was following her beckon and was allowed himself to be pulled into the nest. Papyrus had a lulled look on his face, almost like he was in a trance—until she made that fucking pun.

He made a face, and then he groaned and proceeded to softly scream incoherently into her breasts as he lost all hope in those two seconds of petty existence.

His soft scream was muffled by her breasts, and she laughed as it made them vibrate. She got situated in her comfortable spot, which let her lay slightly on her back and slightly on her side. She had recognized the position as a true nursing position, and that let her cuddle him closer as she reached out with her leg to kick the cover closed on the nest.

“I’m sorry,” She giggled and kissed the crown of his skull. “I couldn’t resist. Let me make it up to you?” She purrs gently. “You’ve got multiple choices for once...” Toki was flowing strongly from all her teats.

He looked up at her, then sighed weakly. "Lord show me how to say no to this..." He sighed, before he purred, and smiled as he kissed her chest and neck lovingly. "I suppose I could help you just a little, we might want to invest in some bottles for storing all that milk you're generating." He chuckled quietly.

She sighed pleasantly as his mouth settled on her neck and chest. “Mmm... We can order some.” She mumbles, eyes closing as a soft, completely, and utterly relaxed purr floats from her. Pheromones follow it next. “The baby store can deliver some by tomorrow evening- maybe. We might get them next week. I’m just going to need help milking. Think you’ll be up for the task~?”

"Oh very much so, yes~" The scent of her relaxation washed over him and he gave a blissful sigh. "Oh you smell so nice~" He sighed happily as he nuzzled her wonderful cleavage, his hand coming up and slowly traveling along the tender ectoflesh until he found one of her nipples under his thumb. "So wonderful~" Oh he tried to stay focused but it was clear that his movements were slowing with her wonderful pheromones.

Toki realized as his movements tapered off that she had inadvertently cock-blocked herself.

She just shook her head instead of getting upset, and tucked her face down against the top of his skull, cuddling him close and basking with him inside of the birthing nest as she rumbled and purred, her stress melting away by the second and ripening her scent for him to enjoy. “Let’s just rest for now, Papy.” She purrs, and kisses his brow, one arm guiding his hand from her nipples to curl at her lower back, cuddling close. He didn’t have the mind to do anything else but cuddle and coo at her anyway.

"Y’sure?" He asked quietly, glancing up at her from his sedated position.

His sedated half lidded look confirmed it for her if the slight slurring of his words didn’t. She gave a warm chuckle, and pressed a kiss right between his eyes. “I’m sure.” Intimate relations didn’t always have to be sex. Cuddling with him could be intimate enough for them both. “I love you.” She coos to him.

"Oh I love you too~" He purred. "My beautiful, wonderful wife, I could get addicted to you... oh... I already am..." He giggled weakly.

She gave a warm laugh, and kissed his brow. “You, my love, are completely blitzed.” She says lightly. She smooches his brow again, and then settles down with a well deserved sigh to nap off.
their lovely dinner.
April showers definitely would bring May flowers. As April entered it’s third week, and Toki entered her fourteenth week of pregnancy, April decided that it needed to open up like a lion and roar, the air around and inside of the house chilling as April decided it needed to go out with a bang.

Thunder shook the house intermittently, drowning out the sounds of the children playing in the downstairs dining room, and the sounds of Sans and Grillby adamantly working on the house.

Moving the furniture back to their respective rooms had just been the start of things. From there, the married couple had ripped up the entire bottom floor down to the cement, and were in the process of laying down new tile. They’d gotten all of the kitchen, dining room, and front hall done, but the hall to the second bathroom and the connecting rooms down that hall, along with the living room, were unfinished. They were also going to remodel the downstairs bathroom, since Stag had thrashed it.

Honestly, she had the best family.

It also kept them close in case they needed help- and with Toki at the final cusp, it was definitely a good thing. She couldn’t keep up with the kids, so having them out from under foot let her rest as much as her body demand that she needed.

Well- rest, and stock the fridge with milk.

Asgore, as it turned out, had ordered a massive shipment of milk bottles for Toki. It was a ‘gift’, but also served him and Tenebris as well- it would let them feed and bond with their children when Toki needed a break from playing nursemaid constantly, and let them provide natural, organic food for the children.

However, getting it was an issue- Toki wasn’t able to balance on all fours, milk properly, and not drop the bottles.

But… The solution came in probably the most primitive of ways. A milk pail.

However, her usual culprit for assisting her in draining her constantly filling stores was currently laying in a pathetic pile next to her, quietly moaning into the blankets every time the thunder cracked.

Toki frowned softly at him. “You know… I can try and help with that.” She says gently.

"Are you sure about that?” Papyrus loved that she was offering him her aid but he would feel bad if she spent too much magic worrying about his short-term weather pains... Of course he would absolutely adore the warm relief that came with her magic.

Toki rolled over onto her back, scooting over to him like an incredibly pregnant cat. She reached out and rubbed her hands gently over his ribs, before slowly reaching down to stroke over his pelvis. She gathered her magic at her finger tips. She didn’t have a whole lot of magic to spare with her current milk production, but she could warm him up and spare him some pain. “I can’t heat up all of you, or
this entire nest, but I can do your hip no problem. Maybe a blanket too, so you can keep something
on it?” She settles warm hands on his pelvis, stroking him gently, and waits for his reply on the
blanket.

He cooed quietly as the warmth spread over his pelvis and he sighed contentedly. "Aahh..." Steadily
the pain faded from his still slightly raw nerve endings, and he proceeded to grow more and more
saggy into the bedding of the nest as he moaned louder. "Oooohhh thaaaat's it~"

Toki flushed at his moans. “Papy!” She snickered. “Shhh! If you keep making those sounds,
someone’s going to hear us, and think we’re doing something naughty up here.” She smoothed her
fingers slowly over his pelvis proper, not even bothered about invading his pants to soothe his pain.
She’d get him a heated blanket later- for now, she wanted to leave as much of her magical energy in
him as she safely could, so he could be… Well, not in pain.

Her fingers massaged gently, before slowly pressing her magic against his prosthetic properly, letting
the warmth invade it and soothe the frazzled nerves it was slowly but surely synchronizing with.

He looked at her for a moment with a blissful look before it sharpened to a mischievous grin and he
gave an absolutely blissful howl. "Oh Toki, oh TOKI, OH TOKI~ ITS SOOOOO GOOOOOD!"

There was a howl of laughter from downstairs, no doubt Caeruleus hearing his brother's voice and
thinking it was priceless about how loud he was.

All of Toki fluffed at him, and she drew her hands back to put all four of them on her hips as she sat
awkwardly on her knees. Her face flamed a bright emerald color. “Oh my GOD!” She exclaimed,
the smaller set finally throwing themselves up into the air, before covering her face. “You’re terrible.
I don’t know you. Nope. Nope.” The flustered pregnant skelebee flopped right over in the nest, and
Which meant Grillby and the children heard. Oh my god.”

If it was possible to die from embarrassment, she may have simply combusted right there.

He laughed lightly as he gave her a soft pat. "You expected anything less of me?" He asked smugly,
before he leaned down and peppered her with kisses.

“Nooo!” She flailed her hands, and giggled as he rolled over to pin her down with copious amounts
of kisses. “I shouldn’t have expected anything less, but still. You’re terrible.” She stills under him,
pouting up at him with half lidded sockets. She wasn’t truly upset about it, but she still was flustered-
and now she was flushed with giggles and kisses from him though, not just embarrassment.

He giggled as he gave her a few more kisses before he sighed contentedly as he rested his head on
her chest. "Yes I am, but you love me, don't you~?" He cooed sweetly. "You adore your loving
husband~"

Toki puffed her cheeks stubbornly, but nodded and leaned down to kiss her husband’s brow. “Yes,
yes I do. I love your obnoxious, adorable, loving self.” She pouts at him. She does squirm though at
his head on her chest, making a soft, uncomfortable noise. “Lift your head a little, Pap. I’m
engorged and it hurts.”

He cooed in apology and lifted his head to kiss along her neck. "I'm sorry~"

“S’okay.” She tilted her neck up with a soft pleased croon. “I need to empty again, but trying to do it
myself sucks.” She sighs softly, enjoying the tender kisses of teeth on her vertebrae.

He peered up at her before he smiled warmly. "Oh really~?" He asked in a syrupy tone. "Perhaps I
could assist you~?” He purred sweetly.

Toki’s face bloomed in a bright blush again, and she sputtered. “I- I… What? I mean… You… Want to?” She sputters.

He looked at her with a slightly surprised look. “Tokiko Gaster you are my wife, what kind of husband would I be if I didn’t help you when you need it!?" He demanded, though with a more gentle tone.

“Well, I mean… Y’know… I know how you are with...” She waves a hand at her breasts. “I mean… Can you control yourself long enough to finish the job? I do recall the one and only time that you helped me with the twins, it ended up with you driving me into the couch in a frenzy.”

He pouted slightly in insult. "You wound me with your doubt, my love..." He puffed.

“Oh?” She cocks a brow at him, scrubbing her face to try and chase her stubborn flush away. “Do you want to prove me wrong?” She asks, her eye lights twinkling at him merrily as she issues her challenge.

He stared at her for a moment, and then he puffed up. "As a matter of fact, yes!"

Toki gave a slow grin and a nod. “Alright. Let me go get the stool. If you want to go get the bucket...?” She shifted and tried to pause, before realizing she’d gotten stuck on her back and she couldn’t feel her back legs. “… I need some help rolling over first, please. I’m stuck.”

He stared at her for a moment before he laughed gently and helped her roll over. "Here, does this help?"

"Thank you.” She gives him a thankful smile and manages to get onto her hands and knees. Toki stretches, feeling god-awfully swollen and full, and moves over to grab the stool for him. She carries it back, setting it at the edge of the nest, and then gave him a soft chirr. “Do you want me to get the bucket so you don’t have to use your cane?”

"On the contrary, I can use my cane instead." Rather than take the time to get up, he used his cane and hooked the bucket, easily pulling it over. Though he looked at it. "Thing is, you're not a cow... why are we using a milk bucket?” He asked.

Okay, Toki was mildly impressed at his use of the cane to grab the bucket. His question did make her pause though, and she stuck her tongue out at him. “For one, I have six leaking teats and two breasts that need to be milked. The breasts are easier to aim into a bottle, but I tried with the teats while you were down getting drinks, and that was chaos- that’s why the heating blanket had to be unplugged and washed, and why I need help.”

She flushed a bit and looked away. “I don’t necessarily like the bucket either. It’s a little humiliating, but it’s better than a mess.”

He looked at her with thought, before he smiled, and he gently touched her arms. "Hey... Sit up for a moment…”

Toki shifts and grunts. She collects a couple pillows to sit behind her back- sitting upright for long lengths of time this last week had been unpleasant- and then turns to face him with her new back brace ready. “Okay…?” She makes a quizzical buzz at him, crossing her arms over her tightly stretched borrowed turtlenecks. “What are you planning now?”

He borrowed the stool and sat on it as he faced her, their faces inches apart before he reached out and
gently lifted up her shirt to expose her chest. "Here, take this off and I'll help you get comfortable." He told her.

Toki nods, and squirms out of the borrowed turtleneck. She lets off a soft, relieved noise as her poor chafed nipples are let out into the air. "Mm, before you get too comfortable and help me get comfortable, can you snag the bottle of MTT brand lotion with your cane?" She motions to it over by the bed. "My nipples are chafed and sore as hell- they’re going to need motioned after this."

"Did you have to mention the brand?" He asked with a quiet laugh, though as she asked, he reached out and collected the lotion with the handle of his cane. "A soft massage for you after I've emptied you out~"

"That sounds good to me." She sighs with a most pleased sigh. "And yes, yes I did."

"After all, MTT brand is the only brand guaranteed to work on Ghosts, Skeletons, and other ectoplasmic entities across the planet."

Did she just quote the brand at him? Yes. Yes she did.

Toki paused, and glanced down at her breasts. She was starting to leak slowly.

He smiled and stroked her head, before he coaxed her form to lean against his. He stroked her head gently, then slowly ran his hands down her chest. "Let's... do it this way..."

"Oooh." She blinked at the new position, and curled her primary arms around his shoulder. This stretched her lower back in the most delightful way she hadn’t expected. She let off a pleased purr as his fingers fumbled their way down to the soft, swollen flesh of her breasts. "I like this position." She purrs. "Can you get it into the bucket okay? Or do we need a pillow or two to balance it on and raise it up?"

"It's gonna be okay. Hang on." He found her mounds and gently rubbed them before he took hold of her nipples in the palm of his hand. He slowly began to roll his palms before giving an ever so careful downward pull to start her milk in her uppermost breasts. It took an awkward second of him leaning but he had his target after his first try and slowly began to milk her in their current angle, "How does this feel?" He asked gently.

Aliquam’s response to his question is a very soft, but delighted moan right against his neck. Her secondary hands came to settle on his legs, the one gently gripping the temporary prosthetic doing so very gently. Her fingers knead just gently. "Ohh… Oh god… Yes..."

The immediate relief in pressure was obvious, based on the strength of the streams that Papyrus got out. Her breasts weren’t designed like human ones- they were more linear, offering the ability to give straight and firm streams. The sound of her milk splashing into the bucket was satisfying in the best of ways as the pressure eased.

Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck. A shaky breath passed Papyrus' teeth, before he sighed and smiled gently. "Say again?" He asked sweetly, making sure he didn't lose his aim with her flow despite his... excitement.

She felt a shift in his pants, and she couldn’t comment on it. Toki let out another breathless moan, warm air wafting over the vertebrae of his neck. "Ahhm..." She feels a shiver crawl up her spine, her sore and tender breasts finally getting relief. It was nearly orgasmic how good the god damned relief felt. "G-good. Please- more. Don’t s-stop."

A hot breath wafted out on her neck. Papy could feel his teeth as they ground against each other, "H-
Holy fuck..” He gasped out, lowering his head to rest it on hers, "Toki... You're making such beautiful sounds~" He purred on a hot breath.

“Mmm~ Have you heard the noises you make?” She pants softly against him. “Even better than- mnnn- mine~” Her secondary hands slid higher, carefully higher, and she rubbed her thumbs against the inside of his inner thighs. With the angle and his careful but firm attentions, her breasts were rapidly emptying to more comfortable and tolerable levels. The streams were lessening in intensity, but it didn’t stop her soft noises.

After all, she frequently told him that he had amazing hands. She wasn’t a liar- she was thoroughly enjoying his hands on her.

"Do you want me to move to the next set of teats soon?" He prayed she wouldn't run into his... ahem... growing problem that pooled between his legs. "I-If it makes you feel that much better I’d be willing to…”

“Mmm… Yes,” She purrs, “They’re empty. Be gentle though. The lower ones are very… tender~” Toki’s hands were indeed wandering. Higher and higher yet they climbed- until she found the growing problem in his pants. Rather than comment on it, she slid one hand over, and teasingly stroked her fingers over the thick girth of his hidden member.

"O-Ooh!" He almost yelped out as her hands slipped into his pants and he moaned out a mangled sound as he clenched his legs around her hand, "O-Oh god~" His hands thankfully didn't squeeze her in reaction, but rather they made their grip more tender and kneading as they crawled to her second set of teats

Toki would have slid her hand back, but his legs clenched, and trapped her there. The tender and kneading grip he took was a definite delight, and she felt a blush crawling across her cheeks as she turned her skull to bury it into his neck. Her teeth twitched, peppering soft, butterfly kisses against what bones she could. “A-ah~” Her teats were harder to grasp than her breasts, given that they were significantly smaller even with how engorged they were. Still, they let off slow but steady streams, emptying quickly.

Her fingers got braver as she was held captive, and she wiggled until she could palm him as best she could, stroking him slowly with her thumb. He always got excited when handling her breasts- she poor man couldn’t escape this no matter how hard he tried to deny it.

He loved his wife- he loved her so much, but her body did things to him that would put his soldier mind to shame. He moaned and whined as he rocked into her hand, and it could be felt in his hands as he twitched and resisted his inner urges to simply grope, as he knew she would most definitely be sorely sensitive.

Toki did give a tiny whine against him, her motions slowing as his fingers got a little rougher with her incredibly tender teats. “Ow, Pap.” He might not have meant to twitch so roughly, but that had definitely not been the gentle massaging flow that had been arousing her and drawing those succulent moans from her. “Gentle… Gentle… Like this...” Her fingers stroked over him gently, slowly.

"A-aah... I'm sorry." He whimpered faintly, pressing his head to hers as his hand slowly followed her lead, gently finding the pace of gentle milking from before.

Toki exhaled softly against his neck as he found his gentle pace again, a relieved sound that slid against his neck and up his skull. “Thank you,” She moaned for him. Her fingers stroked him softly, sliding up to the base of his shaft. She paused, and felt him slightly. “… You feel thicker than I
remember...” She observes.

Was that eagerness in her voice?

Yes. Yes it was.

Did she let it distract her from having him empty her first? Not at all.

"I haven touched you in so long... I want you so much but I do not want to hurt the precious lives within..." He admitted quietly. "But I need you... Oh god do I need you..."

“I need you too.” She mumbled softly, and kissed her teeth gently along his neck. She sighed, shifting closer to let his hands have better reach. “Once we finish... I think we’re close enough to the buns being done in the oven that we can… Risk a little fun.” Her teeth nibbled up over his neck, and her fingers stroked over his cock again, teasing what felt like the start of… a knot?

"Oh god~" Hebreathed out, his legs opening as he rocked into her hand. "D-Do you promise~?"

“I do.” She purred, her teeth nibbling against his neck. Toki’s bare breasts pressed against his shirt, and sheexhaled a soft, pleased sigh. “But first... Before we can have fun~ We have to finish emptying me, and I need some lotion~”

"Oh god..." He breathed again, before he smiled and kissed her neck gently. "Of course, my love... Let's get you all comfortable before anything is tried~"

“Not tried.” She purred. “This,” her fingers tightened around his member and gave him a firm stroke from knot to his tip, “is going to fit inside of me. All of it.” Her teeth nipped across his neck, and she paused, moaning softly against him again as he reached a stubbornly tender teat. “Ahnnn… it’s so tender...”

There was a flurry of babble that rose from Aliquam at that moment and his hand gave a gentle knead, before a slightly firmer press to coax out the milk. "H-How's this?" He asked. "D-Does it help?"

There was the feeling of pressure building, before it sort of… ‘burst’, and the stream set off rapidly. “Ah~” The relieved sigh was nearly orgasmic, and her fingers squeezed his member oh so gently, before sliding teasingly from his pants to resume kneading his thighs. She couldn’t see that far down her belly, so she couldn’t see which ones were plugged and which ones weren’t. “God, yes~” She breathed against his shoulder.

"You're so beautiful when you moan like that, and knowing you feel such blissful relief from my hands, my touch... Oh Toki it just makes me want you more... is this your second set or your third?" He asked. No he wasn't so eager to finish to get to the next thing- what are you talking about.

“One more set left,” She moaned against him, her ecto-tongue sliding out and licking up his vertebrae. She found his shirt was starting to annoy her, and her hands started to toy with trying to get to more of him. Eventually she made a soft, frazzled buzz. “Fuck it.” She decides, and then her primary hands grip the back of his t-shirt with surprising strength- and she rips it clean down the back, so that only his arms are trapped.

Her mouth immediately seeks his collar bone and shoulder bones, devouring his taste as she teases and nips at him, stimulating him and no doubt torturing him at the same time.

It was a good test for his self control, after all. He had one more set- he had made it this far.
Holy fuck. The bulge in his pants was straining now as he shakily reached down to finish her last set of teats, "Toki... o-oh my god~" He gasped weakly. "Y-You're gonna make me... ah... before I'm even in you..."

"Well," She purrs, her hands kneading his thighs as her mouth works his collar bone. Slowly, she lets her tongue extend down until she can curl it around his upper most rib and stroke it. “It has been a while, hasn’t it? It would probably be good for you to get a little spent up spunk out, hm?” Her hand slides up his leg again, and this time she teases him through his sweatpants, stroking his heated and hard member effortlessly as he empties her last teats. She opens her mouth, and exhales hot air against his sternum, vibrating it with a moan.

"Fuck!" He bucked sharply into her hand as his legs clenched, before hissing as he released her teats to grip her shoulders. "Toki... I'm gonna burst at this rate..." He hissed, "You're driving me insane~"

Toki grinned up at him slowly as he set his hands on her shoulder. Slowly, pointedly, she leaned right back down as far as she was capable, and sucked one of his ribs right into her mouth, before sucking on it in time with the sensual thrusts of her hands.

She knew what she was doing. She was daring him to do something about it- or to just let her bring him to his first release.

"To-kiiiii eeee !" He howled out as he grabbed her tightly as he arched. "Fu-fuck! Fuck! Aaahh!" His mouth fell open as he ground against whatever point of contact he had going for himself.

Both of her secondary hands came to hold his member, while her primary hands held his shoulders stationary. She nuzzled and licked him, and began to trail her teeth over his bones in the most tortuously teasing buzzing he’d felt in a long time. “That’s it,” She purrs. Screw everyone down below- this was the noise she wanted right now. Him howling her name while he rutted against her- She hadn’t heard this in so, so long.

He choked and gasped as he rutted through his first climax, but as he came off his high, he whined weakly before he sagged. "F-Fuck..." He rasped.

Toki stroked him through it, and admired the truly large size that his knot swelled to in her waiting palms. She leaned down, and ran her tongue across his collar bone again, giving him a soothing purr. “Mmm… I enjoy watching you come undone,” She purrs heavily. “How about I help you slip out of these ruined sweats, and we continue this after you’ve helped me with my… little… issue?”

"Hhhnn..." He gave a weak whimper in reply before his trembling hands found her teats once more. "A-Almost done." He whispered, giving a tiny nod.

“Almost.” She cooed. “Nearly empty. And then lotion… And I’m all yours.” She purred. Her fingers stroked slowly over the base of his swollen knot, teasing up towards his seeping tip, massaging the shaft as she went. Her palm teased him, from hilt tip, while he worked her over relentlessly. When she ran empty, she gave him a little nip, and leaned up, her fingers drawing out of his ruined sweats. She looked at the mess staining her fingers, gave him a sly wink- and then licked her fingers clean. “Mmmmm.” She thrummed, “The most exquisite treat.”

"Oh god... You're so... you're priceless ." He gasped. "I am... S-so fucking lucky..."

Toki laughed and leaned back once her fingers were clean. Her back was aching a bit from the lack of position changes- but her breasts and teats felt fantastic, if dry. Toki slipped her fingers down to gently shoosh his fingers away from her now empty lowest set of teats. “You’re lucky? I think I’m the lucky one.” She gives him a doting smile, and then stoops down to grab the milk pale. She sets it
to the side, where it won’t get bumped by anything, and then peers at him.

A slow grin crawls up her crocodile teeth. “Ready for the lotion? I think I can help with that. Though…” She peeked at his soiled pants. “You may want to change out of those before you get cold and chafe.”

"I wonder if my hands will stay still long enough to a-allow me." He whispered in reply, taking hold of her body in his hands once more to try and soothe his trembling.

Toki laughed, and fetched the lotion herself. She shifted, and reached out with her primary hands. “I could always shred them like I did your t-shirt.” Her secondary hands work to open up the lotion. “I can work with the lotion. You just rest your hands, alright? Steady yourself.”

He nodded slowly and leaned back on his hands, slightly boosting his hips as he gave a soft breath. "G-go ahead~"

Toki gave him a bemused smile. Since he’d lifted his hips up, she simply gently, but firmly, slipped his pants off instead of ripping them up like his shirt. She slid them down to his knees, and then patted him gently as his knotted member bobbed straight up into the air, angry and sore looking.

She licked her teeth a little bit, her smaller hands working on putting lotion on herself. “You look a little sore there, my love… Still up for sating our needs~?”

"Please~" He whimpered happily. His knotted cock was slick with his previous load, and twitching with the occasional hitch in his breath. "I need you~"

Toki finished her work, and leaned back with a soft, pleased purr. “I need you too.” She shifts, and rubs her fingers down her newly softened and moisturized breasts as she tosses the lotion away. “Now…” She looks at him, and her sockets settle at half mast. “How would you like me~? Your leg will support you now...” He could actually take her without support now. Or, at least, perhaps he could.

Maybe not yet…

Oh god now that was a question... He looked at her, and then he keened and slowly pulled her up and over into his lap, his hands trailing down her hips adoringly to grope her thighs.

She gave him a cheeky smile as he hefted her into his lap, and she settled against him gently, though she had to take most of her weight. She was hesitant to put weight on his leg with him sitting on a stool like this- she didn’t fully trust the temporary prosthetic.

“Mm… cowgirl might not work all that well.” She could feel him bumping against her, and she was still stuck in her pants with her shirt lifted up to her shoulders. She leans over to give him a kiss though, and teasingly rubs his shaft against the hidden treat that was her core. “Doggy style maybe? Might be less painful for us both now- though I do wish we could do this face to face...”

But with her belly like this, even with his lack of middle, there was no way to set a good pace without something getting unpleasantly pinched.

"Soon, isn't it? Soon that you'll have the pups, and it'll have you to myself~" He purred happily, kissing along her form before he chuckled. "I say we get you comfy on the nest, belly down, ass up, and sit you comfortably on our biggest pillow while I rail you like the animal I am~"

Toki sputtered at that, and her face blossomed into a bright green flush. “I- I- Oh my lord, Pap, holy shit. Yes- fuck yes, I’d say take me right now but I can’t move that fast.” She shifts on his lap and
gives a little squirm. “Nest- now. Lemme up- I gotta get out of these clothes and I need you.”

Fuck her- it the idea of him raling her like the ‘animal’ he was had her womanhood trembling in excitement. She’s pretty sure he could smell it too.

Toki managed to squirm out of his lap- and then she settled down onto the nest. She shimmied herself out of her top, and then wiggled her pants off. She was left bare to him as she took a couple crawling steps onto the nest, and then piled a few loose pillows up. Toki got herself comfortable, put her ass in the air, and then wiggled it teasingly at her husband.

She shivered at the cold air rolling over her backside, and made a soft, teasing noise with her wings. “Well… I’m ready. Now it’s your turn~”

He watched her get comfortable, before he grinned and slowly pushed himself off his seat to make it into the nest. He finished shaking off his clothing, and then immediately draped his form over her and cooed as he pulled her close, kissing her neck before he groped her now drained chest as his erection found its way to press between her thighs. “You look so beautiful, and you smell so intoxicating~” He purred his low, happy tone into her ear.

His touch against her chest was not met with non-swelled flesh. Her breasts may have been reduced in size thanks to her lack of milk excess, but her pregnancy breasts were still fantastic things to see, and to feel, warm against the bones of his fingers.

Between the feeling of his member shoving between her thighs, his teeth against her neck, and the palm cupping her breast, Toki couldn’t stop the breathy gasping moan that escaped her. She rocked back against him, the hard, slick heat of him rubbing against the plush warmth of her thighs. “Keep talking like that,” She pleads softly, “hah~ I love that tone of voice. Mmm~” Her hips rock against him eagerly, almost heatedly.

“F-fuck,” She gasped, “fuck- please, please, claim me, claim me and make me yours again~! Fill me until I can’t be filled any more, and mark me until everyone knows who I belong to.”

Resolve? What resolve could she possibly have? It was crumbling by the second as she practically begged him to pound her into the pillows.

Yeah right, what was he thinking.

Securing his arms around her, Aliquam bit into the vertebrae at the back of her neck and rolled his hips until his cock found her yearning folds. His bite adjusted, and then bit a little harder as he pushed inside, no doubt resisting the urge to go rough into her body for the sake of the young.

Her wings arched up under him, her body bucking under him instinctively as his teeth latched on to the unprotected back of her neck. With no thick and curling mane there, he took the entire back of her spine into his grip, and tightly held her skull down while her back and hips squirmed against him.

The feeling of his member sliding home was alien and different with the girth of his knot- and the
deepest most primordial part of Toki craved it like a dehydrated man in an oasis. Her walls clamped
around him, her juices mingling with his as it helped to guide him home. The angle of her body took
the weight of her uterus off of her pelvis, giving him unrestricted access for his swollen member to
slide into her. His distended knot bumped against her outer lips, something he would have to put
more force into getting inside of her.

Toki mewled, her mouth lolling open and tongue forming to slide out as she panted.

Her wings flaring against him had him grunt in initial surprise before he tightened his grip around her
and pressed his chest down to pin her. "Get comfortable... and stay down~" He growled into her ear.
"Because I'm not going to give you any change to fight my dominance…"

That growl had her melting under him. Where once she might have fought back against Tenne just
for the hell of it, she submitted under him, her wings splaying out as she slumped, her back curving
to make more space for him as he pressed her down into the nest.

“No,” She whimpered a soft, pleading noise, letting him know she wasn’t going to try to fight as she
bumped back against his knot with an encouraging wiggle. Not a demand- a mates plea. “Please,
mate, please my alpha, take me~”

That title left his skin crawling and his cock twitching as he anchored his good knee into the soft
pillows and he gave her a husky rumble as he started thrusting into Toki's body with loud, pleased
growls that sent vibrations through her exposed bones.

As he set a pace that was borderline bruising, Toki found herself gasping with every thrust. His
repaired hips slapped against the summoned ectoflesh of her backside, his knot ramming against her
labia and slowly but surely working its way inside of her. It had been over a quarter of a year since
she’d taken a knot- her body had adapted to being without it, and now she had to adjust to trying to
fit an already expanded knot inside of her.

Her eager return motions showed she was more than willing to try and fit all of him in, however.

Liquid heat burned in her belly, tightening the muscles of her back and making her belly twitch with
need as she warbled and gasped, her body buzzing and spurring him on with wordless pleas for
more, please dear god more.

Her wordless pleas spurred incoherence from Aliquam and his distal phalanx slightly dug into her
warmth as he weighed more into how much he pressed his knot against her. "I love you." He hissed.
"My beloved mate... you're so wonderful... you're so fucking hot."

His finger tips were nearly bruising as they curled into the softness of her body, and it spurred a
mewl from her. Her legs splayed wider as his knot worked in, and she felt her eye lights flickering, a
few droplets of condensation falling from her teeth from how fast and hot her breaths were coming
out of her open mouth.

“I-” She gasped, “I love you too,” She struggled for words. “I l-love you so much, my mate, my
amazing, strong, wonderfully handsome mate-”

His knot popped in before she could continue, and Toki felt her eye lights fuzz out into nothingness
at the sheer girth of which it stretched her.

Her walls fluttered desperately around him as he thrust, battering her insides like an unforgiving ram
as he had his way with her. Toki wouldn’t change a thing for the world- except maybe the shrill,
desperately hungry noise she made as she was suddenly full, suddenly over-stuffed, with him
ramming into her deepest recesses with no where else to go.

It seemed to do the trick for them both. As the knot popped into Toki’s warmth, Aliquam roared as he gave a sharp thrust to completely wedge it into her, locking her in place as his teeth found their mark in her flesh, they sank in and just as his knot had, they locked in place in her ectobody. His hands found her hips and he snarled soundly as he gave them a slight boost as to allow him a better angle to thrust into them.

Toki’s mouth opened in a feminine cry of bliss as his teeth sank into her flesh, popping past the skin with a sharp, stinging pain. As he pounded harder, she found herself at her peak, overwhelmed and unable to do anything else but submit and succumb to the whims and wishes of her body.

Her entire body tensed up under him, her filled walls tightening and clamping around his knot in waves. There was a copying cramp in her belly and back, but it was a background sensation in the absolute tsunami that was drowning her.

Toki kneaded the nest, her body going limp save where she was connected to him, at his utter mercy as she rode out wave after wave of lingering, mind-blowing orgasms, while she counted the stars exploding behind her eyes.

There was all the stars to witness exploding as Aliquam continued his rough pace, his grip on her refusing to relax as he fucked her through her mind-blowing orgasm until he was able to reach his own.

Various grunts and moans rose from him before he hissed through his teeth and gave a low, muffled snarl into her flesh as he pressed flush to her hips, trembling as he reached release and filled his beloved wife’s battered walls with his cum.

By the time he came, Toki was limp under him, completely spent and utterly exhausted. She didn’t squirm as he flooded her past the point of comfort, very, very little being able to squeeze out as his knot inflated further and fully locked him deep in her depths.

Other than the necessary brain power to keep her from collapsing completely on her belly, Papyrus had pounded her until there wasn’t a single thought in Toki’s skull. She panted slowly under him, heated breaths escaping as her sockets slowly blinked, trying to take in her surroundings again. Her limp wings were twitching under the effects of the muscles twinging from his bite mark, of which she seemed to have enjoyed thoroughly.

“Mmmnaaah~” The only word she can make is a blissful moan. Such elegance was worthy of the finest poets- particularly after such a rough round of passion.

It was a beautiful sound that brought peace to the beast mounting the pregnant monster.

With a weak moan, Papyrus slowly let go of his mouthful and he nuzzled appreciatively into Toki’s back, pecking the base of her wings lovingly. "I did not hurt you... did I, my love?"

“Mmmnnn...” Toki made the softest of moans as his teeth released, her ectoplasmic blood bubbling to the surface in thick drops. It didn’t even seem to bother her all that much- she instead shifted, and guided them both to lay on their side, one of her wings folding under them so he could remain spooned close. “No.” She nestled back into him with the positively most sated purr she’d made in a long time. His knot tugged uncomfortably, making her womanhood twinge with the abuse it had suffered, but her body practically sang in delight. “You were perfect, my love.” She purred, once she could do words again, like a civilized being.
"Mmh." He stroked her side as he settled behind her, spooning up against her. "As were you~ you're so warm... so... beautiful..." His hand ran under her stomach, caressing it delicately as he purred in delight.

Toki slumped in utterly blissful exhaustion as he spooned up behind her. Her sockets closed, and she rumbled a soft, tired purr. "Mmm..." Toki wasn’t sure what else to say to him, so she simply settled for just purring to him, loud and warm, as her body relaxed.

Her body may have relaxed- except under his caressing fingers, her belly twitched, and began to harden firmly, in time with her being tensing around him. It started at her navel, and pulled the soft, supple skin rock hard, the pups inside going still as her body clamped tight about the middle.

Toki made a soft, tiny uncomfortable noise, too momentarily gone to recognize it for anything more than a stress cramp. “C’n ya rub a little firmer...?” She mumbles with a sated thrum. “Got a cramp right under your hand.”

"Sure thing, honey." He ran his hand down a little before he pressed gently with his fingers, giving a slow but thorough massage where she asked. Though as he rubbed, he began to catch on that this may be more than a cramp. "Toki... are you feeling okay?" He asked quietly.

“Hmmmn...?” She seemed confused as to why he was asking, but roused her attention enough to take notice that the cramp was, most definitely, more than a cramp. She gave a soft hiss, her mind finally addressing the tight ache that clamped from her spine to her belly button and made her body clamp around his invading knot like a vice. Her brain clicked back on rather rapidly. “Hah... Y-yeah. Just a Braxton hicks...? How long has it been tight?” Braxton hicks for her were a little less than ten to fifteen seconds usually. They were uncomfortable given her size, but she knew false from true. True ones were thirty seconds to a minute- or more, as labor progressed.

Problem was, she didn’t know when this had started. She could count the seconds from now, but it wouldn’t mean anything long term.

“This has almost been forty seconds.” He answered briefly, still trying to knead it out lest it be just a scare.

Toki breathed softly, and tucked her chin. She counted the seconds after, and the timer ticked on- and at forty-five seconds, it started to ease off. “That... may have been a contraction. Actually... I think that was one.” She breathed easier as it eased off, and she rubbed her fingers gently over his on her belly. “Okay... it was just one. It doesn’t mean anything. If we learned anything from the twins, it means nothing.”

They were close though- they were within a week or so of her suspected due date. It could be...

"Toki... D-Do I need to call dad?” He asked worriedly, leaning back slightly before he gasped and stillled. "I... I'm stuck... oh shit...!”

Toki had let out a tiny yelp as he went to pull back, and tugged her hips right along with him. He’d locked them together, and she shot him a withering look over her shoulder, before remembering that he wasn’t used to working with a knot. “Don’t pull,” she hisses softly, “Please. That hurts. We can’t part for another half hour to forty five minutes- it’s your first knot, so we won’t know until, well, we actually know.”

She shifts against him, and parts her legs lightly, trying to get comfortable. Her muscles ache slightly, and she makes a grumbling noise. “It was... it was just one. We don’t need to call your dad. We’re still...” Her entire skull flushes. “He might be a mostly unflappable doctor, but that doesn’t mean he
needs to see us like this. Just… We’ll relax. Last time they were infrequent with the twins. They
came every… what, fifteen, ten minutes?"

"Sorry... Sorry..." He slowly lowered again before he sighed and wrapped his arms around her. "I'll
stay here and keep count, honey..." He told her gently, slowly rubbing along the tense muscles as he
tried to resist his urge to freak out at their... circumstance.

Toki took slow, measured breaths, and worked on letting her body calm down and relax. She felt
overly full and stuffed, but she knew it was for the best that they didn’t try and relieve that pressure
yet. She shifted, her abdomen twinging under his fingers. The litter rolled inside of her, kicking and
displeased with the sudden tightness that had woken them from their nap. “Thank you, my love.
Remember… even if it is time, they’re far enough along that coming out of the oven a little early
won’t hurt them.” She laced her fingers with his, and she stroked his palms firmly, trying to help him
relax. “I can feel the tense trembles in your ribs, love. Relax, okay? Deep breaths. Just breathe with
me, and relax.”

Labor made him very jumpy- things would never change as far as creating life went. “Would talking
help?” She murmurs softly.

"I-I suppose..." He answered quietly, before he kissed her head. "How do you feel?" He asked
gently.

Toki lifted a hand back and cradled his skull with a tender thrum. “I feel stuffed full. Stretched.
Sated- very sated ,” She emphasized that, “and sore. A good sort of sore.” She mused. Toki wiggled
back against him with a quiet, soft noise. “So, when we’re free to move again, do you want to get
my switch and go cuddle in the birthing nest?” She asks quietly, and looked back at him. Her fingers
rubbed along the back of his skull, soothing him quietly as she tried to twist enough so she could
look at him slightly better, while letting him cradle her belly like a lifeline. “I’m totally going to beat
you next time on Mario Kart.”

He purred quietly at her touches before he smirked at her. "You beat me? You. WISH." He laughed
gently. "I am unstoppable."

“You? Unstoppable?” Toki had a good laugh. Like a good couple minute laugh, and then gave him
a cheeky grin and rotated her skull around to kiss him. Toki gave a soft squirm to try and get more
comfortable- it also checked their status. Nope. Still firmly knotted together, and not going anywhere.
Blegh. “I hardly doubt that, mister ‘crashes his cart into all the bananas’. ”

Under his fingers, her belly gave a twitch, firming up slowly but surely around the navel and starting
to spread. Perhaps ten minutes from the first.

"And I still make it in first place." He kissed her gently as he gave a shameless hum, before his hands
picked up a delicate kneading motion on her belly. "Ten minutes." He murmured.

“First place in my heart.” She kisses him gently in turn, and then exhales softly across his neck as her
belly fully hardens. “Ten minutes.” She repeats, eyes closing. “Okay… Maybe… I mean… I don’t
really want to call your dad while we’re stuck together, love. That’s… Just because he’s had his
hand up there for medical means does not mean I want him to see us being intimate. But if this is the
big event...” It wouldn’t do to waste time. “What do… you think we should do?”

Toki didn’t know- so she was going to leave the choice up to him.

"Well... There's no pulling out until I deflate.” He sighed, before he kissed her cheek. "Rest a little, I
suppose. There's no reaching the switch from here..." He suggested lightly.
So no calling yet. Good enough for Toki.

Toki shifted and snuggled into him with a warm and pleasant sigh. “A little nap before we play sounds good. I dunno about you, but you worked me over gooood.” She purrs. “My breasts don’t hurt, my body is relaxed—” or would be once this contraction—ah, there it went, “and I am completely content to nap here in your arms.”

"Then let’s stay here until we either come apart or things get worse, yes?” He suggested lightly, kissing along her neck before he settled and relaxed with a smile. "I love you~"

"That sounds good to me." She rubbed her wings against his ribs with a soft, pleased sound, and sighed at his kisses. Toki was relaxing in the best way, her eye lights dimming contently. "I love you too.” She purrs. Her eyes drift shut, and she relaxed as she napped a bit in his arms.

Toki didn’t nap deeply though. Her body tensed up every ten to fifteen minutes with a contraction—right up until his knot deflated enough for him to slip free.

Once he popped free, there was a gush of sticky fluids—orange mingling green—and the cramping in her lower back eased.

"Mmmn, look at that." Toki mumbles, shifting to peek at her legs. "We made a mess."

"Did I make your water break?” He asked worriedly, having looked at her hindquarters as their mixed mess spilled onto the nest. "There’s a lot of fluid here…"

Toki gave a soft laugh. “No, no. I didn’t feel a pop. This mess is all on us. Well… You, mostly.” She shifts, and gathers the blanket under them. It was soiled already, so she used it to carefully mop them both up. “But, we can have your dad come check and see now if you want— he should be able to tell if I’m dilating or not- or scent if this is actual labor. He did last time with our twins.”

“No.” He shakes his head after a moment to decide. “We’ll rest a bit more. If anything happens, we’ll give him a call. Your body was probably just telling us that it wasn’t time for… Well,” he coughs, “intimate times.”

She laughs. “Probably. I want to nap a bit more, and we’ll see how it goes. I already feel better. We can game after.”

He smooched the back of her neck, and spooned up close to her again with a pleased rumble that tickled her wings. “Sounds good to me.”
Toki got one whole week of false labor starts. They were an utter delight- an utter, and absolute delight. She’s fairly certain that Tenebris was going to have a heart attack if the litter just didn’t up and come here soon.

Despite the false scares, the house was busy. By the second of June, the entire house was put back into order. Toki had a living room again, and the entire bottom floor had been redone in tile. The bathroom was fixed, and everything was… Well, in order.

Toki was, at fifteen weeks pregnant, painfully huge, and nothing was comfortable. She was, however, happy to have her home in order again- her instincts shifted from her bedroom being the only safe haven to the whole house being included as a den and haven once more, so she was able to relax downstairs on the couch with her family.

And just her private family too- for the first time in literal weeks, the house had only her, her husband, and her two amazing children inside.

Well, and Stag of course. The deer beast was currently curled up behind her knees, and resting their head on her hip.

She was stroking their brow as the two of them watched Papyrus sitting on the floor with the twins, currently getting his rump handed to him in a game of Uno. A heavily modified game of Uno, because Honey wanted to play by Honey’s rules, instead of the official rules.

Thankfully, the men in Toki’s life were more than used to her daughter’s eccentric ways.

“Daddy,” Honey chimes smugly, “I’m gonna play a wild card. You have to draw five cards.” The card in her hand, in fact, said draw two- but what did Honey care for the rules? Absolutely nothing.

Stag made a soft noise on Toki’s hip, and a soft tongue started to groom a strip of skin that was visible where her shirt had pulled up. Toki rolled her eyes, but let them do as they would, as she watched her little family with joy in her eyes and a relaxed piping bubbling in her chest.

"Ah jeez, five whole cards? I cant believe you'd do that to your dear old dad." Aliquam put a hand over where his heart would be with mock insult. "Well, what happens if I happen to do this?" He then put down a switch card. "By Honey rules, that effect is now reverse onto you!" He laughed.

Her little mouth popped open, and she gave him an offended look, before wiggling a finger at him. “Oooo, Daddy, you’re good.” She takes five cards from the pile, and then her grin grows. One would think she was the twin that had the crocodile teeth- but no, she shared her Daddy’s amazing smile. Though it was now stretched in a grin like her Uncle Sans. “Hehehehe.”

Her high pitched giggle promised nothing good.

Skylar peeked over at his sisters cards, and he grimaced. “Oh boy.” She’d gotten three draw four
Toki laughed from her spot on the couch. “You three are great to watch, you know. So, who has the most cards?”

“I do!” Honey exclaims with mischievous delight, wiggling her nine cards at her mother. “For now!”

“I’ve got five.” Skylar gave her a sheepish grin.

Aliquam held up two cards with a grin. "I'm getting close to winning."

“Are you sure about that?” Skylar is the one who snickers. “Honey’s going to nail you good, Daddy.”

“Orrr I could get you.” Honey grins. “Snitches get stitches.”

She played her cards, and ultimately, Skylar ended up with the last of the draw stack in his hands. He sighed, and obediently moved the discarded cards over, shuffling them and flopping them over to be used as drawing material. “And now I have twenty one cards- but Honey has no more draw cards.”

Was he a little smug? Yes he was.

Toki giggled. “So, what does Daddy get if he wins?”

"Some love from Momma dearest, perhaps~?” He asked sweetly as he fluttered his eyes up at her.

“Some love you’ll get.” Toki gives him a loving smile, and blows him a kiss.

Stag makes a soft noise, and bumps their face against her hip, snuffling at her intently. “Mehhhhhhh.

“You get love too, Stag, don’t worry. I’m glad you came home finally.” She soothed, and rubbed their ears tenderly, scritching around their golden glittering antlers. The content warbling noise she got was absolutely precious as the deer beast shifted, folding their legs up tighter to their belly. How such a massive beast could become such a tiny deer was beyond her, but she wasn’t going to complain. They were precious.

“Stag’s jealous that Daddy gets all the loves.” Honey giggles, as the next round of cards goes around. She loses two from the four she had, so she was down to even numbers with her Daddy.

Well when he finds an enchanted doe monster to become his mate, He’ll understand why I get more love than he does...” He announced, before he smirked at Honey. "Well, my dear daughter... you were a fine opponent... however.” He then put down his card.

A skip-a-turn card.

"No one can beat me at card games!” As the card meant her turn was skipped, he put down his last card of matching color, and put his hands up. "AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!"

Honey’s jaw dropped, and she let her cards fall. “Foiled.” She said. “I’ve been foiled… But you know what that means…?” Her teeth opened in an almost canine grin at her Daddy, and she rocked forward slightly. “SPECIAL ATTACK MODE ACTIVATED! VENGETEEEEEEEENCEEE I!”

She shrieks.

She pounced, cackling as she slammed into his chest and headbutted him soundly with the flats of her horns so she didn’t stab him.
Skylar tossed down his cards with a sigh, but indulged his sister. While she went for a head on approach, he went around the side and worked to shove his father over, giggling as he tickled his ribs.

Toki laughed, delighted, and watched the show with Stag as the children launched their surprise attack upon their father.

"Oh heck!" He laughed as he was tackled down and for a short time seemed to be losing the battle, until there was the sudden sound of the door opening.

"GREAT SCOTT, PAPYRUS!" Tenebris barked. "ITS TIME TO SCIENCE!"

As he entered, one could hear the elder of his sons losing his shit out of sight of the doorway.

Toki did that sort of half flail of one to fat to actually get off the couch, but making the effort to attempt. She craned her neck over, her wings bristling up and disturbing Stag. “What the hell, Dad?” She exclaims, ruffled about his lack of knocking, but not surprised by it. So much for a quiet day.

Stag was much less pleased, and curled their lips up. The cervidae beast had the same crocodile teeth that their mistress did, and the cute little ‘mehs’ from earlier gave way to a more beastly hiss. “Cuddles interrupted." They grumbled.

The twins, however, scattered from where they had been wrangling their Daddy into submission. Honey went up over the couch, and Skylar zoomed under it.

Tenebris gestured at Sans, who was crying in laughter as he entered. "Toki I am SO sorry but I paid him twenty bucks to say that!" He laughed.

Tenebris just rolled his eyes and walked over to Papyrus with a cloth bundle in his hand. "Anyways. Your prosthetic is ready." He announced.

That got Papyrus’ attention and he sat up, smiling at the good news.

It got Toki’s attention too. “Well, if his leg is ready, then it’s worth the interruption. Though- that was the easiest twenty bucks you’ve made in a long time, hm Dad?” She quirks a brow at him.

Stag gave a soft grumble as Toki shifted to try and get up, and turned to plop their head on her hip. “Reeeest." They plead at her, and snuffle pointedly, lipping gently at her hip.

"Stag," She rolls her eyes, “I’ve been here on the couch for the past hour. I need up.”

"Mehhhhhhh." The fussy noise is adorable, but Stag gets off the couch, and their hooves click on the tile. They tilt their head up at Tenebris, and then make a vague goat like noise, before trotting off to the kitchen. “Will get drinks.”

“Thank you, Stag!” Toki chirps to them, and flails to try and sit up. “Can I get a hand, please?”

"Does he still hate me?" Tenebris asked as he came over and carefully helped Toki up. "I feel like he still hates me..."

"It took him some time to get used to me, it's okay..." Aliquam replied to assure him.

“It also probably doesn’t help that sometimes you guys forget that Stag is a they- technically, if we go off the old stories, Stag was created through ancient blood magic, using the sacrifices of six men, six women, six children, and six elders.” She gives a soft hum, and stretches her back with her lower
hands. A rippling cramp up her spine steals her breath for a moment as she winces. “For all Stag looks like, well, a stag… Stag doesn’t have any defining genitals and hasn’t chosen for themselves what they want to go by yet. Or a name, for that matter.”

“What are genitals?” Honey chimes, poking back over the couch and startling her mother.

“What defines your body’s physical sex.” Toki chimes lightly in answer. “And also a topic for later, when you’re old enough to retain and understand everything there is to know about the many genders, or the lack-there-of concerning them. Anyways!” She claps her hands together, and looks up at Tenebris as she shifts off the couch and onto all fours. “Leg? Do we need to leave for it? Or is it going to be painless? I hope it’s painless.”

“Or Momma might chew on Grandpa again.” Skylar’s voice was faintly mumbled from under the couch as he reached out to poke at Tenebris’ foot.

"It's going to tingle, but otherwise be very painless." He answered, carefully lifting his leg as he looked down at Skylar. "Careful, pup." He spoke gently, before he stepped closer to Aliquam.

Papyrus cleaned up the cards around him before he looked up at his father, trying to hide the fact that he was exceedingly excited to have the new leg delivered so soon.

“Alright.” Toki laughs. “Well, I know what he’s going to do if it works like we hope. So… kids, you’re gonna wanna stay out of trampling room.” Her back aches up along her spine, so she moves over to Caeruleus to give Tenebris space. She peeks up at him. “Heeey. Heeeey, Cae. Your hands aren’t busy. You should put them to use and rub my lower back.”

"Pregnant mama wants back-rubs, you got it.” He shuffled over and sat down behind her, rubbing his hands before he began to gently rub her back, kneading into the sore muscles tenderly as Tenebris knelt down and got to work on Papyrus.

They started by taking off his pant leg over his new hip and after a momentary inspection of the prosthetic, he revealed the new prosthetic, which was a pure white bone color. "It will stain after long enough of being used in your magic field... How does it look?"

"Oh god, it looks perfect." Aliquam's eye-lights were glowing with excitement.

Toki sat down for Sans as he massaged her lower back, leaning forwards slightly on her hands with a soft groan. Gods, it felt good and hurt at the same time. She kept her gaze on the prosthetic, and arched her brows as he unfolded a full leg from what looked like such a small package. Well- their limbs did bend in inhuman ways when they weren’t thinking like they had muscles… Also at least it wasn’t a garish orange. She was definitely happy they seemed to have gone with a more… normal color, rather than the safety-cone orange she was imagining he was going to with.

"It looks amazing.” She agrees, giving a soft grunt as she exhales, her body tensing up with her belly. Stupid false contractions, she grumbled bitterly to herself. They were annoyingly uncomfortable, and she couldn’t make them stop, or force them to become actual contractions. “It looks like it’ll hold his weight too… What are his limits going to be lifting wise? Will he be able to do everything he used to do, if it integrates properly with his magic field?”

"Hopefully, everything he used to do and more… This was tuned to his magic frequency specifically, so hopefully it won’t have any less difference than his original had.” Tenebris slid the old prosthetic from the pant leg before he lined up the new one to his middle son’s hip. "Would you like to put it in or would you like my help?" he asked
"I- I want to do it." Papyrus took the prosthetic into his hands and slowly lined up the ball-joint, slipping it in before he twisted and popped the bone into place. "A-Ah!" The sound to come from Aliquam was a mixed sound of surprise. A moment passed, and it had him snaring the leg in his magic before he slowly lifted it up, giving his new toes a slow flex. "Heh... wow... Look at this, Toki..."

"Look at that indeed!" Toki gave a slow whistle. She leaned more into her brother in law’s hands, exhalting softly as she massaged her fingers over her lower belly. “Your toes move!” She stretched her legs out and wiggled her toes at him briefly in a sort of toe-to-toe wave, because she was dorky like that. “Do your tests.” She nods to him encouragingly. “Toe check, ankle check, knee check- and once you’re cleared… I hope you’ll wait long enough for me to get outside with you to see you run.” She beams.

"Of course!" A toe wriggle confirmed the first, he slowly rolled his ankle and sighed at the good feeling, bent his knee a few times before swaying his leg back and forth, his expression growing more and more excited. He carefully put his pant leg back on, before he spoke up again, "Everything's good so far... Father, give me a boost?"

With a strong grip, Tenebris grabbed Aliquam's hand and pulled him up to his feet, letting him fix his pants before letting him go again.

Standing on his own two legs, Aliquam fixed his legs before looking at Toki, his breathing picking up in excitement. "Toki, look at me!"

“Look at you!” She exclaims, beaming. She wiggles a hand at Sans, despite wanting to stay there and keep getting back rubs, and then rolls onto all fours. She pads closer, and gives him a look around from one end to the other, beaming wider and wider. Toki moved a little stiffly, showing she wasn’t the most comfortable herself. “No pain?” She asks, looking at how he was bearing his weight.

The twins shifted, coming out from around the couch and under it. Honey peered up at him excitedly. “Daddy!” She squeals. “You're standing on your own feet!”

"No pain. No cane. I'm on my own feet!" He laughed, tears welling in his eyes.

"Try walking around, Pap, go upstairs or somethin’.

"Right right, of course!" Papy slowly turned around, and started for the stairs, each step slow and careful but gradually picking up speed. He made it to the stairs and slowly started climbing... though he only made it halfway before he suddenly took off, going to the top of the stairs before coming back down, barely able to muster words in his excitement before he eyed the door.

"You know what. Go for it, get out of here, Aliquam!" Tenebris laughed, going to help Toki into his arms, knowing it would do her better to see her husband in his times of celebration.

He was motionless for less than a second before he whooped and laughed as he ran out the door.

"And there he goes." Cae laughed, pushing Toki carefully into Tenebris' pull to help her over her swell to properly get up.

Toki didn’t protest being lifted properly into Tenebris’ arms. She looped her arms around his shoulder, sitting on the curve of one arm with her legs dangling down. She laughed, her belly bumping precariously close to Tenebris’ face with how high he’d boosted her up.

She’d be able to see over the wall though- and probably see some of the mayhem no doubt “I’m
going to have to duck to get through the doorway. But lets go out back and see where he went!”

The rains from the week prior had dried up, leaving the grass green and restored, and the land lush and damp, so they’d be fine going out onto the lawn.

“I’m gonna go get the music box!” Honey grins. “Daddy’s got legs! This calls for celebration! I’m gonna plug it into the kitchen.”

Skylar nods slowly and smiles. He looks up at his Grandpa and his Mother as his sister scampers upstairs. “I’ll go help her. Sissy’s wanted to dance with Daddy since she saw a father-daughter wedding dance on you tube. She didn’t think Daddy’d be able to dance with her until she got taller though. We’ll meet you outside!” He gave them both a cheerful grin and then chased his twin upstairs.

Toki hugged Tenebris’ head, and clutched one of her hands above her heart. “They’re so sweet… Pap’s going to love getting to dance with Honey.”

Holding her securely, Tenebris stole a quick kiss to the belly as he listened for the siege of chaos. Though his breathing picked up a little and he ended up turning his head a little with a thoughtful hum. "It's going to be wonderful... though if he asks to dance with you, I might want you to consider taking it gently... your scent is different.”

“Different?” Toki blinked, and patted his head as she was sniffed. She urged him on with a soft tap of her heels against the bottom of his shield. “How is my scent different?” She questions. “Ah-y’know what, you can tell me outside. Outside first, Dad, outside!”

There was a ruckus starting up outside- the barking and howling of the wolf guards, and the maniacal laughter of Undyne echoing across the village. Aliquam’s whoops were audible too, even through the house- they were making quite the ruckus outside.

“Ouuuuuut,” She whines like a needy puppy.

“Out?” Stag queries, poking their head back in from the kitchen with tea in their hands. “Your mate ran out. Very fast. Legs work now.”

"Indeed so, Stag." Tenebris answered as he stepped outside, before he reached up to rub her stomach. "Toki, you're smelling very close to birthing. So I adore you, but don't you dare break your water on my shoulder. I love you but I swear to god."

Toki rolled her eyes, ducking under the door way just slightly to make sure she cleared it safely. “Dad, it’s not like I can control it. It’s going to break when it wants to break. If I could control it, I’d have broke it when I went into that first false one.”

Stag followed them out and left them with the tea, before shifting forms and bounding off to go see what all the ruckus was.

As Stag left, Skylar stepped out, Honey fiddling around in the kitchen to plug in the stereo. “Daddy’s making a ruckus.” He chirps, and then scrambles over to his Uncle, tugging on his shorts. “Up? I wanna see, and Grandpa’s gotta hold Momma with both hands for safety.”

Cae grinned down at his nephew, before hooking both arms onto his underarms. "Up we go." He announced, turning to face the town as he put Sky on his shoulders.

"Listen, it sounds like he's heading past the park..." Tenebris mentioned, hearing as howling picked up as well from the wolf-guards.
"Sounds like he's not the only one celebrating either." Cae agreed with a soft laugh.

Toki gave a laugh, perking up as she tried to see higher over the walled off portion of their yard. She couldn’t see anything, but she could hear- and as she listened, she could vaguely pick up the feel of Stag’s excitement. There were high pitched squeals following the crowd now. “I think Stag found them too.” She laughs. “And Undyne. I can hear her laughing. I wonder what they’re doing- but I think it’s best I don’t know. That woman’s intensity will forever intimidate me.”

“Auntie Undyne is super nice.” Skylar held onto his uncle’s skull, and tried to see too. He had less luck than his mother, but he could feel his Daddy’s excitement. “Daddy’s having a lot of fun. He feels really, really happy.”

"Can you feel the energy in his soul?" Tenebris asked. "There's no doubt in my mind that he's drowning in endorphins right now. He's so happy..."

Toki smiled to Tenebris, and leaned against the side of his head. “Yeah- he’s absolutely overjoyed. I think the only other times I’ve felt him this excited was when the twins were born, and when we got married.” She gives a soft laugh, and then curls her secondary arm on the top of his head. Her fingers press slightly, and more of her weight leans into him as she gives a sharp exhale. A contraction rolled hard over her, and it stole her breath away as she leaned to try and alleviate some of the discomfort sitting upright brought her. “He can walk again- he’s got his legs and his life back. And, once I no longer need the help, I’m sure he’ll be off to demand his job back. He was never the stay at home parent. That was more my... forte.”

"Watch him go right up to Asgore with the whole guard making puppy eyes at him... Speaking of. Tokes, do you still have his armor?" Cae asked. "Because if he does and Asgore caves, he's gonna need it."

Tenebris rumbled quietly as he felt the squeeze before he reached up and softly stroked her arms. "Easy now, sweetheart..."

Toki made a soft hum, and slid her fingers from his head down to his. She clutched them tightly, squeezing as her middle held firm, and releasing once it did. She didn't let go of his fingers though-she'd probably need them later. That gave Cae a full thirty seconds of awkward silence, before she finally turned her skull to look at him and answer him. “Sorry about that.” She hums. “Yeah. We’ve still got it. He never got rid of it, but he couldn’t look at it without getting sad, so I put it in the closet. It’s all shined up too- ready to be worn again. He may need to strength build a bit to wear it again though. Months being unable to do his usual workout routine would make his body lose strength and stamina.”

Though, he’d regain it quicker again. Muscle memory was a fantastic thing.

Skylar tilted his head and watched his mother. He caught his grandpa’s eye, and mouthed slightly ‘Is Momma okay?’. "She's close to having the pups. They're starting to get antsy, so she just needed a second to get over the ache." He explained. "She's okay... Grandpapa's got her, doesn't he?"

Skylar seems to have accepted the answer for what it was. He nodded to his grandfather, and nestled down on his uncle’s shoulders. “You’ve got her.” He nods. “And a doctor knows best.”

“Yes he does.” Toki agrees warmly, and smooshed the top of his head in thanks. There was a kick from her belly, a grumpy pup shifting, and a foot pressed against his cheek. “Anyways, yes Cae. Armor is still good to go. It’s probably just dusty. I haven’t been able to stand up long enough to
There was a click from the kitchen, and then music began to play. Honey darted out of the kitchen, and grinned. “I got the tunes!”

"She got the tunes." Cae parroted, before he turned towards the path."Oh look, here he comes."

Safe to say, Aliquam was running like hell, and thanks to the rain keeping the dust down, it was more than clear that there was a very large group of wolves running behind him that could have been the entire royal guard on his tail.

And there was no doubt of the happiness on Aliquam's face.

"Here he comes."

Behind the guards, in her full armor regalia, was Undyne, cackling manically as she thundered after him, sounding not unlike a bag full of silverware in a tornado.

Toki watched their approach with trepidation. “… Are… Are they going to stop running?” She asks hesitantly.

Honey had no such hesitation- she ran out to meet her father, throwing her arms out wide with a screech. “DADDY! DANCE WITH MEEEE!”

"They're not gonna stop- holy crap get out of the way!" Tenebris grabbed Honey with his tail and quickly moved to the side.

Cae did the same as he watched.

Aliquam grinned and stopped before he did a flip to take off the extra speed before he landed hard, only to yelp as he got tackled by the wolves, who were all barking and howling with relentless glee as they congratulated Papyrus on his new limb.

Honey pouted and squirmed in her Grandfather’s grasp, making a huffy noise. “Don’t break Daddy!” She yells at the literal dog pile that her father was consumed by.

Undyne laughed, coming to a stop behind them. She started digging through the pile, scruffing wolves and setting them aside with a playful ruffle as she searched for her quarry. “Come on you lot, let him up! If you break him, we can’t heckle him to come back and work with us!”

Toki for her part was giggling, her grip like iron as she clung to Tenebris.

"You make it sound like I had any other plans you scaly DORK!" Bony arms reached out and grabbed Undyne by the arms, before one of the hands pointed. "HEY FELLAS! SQUIRREL!" He announced.

Canine based monsters, on occasion, were not all that different from actual canines when they were sufficiently riled. And given that they had just been chasing someone made of bone- well, the mob raced off after the ‘squirrel’ with a bunch of hooting and hollering, raising a ruckus galore.

Undyne snorted and hauled him up. “That never gets old.” She grins suddenly. “And who are you calling a scaly dork, you BONY NERD?” She switched their grips around suddenly- and then suplexed him.

Toki’s eyes popped wide. “U-Undyne!”
“Aunty no!” Honey yells. “You can’t break Daddy yet! Only Momma gets to break Daddy!”

Tenebris sputtered at that before he burst out laughing into Toki’s belly. "H-Holy...!" He wheezed.

Aliquam choked at what Honey said before he cackled and rolled over, sliding out of Undyne’s grasp before he locked his legs around her, hooking them hard around Undyne to lock her in place before he squeezed.

To her credit, Undyne held out longer than most might have. He was weaker with lack of practice and walking for months- but he still had strength. She ended up tapping hard on the ground until he let her go, where in she rolled away to wheeze and make sure he hadn’t dented her armor.

Toki laughed at both Tenebris hiding his face, and at her husband and his best friend.

However… With Undyne away from him and trying to catch her breath, this left him open. After Honey got tired of it, she simply teleported right out of her Grandpa’s tail grab, and proceeded to tackle her Daddy into the grass. She sat on his chest and pouted at him.

Aliquam laughed at his victory before he caught Honey with a smile, "Hello my pup! Look at me! I just made the might Undyne tap out!" He laughed.

“You did.” She smiles at his happiness, and then reaches out to mush his cheeks in her small hands. “Daddy. You have legs. You can walk. You can run. You can squish Aunty Undyne until she makes wheezy noises like when Gael has a hairball. Daddy.” She gives him her most serious face to ever serious. “Daddy. You can dance.”

He smiled up at her. "I can dance.” He repeated... and then it clicked and he snatched her up as he got to his feet. "I can dance! And I can dance with my baby girl!” He laughed.

Honey squealed happily, and threw her arms around his neck. “Dance with me, Daddy!” She chirps. “Please? I got music and everything. I wanna dance with you!”

Toki watched with a fond smile, and lightly nudged the top of Tenebris’ head. “If you get girls out of me, you’ve got this to look forward to.”

"Then let's dance!” He laughed as he spun her around. "Skylar! Caeruleus! Can you go turn up the music?"

"Oh I don’t doubt that, though we'll teach them to Tango, and perhaps a lovely ballroom Waltz~” Tenebris purred in reply.

Honey’s laughter pierces the air, and it’s a jubilant noise that brings only joy.

Skylar guided his uncle inside with little kicks of his heels, and a few moments later, the music pumped louder.

The sound waves tickled over Toki’s wings, and she leaned down to speak with Tenebris while her husband and daughter danced. “Honestly, I can’t see you doing the Tango or a Waltz. Your tail would be such a tripping hazard.” She giggles breathlessly, riding the high of the ambient joy in the air. “Honey is finally getting to dance with her Daddy though. They’re both… Ridiculously happy.”

"I have a belt hook for a reason, silly girl... and of course they are, my son just got his full functionality back... he spent nearly a full year raising his children and recuperating with his beloved wife, and now here he goes, back to guard duty like he was meant to. I'm so proud of him.” Tenebris gave a warm sigh, smiling proudly. "And I'm proud of you too…”
“Of me?” She asks, incredulous, not sure if she heard him right over the sound of her daughter’s joyful shrieks and the ridiculous clanking of Undyne’s armor as the fish woman stole Skylar to dance with him—dragging Caeruleus into the mess too. The music was rumbling over her, and she felt her head bobbing with the beat. “I can understand being proud of Aliquam—hell, of the kids too. They’ve all been huge sports about the fact that you’ve all had to step in where I couldn’t, and take over for me pretty much when I was hurt. What on earth made you proud of me?”

She’d been a pain in the ass for a while now—growling, grumbling, the general beastly behavior… It was pesky.

He smiled and slowly lowered her to rest her against his chest, adjusting his grip to hold her in a supportive dancing pose as he carefully twirled her around. “You stayed alive. You survived the worst at least twice already...” He commented. "You came back to my son, you came back to your children, and to term you have carried a litter of children carrying the blood of the beast you know as your Papa, and yet instead of wanting them gone, you carry them so that I might have my own pups... You're so selfless...

Toki let her legs dangle as he supported her weight. It was uncomfortable on her back, but it wasn’t end of the world painful. She let herself relax in his arms, and breathed softly as her muscles tightened in warning. “I made a promise to come home.” She murmured softly. “And… Well, the children are innocent of whatever sins I may have committed. I wouldn’t have ever wished them gone.” She leaned up to give him a daughterly kiss on the cheek, and then gave him a cheeky grin. “I’m not selfless, Dad. I’m just… Me. I’m a whole box of strange looking rocks, and all of it makes up who I am. Thank you for dancing with me, by the way. You’re doing wonderfully.”

He had worried about her dancing too roughly and straining herself.

He smiled down at her. "I told you so~" He purred, pecking her head with the same admiration. "You have such little faith in me sometimes~" He teased. "I had to learn all these dances when I was younger... The tango was just my fun little side project with his majesty's past adviser."

Toki gave a soft laugh, her toes curling where they dangled. “I never learned how to dance, really. Nothing more than the usual head on the shoulders sway. Tango is a lovely dance. If I had to learn any, though, I think I’d like to learn how to Salsa dance.” She shifted, and under his fingers her back was starting to tighten up, followed by her belly hardening against his middle. She knew the signs, and dropped her voice down low. “Another contraction is coming.” She says softly, closing her eyes and breathing into him with a soft, calm tone of voice. If she was calm, they would be calm—she couldn’t panic and expect them not to panic. “Just sway with me. It’ll let it pass easier.”

"Of course, my dear." He focused on the muscles against his form and as the contraction passed over her, he slowly turned in a way that would make her sway and bend both against and away from the muscles in question, hopefully a method that would bring her some relief.

It brought her a little relief, and she sighed into his neck. Her belly was still hard and heavy like a rock, but the knots in her back eased. She let out a tiny, unbidden moan. It didn’t leave past them thanks to the music. “Thank you,” She mumbles, “Whatever you’re doing is helping the back pains tremendously.”

When it passed, she leaned up and rubbed her forehead against his shoulder. “You make a pretty good partner for helping folks through contractions when you’re not a panicked mess in the car. That’s not just a doctors skill either. Thank you.”

"Forever and always at your aid, my daughter..." He promised, "After the first time, it's always something I can handle, and you're no exception..." He purred.
He watched Aliquam dance with Honey, smiling at the look on his face. "He's been given new life... he's going to be just like he was before... energetic, happier... indescribable joy... He's going to run with his children, with you... didn't you wish for that before?"

"I did." Toki smiles slowly, almost whimsically as she watches Papyrus twirl Honey across their cement patio. Father and Daughter alike never had looked happier, she thought, than in each other’s arms and dancing like no one was watching. “I still do. And once the litter is weaned, I can work on getting back into shape, and he and I can run again.” She looked up at him with a lopsided grin. “Right now though, I struggle to waddle across the house without being winded- I doubt I could run anywhere, even if I tried.”

"You'd be surprised by the stamina of a mother." He chuckled lightly, before he hummed as he saw Aliquam come over with Honey, smiling warmly. "Care to trade, my son?"

"Yes please, Father."

"Of course." The older male nods. “Now remember, you must be careful with her; she is ready to pop any time now.”

"Fatheerrr... Give me my wife." Papyrus whined as he made grabby hands with his free hand.

"Alright alright, here you are." Tenebris knelt down and slowly set Toki down, a smile on his face as he then took Honey, pecking her head sweetly.

Toki very nearly continued to go down once she was set on her feet, her body used to and more comfortable walking on all fours. However, she instead straightened her back despite the bristling cramp that ran up her insides, and took a step over to meet her Husband as he traded off for Honey.

Honey settled nicely into her Grandpa’s arms, headbutting him with an affectionate coo.

Toki curled her arms around her husband’s shoulders to give him the first proper hug in weeks. “Hey there, handsome.” She smiles. “Did you have fun with Honey?”

Tenebris cooed as he headbutted his grandchild and went off to dance with her as Aliquam had his moment with his beloved.

"I'm going to have more fun here in a moment" He told her as he hugged her firmly around the chest. "Oh Toki this is so wonderful~" He cooed happily. "I can walk again, I'm gonna get my old job back, and I'll be able to do so much more again! No more sulking about the house because of my inability... no more missing things just because I couldn't walk or run..."

She grunted at the firm hug, but let him have his moment. She had the magic to reinforce her bones, so she wasn’t walking glass anymore. “It’s going to be good to see you back at work- and though I’ll miss you at home, I’m going to be happier knowing that you’re happy at work instead of at home where you feel so stifled. No more missing things indeed.” She agrees warmly. “Speaking of... Do you want to dance?” She grins, and moves her hips in the start of a basic swaying motion. “I don’t know how to do anything better, but... I would like to dance all the same."

"I think I'd like that very much.” He kissed her head and began to gently sway with her, much like what Tenebris had been up to when he had her.

Toki let out a soft, dreamy sigh as she leaned into him. Her eyes drifted closed as she inhaled his scent, her middle tightening in another breath stealing cramp that painfully lingered for some time. She didn’t show much in the way of visible cues beyond tension, but she did lean more into him. “Mmm... This is nice.”
She was frankly surprised he could hold still long enough to dance with her like this.

"I'm glad you think so." He kissed her again, giving her a small twirl before he giggled and lowered her into an adoring dip. "I love you so much, Toki~"

Toki was in a world of pain as he twirled and dipped her mid contraction- the intense pressure in her uterus was nearly blinding, and by the time she was upright again, it was all she could do to simply drape against him with a soft noise to let it pass. "I love y-"

Her words were interrupted. There was a popping feeling- a releasing sensation deep inside her belly- and then her water broke, drenching her legs and the patio below her with jelly like florescent green amniotic fluid as she stared at him with wide eyes.

"Oh... Oh shit."
Chapter 153

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And now the moment you’ve all been waiting for. Except broken up into many chapters because it got very long! So hope ya’ll can wait a couple more days for the best parts yet to come. When Silver and I write, we write- and in depth we go.

Oh shit indeed.

Surprise sank in, and then shock, and Papyrus froze on the spot, weakly stuttering, before he turned to the oldest monster there. "FATHER!"

Tenebris turned then he blinked, before he sighed and smiled. "I warned you, didn't I?" He chuckled and set down Honey before he came over and pat Papyrus' shoulder. "There there, Papy... it's gonna be okay, it's just her water... It should even give her some relief..." He smiled at his son then looked to Toki. "How do you feel?" he then asked.

Honey peered at the mess below her mother and then peeked up at her. "Momma?" She tilts her head. "Did you pee?"

Skylar and Cae were released by Undyne as she recognized what exactly was happening, and she backed out swiftly. "Nope, nuh-uh, don’t need to be here for this. Call me when there’s babies to see."

Skylar watched her leave, and then shook his head at Honey. "No, Honey. Momma’s having the puppies."

Toki was still frozen despite the chatter going on, still bracing as much as she could on Papyrus while he had his minor freak out. She was still dribbling and draining, and it was utterly gross. She glanced up at Tenebris once the contraction ended, and blinked slowly. "I feel sticky." She says. "And wet. And like I’d really like to get out of these clothes, but I know I’m still..." Her face twists. "Dripping."

Cae grinned at that before he turned, "Honey, Sky, you kids think you wanna stick around for this or do you want to bail to find what Solstice is up to?" He asked.

Aliquam settled down thanks to his father's influence and he sighed against Toki's stubby mane, before he pecked her head. "Father, I'll get her inside... Do you have any ideas for what to do?" He asked.

Tenebris nodded gently. "Oh of course, my son. Let's get her inside and into her nest... You can carry her upstairs while I grab some towels and some warm water."

Aliquam nodded and looked to Toki, nuzzling her warmly. "Alright... Do you want to walk upstairs with me?"

The twins listened to the conversation being had, glanced to each other with a clear decision unanimous in their eye lights, and then looked to Cae. "Can we stay? At least downstairs? We wanna know what it's like and help if we can."
Toki listened to the children and hummed softly. "Someone needs to tell Asgore and Thumper. Sans, if you and the kids want to make the trek, that'll give us time to get settled." Her gaze slid back to Aliquam. "I..."

Her brow furrowed, and her legs shifted. "I need to walk. So let's walk. Just... Watch where you step. Your feet are a lost cause, but we don't need more in the house." Her eyes slid to Tenebris. "Plastic tarps. Put them on the floor of my bedroom please. I don't want to ruin it."

Toki was getting the urge to pace, and had a feeling she'd be leaking slowly for a while. She didn't feel like leaking all over her floor. Her bedroom had carpets on it in certain places, and she wasn’t sure she could get it out of the wood-grain that wasn’t carpet.

Tenebris nodded and got the head start on the tarps, getting them and getting upstairs to put them down while Aliquam helped Toki inside.

Cae looked to the twins before he smiled. "Yeah, let's get you two inside. Then I gotta go get Asgore and Thumper..." Walking inside behind Aliquam, he hummed. "You two can stay downstairs unless Momma says it's okay to come up, if not, Thumper can keep you company..."

The twins nodded slowly. Skylar spoke first. "We can be patient. In all the movies where the Momma has babies, she’s wheeled back in a hospital and everyone waits out in the waiting room, so it won't be much different than that."

Toki gives a soft laugh, and leans into Aliquam as they pace slowly to the house. “Our kids are bright.” She smiles, and hesitates at the door. She pauses, and grimaces slowly as another ooze of slick makes her pants even more gross. She’d have preferred the human method this way- it was just water, not... Liquid like gelatin. “Though... I do hope everyone is in for the long haul. I don’t know how long this one will last, but there’s a good chance labor will take several hours.”

It wasn’t a 'water breaks and it's go time' sort of deal. The process of bearing children took time, even for monsters.

“We can wait!” Honey chimes to her Momma, and wiggles excitedly.

Toki smiles faintly and nods. “Good girl.” Taking a deep breath, she made her way across the kitchen, and headed for the stairs. She stared at them, and hesitated, unsure if she could safely climb them when she couldn’t see her feet, and she was incredibly off balance. And, y’know- she was covered in slime. “I need to wash off when we’re upstairs. Just a quick rinse with a wet towel. I don’t feel like a bath right now.”

"We can use the bathroom to wash off while Father sets up the tarps and everything else, make sure everything is ready for you... It'll give him the time he needs to cover underneath the birthing nest as well, and get the towels so we're completely prepared once the first pup starts coming.”

Toki nods slowly. She stares at the stairs for another moment, and then turns away. “Let's go to the downstairs bathroom so we don’t drip all over the bedroom floor.” She decides. Thinking of it pragmatically, it was also closer to the laundry room, so her soiled pants could be tossed away. Her turtleneck could serve as a ‘dress’ until she got upstairs. Toki waddles her way there, and eases the door open with a soft thrum. “Hm... Shit.” She looks at the cupboard and frowns. “Pap...? Can you get wash cloths please? I don’t really feel all that safe bending over. I’m not too sure I can straighten up again.”

He nodded gently as he helped her into the bathroom before he set her down on the toilet, he collected washcloths from the cupboard and brought them over to the sink to start running the hot
water. "Have you had any contractions?" He asked.

"Not ye- ah, ha, ha, haaaaa... " As she got settled on the toilet, Toki tensed, her belly tightening as she went to slide her sweat pants down. Like before, contractions were intensely more painful without the cushion of her amniotic fluid there to muffle it.

Toki's hand came up to clutch the edge of the counter, and she braced with a soft groan. "You just had to ask, didn't you?" She groused, giving a soft moan. "Having one now. They were uncomfortable before. Painful now." Toki had a feeling she wasn't going to get to sleep through most of her labor this time.

He soaked the rags with the hot water and knelt down to gently wipe her legs clean, once he helped ease her out of her pants first. "That means it's just that much closer to being time. I'm not going to lie, I'm really kind of excited..." He laughed nervously.

Toki’s free primary hand slid over, and she may have clenched it on his shoulder. She tucked her head closer to her shoulders and groaned softly. “I am too.” She huffs in a shallow breath, scenting him and the pungent mess he’s helping clean off. “I’m really excited for the litter to be here. Hah… Ahhh…” Once it faded off, she could breathe properly again. There was a shift in her middle, and she grimaced as they kicked. “They’re ready to get here too. So… You’re ready to meet your little siblings? Oh- Papy, remember to clean your feet too.”

"You come first, my love. I clean you first, then I'll clean myself off, alright?" He hummed.

Toki nodded slowly and shifted her legs to let him clean. It was sticky and stubborn, so it took a little bit of scrubbing- but she insisted on cleaning her feminine parts herself. She did have some limits after all- and they were tender too, so there was that. Once Toki was clean, she shifted on the toilet, and leaned up to rinse the cloth for him, so he could work on his feet. “I’m sorry I got you messy, by the way. Though… Your face was priceless. You and your dad made the exact ‘oh shit’ face, you know- when my water with the twins broke in the car, and just now when we were dancing.”

He sat on the side of the tub before he smiled at her. "You think I care about the small mess? You're my wife and you're in the middle of labor; I don’t care about a little mess on my bare feet, which I can easily wash off."

Toki gives him a lopsided smile. “I know you don’t care about the mess. But I care about the mess- and it’s because I think of who has to clean it.” She gives a soft, shaky laugh, and stoops down to help him clean while she can. Her back doesn’t thank her, but his feet are mercifully easier to clean than her legs had been. He’d been secondhand splashed- she’d been basically in the front row seat of a water show without a poncho on.

“There we go.” She smiles as his feet sparkle cleanly- free of all the dirt he’d gotten on his run too. “I also didn’t want all that dirt in the nest. Like you said, I’m in labor- sanitary conditions are mildly necessary. Alright though- think your Dad has had enough time to get the bedroom ready for go-time?”

"I think he's had plenty of time and is now waiting on us to show up to occupy the nest." He answered. Finishing with his personal cleanup, he got up and tossed the rag to the sink. "Alright, ready to go?" He asked, holding out his hand.

She took his hand, and let him haul her to her feet. Her gaze roved over him quietly, and she was proud to say there was no awkward dripping from inside of her. At least, not with standing up. “I am, yes.” She nods. She waddles out, and makes her way to the stairs with him, where again she hesitates.
Anxious indecisiveness is plain on her face, and her fingers tighten on his arm. “… I don’t know if I can go up safely on two legs.” With how much she was leaning on him— which was a lot, if he even noticed it now that he was fully stable on his own two feet, she wasn’t sure she’d be able to safely traverse up the stairs on her legs. “I want to try. Just don’t let me fall, please.”

“I’ll be right here with you... you aren’t going to fall.” He promised. "I'm going to stay right here behind you... Or beside you, whichever you’d rather."

“Behind.” Toki decides, and shifts her grip off of him and onto the railing. Her fingers curl around it, and then she starts hauling her way up. She goes slowly, step by step, making sure she’s secure and safe.

She makes it to the very top, before another contraction rolls over her, and her knees quake. The last step is surmounted, before she leans on the wall, and groans very quietly, well aware that there were children within hearing range, and she would scare them if she started moaning in agony. She didn’t wait for it to end though, taking ginger steps into the bedroom, using the wall as a brace and her hovering husband as a safety net. She had a one track mind, Toki did.

However, stepping into the bedroom brought a new and interesting thing for Toki. From one step to the next, there was a sudden sensation of her entire sense of balance shifting— and then her belly was no longer pressing up so high. It was, in fact, hanging low. The litter had dropped down into position to let her body continue to open up.

And given her size, it was a literal drop, and if she had seen it, she was sure Tenebris and Papyrus had seen it too. It did make that specific contraction easier, though it did make her feel like she had a bowling ball in her hips. Her waddle was more pronounced as she stepped aside to let her husband in. “Um… Is everything ready?”

Aliquam entered as he saw his father bent over the nest, but he tensed up a little as the beast turned, his eyes feral with his crown protruding. A low rattle rose from the beast and Aliquam let a soft ‘Oh dear...’ pass his teeth. "It seems someone else wanted to be here a little more than Tenebris did..."

Toki hesitated at seeing the crown, and she froze like a deer in the headlights. However, ceasing all movement brought back the pain, though this time more centered towards her back, and she staggered a bit to brace on the nearest table to the door, her breath wheezing out of her with a soft, pained whine. “Oh. Okay. I was hoping to have a doctor here that was familiar with the process. Not... Hhhhhh...” Her soft distressed whine was accompanied by the flick of her wings as she braced and tried to stretch her lower back. She needed to pace, but she needed a back rub.

Indecision was strong, and she was flustered by the sudden and unplanned appearance of Papa.

Papa watched her warily but seeing her stumble from the pain had him coming over quickly and leaning up his head to rest against her side as he began to rumble and rattle worriedly.

Aliquam tensed up as he approached, but the supportive behavior had him sighing in relief.

Toki leaned her side quietly into his middle, breathing soft pained noises. It took a little while for it to end, and when it did, she straightened carefully. She let out a shuddering breath, her wings buzzing anxiously. “Ow...” She mumbles softly. “That was... That was rough.” She glances down at Papa, and swallowed. “Ah... So, hah, what made you decide to... come out? Also... I need to pace. So...” She held out her arm for Papyrus. “Ready to put those legs to use...?”

"Of course, darling." Aliquam gently took her arm in his own and helped her support herself.
Papa gave a low rumble in reply, his tail rattling behind him quietly.

Toki let Aliquam help her walk, and she set to pacing over the carefully placed plastic walk ways. The walking was unpleasant, but it seemed to help make her insides ease a little bit. She could hear a ruckus starting downstairs as the door opened and closed, and the excited yet muffled talking of people arriving at the house. She tilted her head and looked at Papa. “I know you can talk, you silly old man.” He’d done it before, when he’d successfully fooled her into thinking he was Tenebris.

Papa tilted his head and slowly opened his mouth. "I am... Excited... My children are coming..." He answered, though hearing the ruckus, he began to rattle and maneuvered around them to pace in front of the door.

“I know you are. We’re excited they’re coming too.” She says slowly, pausing as a cramp seizes her back. Her secondary hands go around to cradle her lower back, and she groans, before continuing her waddle-pacing. She watched him pace at the door, and there was a momentary worry for anyone who came through- before she decided they were on their own as far as Papa goes.

There was a moment where she rethought that though. “Papa.” She calls, deciding to put it out there lest he get overly grumbly, “If you bite one of the children, I’m going to boot you out and you won’t get to see the litter until tomorrow.”

It might have been said in a very light tone of voice, but her threat was very real. Her kids might have promised to stay downstairs, but kids were kids, and they would probably get nosy sooner or later. Thumper also made no such promises.

"Understood..." He rumbled quietly in reply, picking up on the footsteps that were steadily growing closer to the top of the stairs.

Toki’s wings perked slightly at the set of footsteps coming up the stairs. Muffled, she couldn’t tell who it was, but she knew it wasn’t one of the kids. Unless they were trampling up the stairs like a hoard of unruly elephants while chasing their summons, they were usually silent.

She looked up at Papyrus, and then startled to waddle for the nest. She needed to sit down if they were going to have visitors. Toki had no pants on and had no desire to accidentally flash Asgore, Grillby, Sans, or whoever the hell decided to visit the laboring mother.

The door opened just as she got seated at the edge.

Asgore’s fluffy white foot poked in as he peeked around the edge. “Toki? Boys? Everything going okay? Can I get you guys anything?”

But upon the confirmation that was indeed not a child, Papa snarled sharply and lunged at Asgore, snapping at his toes and sending the king stumbling backwards.

“What on earth?” The king let out a startled sounding bleat as he fell backward, landing against the opposite wall.

“Sorry, Asgore!” Toki calls. “That’s not Tenebris. We came upstairs, and Papa is out to play. He’s on guard duty right now, I think- he might not know it’s you. We’re okay. I could use something to snack on though, and maybe something to drink with electrolytes?”

She needed food now in case she got nauseated later- food made energy, and she had five she had to deliver. She had to deliver them- Papa couldn’t do an emergency c-section if she needed it.

There was a faint groan from Asgore recovering against the wall before he got up, "Do you think
you want some raw meat more? Or just some fruit or something light to keep your appetite sated?” He asked as he pushed off the wall and came to the doorway, watching to keep from Papa's striking range.

Toki’s brows furrowed lightly, and pondered what she wanted to eat. “Maybe both?” She asked lightly. “If all else fails, and the meat is too heavy, Papy and Papa can eat it instead.” She gives him a smile in the doorway. “Thank you. Anyway, I don’t know if we have anything with electrolytes in it, so if we don’t, maybe just some water? Or juice. Juice would be fantastic.”

She flicks her wings, and leans into her mate, giving a soft, pleased thrum, nuzzling into him as the reclining motion gives her some relief in her discomfort- and lets her feel the shift in the litter.

"Sounds good, I'll be back upstairs in a short bit." He told her, starting downstairs again with a side glance to Papa, who rumbled quietly as he glanced back at Toki and Papyrus.

Papy glanced back at him, but as Toki leaned to him, he smiled and wrapped his arms around her. "I love you... are you doing okay?"

"My back hurts." She says softly, and relaxes into his arms. “Pretty sure another contraction will be soon. They seem to be coming… Quick.” She was anticipating a slower delivery than this was playing out to be. “Do you remember the acupressure points? Maybe that would help.” She asks him, softly peaking up at him and also peering at Papa while he stared at them. She wiggled her fingers at him in awkward greeting.

Was he just going to stare at them when he wasn’t alert to sounds in the hallway…?

He nodded slowly. "Let's sit you down so you don't buckle when I push them... okay?" He suggested. "I think Father is going to remain vigilant so hopefully he does not interfere too much when you start becoming vocal.”

Toki nodded. “Wise idea. I don’t really want to see you bit.” She shifts away from leaning on him, and rolls to lay on her side. She settles on her right side, and then makes a soft, frantic noise. “Nope. Not right side.” And then she rolls. The left side is much, much more comfortable and stream line feeling, and she exhales pleasantly. “Okay. Much better. This work?”

He nodded and took his position behind her back, his hands slowly tracing over her muscles before he gave a small press in some sore muscles. "Here, perhaps?" He purred.

She gave a soft keen, her foot kicking slightly as it sent tingles down her leg. “Ow. Yes- there. Just… acupressure. Please.” There was a shift, and then her body tensed up. Yep- a contraction steam rolled right over her, and she knotted her hands into the bed, panting softly as her toes splayed in discomfort. She warbled her discomforts out loud.

He pressed his thumb carefully into the spot she asked to press at as well as ran his hand along her midsection, cooing gently to soothe her.

Papa twitched before he slowly got up and sniffed her as he came closer.

Toki’s eye lights focused on Papa as he came closer, and she offered one of her hands to him to give him something to do- something productive. She could squeeze his hand with no problem, and not worry about breaking it. Her secondary hands worked at kneading the blanket under her while her mate attempted to soothe her, and pressed his thumb into her back. It did seem to help some, and her soft, pained sounds died off slightly.

“Pap...” She mumbles slowly through grit teeth, “When it’s over… Can you check me?”
"Check you?" He asked, before he blinked. "Ah, you mean your dilation?" He asked.

Papa sniffed the offered hand before he rumbled and laid down, delicately grooming her palm with a soft purr.

“Yes, my dilation.” She nods, and feels her pride swell. “This is why I married you. You’re the best.” She did pause however, as Papa scooted closer to the nest, laid down partially on it, and then… licked her hand. Well, groomed it would be more apt. She made a small face. “Y’know… If you want to groom something, you can groom my mane, Papa. I wouldn’t mind right now. I’ll let you know when I need my bubble space again.”

Papa smiled and nodded, slowly kneading his designated spots with a soft hum. "I love you too, Toki~"

Papa rumbled quietly at her words before he crawled a little closer and leaned up to nuzzle her forehead with a warm rumble before he started a gentle grooming of her mane, rumbling all the while to help her feel better.

Toki opens her mouth to chitter softly to Papa in beast speech, telling him he was doing a good job in keeping her comfortable and feeling better. When the contraction ended, her body relaxed, and she let herself go limp. “Mmmm…” A soft, tired noise left her. “Alright… You know how to check my dilation?” She asks Papyrus gently, not having moved.

She’d need to be on her back for it- but they needed an accurate base to go off of. She needed to be four fingers wide in order to push. She wasn’t going to risk pushing early- not with the fact these were beasts, and beasts had all kinds of ridges and other unpleasant things.

"I think so, yes." He nodded gently. "I will simply need to sit between your legs and have you relax while I give it a feel..."

Papa purred at the beastly uttered praise, and his tail began to wag quickly.

Toki nodded to him, and shifted. She rolled onto her back, which was exceedingly uncomfortable- and then she shifted, and propped herself up on Papa, putting her back against where his chest was, letting him peek over her shoulder, or keep grooming her, but more along the back of her neck. “Alright… This should do. Thankfully, I don’t have lungs.”

Toki hesitantly spread her legs. Her turtleneck had pulled up, cupping only the bottom of her belly. She was sorely getting tempted to pull it off, as it was chafing on her and she didn’t want any fabric besides the nest touching her suddenly- but she’d worry about that in a minute. Her lower half was bare to him, her nether parts a little swollen looking, and stained a darker green from the slow leaks of amniotic fluid.

Papa cooed happily at being leaned on and he leaned his head on her as he started to groom her more affectionately.

"It’s a good thing I just washed my hands, eh?" Papyrus smiled slightly as he got into position, feeling along her entrance to see if it would be slick enough to allow him to slip his fingers inside without additional lubricant.

Her legs twitched as his fingers prodded her, and she made a very clear face that said no, no it was not slick enough without additional lubricant. She thrumped a soft purr to Papa, however, to let him know his grooming was appreciated. “It is good indeed. Though— Lube up? I’ve… never felt all the textures on your fingers quite like this before.” Everything felt sensitive and tender, like her body
was preparing to warn her if anything got hung up.

He nodded and gently patted her leg as he got up. "Let me get some lubricant then, I'll be right back." He got up and walked to the dressers to rummage and find a bottle of lube.

Why there?

Well, first option, he was a guy- of course he’d keep his lube there. And second… Children.

He had no doubt that Honey would use it to make a slip and slide in the hall-way.

He came back and tucked it under his arm for a moment to let it warm up. Once it was warm, he put it on his hands, quietly kicking himself as he remembered that no, there were no such things as gloves big enough for skeletons. Barehanded it was. "Alrightie, I'm all lubed up, here we go..."

Toki let out a soft, sound and nodded. “Alright. Just go slow, please. I’m tender down there.” She shifts, her legs opening wider for him, and gives him a slow smile.

"Of course, darling." He smiled gently, slowly applying some lubricant to her folds before he pushed a finger into her, going to see if he could get deep enough to feel her cervix.

One finger was stopped by the rest of his knuckles before he could get deep enough. She didn’t seem bothered by one finger though, and the lubricant seemed to help. It was cool feeling and soothed some of the ache. Her fingers shifted, and she rubbed her belly through her shirt, the litter squirming slowly inside of her. “You’re not hurting me.” She informs him warmly, knowing communication was good. “Do you feel anything?”

"No, 'm not deep enough yet, I'm gonna have to add another finger, okay?” He hummed softly.

Toki nods. “Go ahead.” She lets her head roll back into the soft grooming motions of Papa, and focuses on that. “Your hands are smaller than your Dads hands. They don’t hurt as much as I remember his did with the twins.” She informs him warmly.

A brief nod was given and steadily Aliquam pushed another finger into Toki's body. "Alright..." He gave a slight push but he smiled, and gave a nod. "I think I feel it."

Two fingers was more than enough to do what was needed. Toki made a bit of a face as his fingers had to press further in, but his fingers could touch her cervix.

She was a little less than two finger widths in in diameter for dilation- so roughly four or five centimeters.

“H-how am I doin’?” She asks, her eyes flicking to him as her fingers nervously tap on her belly.

"You're doing well... If I had to guess... Four centimeters... perhaps five if I'm generous..." He answered, before hearing a soft hum that made him look out.

"Well... not the first time I've seen it, but probably the last time I'd want to see you guys in a pose like that..."

_Oh crap..._ Aliquam groaned quietly. "Hello, Caeruleus…"

Toki’s hand shifted, and she took a firm hold on Papa’s shoulder, so he didn’t dump her flat on her back to go chase his son out of the room. Her face flushed a bright emerald. “Sans.” She greets. “Erm… Well, I suppose it’s fair. I had my hand up yours- you get to see your brother up mine..."
Worst trade off ever, but y’know. “So, uh… Looks like you have food. Food is good. Lets talk about food. Once… y’know… Papy’s out. Four centimeters you said? Close to five? We’ll go with four. Four is a good number. Eight is transition, and that gives me four centimeters of time before I could get… icky feeling.”

If it was one thing her family had learned about her, it was that Toki babbled when she was flustered.

Cae gave a small smile. "Hey there, yeah, I brought you a beef loin steak on a plate and a fruit salad in a bowl. Cross contamination, yeah?" He chuckled.

Aliquam sighed quietly before he looked up at his brother with a smile. "Thank you for bringing her some food, Caeruleus. Father chased out Asgore rather than let him even come in."

Toki nodded, and then shifted to sit up once she didn’t have a hand up inside her any more. “Cross contamination is a no-no.” She agrees. “At least cross contamination outside of my stomach.” She snorts, and then looks at Papa and wiggles her finger at him. “No biting Cae. He has food. Food is good.” Toki scoots to the edge of the nest then, and then gives him a hopeful look. “Did you manage to bring up some juice too? Hydration is important.”

She makes grabby hands for the bowl and the plate. She’d share the meat with the boys- but she definitely needed quick acting energy now, to let her body use it for what it needed it for.

Papa rumbles quietly and follows her hands before he nodded and settled down to let Cae give her the food.

"Here you are, sweet thing... Enjoy~" He chuckled. "How's labor going?" He asked.

"Well, I’m at four centimeters,” She says as she balances the fruit on her belly first. The meat is set next to her, as she sets into the fruit first. She takes her glass of juice, and sets it next to her ankle. “And labor is about what you expect. Every five to ten minutes, it feels like someone is ripping my stomach apart with knives from the inside.” She nibbles the fruit ravenously. God, it was good. “I’m also having the intense need to have no clothes on. Everything feels like it’s chafing. But, I don’t want it to be awkward, so the shirt is on while people are still coming up. How’s it going downstairs? Kids behaving? Thumper and Asgore excited?"

"Asgore's a little shaken but he's thrilled, Thumper is excited but keeping the twins company since I told them I could give the all-clear to come up if I got one.” He answered. "They're really looking forward to meeting their new aunts and uncles."

Toki hesitates, and then gives a slow nod. “I need to put a skirt on, and then the kids can come up.” She squints over at Papa. “Asgore too.” She says pointedly. “And you’ll be nice to your mate, Papa.” She shakes her head with a sigh.

Before she knows it, her bowl of fruit is empty, and she gives it a sad look, before taking a sip of juice. Toki takes a couple nibbles from the steak, but finds that’s not really what she wants. Heavy meals weren’t her forte- but, a couple bites was enough for long lasting energy. She offered the steak to either her husband or Papa, whoever wanted it, and then made a shuffle to try and get off the nest. “Let me get a skirt on, and you can give them the go ahead.”

She hefted herself up and went to go rummage in the dresser for a skirt. She got one she didn’t mind getting dirtied, and shimmied it on, leaving it loosely tied, before going to go sit back down and sip her juice.

Papa rattled as she came back, now wearing a skirt, and he rattled before he rested his head on her
shoulder, rumbling to welcome her back.

Aliquam smiled at her as well. "Well, feel better now?" He asked while Cae walked out to let the
other know that it was safe to come back.

“Food wise, yes.” She beamed to her husband, and hummed as Papa cuddled up to her shoulder like
a particularly snuggly leech. She lifted her secondary hand to pat his face gently. “Clothes? Fuck no.
I want to be naked- but it’s not proper to be nude around everyone else while in labor.” Toki may or
may not have nibbled a bit more on the steak while she was sitting there. Okay, it was good, even if
it was heavy. She may have wanted to share, but sue her if she was just going to be peckish with it.

Aliquam nodded in understanding before he leaned down to kiss her head.

Papa rumbled lowly before he set his head down and huffed. "He wants out... he is yelling at me to
wait my turn."

Toki glanced back at him with a quiet sound as she leaned into her husband’s kiss. “Well... This is a
big deal for him, Papa. He’s the only one here with the medical training to identify if something goes
wrong while I’m pushing.” He’s given a soft smile. “It’s understandable that he wants out. I know
you want to be here- but maybe you can come to an agreement to come out and say hello when the
first one is here?”

He looked up at her understandably, before he rumbled and closed his eyes. After a moment, he
relaxed before he sighed. "Yes, thank you, Tokiko..." He murmured. "How are you feeling? How
are your contractions going? Have you measured your dilation yet?"

Toki gave a soft chuckle at his rapid-fire questions. “I ache, and I want to be naked right now but I
can’t because guests are coming. We did measure- Papy thinks I’m somewhere between a four and a
five.” She shifts to peer at him, and pauses. She takes his hand, and holds it against her belly, which
hardens as she does so. “And contraction. On schedule.” It squeezes her insides, makes her a little
queasy since she just ate, but it’s not anything that she couldn’t handle. She breathes slowly but
surely, and lets his hand go in order to curl her hand over Papy’s leg and squeeze.

"Good... good..." He murmured, before he hummed and gently groomed her from his spot. "Any
movement from the pups?"

“They don’t like contractions, so yes. I get lots of squirming.” Toki exhaled softly, and leans faintly
into the grooming. Her eyes close, and she zones out just slightly as she rides the waves. "Mm... It
feels like they keep getting more intense..."

There was a knock at the door that got her attention, making her look up. Asgore poked his hand in
with a flinch, and waved. "I’ve got the kids," he says from behind the door, "Can we come in?"

"S-sure.” She stammers, trying to make herself look a little more put together.

The door opens, and Asgore steps in, followed by the children. He could see how she was sitting,
and his gaze sharpened. He hesitated to hurry close though, his eyes roving over Tenebris. “Can I
come close?” He asks, his hands wringing anxiously with the desire to do something to help. Waiting
was the worst- he’d been a mess when Asriel had been born.

“Momma!” The twins slid around him, and hustled for hey. They didn’t jump in the nest though-
moving to stand by their Daddy’s knee instead. “Is Momma doing okay?”

"Hello pups. Yes your mother is doing just fine. From what I can tell she’s taking her labor
exceptionally well." Tenebris rumbled in reply, before he smiled up at Asgore, "Do not be scared,
silly goat. They are your children after all, are they not?"

Asgore gave a slow smile and approached as soon as he heard Tenebris speak. At his side was Thumper. “They are.” He agrees warmly. He moves to kneel down in front of Tenebris and Toki, and hums softly. “How are you feeling?”

“Contraction.” Toki gives him a faint smile. “Will be better when it ends.”

“Oh?” Honey’s eyes go wide, and she wiggles her hands at her mother. “Can I feel?”

“Oh… Sure.” Toki guides Honey’s hand to her belly, and Skylar’s as well when he edges over shyly. Her belly is hard under their fingers, and Skylar looks amazed, while Honey looks bewildered. “It feels hard, doesn’t it?” She glances at Thumper and Asgore, and hums softly. “If you want to feel too, you can.”

Honey makes more of a face, and draws her hand back. “I don’t like it.” She decides. “You’re not soft. It’s weird.”

Asgore laughs, and slips a hand over to feel only briefly. “It’s not weird, Honey. It’s natural, and beautiful, and shows just how strong a woman your mother is.” He gives her a dashing smile, and then draws back to give her space. “Do you boys need anything? Drinks, food? I imagine you’ll be with her the whole time, so I don’t mind running errands for snacks and drinks. Labor is not a fast process.”

"I am not hungry." Tenebris answered, giving a brief shake of his head.

"Nor am I. I have better things to worry about than hunger." Aliquam answered as he leaned down to gently trail kissing along her head between her horns. "I love you~" he purred gently. "You’re doing wonderful…"

Toki smiled softly and leaned into his kisses, shifting her weight to lean into him slightly. “I love you too, Papy.” The leaning made her middle shift slightly, and she made a tiny, soft noise of discomfort.

The soft noise was enough to make Skylar leap back, looking frightened that he’d hurt her.

“It’s okay, sweetheart.” Toki soothed automatically. “Having babies isn’t pleasant. You didn’t hurt me.”

He nodded hesitantly, and moved to cling to his father’s knee.

Asgore looked at Thumper, and then gently nudged the bunny closer. “We’re not going to spend much time up here, son. Do you want to say ‘hi’ to Toki and your little siblings while we’re up here?” He asked him gently. “Or do you want to keep hiding behind me and keep being shy?”

Thumper looked up at Asgore with a small twitch of his ears, before he slowly hopped closer to Toki, smiling a little. "Hi Toki... can I feel too?" He asked gently.

“Sure, sweetheart.” She smiled at him softly. She took his fluffy paw, and put it against her belly, letting him feel how tight it had grown. Under his hand, it began to soften, and the squirming kicks of the upset litter was felt as they were finally given space to move again. “They don’t like contractions. They’re always very active after.”

"I can tell... poor babies... they're gonna come out soon, right?" Thumper asked, slowly rubbing her stomach to offer comfort.
“Soon.” She nods softly, adjusting her legs slightly. “They’re sitting heavily in my pelvis right now, but my body has to open up more for them to come out.” She reaches out and rubs his head gently. “You’ll get to meet them soon. I’ll wager probably before tonight, even.” She gives him a cheeky smile. “Why don’t you and the twins play some games downstairs when you go back down? Video games always make time fly for you.”

"Ah...” He looked up at Honey and Skylar. "You guys wanna go play Mario?"

Honey nodded enthusiastically. “Yes please! Having babies is boring.”

Skylar tilted his head, and looked to his parents. They had this - they didn’t need his help. Slowly, he nodded to his technical uncle, and then offered his hands to the taller bunny boy. “Mario sounds fun.” He nods.

Asgore laughs softly, and nudge them out. “Alright, little ones. Go play. I’ll be down in a minute with Caeruleus, and then we can all race together.”

Thumper nodded, and bounced out of the room with the twins.

Once the kids were gone, Toki made a face. “Having babies is boring?” She exclaims incredulously, not at all upset but more befuddled by how her daughter’s thought process worked. “Did she expect me to be like one of those television moms? Huffing and puffing, and three pushes and bam, here’s a baby? Or maybe shooting them out rapid fire like a pitching machine?”

Asgore lifted a hand to his mouth and covered his snort.

Tenebris pressed his face into her shoulder with a low groan.

Aliquam just smiled and shook his head. "She doesn't realize that unlike on TV, the birth does not happen as soon as you start watching..." Aliquam chuckled lightly.

Toki snorts a laugh, and pats Tenebris’ head. “Sorry, Dad. I know my jokes suck. But yeah- she’s young yet, she doesn’t understand how the world works.” Toki shifts, and tries to get comfortable. She looks at Cae and Asgore, and gives them a faint smile. “If it’s okay with the both of you, could I have some privacy now? I want to get out of these clothes. They’re chafing and I doubt you want to see everything.”

“Ah, no.” Asgore snorted and shook his head. “I’d rather not. I nearly fainted seeing my son being born. Childbirth is no joke.” He pats her knee gently, and then stands. “If you need me, just call- and you can perhaps put on your silky robe instead?”

The light bulb went on for Toki, and she clapped her hands together. “Yes! That’s perfect! If anyone else comes up, I can cover up with that. Thank you for reminding me. Will you toss it to me before you go? It’s hanging by the closet.”

Asgore nods and moves to do so, grasping it and bringing it over to rest on the edge of the nest for her. He gives them all a smile, and then moves to the door. “Caeruleus? Are you ready to come down as well, or did you have a few things you wanted to say to them in private?”

"Love you a ton, Tokes, good luck with the labor, call me when a head starts showing, I'm out." Cae gave a soft wave before he walked into the open closet, closing the door behind him.

And when the door swung open again, there was no one inside.

Toki broke out into guffaws as Asgore shut their bedroom door again, heading off the cats before
they could invade. She shifted, and carefully squirmed out of her skirt, and then her shirt, before laying back naked into the nest. “Aliquam.” She says lightly, a little out of breath from laughing and undressing, but enjoying basking in her nudity too much to care. “Your brother is incredibly silly. I love all of you so, so, much. I need a massage.”

Wait, what? Had she said that last bit out loud?

"Well... I'm already going to be watching you for breaching. I could rub your feet while I'm down here." Aliquam offered.

Toki blinked slowly, and peered at him quietly. “Y’know… That sounds good actually. Just… Leg massage. Yes.” She shifts, and peers at Tenebris. “… I don’t want to be too presumptuous, but could I use your lap to rest against? You won’t get too dirty from this end, I promise.”

"Consider yourself in kneading range~" Tenebris purred warmly. "You get as comfy as you want to, my dear.” He ensured her, sitting up a little bit to replace her form against his in a more comfortable position. "How’s this?” He would then ask.

Toki got as comfortable as she could, and found his legs more than comfortable to relax against. “You know,” She murmurs, “I’ve had massages from both of you before, but I don’t recall them happening at the same time. This is a good way to compare them both, and decide who is the best masseuse of them all.”

The males looked at each other, but rather than growing competitive, they shared a mutual grin before they got to work. Aliquam’s fingers danced along her legs and feet while Tenebris rubbed her shoulders and kneaded her back.

To say she was in heaven would be an understatement. Toki went limp as they handled her, her body entirely theirs to move as they massaged and rubbed. Knotted muscles and tight tendons came undone under their skilled fingers and combined assault- honestly, she really stood no chance.

Papyrus started with her toes, massaging upwards until everything tingled from the tips of her phalanges up to her tarsals. Stress she hadn’t even known she’d had there melted away, and she was at peace. His hands worked up the bones in her ankles, up to her shins, and Toki’s not sure when she stopped paying attention, but she did. The bliss was too good.

She stopped paying attention to Tenebris a lot sooner, honestly. He had more muscles to work with, including her wings and lower back and up along her sides, but he did fabulously.

The pregnant beast floated on a sea of relaxation and bliss. She was aware, and every few minutes a contraction would roll through that would make her groan softly, and she could be soothed with soft hands and gentle fingers massaging where they could. They exchanged soft words over her head, talking about how she was doing, if there was any progress they could visibly see without having to reach in and check her dilation.

Toki honestly wouldn’t have cared either way. She spent the next hour and a half- maybe two hours, frankly- floating on what amounted to a slightly painful cloud nine.

However, her mouth got dry, so she roused up enough to finally sate her thirst. She had her husband hand her the juice, and she had Tenebris boost her upright- where in she paused after she finished the glass of juice, and very nearly dropped the empty glass.

Now that she was sitting upright and gravity was trying to aid her body, there was an intense pressure in her walls, and a cramping sensation that left her clenched and nauseated. Toki tensed, and
rolled the empty glass out of the nest, trying to carefully sit up enough to get onto all fours. “I- I need to go to my birthing nest. Please. *Now*. *Right now*. ”

The massage had relaxed her enough to dilate for the first one to come.
Chapter 154

Chapter Notes

Strider Note: YES. CLIFF HANGERS YOU ADORABLE FOOLS. ENJOY THEM. Also there’s a lot of birth in this chapter. Loooooots of it. Don’t like, well, skip and hope you catch the surprise, which may be in this chapter or could be in the next one.

Also, if you all get the urge to draw the pups, please, by all means, don’t hold back.

Silver and I do not have the art skills to do it ourselves XD

Anyway, I apologize for the delay in the update. I lost track of time- I meant to update a couple days ago, but eh, y’know, life.

Her sudden urgency had Tenebris carefully flipping her over onto her hands and feet before he rolled out of the way of the birthing nest.

Aliquam moved as well, but stayed closer than Tenebris. "What do you want me to do, Toki?" He asked her gently.

"In the nest, behind me like before." She grunts, moving awkwardly towards the opening. “Dad? Can you handle-’” She paused at glancing behind her, and felt her stomach drop in time with the head slowly and painfully descending down. “Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck. Papa. Nooo. Papa, come on-fucking shit- okay.”

There was a clearly not Tenebris waiting at the edge of the nest now- and the first pup was coming, now, and she needed to get comfortable and push. She couldn’t deal with this right now.

“Okay. Okay.” She shuffled into the nest, and got settled on her side. Her middle contracted as she strained, and one of her legs kicked briefly, before she strained and huffed. “Papy. You’re… Gonna have to play catcher.”

He nodded gently and moved between her legs."I'm ready, give it everything you got." He told her, giving her foot a palm to press into to countermeasure her straining.

The palm was a good brace, and she leaned on her arms as she strained, her middle tightening as she huffed and puffed.

Thankfully, the pup seemed smaller than Skylar or Honey had been- but only just a little bit, and surely only smaller because there were so many packed into a tightly cramped space. The head moved down, and she could feel every ridge and spine along the top. It was not smooth, it was not nice, and she felt her eyes watering by the time the first contraction ended. She knew it wasn’t horns-horns came in twos or ones. No, this pup was coming with a tiny nubbly crown of spikes.

She’d made progress though- the head was firmly lodged in her canal, and she was as uncomfortable as hell. “Hah- oh god. It’s got a crown.” She gasps softly. “Holy shit. Crown. Sharp. Ohhh, fucking, fuck, I know where it got that from.” Her gaze flicked over to Papa, and his smug face tucked under
his blooming crown. His crown might have been more warped, but it was bigger than Tenne’s was, and fuck all if the pup hadn’t gotten their father’s crown.

There was a shift, and she made a tiny distressed sound. “Wings too.” She couldn’t settle into the groove- it felt like it was too fast, like she hadn’t had time to brace, to feel the child move down and get into position. In all reality, she probably had, but probably hadn’t remembered.

The next contraction had the wings coming into her canal, and she made a garbled sound, bearing down and hoping Papyrus would do something to, well… help. The wings slowed the process exponentially.

Aliquam reached up and pressed his hand ever so carefully over her waist, giving a slow rub. ”Deep breaths, Toki... Do you want me to try and compress their wings?” He asked.

“No.” She shakes her head. She didn’t want to know what ‘compress’ their wings meant, but she had a horrible inkling it meant something incredibly and horribly uncomfortable for her. She had no desire for any of that, thank you very much- delivering babies was already unpleasant enough.

Toki took a deep breath, and exhaled, wincing as a kick from one of the litter made her middle flinch. She gave a soft, primal sounding grunt, closing her eyes as she strained another push. Progress was progress, contractions or no- though the next contraction was swift in coming.

All in all, it was perhaps five minutes from when she’d scrambled up until she felt her lower lips start to bulge. Her leg jerked against his palm, the burning pressure of crowning hitting her as a tiny stubby slightly gold colored crown began to push forth. Delivering without the aid of gravity was definitely hard, and she disliked all of it. “Aaah… Wh-what can you see? Is it okay?”

"The pup is coming out, slowly but surely... they're coming... they're coming and you're doing great...” He answered, before Papa began to warble and pushed slightly to sit between Toki’s legs.

Toki’s breath hitched as Papa easily nudged his son out of the way, and seemed to be warbling at her. She bristled at him, and her bones rattled as she hissed, a low and guttural sound- she drew one line, and he would be reprimanded harshly if he crossed more than his paws into the birthing nest proper. He was not her mate- he was her alpha.

Her hiss rattled off into a moan as her body contracted again, wanting the first pup out. She pushed hard, feeling her body stretch. She whined, her mouth opening with a hard pant, as her hands groped for something more firm to anchor on to than blankets. “Hnnnhlnng... ”

The head crowned outwards, and then, with a few pained pushes from Toki, popped free, shoulders slowly working forwards after. The wings were tucked close, and seemed to be stubbly little nubs as far as first views went.

He watched her mark her territory with the line and he slowly backed up, rattling in apology as Aliquam took a gentle hold of the head, though he gave a low grumbling rattle as Aliquam used a rag to quickly wipe off the pup’s snout and allow them their first shallow gasps that they could manage from the birthing canal.

Toki was a little relieved when Papyrus took his spot again. She strained a bit more- the shoulders were wide, so wide, so horribly, horribly wide with the wings. But… ultimately, the first pup slid out of her, brushing over her thigh and lessening the pressure inside her. It gave a soft, mewling cry, squirming with tiny, soft baby claws, slippery and slimy.

She panted, slumping a little bit for a moment to rest as pangs and aches traveled up her. “Let me…
Let me see? Boy? Girl?" She rested fully on her side, trying to crane around to see the newborn pup.

Aliquam moved to check before gasping sharply as Papa tenderly stole the pup from him, carrying it to the close-by part of nest to start grooming clean with croons and coos of pure love.

"Ah... Stolen ... But I believe it was a boy." Aliquam answered.

Toki responded with an instinctive rattling hiss, her eye lights narrowing and thinning as she growled at Papa. She lifted up a bit automatically, intending to go get the pup- which every part of her screamed needed to be nestled close to a mother’s warmth with access to milk for the first long time. Her body clenched up though, her nethers making her flinch and keen and settle back down. She wouldn’t be chasing after him, no.

But her eyes watched him, her teeth flexing in and out like an irritable crab.

"Honey, honey." Aliquam quickly shuffled closer to her and wrapped his arms around her form, kissing her head and neck gently. "Toki, Toki, let Papa have his moment, darling... As soon as he's content, he's gonna give the pup right back to you, safe and sound, without hesitation." He told her. "He's probably just imprinting a little through cleaning... He is the daddy, isn't he?"

Papa ignored her look while continuing to groom the pup until it's soft gasps and whines elevated to loud, shrill cries, reassuring father and mother and brother alike that the pup was strong. It was with those howls that Papa cooed gently before he slowly picked the pup up again and brought him back to the birthing nest.

Toki was a bristly grumbling mess as Aliquam curled his arm around her and peppered her with kisses. She hissed and growled softly in his arms, but through her instinctual need to have the pup close, Toki could understand. He needed to imprint his scent upon the pup, and cleaning was something he was good at doing.

However, that didn’t mean she wasn’t a little quick at snatching the pup close when he was handed back, snuffling him softly and whuffling to him gently as she tucked him to her chest.

He definitely didn’t look like Honey or Skylar did- he looked more like a tiny, fleshy little beast, with digitigrade legs, a tiny golden crown of nubby spikes making up the back of his head, and stumpy, fleshy chicken wings slapping in distress against her arms.

He was perfect.

His cries died down as she tucked him against her belly, and he settled down, little snout rooting blindly against her as he sought out the smell of milk.

Toki settled as he did, agitation leaving her frame. Tiny stumpy paws helped him locate a teat, and she let out a soft, throaty thrum as he latched on, toothless mouth gumming at her as he tried to work out how to nurse. She relaxed with a soft, content croon, eyes at half mast as her stomach twitched and pulsed slowly to prepare her for the next one.

Aliquam kissed her head proudly while Papa took a place of vigilance at her far end, rumbling as he sniffed for now close the next pup was.

Toki’s eyes sharpened a little bit, eyeballing Papa slightly as he settled near her back legs. She rumbled softly, sighing quietly, and looked up at Aliquam. “He’s going to clean the next one, isn’t he?” She asks, her voice sounding dry and rough. The pulse in her belly turned to an ache, and her leg lifted. She gave a slow push, exhaling as she felt something move down. “Mnnn... Hah... Would be... Easier if Da- Dad was here. Could hold your hands.” Her face pressed into the padded
wall of the nest as she keened slowly and softly. “Godddd, I have to do this four more times.”

"There's nothing keeping me from holding you but your instinctual distrust of father's beast in this instance... if you trust him to imprint and clean the pups before immediately returning them to you, then I can stay here where I belong and help you through it." Aliquam told her with a gentle tone, his words heavily implying his thoughts on the matter.

Toki took a deep breath, eyeing him quietly as she seemed to debate taking offense to his implications. Her breath whooshed out of her in a hard rush, and she closed her eyes. “I don’t- hah- I don’t trust him to know what to do if... If one gets stuck.” She made a soft groaning sound. “But... Tenebris can come out if that happens.” Hopefully in time. She gave a soft keening sound. “I’m sorry for growling before. Just... Instincts. They say the pup needs to be warm.”

And who was warmer than the fire oriented monster? Perhaps Asgore with his mountains of fur.

Her hands spasmed across the blankets with nothing to hold onto, and she keened. The first thing she could feel was a rough, scraping texture, she wasn’t sure how to describe it beyond that. It was like a snake, but rougher, and there were horns. She keened in soft distress, trying not to squirm and disrupt the first pup as he nursed slowly and steadily.

There was a knock at the door that Toki barely heard. She was trying to ground herself with her nesting material.

The door peeked open, and Asgore’s fingers poked in. “I heard crying.” He says softly. “Is... The first one here? I’m sorry- I should have stayed downstairs, but...” He was the father too, and he was equal parts excited and terrified to meet his children.

Papa turned to look at him before warbling loudly. It wasn’t a deterrent this time, rather an invitation to entertain the mother when she wasn't having contractions or needing to push.

Aliquam smiled up at Asgore gently while shifting up in the nest and taking both of Toki's primary hands. "Come in if you'd like, Asgore... you will be able to imprint the pups as well if you'd like. They can be groomed by Father, but you could warm them up quite well." He offered.

Asgore nodded slowly but surely, and then padded into the room. He closed the door behind him, and made his way around the nest towards his step-son’s side. His eyes caught on the first pup, staring unabashedly at the little one as it nursed frantically at her teat. He crawled closer, cupping his paws to his muzzle. “Oh my stars.” He breathed.

Toki’s primary hands clamped tight over Papyrus’ hands, her secondary hands supporting her weight as she strained some. She panted when the contraction ended, and gave a soft keen. “Ah... Hah... Y-yeah. He’s beautiful.” She rasps softly to Asgore. “Mnnn. Nnnng...” Her head lowered, her raised leg trembling. She could feel horns grating down her insides, and she keened softly, low sounds of discomfort.

“A son?” Asgore perks softly. “I’ve got a son... He’s beautiful, by the stars...” He wanted to hold him, but that could wait- he needed to have his belly full first, and then Asgore could hold him.

Papa swung his head slowly as he watched her form move, before he gave a low rumble and extended a hand. He settled it on the lump where the pup was, right behind the un-emerged pup's head, before he rolled his fingers and pushed. The pup within gave a sudden shift and as if it had been moving oddly, the presence of the horns against her walls eased a great deal.

"Head was stuck..." He rumbled as he quickly returned his paw to his personal space.
“O-oh my ghhh…” She gave a soft exclamation. The sharpness of the horns eased, though the invasion of his fingers into her personal space was not very welcome. Still, now that the pup wasn’t stuck, it practically glided out- and the head crowned and slid out with a couple pushes.

A few pushes past that, and there was a purple-scaled lump settled limply between her thighs, the long, bony tail still curled inside of her.

Toki collapsed, exhausted. Two was tiring- she’d been exhausted from two before. She had three-three more. *God damn*. She trembled as she held her husbands hands tightly.

“Oh my god.” Asgore murmured, eyes focusing on the flash of purple he could see. “Is it…?” It wasn’t moving. There was a fatherly anxiety cresting in his voice.

Papa picked up the pup and pulled it close as he began to groom it's face incessantly. Enough laps broke the membrane and began to clear the pup's airway before he lowered his mouth to the pup's and sharply inhaled, a loud bubble coming from its throat before he continued to groom them.

" Q-QIII! " At last, a squeal from the pup, who was now getting cold as Papa groomed them clean.

Toki’s shuddering breath eased as the pup let out a cry. She looked at the little one- took a good look at it- and then made a soft, instinctual hum. “It’s a girl.” She mutters tiredly. Her head slumps down onto Aliquam’s arms, and she does her best to ignore the cries from the pup, lest she get testy and demand her back before Papa was done.

“A girl?” Asgore perks, looking relieved at the tiny, squeaky sound.

“Mmmm.” Was the exhausted noise from the toiling mother who sorely needed a nap.

The pup seemed wholly unhappy at being cold and being thoroughly groomed, and though she was sightless and about as strong as one might expect from a newborn beast, she kept trying to wobble away on four tiny purple and white paws, making the grouchy ‘qiii’ noise the whole time. She was snuffling with her tiny nose, a soft pink tongue flicking out of a gummy mouth in search of warm food to fill her tummy.

"She's a little cold... Would you like to warm her up, my dear?" Papa purred softly, slowly offering Asgore his firstborn daughter.

Asgore fluffed, looking startled to have been included in the process. He nodded though, and took her into his hands. She was so, so tiny- she was barely as big as his palm, if that, and yet she’d looked like she’d been so hard for Toki to deliver. He cradled her to his chest, crooning softly as she took a soft snuffle from him. His magic pulsed up and warmed her gently, and he lifted her to his nose, gently inhaling her scent. She smelled… Well, of his mate, and of Toki. Primarily of Toki though.

He spooked as tiny paws grabbed his mouth, and a little mouth tried to suck on his nose.

He’s *pretty sure* he died and may have gone to heaven. Yep. He’s fairly sure he did.

Still, he disengaged her, and warmed her gently with his fur and his magic, before looking at his mate. The pup started picking up with the unhappy howling. “She’s hungry.” He says gently. “Why don’t you put her back? You both seem to be okay getting closer.”

“Thank you for respecting boundaries,” Toki rasps with exhaustion, her eyes trying to drift closed for a short rest. She was tired, so tired. “Mmmm… I need a nap.” She whines softly.
Papa rumbled as he took the pup before setting her beside her brother, giving Toki a respectful nod. "I'm proud of you..."

Toki was too tired to even appreciate that fully. She gave him a thankful hum though, and shifted, drawing one hand from Papyrus so she could adjust the female when she had problems latching. Once she was good to go, Toki settled down again, resting with a couple tired, soft pants.

Finally she gave a soft grunt, and then flicked a wing, motioning Papa closer. If he was going to be acting as midwife, then he may as well do it properly- nearly two feet outside the birthing nest didn’t really work that well.

He noticed her gesture, and it took him a moment to decipher what it meant. When he did, he perked up with a thrilled chirp, slowly crawling closer until he was in a much more comfortable position within the birthing nest.

Toki gave him a soft thrum, and settled down. Her sides heaved with rapid breaths, and she panted quick breaths, trying to rest while her body did what it needed to in order to prepare. She was almost half done. It wouldn’t surprise her if her body had to take a break from time to time.

Asgore watched and smiled, staying out of the nest and not minding at all. In fact, he shifted the covering for them so the nest retained more heat for the pups. “Aliquam,” he calls softly, “do you think a couple cool damp cloths would help her any? I can fetch them for you if you’d like to give her a little bit of a wipe down between resting. Thank you for letting me be in here.” He might not have been here for the first, but that was okay- he still had a son, and that’s what mattered.

"Yes, that would do very well. Thank you, Asgore." Aliquam confirmed thankfully. "We'll let you know if there's anything else, because I'm sure you're going to be very dependable in a time like this."

"Of course!" He exclaims softly. “Of course! I’m going to try and make sure that I do my best to help you all.” He shifted to get up from the nest.

“Water.” Toki croaks. “Please. I need a drink.”

Asgore nods, and stoops down to grab her juice glass. He makes haste to the bathroom. Wetting a couple cloths is easy, but he takes a moment to rinse the glass, before filling it half way. He returns to them, and crawls up carefully. “Here, boys.” He hesitates though. “Can I hand these to them?”

“Mhm.” Toki mumbles, and lets go of Aliquam’s hands. She shuffles to try and sit up for her drink.

Asgore nods. “Help her with her drink,” he says gently, “She won’t appreciate if she fumbles the glass and soaks the blankets.” He holds the wet cloths out, and the glass, just over the edge of the line for Aliquam to take. Papa could take a cloth too if he wanted- but he wasn’t sure the beast would. After all- beasts were beasts, and tongues were just as good.

Asgore had just been thinking about this, his tongue hanging from his mouth, before he grunted and reached out, taking the cloth to gently wipe Toki's thighs.

Aliquam seemed to see the gears turn in Papa's head and he chuckled quietly, though he was thankful that his father did not fall that deep into beastly tendencies.

Toki shifted, and made a grumbling sound, before simply lifting her hand to take the glass of water from him. It shook, and she was glad Asgore hadn’t filled it. She took a deep drink, ultimately draining the glass, before offering it back. She parted her legs a little bit to let Papa clean her.
Toki didn’t press for Aliquam to cool her down. By the time she went to ponder it, she got the feeling her short break was ending, and she let out a soft snuffling sound, before trying to hike herself up just a little bit. She did so without disturbing the two feeding as they were on lower teats, and let out a soft sound as she bore down. “Pap,” She wheezes, “my shoulder. Support. Please.”

He nodded and carefully scooted close to support her upper torso against his own. "Up we go."

Toki leaned into him and curled her fingers into his shirt. She took a deep inhale of his scent, and felt something in herself relax. "Don’t let me go." She whispers softly, clinging tightly to him as her belly clenched. She moaned, and bore down, one hand slipping down to instinctively comfort the litter as one of the pups gave a shrill whine at her distress.

The third seemed to be coming smoothly though, thankfully- a smaller set of horns scraped painfully, but it wasn’t anything like the second. However, there seemed to be a thick… Something around the pup’s neck, and she wasn’t sure what it was. “Papa,” She gasped softly, “Check the neck. Something on the neck. Feels thick.”

Papa nodded slowly and for a moment gave Tenebris the control they needed to feel around while knowing what to look for.

"It's very thick... but it will not be a problem..." Tenebris answered.

"Are you sure?" There was an anxious sound in her voice as her toes curled, fighting the urge to push. She didn't want to push if the pup would die via strangling from a tail or something.

"Absolutely sure?"

Tenebris, and Papa in the same, gave a nod, "I'm absolutely sure." He purred, before he grinned softly. "It's fur."

“Fur?” She blinked slowly, before giving a strangled laugh. “Of course it is. Fur. Of course. Hah… hhghhh.”

The third, once she resumed pushing, came easier. Within a few pushes, there was a golden maned, pale horned, mewling blaster beast pup slumping out against her thigh, already squirming and fighting to get free of the sack covering it.

Toki, tired, slumped into Papyrus with a soft moan. “Girl.” She guessed on a whim.

Papa had taken over once more to start grooming the pup, but it proved to be a fighter as it gave its own little war-cry as it began to breathe on it's own as soon as the sac was gone from it's face.

"Girl." He agreed.

“Nghah. Knew it. Girls steal their mother’s hair.” She makes a light joke of her own mostly hairless state. Toki slouches softly. “Two more. Jesus fuck, two more. I’m so tired.” Her gaze slid up to Papyrus. “If you ever put five in me, I’m castrating you.”

Was her threat serious? Yes. Yes it was.

He gave an innocent smile. "I wouldn't think of it, my love~" Yes he was. He was thinking about how wonderful it would be to have her that pregnant with his own children.

She could tell he was too, and the bemused stink eye he got had Asgore laughing.

“Perhaps three would be a good number, given the size of the children you give her.” Asgore
advised with a smile. “Honey and Skylar were a fair bit bigger than the pups, if I do recall.”

The little female in Papa’s grasp gave something verging on an unholy shriek that interrupted anything Toki might have said to Asgore on the matter. Toki’s mane ruffled, and she lifted up. “Dear lord - give me the pup. She is having a fit.”

Papa rumbled softly before handing her over quickly.

The golden maned pup gave another howl before whining and going limp against her mother’s chest.

Toki gave a soothing croon to the pup, nuzzling her gently to soothe her soft whining. She shifted a bit, warming her against her body, before tucking her against her siblings. The golden maned one struggled a bit to latch, and Toki had to crane to help her- but soon she was suckling away, tiny, unpracticed pulls bringing forth only little drops at a time.

The skelebeast sighed. “There. Sorry, Papa. I can’t listen to the cries for long- they may be your pups, and I’m truly doing what I can to let you bond with them, but mother’s instinct says to comfort when they’re fussing.”

Asgore gave her a patient smile. “It’s alright, Toki. You’re an amazing mother. Thank you for doing this.” He shifted, and simply smiled, watching his three amazing children with loving gazes.

Toki exhaled softly and gave him a bright smile. She went to get comfortable to rest, when there was a cramp- one hell of a god honest awful cramp. Her leg jerked up, may have caught Papa in the chin, and she flinched, letting out a soft cry as she bore down.

The next pup was not going to wait- hell no. Someone had no patience and the squirming bundle wanted out right the hell now.

Papa grunted at the kick but didn’t seem too upset by it.

Asgore looked a bit startled, lifting a hand to help, and then tucked his fingers back. “The washcloths, Aliquam. Cool her forehead- she’s perspiring.”

Aliquam nodded and began to gently wipe Toki’s forehead. "Are you okay, Toki?" He asked gently as he gave her forehead a pleasantly cold wipe-down. "Is the next pup coming right now, right after the little girl?" He asked.

“No, no, not at all, I’m just pushing on air because it feels good,” She snaps. Toki’s skull rocks back, and her belly visibly tightens as she pushes. A primal groan rumbles from her, filling the birthing nest.

Asgore’s mane stands on end.

When she catches her breath, she exhales sharply. “Sorry, sorry. I didn’t mean to snap. It’s big- it’s so goddamn big. There’s horns and the shoulders are thick, and I don’t know how I’m going to get it out- it feels too big.”

Her belly rippled again, and her leg kicked faintly, a desperate pained motion as she struggled to keep still for the pups while expelling the next one, who seemed to, unlike their siblings, be moving at the pace of molasses on a cold day.

He kissed her head gently while watching her with great concern.

Papa scooted closer while rubbing his now slightly aching chin and began to warble gently, before
he rested his hands on her hip, boosting her rear end slightly to straighten her spine and coax her legs open further if possible.

The position was intensely uncomfortable, but it did seem to be letting her hips open up wider. At least a little bit, given how she was on her side. Toki let out a soft grunt, and the opening of her hips seemed to give the head room to move. Slowly but surely it moved down, the nose sliding down with the horns grating as she pushed.

She tensed as the shoulders slid in, one hand sliding to her husbands chest and grabbing tightly to a rib. “Hhhh hah hh ….”

Slowly but surely, the pup moved down- and indeed, as the head crowned almost thirty minutes from the start of his descent, the pup was massive. The muzzle was nearly twice the size of the heads from earlier, and there was clear strain on her body. Her labia stretched around it, struggling to stretch without tearing- there was no room for Papa or Tenebris to slip a finger in to help ease the passage.

Toki keened all the while, her grip ever tightening on her husband.

Aliquam squawked in pain and quickly attempted to replace the ribs in his wife's hand with his hand instead, pleading quietly for her to let up and let his ribs go.

Papa thrummed softly in thought before he shifted and sat up, looping his arms around the small of her back to pull it up, making her arch as he rumbled. "Asgore." He rattled in summoning.

Toki’s fingers were hard to pry off- and every time her belly tightened, they seemed to mimic it on his ribs. But, with enough work, she soon had his hand in her grasp, and was slowly murdering his fingers instead of deepening the bruise on his poor rib.

Asgore startled, but scooted closer to Papa. “What can I do?” He asks, feeling a little bit faint at the sight of her body stretched so… so horribly like that. Women’s bodies amazed him, and yes he was weak to admit it made him faint thinking about the process of the baby coming out, but the end result was worth it. “What do you need me to do?” He corrects his statement.

"Catch." He answered in the most obvious tone, gesturing down at Toki's straining entrance as he began to softly rub the tense flesh under his thumbs.

Asgore sucked it up, and eased his hands down under her. Careful of his claws, he gently massaged her perineum like the baby books had said to do while Papa worked on opening her up using counter-pressure.

Toki couldn’t even be unhappy about the extra hands- she needed them as she gave a cry and a hard push, and very nearly tore as the horned head of the massive pup slid out.

Asgore caught the head, clearing the nose with a swipe of his thumb. He could see a thick mane of blue fur sprouting down the pups head and neck between the horns, and he felt his heart warm. “Ah-ah, the head’s out.” He eased his fingers around the neck, and cradled it gently, trying to help carefully ease it out as she pushed.

The head being out didn’t stop Toki’s pained noises- because behind the head came something even wider, and it had Asgore scrambling to stretch her safely for it. The shoulders came out one at a time, but there were a massive set of wings growing out of them. They were folded, creating the thick shoulders she seemed to be struggling with.

“Big wings,” Asgore mumbles, and works to ease them out into his hands. He gets the first one out
no problem- but that’s where the trouble started. The pup took a breath through the open end of the
sack, and then began to struggle. And that freed wing? Well, that began flopping and flapping
everywhere like a wet plastic bag on a stick.

The wriggling caught Tenebris' attention and he rumbled. "Asgore, switch our hands' positions." He
ordered quickly.

With a small nod, Asgore did his best to replicate that which Tenebris had done, and carefully the
doctor brought his hands up to the pup. He groomed his face a few times while gently grabbing hold
of the wing. He folded it down, then he wrapped his hands around the pup's form behind it's
shoulder.

"This is going to feel... VERY unpleasant." He warned, before he slowly shifted the pup and turned
it, trying to free the pup's shoulder.

There was a creak from Aliquam’s hand as her own tightened on it. Her toes splayed, and she threw
her head back with a shout as he pushed the pup back and then began to twist it free. A pup that big
was not meant to go backwards by any means, and everything chafed in the single most painful way
she’d felt by far. This trumped Honey’s birth by miles. “Ow, ow, ow, ow fucking OW TENEBRIS
FUCK !” Her leg may have kicked a bit, but all it did was bounce off Asgore’s shoulder. “ FUCK
YOU HOLY FUCK! UNPLEASANT MY MOTHER FUCKING ASS ! ”

Aliquam gasped in pain as well as the slight shock of the expletives that flew from Toki, hoping that
it would be soon that his Father didn't need to do whatever he was that seemed so unpleasant.

As unpleasant as it was, as Tenebris almost had to duck under a kick, but the twist helped and it was
with that that the pup's other shoulder got loose and the pup almost immediately fell into his lap, free
from Toki.

Toki went limp as soon as the pup was free, panting, in pain, and tears freely leaking from her
sockets. It took her a moment to gather herself, before she could pay attention to the fact that they’d
jostled the three pups off her teats, and they were piled next to her whining as they tried to find food.

Her hand loosened on her husband’s hand, and she gave it an apologetic kiss, before turning back
onto her side to comfort the three pups while Papa- or Tenebris, perhaps- tended to the… Frankly
huge pup that had been pulled from her.

The pup seemed to flap their wings just a bit, before settling down passively in their father’s arms,
exhausted from the ordeal.

Tenebris sighed in relief, before he smiled gently and stroked the head of the large pup, smiling
gently. "Well hello there, little pup~" He greeted warmly. "I'm your Papa~"

The large pup gave a little squirm, and their toothless mouth opened to suckle tiredly at his finger tip.

Toki looked up at Tenebris once she’d gotten the litter calmed down and back to nursing again. She
hurt, and her legs were visibly trembling with effort- she just had one more to go. Just one- thank the
gods. She took a slow whuffle in, and coughed softly. “I think you’ve got another son,” She rasps
lowly, before slumping tiredly into Aliquam. “Hi Dad.” She mumbles. “It’s good to see you again.
Do you want to meet your other three children…?”

Tenebris was trying so hard not to cry but you could see the tears of happiness as he looked up at
her. "Y-Yes, I'd like that..."
“Then come here,” She mumbles softly, “quick, before the last one comes.” She motions for him to lay next to her, and settle his biggest son against her, so he could feed while he looked over his eldest son and two daughters. “Two girls and another boy,” She mumbles a little breathlessly. “You soooo owe me so much cocoa, Dad. So much. Like two bath tubs. No. *Three*. That one was worth a bath tub of cocoa on his own. Or just a hot bath. I’d take one of those too.” She mumbles tiredly.

He gave a soft laugh as he leaned down to nuzzle his new children. "Look at these beautiful puppies. Oh Toki, thank you~" He cooed happily.

Toki exhaled shakily and closed her eyes softly. “I’m glad you’re happy, Dad.” She mumbles with exhaustion heavily present in her tone. “They’re beautiful and healthy - and that’s what’s important...” She shifts, and lifts a hand to motion to her middle. “Would you like to practice settling him? I’m not going to wake up all the time, so it will be good if you can practice helping them get a latch.”

That had him perk a little before he gave a nod. "Yes. I should give it a try." He rumbled, settling near Toki’s stomach before he shifted the large pup towards one of the teats. The pup whined quietly before running his face over the nipple. He attempted to latch but looked like he was having a problem with latching on.

Toki leaned her fingers down and stroked gently over his leathery wings. She frowned gently, her brows furrowing. “He’s having trouble latching.” She mumbles gently. She gives it an attempt, manually guiding the nipple into his mouth to see if he would latch.

He squirmed and made a fussy cry, giving a few feeble attempts at nursing.

“I think he might be too big to get a proper angle to keep the nipple in his mouth. Or maybe suction.” She frowns slowly. “Asgore? Will you go warm up one of the bottles from the kitchen, please?”

"Oh yes. Of course." Asgore got up. "I'll be back in a few minutes." He told her as he quickly stood and left the nest, exiting the room and thumping down the stairs with heavy steps.

Tenebris rattled quietly before he leaned down and whined softly as he picked up the distressed pup, grooming him delicately.

The distressed pup whined again, making a soft sooking noise as he was pulled from the smell of milk that he could taste, but not consume.

Toki lifted a hand and gently rubbed her hand over Tenebris’ head. “Tuck him close to me for now. He needs to stay warm so his belly will be ready to accept milk when Asgore’s got the bottle and warmed it. Just settle close and let him know you’re here. We’ll feed him as soon as we can. He needs to dry off though- he’s already clean, but he needs to be dry and warm.” In this moment, she was the one with the most experience handling distressed infants and parental instincts. Over-grooming wouldn’t do the pup any good.

He was momentarily reluctant until he set the pup down once more and promptly laid down beside the pup, cooing to him gently.

Aliquam watched him settle down before he sighed and smiled. "How are you doing, Toki?" He asked.

Toki hummed as he settled the pup between them, and extended her magic out to keep the little one warmer. The birthing nest was designed to retain heat, so she was good to go as far as that went. The pup settled slightly between them, but was still seeking food, so she offered her pinky finger on her
secondary hand to act as a pacifier of sorts.

It seemed to please the pup and quell the last of the soft whimpers.

She shifted her head, looking up from where it had come to rest in her husband’s lap. “One more to go.” She mumbles. “And I’m so, so tired already. I also feel like someone grabbed me by one leg and just pulled in the opposite direction and tried to tear me in half.” She side-eyed Tenebris for a moment, and then huffs softly. “And that, I can blame wholly on your Dad. Or at least his genetics.” She gives a soft grumbling sound, and nuzzles her face against Aliquam.

Tenebris chuckled quietly, before he sighed. "You know... He looks just like him."

"Do you mean your Father?" Aliquam asked, stroking Toki’s head tenderly.

Tenebris nodded, before he sighed and smiled. "I think I want to name him after my father as well... Memphis."

“Memphis is a good name.” Toki mumbles softly, giving the large pup a soft rub under his chin as she ends up cradling his little head. His soft attempts at suckling fade off as he settles to sleep, tiny paws twitching. “Hah… What about the others…? Had you discussed any other names with Asgore…?"

"I think we should wait for Asgore before discussing names."
Almost at the moment that he was mentioned, the Boss monster poked his head in. "I brought a bottle." He announced, before he came closer. "Wait for me for what?" He then asked, sitting down and handing the warm bottle to his mate.

Toki lifted a hand out and took the bottle from Tenebris, checking the temperature real quick out of habit. She glanced up at Asgore and gave a nod. “Good job.” She said, pleased. “I asked him about names.”

“Ohhh.” He nods, and then chuckles. “I see. And yes- I’ve handled your fresh milk enough to make the temperature close enough.”

Toki nods, and then holds the bottle out to Tenebris as she takes her finger from the pup. “Do you know how to feed a pup a bottle?” She asks him softly.

"I do, yes." Tenebris slowly re-positioned the newly named Memphis and cooed gently to him as he adjusted the bottle to coax him to take the rubber nipple.

Memphis didn’t enjoy having his makeshift pacifier taken from him, but he accepted the warm rubber nipple in it’s stead. The tip was small, like her finger, and easy for his gummy mouth to take-and when he sucked on it, it gave the same milk he’d smelled earlier!

His tiny paws kneaded the nest below him to encourage more milk, and he suckled eagerly, blindly butting against the bottle as his little wings flapped and wobbled, nearly rolling him right over.

Toki didn’t step in- this was Tenebris’ experience with his son, and he’d get the hang of it soon enough. Besides- she was busy turning her face into her husband’s lap and pretending the growing throb in her belly wasn’t happening.

The love that Tenebris was feeling for his newest had him smiling happily as he tenderly helped Memphis feed. "Look at how wonderful he is, Asgore~ He looks just like my father~" He cooed happily as he smiled up at his mate.

Asgore leaned in as much as he was able to without intruding upon the birthing nest, and his eyes watered in utter love for what he was seeing. “You’re an amazing father, my love.” He cooed softly. “I never knew your father, love… Memphis looks a lot like you.”

Toki exhales a soft warbled noise into her husband’s thigh, her leg twitching. There was a prickly
feeling inside of her, and it was entirely unpleasant. “Do you want to hold one of your siblings?” She asks Papyrus with a muffled breath. She was in denial, yep. She could wait- the last one could give her a few more minutes of rest.

"Nah... I'd rather hold you while you help the children drink their first meal." He purred in reply, rubbing her head affectionately.

Toki nods softly against him, appreciating his affectionate gestures. Her mouth opens, and she tries to very quietly pant into his leg. “The first three are doing good keeping latched. They just can’t feed very fast yet. They’ll get there eventually though.” Her leg gives a twitch, and she stretches it, flexing her toes as her middle tightens again, for the final round. She kept quiet- Memphis needed to eat, and hopefully the last one would be smaller.

The sounds of suckling filled the birthing nest as Toki went quiet- perhaps a little too quiet as she tried to keep under the radar. Thankfully, Tenebris and Asgore were completely absorbed by Memphis.

"I love you, Toki." He purred gently. "I love you and I love what you have done for my family and my people alike... I could never be this happy without you where you are now, in my lap, in my arms~"

Toki caught one in every other word as her world focused in on keeping quiet while her body strained and a painful prickling sensation grew at the edge of her pelvis. Toki managed a soft sound for her husband as her shoulder trembled under his hand. “Love you too,” She rasps in a breathy tone in reply to something she’s very sure was sweet and touching, but at the moment was one of the furthest things from her mind.

The last pup was moving down- something slim and prickly pressing against the entrance to her canal.

Her shoulders twitched as her belly gave a hard contraction, and Toki had no choice but to push, as discretely as possible. Slow but steady- whatever this one was covered in felt like small needles, and she needed to go slow because lord have mercy it hurt.

Aliquam detected her sudden change in physical behavior and frowned a little, before he reached out and set a hand over her midsection. He could feel the hardness of her contraction, and that urged him into feeling around for the pup until he made out the shape of the beginning of the pup in the form of his palm. "Toki, are you okay?" He asked quietly. "Is there something wrong with the next pup coming?"

Toki felt his palm against the deflated skin of her swollen belly, and her shivers increased for a moment as he put pressure on where the pup was at- her body shifted, involuntarily and she tried to squirm away from his hand. “Hurts~” She gasps very quietly into his leg, “Hurts very bad. Very sharp- like… Like needles. Please don’t press- please , please don’t.”

There may have been something wrong when the laboring skelebeast was quite literally begging into his leg for him not to press on her middle.

Upon the first whimper, his hand was lifted and placed instead on her shoulder. "I'm sorry... what's going on?" He asked in a worried tone.

This got Tenebris' attention and he looked over. "What's going on?"

"Toki says it feels like needles when there's weight on her midsection."
Toki let out a soft shuddering breath, and her legs curled upwards, almost flinching into herself. She curled around her middle, and around the pups, almost trying to make the pain stop. She was not rough, but for their safety, she very, very gently disengaged the pups from her teats, and cuddled them up a little ways from her, so they wouldn’t get jostled or hurt if she flinched too hard.

They seemed to settle down, their bellies full enough to let them not fuss at being pulled from her so abruptly.

“It hurts,” She whispers softly, eyes flinching shut. Her leg twitched, tried to lift, and then flinched closed again as the pressure sent waves of stabbing feelings through her walls from whatever was coming out of her. “It hurts, god it hurts…”

"If it's a breach birth, then you might have a crown dragging along your walls... It's going to be very unpleasant but I cant do a lot to help until the pup starts to emerge a little...” Tenebris explained as he slowly sat up, holding Memphis carefully as he continued to help him drink his bottle of milk.

Toki keened softly and nodded. She could understand that. There was no physical way for him to reach up inside of her and turn the pup around manually, so this is how it would have to be.

Toki shifted, no longer bound on her side by her own size and by the nursing litter. She shook as she hefted up, putting a bit of gravity on her side. Her wings trembled, braced against her husband’s shoulders, both of her legs uncurling and spreading open to try and make space despite the discomfort.

Toki waited until the next contraction- and she pushed, slowly but surely firmer than before to actively work the pup down and out of her.

The noise that rose from her maw was not a cry- it was a borderline bone chilling howl of agony as the needles turned to razors slicing down her walls, carving a literal pathway out of her as her muscles forced the pup down. She felt something hot and sticky lead the way out of her, staining her thighs and the ruined blanket under her.

Tenebris stiffened before he looked up at Aliquam with a distressed rattle.

"It's okay... it's gonna be okay..." Aliquam held her firmly. "Toki, do you want me to try and help the pup come out smoothly?" He asked.

"The pup's already in the birthing canal; it's too late to try and turn them around..." Tenebris mentioned.

"Then at least I can use my hand to stop whatever is scraping her so badly…"

Papyrus didn’t get a verbal answer in words. Her primary hands tightened over the blankets under her, and her secondary’s clenched alongside them. Her mouth fell open with another pained cry as her body pushed again without her consent. The wet feeling against her legs grew more.

Asgore’s hands anxiously fluttered, and he reached out to Tenebris regardless of the line drawn. “Give me Memphis.” He says, and collects the other pups as well into his lap. They needed space to safely move and not risk squishing his babies. “Toki needs the both of you right now. I can keep them warm and feed him. Hurry please- I don’t want to lose our last pup.”

They had already lost one.

Tenebris felt a tremble pass through him and he moved to allow Aliquam the space he needed, supporting Toki’s upper half in her husband’s stead.
Aliquam tried to resist the fear that was steadily pooling from Asgore's words. While uttering his apologies, he lubricated his hand and her entrance before he slowly pushed three fingers into her body.

"It's a breach birth; I feel feet." He spoke softly, before he gasped softly in pain as his fingers were pricked. "Oh!"

"What is it?" Tenebris asked,

"I... It's quills... I think."

"Breached quills!" Tenebris repeated, as if it was all clear now. "Aliquam, what you need to do is put your palm over the largest concentration of quills, press them down with one hand, and see if you can grab the feet and pull when Toki has another contraction." He instructed

Aliquam hesitated, before he sighed and nodded. "Alright... I apologize in advance if this hurts, Toki..." He told her, before doing as his father told him. He slowly pushed in his lubricated hand, carefully crawling his fingers over the quills before he pulled and flattened a good amount of the quills upon resting his hand.

"Alright. They're flattened." He announced.

"It should now be less painful to push, Toki..." Tenebris told the distressed mother.

Toki was mute through all of it. Well, mute word wise. Her mouth gaped open with ragged gasps and shaky sobs, her sockets clenching shut. His fingers were agony, and his hand? His hand was hellfire incarnate inside of her. It took everything she had not to thrash and kick at her husband.

The soft murmurs reached her just barely, and she blinked her eyes open enough to gasp and nod roughly.

The next contraction came swift, her muscles practically crushing Aliquam’s hand as she pushed, lurching the pup downward. He didn’t have all of the quills, telltale by the high pitched keening that Toki made- and that feeling was amplified by him pulling as she pushed.

The feet and the hips soon appeared however- and the pup was painted a garish green. As was Aliquam’s hand- and the blanket under Toki. The quills had sliced her good, and there were more deeper inside.

Aliquam cared little about the crushing weight on his hand, but was glad that they were now a lot closer to the pup being out.

He reached down and grabbed the pup by the ankles, holding firmly before he readjusted his grip, using his arm to keep the quills down as he reached up and felt for the pup's head. "Okay... Okay... Here we go... I've got the pup's head." He announced.

"If you have one more push in you, Toki..." Tenebris urged gently.

She didn’t, she really didn’t, but Toki would try. The head needed out, the pup needed born. Toki was a shaking, trembling mess in Tenebris’ grasp, all four arms shivering and shaking like a drug addict in need of a fix.

When her muscles tensed again, Toki gave one last hard push- and then the pain was over. Well- the ripping, tearing pain, anyway. The lingering feeling of someone having taken razor blade lined steel wool to the inside of her vagina was still something she was dealing with, but the pup was free.
The pup popped free into their brother’s hands, face screwing up into a grumpy looking pout.

Behind the pup poured a wave of green- and *not* amniotic fluid.

Aliquam caught the pup and wrapped them in a towel to set at Toki’s side, before he set his hands on Toki and began to work his healing magic immediately. He drove his magic up her insides, working to dissolve any quills that had gotten stuck, and to heal the deep rends in the sensitive flesh inside of her. "It's over, it's done, the pup's free." He told her quickly. “It’s over, Toki, it’s over. God, it’s over, you’re going to be okay…”

There had been a bit of damage done to her, and subsequently to her HP, with the birth of this last pup. His healing did slow the bleeding, however, and stop the cramping in her drooping stomach.

It took a long, long time to heal the cuts and the massive damage done to her womb, and stop the hard bleeding inside of her.

Toki didn’t relax until the bleeding stopped though, where in she shifted and let out a tiny soft sigh. “It’s done. I’m done…” She went briefly limp, before shifting to lay on her side. The pain was… Less. Much less. She shifted the swaddled pup closer to her, peering at the blood covered baby quietly. She was raw, healed or not, and she shifted once she was healed enough and let Aliquam know that she didn’t want his hands down there anymore for the day. “Quills.” She mumbles. “Somehow I was picturing porcupine, not… little bird feather quills. Might want to be careful grooming this one, Dad- your tongue will end up like my vagina.”

Aliquam moved out of the way so she could close her legs and he sighed as he leaned against his father, a relieved smile. "It's over. You did it... I'm so proud of you…”

Tenebris blinked at her words, before he chuckled and he began to gently rub the pup down. "Duly noted, my dear.” He rumbled, before he took a look at the pup's face, "Well, someone's already cranky, and with one hell of a set of emerald peepers." he chuckled.

“Thank you.” She mumbles tiredly. Toki let off a tired sound, curling up. She peeks her eyes open to look at the only pup to open their eyes so far. A quick sniff, now that it wasn’t covered in blood, showed that it was a little male. “He’s got my eyes,” She murmurs with exhaustion. Shakily, she makes a noise to Asgore, and reaches for the pups.

He returns them without question, tucking them up against her deflated belly without a fuss. He even helped them get latched when Toki’s fingers fumbled. “She needs to rest,” He mumbles, pausing when Memphis finishes his meal. He tucks the biggest male right up against her belly to let him bask in the warm, and then watches softly as all four of the pups there settle in. Three eating, one sleeping, and the last fifth one gets cleaned before he can do either. “Maybe a hot bath?”

“Not right now. I would like to rest first. Please. I know everyone is excited and wants to come upstairs and meet them, but… I need some time to rest.” She looks utterly drained as she looks at the three men towering above her. “And they need time to settle before they’re disturbed too much by being passed around.”

"I propose we borrow the newest in order to clean him off..." Tenebris offered from where he had sat up better beside Toki.

Toki nodded slowly. “Yeah… You’re not going to get all that blood off with a towel alone, and I think he knows it.” She motions a hand to the bathroom. “Go wash him off, please. In fact, they could all probably use a good and proper washing… But one at a time.” Her nether regions still throbbed unpleasantly, and there was a slow leak of… well, as far as she could tell, magic bleed off
from where her body had been feeding it to the pups- she didn’t really want them going far. “And… can you maybe bring a towel back to put between my legs?”

Asgore offered her a smile. “The little bit of bleeding is normal.” He says, seeing the look on her face. “Skeletons are marvelous creatures- when their bodies dispel, they get to escape the bleed that other monster mothers must endure as their bodies adjust to not feeding their children magic anymore. However, since you must nurse, I imagine your body will be here for some time.”

Tenebris rumbled in agreement before he slowly moved out of the nest, taking the newest pup with him in order to go clean him off.

Toki watched him go, before her sockets drifted closed. She shuffled one of the pillows from the wall over, and tucked it under her head, breathing slowly as she settled down to try and nap.

Asgore gave a soft hum, and then looked to Papyrus. “Son,” he says softly, “Why don’t you go clean up a little bit, and let everyone downstairs know that they’re here, but that Toki needs a little while to rest before she takes visitors? I’ll keep her company until you get back.” He offers him a warm smile. “She’ll want to cuddle up with you, I’m sure, but she’s not going to want to cuddle up with her blood on your hands.”

“C’n someone get the bloodied blanket out from under me?” She mumbles. “It’s got a couple layers. I don’t wanna lay on it.”

Asgore cocked an ear at him, as if saying ‘See?’, and then he shifts, invading her space long enough to take away the dirtied layers, leaving her in clean and fresh layers to rest in.

“Thank you.” She yawns.

Aliquam slowly exited the nest and collected the soiled linen, giving Toki a smile before he started out. "I'll go put these in the laundry and see how Father is doing with the child." He announced.

As he left, Asgore sighed, before smiling at Toki. "Are you doing okay, Tokiko?" He asked gently. She peeked her eye open to look at Asgore, feeling a small tickle of annoyance budding through her. She wanted a nap, god damn it- she’d just done basically all of the work here. “I feel like someone’s fucked me raw with a cactus dildo.” She says with blunt exhaustion. Toki sucks in a deep breath, and sighs. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to be snarky. I’m just very, tired and sore, and I would greatly enjoy sleeping right now.”

Her teeth splay as she yawns at him.

He chuckled gently and nodded in understanding, before he inched backwards just slightly. "In that case, I'll leave you be, and you can get your rest until you have your bath.”

“My bath can wait a couple hours.” Toki muttered in exhaustion. She stretches out her arms, and Toki settles down to try and sleep. She actually settles down and starts to doze within a few minutes, and her soft snores are music to anyone’s ears.

“-oki. Toki. Come on, Toki, wake up.”

Toki made a grumbling snort, and squinted one eye open to look at Tenebris. She could feel Papyrus behind her, one arm gently draped over her shoulders as he, now clean smelling and dry, cuddled up
behind her. Toki made a soft, inquiring noise, feeling like she’d just blinked asleep and was now being woken abruptly.

There were tiny paws kneading at her belly - the litter were up and nursing again, though it was slow, and starting to ebb off. They’d probably been nursing for a while.

“Mwah?” Was the intelligent answer Tenebris was given as she blinked one eye at him slowly.

"I finished with Severin... And now it's time for your bath."

Severin... no doubt the children had been named while she slumbered.

"The pups are all fed well enough for now, and all of them have been properly washed. Come bathe." Tenebris coaxed gently.

Toki squinted up at him slowly and sighed through her nose. “Mmmnn… How long have I been sleeping?” She asks, deflecting his immediate coaxing towards a hot bath. She had absolutely no desire to get up. Toki wanted to keep sleeping. “Severin…?”

"Three hours." He answered, before he smiled. "We thought about names for the pups while you slept." He explained, before he chuffed. "You’ve yet to pass your afterbirth, and that’s concerning... part of me wonders if it is because you had to be healed earlier, but a hot bath would help you loosen up at least enough to pass your afterbirth. So... Doctor’s orders. Bath time."

Three hours was not enough sleep. Her groan and attempt at burying her face in her arms told him as such. She was glad to hear about the names though. She just didn’t know which one Severin was.

“I don’t know what on earth you’re talking about. Skeletons don’t have afterbirth.” She mumbles blearily into her arms. “So I don’t need a bath. I need more sleep.”

He rolled his eyes before he leaned down and gently bit into the back of her neck, giving her scruff a pull. "Let’s go."

Toki gave a growl as he scruffed her, feeling her limbs instinctively want to go limp as the pressure points were clamped down on. Her limbs braced on the nest, and she glared up at him tiredly. “Let go.” She counters, one warning in her voice before she’d swat him.

If he was going to be pushy about it, she obviously had no choice. She could just sleep in the damn tub. But if he pulled her, she’d end up trampling over the newborns, and that wasn’t acceptable. “I need to get up so I don’t squish the pups. They also need to be tucked back into someone who can keep them warm.”

Papyrus was behind her, so she wasn’t too worried about that.

"Ah, that's my cue." Aliquam spoke gently, moving to lay on his back and pull the pups carefully into his hold. "Come to big brother." He cooed gently as he collected the pups one by one.

Toki let him take the pups, and then when the coast was clear, she slowly shifted onto all fours, her neck still in Tenebris’ teeth. Her stomach sagged, her teats pulling the empty and stretched ectoflesh down. She was stuck with postpartum mom-tummy it seemed- oh well. It wasn’t the end of the world.

However, her nether parts made her hiss, and she hunched up slightly. “Owww...” She hisses.

Tenebris watched until the last of the pups was wrapped in their brother's arms before he gave a slow
pull and he lifted his head to lift Toki off the ground a little more as he started for the bathroom.

He was not tall enough to carry her completely off the ground while on all fours, and she let out a grumpy, rumbling hiss as she was forced to skitter along with her legs to keep up. Most of the weight was on him, but all the same.

Actually… Dead weight was harder to move. A glint came to her eye, and suddenly the easy weight he was moving seemed to double as she went completely limp under him.

Toki did not want to go lay in the tub- she wanted to sleep, and darn it, if she had to do something she didn’t want to do hours after giving birth, she was entitled to being a shitlord about it.

He eyed her sourly before he rolled his eyes and began to drag her dead-weight, grumbling to himself about how he was working with an overgrown child who should behave better than this.

Of course, dragging her under him made her one hell of a tripping hazard, so he had to resort to carefully walking backwards as he dragged her along the carpet.

Toki realized her mistake right about the moment she started to get rug burn on her teats. Her limbs lifted up and she huffed, hobbling along after him as he dragged her from the bedroom carpet into the bathroom tile.

“T’m not an overgrown child.” She says once he brings her to a stop. “T’m a woman who just gave birth to five pups- one of which was probably like swallowing a porcupine quills first. You’ll have to pardon me if I’m a little salty about being dragged from my nest for a bath I don’t want, regardless of ‘doctors orders’.”

Toki eyes the tub, and tries to get her legs under her. They tremble, and shooting agony spirals through her pelvis, making her drop right back down onto her knees. “Yeahhh. I’m not standing to get in that tub.”

Tenebris rolled his eyes before he sighed and gently picked Toki up. "That's fine." He huffed, before he slowly put her down into the hot water.

She growled at him crankily, right up until he set her in the water. As the hot water washed over her, she half relaxed with a sigh. Her nethers burned like a mother fucker, but the hot water felt absolutely orgasmic against all of her stressed muscles.

Toki shifted to lay on her back in the tub, and began to purr quietly, her eyes drifting closed again.

_That's what he fucking thought._ Slowly letting her go, Tenebris chuffed softly before he smirked and let her be, reveling in his small victory.

Toki rumbled once he was gone, and settled down to soak. She was in there for a good hour, just relaxing and letting the sweat and filth of the day rinse off of her. She changed out the water twice, when she’d tinged it green with her renewed leaking.

The hot water helped her muscles though, and she relaxed more than she thought she would. Toki got a bit more of a nap in between changing the water as it cooled and rejuvenated her.

It was about an hour and ten minutes into Tenebris having left her to soak and intermittently nap that Toki felt a cramp. It felt more like a menstrual cramp than anything else, and she grunted as she parted her legs. It didn’t take long, before something meaty and wet slid between her legs.

Lo and behold- Tenebris had been right. There, floating at the surface of the water between her legs,
was a meaty ectoplasmic slab of multi-colored afterbirth with six broken strings on it.

“Wait… What?” She mumbled, shifting to sit up properly. “Six…?”

A cramp seized her middle, and then she let out a long, and low sounding grunt, primal by nature. She bore down by instinct, her hands clenching on the tub and tightening as her poor abused muscles screamed in agony for her to please, please not be doing this yet again.

However, despite her wishes and desires, Toki was doing this yet again. She contracted again, softer this time- and she felt something tiny, so tiny, move down inside of her. Tiny but rough- there were soft nubs scraping over raw but healed nerves, and bits of a few thick places that made pushing difficult.

It only took a few true and honest pushes where she put all of her effort behind them, before she forced the thing out. When she leaned forward to see what was up, Toki came face to face with a nearly perfect clone of her beast self floating lifelessly in the water. The only differences to the tiny form was the fact it had a long curling tail from Tenne- however it was tipped with a stinger, not a blade- and the fact the horns were tiny little nubs on the top of her head, not unlike Toki’s original horns.

Rendered mute by panic, Toki picked up the pup- who was so small she fit in Toki’s secondary hands like a doll, and she pulled it from the water. She broke the sack over it’s mouth, and began cleaning it. Her, Toki’s acute sense of scenting things told her- the pup was female. Toki’s tongue slid out, and she groomed the pup, cleaning her face and nose and opening up her air ways. Once she’d been cleaned that way, Toki scrubbed her so gently clean with the slowly bloodying water.

Still, the pup didn’t stir- and Toki was growing more frantic, letting out little whines as she set the spotless pup between her breasts and patted her back between her insect like gossamer wings. She was so tiny she could only use a her fingers.

Finally, there was a hacking cough, and the tiny being took in her first breath- and began to wail, the tiniest, weakest pathetic mewls Toki had ever heard.

Toki clutched her to her breast, looking utterly shell-shocked to have delivered the sixth pup that everyone had believed to have died.

It was not long before the mewling caught the attention of bigger beasts, and it was only seconds before Tenebris appeared in the doorway of the bathroom, Asgore close behind. The bathroom door had been slammed open hard enough for it to bounce off the wall and nearly barrel back into them and slam shut again.

Neither could find their words, eyes blown too wide and mouths open and nearly gaping at the sight before them. Slowly, very slowly, Tenebris gave a tiny and timid rattle, as if Papa was asking if what he heard was actual real, and if it was what he thought it was.

Toki gave a soft, shuddering breath, and hitched up a little bit in the tub. By far, the last pup- this little miracle baby- had been the easiest birth. She glanced to the door, the pup wailing feebly into her chest, and she gave them a deer in the headlights look. “H-HELP, please. I want t-to get out. S-She needs dried and fed.”

Was she in shock? Perhaps a little bit. A good shock, but shock all the same. She needed help though- she couldn’t dip the pup under the water, and she couldn’t get out of the slowly bloodying water by herself.
It didn't take Tenebris long at all to collect Toki out of the bath, though it was when he safely set her down in her nest did the shock sink in and he gasped weakly, before he sighed and smiled shakily. "The runt survived." He breathed in relief.

Toki had been settled on her back, the tiny, feeble pup nestled against her breasts proper. Her arms cradled her, and she let the tiny form rest and catch her breath as Toki let it sink in slowly that the sixth had survived.

“How?” Asgore murmured softly from where he’d pressed in against Tenebris’ back. “You said… There was no magic signature… Unless the runt was simply too weak to register...”

"That must have been it... The other signatures drowned her out, and I couldn't feel her."

Toki exhaled softly. “Try not to think about it.” She mumbles. “Focus on the fact she’s here. She survived… She looks exactly like I did too.” Her fingers stroke through the tiny green wisps of a mane, and she’s rewarded with the tiniest, softest mewl as the pup nuzzles against her, seeking nourishment.

Toki doesn’t hesitate to adjust her, and despite her size, the tiny being has a decent latch onto Toki’s nipple proper. The skelebeast just looks exhausted as she cradles her and lets her drink- proving the pup was wholesome and healthy, and had no health problems or issues feeding.

Tenebris looked at Toki as she spoke before he whined and rattled loudly. "She's so tiny... I almost fear I would hurt her if I touched her…"

Toki breathed slowly, tiredly, and lifted a hand. “Lay next to me, and give me your hand.” She mumbles softly. “Pap- other side for you. Settle the pups down on my belly. Might as well get them settled in. I’m not going anywhere.”

Aliquam nodded and moved to her side, ever so carefully setting his armful of pups down around their sibling before he settled down at her side.

Tenebris rumbled softly before he slowly laid down on Toki's other side, a small rattle coming from him as he looked up at the pups. "They're so wonderful... Six puppies…”

“Six little rays of hope.” Toki mumbles, and tucks a pillow behind her head.

“Hope...” Asgore murmurs softly, curling around Tenebris with a soft thrum. Wet fur presses to the back of Tenebris head, and it shows that the bigger monster had been moved to tears. “Hope is a good name for her.”

Toki grunted, and took Tenebris’ hand, gently taking one of his fingers and stroking it down the tiny back of the little pup suckling at her breast. She didn’t let his claw touch her wings- something told her that the little pup’s wings were too fragile for that yet- but she did let him feel her tiny whuffing breaths against Toki’s nipple as the little female adjusted her grip and suckled better.

She guided his finger- which was all that could really fit with how small she was- up and down her back a couple times, to assure him that he could touch, but he just had to be careful. She was tiny and fragile, but she wasn’t glass.

Tenebris' finger twitched insecurely until it came to touch the pup and he gave a shaky breath of relief. "Oh my god..." He sighed, before he cooed softly. "Our darling Hope..." He agreed.

Toki lifted her hand, and shifted to simply cradle the pup, listening to the sounds of suckling. She could feel six mouths suckling at her, though Memphis was struggling, he was doing it for simply
bonding most likely. She let her eyes drift closed, tired and exhausted, and completely spent. “Hope… Hope is a good name. Hope for the future, hope for things to come…” She mumbles.

She takes a deep breath, and a slow and steady rumbling purr begins to bubble up out of her chest for the three men to hear.

It brought a smile and relief to all three of them and as Tenebris nuzzled her shoulder.

Aliquam kissed her cheek as he cooed his love for her.

After a few minutes of simply laying there, Tenebris rumbled again and spoke, "We were talking about names while you were asleep and bathing, Toki."

“Yeah?” She breathes almost airily. In the minutes that he’d taken to talk, she’d nearly drifted to sleep again until Tenebris spoke. “I know Hope, and Memphis. I know Severin is a name, but I don’t know who Severin is. Want to point them-” She pauses, yawns, and then continues, “out to me?"

Tenebris nodded slowly, and lifted his hand to set it on the back of the deep green pup, who's eyes momentarily cracked open for all but a second to glare at them as he nursed. "This one is the one we called Serevin."

“Ahhh, the one with the feather quills.” Toki observes the grumpy look Tenebris gets for interrupting the pup’s nursing, and soothes him with a couple strokes to the pressure points between his eye. It did the trick and slowly the pup's eyes rolled closed again. The hand lifted off his back and rested on the golden firstborn male, who gave a soft muffled mewl at being touched. "We're calling this one 'Orphelius.'"

“Orph- Orphelius… That’s a mouthful.” Toki laughs softly. “Pheli has a very regal name though.” He seemed to settle right back to nursing easily enough, his tiny golden mane fluffing as he suckled firmly.

"It's also Greek, a nod to my bloodline." Asgore commented happily.

Toki nods sleepily. “So, Orphelius, Severin, Hope, and Magnus… Who’re the last two?” She yawns.

Tenebris reached and touched the brown-pelted female, though unlike the others, she showed no reaction, more focused on her nursing. "We're calling her Temperance."

“And who’s this little purple lady…?” Toki hums, gently rubbing a finger across the little female who was still yet unnamed to her.

“We’re calling her Yuko.” Asgore smiles softly.

Yuko let off a tiny growl, and Toki laughed as she stroked her fingers over her, before settling down. “Yuko… Temperence, Yuko, and Hope. You’ve got three girls- I hope you’re excited.”

"I know, I'm excited." Tenebris purred. "I'm a Daddy again~" He cooed happily.

Toki gives a soft chuckle that disturbs all the pups on her belly. They whine until she soothes them, and she gives a soft, sleepy sigh. “You’re a daddy again.” She nods sleepily. “Alright… Now it’s time for this nursemaid to sleep. I’m exhausted. If you want to have the kids come in, just cover my lower half with my robe, and ask them to be quiet.” She yawns. “I won’t mind them coming in if they can keep calm and quiet.”
Tenebris nodded gently, before he thrummed and settled down again with a pleased purring to celebrate his new heirs.

Toki’s soft purring mingled with Tenebris’ own as she closed her eyes, the soft suckling of the litter lulling her to sleep as they nursed from her and bonded. Toki was content—she’d worked hard, labored hard, but it had been worth it despite all of her grumbling. They were precious—Hope was a miracle and Toki wouldn’t give it up for the world.
Chapter 156

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Welcome to Book 3! Which could alternatively be called the epilogue book, as it’s just a most likely a nice slice of life section that’s going to wrap things up nicely. Probably much less angst here than in the other books- Maybe. Slightly. Unless Silver and I decide to do more angst plot- with us, you never do really know. There might be something thrown in here that you wouldn’t expect- but remember, we’re suckers for a happy ish ending. Anyway- enjoy~

Oh yeah. it's NSFW too. Slightly anyway. :D

Four months was a long time for things to happen. Flowers could bloom, people could move, weddings could happen, children would go to school- so many things in such a short time.

The twins were now officially in pre-school given their intellect and advanced growth. They’d also pestered, and pestered, and pestered until Toki and Papyrus signed them up. Which was a big help, since Toki was busy with the litter most of the day, and Papyrus was working all day now.

The twins were enjoying school. Honey was a social butterfly, and she knew everyone and everything happening. Sometimes, even, before it had happened. Skylar on the other hand was more reclusive- but he had his niche of children he played with, and they were good friends. He played music with them too.

Han’s violin, where it looked comically huge in Papyrus’ hands, had fit Skylar surprisingly well. Skylar took the heirloom with grace, and he played it any chance he got. Out of the house, of course, so as not to disturb the pups.

Kon and Lana were now officially married- and Toki was now related to her seamstress, and through the seamstress, she was also related to Bo and Wolfen. Her monster family was growing ever constantly.

The brother she never thought would get tied down ended up doing just that- getting tied down and married to the absolutely lovely sheep woman. They were both happy- and Toki was absolutely enthused for them, even if she couldn’t attend the wedding. She got to watch it from the window upstairs though, which was good enough for her.

The wedding had been a beautiful affair- Kon and Lana had been beautiful too, and Lana had taken to being a Nara like a fish took to water.

Papyrus was also back to work officially. He was now full time guard rotation once more- and honestly, he’d never been happier.

With the conversation she’d had with Asgore, the ban on people had been lifted. Guards had been doubled up though, and security on Nara Village had been doubled. In the long run, everyone felt safer for it- and it brought in new revenue to the village by opening up a whole slew of jobs.

There were more than just wolves on the force now- there were even trained rabbit guards on the
force. Believe it or not, Toki had seen them send Aliquam stumbling with a well placed kick to the jaw. Their leg muscles were not something to joke about.

Four months was also not a relatively long time to nurse babies- at least, not by human standards, or even by the standards of how long Toki had breastfed the twins. She hadn’t even fully weaned the two of them before she’d been taken- though they’d not quite been a year old before she’d been stolen from them. She was looking forward to their birthday in October- when she’d actually get to experience celebrating it with them.

However, four months rolled around, and it had been four months of one hell of a roller-coaster ride. The pups started out easy enough to feed- minus Memphis, who had to be primarily bottle fed since he struggled with proper latching through the entire time she was nursing- but that changed as soon as all six of them started getting more mobile- and getting teeth.

Yes, they got their teeth much, much earlier than the twins had. Toki felt each and every one of those tiny teeth as they popped through their tiny gums and were used to viciously gnaw on her, and on her chest.

Tenebris brought her a lot of hot cocoa to make up for her being chewed on.

The teeth honestly weren’t the worst part. All six of them had their own little personalities that were starting to develop- and they’d squabble and spat as all siblings did. Most days they’d romp and yip and squeak to their hearts content, but sometimes they’d get too rough and Toki would have to give them a reprimand in beast speech to get them to calm down.

Hope, despite being the runt, attempted to be the more dominant of the group. She was a lot like Dear in that retrospect- and she was very much clingy to Toki, much to Toki’s disgruntlement. She was trying not to get attached- and it was hard not to, when she had a tiny mini-beast of herself, cuddling her and trying to drive her siblings away so she could keep Toki to herself.

Yeah, that was a thing- beast pups operated differently than human babies. She could see how her twins were so advanced despite not being two years old yet. The beast pups were capable of understanding complete and complex sentences from a couple months old- though it was a toss up if they’d actually listen.

Most of the time they ignored Aliquam when he attempted to get them to mind. Same with Asgore, or Sans, or Grillby when he was over. Well, Grillby had the most luck of the lot- he could sort of stare them down, and they’d eventually just sit and behave and give him sad puppy looks.

The only ones they for sure listened to were Toki and Tenebris. Toki, because she was their birth mother and instinct said listen to mother, and Tenebris because he was the closest thing their tiny instincts could latch onto for their genetic birth father.

Asgore got walked over a lot- both metaphorically and literally.

But, hopefully, that would change.

It had been four months since the litter was born. It was September, it was cooling down and summer was coming to an end- and Toki’s milk had been drying up for a couple weeks, and her teats had finally disappeared that morning.

Which meant that it was time for the litter to go home with them.

Toki had a pouch on her chest, with all of the litter loaded up in it. They were settled down and napping, resting against her bones with their little limbs clinging to her. She had the entire lot- which
had practically quadrupled in size since their birth- braced with both arms as she walked down the street.

Aliquam had all of the pups baby things gathered, and was walking with Toki.

“Four months feel like forever.” Toki mumbles softly, grunting as Hope shifted up and tried to mouth at her collarbone. There was no ectoflesh for her to suckle at though, and the pup gave a tiny, sad noise. “I can’t believe it’s flown by so fast… Our kids are in school, the pups are going to your dad’s home… The house is going to be so empty. Well- besides Sobek and Snuggle.”

Snuggle had been in a cocoon for the past week- so he hadn’t moved from a corner of the living room. They suspected he was finally ready to grow into a full sized bee. And they hadn’t seen much of Sobek since he’d molted. He had lost all his baby feathers, and was now a very grumpy, very flustered, naked chicken.

"It will do us some good to have the home to ourselves. Indeed I will miss the excitement of the pups, but their Papa is waiting for them so eagerly. I almost feel like it would be cruel to try and harbor them for ourselves any longer..." Aliquam answered, watching her before stepping closer and leaning down to kiss her head. "You were a miraculous nursemaid, you know..." He assured her sweetly.

"I wouldn’t dream of keeping them longer than necessary. My milk is gone- my body is saying they’re ready to go to their daddies, even if they don’t think so yet." She leaned into his kiss, her mane fluffing up. Yeah, that had grown back too. Four months, and it was almost back to full length. Toki kept it neatly trimmed instead of wild and everywhere. "I know I was a good nursemaid. They all grew well. You know... I don’t think I ever told you. Hope is literally what I looked like as a beast. Four arms and all. Though, I didn’t have a tail."

"I have no doubt that you were the most beautiful creature." He purred, though glancing at Hope as she was mentioned. He gave a soft laugh. "The way she has Father’s tail, but your stinger, it reminds me of a scorpion." He commented.

Toki laughed, and rubbed Hope’s little wings through the pouch. “I wasn’t bad to look at when I was up on my body weight. You’d have liked me- I had boobs.” She gives him a teasing elbow with her secondary arm and winks at him. “Anyway- Yeah, she’s a lot like a little scorpion. Though, she’s definitely got my teeth instead of your dad’s. I felt every one of them as she was growing them in.”

Toki glanced up and sighed. Her wings flicked lightly, and she gave Papyrus a wide smile. “I’m eager to have a moment to fly. I haven’t been able to fly since… well, before I got too heavy to fly.” She sucks in a soft breath, and cuddles into his side. “I imagine it’s going to be like when you got to walk again. Do you want to join me in the sky with Clover? I think I want to fly home once we drop the pups off.”

"It has been a long time since you've flown around. I'd love to be there when you have your first time in the sky after so long." He answered, knowing she was going to be thrilled to have him up there with her.

Toki beamed at him. “Thank you, my love. I’d like that a lot.”

Tenebris’ house loomed ahead, and she made a soft humming sound as they reached it. She reached a hand up and knocked on the door, shifting and soothing the litter as they stirred at the noise. It was better that they were mostly sleeping for this. It would make the transition smoother.

She knows Tenebris was not expecting them today, so it would be a surprise for them- a welcome
one. They were waiting patiently for the day they got to bring them home.

Surprisingly enough, it was not Tenebris nor Asgore who opened the door, but Thumper, who was rubbing his eyes before he looked up. "Hullo Toki, Aliquam, what's up?" He asked softly.

"Hey kiddo." Toki gave him an odd look. "What's got you home from school, kiddo?" She lifts a hand and feels his forehead, rubbing between his ears. "You feel a little warm, but not fever warm."

"Spent a little t'much magic practicing... Papa wanted me to stay home to recover my magic..." He answered softly.

"Aah... Magi-drain." Aliquam spoke with a small nod.

"Ahh." Toki nods softly. She lets off the tiniest, smallest curl of magic for him to absorb, if only to alleviate the start of his maybe fever, before drawing her hand back. "Do you mind letting us in, sweetie?" She asks gently. "I need to talk to both of your fathers."

"It might end up waitin' a bit... they're nappin." He hummed softly, before he pulled open the door. "But you can come in." He offered.

Toki offered a sly smile. "Alright. We'll only be a moment. Pap- why don't you go drop that off in the... room ... for them."

Aliquam took a moment, and then he grinned and gave a nod. "You got it." He whispered, starting upstairs.

Toki stepped inside, and slowly made her way to the living room, where she could hear Asgore’s rumbling snore. She made her way silently inside and over to the nest in the middle of the living room, before shifting to step silently into the nest.

She shifts, and opened the pouch. Hope didn’t unlatch immediately from her ribs, so she let her be for the moment while she gently pulled the sleeping Magnate from the cloth pouch, and settled him down against Tenebris’ stomach. Severin was tucked on Asgore’s chest, and the serious pup nestled into his mane with a sleepy sigh.

Toki worked on unloading the pups slowly, trying to be quiet while giving Hope time to let go.

Thumper slowly followed Toki to the main room. The pups quickly got comfortable in their father's arms, though Tenebris opened his eyes slightly and gave Toki a soft rumble. "Thank you." He whispered.

Toki wasn’t done yet- there was one that wasn’t wanting to let go, and Toki startled when Tenebris whispered to her. She blinked at him slowly, her fingers working to try and gently pry Hope from where the pup had a grip on her rib cage. Toki’s secondary hands were unwrapping the pouch, which would let Asgore tote the litter when he needed to move all of them at once. “… You’re welcome.” She mumbles back, equally quiet. “Help me? Hope won’t let go.”

Tenebris nodded slowly and reached up to ghost his fingers over the pup's back, chirping and rattling sweetly to coax her to let go.

Hope whimpered, stubbornly clinging with tiny claws as she resisted the soothing touch and gentle coaxing.

Toki sighed. She gently pried her fingers under the runts own, and carefully got her unhooked.
Doing so got Hope to kick up towards full blown whines, and Toki shifted her off to Tenebris swiftly before she could change her mind. “They’re all yours now, Dad.” She whispers softly to him, and backs out of the nest.

Hope whines, opening green eyes to try and fuss at Tenebris.

Toki steps back towards the main room, and wiggles her fingers gently in good-bye.

"Thank you" He whispered again, before slowly grooming Hope to hush her gently.

Thumper smiled warmly and gave a small wave. "Thank you, Toki~" He whispered.

Toki gave Thumper a warm smile and waved back. She met Aliquam in front of the door as he came down the stairs, and she exhaled softly before stepping outside.

“... That was rough.” She says softly. “But... We’re free. I don’t think we’ve been kid free in... Wow. A while. Is this what human parents feel like when their kids go off to school for the day?”

What was she going to do with herself besides writing? She hadn’t ever ordered her hives, and it was too cold to bother now... What did one do with ones self now that they were free?

Aliquam stepped to her side with a smile, wrapping his arms around her with a gentle squeeze. "I'm so proud of you, you did everything right..." He purred happily, before he smiled. "Do you want to go flying?"

“I did.” She smiles slowly. “And I do. If you still want to, that is. Unless there’s something else you’d rather do with the time we have free to ourselves today?”

"..." He looked at her with an innocent look in his eyes and steadily... lost the look.

Four months was also a long time for them to have not been intimate.

"Oh... Oh my god..." His cheeks darkened, before he took a deep breath. "Tokiko... The only reason I didn't say it is because I'm a gentleman... but now that you suggested it..." He gave her a look that screamed that he wanted exactly what she had in mind.

Toki gave a slow and innocent smile, and leaned her hips purposefully back against his, wiggling slightly before she stole away with goal-directed strides. “Oh Papy dear, I don’t know what you mean. Would you care to explain it to me~?” She teased, her hips sashaying slightly with a pep she hadn’t had to them in ages. She felt like her again- feisty, sexy, and free. “What is it that you didn’t say because you’re such a gentleman?”

"Toki oh my god. I’m not even joking- I’m ridiculously hard.” He whispered frantically, trying not to be heard by anyone else, before he took a deep breath. "Tokiko let's go home." He told her before he took another breath and he quickly took after her, muttering a soft 'oh my god, oh my god, oh my god' under his breath with every step.

She had felt a distinct hardness in his pants- but he was painfully easy to arouse sometimes. And it had been four months and a week or so since they’d been intimate. They’d had too many kids with high needs in the house to even consider intimacy- and by the end of the day, Toki was too tired to even consider giving him a blowjob to blow off his steam.

Unlike her, his sex drive was rampant. That, she suspected, was the cat beast in her amazing mate.

The same cat beast made him a pursuit predator- which made her fleeing from him a dangerous game.
to play.

She gave a cheeky grin at him over her shoulder, and flicked her wings at him, keeping just a few steps ahead of him and making sure he had to move quick to keep up. “Come along Papy dear, come along. We’ve got a bit of a jaunt home, don’t we~? Maybe we should stop at Grillby’s for some milkshakes on the way~?” She gives him a half-lidded teasing look.

She was literally poking a wild cat with a stick- and it was exciting.

True to his more feline blood, a low growl rose from him as she walked away and he began to follow with a little more speed in his pace. "Toki I love you, but you are poking a sleeping bear I’m not sure you want to mess with without being behind closed doors..." He told her, heat rising to his face.

Toki cast a glance over her shoulder again, and cocked a hip at him, almost sashaying as she walked. Bearing children twice had definitely given her the mom hips, and she made use of them as she swayed like a bell in a breeze, enticing him into watching her. “Oh? But you know how much I love to prod the sleeping bear. Though, poking the sleeping cat is so much more fun~” She purrs, and her eyes half lid at him over her shoulder. “And who says we have to be behind closed doors? We have the whole house to ourselves. Why don’t we go reclaim it~?”

Toki, she had to remind herself, Papyrus loves your boobs more- don’t make him an ass man because he’s already staring...

He stuttered a little before he took a deep breath. "Couch or counter...”

Her eyes flashed with a wicked glint, and she tensed momentarily, paws tightening their grip on the cement. “I dunno.” She trills innocently. “Why don’t you… catch me and we’ll see?”

With that, she took off at a sprint she knew he could catch up with. She didn’t want to outrun him- no, the chase was what was fun. It would rile him, and rile her, and make the whole experience that much better.

And if it let Sentinel out to mingle some with Papyrus at the same time, well, Toki wasn’t going to complain.

Now that he could run, she could run; and now that he could run...

Pupils turned to slits as his irises shone a bright golden orange. And with that, he took off after her in an absolute sprint.

Nearby, a shark monster noticed her running as well as he who chased her before she cackled. "OOOOOH GIRL YOU BETTER RUN!"

Toki made the mistake of glancing over her shoulder when the woman shouted at her- and she spooked a bit at the intense look on her mate’s face. Mayyybe not such a good idea to rile him and then run, but she’d take her lickin’s and keep on tickin’. And probably enjoy it too.

She went from a steady run to full out sprinting, because like fuck if she was gonna go down easy. He had to work for it, damn it.

Believe it or not, she made it to the house. She was huffing and puffing like she might blow the damn thing down, but she made it- and she got the door shut behind her and everything. A shut door would delay him a few seconds that it took for him to either plow it down, or see reason and open it. Either or, it would let her get to the living room, and at least get somewhat prepared.
She turned around to do just that- and ran into a heated wall of bone.

When the calling came, no man needed a door.

Now that he was unencumbered by armor or cast or cane, Aliquam instead had lunged through the open window, and rolled to a stop in the foyer before he snapped his fingers and had fully surrounded her in bones.

Toki recognized the wall of glowing bones, and she didn’t bother to reach out to touch them. She’d been caught, fair and square, and now she awaited her punishment like a bird in a cage as he caught his breath and stalked for her.

“Well,” She grins, “It looks like I’ve been had. Tell me,” her eyes half lid at him over the wall, and she buzzes to him playfully, “What are you going to do now that you’ve got your queen bee in a cage?”

He leaned his head to one side before he smirked. "I'm gonna make her hum ~" He purred, before he snapped his fingers. Bones appeared around her, before linking together and wrapping around her form, giving a slight squeeze.

Toki gasped, her hands sliding to the bones that twined around her ribs like snakes, slipping under her clothes. Her ribs tingled warmly, and she shivered, her wings buzzing. Her wings tightened as his bones slid around the joints too, stimulating them and making her tremble. “M-Make me hum, hm? Well, how are you going to d-do that from behind this wall of bones?” She gave him a sultry look, resisting the instinctual need to give him the hum that he so craved.

He grinned smugly and with a hum, a bone appeared between her legs, lifting up to rub the rounds of the end against her hidden folds as it began to vibrate.

Toki hadn’t even realized her womanhood had appeared until the bone pressed against her through her pants, and she felt her legs tremble. She couldn’t stop from resting her hands on her cage, and was relieved when the bones didn’t damage her. “Ah-hahh… That’s playing d-dirty.” She whines softly.

If he was going to play dirty, she was going to give him a show. She rocked her hips on the bone, mouth lolling open and panting teasingly to him. She let out a slow groan, and a soft piping filled the air from within her cage. She fanned her wings slowly against her bone chains, and plumed pheromones over to him.

Two could play at the dirty game, after all. She was going to make him wish it was his hands on her ribs, his member between her legs, his tongue twined with hers- oh yes. She was going to make him want her.

Oh FUCK . Aliquam choked slightly as he watched her, clearly gawking as he stumbled back into one of the nearby tables. "H-Holy shit..." He wheezed.

Toki grinned at him over the layer of bones, and lifted her fingers, running her tongue along one of them. “Oh?” She asks, thrusting her hips against the bone vibrating between her legs. Her pants were growing damp, and there was arousal blooming in her belly. She didn’t know he could literally make a vibrating bone- that would have opened up so much play in the bedroom if she’d have known that. “Got nothing to say, hot stuff? What about making me hum, hm? Your little Queen Bee in a cage~?”

It was as if his resolve was crumbling away as the bones slowly fell from around her. "Oh my god~" He whispered hungrily.
As the bones melted away, Toki let her hands strip her clothes away, revealing more and more of herself entangled with the bone chains he’d woven around her. Once she was bare, she left the pile of clothes right there in the doorway, his little vibrating bone toy tangled with the lot of them, and stepped over the last of the cage- the last of his resolve- and strutted towards him like a predator stalking her prey.

Oh how the tables had turned.

She pushed him back against the wall, her pelvis pressing against his as she purred up at him. Her mane mantled up, and she stroked a finger coyly up his chin and grinding her soaking core right against the throbbing, and heated rod that was jutting out of his too-tight pants. “God? That’s not my name, sweetheart. But, if you want to call me that, I don’t mind being your goddess tonight. Will you be a good disciple and worship at my temple?” She coos teasingly.

Toki nipped his neck, kissing up to lock her teeth with his and blow his mind with a searing kiss- and then she was gone, slipping away like the minx she was and leaving him teetering there on the wall as she giggled and sashayed to the kitchen, every ounce of her oozing ‘come get me’.

His little bone chains rattled against her bones, enticing him further.

Aliquam watched her go, before he took a slow breath and straightened himself up to follow after her. "Tokiko, you are so unbelievably addictive." He sighed as he trailed after her into the kitchen with a wide grin. "I'm going to make you reach a new plain of earthbound bliss at its finest, I swear it." He hissed happily.

Toki turned to face him in the kitchen, leaning against the counter and grinning at him. Her spine rubbed against the granite counter, and she had a moment where it felt alien- she was so, so used to having an ectobody on because of the litter, that it felt weird to be without it. Her secondary hands slid up her ribs, and she slid her primary hands along the arches of her pelvis.

She rocked her hips, and made a soft, tiny moan. “A new plain of earthbound bliss, hm? Well, I think you’ll have to touch me for that.” She purrs. “Well, more than just these.” She jingled one of the chains with her secondary hands, her eye lights watching him stalk closer.

Holy shit. Papyrus watched her simply run her hands over her exposed bones; oh it had been so long since he got to properly kiss every last fucking rib. He took a deep breath before he purred, "Oh my fucking god~" For her to hear as he came closer and reached out to set his hands on her hips, pulling her close before he ran his hands up her sides and pulled her into a kiss.

Her hands curled onto his shoulders, fingers plucking at the shirt covering his chest, and she met his kiss with a soft, heated moan. Her hips rocked into his hands, and then into his hips as she was pressed against him. Her wings buzzed behind her, vibrating against the counter. “Mmm, I don’t think we’ve claimed the kitchen yet,” She purred, eye lights twinkling at him merrily as her teeth moved against his, and one of her secondary hands stole up under his shirt to tease his lower ribs.

Toki had always loved his ribs- they were broad and strong in ways that no human set of ribs could ever be. Hers weren’t human looking anymore either, not after her Void ordeal, but he seemed to be enjoying them regardless. And, well, she was enjoying his fingers sliding up the sides, rattling the chains he’d put on her. She enjoyed that a lot.

"Well why don't we change that?" He suggested, purring a soft sound before he cooed and lifted her up onto the cleanest section of counter, kissing along her collarbone before he hummed and looked up to her, smirking. "Darling, will you put your hands together for me~?" He cooed.
"Together?" She questions, her sockets half-lidded at him. His mouth on her collarbone had been pure bliss, and she’d been putty in his hands as he hiked her up and planted her backside on the granite counter behind them. It wasn’t soft, but it didn’t need to be- her bones were tough.

She lifts her primary arms above her head, pressing her fluffy wrists together and purring at him as her legs hook over his clothed hips. Her secondary hands were now both roaming under his shirt, stroking his ribs firmly and playing with his sternum. “Like this?” She asks with a pleasant purr, wondering if he’d meant one set, or both.

He smiled and took her smaller hands in his hold to kiss them gently, though his eye lit up as her primary set of hands rested together and with a hum, another bone appeared before wrapping around her wrists to trap them together. "Juuuust like that~"

Bondage wasn’t usually their forte, but Toki couldn’t deny that it was exciting. Her arms gave a little tug against the bone holding firm, and she gave a slow grin. Her mouth slid forward, and she nipped at his shirt, giving a soft noise of impatience. She wanted to lick his ribs, since he had her smaller hands in his grasp.

Of which… they proceeded to stroke his palms, massaging and stimulating the nerve enriched bones. She had every intention of driving him wild- and he hadn’t even gotten to the really good stuff yet.

“What are you going to do now that you’ve got me right where you want me~?” She purrs to him saucily.

"The answer is very obvious, my beloved. I'm going to love you..." He purred, kissing her again before he took her secondary set of hands into his own, kissing the palms of them before pressing them together gently as his eye lit up again and another bone snared them together against her chest. As she grew trapped, he then gave her another boost and pressed her back into the cool granite as he reached down to undo his pants. "And then I'm going to fuck you until you can feel nothing but my cock inside of you~"

Her face blossomed in a brilliant flare of emerald green, cheekbones tinting almost the same color as her eye lights, and as the soul pounding behind her ribs. She squirmed, and pressed into his touch with a soft keen. With both sets of hands bound, she couldn't touch him much. Though, with the secondary set against her ribs, Toki could stretch her fingers out and ghost them over his ribs and sternum through his shirt.

Her eyes followed his hands down as they started to undo his pants, and she all but licked her teeth anticipated enthusiasm. Her brow cocked up slightly as his member slid free, and she noticed the telltale bulge at the base. "Oh?" She purred. "Pent up enough to knot me, are we?" Not that she was going to complain. His knot was a perfect fit- not too big and not too small.

Her legs were free to help him guide his pants down, and she teased the soft pads of her feet over any expanse of bare bone that she could.

He hadn't taken his shirt off enough for her to savor those delicious ribs of his, so she was just going to have to tease him in other ways while he drove her mad with desire.

"Perhaps~" He stayed just out of reach though as she tried to get clever with what limbs she had left. "Staaaaay." He told her gently before he slid out of her grasp, knowing that the bones around her would keep her trapped.

"Why don't you tell me what you want, my love? And maybe I'll indulge you~" He purred, hands sliding up from his partially removed pants, before humming as he hooked his shirt on a few fingers.
to drag it upwards, showing just a little bit of ecto-skin to his trapped wife.

Her eyes caught on that ecto-skin, which hadn’t been there a few minutes ago, and she felt herself tremble slightly as her mouth went metaphorically dry. She actively tried to move against the bones holding her hands- but lo and behold, they wouldn’t budge. When he meant stay, he actually meant stay, it seemed.

Toki keened softly at him. “Papy. My Aliquam. My love. Where did you learn to tease like this?” She questions, though figures he’s probably learned from her. Toki was as good an influence as she was a bad one sometimes. Given how much she teased him, how could he not have figured out how to drive her mad? “I… I want to see you. All of you.” Her eyes drink in the bits of musculature she can see in the glowing orange of his belly, and the muscles leading down into his pants. “I want to see you touch yourself- touch where you’d want me to touch. Where I would be touching.”

Her fingers flex with a sudden need to be on the ribs she could see.

He smirked, and with a soft hum, began to pull up his shirt. Lordie, He had gotten ripped in the four months since the litter had come, as if every waking moment was spent revitalizing muscle lost in his time of disability. "My ribs, yes… But would you want to dance your fingers along the muscle I have regrown, my darling~?" He purred. "Perhaps trace my abs, or see how long until you tickle me and make me tighten up right under your hands~?"

Her mouth watered a little bit, following the muscular trail of his abs. He never used to summon his ectobody, so now that he was sitting there teasing her with the expanses of his muscular fitness. And she couldn’t even touch it.

Toki whined softly, and reached out with her feet, wiggling her toes at him. “You’re so mean,” She whines. “I want to touch you. I want to lick you, every last inch of delicious orange ectoflesh. I want to see if you taste as good as you look. I want to stroke you, I want to hold you, I want to kiss you and sample you, and savor every bit of you. Papy, please~?"

"But I haven’t even taken off my pants~" He purred, pushing his pants down to his knees before stepping out of them. He had barely gotten to shed his shirt before there was a deep chuckle from the doorway.

"Well… I can see I’m interrupting something."

"F-FATHER!" Aliquam was surprisingly fast as he stepped back into his pants and slid them up, trying to stuff himself inside as he flushed. He at least got himself tucked back into back into his boxers, if not the zipper and button on his pants done. "W-What are you doing here?!"

Toki had no means to hide herself, or the growing puddle of arousal staining her counter top a glowing green. She squirmed, and finally settled for crossing her legs to try and hide her womanhood. A child coming out was different than her being actively aroused. Not that her bony thighs did much- yes, they were thicker since her void mutation, but not enough to cover everything. She still tried though.

“D-Dad.” She blinks awkwardly, seeing him half in the front door. She gives a strained smile. “I thought you’d be with the pups all day since it’s your first day getting to have them to just you and Asgore in your home.” Well, him, Asgore, and Thumper. Settling the children in was important. It hadn’t even been an hour yet. “Is something wrong?”

"On the contrary, I had a passing suspicion that you two would immediately partake in… celebrating your new freedom of responsibility.” Tenebris grinned, before he flicked something at Aliquam.
He quickly caught the small box before he peered inside, blinking. "Father, what is this?"

"My newest project, completed. Soul protection."
Chapter 157

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Muhahahaha. Gotta love when we split the chapter like that~ NSFW take two is a go :D

Almost in a comedic manner, Aliquam's boxers became overwhelmingly tight. "O-Oh my god~" Had he just... did he just...?

Toki’s gaze followed the box, and she blinked at it. Soul protection. “You… You made the soul condoms. You actually made soul condoms.” Her gaze flicked down to her husband’s boxers, and she blinked at the orange stain on the front. Did he… Did he just… bust a metaphorical nut over the condoms? If he did, that was so not fair. Understandable, but not fair. “… Papy? Ah… Did you just...?”

"Hhhhhhh...." His face burned in shame as he hid his face in one of his palms. "Oh my g-god..." He whispered. "Than-Thank you... Father...” He gasped.

Tenebris chuckled lowly, before he gave Toki a grin. "Well, my darling, it seems now it is time for me to take my leave... I was quite happy to get you what you needed."

Toki squirmed against the bones still holding her. “Thank you, Tenebris.” She mumbles to him. She couldn’t help her poor flustered husband- but she did try and rub her thighs together to lessen the ache. “We’ll, ah, see you later.” She squirmed again, and huffed softly. “Paaaaap, let my hands go so I can read the instructions on the box.”

He nodded and with his free hand, snapped his fingers and revoked the magic around her, the bones vanishing.

With all four hands free, Toki was free to rub her wrists and then cover herself until Tenebris left. Once he left, she looked at her younger husband and arched a brow. "Alright, mister early arrival.” She teases. "Lemme see the box."

Not like they'd need it now, she mused a little sourly, her eye on that orange stain on his boxers. Ah well. He was young, and only age and experience could lend one the control needed to hold off an orgasm after denying yourself pleasure for so long.

Toki would just need to take a cold shower.

He nodded slowly and held the box out to her. "H-Here..." He purred, before nearly collapsing against the counter with a weak moan.

Toki sighed and watched him for a moment, before she read over the box. “Well… That’s easy enough to follow. Apparently, the sheets are hard, but soften up and sort of form around the soul when they’re close enough. Then you just peel them off when you’re done. It acts like a spermicide. So… It can be worn by either party, for full pregnancy protection- unlike actual human condoms, so long as you get it fully sealed.” She smiles. “Your dad is going to make a fortune off of these with HTM sales.” She says lightly.
Hopping off the counter, Toki takes a moment to mop up the counter with a paper towel before
doing the same with her thighs. She looks at her summoned parts with a soft sigh. “We’ll have to test
them out later though. I think it’s about time for a cold shower.”

His dad appearing was definitely not conductive to a sexy mood. At least her poor pent up Aliquam
had gotten a release though.

He looked at her with a whimper. "A-A cold shower?" He asked.

His kicked puppy look had her mane fluffing. “Well… Yeah. I mean…” She motioned to the front of
his boxers, wet and orange. “Your Dad was also a bit of a… Well… mood interrupter, Papy. You’re
still sputtering over there, and he’s gone now.”

"Nnnnhh..." Aliquam shakily stepped closer and pressed against her, his mouth slightly ajar as he
shifted his form. He was burning up. That also wasn’t a third leg pressing against her thigh. "T-
Toki... please..." Was he...? Another rock... and it pressed again hard. Oh he certainly was.

“… Papy?” The heat of his shirtless chest against her back had her wings tensing. Had he gone into
heat again? It felt so soon, since the last had been while she’d been pregnant… but in all reality, it
had been quite some time. She turned around to face him, and that left him rocking his clothed
member against her pelvis. “… Did your heat just hit?”

She opened her mouth, and sucked in a breath of his scent, sucking in the smell of his ectobody and
tasting him to discern if she could detect the musky pheromones that came with his heat.

"I-It hit this morning..." He answered on a shaky whimper. "I've been good... f-four months... I've
been good." He was begging. He wasn't saying it straight but he was begging. He needed her... so
badly.

“Oh Papy...” She sighed softly, and rubbed her face gently against his. She could smell the heat
pheromones on him- but it was buried under a lot of his usual cologne. “I can hardly smell your
pheromones. You hid the smell with your cologne this morning- and you know how I love when
you use it. Of course I wouldn’t have noticed...” She says softly to him. “So... shower is necessary.”

She needed his pheromones to help trigger her body’s response to his heat- she’d need to be able to
keep up with his libido.

She wasn’t telling him no, however- but that they needed to wash, so she could scent him properly as
a mate should, and then she was his for the taking.

He whimpered loudly but backed off and collected his shirt. "Okay... Sh-Shower..." He breathed
out, before giving her a small smile. "W-Would you like a head start?"

“Why don’t you be my guest, sweetheart?” She motions him upstairs with a smile. “You’re the one
who needs to rinse the most to let those sweet pheromones of yours out. Though, that’s something
we can tell your dad. Significant quantities of cologne can block out heat musk.” She gave his
backside a playful swat, and ushered him out of the kitchen and towards the stairs, following him up
step by step.

He cooed feebly in reply before making his way upstairs with trembling legs. "Oh Toki... I'm so
thankful the children are going to stay in school for a few more hours." He joked weakly. "I worry
that you and I are going to be quite busy.”

“I imagine so.” She smiles slightly, reaching up to pinch his ass cheek through his pants as he made
his way slowly up. She picked up her pace, and stopped beside him, hooking herself under his
shoulder and helping stabilize his legs.

This was his first heat with this prosthetic. There was no telling if it would malfunction or not while his magic was more unstable.

"A-Ahh..." He trembled and whined at the pinch to his ass but the help up the stairs did him wonders as they made it up.

“We managed last time though. We’ll manage it this time.” She had practice handling her heats over in the other world. Quinn and Kai hadn’t wanted to be apart from them long enough for her to sort herself out properly, so she’d learned on the fly. Once at the top of the stairs, Toki helped him to their room, and then motioned him to the bathroom. “Do you want me to join you in the shower?” She asks him with a lopsided grin.

“Oh yes please, I would like that very much~” He cooed in reply.

Toki smiled slowly and slyly stepped in front of him again. “Alright. Well, you need to strip first,” She let him stand on his own, trailing her hand up his muscular ectoflesh covered chest, to his neck and then up to his jaw. She rubbed her fingers gently along the edge of his jaw bone, and gave him a smug look. “I’ll go get the shower started, handsome. You get your clothes in the hamper before you come in after me, yeah?”

That said, she turned to go to the bathroom and get the shower started.

"Mmh~" He cooed at her touch before giving a small nod. "Y-Yes ma'am..." He murmured.

He let her go ahead to the bathroom as he stripped, though indeed it wasn't long before she was once more in his company, his orange ectobody alight and glowing just slightly as his erection stood tall for her to see. Lord he was needy wasn't he?

By the time he was in, Toki had the shower going, and it was steadily warming up. The box of condoms had been left on the counter top for the bathroom. She turned around to eyeball him, and she gave him a slow purr. One of her primary hands was stuck in the water, and she was clearly testing the temperature for the both of them, since neither wanted an icy shower.

That gave her a moment to peruse the goods, so to speak. She eyed him head to toe, and licked her teeth. “My, my, my… Someone is a needy boy. You already came once today, and look at you, still hard as the moment you pressed against me earlier today, aren’t you?” She teased lightly. Her eye lights trailed up to his, and hers twinkled mischievously at him. He could be such a cute little sub sometimes without even meaning to. “Don’t worry, my love. We’ll get you all taken care of. The water’s gonna warm up in just a moment.”

"Okay dear~" He purred quietly, his eyes hazed over in lust as he gave her a smile while waiting for the okay for the water, though he reached out and ran his hand under the falling water as well, "It’s nice and warm." He mentioned, "It’s going to feel nice."

His hand under the water put him very, very close to her, and Toki didn’t really have anywhere to back up. She just gave him faintly lopsided smile at his hazy lusty look, and reached her free primary hand up to ghost a touch over his chin. “It’s warm enough now,” She says, feeling the shift of the hot water kicking on, “Why don’t you hop in first? Get that first initial rinse~?” She purrs, trying to coax him in.

He sighed gently before he purred and took her by the arms, gently pulling on her as he slid around her. "Come with me~?" He purred, though he didn't give her a chance to say no as he tugged her
into the shower with him. "I'm not going to do this alone, am I~?" His voice was nearly as hypnotic as his gaze was.

Toki was a little lost in his voice and in his gaze, and she didn’t fight as he tugged her into the shower. In fact, she slid it shut behind her with one hand, and then dry-swallowed as she looked up at him. “N-no, not at all.” She stuttered. Her hands slid out to get a grip on him, her fingers settling on the firm curve of his hip. His ectobody had blended seamlessly over his prosthetic, which was good. He’d look odd with a mostly full body, but one leg still skeletal. “A-ah, will you hand me the soap? I can get you started.”

… Okay, maybe she wanted to soap him up a little bit and play with his body while it was soapy and warm. So she liked muscle just as much as she liked bones? She was allowed to like multiple things.

He shivered with a soft sigh at her wandering hands before he nodded and reached out to take hold of the soap, passing it to her. "Here you are, sweetheart." He purred gently, his voice growing a little more sober sounding under the pleasantly warm water.

She took the soap, and lathered the bones of her hands up, before rubbing the bar against the muscles of his chest. She found her eyes more than a little entranced by how the suds and water slid down his body, bumping over his pectorals and down over his abs, before slipping down to his thighs.

As she washed, the scent of his cologne went away with it, and his musk began to rise up. Toki could feel the warm begin to encompass her bones, stirring her arousal deeper into her being. Her eye lights expanded as all four hands came to rest on him, and she slipped closer, his member bumping between her legs as her hands washed him.

Slowly, she was making her way around towards his back, and she seemed content to drink him in slowly- every inch of him bit by bit.

Her hands dancing along his body made him give a euphoric sigh for her efforts and he gave a sweet moan to reward her for her blissful touch, though after long enough he angled his body a bit more and pulled her into a kiss, her body quickly pinned between his own form and the wall.

Toki squeaked as he advanced on her and pinned her to the wall. She welcomed his kiss openly though, her soaked mane trying to fluff upwards as she arched herself into the heated muscle. There was temptation to let her ectobody form, to let the soapy ectoflesh rub together under the spray, but she was enjoying the feel of his bones against her. Unless he demanded, she’d keep her ectobody hidden, since she’d only just gotten her full bones back.

But… She would enjoy his body. As she leaned into his kiss, her hands wandered. Her primary hands slid down, while her secondary went up, sprawling across his shoulders and dragging soft claws along the flesh. Her primary hands, however, slid down to his backside, and she cupped him in her palms, working the sudsy and muscular backside in her palms.

He had the nicest ass- and yes, she was going to fully explore this ass and enjoy every bit of it’s bountiful surface until he simply hauled her up and fucked her senseless under her growing heat.

He cooed at her hands along his rear before he sighed happily and hugged her around the back, though he then leaned down and pressed his face into the lowest part of her mane. "Hey... Would you mind~?" He purred softly.

"Would I mind~?" She questioned. Her eye lights twinkled at him. "You mean my body? Something soft for you to hold~?" Her hands wandered lower on his backside, investigating between his cheeks. "Mmmm. I think I can do that~"
Under his hands, her flesh formed and rolled over her. She was sans her nursing teats, but her body was not the same. She had lost some of the maternity weight, but her ectobody bore marks of motherhood.

She had a small span of stretchmarks across the supple pudge of her belly, and dancing along the sides of her breasts. Ectoflesh could bear some forever marks- and hers was of motherhood.

And his mating bite along her shoulder under her damp mane, of course.

None of her differences and marks stopped him from pressing his face into her bosom and giving a low moan of happiness as he proceeded to massage and grope over her body. "Beautiful, beautiful body~" He whimpered happily, his member throbbing harder against her supple thighs. "I'm the luckiest bastard in the world to be your husband~"

She laugh gently, and more than welcomes him to enjoy himself between the water slick valley of her breasts. "Somehow I have corrupted you into enjoying all things soft and squishy and clearly non-skeleton." She teases, giving his backside an ample squeeze again. "But that's okay. I like you covered in orange too~"

Her fingers find something surprising in their exploration though. She pauses, surprised, and she gently nudges it. "Oh my goodness. You have a butt-hole . That... That is precious ." He didn't even need it, but he had one, and she hadn't ever known he had one.

The prodding against the ring of muscle between his legs had him straighten with a gasp, before he fumbled and flustered as he hid in her mane. "Why are you poking that..." He grumbled. "It just shows up..."

Toki laughed and rubbed her finger gently over it. "Because I didn't notice it the first time we played with your ectobody, and it's adorable." She kissed along his shoulder as he hid in her mane. "Do you want me to leave it alone?" She thrums, her secondary fingers massaging the tense muscles in his back.

"Mmh..." He considered his options, and then considered how Toki didn't really have nails so much as sharpened finger bones. "Well... ah... perhaps later we can e-experiment..." He stuttered softly. "Though not right now; not yet..."

Toki gave him a slow and tender grin, and slid her sharp finger bones away from his pucker. Instead she gave his buns a firm squeeze, and then cupped his lower back as she hiked a leg up over his hips.

With her back against the wall under the multiple shower heads, he had ample room to brace her. And, at this angle, it let his throbbing member press against the heat of her core, and feel the slickness that was most definitely not water. “That’s right...” She purrs, heat rumbling from her. Her body was reacting fully to his heat now, and her bones were starting to ache. “We’ve got so many other things to do right now~ and a new box to make a test run on when we’re out of the shower. Though...” She pauses... “If they don’t work, or we’ve got it on wrong... are we ready for kids yet?”

"Nnh... I... I know my seed is that good, but perhaps we can try father's protection..." He whined quietly. "So I get to have some reckless romps without fearing another litter right away. As eager as I am for more children, I have to make up for lost time with my wife first."

She laughed and pulled him in for a kiss. “Then wait we will. So, no ungloved souls yet.” She taps a finger against the orange flesh of his chest as she drags her smaller hands around to rest between them. Her breasts pressed against his pectorals, pressing the ample flesh upwards. Motherhood and
nursing had it's perks- she’d never had a cup size this large before. “Shall we get out of the shower?” She grins at him coyly, and rocks her warmth against his length. “If the condoms work how I think they work, we should try them dry before we attempt to glove up in the shower. Besides...” She opened her mouth, trailing from the kiss down to taste his chest. “I can taste you- the bare, amazing taste of you. All of you. I’d say you’re clean now."

He cooed sweetly, nodding in confirmation to her words before he sighed quietly and reached out to turn off the water. "Let's... Let's go... please~"

Toki gave him a slow smile. Her leg shifted where she’d hooked it over him. “Carry me~? I'll grab the box as we go past~"

With the water off, he nodded and effortlessly hiked her up into his arms. "My perfect wife with her perfect fucking ass and her perfect body and her beautiful personality." He purred, kissing up her chest and up to her teeth to capture them in a deep kiss as he walked out of the shower, caring little that they left a trail of water in their wake.

She swept the box of condoms into her secondary hand as they stepped out. Toki couldn't stop the bubbling giggle as she looped both her legs around his waist, her teeth working against his as she kissed back earnestly. “It's been a long time since you’ve swept me off my feet like this.”

"And now that I'm back on my own two feet you bet, I'm going to make up for lost time~" He answered with confidence long missed from his composure.

She gave a hearty laugh, looping her primary arms around his neck. She hoisted herself up some, putting her breasts right in his face. “Oh yeah. We’ve got a lot of lost time to make up for.” Not that they wouldn’t have even if his prosthetic hadn’t taken properly, but she was glad that he had his confidence back. Sometimes self-confidence was everything. She was just sad these sorts of prosthetic limbs didn’t work for general humans.

“Take me to bed, handsome. Or wherever you can manage to. This rod between my legs needs some tender care, stat~” She purrs, and oh was that a twitch of her legs around him, pressing him deeper against the heat of her core? Yes, yes that was.

He cooed happily as the placement of her embrace put him in what was easily his favorite position against her body and as she suggested, he took her right to the bed, just in time for his cock to eagerly twitch against her body. "And I'm sure there's a cervix in this room in need of a thorough beating~" He hissed happily.

Toki laughed as she was laid back on the bed. She pulled him flush to her, and for once, he was able to loom over her on his own strength. She grinned at him. “I’m ready and waiting for you~ but I think we wanted to glove up first~?” She opened up the box in her secondary hands, and pulled out a sheet.

She paused, looking at it. “… I think we have a small dilemma. I’m not going to fit.”

He blinked, and then he whined quietly. "Well... I guess... but for now... wont it fit me?" He asked.

“Yes.” She nods slightly. Her smile grows again, and she tosses the box up the bed, before stroking his chest, calling her magic to coax his soul out. “Lets see if it’ll fit you.”

He leaned back and cooed quietly as her magic enveloped his soul, and he gasped only slightly as she pulled it out. "Nh~"

She purred warmly at his response, and cupped his soul in her hand. “Oh, Papy,” She cooed,
“You’re already juicing for me...” Her fingers ran over the thick orange slime his soul was emitting, and she winked up at him. “I’m flattered.”

As the sheet was brought closer, it reacted, softening and allowing her to wrap it around his soul firmly. The soul and sticky juice were contained, and she hummed thoughtfully. Her fingers rubbed his soul. “Can you still feel this?”

He didn’t even answer through his immediate squealing and moaning at the wonderful touches. "O- Oh god~"

Toki laughed, and rocked her hips into his. Her soul floated free of her own accord, dwarfing his in size. “Well, don’t just sit there, big boy.” She bounced her hips under him playfully. “That knot’s going to bruise my pelvic bone if you just keep letting it sit there and throb like that.”

He gave a heavy huff of air before he hoisted her hips up and pressed the head of his cock to her entrance, barely able to hold himself back from just slamming into her, rather than sliding into her slowly like he did.

She gave a slow groan as he pressed the head of his cock into her. “Oh sweetheart,” She moaned gently. “Please- don’t hold back. I ache for you.” Her soul slid to brush against his, tendrils sliding from hers to lace around his and envelop it. Her soul practically swallowed his into her depths, and she enjoyed every bit of sensation that passed through it.

Her begging egged him on, but it was when her soul just about absorbed his did he scream out and actually follow through on his initial intentions.

It was safe to say that Aliquam was already gone to the pleasure, moaning and howling as he began to quickly rock his hips into his wife. His knot was already on the verge of swelling, so it was safe to say her trick did wonders on her poor, heat-induced husband. "O-Oh god! Oh FUCK!"

Toki was drawn along for the ride. She bounced and rocked under him, her hands clutching at the firmness of his skin as she gasped. Her mouth rested open as she panted with every rapid thrust, his swelling knot pulling at her entrance with every tug in and out of her. Gods above, he was fantastic.

Her soul beat against his, her tendrils twining with his and coaxing his out. Her juices enveloped the barrier between them, and miraculously, it held. Slowly, her soul rubbed on his, teasing him harder and riding her own heat out.

"H-hhahhh! Fuck...! Oh fuck~ Toki!” He had no filter left as he cried and moaned out for her to hear. She was doing so well, and he had missed every last bit of this.

“Aliquam~ Oh my love, my husband, my Papy, please, please~” Her soft gasps mirrored his frantic cries of pleasure. Her fingers clutched him, sharp points raking faint lines down the glowing orange flesh of his back. Her soul was beating quicker against his, their tendrils squirming together in bliss. The feedback from his end was… glorious.

On her side, she could feel the slide and push of his member inside of her, the thick split of his growing knot as it stroked inside of her with the most pleasant feeling. But from his side, she could feel every pulse and twitch of her walls, the sensation of his member brushing against her cervix and how it eased open for him, and how his knot rubbed along a few tiny scars her body had inside from delivering the litter- and how the rub and glide of the firmer, thicker strips of flesh seemed to make him pulse harder for the texture.

It was overwhelming. It was glorious. It was… ethereal in it’s bliss.
She could only clutch to him and ride it out, her breaths coming with soft gasps and pleas of his name as her mouth nipped and nibbled over his shoulder, teeth marking him with soft hickies.

Everything his wife felt, he felt, and as it was layered over by her embrace Papyrus could only moan as he returned it considerably.

Her nips on his skin sent tingles along his body and he nearly howled from the fiery sensation before he quickly returned the favor, though with much more gusto as he promptly sank his teeth into the flesh of her shoulder, pressing as deep as he could to remind the world that this woman was his wife, and he belonged to her as much as this bite meant she belonged to him. His teeth grated deep, pressing into bone and linking up with the mark that was already there.

Initially his teeth glinted off of her, pressing but not harming, as her defense was fully restored and back in place. It only took a little tweak on her part to rip it all down, and for his teeth to slide through where her ectoflesh was thinnest and sink right into the bone below. Her mating mark burned with pain, but it was a pain that fueled pleasure in the heat of the moment.

Her teeth splayed, a rough gasp leaving her as the warmth from her body doubled, and she finally dropped her head back down to his shoulder and reclaimed her mark on him just as passionately.

All the while her hips rocked into every thrust, even as his thrusts grew difficult with his thick his knot was growing. Eventually it didn't pull out, and she was left gyrating herself against him, driving them both wild with the friction and feelings shared between the linked souls.

Now knotted, Aliquam couldn't do more than rut his hips against her, whimpering and moaning loudly through his mouthful of her shoulder. His soul began to let off a fair bit more energy now, though... and in that energy came words he long reserved.

He brought his arms up and tightly wrapped them around Toki, pressing his head into her neck as he gasped and moaned.

' With this body, I will carry you in your time of need... ' His vows.

Her soul echoed the words she could feel ringing from his, finishing the next verse. ‘ Your cup will never empty if my blood will be your wine... ’ Her very essence echoed to him, the words different, but so well meaning.

The waves of pleasure were driving Toki wild- and ultimately, the heat in her belly was growing hotter and hotter, the painful urge and need growing inside of her to reach her peak, to take all he had to offer and more. The instinctive part of her was making soft urging sounds into his neck, a plea for him to breed her good.

With shaking legs he pulled his shins underneath her, slightly lifting Toki up so that gravity would further weigh his form into hers.

' With this soul... Nnh~ ' It did well to help and he trembled hard as he pulled closer. ”A-aahh...” A breathy moan momentarily interrupted him before he got a hold of himself and pressed close again. ' W-with this soul... I will be your light in the darkest night...'

Toki leaned into him as he hoisted her up, and she felt his knot hilt deeper. She felt like she was seeing stars, and that she was about to explode. Her soul pounded around him, her walls fluttering around his member as her breath came swift and fast.

She was blind to everything but the feel of him in her, around her, and the taste of him on her tongue.
‘With this love I ask you to be mine.’ Her soul caressed his deeply.

Aliquam gave an airless gasp as the pleasure from both body and soul finally overwhelmed him and he gave a weak howl as his grip tightened, pleasure finally giving way to release and he blissfully pressed his face into his wife. "T-To... Toki~!" He was barely audible, but lord that was definitely pleasure at its finest.

His second release triggered her own.

Her mouth opened, falling from his shoulder as she gasped, her neck and back arching at the lightning bolts of pleasure coming from her walls clamping around him. Her body milked him as her soul tried to do the same for his. Only, where her soul exploded in a messy burst of release, his was contained within the wrap that sealed his off and kept them from conceiving.

“Mine~” She gasps, her arms circling around him to hold him close as she trembled in his lap. “Mine~ yours. Ah~”

He savored the sensation of the blissful release he and his wife both shared, and while he wished to return the favor of being soaked in his wife’s soul-magic, he had accepted his fate to the protection of his father’s invention. It didn't stop him from getting louder of course, but hey, this was a fuck with all responsibility abandoned, wasn't it~?

Eventually, Toki slumped against him, her body going lax as the heat temporarily abated, and her orgasm faded off. She panted against him, and made soft, pleased keens for him to hear. God, it had been too long since they’d gotten to be intimate. A relationship wasn’t built on being intimate, but for two people who enjoyed the activities… Well, four months was far too long.

"Mmh..." It was a while before Aliquam could actually speak, but when he did, all he could do was offer a shaky grin and an exhausted giggle. "W're g'na need another box of those reeeaaaal soon~”

Toki laughed and smacked his shoulder gently as she cuddled up. “I’m not gonna deny it. I definitely enjoyed it~” She purred slowly. “Looks like it worked too. No goop from youuu~”

"Mmh~" He whined softly, before he pulled her securely against him and nuzzled her gently, "I love you..." he purred softly, "I love you, I love you, I love you~"

She kissed his neck gently, and then toppled over backwards, letting her soul draw back into her body as she drew him with her. She batted the paper aside as his soul returned to his chest, and then snuggled him in on top of her as they rode out his knot. "I love you too. Heh... Jeeze. I'm out of shape.” She laughs. She was tired after one romp. Toki could have napped with him buried in her and draped on her right like that.

"You might be out of shape, but you have never looked so beautiful than you look right now." He purred sweetly, trailing kisses along her collarbone as he got comfortable with her on the bed. His soul was giving off a gentle humming as it returned to his chest, a sign of just how happy he was to finally have the luxury of his wife back.

Toki looped all four arms behind his neck, and just relaxed with him. Her mane was pluming up happily as she drank him in with everything she had. She watched him, stroked her fingers gently along his skin and his bones, and drank in everything she’d been denied having for the past four months. With the kids in school and them alone… Well, they could find time for adult time between his work schedule and house chores. And bee hives. “And you… You've never looked as handsome as you do right now.” One hand slid up to cup his cheekbone and she beamed at him. “Happiness suits you, my love.”
And that smile on his face could not be happier as he leaned into her hand, a soft sigh passing through him before he rested his own hand on her cheek. "I have you back... I have my leg back... We can run... We can dance... We can love one another like nothing ever happened to us... And that would be all I could ask for." He cooed.

Toki let a slow and sly grin crawl up her face. "Not necessarily all you could ever ask for." She wiggles her hips pointedly. "I do recall something about as soon as the litter were weaned, you were going to try and put another one in me." She wiggles her brows at him playfully, and kissed him. "So I think a gaggle of kids would be something else you could ask for."

He gave a soft moan at her hips swaying and gave her a sweet sort of look. "Well that is indeed true. You said it yourself that perhaps I should not seek so quickly to impregnate you as to allow you some time to recover from the pups." He giggled. "That's the reason why I was willing to try father's new soul protection."

She snickered softly and nuzzled her face to his. "Well, I appreciate the time to have my body to myself." She smiles. "There are some things I want to get done before I'm pregnant and you and the village proper do your usual worry-hover." Her fingers massage his skull and the back of his neck, relaxing him as she enjoys his weight on top of her. "I want an apiary again. I know it's not the season for bees, but I want to order hives so I can bring in bees next spring. Writing is more lucrative as far as royalties from book sales and movies goes, but bees were my passion."

"Fluffy honeybees flying around like chubby puppies with wings." He agreed with a soft laugh, "I agree. It would be nice to have that little luxury back."

"Yeah." She smiles slowly. "My hive is one thing, but it's different when it's... y'know, non-monster bees." She sighs pleasantly. "I want to work on selling my own honey too. Not sure how to go about that though. Think it'd fall under monster goods?" She wiggles her hips against him slowly, teasingly, and enjoys the movement his knot gives inside of her.

"I would suspect it falls under such, especially since it's green." He chuckled, though a shaky one as his hips rocked in response to hers. "Ah..." He liked that~

She could tell he liked it. She continued to slowly gyrate her hips under him, reveling in the slow rock and squish of his member inside of her. "Mmm..." She breathed against him, feeding the heat that was wrecking them both with the slow, sensual movements. "Green means all organic, huh?" She teases, her eyes twinkling at him.

It was not long before he was trembling, his cock giving a weak twitch inside her. "Nnh... M-Mmhmm..." Boy she knew how to get him.

Toki knew indeed.

She shifted, and suddenly her leg lifted under them, giving her the support she needed to roll them. Her arms moved out from under him as she laid him out flat on the bed and lifted up, settling on her knees as she rolled her hips and started to very slowly bounce on him as his knot allowed her to.

She loomed over him though, her breasts bouncing for him. She’d never removed her ectobody, and now she was going to put on a show for him.

After all- what was the use of having a body like this, if one didn’t live a little and use it to drive her husband wild from time to time...?
Strider Notes: Sometimes how you phrase things can come off absolutely terrible, as Papy here figures out.

Toki had wished for a hive to pick back up at beekeping, and after Papyrus' heat wore off, the lovers had done what they had to, and ordered what they needed in order to bring Toki home new apiaries for the next season of bees. It took until the last week of September to get them shipped in, however. It was... Well, maddening, frankly, the waiting- but very, very pleasing when they finally came in.

Aliquam had just finished assembling one of the hives before he sighed a soft content sound and turned to see his wife where she was assembling another hive. While normally he would simply ask her how it went, he had something on his mind this time and he slowly turned away, taking a slow breath before addressing her. "Toki, when you get the chance, I'd like to talk to you about something... important..."

Toki glanced up at him from the half assembled hive. The end of September was proving to be very, very cold indeed- but the little cove for her hive was sheltering them from some of the chill wind, so it wasn’t too cold. She ruffled her mane, the top of it spilling out of her modified turtleneck, and offered him a smile.

"Well... we’re about as private as we can get." She finished one board on the hive, and then sat back, resting her hands. A builder she was not. Kohaku was the one who usually did her building- and for good reason. Her hive was slightly lopsided. "What did you want to talk about?" She asks, draping her arms lightly over the half finished hive.

*Oh lord- it looked horrid.*

With a soft sound under his breath, Aliquam came over and tried as subtlety as possible to start fixing the hive under her. "Well... I've been thinking about... well.. Us."

That bade her pause enough to make her not kick up a fuss over him fixing the hive she was building- she knew it was bad, but it wasn’t that bad, was it? Her eye lights blinked at him slowly, and she rocked back on the pads of her toes, her claws kneading the ground with a sudden anxiety. “Us?” She says slowly, uncertainly. ‘Us’ sounded very ominous, and she’s certain he heard the uncertainty in her voice.

"Yes... us.... uh..." He rubbed his neck, slowly stopping with his fiddling to lean back a little. "I was... unsure of how to go about asking. But after everything we've been through... The Humans Against Monsters... your disappearance for those six long months, and being a surrogate for the pups for Father..." His words trailed off into soft stutters, before he took a slow breath to steady himself. "Toki... Forgive me if this sounds... you know ... Unwarranted and out of the blue... but..."

Toki’s soul had been sinking, and she’d felt something akin to a cold sweat break out on her body. She’d asked him many a time if he’d regretted staying with her, telling him that he’d have had a simpler life with another monster instead of having stayed with her. And here he was- he was going
to finally ask her to separate. She… She didn’t know what had triggered it. She thought they’d been in a good place, and doing just fine- but maybe, maybe there was something he was seeing that she wasn’t?

“Do you think you’re ready to try again to have children?” His orange gaze looked up at her, hoping this wasn’t going to be something he’d regret asking.

What…?

Toki blinked slowly, and she felt a flash of anger and fear and something akin to relief bounce through her. “You… You mother fucker!” She explodes, lurching around the half built hive to pound her fist into his arm and give him the worst dead arm known to man. Okay. Maybe not just his arm- she may have tackled him. You couldn’t blame her- that had been terrifying. “You utter mother fucking fucker mc’fuck face! Did you even hear what you sounded like when you asked that?” She glared at him.

Were her sockets watering? Yes, yes they were.

"OW! OW! OW!” He yelled in pain as he went down before he caught her assault with the one good arm he had left, though it was in that moment he repeated to himself what he said... and almost immediately released her, accepting his punishment but at least covering his face. "Toki, oh my god, I am so sorry!” He yelped under his arms.

She didn’t really hit hard after the initial punch- but she flailed her hands at him and eventually draped over him with a soft sniffing sound. “You’re an asshole.” She tells him softly once she’s worn herself out flailing incoherently at him. “You scared me. It sounded like you wanted to separate.” She gave him a sad doe-eyed look and wobbled her teeth at him. “Don’t do that again.”

He slowly wrapped his arm around her before he sighed. "Separate? from you? Never... Have I not told you time after time that I never once regret marrying you?” He told her sternly, before his voice softened and he sighed. "I'm so... so sorry, I didn't mean to scare you, my love…”

She buried her face in his chest and sighed. “I know you didn’t. Just… Everything that’s happened- everything you listed- is a million and one reasons why you could have and should have hit the road long ago. I don’t think I know a single human man who would have stayed.” She propped her chin up to look at him again, and dried her eyes. “I’m sorry I freaked out like that. Just… It’s something I’ve always been afraid of, I guess- that one day you’ll realize the mess you’re in, and pack your bags and leave with the kids. Another one of the secrets I’ve kept.” Her arms cross on his chest, and she peers down at him quietly. “We need to talk about those...” She murmurs to him. “Air those out- and if you still feel like kids after, we can talk about it.”

He took her words in before he sighed and smiled. "Toki... I'm not a human... I'm a Blaster Beast. Through thick and thin, Beasts mate for life... You can tell me anything, and as long as it ends in you still loving me as much as I love you, then I'm ready to hear whatever it is. No matter what it is.”

Toki nods softly to him and smiles slowly. She leans up to kiss him. “Sometimes I forget how much beast is in you. You don’t always act it… But that does explain why you stuck with me for so long. Beasts mate for life- and I suppose you chose me for your mate back when I was just a simple skeleton, hm?” She rubs his cheek gently with a soft hum, and then rolls off of him. She sits in the grass, and sighs. Secrets were hard to share. “There are two big ones off the top of my head that I can recall wanting to share with you.” She tells him gently. “One of them involves showing you something.”

"Through thick and thin, I still love you to this day." He purred, sitting up beside her. "Go on then?"
“Alright.” She nods slowly. Toki sighs. “So… You remember how I control the Save and Load buttons now…?” She mumbles gently. “And how Cruelty destroyed the Reset button?”

Memories long forgotten- or rather, tried to be forgotten- are quickly remembered and he gave a soft noise as he nodded. "Yes, I think so..." He spoke quietly. "Why do you bring them up?"

“Because, something happened all those months ago when I was in the coma.” She crosses her arms and makes a soft sound. “I wasn’t just out of it. I was... somewhere. I want to call it a limbo.” She says gently. Toki closes her eyes and sighs. “I was close to dying, Pap. If not for all of you- the whole village- I’d have died when I summoned that Queen. In limbo, I saw… the buttons. Save, Load- and Reset. But Reset was… different. Very, very different.”

"U-Uh... How different?" He asked softly.

“Well...” She summons screens, and turns them around for him to see. Save is normal, as is Load, but Reset is not Reset. Rebirth glares at them ominously. “Like this. Rebirth is apparently my option now when I’m... close to death.”

He looked up and his eyes widened slightly. So easily she could die and become reborn... and it would be that easy...? It was his turn to feel the sinking feeling in his soul. "Y-You'll... Never use it... right?" He asked quietly. "If you're close to death... you wont rebirth... you'll keep fighting... right?"

Toki watches him quietly and swallows. “Not until I’ve got no other choice but death by old age,” She promises him gently, and reaches out to take his hands in hers. “I’m cursed to a life of never dying, Pap. Not permanently. When you’re gone, and our children are gone, and our children’s children are gone, I will still be here. I may not be in this body, but I will still be here.”

As she took his hands, he looked at them, before he took a weak breath. "So... Even after my bones have disintegrated and I've died and been dead for centuries... And our children and our grandchildren... you'll be able to... just go right up to our graves..."

“Yes.” She says gently, and her fingers squeeze his. Both sets of her hands hold his. This was something she’d been trying to get him to understand since she’d came back from the void. But... finally, it seemed, he was understanding why she was so afraid of the future. “Are... Are you okay?” She asks him softly.

She’d been slowly coming to terms with her oddly omnipotent immortality. As for him... Well... He’d have to come to terms with her impending eternity without her family on his own.

"..." He pressed his teeth together, before his eyes pressed closed and his trembling hands lost what little grip they had. He wanted to talk... but... his words were in his throat. There was nothing he could say... how could he?

Where he had no grip, Toki had plenty. She took his hands, and lifted them to her teeth. She kissed his limp knuckles gently. “It's not for nothing, Papy... You’re my first love. You’re my mate. You’re going to be the one I remember for all of my lifetimes.” She smiles softly to him, letting the buttons disappear as she scooted closer to hug him and soothe him. “However, further lifetimes aren’t something we need to worry about. That’s a long time away. It'll be okay.” By the time he was gone, she wouldn’t be his worry anyway. She smooched his temple gently, and cuddled him closely. “We have our lives to live now - we have children to have, and our futures to look forward to.”

He grit his teeth a little bit, before he whined and pressed into her shoulder, his arms quivering where they hung between them. "... I-I'm sorry..." He whispered.
“It’s a hard realization to have.” She soothes, and kisses his cheeks. Toki wraps him in her arms and quietly exhales. “I have my fair share of panic attacks when I think of a future without you. So I just… don’t. I try and focus on the now. That’s the only way I get through my day- thinking of the moments I’m having with you now, or with our kids.” Her smaller hands slip up to cradle the back of his skull. “Focus on our now, Aliquam. We want to have kids- that’s a yes, by the way- and we have things we need and want. Like… a new car to fit the future children.”

He sighed quietly as her words brought his mind to a standstill. It took him a little while before he smiled up at her. "You are the most wonderful woman I could have ever asked to be my wife..." He purred, before he set his head on her chest. "I suppose the next time I go into town I can look into trading my vehicle. It's still in good condition so there might not be much of a difference to pay when all is said and done." He hummed.

She cradled his skull against the bones of her chest and sighed. "As much as I love your car, it's not good for more than two kids. You'll want to get something that’s a comfortable ride though. It's a long drive anywhere." She kisses the crown of his skull.

"Roomy, efficient, comfortable." He named off before he hummed and smiled. "Any other ideas we will want to include, my love?"

She laughs. "Why not toss in gas efficient as well?" She jokes faintly, and sighs. She leans against him, and ponders him quietly. He was too unsettled and upset by that first secret. He didn't... He didn't need to know about the dark side.

A final soft chuckle left them both in silence.

Aliquam was thankful that they changed the topic, but it continued to linger in his mind just what had been warned... And as happy as it made him to hear his beloved would never die, it also haunted him, that one day she would wake up without him at her side...

Toki peppered him in kisses and hugged him tightly. She watched his face quietly, before looking back at the mutilated bee hive. "So... Do I get to put the baby crib together this time?"

Distractions and teasing would drive it from his mind in time. And for now, she'd remind him that she said yes to more babies... And that she was horrible at carpentry.

"Nyeh heh heh heh~" With a more genuine laugh, he pulled back and pecked her cheek. "Absolutely not. I love you, but I have no faith in your carpentry~" He cooed softly.

Toki offered him an obligatory pout. “Aww, are you telling me that’s not the most amazing and well-put together bee hive that you’ve ever seen?” She wiggled her brows playfully, and ran her fingers lightly over his ribs, tickling him. “I could put a crib together~”

Her wandering fingers had him giggling before he reached down and caught her wrists. "I love you, with all my heart, but good lord, absolutely not. You put the queen catch on sideways and you've left the comb in the lock-open position; any nectar would just leak out."

Toki rocks her head back and laughs as her wrists are captured. “I didn’t realize I’d messed it up that badly.” For the type of hives she’d bought, where you just unlocked the combs and the honey ran out without disturbing the bees, that would be an absolute disaster. “So I guess I’ve got no hope of going into the house building business, huh?” She grinned cheekily, and ruffled her mane so she could lean closer and nuzzle him with the fluffiness that surrounded her.

"None at all~" He purred, before he chuckled and kissed her a few more times. "But that's fine, I can
tackle that fine enough, you don't even need to worry about it 's long as I'm around~”

“Kohaku has told me the same thing since we were children” She leans into him with a laugh. “So, how about I just unbox the parts for you, and let you do the building? It’s basically big puzzles for you, isn’t it?”

"Oh yes, it's very fun." He answered happily. "If you'd like to skim the instructions while I do, simply if I have any questions." Not likely though, if he was being honest.

Toki gave him a cheeky grin, kissed him, and then crawled away to fetch the instructions. “That’s fine with me. I don’t mind skimming instructions.” She got the paper, and settled down so she could deal with reading them and talking with him. “So- how do we want to go about telling Skylar and Honey that we’re going to end up trying to give them some siblings?”

"I think they're going to be relieved that they no longer need to argue about which is the younger and older. They'll both just be the older siblings." Aliquam laughed as he sat down to pull apart and put back together the hive that Toki had practically butchered.

The poor hive would be revived under his careful hands- but he would have to do some careful prying, because there were nails where nails should not be.

“‘I agree there. But that’s not what I meant.’ She laughs. ‘I mean, do we tell them we plan to? Or do we just leave it as a surprise, and then tell them the news when my belly shows up?’”

"Something tells me they already know. Our children are frightfully observant and are somehow very skilled with intimidating methods of interrogation." He laughed lightly.

She snorts, and makes a warbling noise of amusement. “I doubt they already know, since they’re in school, but they are observant. If we don’t shut our doors before doing shenanigans, they’re most certainly going to know.”

"Heh, if the scent doesn't hit them as soon as they walk in the door.” He mentioned with an amused hum.

“‘Well, they didn’t smell when you almost boned me in the kitchen.” She gave him a cheeky grin and giggled. “Or at least they didn’t know what it was.”

"They have until puberty to be clueless." He snickered, before he stood up and adjusted the now-completed hive on it's pedestal. "Well, here we go. What do you think?" He asked.

“Ugh, don’t even make me think about our babies hitting puberty. Their first heats are going to be horribly awkward.” She groans. Her gaze slides down to the hive, and she beams. “It looks good!” She praises. Her eye lights twinkle at him. “Want some help with the next one~?” She teases.

"Yes ma'am!" He laughed. He walked over to the next package of parts and pulled it open, dumping out the parts with a hum. "Let's get started!" He announced.

Toki laughed, and flopped over to help him sort them. “This doohicky is used to unlock the hives. Y’know, every single one of them is the same. We probably only need one.”

"Yep. From what I saw on the instructions, it opens the valve systems that make the honey drainage possible.” He explained.

“Yep.” She nods. “So we keep one active one… And maybe two or three in case the rods break. Which happens. Has happened- boy, it sucks when they break.” She chuffs lightly.
"Smart thinking, lucky me to have such a clever wife." Of course he thought of that, but hey, he could be sweet to her~

She stuck her tongue out at him. “Sometimes I have my moments.” She blew a raspberry at him. “Speaking of clever… What do you want for dinner tonight, dear?”

"Well, how does pasta sound?" He asked.

“Pasta sounds good, but we need more than noodles. Or our growing kids do. So pasta and maybe steamed broccoli?” She suggests. “Vegetables are good for them.”

"That sounds delicious. Maybe have a salad as well?" He added to the idea, "A light start to a meal that might be heavy if we use a heavy sauce."

“Mmm, that would work.” She nods. “Salads are good. Particularly Caesar salads.” She grins at him cheerfully. “There’s the most irony in those when you stab them with a fork.”

He groaned at that before he laughed and shook his head before he started on building the hive. "Et tu, Brute?" He asked cheekily.

She laughed at him and flicked some grass at him. “You’re silly. So a salad, with vegetables and pasta. Sounds good.”

Well Aliquam looked satisfied with the menu for tonight as he put his focus into building the hive up for his lovely yet unskilled wife.

As Toki split off to start on dinner, Aliquam stayed with the hive parts to finish building up the apiaries. After careful construction of each part of the hives, the skilled Skeleton stacked the hives in a form he learned was called a 'Langstroth' Hive, which was two deep boxes for brood on bottom followed by a slightly more shallow box for honey on top of a queen exclusion screen. Most of the videos he watched online were from American beekeepers, but hey. If it works, it works.

It was perhaps an hour or two since Aliquam spoke with his wife that he completed the new area of Toki's courtyard designated for her passion, said view allowing Aliquam a moment to swell in pride for completing the task, as he knew and so eagerly looked forward to seeing what his wife thought about his work.

Though as he savored his small victory, he was given a lovely reminder of something quite crucial to the working man. In the process of completing what his sweet but unskilled wife was unable to, he had accumulated quite the appetite.

And that just wouldn't do, now would it?

In the time that they had split forces, the kids had gotten home from school, which ran later than human school did. They got home in time for Toki to be serving an early dinner, as she always did when they got home from school.

She'd made steamed broccoli with cauliflower, chicken Alfredo with spaghetti noodles because Honey couldn't stand actual Alfredo noodles after she'd seen Gael hurl up a tapeworm, and Toki had prepared a Caesar salad for everyone that was seated on the table.

And in the oven?
Her signature honey tarts were baking for desert. All she needed to do after was drizzle a little of her honey on them, and they'd be good to go. Truthfully, the only difference with this one, since it was made with her honey and not bee honey, was that it was tinged green.

Toki got the kids set up in the dining room with their salads, and a bowl of raw meat for Sobek as he grumpily ate next to Honey, and then she made her way to the back door to call for her husband.

"Papyrus! Dinner's done!"

Aliquam may or may not have hurried inside, and only just remembered to kiss her cheek on the way in. Oh Aliquam could have howled in delight at the beautiful feast he could see through the door to the dining room, but he settled for humming happily as he washed his hands before he scooted into the other room and sat down with his family, giving an amused look at his wife.

"Tokiko, this looks unbelievable. I have no doubt that I'm going to enjoy this and that we will have little to no leftovers by the time we're done." He announced happily, leaning over to kiss his wife admirably as she returned to join them. "Thank you for the meal~"

Toki laughed softly at his enthusiasm, and smooched him again. She scooted his plates closer to him, and finished serving dinner, before going to pull the tarts out. She’d eat in a second while they cooled on the counter with honey drizzled over top. That was the absolute best way to set the honey, after all.

Once she was done in the kitchen, she returned to the table and took her seat, setting in to sample her Alfredo. Not too bad for not using actual Alfredo noodles.

“So, how was school?” She asks the children lightly.

“Good!” Honey chirps. “I wish they’d let me take Sobek though.”

Toki glanced to the bird, who still hadn’t grown back all his feathers. He was trying, but he was at that in-between fugly stage, and he seemed to know it quite well. “I don’t think Sobek is strictly school safe. He did eat your homework yesterday.” She points out lightly.

"I made a card for Snuggles to see when he wakes up." Skylar spoke up. "I left it next to where we put him..."

"Oh son, don't be discouraged, remember what we told you about butterflies needing time in their chrysalis?" Aliquam spoke gently, having picked up on Sky's emotions through his voice.

"Mmhmm... Its just been so long..." Sky whined quietly.

"Aww, sweetie..." Toki gave her son a soft look. "Snuggle misses you just as much as you miss him. When he emerges again, you'll be able to cuddle up with him and watch movies just like you used to."

"At least he's a pretty lump and not a naked bird like Sobek." Honey poked her bird gently, and Sobek squawked at her.

"Well... All birds go through the fuglies." Toki chuckles softly.

"I would rather Snuggle go through the uglies than not even be awake." Sky whined quietly.

Honey looked at Sky with consideration of telling him to get over it, but rather than doing that, she reached out and prodded Sobek, telling him to go comfort her brother.
Sobek gave her a look that was nothing kind, but he gobbled down the last of his meal, and got up. He waddled over, and plopped his head in Skylar’s lap, looking up at him with grumpy eyes as he chittered at him.

“Well, sweetheart, it’s not that he’s not awake.” Toki says gently. Her soul ached for her son. “He can hear you, I think. If all else fails, remember…” She lifts a hand, and rubs her hand against her chest. “Remember, you can talk to him in here. He might not be able to make words, but you’re connected, bound together. You can feel him, even if you can’t cuddle him in your lap. I can talk to Clover and Sugar and Stripe, even when they’re not here.

Skylar pet over Sobek’s feathers and giggled quietly as he smiled up at the hissy bird. "Thank you, Sobek~" He cooed gently, giving the minion an appreciative nuzzle.

Sobek hissed again, but seemed to resign himself into Skylar’s attentions. He settled his patchy feathered self into his lap, eyed the orange eyed boy lightly, and then trilled at him softly. He could offer comfort this once- but he better not expect it often!

Toki cocked her head, munching another bite of her dinner as she watched their exchange. She nudged her husband so he’d watch too. Sobek was behaving for once.

Oh Aliquam got a perfect view of that, and may or may not have secretly pulled his phone out for recording such a sight.

Toki gave a soft smile, and shook her head. He liked to record things- sometimes she wasn’t sure why he did, but the memories would be treasured once the twins were older. She settled into her meal fully, watching as the twins worked on munching through theirs.

“Do we get tarts after dinner?” Honey asks hopefully.

“If you finish all your salad, yes.” Toki hums.

It’s Skylar for once who looks at it with disdain. “I don’t want all of it though.”

“It’s good for you.” She looks at Aliquam. “See? Even your daddy’s eaten all his salad. And a second helping… But see? It’s good for you.”

“Mnnnhehhh.” Skylar made a face, but worked at munching on it, grumpily dipping the lettuce into the dressing and working the leaves with his teeth. “It’s so hard to eat.”

“I know, sweetheart.” Toki cocked one of her teeth at him and wiggled it. “You’ll get the hang of it, Skylar.” Aliquam told his son gently, giving him a reassuring grin. “I believe in you.”

He sighs and cuddles Sobek closer. Sulkily, he continues to munch. “I can eat most things, but some things are harder.”

“They’re harder for me too.” Toki nods. “I’m sorry you look like me, baby.” She gave him a lopsided smile, ignoring the soft sting to her soul those words caused. She loved his little crooked grin when he was happy. “I know my teeth aren’t easy to use.”

Skylar only shrugs. “I don’t mind them, I just wish they were easier to use.”
"You'll get it before you know it, Sky." Aliquam hoped his words would encourage his son. Though it was not like he had much to offer in terms of aide. Such things would be on his own if naught his mother's assistance.

“It helps if you think of your teeth sort of like fingers. They can grab food just as easily as they can chew food.” Toki supplied lightly, and demonstrated by using her teeth to grab a fork full of noodles off her fork. It was… messy.

Skylar looked at her in bemusement. “You’re messy.”

“Messy? It’s called saving some for later.” She jokes.

"No less graceful than a crab's mandibles, my love." Aliquam laughed gently. “An attempt had been made indeed to be a good example to your son.” He stuck his tongue out at her teasingly.

Toki cleaned her teeth with a napkin, and then splayed them at Aliquam in a bemused display. "Crab mandibles? I was thinking more like Predators from Aliens Verses Predators. And what do you mean an attempt?" Her brow climbed up near her scar. "I am an exceptional example for both of our kids."

Honey had the audacity to snicker at her mother.

Toki faked looking wounded. "I feel the love."

Skylar on the other hand was at least trying to practice with his dexterous teeth, wiggling them before he tried to get the hang of plucking food from his fingers.

Toki watched him, pleased with his progress, and finished most of her plate of food. Full now, she offered her leftovers to her ravenous Husband, who she wasn't entirely certain wouldn't eat the plate if he wasn't careful.

Shamelessly, Aliquam accepted the offered plate and gave his wife a thankful smile. "Thank you~" He cooed sweetly, leaning over to give her a soft kiss before he started into the plate with great enjoyment.

Toki laughed. “I’ll go grab the honey tarts while you three finish up. You two better hurry, or your Daddy will gobble down your Alfredo too.” She teased.

Honey’s eyes got wide, and she curled her arms around her plate and pulled it closer to her. She let out a tiny baby growl at him. “No Daddy. My noodles. Momma made spaghetti noodles for me ‘cause I don’t like nasty worm noodles.”

Toki barked out a laugh, and stood to take her dishes to the sink, leaving her husband to deal with his two precocious children.

He snorted at that, before he gave her a small waggle-at with his fork. "Keep your noodles, Mommy's just giving you phooey to fuss over." He laughed. "I'm content with what I have."

Honey snarfed down another bite. “Are you sure?” She gives him a suspicious look.

Toki snickered, and decided to not help the situation at all. “How many tarts do you want to sate that appetite of yours that you worked up, my love? A quarter of a tray, or half a tray?”

Honey’s noise of utter outrage was worth it.

"Oh I have no doubt I'll easily down half the tray!" Aliquam laughed, playing along. "I absolutely
love your tarts!” He answered, before he smirked over at Toki, "And all the honey you could offer me.” He purred sweetly.

Toki flushed with her back to him, but it was telltale his flirt got to her with how her mane poofed.

"Daddy." Honey gave him a serious look. "If you eat half the tray, you'll get a tummy ache. And when you get a tummy ache, I'll laugh at you cause you were a butt head and didn't share the goodies."

Skylar snorted into Sobek's mangy fluff. "She told you." He giggled.

"So maybe a quarter tray for Daddy then. With extra honey so he doesn't try to eat yours.” Toki teases, recovering her composure enough to bring in a desert plate for them all to share.

Aliquam gave quiet ‘nyeh heh heh heh’s as he accepted his dessert from his beloved and gave Honey a playful look. "I wouldn't eat them all, silly girl. I love Momma’s tarts, but you are very much right, I'd get a stomach ache and I wouldn't be able to sleep well tonight, now would I?"

“‘You’d also get big fat, like Momma was when she had grandpapa’s babies.” Honey puffed out her tummy and her cheeks, and gave him a cross eyed look, because apparently that’s how he’d look if he ate too many tarts.

Toki snorted, and sat down, guffawing into one of her hands. “Dear lord, you guys. We wouldn't want daddy to get pudgy, would we? He wouldn’t fit in his armor anymore.” She couldn't resist leaning over to poke Papyrus in the stomach, where the firmness of his invisible muscles was felt. “When we’d have to find the breastplate stretcher.” She jokes.

"Lord I'm not even going there." Aliquam gave a weak laugh. "I spent months getting my battle body back, I'm not going to lose this for anything." He announced proudly.

“Not even going there, hm?” She grins at him. “So, you want me all soft and supple, but I can’t have a soft and squishy Papy to cuddle at night~?” She grabs a tart and nibbles at it.

"And yet you wont deny when I say you like your hubby's hard muscled body. It might not make the best pillow but you get bragging rights~" He cooed.

She flushed around her honey tart and wiggles a brow at him. “Well, I ain’t gonna deny that. I’ve definitely got bragging rights to the most muscular skeleton around.”

Honey groaned. “Ugh, you two are so grossssss.”

“I think it’s sweet.” Skylar watched them with intense interest. “When will you give us more babies?”

Toki choked on her honey tart- an impressive feat for a being without a constantly physical throat.

Well that surprised Aliquam as well and he almost choked, not quite , before he looked at his son with a shocked look. "Skylar, good lord!"

“What?” He blinks at him slowly. “I want a little sibling. We’re in school now- you’ve got time to stay home when Daddy isn’t working. Do what adults do.” He wiggles a hand. “Make baby magic.”

“Make baby magic.”” Toki wheezes.

"They're more eager than I am!” Aliquam was starting to break down laughing as he pressed his
head into his hand. "Oh my god...!"

Toki cleared her throat and laughed softly. “Good lord Skylar. Well. I can’t tell you we’ll give you a sibling any time soon, okay?” She leaned over to squeeze her husband’s leg gently. They’d keep it a secret until she was pregnant- and then watch the children freak out.

“So you want a baby too, Daddy?” Skylar tilts his head, and then hums. “You need to get to work sweet talking Mommy then.”

Aliquam shook his head with a wheeze of laughter, "Skylar, let me go at my own pace and you’ll get your siblings. I just cant imagine it to go well if I’m rushed by my own children."

He huffs softly at him. "But your pace is so slowww!" He complains. "Honey and I will have to move out by the time you two give us little siblings, and by then we’ll be too old to properly bond with them ’cause we'll have to go out and do adult things like get a job and find a house."

Toki blinked. "I don't think it'll take us that long. And just because you're grown doesn't mean you have to move out- you move out when you feel you're ready, and not before."

"You're missing the point." Skylar's cheeks puff more, his crocodile teeth puckering at them as he pouts.

"No no we get it, we're just giving you a hard time~" Aliquam teased sweetly, an amused grin growing on his face.

Skylar frowned at him and sighed. “You’re both mean.” He pouts. “I’m serious. I want a baby to cuddle.”

“Give it time, sweetheart.” Toki chuckles. “Babies can’t be made instantly, sweetheart.”

"You guys couldn't come fast enough, you know... I was so excited to get to cuddle with my babies and I spent a lot of nights curled up to your mother's belly." Aliquam hummed with a smile. "It'll be well worth it."

Skylar sighed and slumped in his chair. “Well I guess… I know babies take a long time to grow. Three months and then some- it’s a long, long time to wait.”

Toki choked a little bit, and shook her head. “Sweetheart, that was a special circumstance. I carried the both of you for exactly forty two weeks- and then you decided that it was time to enter the world on your daddy’s birthday. Well- start to. You arrived the day after.” She offered them a lopsided smile. “So I figure you’ll be in for a long wait for these babies too.”

“Ugh really?” Skylar looked nonplussed. “Forty two weeks? That’s… I don’t know how many months that is. Too many months.”

“That’s how we felt when waiting for you both.” Toki laughed. “We were so ready for you to come- your daddy was walking on eggshells waiting for when you’d come. He nearly panicked any time I had a contraction.”

"At least Father was there to help us keep a level head. We were, and still are, so lucky that he was there for us..." Aliquam hummed happily

"And yet he was a lump of panicked anxiety the entire drive home.” Toki laughed heartily. "He was so terrified you both would arrive in the car. Your labor was a lot longer than the litter's was."
"It was long?" Honey asked, furrowing her brows. "When we made your belly hurt?"

"It did take a while longer than the Pups, but you still made it here, so it was worth the wait."
Aliquam purred gently.

"Really? How much longer?" Skylar asked.

"Well, you two decided it was time to come early in the morning. But, I didn't realize it until later in the day- and you arrived early in the next night." Toki answered her son warmly. "I half thought you'd be a birthday gift to your daddy."

"Instead you ended up a Belated birthday present." Aliquam added with a soft laugh. "But I would think it's a good thing you two get your own birthday and I still get to enjoy mines without guilt."

That had the twins cocking their heads at him. “Without feeling guilty?” Skylar blinked.

“Why would you feel guilty?”

Toki laughed softly. “That’s something for another day, children. Finish up your dinners- and why don’t we all go play some games after you’re done? If your homework is done that is.”

“Homework is all done, Momma. Can we play Uno?” Honey chirps hopefully.

“Ugh no.” Skylar makes a face. “Not Uno again. Maybe a video game?”

Toki leaned back and cast a tender look to her husband as their eldest children bickered about what to play. This was life now- dinner with her husband and their children, and listening to them bicker about what the family would play. She wouldn’t change it for anything.
Chapter 159

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: This is definitely a chapter where things happen in the foreground and background. Read carefully, my lovelies- You might not understand now. But you will. In time. Hehehehe.

Their efforts to conceive actually were not very fruitful. Two weeks of trying- putting them well into the freezing cold of the first week of October- had no visible effort shown. It was amusing that an accident could happen in an instant and result in a surprise pregnancy, but when you actually tried to do something, it never seemed to happen when you wanted it to. ‘Amusing’, though more or less frustrating for the twins who were not very patient.

Honestly, Toki didn’t mind that she wasn’t pregnant yet. She was making use of the streak of good weather to fly- but there was only so much exercise to be done when one only flew around the village for hours a day. She was itching to stretch her wings for a long distance flight, frankly. Flying around the skies was just not enough for her anymore.

Which is why she found herself on Tenebris’ doorstep, bouncing on the toes of her paws while her husband lingered not far behind her with Clover.

The massive Hell Hornet was less than pleased about the mild dusting of snow that was molesting her feet, but she was standing still regardless as Aliquam adjusted her saddle and made sure the newly made saddlebags were in order.

“Toki, if you’re sure you can manage it. Worst case, I imagine that Clover would at least be able to carry you both home... I suppose it would save gas." Tenebris gave a low thrum as he considered the offer, before he offered Toki a soft smile. "I really appreciate it..." He gave her a peck on the head. He smiled as he straightened up. "Let me go get my wallet, and I’ll cover the payment, as well as give you guys some extra money for lunch while you’re out.”

"Toki gave him a cheery two-handed salute. “Alright, Dad. Well, Papy and I aren’t going to turn down lunch on you.” She grins cheekily. “And the exercise will be good for Clover and me. We’re getting pudgy just sitting around.”

The massive Hell Hornet lifted her head and made a terse sound at her summoner, obviously offended. Pudgy? Pudgy? She was Pudgy? How dare she?

Toki only laughed, stepping down out of the doorway so she wasn’t looming while Tenebris went to fetch his things. “Okay, okay. We’re not getting pudgy. Pleasantly plump perhaps.” She grins.

"Well-Conditioned." Tenebris chuckled under his breath as he turned to head back inside, a smug smile on his face as he wondered if the hornet heard him.
She heard him indeed- and Clover made a loud grumbling hiss that was very clearly a beastly insult towards his lineage and a threat of what she could do to him with his own tail. You did not make fun of a female summon’s weight.

Toki got the gist of it, and she laughed, heartily, and padded down to go soothe her summons. “Oh Clover, you’re a riot. He’s not intimidated by you like Tenne was, you silly bee.” She moved to flop on her face, and she rubbed her fingers into the fiery fluffy mane of the massive hell beast. “Mmm, you have gotten bigger though. Not in weight, but in size. Your saddle used to fit a few rings tighter.”

Tenebris came out soon with his wallet. He smiled and patted Clover's face fearlessly as he approached the trio on his front lawn. “You're still lovely, my lady.” He cooed, showing that he indeed did not share Tenne's fear of her. "Such a pretty girl aren't you?" He cooed teasingly.

The open-mawed grin she gave him- from a mouth big enough to grasp his entire torso when fully opened- was anything but pretty. Clover rattled at him, but didn’t bite him.

“You’ve got balls of steel, Dad.” Toki snorts. “Anyway- I want to get going before you make her too moody.” She shifts, and pulls her wallet out of the fanny pack she’s got it tucked into. “Here, Dad. Put whatever you want to give us into here, and we’ll get the shoes.” She smiles at him warmly.

He smirked, before he leaned up and pecked her snout, "I still love you~" he purred, before he moved away and pulled cash from his wallet to put away into hers. "Thank you, Toki. I hope you enjoy your flight." He pecked her head as he tucked the wallet back into her fanny pack.

Toki zipped it back up and gave him a cheery salute. “I plan to. Alright- we’ll see you later, Tenebris. Give the pups a snuggle for us.” She patted Clover, who rumbled at both of them, and then stepped away from the stirrups. “You good to ride, Papy?”

Clover was a smooth ride, but if his leg was bothering him, Toki could make the flight on her own.

"I will~" Tenebris gave a small wave before he headed back inside.

"You bet I'm ready!" Was Aliquam's confident response, a grin on his face. His new prosthetic had not once acted up since its installation and man was he living it now that he no longer had to fuss about it.

Toki nodded to him, and motioned for him to mount up. She stretched and rolled her own wings, exhaling softly. “Good, good. Oh! Make sure you put your goggles on. I know it’s almost winter, but I don’t doubt we’ll run into some sort of bugs, and bugs in your eye-sockets suck.” Toki slips hers up onto her face from around her neck.

He giggled and gave a nod, pulling his goggles over his eyes before he grinned. "Ready when you are!" He announced as he pulled himself up onto Clover, running his fingers into her fluffy mane to scratch over her skin in his thanks for letting him climb up like that.

Clover let out a grumble of thanks, and lifted her bulk off the ground. She let off a rough sort of shimmy, shaking off any snow lingering on her belly, and then she spread her wings. She didn’t wait for Toki before buzzing off into the air.

Toki took off after her, and headed in the direction that she knew the city was in. Air was different than a car though- they could go faster, and avoid any curves and loops. As the crow flies, it was less of a flight than it was a drive.
And, for once, the winds high up were calm, and the skies were peaceful. Flight was easy.

The takeoff had Aliquam holding on tight, but as they leveled out, he slowly sat back and leaned his head back, taking a deep breath before he whooped loudly.

Toki laughed with him, but was wise enough to not open her mouth. Aliquam had a safety buffer in Clover to keep the worst of any wind and bugs out of his mouth, but she wasn't so lucky.

The thunder of their wings was deafening. It wasn't, frankly, unlike several helicopters in close quarters.

There was something freeing about being in the air though. Something relaxing and soothing... And joyous.

Toki eased up on her pace and slipped back to buzz above Aliquam. She entered Clover's space, and in the span of a few seconds, the connected beasts synchronized their wing beats so Toki could lean her arms down and tickle twenty gentle fingers along her husband's shoulder.

He laughed and reached up to dance his fingers along her arms, "Toki, this is amazing! To think you can do this whenever you'd like!" He laughed.

She rode her summons air stream, so Papyrus' hands weren't even jostled against her arms. She beamed at him. "I can." She laughs. "Flying is magical. Its freeing in the best possible way. I'm like a honey-bee on steroids. I can do all kinds of neat tricks. Want to see some?"

"Show me everything!" His eyes glimmered at her with the same exuberant excitement that his request proclaimed he felt.

Toki laughed, and pulled away from him.

Once she was out of danger from running into Clover, Toki began to… Well, there was no better word to describe it than to say she was dancing across the skies, like an air show pilot. She was dancing and strutting for him, showing him everything she could do as she whipped and whirled and twirled and fell across the skies in moves no actual insect could ever do.

But a beast showing off for her mate? Well, that was definitely something she would do.

He watched her with a bright smile, his eyes glowing with energy as he watched his wife fly as free as she damn well wanted to be, and for a moment, one could even consider the lucky fella was falling in love all over again.

It wasn’t completely unbelievable for him to be falling in love all over again- they were smitten with each other, and every day they always found something that made them love the other more and with deeper passion. There was no doubt that he was falling for her all over again.

Just like his laugh and smile and the warm light dancing in his sockets were dazzling her, urging her to improve her dance as Toki herself fell deeper for him.

Clover just kept flying, bemused by the lovebirds attempted flirting as she droned ever onward. She kept an eye on her mistress’ magic levels, and when she started to drag down a little bit, she moved under her to support her should she decide that she needed to catch a little rest before they hit the slower city zone.

Thankful for Clover's consideration, Aliquam rubbed through her fur again before he sighed and laid back between her wings, smiling as he stared up at the sky. This really was a gift, he hadn't imagined
in the past that he would achieve this.

Toki was surprised he didn’t have his legs in the stirrups- but she supposed he trusted Clover to catch him if he rolled off, hence him riding backwards like some sort of hoodlum. “Fancy seeing you here, hm~?” She teases playfully. “Clover’s a smooth ride, isn’t she?”

"Finest ride I’ve ever gotten in these here parts, ma’am.” He winked at her as he put on a western cowboy drawl. "Care to join me~?” He then offered.

Toki did end up coming down for a rest, seamlessly settling on Clover’s back and… Well, seating herself in her husband’s lap, straddling him smoothly. She winked at him. “Well now, don’t mind if I do.” She got herself comfortable, and stretched out against his chest as her eye lights twinkled at him merrily through her goggles as she drawled right back to him and joined him.

Aliquam smiled in delight as he pulled her into his lap before he pulled her into a kiss. "I love you~" He purred happily. "This is fun~"

Toki lounged on his chest, her magic expanding over them and adding an extra cushioning layer to the bubble around them as Clover flew. She met his kiss with a warm sound. “It’s loads of fun,” She laughs against him. Her goggles glow a bright green as her eye lights brighten happily. “It’s a bit of an edge of danger to our usual cuddling~ Kissing on the back of a fast flying bee, with the chance of us falling off… heh. Too bad we can’t do more, eh~? I think Clover would toss us off though.”

There was a bounce that had Toki bracing him under her with her four arms that told them both that yes, if anything sexual in nature happened, Clover would dump them off faster than a bull in a rodeo does to a rider.

"Well the one downside to flying Air-Hornet." He teased, kissing her again gently. "Oh well, we'll just do what we did last time one of us got needy, eh~?” He teased.

She laughed, and simply draped on him. “Or we could wait until we’re home.” She grinned at him, and nuzzled her face to his. “You and your crazy libido can wait that long. I promise not to wiggle too much, eh?” She had her pelvis flush with his- and she was good at teasing him into a frenzy, if his last heat was anything to go off of.

"Oh I know I can wait~" He purred in reply. "I simply tease~" He assured her, before he patted Clover. "Besides, I don't really have a choice, do I?"

The bee buzzed in affirmative below them.

Toki chuckled and smooched him again. “If I had my muscle mass from when I was a beast, carrying you and being intimate in the air wouldn’t be an issue. I mean- I can still lift you, but I don’t think I could achieve intimacy in the air like I am now.”

"That'd be hot though~" He chuckled, leaning up to kiss her cheek lightly, "though I suppose that while we cannot get that frisky, you and I can simply cuddle while Clover flies us both to town.”

“True.” She laughs softly, and lays more comfortably against him. “Cuddling sounds good. We can also decide where to go for lunch. Your Dad gave us a fair bit for lunch- so maybe some sushi? I’m open for suggestions though.”

"Ooh, Sushi." He seemed to agree. "Or ramen~" He seemed really eager for the idea of ramen.

"Ramen works too." She gives him a lopsided grin. "I just hope you don’t mind being seen in public with me while eating it. Most places wont allow forks for easier eating use."
Toki’s teeth were not meant for slurping. More or less, she literally couldn’t slurp. She’d have to feed the noodles into her mouth like a crab does it’s food. It was messy. Spaghetti noodles were easier, since a fork could twist them into a lump and they could all be shoved into her mouth.

"..." He took a second to consider what was going to happen if they went to eat ramen and he made a face, realizing he would be setting her up for embarrassment. "I.. Realize the consequences of you attempting to eat noodles. I suppose we should go for sushi after all..."

Toki leaned up to rub her face against his, and flexed her teeth, smooching him gently. “No.” She hummed. “I don’t mind ramen, or being embarrassed. I can take a couple stares. It’s not like I don’t get them anyway.” She grins at him cheekily.

Clover slows down slightly, and gives a hard thrum. The city was looming ahead.

"Mh, If you’re sure, my love..." He smooched her a few times before he nuzzled into her warm, wonderful fluffy mane. "According to the sound Clover just made, it sounds like we're almost there.” He announced, before he hummed and nuzzled into her again, "Mmh~ Can we stay like this the rest of the way~?" He asked quietly.

“We’re almost at the city.” She corrects gently, and nestles down into him with a warm sound. Her sockets blink at him lazily behind her goggles. “I don’t mind laying on you the rest of the way. Clover’s tracking the rout from my memories, so we’re good to relax here for a while. All that showing off tired out my wings, so the rest is nice.” She melts against him happily. “Should we pick up a game for the kids while we’re here? We’re just a little bit away after all. They wouldn’t mind another harvest moon game.”

He hums happily as she gets comfy before nodding in agreement. "Perhaps another game would be fun. Maybe even get one for father?" He suggested with a soft laugh. "I can already imagine him lighting up like a child at the offering of a new game."

“I could see him doing that.” She laughs. “Though gods only know when he’d find the time to play it. The litter keep him and Asgore busy as heck. I don’t even know how he managed to come up with and finish the condoms with how busy he is. However... We could also get another game for another father I know.”

She playfully tickles her smaller fingers along his ribs, her larger hands bracing them on the saddle so even if he squirms, he won’t fall. “You’ve finished all your puzzle games again. You might actually have to branch out of puzzle games and into... Le-gasp ...” She gave him a cheeky grin, her dramatically announced words playful and silly. “Action or RPG games.”

"Oh no, how awful." He drawled dramatically before he grinned and nuzzled her. "I’ve been wanting to play Breath of the Wild for a while now! Do you realize how many puzzles are in those Shrines?!"

“Yes.” She gave him a completely deadpan look. “I know exactly how many puzzles are in those shrines. And I loathe every one of them.” She makes an obligatory grumbling noise. “I suppose... I mean, with royalties from my books and the movie deals, we could afford a second game cartridge for you to run your own Breath of the Wild game? We could technically afford a second switch if you wanted.” She nuzzled him back.

"..." He looked at her hopefully, a small smile on his face.

“...” She stared back at him. “Well how can I say no to that face? We’ll budget it in.” She promises, and smooches his cheekbone gently. “We’ll get you games too- your own Mario-kart so we don’t
have to squish together to try and see on my screen, maybe?”

"What about Stardew Valley?” He then suggested hopefully.

“If you want it, we’ll get it.” She laughs. “With you working as a guard again, we’re no longer a one income household- we’re doing okay. We can afford splurges every so often.”

"Okay’? Toki you earn more than I do by simply going day to day.” He told her, before he chuckled quietly. "Splurge… we could buy new cars and barely lose a fraction…”

Toki rolled her eyelights behind her goggles, and lifted her secondary hand up to flick between his brows. “Shush.” She says. “I prefer to act as if we don’t have a plush savings to fall back on. I want our kids to value their money- not grow up throwing it away on silly things. So yes- theoretically we could buy a yacht even, but we don’t need it. We do, however, need another car if we’re going to keep having kids. Do we want to look today since your car isn’t with us?”

He took the flick with a pout, though upon mentioning vehicular options He gave her a smile. "That's actually a really good idea, great thinking Toki.” He praised.

“I have my moments.” She laughs. “Rare as they may be. Anyway- this way we can have the kids car, and then your car can be our date-night car. Because yes- date night will continue, with a whole house-load of kids or not.”

"Bless you, my love~” He purred happily. "I'm so lucky to have such a smart wife." He gave her a few more kisses before he reached down to pet Clover. "And such a powerful one too..."

Toki gave him a crooked crocodile grin after each of his kisses. "Power or not, this smart wife knows we need to get a portable garage for your car. And, this smart wife knows you probably don't want my help building it, do you?” She wiggled a brow at him cheekily, and tightened her grip as Clover began to weave.

The big bee was now in the heart of the city, weaving past buildings that scraped the sky, and over and under high-rise walkways and overpasses that had cars zipping to and fro. People were stopping and staring at the massive hellfire green Hell Hornet, several trying to follow where she was going.

"I mean, now that you are no longer burdened by pregnancy, I don't suppose you'd be willing to help, now would ya?” He asked hopefully, tightening his grip just slightly as Clover began her more delicate maneuvering around the buildings, "Steady, girl... if we need to walk or run just let us know.”

Toki glanced up and checked the clearance for Clover. “She’s good. Most of these buildings have space, and she’s going around if they don’t.” She glanced back down at him and cocked a brow. “I mean, I don’t mind helping building- but remember the bee hives?” Her grin grows mischievous. “My work of art didn’t pass your standards.”

“I have no idea what you're talking about~” He hummed innocently.

"That is bullshit, my love, and you know it." She laughs heartily and bumps her nasal ridge to his. "I'll help. If all else fails, I can hold support beams while you screw them in, ne?”

"Yes yes, that'll do~” He answered, smiling up at her, "So helpful~” he purred happily.

“I try.” She laughs warmly.

Clover gave a soft buck under them, and made Toki look up. Clover came in for a landing, neatly
parking in one of the… Well, okay, two parking spots.

“You double-parked.” Toki points out to her grouchy summons- and gets thwapped off the hell-hornet’s back with a well aimed wing in response. She lands with a grunt, and then gets to her feet, dusting herself off. “Thaaanks, Clover.” She rolls her eye lights, and pulls her goggles down.

Clover just leers at her, and pointedly huddles down, settling down on the pavement, which had no snow and was blessedly dry. Clover liked the dry. It might not have been sun-warmed, but flame-warmed would make it comfortable soon enough.

Aliquam carefully dismounted before he smiled and reached up to pet Clover. "A lovely landing by a lovely hornet. Thank you, Clover~" He praised as he gently pet her head.

Clover chittered at him warmly and nuzzled him. Once she’d had her fill of attention, she nudged him off to go do his chores. She didn’t want to be here longer than necessary. There were too many people near who were gawking.

Toki chuckled. “So. Shoes first, or games first?” She asks. “Lunch has to come after. I’d say after getting a car, so we don’t have to park clover outside and make her wait. Games and shoes will be ruined if she goes back to her world.”

Clover gave them an unimpressed look.

"And she’s not willing to wait while we eat.” She eyed her hornet. “She may get into mischief. Expensive mischief.”

"And we don't need the extra attention." He agreed, before he smiled up at Clover. "We'll try to be quick." He told her, before he came to Toki's side. "I say we go and collect the shoes first." He answered.

“Shoes sounds good.” Toki nods. She offers him two bony arms to take with his own, and leans up to pluck his goggles off his face, leaving them around his neck. “Shall we?”

He nodded, and while starting for the shoe store with his arm laced with two of hers, he pulled his goggles off completely and put them away in the backpack they brought along.

Toki opened the door for them once they made their way up to it. She blinked however as they stepped inside.

The shop itself looked mostly the same. Walls of shoes, some in states of repair, some ruined beyond any hope of being salvaged, and some in various stages of being created from the bare bones of the heart of shoe-making craft.

However, what was different was the person behind the counter.

There wasn’t a little old lady behind the counter.

Aliquam had looked around the shoe store as he had a habit of doing- such lovely shoes and all custom made, he had respect for this family. Though he indeed noticed how it was not the lovely elder from the previous visits.

"Ah..." was the soft sound to rise from him, partly recognition, partly... Confusion... at the new face.

There was a green dragon HTM sitting behind the counter with head-phones over his head. He was shining shoes with the same Tenacity that Yuri did, but his shoulders were hunched over and he
looked less than pleased to be out front.

Toki slowly made her way to the counter and rasped her bony knuckles on it. “Hello…?” She prompts gently.

The man jumps. “Ah…” He removes his headphones and glances up at them. He looks a lot like Hanzo, however he’s not the same color. “Hello. Welcome to Shimadas… Can I… help you…?”

"Hey there, we're here to pick up a custom order, last name Gaster.” Aliquam spoke politely as he moved up to join his wife, a smile growing on his face as etiquette kicked into play.

“Gaster…?” The man blinked slowly, and set down the pair of shoes. He straightened, and then began to thumb through the mess of papers in the back. “Gaster, Gaster… Where did she… I… Ah… I’m not used to my grandmother’s sorting system. I don’t… Usually work out front.”

“It’s okay.” Toki holds up her hands in a placating manner. Her back shifts, and she feels one of her spinal disks shift, crunching uncomfortably under her clothes. “Take your time, please. We’re in no rush.” He seemed frazzled as it was- or upset about something. Toki tilts her head, and peers at him quietly. “My father in law is quite familiar with Yuri’s work- and so am I. It’s well worth the wait. She got me outfitted with shoes three months back or so?”

After Tenebris finally pitched a fit over her squishing her beast feet into shoes entirely not meant to house them. It reminded her of the fit Tenne threw when she came home and bled on his floor from cut feet.

“I see…” His face pinched, and he flinched his shoulders closer to his head. He thumbed through the papers, and finally located their order ticket.

“Are you… Genji?” Toki prompts gently.

“Yeah.” He grunts. “And I’ve got your order right here. Let me go see if Hanzo has it done.”

Toki’s mane flattened, and she blinked as he walked away from them awkwardly. She folded her hands down at her side, her brows furrowing. “… Where’s Yuri?” She asks her husband quietly. Never once had the old lady not been here.

"I don't know... off the bat I can't smell her, so she hasn't been in for a while... But Genji's familiar... he must be the one who had been in the back..."

It was a minute before the familiar blue-scaled HTM stepped out, Hanzo looking to them both with a solemn nod. "Good afternoon." He sounded calm, with something else as an undertone. Toki picked up on the undertone, and the fact that the usually awkward but smiling HTM had come out with a flat, tired look on his face. "Hanzo,” She greets him warmly, and makes a couple steps towards him, “Good afternoon. How are you?” Her green gaze searches him keenly. Yuri hadn’t been here in a while, her nose told her. She could still smell her, but not as fresh- it had been a month, maybe a month and a half. Closer to two months almost, since Yuri had been here. But she’d worked the front so much her scent was ingrained there, in the desk and the papers. “Hanzo… I don’t want to be blunt, but… Where’s Yuri?”

It was when the elder was mentioned did the dragon seem to deflate further. "Grandma... Well, Grandma’s in the hospital. She got sick when the last cold season blew in, and it didn't ever really get better.”

Toki frowned and felt sadness bloom in her chest. Yuri was a lovely woman. “Oh no … What
“hospital?” She asks. “I’d like to go see her.” They could have clover take the shoes back while they made a quick trip up to the hospital, and then spent some time walking around town. Being out and about would be good for them, instead of strictly in and out of the city.

"Ebott General Hospital." He answered. "We were going to close early to go see her, but I'm pleased that you came before we did..." He then offered a gentle smile as he held out the larger-sized box. "This was an order she was looking forward to seeing delivered... So we continued our work. She wanted us to. I hope they are to your liking."

Toki reached out to take the box, and she cradled the baby shoes to her chest. "Yeah... Baby shoes for the pups... I've got your payment here." She used one of her secondary hands to grab her purse, and fished around in her wallet once she found it. It only took her a moment before she procured the amount. And a little extra too.

She understood not being able to work and the struggles that came with it. Power bills were expensive in winter, not to mention hospital costs.

Toki and Aliquam could pay for their own lunch. As Aliquam stated, Toki made more than enough—which she usually didn't touch in case someone close to her needed help financially. Tenebris would support overpaying for shoes at this point.

It was a surprise to Hanzo but he gave a low bow in respect. "Thank you so much. This will help us greatly."

Toki gave him a smile, and offered him a comforting look as she returned his bow. "I lost my brother suddenly." She says gently as she straightened, complete sympathies in her gaze. "So I can imagine how hard it can be to work with your Grandmother in the hospital, not knowing if you'll get a call for good or bad. It's not much, but maybe take the extra and take Genji out to lunch to relax and get your Grandmother some flowers?"

"Thank you, ma'am... " Hanzo gave another bow before he turned and called out to Genji to collect him to go out.

Genji was less than pleased to be called out. He came out of the back regardless, his shoulders hunched and his long tail hanging low. He had his hands shoved in his pockets, his headphones around his neck. He shuffled over to his brother.

Toki gave them both a smile, and urged Aliquam over to the door. “Lets go get these put in the saddlebags.”

Aliquam nodded. Though as he watched Hanzo speaking to Genji, he could see for a moment a gleam of happiness in the younger man’s eyes before he glanced towards the leaving couple. Of course, nothing was said, but the look on his face was enough to make Aliquam content as he bowed his head before following Toki out the door.

Toki made her way towards Clover, cocking her head slightly.

There were several people gathered around Clover. Not around-around, so to speak, but more or less within one cars length of the dozing Hell Hornet. Clover didn’t seem concerned with them— but then and again, a lion didn’t concern itself with the opinions of the sheep.

Toki shrugged— if she was human and saw a massive bee double-parking, she would probably stare too. She just wouldn’t want to be the cop brave enough to try and give Clover a parking ticket.

She padded out towards her summons, and made her way towards the saddle bags. “So, do we want
to hit the game store first, so we don’t have to back track?” She asks her husband quietly.

"I say the game store, it's right next door, isn't it?" Aliquam answered, though he noticed the crowd and he looked at Toki, "...?" He gave a loose shrug, clueless but not sure what else to really do with people staring at them.

Toki shrugged right back at him. His guess was as good as hers. It was best just to leave them be, and deal with them if they got rowdy.

She nodded to him though. “Game store then. You get a switch, and some games because you’ve been an amazing husband and father and you deserve a treat for being so good.” She gives him a cheeky grin as she tucks the shoes inside. She was trying to lighten the mood from hearing about Yuri. Teasing him gently was a surefire way to do it.

He gave a nod and hummed as he bumped her hip with his. God, it felt good to do that again. "It's quite the sight. Of all the dog guards in the village, I'm the goodest boy~" He teased with a soft laugh.

She bumped him right back, and there was something giddy in her. She would never tire of it now that he could do it again without pain. "You're the goodest good boy, and good boys deserve new toys."

"Yay!" He was so silly, but he would never tire of being happily silly with his wife.

She'd take silly and happy over the man she'd woken up to from her short coma any day.

Toki finished packing the shoes, and turned to him. She leaned up to give him a kiss, and then cheekily arched her brows at him. "So. I'm looking forward to seeing you play Stardew. I think you're going to love chickens."

"I heard something about blue chickens. Are those really a thing?" He asked hopefully. "If so I would so dearly love some of those; they sound beautiful."

"They're a thing." She nods warmly. "Same with demon chickens. They're called Void chickens. It's... Coincidentally amusing."

"I wonder how father will react when he discovers such a creature." Aliquam gave his soft, sweet 'nyeh heh heh heh~' upon thinking such a silly thought about his father.

"Probably not very well." She laughs. "I have three void chickens. Tenebris, Tenne, and Blobby. And then I have a duck I named Sir Quack. Sir Quack lays me more feathers than eggs."

"Aww!" He laughed gently at their names. "Well now I need to come up with some names for when I get them."

"You could name chickens after us?" She grins at him cheekily, and then tugs him towards the game store.

He had a good laugh at that, though he was definitely thinking about that as they entered the game store.

The clerk gave a brief, "Welcome!" from where they were currently helping another customer.

She waved at the man behind the counter, and then headed towards the section of Switch games along the wall. "If there are other games you wanna play, we can get you those too. You do have
mandatory down time from work after all."

"You got it." He smiled at her, before going to scour the game selection as he hummed some random tune from an unspecific game.

As the customer who had been at the front took his leave, the cashier gave a smile and the usual spiel of 'Let me know if there's anything I can get for you'.

Toki hummed softly to the cashier as she followed Aliquam over to the games. "We'll be buying one of your switches today. But for now, we're going to browse your games and get my husband set up."

"Alright. While you look, will you want a pre-owned or a new one? And do you have a preference on the design of your switch?" He asked.

"New preferably." Toki chirps. "As for preference..." She glances to Aliquam. "Do you want a game-designed one, or just a basic switch like what I have?"

"Ooh, do they have one with a design on hand?" He asked hopefully.

"They might?" Toki glanced at the clerk. "Do you have any with designs on them?" She asks while Papyrus rifles through games.

"I just had a return of one of our 'Breath of the Wild' models." He answered, "Nothing wrong with it, but it got returned by a rather upset looking mother with a screaming little kid." The cashier answered, going to collect it. "Left it with all the games and everything."

Toki hummed, and looked to Aliquam. It was his call if he wanted a used one or a new one.

"There was a Zelda model?" He questioned, before he smiled. "May I see it?" he asked.

"Sure thing." The cashier lifted it up and set it on the counter, opening it up for the others to see.

Toki wandered over to the counter, and made a soft hum. "It's very nice. But, it's yours love. If you want it, Papy, you can get it- or if you'd rather a new one, we can get that instead."

"I don't think there's another one like that here... and this one looks to be in good condition." He mentioned.

"He's right." The cashier agreed with a smile. "They had just bought it the day before."

She nods. "Then you make the choice." She urges him gently. "If you want it, say it, and we'll get it and the games, along with the other games we want."

Papyrus gave a nod. "Then this will do nicely, the bundle will work well as a start." He decided.

"What all games does the bundle come with?" Toki asks curiously.

"Breath of the Wild, as well as the newest Splatoon, Mario kart, and this is a big purchase so I'll even throw in a game of your choice." The cashier offered.

"Stardew Valley!" Aliquam piped hopefully.

"Stardew it is." The cashier laughed.

Toki smiled. "Then it looks like I'll need to buy Splatoon to play with you and your dad." She wasn't really all that interested in it, but who knew? Maybe she'd enjoy it, and she'd give them some laughs
"Sounds like fun." Aliquam smile happily. "Does it come with a protective case?"

"No, but we have plenty of them to offer; from plain black ones to ones with designs on them." The cashier answered as he pointed to where said cases hung.

"Thank you!" And he was off to look at said cases.

Toki watched him toodle off, and then glanced to the cashier. "You've got glass screen protectors too?" She asks. "It'll most likely be played as a handheld, so the extra safety would be nice."

"Oh of course!" The cashier answered. "Since they're fragile before application, I keep them behind the counter. You said you had a couple systems back home? I could sell you extras."

"Just one system, and mine's got a cover on it already." She smiled at him. "I'm good, thanks. One of the employees here actually installed the screen protector for me." She wiggled her fingers. "Bones don't allow for accurately gripping small, slick surfaces, y'see. Getting it on straight would have been hard."

He gave a nod of understanding before he smiled. "One, then." He agreed, before he looked back towards Papyrus, who was looking at the games with a gleam in his eyes not unlike the thrill of a child.

Toki nods. "Please." She glanced to Papyrus, and scooted over. "Did you decide on a carrying case?" She tickles his ribs gently. "Or did you get distracted by all the amazing games~?"

"There's so many games!" He answered with a soft coo, before he smiled at her and held up a case. "I did find a case though. Ta-da!" It was simple, and a light brown color. But on the front was a familiar little fox-like character on the front. "Look, it's Eevee!"

She laughs. "We don't even play pokemon-go in order to get the actual Lets Go Eevee or Pikachu. We'd have to drive two hours to get poke-stops and whatever. But, it is cute." She looks it over and nods her approval. "There is a lot of games. You don't have to get them all now, Papyrus. We can just get a couple multiplayer ones- Splatoon for me since your dad has that and yours is coming with it, for instance- and we can all game."

"Sounds good." He took his prizes up to the counter and set them next to the starter package they would be buying.

"Alright, anything else you think you'll need today?" The cashier asked with a smile. "Also, do you have a rewards card with us?"

"I've got a card." Toki fished it out of her wallet, along with her debit card. She paused once she set it on the counter, and then she trundled over to the games. She snagged two more older Harvest Moon games. "These as well, please." She smiles slightly. "I intended to get something for the kids. I think this is everything. Papy?"

Her husband nodded to her, and that was that.

"Fantastic." The card was taken and- once swiped- returned. The console loaded her information swiftly, and her name popped up on the screen, "Alright, Miss Nara. Just let me get everything into the computer." Quickly and accurately, the cashier scanned and tapped everything onto the check-out screen before he smiled. "Would you like to hear what we offer for protection plans?" He asked.
"No need, we'll take the longest one you have." Aliquam answered, knowing all too well that it was better to be safe than sorry.

"Two year plan, you got it." And there it was added to the total of what they would be buying that day. "And for the games as well? We offer protection plans for those as well." The cashier glanced to Toki.

Toki blinked. "Nah. They'll be in the case, or in the system themselves. The games will be safe. And I'm not worried about our kids chewing on them." She grinned at Aliquam. "Honey tasted my Breath of The Wild cartridge when I dared her to, and she won't ever do it again." Toki offers the cashier a brilliant grin. "Thank you, though."

Papyrus gave a soft hum, before he looked at Toki. His gaze slid over to the cashier after a moment, and he gave him a sunny smile. "I'll take it on my games, it's never a bad idea, and I'll pay for it if you'd like, dear." He piped softly.

"Alright." A few taps of keys, before both men glanced at Toki.

Toki puffs a soft sigh and shakes her head. "Just put it on my card." She waves a hand. She honestly didn't care- she didn't usually run protection plans on things, because by the time you needed it, the plan was useless. But she would humor her husband, rather than start an argument over video games. "I'd rather not have to run two cards over one purchase."

"You got it... Alright, looks like your total will be..."
Strider Notes: And yes. We went there with Yuri. Let us know what you think of the Children.

With his prizes in the safety of his arms, Papyrus stepped out with a small smile. "Thank you, Toki. I'm looking forward to playing with you and the others- it's going to be so much fun!" He hummed happily.

Toki smiled. “Consider it an early birthday present, my love.” She leaned up and smooched his cheek. His birthday was on the twelfth, which was in roughly a week. The twins were the day after, on the thirteenth. “Why don’t we just carry these with us so they don’t risk getting jostled in Clover’s saddle? We need to stop after we visit Yuri and pick up some wrapping paper for the twins. These,” She wiggles the bag looped on her wrist that has the two games in it, “are for their birthday. We need to pick up a couple more things. This is the first birthday I get to spend with them. I want to make it memorable.”

She hadn’t gotten to experience their first birthday. She was damn well going to make their second birthday memorable- since they were already mentally the age of small children. Toki had a lot to make up for, damn it- she had a lot to make up for and a lot she missed, and she damn well wasn’t going to mess this one up.

The crowd of people around Clover had grown. The sleeping Hell Hornet didn’t seem to pay them any mind, rumbling snores bubbling out of her.

He nodded in agreement to her ideas of the games being for the children’s birthday presents though when he saw the larger group of people, he rose a brow, "is it just me or has that crowd around Clover grown considerably?"

"It's not just you." Toki tilted her head. She watched the crowd warily, and then strode towards her Summons fearlessly.

The crowd moved and seemed to grow more excited as they took notice of her. There was a low murmur rising through them, not quite able to be heard yet by the approaching skeletal duo.

"There's humans and HTMs in there." Toki observes quietly. That soothed a little bit of anxiety she had. HTMs usually guaranteed it wasn't about to be a violent riot. They also didn't smell angry. Over the stink of the city, Toki thought they smelled... Excited?

She reached Clover, and patted her to rouse her.

Clover yawned, and patted her to rouse her.

Aliquam glanced at the folks around them before he cleared his throat. "If we're going to be taking off soon, I would certainly hope this crowd of folks would be wiling to move out of the way. We'd hate to hit anybody with Clover's wingspan as it is." He spoke slightly louder as to try and make a point to everyone.
Toki coughed lightly. They weren't actually going to fly- but they were sending Clover home for Tenebris to unload her bags. She watched the crowd grow more excited though when Papyrus spoke to them, but she did get to see them step back. "Alright... Clover, time for you to fly home."

Clover looked at them both, and then at the crowd of people. She stood up, stretching her wings, and cocked her head. She rumbled at her riders, wanting to make sure this was what they wanted- she couldn't protect them if she wasn't here.

"We'll be okay, big girl, we're gonna get a new car and we'll drive home." Papyrus reached up and rubbed her snout gently. "Thank you for the ride."

Clover chuffed, and then mouthed at him gently with her mandibles as if to chide him and remind him to keep his guard up to protect himself and his much smaller and more fragile appearing wife. Though, they all knew if push came to shove, Toki could probably level the city if need be. Then, she lifted her wings, and took to the sky.

Toki watched her go, and then reached out to gently finger the hole Clover’s tooth had left in her husband’s shirt. “Well, at least it’s not very noticeable.” She hums very gently to him. “Alright. Off to the hospital we go.” She glanced at the hoard of people staring between her and the bee now making her way home- and being followed by a helicopter it looked like- before linking her free primary arm with her husband’s and starting off for the sidewalk at a quick pace. “Alright, lets go see Yuri and get lunch and a car. Or is it car and lunch?”

He smiled to himself as he reached and ran his finger over the new little hole before he rumbled as he saw the helicopter. "That thing better keep its distance or she'll down it.” He chuckled. Though as she spoke of plans, he followed her lead and smiled as he pecked her head. "A good question. I say we go car searching first, talk it over during lunch, and go back to collect which we decide on.” He suggested.

“I like that idea.” Toki preened at his kiss. Her gaze watched Clover, and she snorted softly. “She’s annoyed by it. Ah- there she goes.” She watched as Clover went up above the buildings, and then took off faster than the helicopter could keep up with. Toki laughed. “She wouldn’t down it- that would be bad for PR. Anyway, I like the car searching idea first. And, if all else fails and we find the one, then we don’t have to worry about walking for lunch.”

Toki guided them to the sidewalk, and then to the crosswalk. She pressed the button to cross, and then waited patiently for the light to turn. There may not have been any cars, but waiting was polite.

"Well there you go." He laughed, giving her a light squeeze as they waited, though he could feel the air on the back of his neck shift and he grunted faintly, turning slightly to eye the small group of people lingering nearby, all of which watching them.

What the hell?

Toki tilted her head as he grunted, and she spotted the mob from before slowly trailing after them along the sidewalk. She eyed the area around them and hummed. “Well, it is the closest crosswalk? They’ve got to cross too.” Toki chimes lightly, trying to soothe away the ruffled look that crossed his face. She crossed her secondary arms across her chest and rubbed his forearm soothingly. When the light turned, she guided him across, and hummed softly. “So the hospital isn’t far from here,” She says to change the subject, “what should we bring for Miss Shimada?”

"A good question... flowers and plushies are sort of cliche... Mmm... Too bad we don't have any honey..." He hummed.

“We don’t.” She nods in agreement. “And we don’t have any jars- Oh!” Toki pauses. She wonders. Could she…? She thought maybe she could. She hadn’t tried to make any since she’d been here, but
if her stingers were still here, well, who’s to say her wax glands weren’t too?

She shuffles the bags into his hands, ignoring his appalled look at being suddenly turned into a pack-mule. Her hands came together, and she focused- and out of her neatly trimmed wrist fur came the familiar thick wax that she’d used to make honey jars back when she’d sold it with Tenne.

Toki made a gleeful noise, and then began to swiftly craft a jar with ease born of doing it hundreds of times a day for roughly two years. It was a bit harder with bones instead of flesh-fingers, but she worked around her bony joints. “Here we go.” She grinned. “I can just make honey.” She chirped, her wings flicking happily behind her as her mane ruffled in glee. And monster honey was better than normal bee honey by far- at least health wise.

Being momentarily disgruntled lasted exactly that long as Aliquam watched her, his eyes widening in awe as she molded a jar out of wax. "That's... That's phenomenal." He complemented.

“It’s a fun little quirk of being a bee, I guess. I discovered it the first time I went into heat in the other world. I built myself a literal hive and hid inside. Well- Dear did.” She chuckled softly. It doesn’t take her long to shape it- she actually had to use magic to keep it warm. The cold chill of early October cooled the hot wax faster than she wanted it to. But, once it was formed, it cooled it off just right- as well as the lid she crafted and fitted to it.

Once she had it fully shaped and it had cooled and hardened, Toki angled her wrist and started to fill it. Where they had to have tempered glasses for her venom normally, her hand-made jars weren’t bothered in the slightest. Toki capped it once full, and then stopped walking and stooped to pack it in snow so it would rapidly cool off.

“There we go.” She beams as she resumes walking with him, carrying along the snow-packed jar. “A perfect gift once it cools, yeah?”

"Wow..." He had to blink a few times but gave her a bright grin. "Amazing... very impressive, my dear." He praised. "Yeah, we just need to stall long enough for the honey to cool." He agreed. "Which should be enough time for us to walk to the hospital."

“I’m not just omnipotent in an impressively scary way.” Toki gave him a bright grin. “I’m good at practical gift-making. It’s not as pretty as a store-made jar, but it’s hand-made.” Toki kept the jar away from him as they walked. Even under it’s rapidly melting snow-coat, it was steaming. “It’ll be cold by the time it’s there, and Yuri can have some if she wants some. So- am I going to need to start stocking our fridge with jars like this?” She gives him a cheeky grin. “Or giving you lumps of warm wax?”

His other self, her little son, Quinn, had loved to play with wax when she made her jars.

"... I mean... if you have the wax to share I wouldn’t mind molding a few things out of wax~" He hummed in reply. "I could easily make candles out of the wax too." He considered.

Toki thought that might be the case. The little pang in her soul surprised her though, and she lifted a hand to rub her chest. It seemed she’d never stop missing the children she’d taken for hers, even if she had the adult versions with her now. “I don’t mind sharing wax.” She smiles to him gently. “You know... your smaller self used to like to play with wax too. Little Quinn- he would make little wax bees while I made my jars. Or try to make bees. They weren’t very good, but they were precious.”

She didn’t talk about Quinn often- she’d hardly told Papyrus anything about him. She wondered if he was curious at all.
"Oh really?" He seemed to be listening to her this time, a smile on his face. "A child can do their best and the best thing we can do is encourage them." He hummed.

"Indeed." She smiled warmly at him and hummed gently. "Encouragement can go a long, long ways." She smiles wisely to her husband. "Particularly to children."

"Especially children." He agreed, pecking her head with a soft hum. "Perhaps we should buy her some tea as well?" He suggested.

"I think they'd have some tea in the gift shop?" Toki inhales lightly. "What do you recall her smelling like for tea?" She asks.

"She was a very gentle scent... Though if I had to guess... a Thai mix. Very light one." He answered. "A healthy choice for someone her age."

"Very." Toki nods in agreement. "So we'll see if they have something like that in the gift shops." A gift shop that didn't have tea was not a gift shop to visit really.

He nodded in agreement, giving a soft whistle as he walked with her. It didn't take too long to get to the hospital- it was just a short jaunt, with only a few corners here and there. They arrived swiftly at the front of the hospital. "You know the way to the gift shop?" He asked.

"Bottom floor, about twenty feet from the main entrance." She nods softly. "This is the same hospital my grandparents were at a long time ago, so I got familiar with it when we visited them."

It felt like a lifetime ago that she’d lost her maternal grandparents. Her paternal grandparents- by blood, not by marriage- were the only ones left. She hadn’t gone to America to see them since before she’d become a Monster. Toki mused she probably should make a trip out to see them- they were getting up there in years, and there was no telling how they were faring.

"I see." He hummed in reply, heading into the gift shop with her before he began to search for the tea.

Toki hummed and let him search. While he searched, she took a moment to sign them in on the guest list in the lobby, and then she went back to join him.

She got a few weird looks- but y’know, a skeleton in a hospital was a morbid thing to see.

"Find any Thai tea?" She asks him warmly.

"Sadly no. I just found this light 'thigh' tea." He joked as he held up two boxes of Thai tea. Seemed that victory was his on this day. "It's not too expensive either, decent enough that I could grab two." He mentioned as he held out the boxes to her.

"Let's just settle on one for now." Toki smiles to him. "That way others can gift her some too, and not feel like they're overwhelming her with tea. Besides, we've got honey for her too." She winks. "My gift to her," she hefts up the jar as she takes the tea from him, "and your gift to her. It'll be a good combination gift, no?"

She moved her way towards the checkout stand, and smiled to the cashier who seemed to be ogling the waxy jar that was filled with green. It took humans a long time to get used to green honey in the other world too.

"I agree!" He laughed, pulling out his wallet as he gave the cashier a smile, though he then noticed and he glanced at Toki. "Has the honey cooled yet, do you know?" He asked.
Toki peeked at the jar and hummed. "Maybe?" She gently popped the top off, and then stuck the tippy tip joint of her pinky finger in it. "It's still warm, but it's passed the deadly point. The enzymes have changed from venom to honey." Toki hums softly to him in answer, capping it again and popping her pinky into her mouth to clean it. Honestly, it didn't take long to cool it to a safe point on a cold day.

"Interesting. I was going to offer some to our ogling cashier." He joked lightly.

The cashier had gone very pale when Toki mentioned it was a venom. "Ah... I'm good, thank you." She stammered. "Is that all for you today? Flowers or a get well card maybe?"

"This is good for us, thank you." Toki smiled at her.

Aliquam nodded in agreement as he pulled out his wallet. "No need for a bag either." He let the cashier know.

The woman nodded back, and rang them up. She gave them a faint smile, and offered out his receipt.

Toki cradled both of them with a soft thrum. "Alright- we need to go see what floor she's on."

Taking the receipt, Aliquam walked with Toki to the front Desk, "Pardon me, Which floor is Yuri Shimada on?" He asked.

The receptionist had already seen Toki, but Aliquam was more skeleton than Toki appeared to be and she spooked a bit at seeing him. "A-ah... Mrs. Shimada is up on the fifth floor. She's in room four-one-eight."

Toki smiled at her warmly. "Thank you. We'll be sure to sign out before we leave." She promises. Toki offers her secondary arm to Aliquam, and starts wandering towards the elevator.

"Fourth floor." He murmured as he glanced up at the directory. Hospice care. Aliquam sighed quietly and shook his head slowly.

"That's not looking good..." He murmured as he called the elevator.

"No, no it's not." Toki nods in agreement. She fell silent as they waited for the elevator and she quietly grinded her teeth. "Do you think... maybe your dad could help her?"

It was a bit of a touch and go area- magic on humans that was. When she'd been sick, there hadn't been much Tenebris could do to help her transition into a monster- all he could do was make her more comfortable, and that had been enough for Toki.

"I don't know... she's human. Healing magic can only do so much to a human... It was better on you because of your monster genetics..." Aliquam answered, before he sighed, "don't grind your teeth, my love... it's bad for them..."

"Well, there's obviously some genetics in her, or her grandsons wouldn't be like me." She says lightly. "But... I don't know. Healing magic doesn't really work all that well on humans as far as I know- or Todd would simply wipe away every cut and scrape that Rosie and Felix get when they're out romping."

Toki does stop grinding her teeth though. She simply splays them instead, wiggling them slowly. The sharp, crocodile points needed to be dulled. "I didn't mean to worry you about my teeth. It's a stress thing. They spark when given friction with each other, so I never thought they'd be... Well, damaged by my grinding."
"Well... Perhaps not... They are different than molars, after all..." He was trying, whether he was fussing out of general stress or had actually thought her teeth grinding was problematic, one could give him at least a little credit.

She intentionally sparked two together, flecking the door in harmless sparks, before settling her mouth flat again. "I don't think it's harmful, but I'll be more mindful." She promises. "Most of the time I don't even know I'm doing it. A gentle reminder to stop when you notice me doing it would be very appreciated, love."

"... Sure." He gave her a squeeze as the elevators slid open and he let her go to step inside and press the button to take them to the fourth floor.

She cuddled into him as the doors closed, sealing them in. The jolt as the elevator started moving made her laugh. "Y'know, I don't have a stomach anymore, and yet the motion of the elevator still seems to make it lurch."

"I think that has something to do in your head rather than your stomach itself..." He answered, before he chuckled. "Though this might be something father could explain better than i ever could."

Toki lifted her secondary hand and knocked her knuckles against her forehead where her scar was. It made a hollow noise. "Everything is like, ghost organs unless magic is pumped directly to them. For once, I can say there's nothing rattling around in this head of mine. But your dad probably could, yeah. He's mister science man."

He gave a soft giggle as she knocked on her skull before he leaned down and pecked her head gently with a sweet purr. "Be nice to your head, my love~" He hummed to her, holding her close on the elevator ride up... So brief, and yet it felt like forever as the doors slid open, revealing the opposite wall.

And the large number four that sat upon it.

Toki exhaled softly and kissed his cheek. "My skull is fine, love." That said, she stepped out of the elevator and began looking for Yuri's room.

A brief questioning to the clerk gave them the way and slowly the duo approached Yuri's room... Aliquam rose a hand to the door and hesitated, before he took a breath and slowly knocked, "Missus Shimada?" He called gently.

Inside, a rough hacking cough rang out. It lasted several worrying seconds, before a rough voice called to them. "Come on in."

Toki eased the door open, and was greeted to the sight of Yuri hooked up to countless monitors, with an oxygen tube hissing soft puffs of air frequently up her nose as she took rasping gasps of air to settle her lungs. Her cheeks were hollowed, her hair freshly washed, and she trembled in her seat. "Hello, Miss Shimada."

She squinted at them for a second, before her expression brightened. "Ah! Toki and Aliquam. It's been a while since I got to see you two. You've slimmed down some."

Toki laughed gently and ran a hand over her flatter middle. "Heavens yes I did. A litter of six played hell on my body." Toki gently passed the tea to her husband. "We brought you some gifts! I made you some honey."

Aliquam smiled as he stepped over to the table. "And I bought you some tea to go with the honey. I hope you like Thai." He added as he offered her the box. "How are you feeling?" He then asked.
"I've been better, I have to say. Honey and Thai tea?" Yuri rasped, pushing a button on a hand-held device. The top part of her bed raised more, and she could look at them properly. She seemed to breathe a little easier. "Oh, aren't you both sweet. I assume you both went to the shop and saw my boys?"

"We did." Toki nods, and steps closer. There was a table across Yuri's lap, covered in an empty mug and an almost full bottle of water, and she gently settled the now safely cool home-made jar of honey onto the lap table. "We picked up baby shoes for Tenebris today, and your grandsons told us you were here. We thought we'd stop by and see how you were."

"Ah, that looks lovely." Yuri looked delighted at the green honey, taking the jar and turning its murky surface over in her hands as she observed it. Her hands shook slightly, but less than she did just sitting there. A shoemakers hands, even in sickness. "My grandsons are sweet- they've been trying to keep the shop in working order for... when I go home." Her eyes listed to the side, to the sign on the door that said 'hospice'.

Toki's gaze followed hers, and she leaned down to pat her shoulder very gently.

Yuri's hand cupped Toki's skeletal one, and she exhaled a shaky noise that became a hacking cough that rattled her frail bones.

When it stopped, Yuri glanced up at them and sighed. "I'd love some tea to soothe this throat of mine. But by the time I can get one of these blasted nurses to help me, it'll 'be too late for you to have caffeine Madam Shimada'." The nasally tone of voice was obviously a mimicry of one of the nurses.

Toki laughed gently. "We can help with that. Papy? Will you open her tea for her and put one of the bags in the mug? You don't mind if we use your water bottle, do you?" Toki was primarily fire based when it came to magic. Why wait for tea when tea could be made right there?

"Not at all." Yuri blinked slowly, looking at them with tired but curious eyes.

Giving a nod to answer his wife, Aliquam came around to the other side of Yuri's bed as he opened the box of tea, dropping a bag into the mug before closing the box and setting it up on her bedside before he stepped away, a smile on his face as he sat down.

Toki took the bottle of water, and poured a generous amount into the mug. Though, enough space was left for honey, because who wouldn't want honey in their tea? Toki then gently clutched the mug in her hands, and pulsed her magic into it.

Yuri watched, amazed as the mug began to steam before her very eyes. Once it seemed to reach a certain temperature, the skeletal woman let go, and unscrewed the top. Before Toki could even ask, Yuri smiled to her. "Yes please."

Toki beamed at her warmly, and fetched the spoon leftover from the last time she'd had tea, and used it to measure out a couple spoons of the green honey. She stirred it in until it dissolved, and then she scooped another spoon, presenting it to Yuri with a cheeky smile.

The ailing elderly woman took it with a delighted grin. "The boys aren't too good with their magic," She says, popping the spoon in her mouth, "so that was a real treat to see. Mmm... This is very good! Why's it green though?"

Toki did a little four-handed jazz hands for show as the tea steeped on the table in front of the Shimada matriarch. "Maamaagic~ " She knew Papy would explain the real reason, because he was sweet like that.
Aliquam chuckled quietly, "It makes me happy to know that we can still offer you something to enjoy during these hard times, ma'am..." He spoke gently, before he gave a quiet laugh. "It's actually Toki's making. She can cool down what comes out of her stingers and it becomes safe to eat.”

"Oh really?" Yuri looked fascinated at the idea, and she shakily took the warm mug into her hands. She inhaled the smell of seeping tea, and took a drink before it even got done. "Ah~" She sighs in bliss. "It's very good. The honey is splended- you make delicious honey. Have you thought of selling it?"

"Many times," She laughs. "Working on getting it licensed for sale." People couldn't decide if it was like 'someone trying to sell breast-milk butter to the general populace', to use her handler's terminology.

"Then again it's not unwise to have it simply sold locally as you do not often have it in you to make a large amount at once." Aliquam mentioned, passing a smile to his love "It makes it more akin to an exotic treasure, or a local delicacy for those who visit, you know..."

"True." She nods with a smile. "I still have to get licensing for it to be sold to monsters still, since we do have humans that come in." She laughs gently.

Yuri doesn't laugh, but she makes a soft, savoring noise of her tea. "Mmm, I'm sure you'd sell it often~"

"But then again, does anyone actually crack down on what you do in your own village?" Aliquam then asked, pondering about it for a moment as he rested his head on his knuckles.

"Probably not, but I don't want to test it." She laughs. It wasn’t her village anyways- it belonged to the monsters. If anything, Asgore, as their King, was mayor of the village of sorts. "That's like wearing a pork-chop dress out to visit the lions den and being surprised when you're eaten alive."

Yuri blinked. "That's a lovely image." She gives a soundless laugh into her drink. "You're got a good sense for painting images, Toki."

"I'm a writer." She laughs warmly. "So of course I paint mental images."

"Vivid images indeed, of all sorts as well, Toki; who knows who you might mentally scar in the process of your artistic ways." Aliquam teased with a soft laugh.

Toki grinned. "Well, if you remember when we went camping while I was pregnant with Honey and Skylar, I scared the pants off of everyone with the story about Stag's origins." She laughed heartily.

"Oh, you're right about that. Good times." He cupped his chin, reminiscing before he gave his trademark 'nyeh heh heh heh' laugh.

His laugh startled Yuri, and she rasped a soft laugh as she finished her tea. "You're both lovely- and I can see how deeply you love each other. Thank you for coming to see me."

"We're not the only ones that'll be visiting today," Toki smiles to her warmly. "Your grandsons will be here after they have lunch."

"Oh will they...?" She looked tired but surprised and happy about that.

"They worry about you, and that tells us just how much they love you." Aliquam hummed. "Both of them with all their heart."
Yuri sighs, and something rattles deep in her chest. "Yes, I know they do. And I love them too. I'm hoping I'll have the energy to stay awake their whole visit."

Toki hesitated, and twiddled her secondary fingers. "Would you like us to leave?" She asks her gently. "So you can get your rest to see your grandsons?"

Yuri looked hesitant to answer her.

Toki glanced to Aliquam and smiled. "Lets make her one more mug of tea, and then let her rest, okay? Would you like that, Yuri?"

"I think I'd like that, yes." She sighed softly and gave Toki a grateful smile. She shakily offered out the mug to Aliquam to refill with water for Toki to heat.

He gave an understanding smile and poured water from the bottle into the mug. "It was good to see you, Yuri, I'm glad we were able to bring you something to drink."

"And I thank you both for brightening the day of a little old lady." Yuri smiled to them both warmly.

Toki took the mug once full, and changed the tea bag, before warming it and adding another spoon of honey. Once it was perfect once more, she offered it back to Yuri, and then offered her a kind bow. "Alright- rest well, miss Shimada."

"Of course. Enjoy the rest of your day, dearies." She offered them a warm smile, and leaned back some as she cradled the mug of tea, enjoying it against her bones.

"Until next time." Aliquam bowed in the same before joining at Toki's side to head out, "It was wonderful to see you, ma'am."

Toki waved at her, and then left with Aliquam. She walked quietly with him to the elevator. "She's very sick." She says quietly. "You can hear it in her lungs, and you can see it in her face. Her body is tired. I think we'll talk to your dad and see if he can help at all."

"Quickly, I hope..." Aliquam agreed, calling the elevator and holding his wife close as they waited.

"Indeed." Toki nods, and nuzzles him. Once they're in the elevator, Toki hums softly to him. "Alright- we're off to car shopping, then lunch, and then deciding on a car, and then home, yes?"

He nodded. "I'm looking forward to seeing just what vehicles are up for grabs... What do you think we'll find?" He asked.

Toki settled into his side with a soft hum. "Personally, I'm hoping they have a mini-van. As stereotypical as it is, given the fact that I gave birth to six children, and my genetics now firmly line up as something between beast and skeleton, I'd rather be prepared than be sorry if we spend a fortune on a car, and get waylaid with an army of munchkins in our next round of kids. Which isn’t going to happen," She eyes him, him and his kink for her heavily swollen belly, "But it doesn’t hurt to be prepared. So yeah- minivan, which will work for holding any more future kids. Especially if we get an eight passenger."

If all else failed, they could just get a full sized van, which ranged in sizes from ten to fifteen people, she’d heard.

"Sounds good." He agreed.

As the elevator reached the ground floor, Aliquam stepped out before his eyes narrowed and he gave
a low sound as he pulled Toki closer.

The people from earlier were everywhere now. He could see at least one in every direction.

"Toki... I almost fear that we must prepare for a fight to happen extremely soon..." He warned her in a lower tone.

Toki blinked at just how full the ground floor of the hospital was. Her teeth twitched, and she tightened her fists faintly. "They're just people, my love. We're in public." She reminds him very quietly. "We'll be okay."

Toki tosses her head up, and her mane ruffles. Instead of letting them unnerve her, she takes their stares and lets it fuel her- and she struts to the main desk, checking her and Papyrus out smoothly, before turning to walk towards the exit with her head held high and her mane ruffled higher still.

Aliquam was less so, his gaze sharp as he watched around him, though it was by the time they stepped outside that he grew defensive of all the eyes watching as they seemed to multiply. His magic flared, and he wrapped his arms around Toki and gave a low snarl.

It was almost satisfying as many of the humans reacted with fear, though there were still the persistent few who shied for but a short-lasting moment.

Toki grunted as her husband snared her, crushing her to him as she found herself defended by a large white bone club. She gave a soft squirm, and stilled only when several of the humans- and HTMs- that had been following them stepped forward.

They bowed respectfully. One hit his knees, and bowed to them- no, their gaze was on Toki, completely on Toki, so that bow was to her.

The one on his knees spoke reverently. "Oh great Hive Queen, we are but humble drones upon your gracious might and splendor and it is a joyous day indeed that you have chosen to bless this city with your Holy warmth. Oh Holy Queen, highest and warmest of the earthly gods, it is our great pleasure to introduce to you we few Children of your humble Hive."

... *Holy Queen*? Hive? What? Toki looked flummoxed, and rightfully so, her hands tightening in Papyrus' shirt.

Aliquam made a face of confusion and pulled Toki a little closer, his right eye having lit up to pulse with orange magic as he watched those around them, feeling quite... *surrounded*... and now that he had his leg back, it was far more possible for him to fight to protect his wife.

"What the hell are you talking about?" He growled quietly.

Several more went down on their knees before the duo. The same man continued speaking. "Oh please, we beg your most deepest pardons and forgiveness for our blunder. We know much about you and have heard much about you, but I'm afraid there aren't many who know about us. We are the *Children Of The Hive*, high Holy Consort, and we beg your forgiveness for frightening you. We would never bring harm to you or our Holy Matron."

"C... Children of the hive?" Toki asked, unsure. "It's... Nice to meet you. And no offense was taken, please, don't worry. We're just understandably wary after everything that's happened."

"Holy Consort?" Aliquam questioned, sounding offended just slightly.

The slight offense was taken into consideration, and the Children Of The Hive prostrated themselves
flatter on the ground. "We don't mean any offense to the Holy Queen's most beloved mate. Please, if there is a title you would prefer, simply state and it would be our honor to oblige. What keeps you happy keeps her High Holiness happy."

Toki stared at the... The cultists in something between muted horror and fascination. "We... Have a cult." She whispered very softly, so only her husband could hear her words.

"No... You have a cult. And it's a big one..." he whispered back, before he lifted his head, "so... Besides stalking us to the point where I need to emphasize the usefulness of keeping your distance, what do you guys want?"

Toki really didn't want to believe she had a cult- but lo and behold, he was basically rubbing her face into the truth. Toki had a cult- and they were big.

"We wish to worship at the feet of the most powerful and Holy, the Queen Bee, the Holy Matron whom possesses a mother's love." He whispered in complete and utter reverence. "We wish to bathe in her holy warmth, to feel her might and magic, to hear her words and obey and to protect she who lives a thousand lifetimes."

And they were fanatics apparently, Toki was realizing with a slow draw of something akin to horror.

Aliquam was extremely unsure about all of this but scowled, "Toki is too humble for all of this. If you want to revere her, praise her from where you stand on your own feet, and from at least six feet away." He warned.

"Is that true?" Another member- a woman- whispered.

"Y-yes." Toki mumbled a little louder. "Please- stand. There's no need to bow like that. No need at all."

There was a hushed murmur that went through the crowd, before those who were almost pasted to the cement began to rise. Obligingly, they moved back from the hospital entrance and gave Toki and Papyrus their personal space.

Toki swallowed. Dear lord, how much weight did her word carry with these people? She exhaled gently, and she glanced between the cultists. The Children Of The Hive were... Watching her almost eagerly. Something struck her from the previous sentence, and Toki cocked her head slightly, her mane ruffling.

"Who told you I live a thousand lifetimes?" She inquires very gently of them.

"We inquired those who experienced your presence, whether it be merciful or those who suffered your wrath. One such shamed one, a soldier who took a very unpleasant swim was close to you when you unleashed your wrath and ripped a hole in the sky." Another of the.. cultists ... answered her question.

Dear gods, that was so unnerving.

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"We’ve also talked to one such woman who fell from the grace of His Darkness.” One of the first men answered her. “She knew that as a complete Holy One, you would be reborn again and again, and time and time again we would be tasked with finding you and securing your safety and true happiness and returning you to where you most long to be, and make sure that generations to come know of your holy word.”

Toki paused at that. One who fell from the grace of ‘his darkness’? Were they talking about the
Void? Fuck all if they were. This could get… interesting in a bad way.

"I think they're talking about Simmons." Aliquam whispered to Toki, thankful they at least backed off enough for him to feel safe with letting go of Toki.

“I don’t think so. They said a woman.” Toki muttered. It couldn’t be Simmons- Simmons had very clearly been a man, until he decided he was more comfortable shedding the coat of cruelty and becoming bitter but gentle Sequoia. “I don’t have any of Simmon’s memories regarding them either. They’re new to me.” She says softly to her husband.

The Children shuffle restlessly, their gazes watching the duo with reverence and awe. “And… Do you have word for us, oh Holy One?” The first man asked gently, clearly trying not to sound too eager.

Word…? Oh fuck- fuckity fuck, fuck, he meant a commandment. Like a god. Because they thought she was their ‘Holy Matron’.

_Fuck._

Toki pulled on the part of her that could now bluff with the best of them at poker, when she never could before, and she nodded softly. Her eye lights sparkled with a thought- this could mark a big change in the world, perhaps. “My first holy word,” God that _skeevved_ her out so hard, but better to give good direction than to have fanatics hyper-focus on something bad and do bad things in her name, “is to always look to Kindness as the first option- be it extending a hand of kindness to someone being harsh to you, or simply helping someone in need. The world needs more kindness in it- I would not condone the acts of those who seek to spread more hate and cruelty in the world. Kindness first- always.”

Toki glanced to Aliquam, hoping he approved. Telling cultists ‘hey no, I'm no god go away’ never ended well in all stereotypical situations- but if she could make the best of it, and make them warriors of kindness and good in her name… Well, why not make the world a little better of a place?

He had a look on his face that was kinda unreadable, consisting mostly of confusion and concern, but he wasn’t sure if he could actually comment on this... so he just nodded slowly.

“Always look to kindness as the first option.” He repeated with reverence, and they all bowed as one. “Thank you for your wisdom, oh Holy One!” The whole of them chorused. “We’ll make sure to spread this between all of the other Children. Are there any other words to spread today?”

“Not today,” Toki said slowly, because fuck how was this actually a thing. “Practice the first… word… and we'll see if you all are worthy of the second word. Now… If we may? My husband and I have some things we need to get done…” They needed a car and they needed food, and fuck they needed to talk about all of this like holy shit.

Aliquam wasn't sure how to take this but on the mention of leaving, he took Toki's hand and gave a small pull. "Come on." He murmured.

The Children Of The Hive parted like butter to a hot knife, and opened the way for them to continue down the sidewalk. "Be safe, Holy One, and enjoy this most amazing and momentous day."

Toki and Papyrus were let out without any fuss, and weren't followed- that Toki could see, anyway- by any of the Children Of The Hive.

Once they were well on their way to walking to the car dealership, Toki gave her husband a confused as hell look. "I have a cult. Why on earth do I have a cult?"
"Because you're powerful, you're influential... and you're dangerous." He answered. "They believe in your power... sadly in an omnipotent manner, which means they're slightly extremist but... hopefully not in a malicious manner..."

Her soul sunk a little when he called her dangerous. She was, there was absolutely no doubt about that- Toki just didn’t like to admit it or think about it a good grand portion of the time. She liked to think herself no different than him- when in reality, the difference in their powers was like looking at a Great Dane and a Pomeranian.

“I was hoping to curb them from being malicious by giving them that... well, ‘word’. Kindness above all. The world would be a better place if people were kinder to each other.” She shakes her head, and links her arms around his waist, letting his arm rest over her shoulder. Toki shivers, her mane falling flat as they crunch over mushy half-frozen sidewalks.

"If we're lucky, they'll take your advice as you meant to deliver it." Aliquam rubbed the back of his head before he sighed gently and pulled Toki close. "Come on, let's put it off our minds... we have an important task at hand, do we not?" He hummed.

Toki took a deep inhale of his scent, and then exhaled happily and nuzzled into him. “You’re right. We can ponder it later. We do have a task at hand- a car! And lunch, before I devour you.” She playfully mouthed at his bicep. “So, what color car do you want?"

Aliquam bit back a retort that would fluster his beloved, but give an amused smile as he pondered out loud at her words. "A good question; now just what kind of color do you think we'll find? I'm thinking a mellow blue color, or if we're lucky, we could find an orange one, yes?" He suggested with a soft laugh.

She laughed and tucked her head against his shoulder. "Orange would make it easy to see and find in the parking lot, but I'm thinking something more mellow. Blue would be good, or a red."

" **Ooh, red ...** " He agreed happily.

"Red is lovely." She agrees. "Anything but baby poop green." She grins.

"Or baby puke yellow." He countered, "Or banana yellow."

Toki laughed. "We're going to jinx us." She tells him. "Oh god. Neon, eye searing pink. Not even the nice pink, but the kind of pink that makes people stop, stare, and go ' **dear god why**'."

" **Dear god why !**" He laughed gently as he shook his head.

The duo continued to jest and laugh until they made it to the first car dealership they could come across, Aliquam looking around as they arrived.

The dealership was... Well, loaded with cars. Most of them were high end sports cars with four seats- some of them having only two seats. They came in a rainbow of colors, from banana yellow, to valentine red.

Toki perused the colors, and found her brows arching. "Most of these are coffins on wheels. If you got in a wreck, you'd be history." She shakes her head with a sigh. "I think they've got the vans in the back."

"Fancy" Aliquam snorted, before he started towards the back lot with his wife; though his gaze panned backwards just slightly as they passed a bright red sports car. "..." Nope. **Van**. Van was more important. And with that thought, he turned forward again.
Toki watched his gaze get lost on the sports car, and she paused, her teeth working against each other. "We've already got a nice car, Pap." She says gently. "If you want, we can trade that in for something sportier so you can enjoy it while we've got the other one for the kids...?"

Toki wanted him to be happy too- and he liked fancy cars.

"Mmmh..." He made another face before he gave her a squeeze. "No, darling... I'll be okay." He told her sweetly.

"Are you sure?" She leaned into him and looked up at his face. "You only live once- and I want you to have everything you've dreamed of. If you want a sports car, I don't mind... well, getting one for you."

"Mmh... perhaps later on." He hummed, before he clacked her head. "Let's focus on getting a lovely vehicle for our future litters and we can fuss about my personal wants later."

Toki laughs warmly and nods. “Okay.” She leans up and changes his head-kiss into a full kiss, before tugging him back to the vans. “So, it looks like they have mini-vans and full sized vans. As much as I’d prefer to get a mini-van, I’m thinking an actual van will be better given how large our children are going to be, and how large the litters are going to probably be. Not even taking into accounting if we take your siblings out to town for anything.”

The vans came in a variety of glimmering colors- blues, greens, oranges, yellows, flesh colors, blacks and grays, and a few, rarer, glittering red colors. They had a true rainbow of colors to look at.

He nodded in agreement though his scanning gaze across the lot was stopped short as he saw something that just called to him. Letting Toki go, he ran ahead before he stopped at a large, bright red van. "Ooohh!" The sound he made was adorable, and in the same it sang just how he already found what they had been looking for.

It didn’t take Toki long to catch up, and she laughed when she spotted it. Dear lord, she’d say good-bye to ever parking close to anywhere again. But if he was happy, that would make her happy. She walked to the door and slid it open, taking a peek inside. She whistled appreciatively. “Fifteen passenger. Niiiice choice, Papy!” She praised warmly. “You giving me a hint on how many kids we’re gonna have?” She grins cheekily.

"Maybe~" He winked at her before giving a cheeky 'nyeh heh heh heh!' "It probably won’t be the most efficient, but then again if we kept my car that wouldn’t be a problem, now would it?"

Toki laughed and flushed. Good lord- of course he’d wink at her. “It’s going to be a gas guzzler for sure- but so long as I keep up work with how it is, and you keep your work, we’ll be okay.” She straightened and grinned at him. “I think this is it- it’s like trying on clothes. You’ll always go back to your first choice. So- shall we go get this started?” She inquires lightly. “And then drive to lunch instead of walking like high-schoolers?"

"Absolutely!" He agreed, going to find the nearest salesman while Toki babysat the vehicle.
Their new ride was bright red and paid in full, and after picking up some delicious lunch as well as a few little tits and tats to keep Toki's hands busy, she and Aliquam were on their way home.

"Now, this birthday is already gonna be better than the last now that you've come back, so now all that's left is how we will be able to make it great from start to finish... I was thinking we start the morning with some chocolate chip pancakes." Aliquam had started the conversation off.

“Chocolate chip pancakes?” She blinks over to him curiously. “That’s a good idea. They adore them! I’m thinking also a home-made cake for them. My Grandma- my biological dad’s mother, that is- taught me how to make the most delicious confetti vanilla cake.” She gives him a grin. “And I can make them some home-made candy too.”

She still remembered how to make candy from doing it so often with Tenne to sell at the Saturday Market.

"Oooo. Good stuff." He agreed. "Perhaps spend all morning doing what Honey wants, maybe go to Grillby's for lunch? And then spend the afternoon doing what Skylar wants, have dinner, then spend the rest of the night gaming and give them their gifts?" He suggested.

Toki nods slowly. “Perhaps all but one of their gifts?” She suggests gently. “I think everyone kind of wants to celebrate their birthday this time. Maybe have their actual birthday with us, and the day after we can do it with everyone else after-hours down at Grillby’s?”

"Ooh! A great idea!” He agreed, before he grinned. "All but one, huh? That one gift's gonna have to be killer; I'm looking forward to seeing their reactions to your amazing gift- I'm sure it’s one of those worth it's own time of giving type of gifts.”

Toki gave a soft laugh, and shifted to prop her feet up on the dash. She reclined in the seat with a delighted sigh. “It’s not really a killer. You know all the knitting I’ve done while nursing your siblings?” She hums softly. “Well, I was making scarfs- a little red one for Honey, like what you wear, and a little green one for Skylar, so it’ll match my mane.” She glances to him and twiddles her thumbs. “I know they’re young, so clothes are probably not high on their list of things they’ll like… but do you think they might like them?”

She wanted to give them something home made and meaningful- she hadn’t been there for the first one, and damn it, she wanted to make the second one count.

He smiled happily. "Oh Toki, that's a wonderful gift! I have absolutely no doubt at all that they're going to love them; they’re hand-made and from their Momma. I don't see how they could be any more perfect." He praised wholeheartedly.
Toki beamed at that. Of course they'd love them—her children were bright and sweet and kind and amazing and she loved them oh so very much...

She lifted one of her secondary hands and let her skull rest in it. Her head was starting to feel fuzzy. Kinda achy, like it got before a bad storm. Blegh, another snow-storm would probably hit soon. They'd have to go dig out the porch again.

"I'm okay saying that they're from us, you know." Toki says warmly. "Can you imagine Honey's face if she got a scarf from her daddy that looked like a hand-made version of his? I'm pretty sure she'll deafen us with her shriek."

"She always was a little daddy's girl." He cooed happily, before he glanced over at her, his hand shifting grip on the steering wheel as they coasted smoothly along the road. "Hey, are you okay?" He asked gently, concern in his tone. "You're holding your head like you just got a throbbing headache."

“I did get one.” She laughs softly. “I’m alright though, love, don’t worry. Honestly, my head’s hurt worse before from some of our shenanigans.” She cocks her head to the side, and wiggles her brow ridges at him with a wink. Let him get a flush out of that.

He gave a giggle as his cheeks darkened slightly. "Oh Toki, behave my love, lest we want to break in how well this new vehicle absorbs motion-shock." He purred as he winked back.

Toki’s grin grew wider and more mischievous as her head ached more. “I dunno,” She grinned, and her gaze slid right out the window. She watched the trees pass by for a moment. “It might be day light now, but this stretch of road looks awfully familiar, doesn’t it? Last time we were here, I think we tested out the shock absorption of the pine needles right there under those trees, didn’t we~?” She teased as she pointed out the window.

He laughed at that, going to look out the window by her, but his laugh cut short in his throat, his amused look slowly fading to a look of horror as he saw that which was happening to his beloved wife. "T-Toki...?"

His laugh cutting off cued her in to something being wrong. She turned to look at him, her eyes flicking over him with worry. “Papy?” Her voice didn’t sound right- it sounded… like a television tuned to the wrong channel. “What’s wrong?”

"Toki... you're fading out!" He whined as his foot lifted from the gas, steadily allowing the van to drift to a less lurching stop. "You're disappearing again!" He had reached out to try and grasp her, but she had disappeared right before he could lay his hand on her shoulder.

"TOKI!"

One moment, she was staring into her husband’s panicked face after having been joking with him— and the next, she was dragged through the heavy darkness that was undeniably the Void. She had no true warning, no true heads up—she wasn’t even sleeping this time. She was conscious and aware and now she was taken. Again.

Toki landed on her hands and knees on a surprisingly flat surface, on a surprisingly solid surface. The void wasn’t trying to tear her apart, or anything of that sort— but… Frankly, she wasn’t sure what she was doing here. Wasn’t she not supposed to see it again? Like… Ever?
She glanced up- and there, out of the darkness, she could vaguely see Phase.

Toki bristled. “What am I doing here?” She demands, her voice upset. “You can’t- you can’t take me again.” Not again- she couldn’t miss another birthday, another almost year of her children’s lives.

"I am afraid you were summoned by the Void." The masked creature’s reply was spoken on a quiet voice, the servant slowly coming closer before he offered a pale hand to her to help her up. "I am afraid I cannot allow you to return home until It is sated."

“Tut tut, Phase, speaking so coldly of your master. 'Until it is sated’, indeed... Do you compare me to a beast?”

"No, My master... My intentions were-GHAAHH!" A pain filled shriek came from the form standing above Toki before he promptly fell to her level, gripping his head tightly as the space around them took a sick pleasure in punishing him for his poor wording.

“Not a word... Away with you, lowly worm. I have words to exchange with our guest.”

Toki set a brief hand on Phase, but ultimately she glared up at the void. “You didn’t need to do that.” She says. “You’re being petty.” She glares at him a moment more for ruining her day with Papyrus, and then Toki feels her shoulders slump, and the air drives from her non-existent lungs. She wasn’t sure she had it in her to play the Void’s mind games. “What do you want, Void? What could you possibly want with me now?”

The Void wanted until Phase got up and disappeared before it spoke up again. “Well, dear Toki. I was bored. And I had a thought that we hadn't visited your lovely family in quite a while... So I thought about taking a peek, and realized that perhaps you missed them~ That you’d like to see how your lovely little family was doing, and so I consulted Phase and he brought you to me so that you could be here to see~” There was a catch, it was clear in the voice of the realm around her.

There was a catch, and if anything said anything about this... it wasn't a good one.

The catch would be huge, but Toki had no idea what it was. She cocks her head at him, green eyes leering warily. “I’m not omnipotent to the extent that you are, Void- I see through dreams, not through whatever it is you’re planning on trying to show me. And I’ve been with my family- I saw them just this morning.”

Unless it- it meant- oh god, did it mean to- “Unless you mean Tenne.” She continues, trying for an unflappable visage and most likely failing. “Last I saw, he and Sequoia were expecting a litter and doing just fine.”

Phase had even helped her give Quinn one of her summons.

"Ah, that was quite a while ago, no? Four years since you saw them last, if I do recall. And you think all stayed as it was before? Tut tut, so naive...” The Void was chuckling around her. "Well then, why don't we see what you've missed... Phase?"

Phase slowly reappeared before he nodded and extended a hand to Toki.

Toki didn’t immediately reach for him. She felt herself pale, her bones blanching whiter. “What?” She rasps. “Four years? But... I’ve only been home for... eight months? How could four years have passed there? I was gone from Aliquam for six months and it was only two years when I was with
Tenne.

Time wasn’t fluid between the worlds, however- and she had a feeling the Void could hit ‘fast-forward’ whenever it wanted to.

Her gaze slid to Phase, hoping, a silent plea as she lifted her primary hand to take his, that the Void hadn’t let anything truly horrible happen to Tenne and Sequoia.

Phase looked down in apology as he took her hand and without warning she was pulled to a new sight.

It was Tenne, her wonderful Tenne, and her darling boys, Kai and Quinn. They were older now, starting to mature, and for a moment she yearned to reach out and cry out for them in hopes for them to hear her.

At least until she took another look.

Curled up in Tenne's arm was a small form- a fuzzy moth looking creature who's eyes were closed, her mouth occupied by an ear of what looked to be a cotton-stuffed dog plush toy. Tenne had a quiet, doleful look on his face as he looked upon a slab of stone, one that gleamed with the relative youth of it’s craftsmanship.

Toki found her gaze wandering over the clearing. She recognized it- the new slab of stone was alongside the stone that marked the one they used for her ‘memorial’ here. But… The new stone- it had more than just one name on it. Why was Tenne here alone with the boys and a baby cream and tan moth beast?

Where was Sequoia?

Toki’s soul sank in her chest, and she stepped away from Phase, moving closer to the pillar of stone to read the words.

However, her eyes locked on the first name and epitaph, and went no further.

*Sequoia Gaster, loving mother and mate- died in childbirth in xx08.*

Toki felt her soul squeeze with pain in her chest- the five names after were Sequoia’s *children*. She’d died with her babies, and Tenne and his boys had lost all but one. “He lost her.” She says, her voice tight with pain. It had been eight months since Sequoia had been in her head- and now she was gone forever. “He lost her- how could you both let this happen!? She was supposed to have a happy ending- this is not a happy ending!”

Pain filled her voice- but was that also anger? Yes that was.

Phase didn't reply. His gaze lowered quietly as his hands folded in front of him.

Toki’s chest trembled with upset, and her fists tightened with pain for Tenne- with pain she felt too. She moved, disregarding Phase, and went to Tenne.

She stood next to Tenne, opposite of his sons, and she trembled. She reached out, and her fingers ghosted through the stone. Despite everything that she’d done in her life, Sequoia hadn’t deserved to die like this- no body did, really. Sequoia was just getting to be happy- this wasn’t fair.

Toki slowly turned to look at Tenne, and lifted her secondary hand. She went to touch him, but stopped, knowing her hand would only phase through him. Instead, she ghosted it along the shape of
his face. She could see the dark stains on his cheeks from tear marks. He’d spent a lot of time crying in private. “Oh Tenne...” She whispered quietly, wishing he could hear her. “I’m so sorry… I’m so sorry this happened to you and Sequoia and your sons… I’m so, so sorry. If I knew… if I knew this is what would happen when I left...”

"What, you would have stayed behind? Forsaken your own love and children for him?"

Tenne’s form wavered in place, before the vision disappeared, replaced by a shadow of a body who tilted it’s head as they leered down at her.

The form was male in shape and musculature and how he stood, just like the ethereal voice that he spoke with, but it had no visible genitalia visible on the nude body. The shape was tall- taller than her- with muscles not unlike Aliquam’s ectobody. There were eight glowing white eyes lining up and down the gray-shadowed head in place of a properly set face, and the voice seemed to exude from the entire body instead of from a mouth. It had no nose, no mouth.

Toki took only a moment to match the voice to the Void, before she glared at the Void’s revealed form. She crosses her arms, looking up at the large form that stared at her with almost quizzical amusement. “No.” She says firmly. Her mane bristled at him. “I’d have found a way, any way, to take them all home with me, damn whatever you and your ‘one soul’ rules say. I’d have made it work, and I’d have made you make it work.”

"Too bad it would have been in vain to plead and threaten, Nara. You think I would allow a breaking of my law? You’re growing gutsy." He chuckled lowly, rolling his head as he loosely shrugged his shoulders.

“You’ve already cursed me to an eternity to living without my loved ones.” She says flatly. “My curse allows me to be gutsy. There’s nothing worse you can do to me. And believe you me- it might have been in vain, but I wouldn’t have stood idly by.” She flexed her teeth angrily at him. “You might be an omnipotent force, Void, and you might have created us all… But I think, if every one of your creations, every soul in existence, were to unite… We might be able to work together to make you sit up and listen. Maybe, just maybe, that’s what you need to get you off your high horse and realize living beings don’t deserve to be used as experiments in your ant-farms.”

He chuckled lowly at that, before it grew and he threw his head back and roared in laughter. "Does an eagle not hunt and kill rabbits if they demand the bird stop!? Foolish girl, simply because you threaten means naught for your 'goals.' " He sneered.

Toki simply gives him a dark look. “A threat?” She laughs quietly. “That wasn’t a threat. That was something I was musing.” She shakes her head, and then looks at him. “Let me take Tenne and all of his remaining children home with me.” She requests. And then, just because he’d assumed it was a threat, she curled her teeth at him. “Or, I’ll make good on that, and I’ll find a way, any way, to reach every universe you’ve ever made, and we’ll make you listen. Now that was a threat, and a promise.”

He leaned down and leered at her eerily, eyes scrunching up in an unnerving and inhuman way. "I could seal you away... force you into an eternal sleep and force both sides to suffer without their beloved Toki..." He laughed in her face.

"It is against the laws of existence, Tokiko..." Phase spoke up softly. "It is why your counterpart died while you lived in that realm..."

Toki felt her soul sink at the threat. Papyrus would never understand what happened- neither would her children or her family. Tenne would be none-the-wiser to her involvement… But… her children
and Papyrus would suffer the most for her pissing off a god.

“You could.” She says evenly, perhaps a tinge of uneasy fear in the glow of her eyes. “You could seal me away from my family, my children, and everything I’ve ever loved. But in an eternal sleep, I wouldn’t feel anything, I would know nothing of it - I wouldn’t suffer. And you? You’d lose any and all entertainment with me.” After all, watching someone in an eternal sleep would be eternally boring. “That’s why you brought me here, isn’t it? You’re... You’re bored. You wanted to be entertained- and shaking up my life, bringing me here, talking to me even though you said I wouldn’t see you again unless I messed up... It’s all entertainment for you. Anything to give you something new to study and to look at, right? Little ants in your ant farm...”

Toki took a deep breath and exhale, trying to steady her nerves. If she pissed him off too hard, she’d be fucked. “I know the rules. But the one who wrote them can un-write them. After all, if you’ve watched any of Honey playing games, you know that sometimes it’s more fun to toss the rules to the wind and make your own.”

What she said seemed to make him think.

The Void being twitched as he leaned back, giving a low growl before the deafening noise mellowed out into a hum. "I suppose you are right... I can only play with so many people before it gets boring... You have proven to be the most fun of your incarnations to play with." He hummed in thought, before he chuckled. "Alright... I will play along. I will bend the rules this once... but... I will not help you if your wishes go awry..." He warned.

There was a sudden sense of relief that washed over her. Play along? “You mean I can take Tenne and the children back with me? And you won’t do anything untoward towards them that’ll make bad things happen?” She asks again, hoping for a clear answer. Awry? She wasn’t even going to comment there. Nothing ever went as planned, but she dealt with it as it happened and she made it work.

"On the contrary, I will bring them to your world exactly as they are... However, I cannot promise the same could be said for you. You have such a soft body, I so greatly take pleasure in remolding it every time you cross my path, dear girl~" He chuckled lowly, before he reached out, caressing her cheek gently with a sharp hand. "You’re such an interesting little plaything... Perhaps I might just steal you after your death, turn you into a servant of my shadows so that I can keep you forever~ It would certainly give Phase a playmate, now wouldn’t it~?"

Some of the relief she had faded away into immediate anxiety as his hand brushed her cheek and made her entire body tingle with discomfort under her clothes. His words were creepy as hell, but commenting on them would do her no good, and would only provoke him more. “Thank you for keeping them in their bodies. I’m... better adept at adapting to my body changing than they would be.”

She hesitated, before offering him a thankful bow, and then turning her gaze to Phase. “You’ll be helping me, I assume...? Am I going to meet them in my world, or...?” Toki hoped she could helped coerce them to come home with her- she didn’t want to just... rip them away. She wanted to give them the choice- and if they said no, well... then she’d respect it.

Phase stepped forward as his master stepped back, and with a small wave of his hand, the scene of her loved ones re-appeared before them. He reached up with a single claw before he pressed and pulled downward.

Almost immediately Tenne took a protective stance over his children and bared his fangs as it
seemed it was the portal opening in their world.

"Go first... He will attack if I do..." Phase spoke quietly.

Toki nodded softly. She didn’t even hesitate, before quietly moving to the portal. She didn’t stick her arm out first, on account of the fact she wasn’t too sure Tenne wouldn’t attack if he saw a skeletal arm coming out first anyway.

The first thing she stuck out was her face, her body breathing in a deep breath of air that wasn’t native to her world. Her mane fluffed in the breeze, and the previously dulled colors brightened into reality as she took in the headstones for Sequoia and her likely still-born children, and the monument to herself.

Toki slipped out fully, knowing she probably didn’t look entirely how Tenne remembered her looking- but she knew her mane and her scent was just as distinctive as the flashes of her scar that peeked out between her horns.

Her eyes blinked slowly down at Tenne, and the white and tan baby moth beast in his arms, before glancing over the shell shocked boys staring at her.

She spread all four arms, and stepped one step forward so Phase could join her. "Tenne, Kai, Quinn..." She murmurs softly to them, not sure what else to say beyond their names.

All pairs of eyes landed on her only for none of the owners to react simply due to the pure shock of what they saw before them.

"T-Toki...?" Tenne was the first to break the silence, his gaze not breaking from her even as Phase slowly stepped through the portal to close it behind them.

Kai's eyes were wide, as were Quinn's, but it was Quinn's that were quickly welling up in tears; tears that sent the queen bee upon his shoulder into a distressed humming as she crawled up to his neck and piped to try and bring him comfort, momentarily disregarding her old mistress.

The young moth in Tenne's arm looked up at her with intelligent and curious eyes, but showed no recognition of knowing who she was. The sole survivor of Sequoia's litter was already four years old and living for her lost kin.

Toki caught the tears in Quinn’s eyes, and she dropped down to one knee instinctively, widening her arms in welcoming as her mane plumed for him. He was ten years old by her count now- four when she first met him, six when she left him, and ten now. Gods, she’d missed so much with them- it was like Skylar and Honey all over again, and she could feel her soul weeping for the things she missed.

"It's me," She says, her voice the same motherly tone as they may have remembered it being, “It's really me...” She paused a moment, and then switched languages. She forgot- they spoke English, not her native tongue. “It’s really me. Boys, my boys... I’ve missed you all so much...”

The younger brother hesitated with a quiet whimper, before he sniffled and gave a shrill whimper. "O-Okasan..."

Mother...

Quinn had called her mother... Even after four years, his heart had never moved from where it felt about her.

He slowly stepped closer before he pressed himself into her body, barely able to believe the shocking
truth that was her warmth and scent now against his body. He was soon accompanied by Kai as he joined in on the hug.

Now all that remained was Tenne, who seemed to need a moment longer to completely grasp how his mate was once more right in front of him.

Toki’s secondary arms collected both boys close, and she held them tight, even as they towered over her in her crouched position. She slowly shifted to stand, and held them firmly to her, her mane pluming out as her wings gave a soft, tender buzz. “Oh my boys…” The near perfect pronunciation of calling her mother in her native tongue had warmed her heart.

They had learned- they had learned her tongue. How, she didn’t know, but at least Quinn knew it.

“I love you so much,” Toki can’t help the soft murmur to them both in her mother-tongue as she presses closed mouthed kisses on top of their skulls, her sockets closing as she cradled them firmly to her.

Her gaze slowly slid up to Tenne, and she lifted her head to offer a hand to him hesitantly. He hadn’t come to her immediately- perhaps he had moved on… If he had… If he had, she would respect it. “Tenne… There’s much I need to talk to you about, and I don’t know how much time I have to do it…”

Tenne took a moment to snap out of it but as he locked his gaze on her hand, he slowly stepped closer and his fingers ghosted over hers. "Toki..." He breathed again, before he fell to trembling knees and quickly used his free arm to pull her close, taking in her scent as Quinn did, a scent he quickly aimed to drown himself in.

The boys moved to her side to let Tenne press himself against her middle, her shirt flexing with her invisible ecto-flesh as he inhaled her smell. Toki sighed, her primary hands rubbing softly over his head. She inhaled their smells, imprinting them to her memory just in case he would rather stay there in his world instead of going with her to her world.

As the once-family bonded, Toki took a moment to hold him tight and glance back at Phase. “How long do we have?” She asks, worried that she won’t get to ask him, before they got ripped away again.

" I will try to give you as much time as possible. " Phase answered quietly as he stepped to the side, folding his hands together as he waited.

"Toki... You were torn away so quickly... I'm so happy to see you again." Tenne spoke quietly into her belly. "It's been so long... I missed you…"

"I missed you too.” She says softly. “It’s been four years here, hasn’t it? Or four years and some change,” She glanced down to the roughly four year old pup in his arms. “It’s only been… less than a year in my world.” Her hands rubbed over his head, and then her fingers tangled in his mane, her bones cushioning so they didn’t pinch and pull his sensitive locks. “Gods, so much has happened… But… we’ll have time to catch up. Plenty of time."

He leaned back just slightly and sighed quietly. "I wouldn't be sure where to start beyond... well...” He looked to the young mothling who had reached out and hooked a few locks of green fur into her felt-covered fingers. "This is Willow…"

Toki knelt down so Willow could better hold her fur- and brought the boys down with her, leaving her face to face with Tenne in a cuddle pile almost. “Hi there, Willow…” Toki smiled at her warmly.
"It’s nice to meet you, Willow. You look so much like your Momma did- I knew her well, and you’re just as pretty as she was, if not more.” She lifted a finger, offering it to the little multi-armed mothling as Toki’s fur was gently handled by felt-lined fingers.

Willow blinked slowly before she reached up and pressed her fingers onto Toki’s mouth, her ruby eyes gleaming gently as she watched her for a moment, before she gave a small smile. "You’ve got Momma’s magic." If she didn’t have Toki’s immediate attention, her words might have ended up overheard from her speaking so quietly.

Her words were almost a whisper. Toki almost didn’t hear her, and she was directly listening to her. Toki smiled against the velvety fingers pressed to her teeth, and she offered them the tenderest of kisses. “Your Momma and I were very close, once. When you’re older and think you’re ready, your Daddy and I can tell you the story, yeah?” She smiles to her warmly.

Willow slowly nodded at Toki’s words before she gave a soft squeak and Tenne put her down to go hug her brothers’ legs as he gave Toki another embrace. "Oh Toki..." Her name was said upon a soft sigh but with many things to say dredging behind it... Tenne knew they had to talk, he knew that he was on borrowed time... but he just wanted to keep holding her.

Her emerald gaze slide to Tenne, and she leaned into his embrace as best she could with the boys not letting go, and Quinn actively weeping into her side. “Phase said he would try to give us time, but I don’t know how long that will be.” She says softly. “I need to ask you something, Tenne- something very important.” She drops a hand to gently pet Willow’s head as the little female hugs Kai’s leg and clings there.

"Ask... whatever it is... just tell me." He responded quickly, almost a plea, knowing that indeed Phase could just steal her away again and leave him with nothing.

She did as asked, lifting one hand from his body up to cup his cheek, her skeletal fingers brushing over his skin tenderly. “Do you want to come with me?” She asks. “You and the children. All three of them. All four of you can come with me to my world- you don’t have to be alone.”

He sighed softly at her touch before he slowly opened his eyes to look at her skeletal hand. She’d had flesh before. "C-come with you..." He repeated quietly, before he kissed her palm. Damn if she had flesh before- this was Toki, his Toki, his mate. He didn’t care if she had bones, flesh, feathers, or scales- she’d be her no matter what form she took. "I... I don’t know... Would we be welcome? Do you not have a lover in your own world?” He asked.

Toki nods softly, and lets her hand stroke his cheek gently. “I do have one.” She says gently. “Though he’s not a lover. Papyrus is my first mate and my husband.” She cups his cheek gently, and exhales softly. “Insectis Queen Bees take more than one mate on the norm- Dear and I consider you both our mates. You’re both dear to our heart. However... You would be more than welcome in our world and in our home.”

He watched her as she spoke, though was unsure as he considered the full scope of her words. Slowly he leaned back, away from her hand, and he turned to set his hand where her warmth sat moments ago. "... Will we change?" He asked quietly. "If we go, will our forms change like yours?"

“No.” She shakes her head. “You four will be just as you are. I secured that so you’d never have to go through what I did- but... I may change again.” She takes the hand he’d pulled away from, and rubs it quietly against her jaw. “I’m... I’m more used to the dysphoria that comes with each time the void changes me.”

"..." His gaze flitted up towards Phase, who kept his own gaze away as his head stayed low. "And
we can trust him to deliver us safely?" Tenne asked in a little softer tone. "I do not want to risk the safety of my children."

Toki looked at Phase and nodded quietly. "Phase is kinder than you think." Her primary left hand lifted, and she let her wedding band glint in the light. "He got me my wedding ring back, and when he handled me prior, he's been very gentle with me. He wouldn't harm you or the children."

Toki glanced back to Tenne and then gently clasped her hands in front of her, no longer touching the children that clung to her. "Tenne..." She says quietly. "If you don't want to go... You're not... You don't have to. But this is, I think, a one time only offer. I'm not going to get to come back and ask you again."

And that clearly said she couldn't stay either.

"Dad-" Kai's grip tightened on her shirt. "Dad- Momma can't go again. Please. We lost her once, and we lost... We lost Mom too..." They'd lost both their mothers. His eldest son was pleading to not make them lose their first mother again. "Please, we can't split up again..." His tail curled low between his bent knees, almost trying to coil around his mother's leg.

He hadn't been as much a Momma's boy as Quinn had been, but she was still the first mother he imprinted on and he loved her.

Tenne never felt the silence be as heavy as it was now. Kai's voice was like a knife in his heart.

"O-Oh my darling sons..." He whispers, before he lowered his head to press it into Toki's fur, taking another deep breath of her scent before he leaned back to look at her... He looked so conflicted...

Toki lifted a hand to stroke his face tenderly. "I can't tell you everything will be alright if you go or you stay." She says quietly. "All I know is, staying is just as uncertain a future as going. But going... We can face those uncertainties together as a pack and a family."

Her husband would need to work with her on this, but... She couldn't leave them here to suffer. She knew personally what happened to a beast that had lost their mate.

Tenne had helped piece her back together again, after all.

"As a pack... and a family." He sighed quietly, before he leaned into her hand, a slow smile growing on his face, before he rested his hand over hers, holding it gently before he spoke again. "Toki... I cannot cope losing you again, nor can my sons... Please take us with you..."

"Please don't leave us, Momma..." Quinn whined gently as he held onto her.

"Okay... Okay." Toki smiled softly. She leaned her head forward and nuzzled the crown of Tenne's head, before she let loose a shaky sigh of relief. Her hands stroked her boys heads, and she even gave little Willow a gentle touch. "Okay. You're gonna come home with me. Ah..." She glances at Phase and moves to stand up, pulling everyone to their feet with her. "Can they take anything with them? Or is this a 'come as you are' situation?"

"I am afraid all must be left behind beyond the clothes on your back..." Phase answered, shortly before a shrill whine got his attention.

Quinn was hugging his pet hornet as he whined, glaring up at Phase. "I'm not gonna leave Kiko!" The bee he cradled in his hands... It was understandable that he would refuse to leave her behind.

"Ah..." Phase tilted his head before he came closer and extended his hand to Quinn. "Let me see
Expectantly, Quinn hesitated as he held his beloved bee close, but a reassuring glance from his mother had him slowly offering the bee up to the unnerving being.

Very carefully, Phase collected the bee in his hands, gently wrapping his hands around her before she was sealed in a bubble. He then held it back to Quinn, "Keep her close... She will stay with you during the travel..."

"Th-Thank you." Quinn looked down at the bubbled bee as Phase rose and he turned, lifting his hand and forming another portal.

"Let us be off..."

Toki paused a moment before immediately walking off. She stooped down and gently picked up Willow, so the pup wouldn't be scrambling to keep up. Willow was so small Toki could carry her in one arm.

Toki then glanced to the gravestone for Sequoia, and felt her soul throb. "I'm sorry, my sister." She says softly. "I'm sorry this happened to you. You didn't deserve that final punishment. But you're at peace now. Rest, and let me take care of everything now. I'll keep them safe."

Having said her goodbyes, Toki gently handed Willow to Tenne, and then took his free hand in hers, before her other hands were claimed by the boys.

Having four hands had it's perks, frankly. She still had one primary arm free to give Phase a thankful motion, as she guided the group to the portal... And then through it, into the never-ending darkness.

"Don't be afraid." She says to them, knowing they likely can't see her, but can feel her. She tightened her grip. "I've got you. It'll be okay."

Tenne gave an uneasy growl as his eyes struggled to adjust to the pure darkness around them, while Willow began to whimper as she held closer to her father.

"I don't like this... it's too dark..." Kai said quietly, holding tightly onto Toki's hand.

“I know.” Toki’s voice was a soothing echo in the dark. Her body twitched, and she stuttered a step with a grimace. “But it’ll be okay. Just hold tight to me, sweet ones. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

There was a rumble from the darkness around them that didn’t sound pleasant.

Toki cocked her head. “Isn’t that right, Void?” She prompts. “Nothing will happen to them, just like you promised.”

There was silence in reply, before a low hum rose from the darkness around them.

Without warning, Phase’s grip suddenly appeared and tightened, and he pulled her hard in the direction away from the others. It took her from Kai and Tenne, but Quinn had been on the same side as Phase and had held on tight enough to be the one remainder.

Upon realizing what happened, the tween quickly made to pull Toki away from Phase, which was a success as the servant released her upon being bitten by the angry youngling. Though as Phase broke away, it came to be revealed just why he did what he did.
The shadows grew heavy around them and began to sink into Toki's feet, climbing up her body until they reached her arms... and then they spread to Quinn... But unlike Toki, Quinn did not have the defense to withstand the sudden attack.

Shadows shot from Toki to Quinn and he shrieked in pain, now unable to let go of his mother's hand as the shadows easily sank into him

"Tsk... What a rebellious little boy~ a strong hand, and a good soul... I can see why you adore him, but I needed him to let go. Sadly, because of him, I might fail to keep my promise..."

For a moment under the crippling darkness, Quinn and Toki were one, his soul racing from the pain and sending beat upon beat of adrenaline flooded magic through the veins of shadow infesting them both. He didn't need much time to flood her with magic, but was given enough time for the void to leave it's mark.

Quinn’s flood of magic was more of a trickle- but his body was overwhelmed by the magic that came from Toki’s body. The void left it’s mark indeed, stretching his magic capacity forcefully as it forcibly worked his body beyond what it was capable of.

His cry of pain wasn’t the only one though- Toki felt like her spine was breaking, and though her grip on him could not be severed, she felt her body go limp as she cried out, pain lancing up and down her back and burning into her chest.

Another scream rose through the shadows, but it was one of rage as Tenne unleashed a blast of energy from his throat, seeking to cut the darkness to find his screaming companions... Though it came to last only seconds as a light shined through a portal as Phase tore it into being

"Master, you must remember your promise..."

"Tsk..." Though the sound was of reluctance, the void obliged the words of the servant and the shadows peeled away from Toki and Quinn, allowing them both to either catch themselves or fall to the ground.

Quinn ended up falling to the ground, whining in pain as he yipped and whined for his papa.

Toki hit the ground on all fours, but she scrambled up shortly, yanking Quinn into her arms with a soft rasping gasp. She whipped around, the light of the open portal letting her see Tenne, and she ignored the burning in her chest as she wrapped her hand around his arm. “Come on.” She murmurs to him, her chest burning with every breath under her clothes. It was still dark and hard to see, but she had just enough light and she imagined he could see her too. “Let's go.”

Quinn whimpered loudly while Tenne took a firm grasp of Toki. Kai quickly took hold of her other hand before they entered the portal, falling forward to hit the cold ground of a road.

The same road that Toki and Aliquam had been driving on not long before this whole mess happened.

Speaking of- lo and behold the bright red van right in front of them, with Aliquam sitting in the driver's seat, wearing a panicked look as the Portal closed behind them.

Toki hit the pavement with a grunt, stumbling with an extra weight that she wasn’t used to having there. She exhaled tiredly. “We made it.” She says softly, and then her gaze flicks up to the van. Her shoulders relaxed, and she sighed warmly. There was so much she had to explain… “Papyrus.” She gives him a wave, and stumbles towards the van. “What the…?”
She had a... tail...?

She had a tail. It was long and curling, thick but dainty bone that had tangled itself up with one of her legs. There were no decorations on the end of it—just smooth, tapering bone, ending with a rounded end. She gave a soft huff, and uncurled it with a hand, manually holding it in her hand.

Tenne was sitting near her, one arm over his eyes as he growled quietly; it was suddenly very bright and he was blinded.

"Toki!" Aliquam got out of the Van and quickly went to her side. "Are you okay?! What happened? Who are these monsters?" He asked all his questions before looking up at Tenne, who was finally lowering his hand, and looking at Aliquam with a surprised look.

Toki leaned up to meet Aliquam, gently setting Quinn on his feet before her husband took her into his arms. “I’m okay. I think.” She mumbled softly in answer. “As for what happened—well, the Void got bored I think, and called me for a visit. I’m still not sure what prompted it, but it was for the best.” Toki leaned up and gave her husband a nuzzle, before turning in his arms.

This wasn’t going to be easy to explain... But fuck, lying wasn’t going to work either way.

“Papyrus, I’d like for you to meet my second mate, Tenne, and my adopted sons, Kai, and Quinn, who were my family in the other world.” She says gently. “And then there’s little Willow, who’s new to me too. She’s Sequoia and Tenne’s remaining daughter. Sequoia... Sequoia and the rest of their litter were lost in childbirth.” She grimaces softly. “Tenne, children—this is my first mate and husband, Papyrus Aliquam Gaster.”

Little Willow offered a tiny wave from her Daddy’s arms, her fluffy antenna wiggling softly atop her head.

Aliquam didn't say anything immediately, nor did Tenne.

Quinn was the first to break the silence, giving a shrill whine as he tried to pat or pop the bubble around his beloved bee, "Kiko..." He whined quietly.

Toki's attention immediately switched gears. She pulled away from Aliquam, and leaned down to take the bubble from Quinn. Her gaze paused as she took notice of the clear talons growing out of her finger tips, before she sighed through her teeth and sank her magic infused claws into the dark bubble.

It popped with a little bit of work and the bee came fluttering out. "So, you renamed her Kiko instead of Toki, like me?" Toki observes with warm care for the boy. She pauses. "Quinn. You have a mane..."

Kiko gave a distressed buzz and nearly stung Toki until Quinn reached out and collected her in his hands, holding her close with a happy sound as he pet her into passivity. Though upon Toki's observation, he looked up at her with a soft sound. "I-I do?" He asked quietly, his free hand going up to feel his neck to discover a light layer of orange fur, more than just baby fuzz, but not yet a mane as lustrous as his Father's. "Ah... I-I do...!"

"How..." Tenne then spoke up, his own mane ruffling up as he went to Quinn's side, sniffing his neck and nuzzling him worriedly. "You're growing a mane so early on... what caused this?" He asked.

Aliquam watched quietly until his eye was caught elsewhere, specifically, Kai getting up to pat himself off before going to examine the taller skeleton.
Kai's gaze was calm as he looked up at Aliquam, before giving a quiet sound and he held up a hand, though what then came out of his mouth was not the English they spoke normally in their own world, rather a polite, albeit first-timer Japanese. "Nice to meet you."

Such politeness totally surprised Aliquam, but he smiled and slowly reached down to take the offered hand, giving it a firm shake. "Well met."

Toki had watched Kai and Papyrus interact, and she made a soft, pleased sound when her husband greeted the younger boy warmly. Everyone was doing good with language assimilation as well—though her other-world family was, well... heavily accented. They were understandable however. Her gaze then turned back to her second mate, and she reached out to run her fingers gently through Quinn's mane.

“I think his mane is my fault.” She says very gently, apology growing heavy in her voice. She’d said they wouldn’t change- and her sweet little Momma’s boy was the one who paid the price. “When we got separated, Quinn held on to me, and... Well, the Void briefly connected us.” She turned her back, and swished her new tail at them. “I think I got this from Quinn.”

Not to mention the fact that her shirt was now... fuller. Much fuller.

“I don’t mind.” Quinn chirps softly, his fingers rubbing through his mane. He blinked up at Toki, and withstood his father’s worried sniffing. “It’s a mane like Momma’s mane- fluffy and soft. I don’t mind at all. And now Momma has a tail! It’s a long tail- I think it’s pretty.”

He didn’t seem to notice the new shape to her torso, but he was little and that was his mother- why would he?

Toki smiled back at her boy. “Well, thank you.”

“Your mane is different...” Kai says quietly.

Her smile fades, and she lifts a hand to her mane. “What?”

The luscious green of her mane had been tipped in black- like the void was slowly tainting her colors and fading them darker and darker.

Aliquam stepped over to Toki and knelt to check her over, his fingers slowly delving into her fur. "Black tips.... my..." He sighed, before he stood and kissed her head. "As long as you're okay... I don't care..." He sighed quietly.

“I’m okay.” Toki assured him, leaning up to kiss his cheek. “I promise, I’m okay.”

Quinn’s gaze flicked between the two of them, and he gave a soft tug to one of her hands. “Momma?” He says softly, tucking Kiko onto his shoulder and nuzzling her softly. “This is your home?”

“Well, not my home, I don’t live in the middle of a road.” She laughs. “But my world.” She smiles at him, and rubs his hand with her thumb. She lifts her gaze, and gives Aliquam a lopsided smile. “Good thing we got a van today, huh?” She jokes, silently hoping that he wasn’t going to be completely angry with her over her bringing them to their world.

Aliquam gave a shaky chuckle in reply before he straightened up and helped Toki make sure she was completely dusted off from her trip into the void. "Yeah, good thing... Come on..." He answered quietly, before looking at Tenne. "If you'd like a lift, we've got room. We don't have any child seats though so you may want to hold onto your little one."
"That will be alright." Tenne gave a small smile before he looked to his boys. "Come along you two. We can celebrate our reunion once we make it to Toki's home." He told them.

"Yay!" Quinn beamed. "We’re gonna get to see Momma’s home!" He smooshed his mother’s hand, and then bounced towards the car, prying open the back door so his Father and brother could climb in with him.

Kai was quick to join him, working on getting comfortable in one of the back seats. "Why don’t you sit behind Mom and her Papyrus?" He chirps softly.

Toki watched the four monsters work on getting into the back of the van, and she gently took Aliquam’s hand in hers. “Hey...” She says softly, and looks at him. “I know this is a lot... But I couldn’t... I couldn’t leave him there. He lost Sequoia too- I think she died having their litter... I know what it’s like to have your soul feel like it’s lost a mate- and I couldn’t leave him there.”

Her bottomless kindness was showing again, it would seem.

He gave her hand a gentle squeeze and gave a weak sigh. "I carry no ill will... but I fear what will happen when he meets Father..." He told her quietly. "He is the father of the pups... isn't he...?"

"He is." She leaned into him with a sigh, her tail curling around his ankle without her noticing. "And... He does still love me, Aliquam. I think, anyway. I know the boys still do... But yes. He’s the father of the pups. That’s... something we’ll cross when we get home. I’ll pull him aside and talk to him- we gave them to your father, who couldn’t have pups of his own with his mate. I’m hoping he doesn’t have a problem with it, but there’s not much to be done if he does. The pups are imprinted.”

"Indeed, no matter what is said to them, they’d only know Tenebris and Asgore... I will be ready to stand between them if I end up needing to..." He felt her tail on his ankle but smiled gently, finding himself enjoying the new appendage as much as anyone else. "Heh... I like your tail..." He cooed quietly as he then let her go, giving a small gesture to start back for the car. "It reminds me of Father's, without the blade of course, but you know what I mean.

Toki hoped they didn’t have to step between Tenebris and Tenne. Tenebris would probably kill Tenne by accident given the power differences of the world...

She took his hand and led him for the car. “You really like my tail?” She had to lean on him a little. Okay, a lot. Her balance was off with the tail, and she wasn’t used to using it for keeping herself balanced. Toki would need to relearn how to walk, and likely how to fly- though Dear was trickling information into the back of her mind that would help her.

Dear had been quiet since the birth of the pups, and handing them over- but one couldn’t coax a beast to talk if she didn’t want to.

“I kinda like it too. It’s... Different. Same with the talons.” She wiggled her fingers. “I like them too. I can ‘paint my nails’ again. Though my tail feels kinda bare being as long as it is without anything on the end.” Toki casts a glance at is as they pause at the nose of the van before parting. “Maybe a ribbon on the end?”

"A big green one, perhaps." Aliquam hummed, before he snickered at her. "You're walking stiffly; try relaxing and add some sway to your walk and you should feel a little more balanced." He advised, having watched his father walk and studied the difference between his strides and Asgore's, for example.
“A green one would be nice.” She paused at his advice and huffed. “If I add any more sway to my walk, people are going to think there’s something wrong with my legs.” Still, she does as asked, and basically sashays her way to the passenger door. It’s easier like he described, but she’s going to have to practice and find that happy medium that doesn’t look like she’s seducing the world.

Toki opens her door, and goes to get in- only to knock herself silly as something on top of her head catches on the top of the door and makes her skull ring. “Oh my lord- ow!”

"Are you alright?” Aliquam asked as he looked over from his side of the Van, though he quickly seemed to realize what happened and why it happened. "Ah.... your horns… Your horns are tall again.” He observed.

“My horns?” Her hands flew to her skull and- where were her horns? What the fuck? Toki’s hands frantically slid up and- oh. Oh dear.

A quick look in the side mirror for the van confirmed it.

She had her original horns back. She’s not sure if she’s happy about it or dreading it- at least she could properly cuddle now without awkward bulges and poky points.

“Huh. My horns are like they were before I went through the void the first time.” She observes. “Cool. I like these ones. I won’t poke as many holes in shirts anymore. Though...” She sighs. “The pillows will once again be at risk. Oh well.”

Now aware of her problem, Toki was more careful in getting into the van- though sitting with a tail was incredibly uncomfortable, and she found herself squirming to get comfortable, until she found the right spot with her tail running down along her leg. At least it was slimmer and less armored than Tenne or Tenebris’ tails were.

“Well… Lets head home.” It was a good thing the house was built with a shitload of bedrooms in it for emergency cases like this. There was no telling if Tenne would want to stay with her and Aliquam permanently, or if he’d want his own little home, but until that time, her home would be open to him.

Once sure that everyone had buckled in, Aliquam put the van into drive and began once more to return home.

Kai and Quinn were occupied by looking out the windows of the van, though Willow seemed more focused on Toki, tilting her head and wiggling her antennae before she hummed and quietly tucked her thumb into her mouth as she leaned into her father's warmth.

Tenne would respond by running his fingers through her fuzz before his gaze drifted to Toki.

He had so much to say, but even though Toki had immediately revealed his identity to her husband, he still felt like a rogue in the territory of a rival pack, that his presence was merely a privilege.

Aliquam hadn't said a word once they had gotten back onto the road, though he would occasionally glance over at Toki, before peering into the rear view mirror to look at Tenne and his sons.

Two years with a man that was an alternate version of his own father, raising two boys that were no doubt his and Caeruleus’ counterparts... It made his soul ache with a fear he knew was irrelevant and unnecessary.

Both men's gazes were not unnoticed by Toki, who was keeping an eye on them both
And, of course, on little Willow. Rather than let everyone sit in awkward silence though, which would amp up the tension and only make the children uncomfortable, Toki turned on the radio and began to sing for them all the way home.

They all had a lot to talk about, but it was something best done with the children in bed when they all three had time to sit down and just... Talk.
Chapter 162

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And so it continues-- Also SNUGGLE IS BACK! And has completed his cocooning!

Toki shifted in her seat as they got closer to home, and let her songs die off. She instead took a drink to freshen her voice, and then hummed.

"Nara Village is ahead." She murmured to Tenne, knowing he'd recognize the name for her last name. "Our home is just inside of the gate. Don't worry, okay? You'll be okay here." She tilts her head back, and eyes both men. This was important for both of them to hear. "After all, I was a stranger in your world once too. You helped make it home. How could I not do the same here?"

The guards at the gate stepped forth and blocked the cars path as they got close and slowed down. "Windows down and identify yourselves."

Aliquam rolled down his and Toki's windows, giving the guard on his side a polite smile. "Aliquam and Tokiko Gaster." He answered.

"And your guests?" The guard queried.

"Monsters." Toki answers. "Not from here and will be staying for a while."

They nodded and stepped out of the way.

Toki's house loomed ahead, tall and covered in brick. The snow had fallen freshly, powdering it in the white substance. Her home was large, multi-floored with plenty of space for everyone.

"This is home." Toki says and leans against her door as she waits for Aliquam to park. "It's not big, but... There's room for everyone and there's food and toys for the little ones to play with. Speaking of... We'll need to go get Skylar and Honey from your dad." She hums to Aliquam.

"Mmhm..." Aliquam poked his head out the window and took a deep breath as he looked around the main entrance, though he noticed something as he pulled up to the house’s front parking space and he took in a slow breath. Papyrus blinked and began to look around more. "Huh... I smell Father but I do not see-"

He wasn't able to finish his sentence as there was a loud impact with the top of the van that caused it to rock on it's wheels.

Willow began to whimper in terror before the source appeared in front of the parked vehicle. It surprised Toki, frightened Tenne, and urged Aliquam to sit up straight and exclaim. "FATHER!"

Tenebris was fully bristled at them, his damaged crown on display as he puffed up and leered at them through the front of the van. His claws ghosted over the paint, aware enough to keep from damaging their new vehicle, but he was alert and obviously quite disturbed.

It occurred to Toki why he would be. She’d disappeared- which meant Clover would have been sent
back without her permission. Of course he’d have been panicked. “Shh… It’s okay.” She soothed softly. “That’s our Alpha- Tenebris Gaster. He’s also my father in law, and he might be in a small panic. Just sit here for a moment, okay? I’ll go calm him down.”

“Momma no!” Quinn gasped. “He’ll hurt you!”

“No he wont, sweet one.” Toki soothed, and proceeded to open her door. She closed it behind her, her tail nearly getting caught as she forgot to compensate for it. “Papa.” She calls softly. “Dad. It’s okay- I know you got spooked, but it’ll be okay, I promise.”

For a moment, she feared that her words would not reach him fast enough as he had looked at her and momentarily failed to recognize her.

Though it seemed to have worked a little as he came around to her side of the vehicle without growling.

He lowered his face next to her neck and fluffed her luscious fur up as to try and grasp her scent, but there was a moment of pure terror as he then released a snarl that rattled her bones. But he wrapped his arms around her in a bear hug instead of biting her, taking a moment to nearly crush her to him before he mustered his voice.

"It took you again... Why did it do this to you again?" He would growl quietly, before whining... Aggressive dad aside, it was time to be worried and protective.

She had flinched a bit at his snarl, but the hug was better than him sinking his teeth into her. She looped all four of her arms around him, and held him tightly. "I don't know." She says gently. "The Void wanted to taunt me, I think. I never know what it wants or doesn't want, but... It showed me the Other World." Her hands rubbed through his sparse mane. "And what happened there. And you know me, Dad. I couldn't leave things well enough alone." She makes a weak joke. "So... Our pack is bigger now by four members."

Kai hesitated, but he leaned against the window and waved at the protective beast outside, simultaneously greeting him and letting him know he was scaring pups inside the van.

The young boy's appearance was uncanny to Tenebris' eldest son when he too had been younger.

Tenebris rumbled as he looked up but he quickly spotted the small pup in the van, and for a moment had breathed a faint 'Caeruleus?' In surprise, before he sighed and offered a gentle smile to Kai.

"Come on out, its safe." Aliquam assured the newcomers before he got out of the van.

Toki shook her head, having heard his whispered words. "Not Caeruleus. That is Kai. His little brother is Quinn, and his sister is Willow." She says softly.

It didn't take long for Quinn to scramble out, bustling around the van to come and latch onto her leg. "Momma!" He cried out, one hand holding her and the other securing Kiko. "Momma! I thought he was gonna hurt you!"

Toki slid a hand down and ran her fingers through his fluffy orange mane. "No, no, sweetheart. Tenebris wouldn't hurt me," again went left unsaid, "and he's a very nice man. He just worries. He's like a dad to me, and he got scared when the Void took me again."

"Oh..." Quinn's glittering orange eyes peered up at him and he frowned thoughtfully. "He looks like Daddy."
Tenebris felt his heart ache as he looked at these darling young children. He never got to see his own this age.  

"Its.... Very nice to meet you two." He spoke gently, before glancing up at the van as Tenne stepped out with Willow.  

The younger male was holding her close as he eyed the larger male nervously.  

Tenebris stared back, taking note of his physical stature and the healthy mane. It was flared up, and very hard to miss. This younger version of him was petrified of him it would seem. It was ironic, but Tenebris felt that at least this alternate knew his place in pack terms.  

Toki noticed Tenebris staring down Tenne, and she backed up from him, feeling her eye lights narrow into slits. Her chest rattled with a growl, and she flared her black-tipped mane in a clear, beastly warning to behave and not bully him.  

He was her second mate- she’d defend him just like she’d tried to protect Papyrus when he’d been in pain while his leg was bad.  

Her warning made, she let her tail swish about her ankles, hopefully drawing Tenebris’ attention off of intimidating his terrified counterpart. Toki had a lot of bodily changes made- talons, tail, who-knows what else under her clothes- if she could get his doctor and science mind working, hopefully they could get through introductions without him trying to dominate Tenne.  

Tenne was an alpha too, she knew- but the power difference was large, and though she loved them both, she would be instinctively driven to protect her mate. She didn’t want to have to choose. So she swished her tail, and did her best to draw his gaze and get his mind to switch gears.  

The look on Tenebris' face was nothing short of surprise as he looked down at her, though not for a second did he growl in reply... It seemed it did what she wanted as he rumbled quietly before he noticed her tail and he slowly went around her to examine her tail. "How fascinating..." He murmured.  

"Indeed." She says, her mane smoothing out as he went from intimidating Tenne subtly to investigating her instead. “The Void made some changes to me and Quinn, since Quinn didn’t let go when the Void did shenanigans. Claws, my old horns back, and a tail- I don’t know what else was done to me under my clothes, but things were done I think. My chest burned a fair bit.”  

Quinn ran his fingers through his mane and made a soft noise. “I got Momma’s mane.” He proclaims, turning slowly to keep his eye on the bigger male that was circling Toki- and him by proxy, since he hadn’t let go of her leg. “Where’s your mane, mister?” He cocks his head curiously. “Don’t Alphas keep their manes big and fluffy like Daddy and Momma?”  

Tenebris paused as Quinn asked that question and felt like an arrow jabbed through his pride. "Well... Y’see... I got very sick when I was little, and it ended up affecting how my mane grew as I got older.” He answered. "I'm only now becoming able to grow my mane back." He explained gently.  

Quinn nods slowly. “Oh, okay. I’m glad you’re better now and can grow a mane.”  

“Indeed.” She says, her mane smoothing out as he went from intimidating Tenne subtly to investigating her instead. “The Void made some changes to me and Quinn, since Quinn didn’t let go when the Void did shenanigans. Claws, my old horns back, and a tail- I don’t know what else was done to me under my clothes, but things were done I think. My chest burned a fair bit.”
“Is he a good alpha?” Quinn asked, looking over at him hesitantly.

“He’s a good one.” Toki assured him with a soothing pet. She glanced back to Tenne. “Why don’t you come say hi, Tenne? Tenebris won’t hurt you. You two actually have a lot in common- and I’m going to regret everything when you finally figure it out and you two and Kai start palling around.” That makes her heave a heavy sigh.

Her house would be ruined if they did heavy science there.

Tenne eyed Tenebris nervously but did as told and came a little closer, holding Willow close to his chest as he looked up at Tenebris.

The larger male didn't say anything yet, but took a breath and closed his eyes to let his crown retract.

That seemed to at least put Tenne at ease.

"Hello." Tenebris finally greets, opening his gaze once his body was back to normal. He slowly offers a beefy hand out to the other male to shake. "It’s nice to meet you, Tenne. Toki has said quite a few things about you. I am Tenebris Gaster- Alpha of the pack. Toki seeks to bring you and your little ones into the fold, yes?"

There was no malice in his gaze as he looked down at the little moth in his arms. Tenebris didn’t see Sequoia in her- he didn’t see anything of Cruelty in the tiny child. No- he saw more similarities to his own Hope, and to Toki than he did the person who had tormented him so.

Toki gave a soft, pleased noise, and moved over to look at Aliquam. “Papy?” She chirrs. “Would you go get Honey and Skylar from Dad’s house, please? They’re going to need to meet everyone here.” She needed to mediate and help get them settled into their new home.

"Ah...” Tenne slowly reached to take the offered hand, giving a firm grip as he rumbled quietly, forcing his mane to flatten. "I-It's nice to meet you, Tenebris..." He spoke in reply. "If I am welcome, my children and I would very much like a place among your pack.” He answered respectfully.

With Tenne no longer likely to faint from fear, Aliquam nodded and started towards his father's home.

Tenebris cocked his head, giving a thoughtful hum and shaking his hand firmly. Very firmly. “It’s good to see more beasts in the world.” He says quietly. “I wouldn’t turn you and your pups away, not when you are new to the world. I know what it’s like to be new to a world. Will you need a place to stay?”

“He’s going to stay with me and Papyrus.” Toki chimes softly. “At least for now to get him acclimated to the differences in technologies in this world than his world, unless Tenne decides he wants to do something else.”

"If it's alright with you, I would very much like to stay with you, darling...” Tenne answered quietly, slowly tucking his arm underneath Willow once more as he released Tenebris' hand.

Tenebris cocked a brow at them both.

“Of course.” Toki gave him a smile. She glanced to Tenebris, and didn’t comment on his look. “I’m going to get them settled, Dad. I’ll see you later, okay?”
He nodded slowly. “Alright… I’d like to see you later for a checkup, Toki. I want to make sure the Void didn’t do anything… untoward with you.”

She nods. “Of course. I’ll come over either tonight or tomorrow. But for now…” Toki quietly summoned her bees, and sent the flock of them to carry the birthday gifts up to hers and Aliquam’s room, so the twins wouldn’t be able to see them when they came home. “Gifts for the kid’s birthday.” She explains. “No matter what’s happened now, I’m going to make it an amazing birthday for them.”

Quinn’s gaze perked up. “This is your first birthday with them, isn’t it?” Ever the insightful boy he way.

“I think so.” Kai hummed.

“It is.” She nods warmly. “I want to make it the best- just like your first birthday’s here. Once you’ve had some time to decide on what you like here, I’ll work on getting you things for your birthday’s too.”

Quinn blinked owlishly at her. “R-really…?”

“Yes.” Toki leaned down to kiss her brow. “You’re my sons too, Quinn, Kai. And little miss Willow- I’ll be whatever you want me to be, sweetheart, but you’ll get birthday gifts too.”

She couldn’t hear her reply, but that was okay.

Tenebris frowned thoughtfully, shook his head, and turned to walk home, leaving Toki with her second family there on her sidewalk.

Toki watched him go, and turned to look at Tenne, before padding up towards the door. “Come along, my dears. The twins share a room across from me and Papyrus, so you’re all welcome to choose whatever rooms you want. There are a massive quantity of them- my home was a safe-house for fleeing HTM’s at one point.”

“HTM?” Kai questioned.

“Ah- I’ll explain that later, sweetie.” She laughed softly. Oh boy- her world was going to be fun to explain.

"Thank you." He smiled at her, before he cooed to his boys and started to the front door of her home. "Let's see about making ourselves at home, okay?" He purred to them.

"Yeah!" Kai smiled slightly.

Toki opened the door for them, and let them in. She had to stoop and scoop her door dashing cat though. "This is Gracie." She says, stepping aside and slipping off her shoes so they could come in. "She's one of our two cats. Gael is around here somewhere..."

Quinn's eyes got big. "Fluffy..."

"Shoes first, sweetheart." Toki smiled at him, and then gently set down her cat, watching her skitter off. "We have two fledgling summons too. One of them is cocooned right now, and the other is a pesky bird who's feathers aren't fully grown back. The cocoon belongs to Skylar, and the bird to Honey."

“Are they full body summons, like yours?” Kai asks, slipping out of his shoes as asked.
"They are. Sobek, the bird, isn't very nice all the time, so just avoid him." She hums. She walks further in, and holds out her arms, giving a show-mans twirl to showcase her home. It's messy with toys and looks lived in, but it looks like there is love galore to be had. It's a home. "Welcome home. Feel free to explore and go pick your rooms, kids. All the rooms have multiple beds, so you can share, or we can move beds and you can have your own rooms."

Quinn was the brave one and delved first into the front room first, before he squealed. "There's a giant hornet in here!"

"Oh dear. Don't get near it and it wont sting you." Tenne called as he started for the front room.

"No, no! It's HUGE!"

Naturally, Toki had to follow Tenne in and look.

There, stretched out on the couch cushions, was a very large hellfire orange and black hornet, legs splayed and twitching occasionally in sleep. The bee’s mane was fluffed in sleep, and it seemed to be making sleepy noises.

Not far from it was a half eaten cocoon.

Toki broke out in guffaws, and strode over to the couch. She scooped up the hornet- which was heavier than he looked- and gave him a nuzzle on his sleepy face as his eyes stirred awake. "You have no idea how happy Skylar is going to be to see you." She beams at him. "Sky's been upset since you cocooned yourself. Did you see all your pictures and letters he made you?"

She got a slow blink for her efforts, and the bee went boneless against her, seeming to sigh and try to bury his face in her fluff to sleep.

Toki held him not unlike a heavily armored toddler, and she rubbed her hand down his fluffy mane and wings, and smiled to Tenne. "This is Snuggle." She says to everyone. "Until recently he’s been in a cocoon slowly progressing from a grub into this handsome hornet you see here. He’s very cuddly, I promise. Also very sleepy."

Said hornet was nearly asleep face first in her chest again.

Toki sighed, and bundled him up before setting him on the couch. She patted his face. "Snuggle- this is Tenne, Quinn, Kai, and Willow. Don’t hurt them, okay? They’re family."

Snuggle gave everyone a sleepy once over, his toxic orange eyes mellow and warm, and then gave a soft click of his mandibles to let them know he understood. He made a sleepy sound, stretched out, and got comfortable again with his armored underbelly to the sky.

She shook her head. "What a lazy bug." Toki sighed. "I wonder if he’s related to Clover."

Tenne was gawking a little- okay a lot - at how easily Toki handled that large hornet, and he gave a few baffled sounds before he simply went quiet and gave a nearly completely silent laugh. "It's... ah... it's nice to meet you, Snuggle."

"That's so cool!" Quinn cooed in awe.

Snuggle offered Tenne a faint wave and snuffled, before flopping a leg against his face and settling down to snooze.

"Well, he’s asleep." Toki laughs softly. "Lets get you into rooms- and tomorrow we can call Lana
and get you fitted with clothes.”

“Lana?” Kai gave her a weird look. “She’s a little girl...”

“She’s not here.” She gives his head a little ruffle, pulling him close to kiss his noggin. “She’s my sister-in-law. She married my brother, Kon. She’s also the local seamstress, and does all of my clothes. And... is going to have to re-do all of my clothes, again.” She sighed, and looked back at the hole her tail had ripped in the seat of her pants. “Anyways. Rooms!”

Kai scrambled away with a playful growl, obviously not bothered, and he laughed softly. “Dad? How do we want to bunk?”

“Well, if they have a bunk-bed, we can all asleep in the same room” Tenne answered as he started for the stairs. "Though now I wonder... Little Lana all grown up... I bet she's wonderful, just like her mother...” He rumbled quietly.

“As for bunk-beds, I think I’ve got one- it’s the one my brothers use when I’ve got everyone here for the holidays.” Toki gave a soft laugh. “The first time I got to meet her mother was your world.” Toki says gently, and gathers the boys to follow him up. “She is just as wonderful as her mother.” She hums warmly. Her tail swishes, and she nearly trips over it, before she just gathers it close and huffs softly. “Our world is different, Tenne. There’s going to be people here you know, and people that you don’t know.”

She grinds her teeth, thinking of the immediate things he was going to notice. Asgore and Grillby were the two major ones she could think of. Grillby didn’t have Sapphire. And Asgore was mated to Tenebris, and he’d lost Chara and Asriel many, many years ago.

She doesn’t tell him that though, but she knows it must be mentioned eventually. Instead, she just leads him directly for the room with the bunk-beds, which is catty-corner to her own room. "It’s here. A bunk-bed, and a normal bed.” She chirps softly.

"Well look at that, that's just perfect." Tenne smiled happily as he peered into the room, before he gave a pleased rumble to coax his boys onward.

Kai and Quinn raced into the room before Quinn squealed and scrambled up onto the top bunk before he sat and held his head high in victory as he giggled. "Top bunk!” He announced happily, claiming it with a fluff of his sunshine orange mane.

Kai grinned, knowing from the start that his plucky little brother would want the top bunk. He trotted over to the bottom bunk, hopping into it with a soft sigh. "Bottom bunk for me, then~" He agreed, stretching out.

Tenne walked to the bed and sat down as he smiled contentedly. "Well I'm glad you two are comfortable." He rumbled gently. "Now to see how comfy this bed is..." With that, he lifted his legs onto the bed before he laid back onto the pillow.

Only for a deep sigh and a pleased groan to rise from him.

Willow stretched out on his chest, letting out a tiny, happy sound as her little wings gave a flutter.

Toki smiled, and moved to sit on the bottom corner of Tenne’s bed. “I’m glad you’re all happy.” She glanced to Willow, and made a soft chirping sound to get the relaxing moth’s attention. “Hey, sweetling? Are you going to sleep with your Daddy since this place is new and kinda scary sometimes? Or do you want me to get you a bed put in here so your silly Daddy’s snoring doesn’t blow you off his chest~?” She gives Tenne a teasing look, eye lights warm and tender.
At the chirp, Willow sat up and looked up at Toki as she spoke to her. She listened intently, before her antennae wiggled and she squeaked happily in response. She gave her small wings a flutter as she wiggled off of Tenne's chest to crawl over onto Toki's lap instead, nuzzling into her fur with a soft coo in reply.

Toki blinked at her lap-full of tiny moth beast, and gently scooped her close, supporting the multi-armed child with her secondary arms as she let her nuzzle more into Toki's black-tipped mane. “Well, that doesn’t really answer my question.” She laughs warmly. Toki glanced over to Tenne, threading her primary digits gently through the soft, baby-silk mane that Willow was sporting. “Did she rest with you at night back at your house?” She asks him gently.

It wouldn’t surprise him if he kept the last reminder of his lost mates close—beasts were peculiar creatures, and close with their family and pack. Sleeping in a family cuddle wasn’t uncommon.

"She is actually making an effort to sleep independently, since she has observed her brothers doing just that..." Tenne answered. "If you have a third bed I can fit next to mine, it would do the trick to help her gradually break away.”

Toki frowned thoughtfully. “I think we might have an old pair of beds from the twins before they decided they wanted ‘big kid’ beds. That should do the trick— we can get it set up for her before tonight.” She gave Tenne a smile, and leaned back slightly, letting Willow get comfortable in her mane. “It’s been a busy day— the kids will likely sleep early tonight, ne?”

The three adults needed to have a good, long talk.

"Aye. It will do them some good after everything we went through today..." Tenne agreed. "Though hopefully not before I can go out and find some prey to feed everyone tonight..."

Toki tilts her head. “Do you… not think I won’t provide a meal?” She asks softly. “It might not be fresh off the bone, but I was planning on cooking a big meal for dinner— but if you’d rather hunt, I can take you out and show you the flora and fauna and what you can and can’t hunt here. There’s some things here that will hunt you back.”

Bears, when they wandered over, and a few species of deadly snakes. He came from where it was mostly coyotes and cougars and rattlesnakes, all of which were smaller and came with warning noises to avoid.

Also Stag. Stag would take great pleasure in teaching Tenne that they were not prey.

Quinn pokes his head over the top bunk. His eyes positively sparkle and his mane plumes in exuberant excitement. “Momma’s cooking? We haven’t had Momma’s cooking in… forever.”

He reached up and scratched through his mane in embarrassment. "I mean… i would have not want to impose... you know... If you weren't able to, I would have been willing to go out and find our own food." He answered.

Toki reached out and gently patted his shin. “At any given time, I can have a hoard of family members invade my home.” She cocks a smile at him. “I’m prepared to throw an impromptu feast anytime, trust me. We’ll be okay tonight. Tomorrow I’ll break out the crock-pots and slow roast some vegetables to go with some roasts.”

“Oooo~” Quinn’s coo was enough to let her know she had his entire approval of that meal.

Toki laughed softly, and gently shifted her hands on Willow. “Alright, well, if I can get this sweet one to let go, I’ll go get items out for dinner- and greet the kids when they get home. You’re all
welcome to take some time and rest if you’d like. If not, you can come join me downstairs, and I can put on a movie for the kids.”

Tenne gave a nod before he cooed to Willow to coax her back. It took little convincing for Willow to return to her Papa, the soft creamy moth youngling not wanting to give up the warm, plush mane of the elder Queen beast. However, the lure of her father’s embrace was enough, and soon he tucked her into the cradle of one arm as he laid back again.

"A nap does sound nice... it was on our to-do list anyhow..." Tenne chuckled gently, stroking his daughter's head gently before he reached out and ran his foot along Toki's back. "It's good to have you back, my love~ I await the first chance to hold you in my arms again~" He purred a little softer.

His touch and words made Toki's mane fluff and her face darken into a vibrant emerald blush. "Ah... I look forward to getting to snuggle up in your arms too. It's been too long." She smiles at him.

Fuck, she hadn't thought this far. How was she going to balance Tenne and Papyrus? Shit, shit, shit... Well, this was one of the things they'd need to talk about after dinner.

She gave the paw of his foot a gentle stroke with her primary arm, tickling his toes with tender affection, before she quietly got up from the bed and moved out of the room. "Rest well." She thrummed warmly.

Toki made her way downstairs, feeling a small inkling of anxiety in her stomach. They'd work it out. She knew they would. For now, Toki would busy herself in the kitchen. Whatever was delaying her husband was probably him venting his worries and frustrations, and she wasn't going to rush him.

Instead, she'd work on getting dinner going, since it would take some time to prepare and to simmer.

It turned out that Aliquam had in fact come home, but rather than go upstairs, he had gone to the kitchen to look for something to make for dinner. Though as Toki entered the kitchen, he lifted his head, giving a mellow smile in greeting. "Are they settled now?"

"They are." She nods, managing to hide her surprise at seeing him home so soon. She’d been lost in thought and hadn’t noticed them getting home. She tilts her head, covering her nervousness with a tender smile. "Where are Skylar and Honey?" She asks softly.

"Living room, Momma." Skylar poked his head out and observed her new look. "You look pretty, Momma. I like your tail. Can I put a bow on it?"

Something inside of her eased there, and she glanced back at her son and nodded. "Sure, sweetheart. We'll put one of my hair ribbons on it later, okay?"

"Okay." He nods, and tucks back into the living room. The sound of books flipping echoes after them. It was homework time it seemed, and he was very likely enjoying his time with his Summons.

Toki turned her attention to her husband as she began to move through the kitchen, only occasionally tripping on her tail as she fetched things. Dear was subconsciously helping her direct it from the back seat, preferring to stay out of it and reclusive as usual, but no less helpful.

"Are you okay?" Toki finally asked him, her back to him as she worked to get rice into the rice cooker. "I know this is a lot, and I couldn't really ask to see if you agreed with me while I was in the Void again, but..."

He didn't answer immediately, choosing instead to ponder over his words for a good few minutes as she fussed around the kitchen. He watched her, watched the sway of her tail and the movement of
her wings, and soon gave a shaky sigh. "A-Am I still good enough, Toki?" He asked softly. "Are things going to change now that he's here?" He sounded uneasy.

That made her eyes pop wide, and she dropped what she was handling in the kitchen.

Toki swiveled to face him, and moved to pull him into her arms. It didn't matter that he towered over her. She had two more arms than he did, and she made up for her lack in height with pure love and boisterous short-person enthusiasm.

"Don't ever doubt that I love you, Papyrus Aliquam Gaster. I don't love you any less than Tenne, okay?" She cupped his cheeks with her secondary hands. "I fell for you first. I bore our children for forty two extremely long weeks. I walked down the isle with you, and I don't ever remove the ring you gave me at our wedding, not since I got it back. I love you- I would still love you no matter what."

She tugs him down to nuzzle her face to his. "Things will change with Tenne here." She says. "Things will change when you and I have our next litter, and things will change with the litter after that. That's just the nature of life. It's ever-changing. However, I want to sit down with you and Tenne tonight and map out what we can expect from him being here."

His arms came up and wrapped around her tightly, holding onto her with that need for reassurance, though it loosened to allow him to lean down and press his head to hers. "I just..." He slowly lowered to one knee to press into her chest, a soft vent of air leaving him. "I never expected him to actually be here. He appeals to your beastly nature a lot easier than I do... I barely know Sentinel well enough to know when he's talking to me... How am I supposed to appeal to you and Dear both?" He asked quietly. "Or even come as close to appealing as Tenne can..." Thankfully, there was no malice in his voice, which meant he bore no ill will towards Tenne or his sons; rather it appeared Papyrus feared his place now that Tenne was there.

Toki tilted her head and hummed softly. She cradled his cheeks, watching his vulnerability plain on his face as he shifted to his knees in front of her. He was afraid she wouldn't need him anymore- a half beast with a prosthetic leg and problems connecting to his beast. Toki just sighed softly, and met his gaze tenderly, peering down at him with love and understanding.

"He's not going to replace you." She says gently. "A second mate doesn't replace a first mate. You do appeal to both Dear and I. Dear loves you, loves the peace and serenity you bring her when she's at her worst, and the soft cuddles you give us both when we're nestled together. You don't have to embrace the beast to appeal to us. I wasn't a beast when we married, Papy, and I love you no less now than I did then."

She kisses his brow gently and exhales softly against him. Toki loved him. The thought of replacing him was ridiculous.

"This must be something beasts are so used to..." He murmured, "I never thought I'd have this problem... I'm sorry, darling..." He sighed gently, looking into her eyes as he tried to bring his train of thought to a start as to allow a more pleasant topic to arise. And yet he found himself silent as he gazed into her emerald gaze. Rather than saying anything, however, a deep sigh escaped him, as if his troubles all vanishing when he looked into those beautiful eyes.

"It's not even a beasts thing, my love. I'm certain Tenne is anxious about this too. This problem of sorts originates... Well, with me." She admits, and rubbed his cheeks.

"Single mate beasts would struggle with having a multi-mate beast for a mate. You don't need to apologize for anything. You haven't done anything wrong. Expressing your concerns and worries is
a good thing." She assures him warmly, gazing deep into his amber depths with adoration. "I would hope you can always come to me when you're feeling unsure."

He gave a sluggish nod in reply as he kissed her chin, before he slowly made to get up again. "Thank you, my love." He sighed quietly.

Toki gave him a hand up, and then peered up at him quietly. "I love you, Papy. Never doubt that, okay? Even when I'm grumpy, even when I'm affectionate to Tenne, I love you both, and that'll never change." She gave him a smile then. "Now... want to help me blow our new family members out of the water with our dazzling cooking skills~?"

"Oh of course." That seemed to help him perk up and he smiled at her. "What were you thinking for dinner?"

"I was thinking pineapple teriyaki chicken over white rice?" Toki gave him a dazzling smile, and pulled gently on his fingers. "What do you think? Maybe make some chocolate taiyaki for dessert? Or maybe some mitarashi dango?" Toki had some chocolate spread she could put in the taiyaki, which would make it more appealing to her picky daughter- and likely their new guests.

"Ah, that sounds delicious~ Let's do that~" He agreed, knowing that it's indeed quite a tasty meal, and would prove at least a little bit that he meant no ill will towards Tenne. "What shall I start on, then?" He asked.

"Hm... Well, you didn't pick one desert, so why not do both?" She grins. "How about you start on the dango, and I'll work on dinner proper, and then we'll both do the taiyaki?" She grinned at him warmly, and moved over to start dinner.

"You got it~"
Chapter 163

Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: And now we see how the conversation between everyone goes, eh~?
Among, y'know, other things.

Toki settled the last of the dishes into the sink, so that they could wash them later. They had five
children to corral to bed, however- one of which was dozing against her chest.

Willow had gotten sleepy after dinner, with all of the preparing that had happened prior to it. Their
nap hadn’t been long, so they’d gotten up and they’d prepared Tenne’s room to house them better- it
had been exciting all the same, and the kids had ‘helped’ with the process. After helping, they’d all
been tossed into the bath and carefully scrubbed down, and then Lana had showed up to help get
them fitted for clothing- it was a busy day.

A big meal after such a day, of course, only ensured the following food coma that had five children
very sleepy after a long day.

Toki flicked her fingers clean, and then went back to the dining room. “Bed time, kiddos.” She
smiles.

Skylar groans out a yawn. “I don’t wanna sleep.”

“And yet, you’re yawning sleepily.” She laughs softly, and goes over to his chair. She ruffles the top
of his head. “Come along, son. It’s bed time. For all little ones. Willow’s already beat you all to
sleep.”

The tiny moth was supported by Toki’s secondary arms, and was snoozing face first in Toki’s chest
fluff. Tiny, soft snores left the sleeping moth pup.

Honey made a face. “Egh.”

“Oh don’t you ‘egh’ me.” Toki tweaks her horn, and is rewarded with a giggling snicker. “Come on,
into your pajamas, all four of you.”

Skylar and Honey got up out of their chairs with reluctant sighs. Snuggle trailed at Skylar’s heels as
he went upstairs- while Sobek darted out of the living room after Honey, shooting Tenne and his
kids suspicious looks all the while.

Toki shook her head, and then smiled to Quinn and Kai. “I did say all four of you. Come along,
boys- upstairs. Tenne? You want to help me get Willow into her pajamas?”

”Right away, darling.” Tenne purred as he caught up to her, before getting ahead of her to go and get
Willow’s pajamas ready.

Quinn rubbed his eyes before he whined quietly. ”Kiko, C’mon.”

The hornet had been nestled up with Snuggle but gave a hum as she got up to follow, Snuggle
reluctantly following on the promise of good cuddles.
Kai was just behind his little brother, ushering him up the stairs when he slowed or wavered sleepily.

Toki smiled lightly, and motioned to Aliquam to follow her towards the stairs last. "I'm going to be bouncing from room to room I think. Will you help Skylar make sure Honey actually puts clothes on instead of just doing it the lazy way and sleeping nude? I'll be back and forth, but I need to get Willow to bed without losing any hunks of mane."

"You got it, Toki." Aliquam answered from the rear of the group. "Anything else I should take care of before we forget?" He asked.

“I don’t think so.” Toki gave him a smile as she reached the second floor. “Alright, love. We’ll all meet downstairs once we’re done.”

That said, Toki slips into Tenne’s room, tailing him in and gently working her fingers against Willow’s fingers to loosen them from her mane. “Come on, Willow. It’s bed time now- you’ve got to sleep a little bit in your bed.”

Willow gave a quiet sound in reply before Tenne wrapped his hands around her sides and rattled gently to her, coaxing her to turn and hug him instead, where he began to get her dressed into pajamas around her stubborn sleepiness.

Toki hummed softly, letting Tenne dress his sleepy daughter, and moved to the boys. She stepped up a rung onto the top bunk, where Quinn had already scrambled and had gotten into his pajamas. Well, mostly. He had no pants- only a long night shirt. “Alright. I’m here to say my good-nights, sweet ones.”

Quinn scrambled closer, and leaned over the bunk to hook his arms around her neck. He smooched her cheek. “Night, Momma!” He exclaims warmly, his accent having improved a smidge after spending a night around native-speakers. “I’ll see you in the morning.”

She gave him a kiss on the forehead, and nuzzled him softly. “I’ll see you bright and early for breakfast.” She agrees gently. Once he settles, she drops down, and scoots over to Kai’s bed. She gives him a sly smile. “So. Are we too old for a goodnight kiss?”

He rubbed his head before he looked up at Toki. "Not really... Even if I was... I'd really want one from you anyways." He spoke quietly as he wrapped his arms around her neck in a firm hug. "I missed you so much..." He admitted quietly.

“I missed you too, sweetheart.” Toki held the young teen tightly to her, and peppered his cheeks in kisses. “I’ve missed so much... But there’ll be a lot I can still get to see.” She smiles to him, and nuzzles his face. Toki had missed so much with both sets of her kids... She felt cheated, in a way- but she knew there were still many memories she could still make with them. Toki pressed a final kiss to his forehead. “Sleep well, okay sweetheart? I’ll see you in the morning, I promise.”

"Thank you, Toki... Let me know when you're ready." Tenne answered.

“I will.” She nods to him, and then moves to Honey and Skylar’s room. She easily slips inside, and checks to see if there are sleepy little ones, or if she needs to work her mommy magic and make them sleepy.

Skylar was already nestled into bed, his darling companion Hornet already curled up around his head as a comfortable pillow.

Honey was less so, and was sitting up with Aliquam on her bed. "Papa, are Kai and Quinny gonna be my new brothers? And Willow my sister?" She asked quietly.
"Maybe..." His answer is uncertain and mumbled. "Your Momma loves them very much, and she loves them much like she loves you... She took care of them when she was missing." Aliquam answered quietly as he stroked her head.

Toki tapped her fingers slowly against her thigh, before quietly stepping into the room proper. When Honey’s gaze jerked to her, she gave her a quiet smile. "Whether or not you accept them as your brother’s and sister is up to you, sweetheart." She moves over to the bed, and sits next to Aliquam. "I love them, just like I love you. They never got to have a Momma though- I’m the first one they ever got to know, and I wouldn’t take that from them."

Skylar made a soft noise, proving he wasn’t asleep. "... Like Daddy?" He asks quietly. "Like why we don’t have a Grandma from Daddy?"

Aliquam had stopped at that, feeling his soul endure a wave of chills as he reached up and pressed a hand over it. "..." He made a face as a memory passed through his eyes, and he closed his sockets tightly. "Yes... Just like Daddy..." He spoke quietly, before he sighed and reached out to wrap his arms around Honey. "Go to sleep, my angel... You have a big day tomorrow..."

Honey nodded quietly, and gave her Daddy a big hug. "Okay, Daddy." She nuzzles him softly. "I love you both."

"I love you too, sweetheart." Toki set a hand comfortingly on Aliquam’s knee, and gave it a gentle squeeze. She couldn’t give him the mother his soul had likely once craved so, so long ago- but she could give him love. "I love you both."

"Love you too, Momma." Skylar gave a tired yawn, rubbing his eyes. "Love you too, Daddy."

"Good night, Honey... Good night Skylar... I love you both so much..." Aliquam got up, gently gripping Toki’s hand to pull her to her feet, before he started for the door.

Toki paused in following with him only long enough to give her babies good-night kisses, before she too left the room with him. She quietly closed the door behind her, and rubbed his knuckles. "... Are you okay?" She asks him gently. Skylar hadn’t meant to hurt him, she knew- her son had simply been trying to compare and understand Kai and Quinn.

"I didn't expect that question. It... hurt to hear it. But it was a question we had to answer..." He answered quietly as he lifted her hands to kiss them.

She let him kiss them, and sighed softly to him. "I know... And I wish to all the gods above that I could make your pain stop, my love. I wish I could. But that is not a void I can fill for you and soothe away. All I can do is love you unconditionally." Her secondary hands lifted to stroke his cheeks. "Speaking of conversations we need to have... We need to let Tenne know we're ready and go downstairs to the living room."

He nodded. "I'll get a head start and I'll see you there." He kissed her cheek as he passed, heading downstairs to wait for them.

She nodded, smiling at his kiss. She waited until he was downstairs, before going to Tenne's room. She didn't knock so she didn't disturb Willow. She just opened the door and poked her head in. "We're ready to meet downstairs, Tenne. All good in here?"

"Oh yes... I'll be there soon." Tenne answered from where he leaned against the wall, Willow curled up on his chest as she suckled on her thumb.

Toki paused, peeking at Willow. "Is she not wanting to be laid down?" She asks gently. "I can get
one of the kids stuffed toys if that might give her some comfort."

"She is feeling a little warm... Do you happen to have any large plushies?" He asked hopefully.

"I think so." Toki worried that perhaps Willow was too young to handle the change in worlds without some complications. She’d keep an eye on her. She shifted, and padded back for the kids room, poking into the door to look for a toy.

"Momma?" Honey peeked at her. "It’s bed time, Momma." She reminds her.

"I know, sweetling." Toki nods softly. "But, Willow isn’t feeling too good- and her cuddle toy didn’t seem to make it through the trip here with us. I was hoping I could let her borrow one of your plush toys that you don’t play with anymore...?"

Honey looked ponderous, and then she clamored out of bed. She moved to her pile of toys, gently moved Sobek off the pile that he was nesting on much to his displeasure, and pulled out one of her plush-toy bees. It was a warm golden color, and had a bright smiley face on it.

"Here, Momma." Honey brought it over to her Mother, cradling it gently in both arms before handing it over. "She can have Misses Bumble. She gets lonely since I don’t play with her as much as I used to anymore, and she’d love to get cuddles again. Tell Willow I hope she feels better, okay? You’re the best Momma ever- you can make anyone feel better."

It wasn’t a large plush toy, perhaps as big as Gracie was, but it would suffice for Willow, Toki thought. Toki knelt down, and gave her daughter a warm smile, and a gentle kiss on the brow. The toy was held in her secondary arm as she pulled Honey close for a hug. "Thank you, sweetheart." She tells her warmly. "I’ll try and help her feel better. And you know what? You’re a good girl. You’ll make a good big sister eventually, won’t you?" Toki gives her a wink.

Honey’s blue eyes brighten and positively sparkle. "Really? You think I will?"

"I do." She nods. "But, big sisters set examples for their little siblings. You have to show them how to grow up- which means...?"

"Bed time on time." Honey chirps. She leaned up to kiss Toki’s cheek, and then scrambled away. "I gotta go get practice for being a big sister, Momma."

"Alright, alright." Toki laughed warmly, standing up and exiting the room again. She left her children to sleep, and went back to Tenne’s room, approaching him and holding out the fluffy, golden bumble bee toy. "Honey was kind enough to send over Misses Bumble." She smiles softly to Willow.

Willow gave a quiet coo in reply and slowly let go of her father to reach for the large bee. As she took it, Tenne gently put her down and laid her on the bed.

Toki padded closer, and gently tucked her into the blankets. "Sleep well, sweetheart." Once Willow was gently tucked in, Toki straightened and padded towards the door. She glanced at Tenne, and motioned for him to follow her and let the children sleep.

She stepped out into the hall.

Tenne was right behind her as he stepped out of the bedroom, rumbling quietly. "Thank you, my love." He purred quietly.

Toki glanced back at him, and took his fingers. She lifted them, and kissed them gently. "I’m glad I
could help.” She says with a gentle tenderness that he had likely missed. “C’mon. You and I have a lot to talk about with Aliquam.”

He purred quietly at her affection before following her. "Right behind you, my love."

“Alright.” She thrummed softly.

Toki guided him down the stairs, her mane ruffling quietly. Her tail swished behind her, and she had to grip the railing to keep her balance, but she managed all the same. Once at the bottom, she moved towards the living room to find Papyrus. “There you are.” She smiles at him softly. “Do we want some tea for this talk?”

"I put the kettle on." Papyrus answered. "It'll be a little before the water's ready."

“Okay.” She nods slowly. Toki hesitated awkwardly, and then slowly moved to stand by the fire-place. She lowered all four hands, warming her palms momentarily, before turning around to look at them both. Her next words aren’t addressed to either of them, but to both of them at once. “Before we start talking, I just want you to know that I love you both, and I’ll still love you both the same no matter how our conversation goes, okay? I don’t love either of you more than the other- you’re equal in my heart.” One hand comes to rest on her chest.

Even if the love for Tenne was supposed to created from the Void, love was love, and she wouldn’t rebuke it.

Tenne and Aliquam had gone to sit on the couch when she’d moved over to the fire. Both of them sat up a little when she turned, but it seemed she had succeeded in getting both their attention. They shared a momentarily glance before looking back up at Toki.

It would seem that she had the metaphorical floor so to speak.

Toki’s teeth ground, more out of stress than anything. The shower of sparks was distracting, but not enough to calm her under their focused looks.

"Alright... Well, I'm honestly not sure where to start. I love you both. You both love me." Her hands worry at her clothing, tail flicking and coiling in obvious anxiousness for what she was saying. "What I would love to see happen is all three of us working together and finding happiness. But, I know that's difficult."

Her gaze slid to Aliquam. He’d already felt like he was being replaced, even though that was the farthest thing from what was happening. While he didn’t hate Tenne, jealousy would make it hard for him to coexist with Toki giving him affection visibly at the same time she did Aliquam.

Tenne followed her glance, before he looked away, not sure what to say... and yet it was not her to speak up the next time.

"Your sons need their mother." Tenne had immediately looked back at Aliquam, who’s hands were tightly folded in his lap as he kept his gaze down. "Six months... that's all it took for your young boys to find the love of a mother in Toki... Much like how her own adore and rely on her." Aliquam clenched his hands in his lap before he smiled a little.

"I'm still nervous about all of this, despite knowing everything is not nearly as bad as it looks... But no matter what's said, what's done... I'm never going to take Toki away from your children... And... in the same train of thought..." Aliquam's bright orange gaze shifted up to Tenne. "You ... I feared that your blood as a beast would better connect to what I thought Toki needed in a lover... But I'm looking at it wrong..."
Tenne's eyes had gone wide as Aliquam spoke, but as Aliquam quieted once more, Tenne smiled. "You're valiant. You're resilient, Aliquam... But you made your future with Toki long before I came along... Your bond with her is stronger than mine. Perhaps my blood appeals better to her beast, but you're still her husband, and that's a truly sacred bond. I love Toki, but I'd never want to take her from you."

Toki fell quiet, listening to them talk. This is what they needed most of all. She could mediate and offer reassurance all she wanted- hell, she could mediate until she was blue in the face, but peace and a tentative harmony could never be achieved if they didn't want to reach it themselves.

They needed to talk, to understand each other through communication directly, not with her acting as a third party filter.

So, Toki stood quietly, letting them talk as she watched them both, eyes flicking back and forth to watch reactions.

"I believe... what had happened was while you had been chosen by Toki, indeed I had spent more time with her beast, and... I'd wager that they are far more open about their love than publicity's norm... We can both love her, and we will both be loved in the same by Toki and Dear in the same." Tenne spoke slowly, watching Aliquam's face as he listened.

After enough time dwelling in thought where he seemed to chew on the larger male’s words, Aliquam’s stiff posture loosened some and he smiled. "You must do wonders for Dear." He chuckled quietly.

The statement was unexpected but Tenne had found himself laughing, though indeed he was right. He had so closely bonded with Dear, and had found himself smitten for Toki in the same.

"Perhaps so! Though I suspect indeed that you're the sort to completely sweep darling Toki off her feet, leave her flustered and craving every moment of your touch." He would respond to Aliquam, who grinned and laughed as well as they seemed to bond in their shared interest of loving Toki.

Toki found herself smiling slowly as she watched them. Her stiff posture relaxed, and the scent of her stress and anxiety began to fade from her corner of the room. They were joking and bonding over loving her - sweeping her off her feet, and other things. They were such... guys. It would be good for Aliquam to have another guy around to hang out with- to get into the same puzzle games that he so dearly loved. Toki would need to make them a man-cave if all continued this well.

"I'm glad you two are working things out.” She thrums warmly. “I don’t expect this to be an easy road by any means, but we’ll work through it together... All three of us. Right...?"

Maybe, just maybe, sometime in the future, her bed would have both of her mates, and she’d be surrounded in love and safety. She could just hope for that. Just maybe… A hope was a thing her heart wanted- but she wouldn’t force it.

Papyrus and Tenebris both looked at her for a few moments, seeming to process her words in a similar manner- and then they glanced at each other. Aliquam grinned first and extended his hand to Tenne. "The three of us." He agreed.

Tenne smiled happily before he firmly took the offered hand and gave an unwavering shake. "Absolutely! The three of us!" He laughed, before looking up at Toki, extending his arm to her.

Toki smiled at the both of them, and then shifted closer to them on the couch. She moved to sit between them, to equally share the cuddles, and gave them both a warm smile. Her mane fluffed,
warm and pleased, and her tail twisted around her husband’s leg as she leaned into her second mate’s embrace. “I’m glad that was resolved enough for you two to get along.” She chirps to them warmly. “It’ll take some time, but hopefully nothing happens that throws a wrench into anything, yeah?”

Tenne hugged her firmly and cooed into her neck as he nuzzled her fluff, while Aliquam's hands slowly trailed down to her legs and ran up the soft fabric wrapped around them.

"You're so wonderful." Aliquam cooed, Tenne quickly rumbling in agreement as his hands planted on her arms.

The hands on her legs prompted her tail to tighten around Papyrus’ shin, and for her toes to splay. There was more sensation there than she remembered having before- and it made her curious. Her bones were sensitive, yes, but they didn’t have nearly that amount of ability to sense touch. “You’re both wonderful.” She rumbled warmly to them both, nuzzling them tenderly. Toki sighs, feeling Dear creeping into the back of her mind as they both basked in the feeling of being surrounded by their mates.

About that time though, the kettle whistled and disrupted her content thoughts, making Dear retreat again. “Do we still want tea?” Toki asks quietly, showing absolutely no desire to stand and make tea, but willingness to go and turn off the burner to make the kettle stop steaming. “Or do we want to call it a night, and get some sleep?”

"Some tea sounds wonderful." Tenne cooed. "But I don't want to let go; you're so wonderful to hold, my darling." He sighed happily. And he hadn’t gotten to hold her like this in so long…

Toki sighed softly, and gave a wave of her hand. A small pull to her magic, and Stripe and a small swarm of her bees were sent buzzing to the kitchen to turn off the stove and to prep the tea for the three of them.

“Tea would be good before sleep.” Toki smiles softly. “As much as I love being held by you two, but today has been long and exhausting- I think I’ll be turning in after tea and some cuddling. We have the rest of our lives to cuddle and to hold each other.” Her primary arms looped around both of them, holding them close as she relaxed.

As her shirt shifted, it made present two shapes that weren’t often out and about since she’d gotten rid of her permanent ectobody- two shapes that Aliquam had grown to love intimately.

What all had the void done to her under her clothes…? Toki was honestly afraid to look, terrified of the dysphoria that would come at having to adjust to a body that didn’t feel like hers anymore.

Toki didn’t comment on them though, simply glancing up when the bees toted in a tray with three perfect cups of tea balanced on them.

Aliquam gave a thoughtful hum while Tenne cooed in awe and gently clapped his hands. "How impressive, my darling~" He praised, before hugging her again with a happy sigh.

"It is good to see you have not lost anything when it comes to your magical ability." Aliquam commented. "As impressive as always." He then praised with a softer voice.

“I would have known if I’d have lost my hive.” She hums to her husband, and takes the tray from her bees before sending them off to relax in her home. She settles the tray on her lap, and offers their tea out to them. She lifts her fingers and taps them against her head. “I’d have felt their loss in here. Hive mind and all that. Anyway- my skills aren’t really anything note-worthy.” She laughs softly. “The bees are just doing the work I give them the magic for.”
Toki’s jaw cracks slightly as she’s forced into a yawn, and her mane fluffs sleepily around her skull, the plume at the top of her head fluffing up around her horns. She lifts her tea, and takes a sip of the scalding hot fluid, a soft content piping noise vibrating out from her chest as her tail rattles contently against the tile floor.

Her sweet sounds made both males rumble and coo happily into her form before they reluctantly let her go to partake in their tea, though Aliquam reached out and gently wrapped his hand around the bee that provided his own tea, running his hand over her appreciatively. “Thank you, my sweet.” He praised gently.

Aliquam had several sets of heated, fuzzy legs that clung to his fingers, and the bee gave a pleased buzz to her mistress’s first mate.

Several of the other bees moved and landed on Tenne, buzzing to him in curious greeting. They remembered him, but he’d never been friendly with them on the level that Aliquam was with them.

Toki relaxed back into the couch, breathing softly as she cradled her mug to her chest. She drank it quickly, feeling the tea soothing her nerves and relaxing her body. Her sockets began to droop tiredly, the bright green of her eyes dimming sleepily. It had been a long day- her body still had phantom pains from her change, and she’d like to sleep them off, frankly.

Aliquam kissed the bee gently before he turned and laughed at the sight of Tenne covered in all the bees, watching as he buzzed through his teeth and sent them all in a flurry of buzzing.

Toki almost choked on her tea, laughing as she watched Tenne. “You’ve got the entire swarm buzzing, Tenne, good god.” Her head was alight with a tingling sensation of her smaller swarm making happy noises. “Y-you know turkey farmers do the same thing with turkeys, right?” She laughs, slurping down another mouthful of tea. They could gobble, and the entire barn of turkeys would gobble back.

“Oh indeed. I saw something of similar nature happen with his majesty. He let out the oddest sounding bleat and it brought all the goat does’ running; it even brought over our buck, wondering why he was making noises.” Tenne chortled at the memory before he cooed and gently pressed a soft kiss to the bee nearest to his face.

She laughed. “I can see that. Your Asgore is much lighter than ours is. But, there are things you’ll find here that are a lot different. I’ll tell you tomorrow though- when you’ve had a night to settle and process everything just a little bit.”

Her next yawn comes after she finishes her tea, and it makes her eye sockets water as she squeaks out a frankly adorable and sleepy yawn.

It seemed it may not only be bedtime for the kids, but also the Momma too.

Both males cooed gently before Aliquam set his cup of tea down before he lifted himself up. "Alright... let me be the joy-killer, but it's time for bed for Mommy Dearest." He announced gently.

"Alas, sad but true. Toki is a woman of many responsibilities; it would be cruel to keep her away." Tenne agreed, sighing as he too sat up. "Off to bed with you then, my love." He purred as he delicately waved her off.

Toki set the cup on the tray, and set the tray on the coffee table. She looked at Tenne with a soft, sleepy trill. She wouldn’t be sleeping with him- his bed wouldn’t fit her, and he had three kids who needed their father close to reassure them that it would be okay. But… She could give him a parting
Toki leaned forward, and gave him a gentle and tender kiss. “G’night, sweetheart.” She mumbles softly against his lips. She doesn’t linger, knowing Aliquam is watching, but the gentle affection is a reaffirmation that she loves him and lets him know it. Standing up, Toki loops her fingers into Aliquam’s arms and yawns again. She nuzzles into his shoulder, half draping into his side like a lump of sleepiness. “I’ll wash the tea cups tomorrow.” She yawns. “For now… Bed, before you have to drag me up the stairs.”

The kiss was savored and Tenne longed to prolong it, but even with Aliquam offering a smile to show how it bothered him less than it would have initially, he knew that complete acceptance had a way to go.

Aliquam helped Toki to her feet before he kissed her cheek gently. "Of course, come on." He purred. "To bed with a sleepy mama."

"To bed with a sleepy mama!" Toki chirped, returning his kiss and then heading upstairs to get into her pajamas. She quietly worked her shirt off on the way up, happy sounds escaping her once she reached her room.

Toki stripped off his shirt as she hit upstairs, trying not to let the changes to her body bother her. Ultimately, a more beastly torso and upper legs, particularly her thighs, and a permanent ectobody weren’t too different or weird, and she found herself relaxing into her silky nightgown as she crawled into bed, tail swishing behind her. It wasn’t as bad as she feared- from her ribs and down was permanently green ectoflesh, while her chest, pelvis, and thighs seemed to be made out of the odd bone like flesh material that most beasts seemed to be made from.

Aliquam had stuck around as she changed but it was in that grace period of her nudity that he gained an awestruck expression and slowly changed into his sleepwear. Papyrus had to take a moment to ogle the sheer artwork that was his beautiful wife, before he moved to lay beside Toki, smiling happily as he wrapped his arms around her chest and nuzzled into the two mounds now attached to her front.

"They're back~ You got them back~" He cooed happily.

Toki couldn’t stop the laugh that came from her. “And they’re not even ecto anymore. You’re stuck with the real thing for the rest of forever, I’d wager. Which… I both love and don’t. Bras are terrible.” She coils her arms around him, and lets him enjoy the plush swells of the breasts motherhood had given her twice-over.

Her tail threaded around his legs as she twined her body with his, and she made a soft happy sound. Toki was… happy.

"Hhhhh~ To hell with bras, just let me hold them and I'll never let them get sore from accursed underwires~" Aliquam cooed as he cupped her breasts in his hands, giving them a soft squeeze with the happiest sounds he could make.

He was such an absolute dork- but Toki was glad that he seemed to like the changes in her body well enough. She gave a soft, sleepy laugh, and fluffed her mane. She pressed herself down, her head curling into his skull like a cat sleeping face first on a couch, and felt his skull settle into the cradle of her horns. She made a sleepy noise, and settled down to sleep as she felt their two cats wiggle their way into the bedroom and up onto the bed with them.
Toki had *odd* dreams that night—small, black hands reaching for her, voices telling her to remember, to speak, to stop hiding, things chasing her in the dark—and she woke up early in the morning with the deep and intense need to tell Tenne about the pups Tenebris had adopted.

She woke up with Aliquam’s head buried in her chest, and she sighed quietly. She could smell the scent of mint wafting up through the cracked door to their room though, and found it in herself to slowly stir and gently shift Gracie up so Aliquam was spooning her instead of his fluffy wife.

Thanks to the almost chinchilla like fur of their adorable gray cat, Papyrus didn’t even stir. Gael only blinked at her sleepily from his roost on the tall skeleton’s hip while she rolled out of bed.

Toki made her way downstairs, yawning as she rubbed one of her eyes. She was following the scent of mint, which led her to the back patio.

The source of the smell turned out to be Tenne, who was resting his arms against the banister of the porch, bent over it as he gently puffed at his pipe.

It wasn’t long since she showed up at the back door that he lowered his pipe from his mouth and he sighed out a mouthful of smoke. "Usually, one would be deterred by the cold. But in this instant... I fear that if I no longer feel the cold, I will wake up, and all of this will have been a dream... a wonderfully painful dream." He spoke quietly.

For a moment it seemed like he was talking to her until there was a soft rumble and a familiar beast sat up on the other side of the porch.

Papa.

There was a moment of fear in Toki's mind, but it ebbed as she realized the beast was talking to his counterpart, not bristling aggressively.

"Indeed..." Papa started, stepping around to lean against the porch beside his counterpart, his gaze looking at the pure white head among the deep black fur that was Tenne's mane. "A dream of any other name, a nightmare... You are outcast in a world not your own, yet you are meant to exist here; your threads of sanity were not cut when you passed." He rumbled lowly.

"Mmh..." Tenne puffed again from his pipe and offered it to the larger, who rumbled and turned as to allow him to exhale the cloud of smoke and steam into the face of the larger, who slowly inhaled it before sighing quietly.

Papa moved away, tapping his claws. "You exist here just as they do... Will you want to take them back?"

Tenne blinked at the question, before he peered back at Papa. "They, my counterpart?"

"The children..."

"Ah... The pups that had stayed with Toki, you mean?"

Papa had nodded slowly before Tenne smiled.

"No. I would have loved to raise them, but they were born in this world to your scent, your touch... they know *you* as their father. I have no benefit taking that from you, my counterpart."
Papa could be heard sighing in relief, before he returned to the railing at his counterpart's side.

"But... I would like to meet them... Willow's brothers and sisters..."

"Of course... this I can give you. You will meet them, not as your own, but family in the same."

"Thank you, Tenebris."

Papa rumbled quietly, before he chuckled. "I must go, before the pups wake to find me gone... They will not be happy to wake without their breakfast."

"Well said... I best get some sleep... Willow wakes first and I usually feed her before my sons wake..." Tenne agreed, giving one last puff of his pipe before he turned to pat out the lit leaves.

Papa leaned down to accept the exhale of the smoke and purred in thanks before he turned and leaped off the porch. He collected what looked to be a dead deer before he rumbled in farewell and started for his home.

Tenne watched him go before smiling and he looked down at the grass, before he sighed and lowered his head to rest it on his arms.

Toki took that moment to step out, having watched the whole exchange. She swallowed quietly- the light dusting of snow on the deck crunched under her the pads of her toes, and she grimaced at the cold feeling, before moving closer to him.

She lifted her primary hand and rested it on his shoulder. “So... you know.” She mumbles softly to him. “About the pups.”

She hadn’t meant for him to find out from Tenebris- but... Well, apparently she couldn’t be the one to tell him everything. Sometimes he’d learn things the hard way. She wondered if he knew that the Tenebris and Asgore in this world were lovers, not simply the best of friends.

Her mane ruffled anxiously, and she drew her hand away, moving to instead rest her palms on the icy railing next to him. “I should have told you before...” She murmurs quietly. “It... It should have been something you learned from me.”

He knew she had been there and gave a patient smile as he looked at her, his tail slowly looped around to entwine with hers. "I am not angry about it, my love... I understand how it would seem like a topic that was hard to approach. Talking to me about someone else with my name raising my children? Without context, I might have been upset now that I am on the same plain... but I have no malice for him, my dear, I promise. I've meet he who raises my young...” He chuckled gently. "And I've met his beast. He is proud- perhaps a little arrogant in his ego and his place in the hierarchy, but he's a kind father. He fathered your husband after all, and look how he came out.”

Toki smiled, and slowly leaned into his shoulder. Her head came to nuzzle against his bicep. “I'm glad you like him.” She mumbles softly. “I'm sorry I didn't keep them- but... It was hard to imagine raising our children without you.” She admits quietly. “But... Tenebris can't produce children of his own through natural means, thanks to a whole slew of things. So... The official story that the rest of the world knows, is that I was a surrogate for him and Asgore. He cried when I offered to let him and Asgore adopt the litter... He didn't get to really raise Papyrus and Sans, you see? Tenebris here has had... dealings with the void. I don't know the whole story, but I know he was gone for a long time- he missed a lot of my husband and my brother in law being young.”

The litter was a second chance for him to be a father again- to raise children on his own merit, not to come back to them already grown.
Toki knew intimately how it felt to skip through time and miss months and years of your children’s lives.

"I know. He told me." He assured her. "He couldn't take another chunk of his soul, so he hoped for a miracle. It's alright. I will love them as an uncle, but the honor of fatherhood is his... and I am fine with that."

“Are you?” She asks him quietly, peeking up at him just slightly. Her eye lights glowed in the darkness, sending twinkles of emerald light across the snow, not unlike the emerald light coming from under her silky nightgown. “I mean…” It wasn’t like she and Tenne couldn’t have more children- even Papyrus had gotten attached to the litter. Honestly, she’s pretty sure seeing her have a litter for his father essentially had kick-started his desire for another batch of babies of his own to cradle and to croon to.

But having another set didn’t replace the set that was lost- Toki felt the same when she’d adopted Kai and Quinn. It had soothed the aching hole for Honey and Skylar, but it could never replace them. The hole was still there- less painful, more hidden, but still there.

The holes were gone now though that she had all of her children and mates with her. She only had a hole for Sequoia- poor, poor Sequoia…

"I will simply wait my turn, my love... I would... so greatly... love to have more children with you... but it's not my place..." He spoke softer, his tail tightening a little tighter. "Not yet at least..."

“It will happen when it happens, my love...” She bumps her head against his arm, and her sockets close with a sigh. Some part of her eases, but some part of her tenses. “I truly do await the day,” She says quietly, “when it doesn’t matter who gives me children- because no matter who sires them, they will have two fathers and a mother who love them unequivocally.”

Her statement said so casually echoed in Tenne’s ears for a moment before he smiled and sighed gently as he hugged her to his side. "I love you... so, so much, Tokiko~" He purred.

"I love you too, Tenne." She smiled and leaned into his hug. She enjoyed his warmth quite a bit. Her magic warmed her insides, but all of this flesh she had... Well, it was drafty under the night gown.

A yawn split her jaw, the sound a tiny squeak that proclaimed the surefire fact her sleep had been interrupted, and that it was far too early for the queen bee to be up and awake. Once upon a time late nights had been her thing- and then she'd become a mom and suddenly a bedtime was the best thing ever.

"What woke you up, Tenne?” She asked him a few moments later.

"A passing thought in my dreams that dared to wake me." He answered, turning with her under his arm. "Come on, my love, let's go back to bed..."

"Weird dreams for me." She yawns, and leans into him, letting him guide her back inside. "Bed sounds good to me. I am beyond sleepy, and we have a gaggle of kids to entertain tomorrow."

He nodded in agreement. "Children's birthdays, yes~?” He purred, before he pressed a kiss to the crown of her head. "Have you already picked out a cake for them?” He asked.

"Not quite their birthdays yet." She laughs. "Another couple says. But, excitable kids are excitable, and they know the thirteenth is looming soon, so they've been a little wild when they get home from school."
Speaking of. They'd need to sign up Tenne's boys for classes.

"I was planning to bake a cake for the kids, but not yet or Honey will eat it all. She has a thing with sweets." She snorts, shutting the kitchen door behind them and locking it against the cold. "I'm not the best at cakes though."

He gave a small smile. "Ah, I actually asked because I wanted to make the cake... I was trying this new recipe for a lighter, fluffier cake before all this came about happening... I would love to see if it was as good as I hoped it is." He offered.

"Sort of like a sponge cake or an angel-food cake?" Toki blinked curiously. It might have been too sophisticated a cake for the kids to really appreciate, but they'd eat anything if you called it cake and slathered it in copious amounts of frosting.

Toki smiled. "That would be lovely." She leaned up, gently pulling him down by his mane, and pressed a kiss to his cheek. "The twins will love it. When the boys birthdays come around, we'll do something special for them too. And Willow as well. You'll have to let me know when her birthday is. I want to knit her something."

Whatever reply she'd been about to get stopped the moment that her fingers tangled into his mane and gently tugged him down to press a fang filled kiss to his cheek. He gave a hot purr and turned to meet her kiss affectionately, pulling her into it with a sweet rumble.

Toki melted against him with a soft and sleepy sigh, her sockets drifting to half mast as she gazed up at him tenderly. She returned his kiss with the sort of sleepy vigor one might expect from a half asleep bed-mate, but it had no less love than a fully conscious kiss would have.

His hands trailed down her back, ghosting over her wing joints and the soft, gossamer surfaces that allowed her flight when she so wished, and settled down on her rear. Tenne gave her posterior an appreciative squeeze before he pulled back from the kiss and purred in satisfaction. "God, I've missed that~" He purred happily, before he pecked her head gently. "Upstairs. Bedtime." He told her with a mock stern tone.

By the time he'd released her, Toki was just a little kiss drunk. Maybe a little bit exhaustion drunk too. Like the walking, talking, physical manifestation of night blogging. She giggled at his stern tone. "Yes big daddy Tenne. " Was the purr necessary? Not in the slightest.

Was her sashay up the stairs as she pulled away from him necessary in any way, shape or form? Hell yes, many times over. Exhausted she was, but she was forever a tease.

She made her way to her room, quietly slipping open the door and glancing back at him so she could wish him a sleepy and saucy good night.

Fluffing up, Tenne grinned happily as he followed Toki upstairs. "I hate seeing you go but I love watching you leave." He purred quietly before he went back to his own room. "Good night, my love."

Toki laughed very softly, and blew him a kiss, flushing at the comment of watching her go. Yes, she had 'that ass' as the memes went. "Good night, my dear." She smiled at him, and then slipped into her room.

Toki slipped back into bed with Aliquam, a pleased sigh leaving her. She moved Gracie, much to the cats' displeasure, but found herself drifting back towards sleep within a few short minutes of Aliquam settling his face back into her chest.
Days rolled onward. Between prepping for the kids birthday, and with everything that happened in getting Tenne and his children into her world, Toki had forgotten something.

She remembered to make a call as she was getting Kai, Quinn and sweet little Willow enrolled for schooling at their appropriate age and knowledge levels.

However, the days she'd wasted had been too long.

By the time Tenebris called the hospital to see about helping Yuri Shimada, he received news that simply made him wilt at recalling the frailty of human lifespans.

Yuri Shimada had passed away in her sleep when her health took a turn for the worse the day prior, leaving behind a mourning family struggling to cope.
Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: Small Montage of things we couldn’t make into full chapters before it hits the true chapter. I know it feels like we’re glossing over Yuri’s death, but… Tbh, I wrote it in a week or less before my own grandma passed, and I didn’t want to just un-write it because irl made it rough to deal with. It just meant we’d do a glossed over section for her funeral- and y’know… That was okay with us, y’know? Believe it or not, Silver isn’t actually one who likes Angst. That’s usually me tbh. Tho uh. NSFW warning for this chap. Under 18, go away.

Also, just so ya’ll ain’t blindsided, the total number of chapters has been announced.

Following the wake of devastation delivered to the Shimada family at the loss of their matriarch, Yuri, the family received a rather hefty sum of money donated anonymously into their accounts with the note to ‘*Give her the best of what she would have wanted-* T’.

The family was not all that certain who it was- they had many well off customer’s who’s names started with T, many of whom had grown to adore the wily elderly woman.

But, they obeyed- and thus Yuri was cremated, and placed in a silver plated urn that was engraved with a cobbler’s anvil, and placed into a glass-plated niche inside the mausoleum with several items to show the kind of woman that she was. Her picture was set in there, as well as a metal plaque with her name, birth and death year, and epitaph on it.

It was something a cobbler’s family could likely have never afforded without a little help from their mystery angel.

Oddly enough, a fresh bouquet of silk flowers showed up for Yuri the same day she was laid to rest, and they decorated the outside of her niche.

On the same day that the brothers returned to the store, they found a similar deposit into the store’s bank account, not unlike the anonymous donation that they got for helping with Yuri’s funeral. Hanzo and Genji read the note that was attached, and wondered if it was the same person, or, perhaps, two people working together.

‘*I know how hard it is to lose someone, and I know how hard it is to pick back up right away and go back to work. So, take some time and mourn. This should cover a couple weeks of bereavement.* T’

Many mourned her loss in the days that followed- but like all things… the world turned ever onward.

The twins birthday arrived with fanfare- and the day was spent having an absolute blast. They commandeered their mother for the day, having her play all sorts of games with them. They had her take them for a flight for a couple hours- wanting to fly all over the forest and up high into the sky.

The flight served them well- it let Tenne invade the kitchen to begin cooking while his sons took a
Tenné made a strawberry shortcake- and of course, he had his faithful daughter Willow to help him make it. She had to sample the strawberries as Tenné sugared them and poured them over the cake to sit and soak. She was too precious to deny- all four of her hands would clutch one of the berries, and she’d nibble at the sugary syrup covered fruit, and make the most delighted coos as she nibbled bite after bite out of her treat.

Her little antenna waved, and her wings would flutter with every bite.

She was absolutely precious.

By the time the cake was done and in the fridge, his sweet little Willow was absolutely smeared in strawberry sauce, and she had to be taken to the bath to be washed up once more.

After all, strawberries tasted the best when they were all over your face.

By the time Toki got back with Honey and Skylar, it was time for dinner, which the whole family was involved with. Tenebris came over, and it was utter chaos making enough dinner for everyone- but that’s what family was all about.

When dinner was over, it was time for cake- and then when cake had been served and eaten, Asgore rounded most of the kids and took them to the bathroom to wash up. Seven messy beast pups, four messy skeletons, and one put upon older bunny brother trying to help his dad round them all up made the bathroom very busy.

Thankfully, Solstice was an easy clean- Grillby cleaned her up quick and easy.

When the kids came back downstairs, gifts were given- and after oodles and oodles of thanks were given, the children ran off to the living room to play for the next few hours, letting the adults get a little while to pick up the house from the tornado of little ones that had thrashed it.

And later that night, when everyone had gone home and all the kids were in bed, Toki had gotten hugged and cuddled by Skylar and Honey and told that they’d had the best birthday ever.

Toki had gone to bed after all of the children did with a warm feeling blooming in her chest- one she’d thought was love for her children. The children’s birthday had been an absolute blast, and while it hadn’t been exactly as she planned, they had enjoyed it and that was exactly all she hoped for ultimately.

However, she woke up the next morning with the same heated feeling in her chest. But it had spread, growing from her chest to all over her body. She ached from the tip of her tail to the ends of her horns- and shifting positions seemed to make it worse.

In her sleep addled mind, her first thought was, was she ill? Or was it from her husband laying over her?

Aliquam was draped over her, not unlike a blanket- he was flush with her backside, and had her wings pinned as his arms trapped her primary biceps to her sides. His face was tucked against the back of her neck, and he wasn’t movi- wait. He was moving. His hips were… rocking?
They were grinding against her backside.

"Hnnn~" He sighed into the back of her neck.

Oh... Oh...

Shit.

Toki shifted, and squirmed out from under him as she felt her body aching to arch back into him. She wanted to roll over, press into the hard bone that was rubbing against her backside, and ride him until the burning sensation in her body went away.

But she couldn’t—she couldn’t just... pick one and choose one- that wouldn’t be right, and they hadn’t… They hadn’t had long enough to be here, to stay here, for Tenne and Aliquam to even share her bed at the same time for sleeping, let alone for sex.

Toki rolled away from him and out of the bed, her legs aching and her back nearly bowing with need. It seemed it had hit while she’d slept, but the children’s birthday had worn her out too much for her to wake up for the earlier parts of it. She staggered upright with a gasp, her mane ruffling with pain, and she went to go slip into some clothes.

She needed clothes on- more clothes, the less likely she’d be to just rub up against something. She was an adult- she could handle this. She could do it- even if it felt like Toki was covered in many, many heating blankets turned on high. She could manage it.

She hoped.

Toki managed to make her walk to the dresser almost stable- almost- and she scrambled into a skirt and a loose turtleneck. She was burning up under them, but it would, hopefully, help control a little of her urges. She had to get the kids off to school- their birthday had fallen on a Sunday, which left Monday being a school day again.

She did her best not to wake Aliquam- but she felt his eyes on her as she moved. How could she have doubted he’d have woken up when she’d rolled out of his grasp. “Good morning, my love.” Toki says, trying for nonchalance and most likely failing with the amount of warmth her body is putting off. She needs a cold shower once the kids are off to school.

"Curse Mondays" He groaned into his pillow, before he sighed and smiled up at her. "Good morning, my love~" He crooned happily, sitting up and rubbing his eyes before he stretched, and rolled out of bed, no doubt to come envelop her and get high off her scent once more. "You smell enticing, you know that, right?"

Toki had managed nonchalance up until he rolled out of bed and began to stroll towards her. How he moved was nothing less than predatory, the roll of his hips, the cant of his chest, and how he held his shoulders as he looked at her. She felt Dear stirring, urging her to accept, to submit to her mate- and Toki shushed her as she felt her mane pluming upwards, arousal pooling in her belly and in her scent. She wanted him. She wanted him badly- she wanted him to ease the ache in her bones, the heat in her belly.

She felt irritation spark in her- god damn it, she couldn’t even accept the deeper affections of either mate yet, and that might take months before that’s achieved. Fuck if that wasn’t enough to drive a woman to spit fire-

Instead of spitting fire or showing the spark of irritation, Toki squeaked. “’Y’know, I actually think I stink a little and maybe might need a shower so I’m gonna go get the kids to school and then do
And then Toki fled, trying to not make it seem like she was fleeing, but oh, oh her instincts and every motion of her frame said she was. She slid out her bedroom door, knocked on the kids doors to rouse them, and then began a slow walk for the stairs to go down. Ye-gods, she wished Tenebris could invent a heat suppressant. Five days of agony was going to drive her mad, and she didn’t even have any sex toys anymore.

Aliquam gave a low rattling groan, an agonizing noise to the needy Toki, as he followed her out of their room and past the children's bedroom, past Tenna's and his children's' room, and stopped her just at the stairs. He huffed as he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her back, pressing his face into her shoulder, snuffling under the neck of her turtleneck. "Stink? Absolutely not... Oh my love you smell addictive~ " He huffed, before he ran his tongue along her shoulder to the base of her neck, "As good as you taste~"

Toki’s legs positively quivered, and she had to grip the handrail with two hands to keep herself upright or she’d have simply gone tumbling down. Her mouth opened with a soft pant, and heat plumed into the air as she gave a shamefully needy moan. “Oh gods...” She whispered roughly. Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuckety fuck. “I- I’m glad you think I smell good.” She mumbled. “B-but ah, we can’t do- the kids are... going to come downstairs for breakfast and school soon.” She rasped.

Excuses- she needed excuses. They couldn’t mate in front of the pups, and Aliquam was supposed to work today, she thought- maybe? Hopefully. And Tenna… She could say she was going out to exercise. Exercise would be good- she could go hide in the woods for a while, leave them a note that they’re on kid-duty until it was over. Yesss that would work…

“I need to p-pack their lunches.” She mumbles, trying weakly to pull from his grasp.

"Then I will wait... just a little longer... but please be quick... you smell so wonderful...” He crooned quietly, slowly letting her go though not backing away. She had better hurry or else Tenna would open his door and catch wind of her.

Toki fled downstairs as quick as her unsteady legs would allow her, trailing the pheromones of her heat like a guiding beacon to her.

She reached the bottom of the stairs, and made her way to the kitchen, taking a deep breath to steady herself. Okay. She’d have a few minutes to compose herself and figure out something to say to her mates once the kids left the house- but for now, she’d get the kitchen all to her-

Or not.

Because there, in the kitchen, in all his pluming maned glory, was Tenna- with a gift.

"Good morning, my love." Tenna purred gently, standing proudly over his downed deer offering.

He was barely clothed, bare necessities only, with the smell of breakfast wafting from the stove.

Toki stared. There was a dead deer on her floor, a nearly naked Tenna standing above it, and breakfast on the stove. Her libido did that fun thing where it spiked upward and filled the kitchen with pheromones and desire.

“G-good morning, love.” She stammers, still focused on the deer. Well, that was a far cry better than a raccoon. But... Fuck, the children were going to scream if they saw it. It was one thing seeing meat being cooked, but it was another to see Bambi’s mom laying dead on the floor. “That’s... That’s a lovely deer.” Her scent proved how much she liked it.
She could hear the stairs squeaking, and her mane fluffed more, tail twitching with a sudden anxious feeling of being pinned in by two males. Shit- had Aliquam come downstairs? The children wouldn’t be down for a few more minutes- dragging their feet on Monday morning and all that- so it had to be him… Fuckfuckfuck…

"I’m glad you think so. It will feed you well." He purred proudly. "I made breakfast for the children, and their lunches are waiting for them." He rumbled happily.

“A-ah, I see.” She stammered. “You did a good job.”

Aliquam reached the bottom of the stairs, and approached Toki from behind. He hooked one possessive arm around her shoulders, kissing her temple lightly while at the same time inhaling her scent, and then he glanced across the kitchen. The deer didn’t surprise him- Tenne hunted, and frankly, fresh venison was very good and the children all benefited from it. However, he felt Sentinel bristling, and making himself bristle, as he noted the packed lunches, and the finished and ready breakfast- which his fantastic and amazing wife couldn’t have done.

His orange gaze settled back on Tenne, and he stiffened his shoulders subtly. He didn’t have a mane to bristle, but he could posture in other ways.

“I see breakfast lured you down.” Toki swallows dryly. “Look- Tenne got everything ready for breakfast and to send the kids off when they’re up.”

"How kind of him." Aliquam's tone is low in his throat as he watched Tenne.

The larger male beast eyed Aliquam and lightly puffed up. "Just out of bed, Aliquam?"

"And more dressed than you." Papyrus quipped back, eyes settling lowly at half mast.

Toki’s mane stiffened in awkwardness and the instinctive need to see which of her mates won her favor for the day. No, just… NO . She wasn’t going to play that game- no ma’am. She was going to have all or none- and not leave one out. They’d all suffer instead of just one. Dear gods, there was subtle sniping going on between them. She lifted a fist to lightly cough into it, and moved out from under Aliquam’s reach, moving to see what was made for breakfast.

It looked like Tenne had decided upon ‘breakfast burritos’, something he had enjoyed making from his culture. It also let her get the kids up and out of the house with a mobile breakfast. Toki cracked her knuckles, grabbed several tortillas, and began stuffing the tortillas with cheese, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, and grilled peppers, complete with a tiny sprinkle of hot sauce for those who enjoyed it on their burritos. An omelet in a burrito, basically.

Toki prepared and wrapped five of them in foil for the children and settled them near the kids’ lunches. She could hear feet moving upstairs- the kids were up, likely dressed, and probably about to come downstairs to collect breakfast and their lunches.

She swallowed awkwardly. “Lets not argue today, please. It’s already going to be a rough enough week as it is- lets not make it worse by sniping at each other.”

Tenne rumbled quietly. "I'll go start processing the deer. Let me know if you need anything, darling." He purred, before he dragged the deer back outside.

Aliquam watched her go before he puffed a little. "Didn't even clean the thing..." He pouted.

Toki had a momentary bit of panic as Tenne left, leaving her with just Aliquam in the kitchen with her. She took a shuddering breath, aware of the smell of masculinity and mate, and her growing
desire to take one of them. Instead of doing that, she prepared breakfast for her husband and her mate, and set them on plates, ultimately deciding she was too frazzled to eat breakfast herself.

So, she moved to the sink to begin cleaning the dishes before the eggs stuck to the pan. “He didn’t.” She agrees. “But… He was thoughtful in making breakfast, so I didn’t have to. It looks like we slept in a little later than normal this morning- and I really don’t want the kids to be late to school.”

"Mmh... still..." He huffed. "I like when you cook..." He moved to rest against her back, nuzzling her as he sighed hotly into her neck. "At least he left... and I get you to myself..." He murmured, starting to nip down her shoulder.

“A-ah, Papy…” She huffs softly, neck instinctively moving to let him nibble her. Her legs got weak, and she slumped a little into him as she washed the dishes. Fuck- fuck, fuck, fuck, she was pinned to the counter. “I… Hhh… You’ve got to share, love.” She mumbles shakily, her eyes closing as she pants, heat raking over her flesh and making her nipples pebble under her shirt.

God, heat was torture.

"I was here first." Was his hissing reply as he gave a slightly sharper nip, his arms coming up to caress her sides. "I want you first..." He growled, before he turned, bristling as the door opened.

"Sorry I forgot-" Tenne was cut off by a feral, possessive growl from Aliquam, before he growled in reply. "In the kitchen, have you no decency, young man!?"

"My kitchen."

That had Tenne fluffing a little as he made a disappointed face, before he looked at Toki. Though it was at that glance that Big Daddy had a good something to say and a rough sounding growl lifted from him, which spurred a sharp hiss from Aliquam.

The rumbling growl at her back made her weak at the knees, and every fiber of Toki’s being wanted her to bend over and bare her womanhood for her first mate to ravish her as he so desired. Being caught between two rumbling beasts had her wanting to roll over and accept their advances with submissive sounding buzzes.

However...

The logical side of Toki sparked with a temper at being used as kindling between the pissing match the two males seemed to be having.

While they seemed to be growling, and bristling tighter and tighter as they stared each other down, they were ignoring the growing bristle to Toki’s mane and the threatening rattle that was coming from her tail striking the tiled floor.

The thing that tipped the scale was the thundering of feet coming down the hall towards the stairs.

She shoulder-checked Papyrus, knocking him out of a growl mid-way as it rumbled out of his chest as she sidestepped out of his grasp and away from the throbbing length pulsing possessively against her backside. She stalked to the kids lunches as she heard them heading down the stairs.

Toki took them in hand, and then whirled on her mates. A growl rumbled up her chest- a clear threat that she was not taking any advances, despite Dear crooning for her to please, please take one of them, any one. She shoved lunch bags into Aliquam’s arms, and then stalked over to Tenne and shoved the breakfast burritos into his arms for him to give to the kids.
“Take a walk.” She snarls to them both, her wings tensing on her back. “The children need to go to school. Go cool your heads out in the snow.” She snaps, and chases them out of her kitchen. She’s not going to put up with them going at each other’s throats over her. No ma’am. She will go spend her heat out in the forest, and they can have a week of being dual-dads.

Both males were chased out easily into the front room and they nursed their dented pride behind matching smiles as the children came downstairs, Tenne rattling happily in greeting. ”Morning pups!” He’d greet, while Aliquam smile made sure he had the lunches in order.


Quinn peeked around both men, and waved to Toki. “Morning Momma!” He always greeted her first- and he wasn’t disappointed when she waved back to him with the same vigor. Sated, he looked up at Tenne with a soft hum. “Breakfast burritos? Yummy!”

“We’re almost late.” Skylar notes. “So portable meals for breakfast is a good idea.”

“Daddy!” Honey latches onto Aliquam’s knee and nuzzles her horns against his pants. “You have no shirt on! Silly Daddy.”

“And you have almost nothing.” Kai blinks at his dad. “Is it naked Monday?”

“No.” Skylar makes a face. “Adults are just being weird. C’mon- lets get our food and go. Here, Willow.” Skylar was a bit taller than Willow, so he handed her the burrito made for her, and let out a soft giggle at her happy trill.

Willow unwrapped her burrito and immediately began nibbling on it. She waved at Toki, and then cradled her burrito to her chest while she worked on gobbling it down.

Kai looked up at Aliquam. “So. Lunches? We’ve gotta go to make it to the school.”

“They’re going to walk with you to school.” Toki’s sugary sweet tone doesn’t alert the kids to anything- but it would most definitely make the adults flinch. “A little cold air will do your silly father’s some good.”

Kai and Quinn exchanged a glance that Honey and Skylar also seemed to share, before they looked at the other set of siblings, and after a moment, they immediately unanimously decided to drop the topic faster than a hot coal.

"Okay Momma!" Skylar chirped.

"We'll see you after school, Momma!" Quinn announced.

"Can I at least get my coat?" Aliquam whined as he seemed to sober up the moment he stepped out into the snowy cold of mid-October.

"Likewise... I'm not wearing any pants." Tenne then whined quietly from next to Aliquam, both of them peeking back into the house.

Hearing their whines from the front door produced two reactions from inside the house. The first being a flare of magic. The second was their coats drifting out the door, carried by a set of calm looking hornets. They didn't seem to share their masters mood, thankfully enough for both men- or their clothes would surely have been singed.
Toki didn't even respond to them. Instead, she called through the house to the kids. "Have a good day at school, sweethearts!"

Yes, Papyrus and Tenne were on the shit-list.

They took the offered coats and cooed to the bees in thanks as they climbed into their provided warmth before accepting their tasks. Tenne seeming more able as his pads were already used to the cold, Aliquam giving soft groans and grumbles as he seemed to cradle his hip more than he focused on the children.

"Shall we go, then?" He piped up regardless.

The group of them nodded, and off they went.

The walk back from the school was just as miserable as the walk to the school. Their state of dress- or lack there of, in both of their cases- spoke to some sort of shenanigans going on, and the other adults were snickering at them in good humor. It also left them extremely chilly, and in no way feeling warm and fuzzy in the nearly arctic cold type of wind.

Tenne exhaled roughly as he uncomfortably trudged home with Papyrus at his elbow. His tail trailed low through the snow- he could feel the burn of heat lingering in his system, but the chill of ice and snow was enough to keep him under control. Age also helped.

He glanced to his companion, hobbling slowly and clutching at his leg. "You know..." He mumbles softly. "I think we went about courting her the wrong way." Tenne comments quietly, rubbing his arms briskly. The coat was warm, but his legs? Not so much.

"It's my fault." Aliquam soon managed in reply, his hip aching as he limped along. "You had the right idea about wooing her. However, my mind was fogged with her scent and all reason was out the window..."

"Mmm... It wasn’t all you. I didn’t have to react as I did- the fault lies with both of us there, and she let us know we were both out of bounds." Tenne sighs through his teeth. "Do you know what I meant by we went about courting her the wrong way?"

"..." Aliquam thought for a moment, pondering just what the other seemed to mean. However, he soon lifted his hand and face-palmed. "Oh god damn it!" He snarled.

Tenne fluffed and sidestepped away from Aliquam. "What?" He asks- semi demands- warily twitching his tail.

"I get what you mean." Aliquam responded as his hands fell again, a defeated look growing on his face. "Our beasts aren't completely used to polyamory. We didn't act like we were willing to share with one another... That, plus she had a responsibility with all of the children from both of us, and our behavior got us both with our asses on the curb."

"Well... You hit the nail on the head." Tenne blinked at him, his mane softening. "We both went about it the wrong way. I know we're not used to sharing with anyone bigger than your children- I'm not either. Even when I had Toki and Sequoia, it was just me with what my beast considered two females in one body- there was no sharing with a rival male. You and I are going to have to... Well, woo her together if we hope to get anywhere."
Tenne sighed, folding his arms behind his back. He straightened, popping his spine as he compressed the muscles in his arms. “To be honest, Toki told me something along that lines late at night when we were talking once a few days back. She said to me, ‘I truly do await the day when it doesn’t matter who gives me children- because no matter who sires them, they will have two fathers and a mother who love them unequivocally.’”

He lets him chew on that for a moment, before sighing softly. “She loves us both, Papyrus- she loves us both with all of her being, or she wouldn’t have chosen us to be her bonded mates. Us sparring for her attention, to have her all to just ourselves, hurts her. So… I think we need to figure out some way for us to share her love without baring teeth at each other. I’ve been without her for four years, Papyrus- I’ll do anything now to keep her happy and to stay with her.”

"Mmh...” Aliquam had to stop at a bench to get weight off his hip. He settled down, straightening his leg and pressing in on his hip at a pressure point to hopefully soothe some of the pain the cold had brought to the prosthetic limb and it’s connecting point. Then the pain abated enough for him to focus properly, he contemplated what Tenne had said to him and then looked up at the larger male. "We're going to have to apologize... But how would we go about courting her in a less competitive way?” He asked softer.

"Hm... Perhaps working together on cleaning and preparing the deer?” Tenne suggests, standing near the other as he rested on the bench. Tenne shivered, his tail rattling, and he gave a bitter glance at the snow that he loathed very much. Snow back in his world hadn’t hardly been this cold- not even in Snowdin. No wonder Toki had hurt her paws in the snow there if this was the kind of cold that she was used to. “Apologizing to females is never an easy task, and there is most definitely not a perfect way to do it. But, I think we can work together on the deer and go from there. Our cooperation will show her we’re willing to work together for her- perhaps after we can build her a nest together in the main room, if she hasn’t already constructed one herself? She’s always been fond of soft things.”

And the softer the bedding, the better her sounds were when she was fucked into them. He had to give himself a controlled shake as Big Daddy, as she had so aptly named his beast, rumbled through his mind. None of that, Tenne thought- this was a civilized conversation.

Aliquam noticed the shake that Tenne had let off and heard a mental snicker coming from Sentinel who seemed to figure what Tenne’s beast had most likely rumbled, before he gave a quiet laugh himself. "A nest sounds perfect. We have plenty of blankets, and if we prepare her a meal of fresh cut venison, she very well would have her sacrificial meal to grant us entry into her nest.” He agreed.

"Indeed she would.” He agrees warmly. When Tenne violently shivers again, he decides he can’t take waiting on the limping man anymore. Tenne offers Papyrus a hand up. “Well- it’s going to take us some time to skin and gut the deer properly. So, shall we?” His gaze slid down to Aliquam’s leg, wondering why on earth he was limping so badly. He wouldn’t ask though. It simply wasn’t proper for one alpha to ask another why they were wounded- it drew attention to it and made the other think they were having their weaknesses spied out to be taken advantage of.

He took the offered hand and smiled up at Tenne. "We best hurry then...” He agreed. "Let's go before she starts to wonder why we're gone for so long.”

"Indeed.” Tenne laughs softly, pulling Aliquam to his feet with one swift tug. Once he's steady, Tenne starts meandering down the path towards the house, his steps slightly quicker to escape the blasted cold.
The house was empty when they got home. Well, empty in a sense. Sobek and Snuggle were cuddled up on the floor by the fire, and the cats had stretched out and claimed the couch for their own- but there was no sign of Toki.

Their breakfast burritos lay cold on the counter, not even a bee to keep them warm, testament to how out of sorts Toki was.

Her scent trailed out the back door, from there, foot prints tracked her way across the snow. She had gone through her Apiary, and towards the river framing the back of their property it seemed.

Her tracks appeared again on the other side of the swollen winter river, and disappeared into the healthy foliage that had survived the firebombing from a little more than a year ago.

The tracks led deeper into the woods, where she'd clearly gone before.

But she would have to wait. There was a doe to be skinned and cleaned.

While Aliquam went to put on some proper clothing, Tenne stepped into the back. He noticed the tracks and rumbled in thought, before he waved his tail up into his grip and swung it sharply, slicing across the doe’s throat to bleed it.

It didn't take long for Aliquam to come hobbling out in clean clothing that was a little warmer than his pajama pants.

He glanced to Tenne, and then moved to help, brandishing a kitchen knife to work on helping loosen the pelt from his side.

"Tsk, A pity you did not inherit our tail." Tenne commented as he used the natural blade to carve the hide from the meat, looking to be intending to keep it intact.

"Nyeh , it's not so bad.” Papyrus shrugged. He’d long since gotten over not having a tail like his father did. It certainly made wearing armor much easier for his job. “I can lay on my back without any pinching. Toki gets a lot of that.” Aliquam comments lightly as he glides the knife under hide, separating the hide from the fatty layer along the surface of the flesh. It's less cumbersome than a tail blade, and more flexible. He works quickly, and soon his half is done, flopping loosely in the cold air. "Besides, kitchen knives work just fine." He hums.

"I can tell." Tenne grinned from his side of the carved deer before he moved to the back and stripped the hide from the spine of the deer. "All done with that, well done. I'll go ahead and start quartering. It's always my favorite part." He chortled.
Aliquam nodded. “Alright. I’ll get the storage bags for the meat before I roll the hide. And a platter for Toki’s offering.”

Despite the pain in his leg from being submitted to the freezing cold in ill-fitting clothing, Aliquam moved quick to get what he needed. He returned with a metal platter for the meat to offer their irate mate, and bags to store the roasts, streaks, and all other cuts that Tenne decided to save.

That done, Aliquam decided to roll the hide for saving. Maybe they could get Toki to cure it- but that was, alas, something Aliquam had no idea how to do. He’d never hunted with his father, so he didn’t know about storing hides. And, to his knowledge, his father hadn’t ever kept hides either.

"Good thinking." Tenne praised. It was in the time Aliquam went to pack away the hide and collect the offering platter that Tenne had almost completely stripped the body of meat, powerful shoulders, tender back-straes, chewy tenderloins, and the spine and ribs, severed at the base of the spine, set aside no doubt for his personal enjoyment if not his sacrifice for his rightfully upset mate.

Aliquam gave a bemused chuckle. "She may like her meat raw now, but Toki likes to try and have some manners. The platter will also help us cross that river without losing anything in the current." He eyes it flatly, and starts bagging whatever Tenne doesn't put on the platter. Ever conscious that this was a gift for Toki, Aliquam doesn't give in to Sentinels whims of licking his fingers clean when he's done putting everything into freezer bags for storage.

Though, he's pretty sure the desire may have crossed his face, resisting instincts is easy for him. Well... Those ones. The instincts to ravish his mate with affection and love are another story entirely.

He turned and began to scrub his hands clean in the snow.

Tenne didn't seem to carry that same care as his tongue grazed over his fingers, licking up the blood as he cleaned up, though the red of blood left faint stains along his claws and teeth that he knew would have Dear going nuts. "Once you're done, shall we seek out our beloved?" He asked Aliquam as he gave him a light grin.

Aliquam nodded. It took him a few more minutes of scrubbing- the red didn’t want to come off, and it was a little bit anxiety inducing, giving him flashbacks to the first human he’d killed- but he got most of it off.

He straightened up, and tucked the meat into the snow to cool off- it was currently colder out here than in his freezer, so why not? before scooping up the platter of meat for Toki. “You may need to help me across the river.” He glances at the swollen surface, the riptides lashing as it tried to crest the bank. He grimaced. His leg twinged in advance. Ugh.

Initially, Tenne was curious as to why he was asked such a thing, though then he thought back about how Aliquam was limping and narrowed it down to some injury.

"Oh, of course." Tenne rumbled quietly. "You have a good grip on the platter, then?" He asked.

“I do.” Aliquam nods. He hobbles towards the river, his grip on the platter never wavering. His leg was hurting something terrible- but it wasn’t anything some down time with a heating pad wouldn’t fix. Aliquam reached the edge of the river, looking down at the rapids with a hum. “Sometimes I’m envious of her ability to fly.” He admits to Tenne. “It would make following her much, much easier. So, how do we want to get over this? The stepping stones are currently covered in about a foot of water.”

"Hm...” He gave a light hum before he smirked. "Well... when in doubt." He chuckled, before he
rumbled and growled as his form began to shutter and grow.

Aliquam side-eyed him and side-stepped him, giving his changing form an odd look. “If you rip your coat, Toki’s going to make me fix it for you.” He comments, watching the black-maned beast shift form.

A good note, Tenne quickly shed his sleeves as his form grew roughly to the same size as Asgore's before he rumbled and wrapped his arm around Aliquam's waist, hoisting him up almost effortlessly.

Papyrus squeaked. “Alright well, this works.” That was a large beast now holding him like a child. Shit. “Lets, uh, get across. And try not to dump the tray in the river. As much as Toki loves her cold-cuts, I don’t think she’ll see the humor in it.”

Tenne rumbled in reply as he carefully made his way across the river, slowly setting Aliquam down on the opposite side in a matter of moments.

Aliquam gave him a thankful nod. “Thank you.” He says lightly. He shakes himself off, and then pads slowly away from Tenne, picking up the location of the tracks again and following them. “Hm… I wonder… I think I know where she went.” He comments softly as they go from barren and burnt forests into lush greenery.

“Hm… I wonder… I think I know where she went.” He comments softly as they go from barren and burnt forests into lush greenery.

Without restoring his form, he rumbled and stalked ahead, his fur ruffling as he rattled and nearly bellowed out to call Toki.

He didn’t get so much as a peep in reply from Toki, letting him know just how quite upset at their squabbling and the whole situation that she really was.

The silence that followed made Aliquam wince a bit. Yep. His wife was a bit upset. He followed her scent, the cold air letting him keep his thoughts as he trailed along towards the pond she had turned into a hot spring for them on their first Valentines.

The pond had been covered in a conical structure, not unlike a beehive. There weren’t any trees that were durable enough to have held up a hanging hive, so it appeared that Toki was in the process of making a ground hive.

By process, most of the hive was built- but there was a several foot gap around the front that hadn’t been waxed in.

Toki naked, was sitting down in the apparent entrance, simply dangling her feet into the pond as she kept her back to the door. She heard her mates tromping along, but had no desire to reply when Tenne had bellowed for her. She had all intentions of sealing herself in her wax den and only coming out when it was time to do parenting duties.

Tenne approached the hive and pressed his paws against the structure as he crooned gently. "Darling~ " He cooed gently, "Let us in, my love." He then whined.

Toki stiffened as she felt and heard the thin wax structure rock under his paws. Her wings tensed against her back. “Go away, Tenne.” She says quietly. She shifts, and slides into the pool. The water steams under the force of her body heat as she enters it. “You too, Aliquam.” She turns and faces them in the pool, peering at them tiredly as she quietly placed her head on her arms. She moaned quietly, the cold making her ache that much deeper and painful. “I don’t have it in me to bounce back and forth between your affections all week, and I don’t want to hurt either of you by just choosing one. So go home.”

"We're both out here for you, darling..." Tenne slowly tapped his claws against the wall. "It's okay-
please let us in... we realize our error... we're here for you. We brought you a meal fit for a needing Queen.”

She waved a dismissing hand. "I saw the deer, Tenne. I know you both wish to court mating favor with me, and I'm not going to choose, no matter what Dear says on the matter, nor how scrumptious a meal you brought." Her arms fold again, and she gives them both a tired look.

"You don't have to choose, love." Aliquam chimes gently, lowering the tray into view to get her attention. His leg throbbed, and he hid a wince. None of them had stopped to eat this morning- well, neither he nor she had eaten anything. "You've got us both. We're not making you choose, my love. We're both here to love you- if you'll have us."

She stared at them quietly, her mane bristling and smoothing as she pondered his words. Toki tilted her head. "And you're sure you both can... Manage?" She says quietly. She's not too sure she wouldn't bite one of them if they started snarling at each other once they got going.

"Of course, darling." Tenne crooned. "Please let us in. We'll show you. Monogamy is not your way, you love us both in the same way, and we were foolish to fear any less..." Tenne’s face lowered down, his amethyst gaze bright from the darkness of his mane.

Toki stared at them both quietly, and huffed very gently. She slowly shuffled over, and motioned for them to join her in her pool- which was steaming now with heat. "No fighting."

"Growling at each other will get someone bitten.” She warns flatly. Her body settles against the sunken log that still rested in the pond, and she sighs, letting her back lean against the stones. Toki can’t help but rock against the water-polished wood between her thighs, trying to relieve just a little bit of the burn coursing through every inch of her. “There’s room for all three of us, and whatever food you brought.”

Both males gave pleased sounds as they were granted entry and Tenne took the platter to climb into the hive as Aliquam had to put more attention on his leg.

"Indeed there is, it's quite lovely in here." Tenne purred as he handed her the platter.

Toki took the platter from him, since there was no real place to set it in the pool proper, and then slid it on the ledge between the pool and the waxy wall surrounding it. The water was hot, and the log was warm under her, and she watched as Tenne settled in the water, drinking in his nearly naked state almost hungrily. She then looked over the meat, and took a small sliver to nibble because she was hungry, but mostly her body ached and she could hardly think of other body functions over the burning ache of her heat.

“Mnnnh…” Toki glanced over at Aliquam while she chewed the strip of fresh venison. “Your leg hurts, doesn’t it…?” She asks him quietly. “Why don’t you strip off and come sit in the water? It’s warmer.”

Tenne glanced over at Aliquam, who gave a soft sound before he smiled happily. "I'd like that." He replied.

It took Aliquam a few moments to undress down to his boxers, before he slowly slid into the water with a sigh. "Ahh... that's nice..." He cooed, before glancing up at Toki from his half-sunken position. "Toki, I'm so sorry that I was part of your problem..." He spoke gently.

Toki watched him slide into the water, her eyes drinking in his nearly naked state, and she had to rip her gaze away to focus on getting another piece of meat to keep herself from lunging across the log to demand his touch. “Y-yeah.” She says softly. “I know. You both got out of hand, but it’s not your
fault. I know how heat affects everyone- it’s probably best that I stay out here, or I’ll cause an ‘epidemic’ across the village.” She recalled her first heat having sent many, many others into heat as well. She quietly nibbles on another strip of something that looked like heart, and tries to keep herself from panting.

Her hips rocked against the log, and her fingers kneaded her knees.

He seemed to knead on his own knees as he sat there, feeling the heated water soothe his hip while he watched Tenne curl up on Toki’s other side, purring quietly as he rested his head on the soft ground saved for resting chins, arms, and other small things on.

Like the platter, for instance.

"An epidemic is an understatement." Aliquam chuckled lightly, his gaze sliding to the platter that she was picking at. "Do you at least like what we've brought you?"

Toki picked up another slice of meat, and chewed at it. She nudged the platter over more, so they could pick at it too. “I do like it.” She nods softly. “It’s very delicious. Though, the platter is a surprise.” She’d been expecting it to be brought wrapped in bloody deer hide or something beastly-and likewise, carried by Aliquam, since Tenne was the one who’d caught it.

Toki shuffled awkwardly, her gaze flicking between the two males. Her tail made noises against the wooden seat under them as she shifted against it, rocking a bit more firmly. It felt good, but it wasn’t what her body craved- and her scent, thickly blanketing the water, and the air inside the hive, told that in spades. “Hah… Please, eat up as well. There’s more than enough here for us to get a couple bites to sate our hunger.”

They didn’t get breakfast after all.

It was at that moment that Aliquam realized he was hungry and he gave Toki a gentle smile in appreciation as he started into his own strip of meat.

Tenne seemed sated and rumbled as he simply watched on

Toki nibbled another strip as she quietly rocked on the log. She finished it, and stopped rocking about the same time as she felt a sharp spot on the log poke the inside of her leg. “Mnrrg.” She made a soft grumbling sound. She couldn’t even rub one out without getting genital splinters- fuck her life. “We need to invent heat suppressants.” She comments with a groan, resting her face in her hands as she gave a shaky sigh. She wanted them both so, so bad- but she couldn’t just… Give in. She worried- she always worried- that she’d do something wrong.

Tenne and Aliquam watched her quietly, before Tenne purred and sidled up behind her, nuzzling her as Aliquam pushed the platter away and inched closer to her front, smiling down to her.

She peeked through her fingers at them, aware of every creeping inch they took towards her. Toki made a soft, stuttering purring noise and her hands loosened. One of her primary hands came to rest on Tenne’s thigh, rubbing it gently, while the other primary one slid over to Aliquam’s ribs, tracing over them with a light invitation.

"B-before we go farther... Are we... Going to go all the way?” She asks. To emphasis what she means, she pushes her soul out just enough to force a green glow to illuminate the pale flesh of her breasts and sternum.

"Not yet.” Aliquam answered gently, taking her hand in his as he smiled at her. "When you're ready.” He told her. "But until then...” He pressed his lips to hers as Tenne pressed his own to the
back of her neck.

It wasn't her who wasn't ready. But she feared that they weren't ready to share souls between the three of them. The glow at her chest faded, and she leaned into his kiss feverishly, her teeth and body almost burning hot to the touch. Her body arched, chest bumping against Papyrus, as Toki's tail moved to thread with Tenne's tail.

Her secondary hands moved to her husband's ribs, stroking them firmly, while her primary hands both finally settled on Tenne, stroking the base of his shield. One moved up to tug on the dark locks of his mane.

Toki's heated arousal scented the hive like a drug.

Aliquam let a low groan pass through their kiss and planted his hands on her thighs to start kneading while Tenne's hands trailed up to cup her breasts as he adjusted to press his front to her back, his tail happily twining with hers.

The hands on her thighs prompted her legs to spread, which let Tenne shift her entirely into his lap. Toki's toes curled, the soft paws hooking Aliquam and pulling him closer so she could stroke at his spine. The hands on her breasts had her panting, trembling as her wings pressed to Tenne's shield at her back. "Mmmmmmmnnn..." Her low moan echoed out of her kiss, and she couldn't stop the soft rock her pelvis did between them both.

Toki burned with a fiery need for her mates.

Aliquam's tongue slipped from his mouth and he gave a pleased huff, before he leaned in and pressed his face between her breasts, nudging Tenne's fingers away as his own hands began wandering. Tenne didn't seem to mind as he reached up and rattled as he pulled her face towards his for a slightly messier kiss, his tongue moving to press into her mouth as he rattled happily. "Rrrrr~" Not angry growling, just very, very happy noises to have what he was craving most.

Her open mouthed panting had only lasted a second before she found her mouth occupied by a long, black tongue. Which... Naturally she had to teasingly suck on as she kissed him back and twined her own green tongue with his.

Toki's hips squirmed between them both, making her breasts bounce against Aliquam's face as his hands roved over her body. Her hands stroked his ribs like a whore stroked a cock- with the skill of someone who had done it innumerable times before.

There was a soft buzzing rising up in her, a burning need that had her weak at the knees being expressed through a series of pipes to her mates.

Of course the piping was partly lost with Tenne claiming her mouth, but it was somewhat audible.

Her piping had both males growling as they began to shift and move her. She was planted in Tenne's lap and Aliquam was quickly starting to pin her there. Both males were quite excited, their boxers starting to tighten against her soft flesh.

They weren't the only ones excited. If her body was a campfire, the heat between her legs was an inferno. And there were no undergarments between her and her mates to keep them from feeling the heat of her rapidly warming up their little pool.

Toki's claws came down to the edge of the first pair of boxers she could blindly grab, and she pulled at them eagerly.
Her body however wasn't ready for the sort of onslaught. Aroused enough yes, stretched, no. Ectoflesh stretched easier than actual flesh, thankfully.

"Want you." Her voice rasped, deep and husky with desire and heat driven need. "Need you. Both. Please - touch me more ~" She arched, her hands grasping and touching where she could and whoever she could.

Tenne gave a sharp grunt as she ended up finding his boxers first and his tongue withdrew from her mouth as he released a hot breath. "Ahh~" He released a hot, heavy sound that even made Aliquam shiver a little.

"Four years..." Tenne rasped, pressing her a little into Aliquam's hold as he tactfully abandoned what little clothing remained, making sure not to ruin his boxers, and finally flesh pressed to flesh as Tenne nuzzled her back. "Four... years ... I've waited to feel you again~"

"Four years too many." Toki agreed with a heated gasp, her legs tightening around Papyrus in response to the heated flesh now bumping against the plush warmth of her backside. Her tail shifted to be better out of the way, still not releasing Tenne’s from the threaded grasp she had him in. Her fingers moved to her husband now, gently plucking at his clothing as she mewled needily.

Toki didn’t even list the short amount of time it was for her- this was like the difference between Aliquam and her, but this time she was in Aliquam’s shoes and Tenne was in hers.

“Wh-” She stammered, trying to gather her wits about her, “What are you gonna do to make up for lost time~?”

"Anything and everything I can to bring us completion." He purred in reply, before watching as Aliquam tilted Toki's head up for another kiss, though hidden behind interlocked teeth was a surprise for Toki; and it was Aliquam kissing with the confidence of Tenne, his tongue invading her mouth carefully but eagerly.

Toki couldn’t reply to Tenne, because she’d found her mouth filled with Aliquam’s tongue. Her husband had never, absolutely never, had a tongue like that before. She wasn’t sure what had spurred him on, but fucking hell she wasn’t going to complain. Toki twined her tongue with his, and pulled him closer to sandwich herself between his heat and Tenne’s. That let her anchor herself between the both of them- and then grind against them both, the water making her glide hot and heavy, even against the tight tent of her husband’s boxers.

Unlike Tenne, Aliquam felt a little more shameless as he grabbed his boxers and pulled them off, tearing them in the process as he flung them off himself and out of the hive. He then ran his hands to her breasts, affectionately squeezing and kneading them under his palms.

Tenne's hands were wandering south, his fingers delving into her folds at the first chance he got, a low purr rising from him as he nipped her neck.

Toki’s mouth muffled a moan into Papyrus’ own as his hands ravished her breasts, the sensitive mounds kneading and tingling pleasantly under his palms. Her pert nipples ached for stimulation, and she arched her chest into him about the same time that Tenne’s claws sank into her folds. Her legs splayed, and her heat hit his fingers like lava- she was moist, slick even in the water, showing just how much she wanted and needed her mates.

Her noises, eager and desperate for the agony of heat to be soothed by her beloved mates, were muffled but not entirely stifled by Aliquam’s kiss, filling the hive alongside their low purrs and pleasant growls.
Tenne growled happily as he felt her slick and tenderly played with the folds until he had enough of waiting. He boosted her up as he growled out and lined up his large cock against her entrance.

Only a few feet in height difference, and yet Tenne had such girth against what Aliquam had. He gave a slow rock against her backside, huffing a hot breath as he growled into her mane.

Aliquam had to catch Toki and gave a soft grunt. But as he held her, he got an idea and withdrew from the kiss to grin at Toki. "Have your latest changes left you your ability to breathe underwater?" He asked.

Toki panted, opened mouthed once Aliquam withdrew from the kiss. Her insides quivered, feeling almost like jelly with how much liquid desire flowed out of her and mixed with the water that they rested in.

The thick girth teasing against her entrance made her gulp. She was a full foot shorter and such equal measurements smaller in general size all around than the last time Tenne's girth had fit in her. She wasn't sure it all would fit. But she could hope.

"I duh-" she stammered, trying to gather her thoughts, "I think so. Don't always have to breathe. It's a reflex." She mumbled, and felt her body tremble in excitement at what he had planned. It was most likely a spit-roast, and her heat haze was down for it.

Her hands groped for them needily, stroking over what flesh and bone she could stimulate.

Tenne kissed along the back of her neck and cooed sweetly as he rolled his hips, the head of his girth slowly pressing against the folds of Toki's entrance with each rol until he managed to push into enough slick to pop the head of his length inside, a sharp gasp coming from him until it mellowed into an enjoyable moan as he began to roll his hips and push himself deeper.

Aliquam purred loudly at the sight before he scooted back a little and shifted to sit on his knees as he purred to Toki. "Would you like to find out, my love~?"

Toki's mind went hazy for half a second when the head of Tenne's shaft slid into her core, his heated member feeling almost cold against the inferno that was the fire of her heat. She panted, and it took her a moment of savoring the feeling of him slowly rocking into her depths before she could even gather an iota of thought.

She turned her lust-drunk gaze to her husband, panting and twitching with lightning bolts of pleasure. "Y-yes," She gasped. Yes she would. She needed something to do, something to touch, something to suck on-

Toki shifted, rolling on the log seat they were all using for their shenanigans. She shifted her stance, her legs sliding back as all her weight went onto her primary arms. This let Tenne have unrestricted access to her womanhood- and put her head about level with the glowing orange length throbbing under the water between Aliquam's legs.

She didn’t hesitate in ducking under, her wings remaining topside as she opened her mouth and blunted her teeth. Her tongue snaked out, sucking his member into her mouth, and she gave him a firm stroke from shaft to head as she enveloped him in the heat of her mouth and magic.

For a moment, Aliquam was praying to whatever god that she still had that wonderful ability, though two seconds after she dove underwater it turned to thanking the gods as he arched, a sweet moan coming out of him.

Tenne was a little irked at the sudden movement but with her rear now more properly sticking up
allowed him a better angle to nudge his way in once more, purring soundly as he eventually got his cock into her once more, slowly rolling his hips to start seeing just how deep he could get after all this time.

Toki was limp between the both of them, her primary hands holding her aloft on the log as she shifted her hands to Aliquam’s femurs. Her secondary hands played with her breasts, tweaking her nipples and sending pleasure tingling through her chest. It occupied her, while her mouth lapped and suckled at his member- and while Tenne rolled into her and stretched her wide.

Her eye lights flickered in and out, lost on the waves and throngs of pleasure. His member was wide and thick, but thankfully her ectoflesh was supple enough and pliant enough to stretch under his girth as he worked his way in- until he was hilted deep, deep inside of her.

The answer to just how deep he could get was quite simple- the answer was all the way.

And blessed be, Tenne wouldn’t have it any other way.

His gentle gestures didn’t last much longer before he started to really go at it, growling and snarling with utter glee as he thrust his hips into hers, driving her into Papyrus.

Aliquam's noises weren’t any less feral, deep and nearly bellowing in his enjoyment of his beloved's mouth on his cock; though he could tell how happy Tenne was. Four years without Toki would do that to a man, and Aliquam had only suffered six months without her. He couldn’t imagine four years.

She’s honestly not sure where her mind started to go blank, lost in a sea of pleasure. The cock in her mouth was the only thing her body could focus on pleasing- her hands could only, after a point, grip Aliquam’s femurs and her breasts for dear life as Tenne pounded her forward, and Aliquam pounded her back.

Toki was like a toy tugged between two alpha dogs- and she didn’t mind any bit of it. Her mouth worked Aliquam’s shaft, while her womanhood stretched to accommodate Tenne- and for the knot that she knew would be growing at his base. Where Aliquam was the perfect fit, Tenne was that painful challenge that she just so loved to take- and she hadn’t had him in so long… She felt his member bulge deep inside her, and here eye-lights rolled up in her head.

She's not sure when she came- or if she ever stopped orgasming, to be frank.

Aliquam sighed out a harsh exhale as his hand wandered up to the back of her head, another moan passing through him before he looked down and noticed something interesting happening with her middle. "Hrmn~ Tenne." He used his unoccupied hand to get the other male’s attention. "Oi!" He barked, when the other didn’t respond. It succeeded in getting Tenne to look up, though with a bit of a peeved look. "Look~"

Tenne glanced down at Toki, only to sputter and slow down for all but a moment as he leaned back, giving a soft growl that gradually grew to a soft "Ah…".

Her body... it was different than it had been in the past. He had not thought to look down, but he didn't regret it.

Her middle was see-through, and as a result he had the most wonderful sight.

His cock, long and black, was piercing Toki’s depths and stretching her as he had done during their first mating... It was wonderful to witness.
Yet the sight had gone too fast as the momentary glimpse was all he needed as a fire ignited in his loins and he bellowed out as he sank his claws into Toki's hips, growling as he thrust and rutted until his beautiful sight was darkened as he came, filling Toki with thread upon thread of his fluids.

How long had the beast gone without a proper ejaculation, one had to wonder?

Aliquam was one to wonder such a thing, as Tenne held tightly as he filled, and filled, and filled his beloved.

Toki frankly didn’t have many wonders or cares left in the world- she was clamping around him in frequent waves as orgasm after orgasm left her reeling. The hot, black seed that was rapidly coloring her middle and bloating it outwards only made her orgasms hit harder- and she moaned under the water, hot and throaty around Aliquam’s cock.

Her middle bulged as her body’s womb was made to grow with the thick ropes of seed flooding her, and the thick knot binding her and keeping every drop inside.

Toki swallowed around Aliquam, aching to fill both sides of her. Her mouth sucked at him, her tongue stroking him, and playing with the head of his shaft as it bobbed and was massaged inside her mouth.

As Tenne shivered, slowly coming off his high.

Aliquam shivered and groaned as he pulled her head down deep on his cock, huffing out as he lost his focus. "Nnh... aah... F-fuck... Toki..." She felt so good around his member- fuck he didn’t know what to do about it. "Oh fuck..." His hand clenched around a handful of her luscious mane and he leaned his head back as he rocked his hips. "Man... I'm not that far off m-myself..." He groaned.

Papyrus received a stream of bubbled as an answer to his words, and Toki resumed suckling his member with vigor. Her secondary hands shakily came down and settled on his pelvis, remembering his hip enough to be gentle but thorough as she stroked and teased and tempted him with touches that normally drove him wild. Her fingers strayed to the insides of his hips, and to the inside curve of his pelvis proper, and she stroked everything, teasing the tips of her claws over it just enough to entice but not to hurt.

Her walls still fluttered and clamped around the tight stretch of knot that damn near had her torn wide- but there was very little thought to much of her actions. Most of it was muscle memory, her mind mostly ‘blown’ by all of the overwhelming stimulation her body had needed.

Tenne shuttered and growled while he shifted and adjusted his hips around Toki's, refusing to let a drop of his seed escape her.

Papyrus gave a soft growl and leaned forward, pressing his head into what ended up being Tenne's shoulder. Tenne gave a soft grunt and pressed his head against Aliquam's in a thoughtless affection, though it was in that moment that the younger of the two felt climax surging, and without thinking a sharp growl rose to a roar and he bit the closest flesh to his face, which ended up being Tenne's shoulder as he pulled Toki's face to his crotch, his bright colored seed releasing into Toki's mouth. It was not even close in the same amount as Tenne, but definitely with matching fever.

With the fangs suddenly piercing his shoulder, Tenne roared in the same and his sharp teeth sank into Aliquam's shoulder, not destroying Toki's own mark upon him, rather layering onto it with intent.

In the fever of the moment brought upon them by their shared lover, the two males marked each other, accepting one another in a personal, and most sacred bond.
And Toki missed the entire thing.

So lost in the haze of lust she was, the only thing she heard were their growls of and yowls of pleasure resonating above the surface of the water. And, of course- the bright orange seed that flooded down her throat. Which, she greedily guzzled, downing every last drop that slipped out and then sucking him clean and dry of anything else.

Her body was slumped between them, her limbs trembling and shaky with all of the releases she’d had. Her mind was mostly gone, only capable of a few, sputtering thoughts with the thick members still spit-roasting her.

The males came off their shared high and slowly fell apart, their shoulders bleeding just a little as Aliquam withdrew enough to let Tenne pull Toki up out of the water and pull her against his chest.

"T-Toki darling," Aliquam panted softly as he inched back over to nuzzle her, "Are you alright~?"

Toki’s gaze was unfocused, and she was quite thoroughly limp against Tenne, not unlike a drowned rat. It took her a bit, but she gathered her wits enough to give a soft giggle. “Whooo~” She coos.

Yes. Toki was alright. Absolutely exhausted, and the fire burning inside her had dampened enough to be tolerable again, but Toki was alright.

There was a soft, green pulse of light at her chest, and her soul throbbed into view.

“M’okay.” She apparently has not realized her soul is bobbing between her dripping breasts. “That was… wow. You’re both… Amazing~”

Both males had ended up gawking at her soul coming out, almost so that they missed her comment, though Tenne had fluffed up at the stroke to his ego.

Aliquam on the other hand abandoned ego for his love and he slowly brought his hands up to cradle her soul, a smile on his face. “Ah, hello again, my love.” He slowly lifted the soul to his face for a brief nuzzle.

Glowing green tendrils extended from her soul, rubbing along Aliquam’s face and tenderly caressing him in a familiar manner. His touch made her body shudder, her wings tensing slightly against Tenne as she sucked in a soft, sensitive gasp.

“Ah~” Toki’s eyes shut briefly, but the touch seemed to stir her to her senses enough to actually comprehend some of what was going on. “Soul’s out...” She mumbles. “Must’ve missed you both.” Her giggle is just as soft as the tender touches from her soul. “Mmmm... My legs are jelly...” So were her arms. Trying to lift her hands after how tightly she had held onto her mates was a lesson in futility. Toki was thoroughly exhausted between the two of them, instead of being the one exhausting her mate.

Aliquam laughed gently before he sighed and adjusted himself to rest against her once Tenne had adjusted to be more comfortable. "Darling must be content~" Aliquam cooed.

Tenne eyed the soul before he purred quietly, though his gaze was wayward.

He could still remember it flickering before Toki would speak to reply to an unheard conversation. Oh how he missed she who was once one-in-soul with Toki...

None of this would be known to the others though- he would not interrupt their happiness.
Toki exhaled softly and thrummed warmly. “Mhmm... Must be content- or longing for two certain someones.” Her gaze flicked between the two of them as Aliquam sandwiched her to Tenne. The knot between her legs made them ache, but she adored the stretch. Toki stretched, and her gaze settled on something that wasn’t there as the stickiness of them finally reached her hands and shoulders.

“Mmmhh... These aren’t my bite marks.” She observes slowly.

Both males stiffened at that... They glanced at one another, their gazes traveled down to the bite marks...

"Oh shit."

"Oh shit ."

"Heh." Toki giggles faintly. "I guess we really are a trine now, aren't we?" Her giggle leaves her breathless between them.

The glow of her soul was bright even in the daylight leaking from the door to the hive; it pulsed and sent out tendrils, grasping at Aliquam and reaching for Tenne. It couldn't go far from her body for safety sake, or she'd goop, but it could glow and look attractive from outside her chest.

"So it seems." Tenne purred quietly, before he reached over and cooed gently as he ghosted his hand over the reaching tendrils. "Ah, you're so beautiful, Toki~" He purred gently, "Such a wonderful green~"

"I'm always green," She crooned to him, her eyes fluttering shut with a soft, sleepy giggle. Her sockets opened again so she could watch as her soul intertwined threads around Tenne's fingers and around Aliquam's digits as they both cupped the core of her everything. The core that loved them with all that she was, all that she had been, and all that she would be.

Toki lifted her hand to join them, the three hands interlinking as her fingers brought theirs together. The green tendrils looped around their fingers, not unlike the threads of fate that tied them together.

Toki gave a breathless giggle, caressing their palms with their fingers. "If only my soul was red, it would make for a great pun now about the red strings of fate."

Aliquam groaned faintly at the pun, though Tenne seemed to chuckle at the joke and he purred happily as he kissed her cheek. "My darling Toki," He purred happily, "So silly, and yet so true in your words."

Her smile grew softer yet, and her soul seemed to pulse in time with those feelings. “Indeed...” She murmurs softly. “I am true in my words- or try to be. Which is why... I want you both to know... That when you're both ready for this-” Her finger brushed a tendril of her soul, “that I’m already ready, and simply just... waiting.”

Her words needed but a few moments to sink into them both to realize just what she was proposing. Aliquam summoned his soul as he gave an excited sound, seeming very eager to bond with her soul once more, though Tenne followed suit in a slightly more hesitant manner.

Toki stared quietly, and she exhaled softly. “Only if you're ready. Both of you.” She reiterates softly. “But if you’re not ready, please don’t feel pressured.” She doesn’t stop them from getting their souls close to hers though- Aliquam’s is the sun, orange and hot and bright with life like a hot summer’s day. Tenne’s is the moon, lilac and cool like a winter pond- they balance each other out, and she craves them both greatly. She won’t pressure though- it needs to be willing, completely and utterly.
"Will you be able to handle us both at once?" Tenne asked gently.

"Please god yes." Was that too needy? Toki’s not sure, but god does she not give any fucks. She needed them.

Tenne rumbled quietly as he nuzzled Toki, before he purred softly and lifted his hand. "Here, then~" He purred gently as he offered his soul to her.

Aliquam nestled close to Toki’s front and kissed her neck gently as he lifted his soul to twine his fingers in hers. "Mmh~" He sighed gently.

There was no hesitancy with her soul- it reached out and the tendrils snared their souls, pulling them flush with hers. She let out a quiet, content gasp, her eyes sliding half-closed as she went limp, utter bliss filling her. She could feel them both- they felt like they filled the void in her being that she’d had for so long… “Mmmm~” It was the single most soothing feeling she’d had in a long time, feeling two souls who loved her entirely press close. There was so much love that it was nearly overwhelming- but it was… beautiful. Amazing.

Aliquam sighed contentedly while Tenne gave a weak sound, almost unprepared for the sensation but so badly yearning for it once more.

"Oh Stars." The maned beast eventually moaned, burying his face against the back of Toki’s neck.

Aliquam gave a deeper sound and leaned into Toki happily as voices began to echo within their minds, shared from the males of the bonding.

' It's been so long.'

' Mate is healthy, mate is strong.'

The third was not spoken, but a deep snarl-like rumble soon echoed, and yet it was undeniably a happy sound.

There was no voice from Toki, no sound or echo- just the gentle pulse of love and affection, and the slowing of her breathing. In true fashion, Toki had exhausted himself between them- and in the sated buzz that followed, she had settled for a nap.

However, while the main personality slept, soft echoes of breath signaling to them that Toki trusted them enough to doze with her soul wrapped in theirs, there were faint twitches to her body and a shift in the color of her soul.

It took a few minutes for her to get used to the body, the new limbs and extensions to her fingers via the claws, but soon her eyes opened and she took a deep breath. The vertical slit pupils of Dear looked at them, and she gave a slow, deep rumble. Dear’s mane plumed outward, and alpha in all her glory, and she lifted her free primary hand back to trail it through Tenne’s locks, stroking them in ways she had missed doing. Her secondary hands came to Aliquam, and she cupped his cheeks to draw his gaze.

“lt's my turn to play now.” She purred, and gave a wicked roll of her hips to Tenne, who was still buried deep inside of her.
Chapter Notes

Strider Notes: So it may seem like it ends abruptly to some, and while to others it may seem like it’s the perfect ending. For us, the writers, it falls into the latter point.

Sometimes you reach a point in your writing where you hit a spot, and the book just… sings that it’s over. One hundred and sixty six chapters has been a long run- well over a million and two hundred something thousand words have been written and shared with you all.

It’s been a glorious journey with it’s ups and it’s downs, and I’m so, so glad that you’ve stuck with us all through it. I’m sad to say that it’s ending- for now.

As it is, TOTU has an open ending- it’s something we can revisit later if we so choose, and write some more into a sequel, and that may be in the future cards, but Silver and I are ready to move on to other stories for a little while. Such as a Breath of the Wild story we’ve been working on for the past while, since Silver finally got a Switch and getting her to write anything but BOTW has been like pulling teeth from a grizzly.

That said- the TOTU universe is everlasting. Remember, the world is massive and huge. If you ever feel like you get the urge to write into it- either in the main verse of TOTU itself, or explore into one of the many AU’s that Toki dreams of, please, by all means… Do so. There are copies upon copies of each AU- no one copy is finite. Endless possibilities are at your fingertips, if only you reach for it.

So for now… Fare well, and we’ll see you in a dream of another dream, my darlings.

Silverwing Notes: We’ll see you in our next story!

Halloween loomed quickly after five days of heat and vigorous bonding through mating. The house was decorated in fluffy cobwebs, grave-stones were set outside, The pets were decorated with costumes, and pumpkins were collected and carved. Well, some carved- some of them were gutted and frozen, some of them were baked, fried, and also stewed.

Toki had worked with Lana, and had gotten everyone a set of working costumes for what they wanted to be. It had taken a fair bit of work too- the kids had endless numbers of ideas, and it was hard to get them to settle on just one idea. Honestly, she’d probably have had an easier time getting them to pick a costume at a costume store- because at least then the costumes were actually limited. When you had a magical seamstress who could weave cloth and thread together like god of yarn and mayhem, the possibilities were endless.

Kai was going as a mad scientist- complete with crazy glasses, fake mustache, and fluffy wig. He’d borrowed a couple test tubes from Tenebris, and loaded his coat with them.

Quinn had been covered in a fluffy bee costume, and his new mane was decorated with sparkles. At the top of his head was a crown, and he had a scepter. His fake wings were bedazzled- and his companion, Kiko, had a tiny, sparkly ‘king’ robe to wear too. They were, to put it bluntly, going as a
Queen and King bee.

It was actually precious- and Toki wasn’t going to enforce gendered costumes on her children.

For instance, Willow was going to be the Joker for Halloween, and Skylar and Honey were choosing to be Batman and Robin for Halloween, completing their little trio of adorableness.

Toki, Papyrus, and Tenne had costumes too. They had a trio-set of costumes for going out. Toki was going to be a sugar-plumb fairy- Tenne and Aliquam were set up to be her nutcrackers. Probably out of season, but any ultra-scary costumes that Lana had come up with had made Willow cry and Skylar hide his face, so they’d put those out of thought and out of mind.

They were having dinner before they went out trick-or-treating. Or would be, when it was done.

Toki adjusted the apron that covered her middle, dusting her hands on it to clean them, and then adjusted her shirt. She wasn’t in costume yet- it was hard to cook while in a sugar-plumb fairy dress and heels. So for now, she was in a nice pair of slacks, and a costume turtleneck that she’d bought online about a day or two after the heat had ended.

A thunder of footsteps sounded on the stairs, and she could hear Honey and Skylar chattering as she worked on stirring the spaghetti sauce on the stove.

“Honey,” Skylar whined, “I don’t want to step out there. Please, can’t we just go upstairs?”

“No!” She protested loudly. “We have to get Momma’s approval!”

“But Honey-”

“No Sky- come on, you have to admit it’s really cool and really awesome and no one else has thought of it!”

“I guess...”

Toki turned around about the time that they stepped out.

Buck naked.

Bare naked child bones greeted her stunned eyes as Honey did the jazz-hands at her, while Skylar tried to hide his face. “Look Momma!” She exclaims. “We decided on a new costume idea! We’re skeletons, so we can just go naked! Spooky scary skeletons send shivers down your spine~”

“I never should have played that song for you lot.” Toki mumbled as she lifted a hand to hide a giggle. “That is a lovely idea, Honey- but you’re not going out there like that.”

“But Momma!” She protested, voice rising into a high pitched ‘I want it now’ whine.

“No, Honey. It’s too cold outside for you to be running around in nothing but your bones. At least your batman costume has some insulation.” Toki shook her head. She motioned them back upstairs. “Go get into your clothing, both of you- dinner will be done soon, and I don’t have time to wash your costumes if you get spaghetti sauce all over yourselves.”

Honey whined at her.

Toki frowned at her. “Honey. You’re really going to hurt Willow’s feelings by changing costumes on her? When it’s you three doing a matching set of costumes?”
Honey deflated in an instant. “No...” She sighs and pouts. “Okaaay. I just thought it was really cool...”

“And it is. Maybe next year if the weather is good.” Toki hummed softly.

The twins looked at each other, sighed, one in relief and one in defeat, and then trooped back upstairs.

Toki shook her head and turned back to the stove, stirring the sauce and turning her attention to check the noodles and make sure they were softening properly. She hummed softly, finding herself stuck humming ’spooky scary skeletons’ as she cooked.

"I have finally gotten that song out of my head and yet here you are humming it once more. Is there no escape from the spooky scary skeletons?" Tenne chuckled as he walked into the kitchen with Papyrus.

"Not when you live in a house full of them." Aliquam answered with a laugh, going up behind his beloved and kissing her head as he wrapped his arms around her.

Toki leaned her back against his chest and giggled. 

"Spooky scary skeletons send shivers down your spine. Shrieking skulls will shock your soul seal your doom tonight~" She sang teasingly, stirring the sauce. "I love you both, you goobers. Are you ready for dinner? Not in costume yet?" She hadn’t looked at them, so thus, had no idea if they were clothed or not.

They would never get sauce out of their nutcracker uniforms if they got them dirty. Spaghetti sauce was far, far too difficult to get out of clothing. And pans. And anything it ever touched, really.

Tenne groaned while Aliquam gave a smug 'nyeh heh heh heh~'

"No, not dressed yet." Tenne answered as he set his head on Toki's other shoulder, reaching around to pick off the nearest meat chunk in the sauce with a soft 'oooh' sound.

The spoon popped across his knuckles gently but firmly. "Ah! Use a spoon! Spaghetti sauce stains like a motherfucker, and do you really want sauce colored fingers?"

She scooped two bites, offering each one to her mates. Such dorks they were. "I'm glad you're not in costume. I'm in my secondary costume of sorts- one I can answer the door for the early trick-or-treaters in, and one I don't mind getting dirty."

Both males took their spoonful and purred as they savored the flavor before Aliquam nuzzled her. "That's a leading statement~" He teased.

"But in the same, it's clever. But we shan't tempt the universe to cause trouble" Tenne joked lightly, before he patted Toki's shoulder. "I'm off to shower, I need to have my mane ready to braid for my uniform~"

"Alright Tenne." She patted his hip with one hand, and chuckled softly. Those two, sheesh. They got along better than one might think when they weren't competing for her affections. Now she was just left with Aliquam, and she gently shifted in his arms as she slid things off the burners.

"Would you be a dear and fill glasses of milk for the table?" She needed to plate up meals for the little ones, and then for her mates.

"Mmh.. In a minute... Enjoying the view from up here~" Aliquam answered as he smiled down at her, though shortly after he sighed and moved away, "Okay I'm content. milk it is."
She lifted her fingers and bopped his forehead. "You silly perve," She laughs. Her shirt did show a little cleavage. No wonder he'd been peeking over her shoulder. He'd been sneaking a peek! No one ever said he was innocent though. "Go set the milk down and behave tonight while we're in costume, and maybe I'll sleep topless tonight." She grins.

Toki knew how to work the system.

He gave a soft 'ooooo' under his breath and patted her hip as he grabbed some glasses from the cupboard and the carton from the fridge.

Toki gave a soft giggle, and began working on setting up plates. “Kiiiiids!” She shouts. “Dinner’s almost done! Come down to the dining room please!”

"Okay Momma!"

"We're coming!" There was a small stampede of feet coming down the stairs and Aliquam smiled as he set up the glasses where the children sat.

Toki soon came in, five plates settled in her hands for the five kids. With elegance and grace, she set them in place next to the glasses of milk and silverware. “I'll get plates for us in a moment.” She laughed to Aliquam.

"Sounds good, I'll make sure the kids wont make a mess.” He agreed quietly as he went with napkins to properly shield the children’s clothing.

“Sounds good.” She smiles softly. “It'll take too much time to wash them all before we change into costume otherwise- we’d miss all the trick-or-treating!” She laughs, and moves into the kitchen to begin preparing dinner for the three of them.

It takes her a little bit- Tenne and Aliquam eat significantly more than any of the children do, and the plates are piled higher than her own. Toki soon carried out three more plates, and settled the plates for Tenne and Aliquam next to their seating location. She settled hers between them, and let a soft exhale run through her.

“Alright. Dinner’s ready~” She chirped.

As if she just gave a pack of dogs a cue, there was the sound of silverware hitting plates and noodles being slurped up with gusto as famished children and adults set into their plates.

Toki watched them set in ravenously, and could only watch for a moment in pure awe. Good gracious, one would think she starved them by how fast all of them- adults included- were eating. She simply shook her head, and then reached back to untie her apron.

“Hey Momma. The sauce tastes funny.” Honey commented mid-bite.

“Well, I decided to change it up some, so I tried making it with Prego this time.” Toki said lightly, and pulled her apron away, revealing the lower part of her shirt.

Where the emblem said ‘ Thing Two ’ in bold letters across her belly.

Aliquam paused almost immediately as she made the pun, before he gave her a side glance and had to swallow his mouthful lest he choke on it. "You're...!"

Tenne blinked at Aliquam's reaction before he swallowed his mouthful. "No way...!" He gawked up at Toki.
Toki gave a slow smirk, and sat down in her seat. Her mane plumed pleasantly. “Yes way.” She hums, and leans over to take a sip of her milk. “I am very much so.”

“Huh?” Honey blinks, looking between them with a mouthful of spaghetti dangling from her teeth.

“You’re wha?” Skylar echoes, not understanding.

Kai blinked at her shirt for a moment, and then gave a hearty giggle. “Momma’s gonna have babies.” He exclaims, excessively pleased. “Finally!”

Toki snorts into her glass of milk. That’s right- Kai had campaigned for little siblings once.

Quinn beamed. “Oh goodness! Really?”

Willow blinked, looking befuddled at their excitement.

Honey still seemed to be in shock, half a bite of spaghetti still halfway into her mouth.

Skylar however looked positively thrilled. He teleported over the table, and wrapped around her middle with an excited squeal more befitting of Honey. “I’m gonna be a big brother!”

Toki laughed. “You are!” She cradled his head, but didn’t push him away. “Just be careful not to squish the baby, yeah? You have to share cuddles with everyone.”

"Lets be honest with ourselves, my love. Babies. Babies. With an 'I, e, s'.” Aliquam purred happily.

"Oh this is wonderful!” Tenne cooed happily, his mane fluffing up as his tail rattled underneath him.

Toki laughed softly. “It is- and it’s a good chance that we will have multiples. But we’ll have to wait until Dad’s able to check and see if we can count them yet. There’s no telling how fast they’ll grow, since, y’know.” It was up in the air as to who sired them. “Unless you can check?” She directed to the still slightly starstruck Tenne. He was a scientist, but he had cared for Sapphire when she’d been pregnant with Fuku.

"Uh..! I mean… I can try!” Tenne answered, before he gave a shaky laugh. "Though... Perhaps my counterpart would do better at this; I could probably not be as accurate...”

“Sweetheart, you’ll do perfectly.” She beams at him warmly. “You took care of Sapphire- but, we can talk with Tenebris about it, and he can teach you some things about checking on them. Proper knowledge can make all the difference.” It really could- she wondered if it was the lack of knowledge, or the lack of sheer magic power that had cost Sequoia her life. But, Toki didn’t even comment on it or hint at it. She simply smiled at them and then ushered Skylar back to his dinner.

She resumed hers with a soft sound.

He gave a quiet sound before he nodded. "Alright, my love. After dinner, while Aliquam cleans the pups, I'll check your soul." He rumbled.

Toki nods. “It may be too soon, yet.” She says lightly. “But, don’t get too discouraged if it is. Practice is practice, and we’ll get you some.” She smiles. “But, perhaps not after dinner. If everyone stays clean,” She eyes the mostly clean faces of her kids, “then we’ll be going trick-or-treating, so it’s off to costumes. Maybe we can soul-check tonight before bed?”

Speaking of… She glanced to Aliquam and then to Tenne, grinding her teeth in thought, despite Aliquam telling her not to prior. Tenne hadn’t just started sleeping with them with the heat- he still
stayed in his room unless it was an intimate encounter... But maybe. “Perhaps we can soul check while we all cuddle up?”

Tenne grew an excited look at that, his tail rattling just a little louder underneath him. "You mean it?" He asked hopefully.

Aliquam smiled and gave a soft laugh. "Of course she means it, Toki always means what she says... and if the litter is yours as much as it might be mine, then perhaps it's high time we finally invite you to share the nest.” He answered.

The children were all silent, watching the adults with rapt excitement as they scarfed down their meals. Their parents weren’t exactly secretive with their private life, but they didn’t scream it from the ceilings either- and it was clear the children were in cahoots for all of them to bunk together.

Mainly so they didn’t have to go to separate rooms when they needed their parents.

Toki smiled. “I did buy a bed that’s more than big enough for me and Aliquam. So please- I would love if you joined us tonight. We can go through our share of the Halloween candy via parent tax.” Toki winked at the kids.

There was a unanimous groan from them. “What did she tax from you?” Skylar asked the boys curiously.

“Hershey bars. Momma likes chocolate.” Quinn sighs. “She gave us honey-treats in return, but still.”

Honey puffed her cheeks. “Whenever there’s a candy bowl in the house, Momma eats all the chocolate. Not the ones with filling though. Only straight milk chocolate.”

“There’s a pattern.” Skylar observes lightly. “But Momma does do lots of things for us- I like the green tea kitkats more anyway, so I don’t mind giving Momma my chocolate bars. But the question is...” He turned shrewd eyes to Tenne and Aliquam. “What are Daddy and Tenne gonna want...?”

Toki snickered. Listening to her kids start to discuss what they might have to wheel and deal on candy wise was precious- and it got their attention off the adults. She turned her attention back to her mates. “I really would enjoy having both of you with me tonight. I may have promised some... specific cuddles,” Topless cuddles, “To Aliquam, and the more the merrier as far as I’m concerned.” She chirps.

Tenne gave a happy sound and smiled up at Aliquam and Toki. "I- I’m so excited for tonight~ thank you both so much..."

Toki beamed at him warmly. “You don’t need to thank me, Tenne. I wanted to make sure that you both were... well, comfortable enough with each other before I opened up the invitation. Since you’ve both gotten along awesome I’m happy to have you both in my bed for the cuddles I so have craved~ The couch is only good for so long after all, don’t you agree?”

He rattled happily and wagged his tail, before hearing a snicker from Kai, a small grin on his face as he hummed something in wingdings.

Toki shook her head, and happily resumed her meal.

Once dinner was finished, and dishes had been cleaned up, Toki sent everyone upstairs to get dressed, the elder siblings helping their younger siblings get their costumes on while the adults got dressed. Admittedly, the adults had more complex costumes.
Toki’s costume had multiple layers to it- many, many layers. She got her tights on, the specially made high heels that came with better traction than her actual shoes did. She had to layer the special frilled and ruffled sections to her dress, or it wouldn’t fluff up properly. She also had to layer it specially, since it was specially made- Tenne’s nutcracker uniform was based around black, while Aliquam’s was orange. Her sugarplum fairy dress wasn’t the traditional pink color that most people thought- it was in layers of orange and black.

So a sort of spooky take on a Christmas tale.

However, she came to a problem with the corset- her arms wouldn’t turn around to lace it up in the back. She stood topless in her room with Tenne and Aliquam, watching them lace up what Lana had called ‘breeches’, and hummed softly. “So, which of you knows how to lace a corset?”

Both males looked at one another quickly, before Aliquam cleared his throat a little. “Ah... I’m afraid I have no clue.” He admitted.

"I’m clueless myself." Tenne agreed quietly.

"Well... Shit." She sighed. "If you can't do a corset, what on earth are you doing with your pants?"

She padded closer and bent over to take a peek, her breasts swaying freely in front of her. "Seriously? You're knotting them like that? That's so... Not aesthetically pleasing! Come here, Aliquam." Toki moved to sit on the bed and patted her knees. "I'm gonna lace you up. Both of you watch- and then you can help me, okay?"

His cheeks tinged as he stammered a little before he stepped close. "Ah... yeah... okay." He spoke quietly as he turned his gaze away. "Thank you..." He spoke softer.

Tenne got an amused look as he leaned his head on his hand, giving a soft laugh.

Toki reached her fingers down to his pelvis, and undid the rats nest of a knot he had going on. She tsked, and then began lacing it properly. "Lacing a corset, and your pants, is just like lacing a shoe. You cross the laces into little 'x' shapes. If you're really fancy, you can do decorative lacing, but I'm not good at that. It's basically shoes, but on your crotch. See? Easy. You only have to do it once so you don't have to make perfect bunny ears twice." Finished, she gave his pelvis a gentle pat, and then peeked up at him and Tenne. "Think you can do yours, Tenne?"

Aliquam was red, boy was he red. Tenne was less so but had ended up leaning back to try and follow her directions to thread his pants, muttering the directions as he worked.

Aliquam couldn't even mumble out a reply, his face darkening as he eventually managed out a brief 'thank you' and moved away.

Boy there was something going on in his mind and he didn't look like he was about to share it.

Toki arched her brow at that blush her husband was sporting, and propped her chin onto her palm. Her tail rattled slowly on the floor, and reminded her that she had decorations for that too.

So, she set out threading ribbons around the smooth vertebrae of her tail. "So... What about lacing up your pants has you so red in the face, oh hubby of mine? Is it something we can play with later?"

Because yes, she'd tease him about kinks with Tenne there. Tenne was being brought into the fold, darn it. They needed to include him.

"Oh- I dont think you'll like it, it's really quite-"
"You were thinking about tailbone threading, weren't you." Tenne interrupted.

And there was nothing more from the husband, only a look of fluster and shame.

"I thought so." Tenne smirked before he straightened up, his pants finished. "Ever tried threading, Toki?" He asked her.

"I've never even heard of it until now." Toki blinked at them both. She then glanced at Tenne's tie job, and gave it a nod. It was doable, particularly for someone who was only just learning corset work, and wore single knot shoes or slip on shoes. She stood up, and looked at her bow-tie job on her tail, tsking softly. It wasn't on straight- and yes, Halloween was about fun, but she wanted to look nice- it wasn't often she got to dress up.

"Did you two want to try it?" She glances at them. "My actual tailbone isn't really accessible anymore, but my tail itself has these... I don't know. Pressure holes? No idea how to label this part of my anatomy, really. You can play with it if you want- but I do want my corset on before one of the boys barges in and gets blinded."

"Aliquam's probably is able to have his threaded if that skeletism runs through his body completely." Tenne commented.

"I have an ecto-body." Aliquam countered, before realizing as Tenne was suddenly sizing up right in front of him... and he was feeling pretty small.

"Do ya now~?" Tenne was fluffing up but that look on his face was no where near aggressive. It was almost predatory.

"He does when he bothers to summon it. I do love when he summons it- I enjoy his muscles as much as he gets to enjoy my ever present chest now." Toki arched a brow at the two of them and the passionate look Tenne was sending Aliquam. "My only concern in doing it to Aliquam is..." She closed her mouth and frowned.

His prosthetic encompassed half his pelvis almost. That included a small portion of his tailbone. There was a fine line between pain and pleasure, and though his prosthetic was nearly perfect, some things did make it hurt.

It was quickly that Tenne deflated and he looked at her before looking back at Aliquam. "Is?" He prompts.

It had Aliquam looking up at her with surprise. "A-Ah... She hadn't told you yet?"

Toki looked between the two of them. "That," she says softly, "is something personal that I felt you were more fit to tell him. If you didn't want to, it wasn't my call. Your body is not my body, love." She says softly.

"Does it have to do with why you limp in the cold sometimes?" Tenne asks softly.

Aliquam nodded briefly. "I am surprised you had not seen it when we followed Toki on her heat." He explained, reluctantly undoing what Toki had tied before he moved his pants to show Tenne.

Tenne flushed a dark color. "I was a little distracted by not having had my mate for four years. Pardon me for not having looked at your ass when hers was much more tempting." His gaze watched the removal of his fellow male’s pants.

Tenne made a surprised noise. "That is a well crafted prosthetic. If I didn't know something was
amiss, I wouldn't have even seen it. Though I do see her concern." His mane slicked down. "Lacing would put pressure on where the seam is on your tailbone. We could try doing it lightly, but heavy lacing may be a bad idea."

Aliquam nodded sheepishly as he watched Tenne’s mane slick down. It was then he released a breath he didn't know he had been holding... in any other circumstance, that would have been pretty... sexy... not that he was about to admit it. That'd be giving the other beast too much power.

Tenne exhaled softly. “That’s something to try at a later date, and perhaps with a soft thread. Maybe a ribbon of silk? Something that will be soft, but painless. However... If we want, we can play with Toki’s tail tonight. She already offered.” He glanced to their shared mate, and arches his brows. “Her tail can be laced up the length- and it would look lovely to have our lacing job mark her out in public, now wouldn’t it~?”

That was a salacious purr from Tenne if Toki ever heard one.

She flushed bright green and sputtered. “H-hey now! The kids will see if you lace all the way up!”

“They’ll just think it’s a lovely decoration.” Tenne purred, eyes half-lidding. “I’m thinking we take those nice orange and black ribbons over there and inter-twine them. Show the world she’s ours, and we’re hers. What do you say, Aliquam?”

Toki sputtered, flustered.

Ali quam gave a smirk and followed his gaze to the ribbons. "A wonderful idea~" he purred happily, "Some lovely weaving and the world will realize the colors have such significance~"

Toki sputtered louder, her tail rattling. “H-hey! When did it become tease the Toki night?” She halfheartedly complains, because she most definitely doesn’t mind it when they double-team to fluster her.

“What comes around goes around.” Tenne grinned. He moved over and took a seat next to her. “Aliquam, the ribbons if you will?” He requested as he took her tail into his hands and began to undo her lopsided decorations.

Toki huffed softly, but sat patiently. “I still also need my corset on.” She chimes, wings flicking at her back.

“Not tight though. You’ve got precious, fragile pups growing in your belly.” Tenne purrs with warm love.

Aliquam grabbed the ribbons and happily came over to sit on Toki’s other side. "Heh~” He kissed her cheek sweetly as he held out the black ribbon to Tenne.

Tenne gave him a grin and took the ribbon. He tied made the top bow at the top of her tail, linking the orange and black ribbons together, and then he began lacing her tail on his side.

Toki flushed. Brightly. Her mane also plumed upwards.

"What a pretty look for you~” Aliquam teased before he kissed her cheek. "So lovely with her black, white and orange, eh, Tenne?"

“Indeed~ She looks absolutely ravishing. It’s going to be a blast to help her strip out of it tonight, isn’t it~?” Tenne grinned devilishly to Aliquam.
She sat still for Tenne and Aliquam to tend to her tail and lace it gently, and her face burned with a flush. “I hope you’re enjoying yourselves.”

“Oh unbelievably, my dear.” Tenne nuzzled the back of her head with a warm sound, and finished tying the bow for her.

Toki swished her tail across their laps, and relished the feel of soft ribbons laced up her tail. “It feels nice.” She giggles. “So... Aliquam- you need to do your pants up again. But... Since Tenne tied the bows, will you help me with my corset and making sure it’s not too tight?”

Aliquam's hands danced along the ribbons before he hummed and smiled up at her, "Of course, my darling... I will try." He purred.

Toki beamed and stood up. She straightened, and tickled her laced tail against his cheek, before moving over to grab her corset. She slid it on, tucking her breasts into it properly, making sure she had no nip slips. True to Lana fashion, the corset fit like a dream- and it made her breasts plump upwards, making them look fuller. It also framed her wings beautifully.

She loved the colors too- it was primarily black, with bright orange trimmings, and all of the frills and lace and fluffy parts were also done in the same beautiful orange. It was lovely.

She backed up, presenting Aliquam with her back as her tail rubbed over his leg.

Aliquam was totally gawking at the sight. It wasn't until Tenne laughed and pushed on his face that he snapped out of it and straightened up to help Toki with stringing her corset comfortably. "You look... Wow . And the corset's not even tied yet." He giggled happily.

"Now imagine how fun it will be to pull it off tonight~" Tenne teased, before dodging a bone as it flew past his head.

Toki laughed. “Boys, come on, come on. Lets get this tied, and then you can ogle the sights.” She wiggled her back at them.

Tenne laughed, and nudged Aliquam around her front. “You make sure it doesn’t tighten too far around her belly. I’ll tie it.” His eyes twinkled merrily at Aliquam. It would also let Aliquam watch the view, as Tenne began to cinch Toki up.

And make her chest more bountiful, growing with every tightening loop of the laces.

Nothing was said but one could tell the 'bro' moment between them as Aliquam moved to her front and gently adjusted the corset as it was tightened... but every time the threads were cinched it would boost her breasts and lord he would stare.

Toki simply arched a brow every time his gaze drew across her chest. She took a deep breath, and made a soft, pleased buzzing noise. “I like this tightness, Tenne. I can breathe. And... Most importantly...” She bounced a little on her paws.


“I have jiggling room.” She grinned. Bro she was not, but she was a wife who knew her husband’s weakness, and would pound him with it. “Now, you two need to get yourselves dressed while I get my mane done up. The kids will be getting impatient soon.”

Tenne may have been staring over her shoulder a little bit as he tied her corset almost absently.
“Huh?” Boobs may not have been his favorite, but he would be a blind fool not to enjoy that jiggle.
With every jiggle, Aliquam's jaw had dropped notch upon notch until he was promptly gawking at his beloved's propped up womanly pillows.

"Oh... oh my god..." Was just under his breath, before he gave a sharp exhale. "I'm... gonna need a moment before I suit up." He admitted quietly.

Toki laughed. She reached her hands down to his pelvis, and did up the ties on his pants again. “You precious dork. Don’t worry, you can bury your face in them before I take the corset off when we get home.” She giggles.

Then, she took a moment once he was tied up again, which would contain any beast he didn’t want to let out, and moved to go do her mane up properly.

Tenne just stared after her as she moved to her vanity, and then moved closer to Aliquam. He clapped his hand onto his shoulder. “Tell me... Do... Do they get bigger...?” He asks, keeping his voice hushed.

After a moment, Aliquam straightened and gripped Tenne's shoulder. "Tenne." he started quietly, before looking up at his fellow mate with what only could be described as having stars in his bright orange eyes.

"She gets teats ." He said simply. "And oh good lord... You have no idea how big... and how sensitive they get..." He answered honestly, shifting his gaze to his wife before he leaned close. "She lactates early on too. And she's into it ."

Tenne’s face flushed almost as black as his mane. “Oh god.” He groaned. “I can’t wait until her teats show up. I’m going to bury my face in them and just...” He rattled out a rumbling purr. “Rrrrr- ”

Motor-boating was much more fun when there was more than just two breasts bouncing on your face.

"Get in line." Aliquam said quickly. "I called dibs like... four years ago."

Tenne squinted at him, and then flicked his forehead. “Ah, you got to have her for pregnancy twice , you greedy skeleton.” And one of them hadn’t even been Papyrus’ doing and he’d reaped the rewards. “You can share the goods.”

"Not when 'the goods' are my wife's voluptuous bosom. Those are my favorite part and I don't wanna share." He pouted.

Both boys were busy with talking and Toki too busy with her mane to bother detecting the fact that Tenebris had come by to check on them, only to catch wind of their conversation.

Getting a devious idea, Tenebris then smirked and teleported in front of Toki, giving her only seconds to squeak in surprise as she ended up in a bear hug with her back pressed against her father-in-law’s chest. He turned them to have Toki facing the bickering duo before another sound escaped the pregnant monster as Tenebris properly cupped her breasts and propped them up in his palms, cradled by his sharp claws.

"A-Aah! "

"Oh boys-~" Tenebris called tauntingly to make both son and counterpart look, and promptly gawk at the sight before them. "Eat your hearts out-~"

Toki, having been mildly enlightened to the hushed conversation happening thanks to Tenebris
being… Well, Tenebris, only gave an anime-worthy squeak-groan and a squirm against him. “A-ahh, Daddy be gentle! You’ll rip my corset!”

More like Tenebris eat his heart out- Toki could play all their games and come out on top.

To her credit. Tenebris wasn’t expecting that either. Lord, he didn’t expect that and even he choked before he freed her to bend over laughing, his hands on his knees as he hooted in laughter before he quickly ran out from a flurry of bone attacks and even a blaster beam from a flustered, furious Tenne.

Toki let out a rightfully infuriated noise once she was freed. “No blaster beams in the house!” She shouts, flailing her hands and scrambling to the door. “Oh! No!” Her eyes take in the damage. There was a Tenne fist sized burn mark on her wall. “My wall! Darnit, Tenne. You get to scrub the scorch marks off tomorrow.” She huffed. “Also, Papa!” She shouts down the stairs, where she could hear him laughing. “If you grab my boobs again, I’m going dull your tail blade while you’re sleeping!”

"Tell your mates to stop fighting over you and maybe I won’t!” He threatened, before a final bone sent him running with victorious laughter.

Aliquam was bristling a little before he huffed and trudged over to Toki, before he pressed his head on hers and wrapped his arms around her chest with a grumble.

Toki deflated with a sigh, and patted her husband's bare arms. "It's moments like this that I can see how he's related to your brother." She says dryly. "He's probably got the pups wrangled downstairs. Come on you two. You need to get dressed, and I need to put my tiara in. We also need to make an announcement sometime tonight too."

Tenne had sheepishly moved at her behest to go get his jacket on while Aliquam reclaimed her boobs for them. "We do?"

"Yes, dear." She chimes patiently, and pokes her husband gently in the ribs to urge him to his clothing instead of clinging to her. "Lana and Kon already know, but Cae and Grillby need to know they'll be uncles again, and Tenebris, for all his assholery, needs to know he's going to be a grandpa."

He didn't go quietly but Aliquam indeed went and collected his outfit. "I'm going to kill him."

"Now now, you cant kill him." Toki tuts to him and fixes her mane. Once it's back in order, she tops it with a tiara and gives a spin on her high heels. Her ruffles layer out, and the laced ribbons of her tail are fabulous. She feels like a sugarplum fairy gone Halloween. "Alright, my nutcrackers, how are we doing with our buttons?" She glances to them.

Aliquam had parted ways to prepare but as Toki turned to ask how things were going, it was revealed that they had given up on trying to tend to their own buttons and were now working on each other's buttons.

She shook her head with a sigh. "Well, at least you have each other." She puts her chin in one of her many palms and watches them happily. "You both look adorable and very handsome, you know that?"

Tenne fluffed a little before he smiled at her.

Papyrus looked down at himself before he sighed and smiled at her. "Glad you think so..."

"And I know you two were teasing me about stripping me down... But I fully expect a double strip..."
“show in return tonight.” She winks. "And maybe, just maybe, I'll let one of you undo my corset.” With that said, Toki flounced out of the bedroom and headed to the stairs to corral their wily family while the boys finished up.

The males exchanged looks with risen brows, before they both followed her out, like knights trailing behind their charge, or dogs chasing after their prey.

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Between the cold, the rowdy kids, and the excitement of Toki’s pregnancy being announced, everyone went home utterly exhausted, even the adults.

Toki, Tenne, and Papyrus didn’t even actually get out of their costumes until they got all of the children out of their costumes, warmed up, in bed, and then undressed all the pets. Including Sobek, who hated the world for Honey putting him in a tutu.

By the time the three of them were able to amble upstairs to Toki’s room, there was little doubt that sex would not be happening.

Toki walked to her vanity, loosening her corset with her primary arms as her secondary got her mane tamed and her tiara removed. "What a night." She groaned, kicking her heels off slowly. "Remind me never to wear heels on Halloween again. Even with the soles Lana put on, my paws are sore as hell from trying to keep my balance in the snow. I had fun though.” And she had a small bowl of ‘mom tax’ chocolate bars on top of the fridge now. Definitely worth it.

Aliquam grumbled in agreement as he shed his clothes.

Tenne was doing his own undressing quietly before he sighed and landed on the bed. "I need to shower... but I want to sleep…."

"Sleep now, shower in the morning." Toki agreed. "We've all smelled worse than a little sweaty beast and stale bones. Lucky for both of you, you get two in one with me." Not really. Toki rarely stunk. Thanks to her pheromones, body odor was a thing of the past.

She stripped herself down to her panties, and then she crawled topless into bed. She had made a promise after all. She settled on her front for a moment, before finding it uncomfortable and rolling onto her back. She stretched, mane floofing sleepily, and then opened her arms to welcome her boys closer. "How's your leg, Papy? If it's bothering you, I can warm it up and ease some of the aches.”

"I stuck a few hot-packs on the joints and wrapped it in thermal fabric before I put on my costume. My leg is doing just fine." Aliquam answered as he took one of Toki’s sides for cuddling, Tenne promptly taking the other as they both picked up purring.

Toki laughed softly and let them cover her in purrs and affection. "I'm glad you're not hurting." She chirped softly. She stretched, and sucked in a deep breath before sighing. Her hand came down to rub the smooth plane of her belly. "Mmmn."

It was very quickly that her hand was accompanied by both males folding their hands over hers. Aliquam sighed happily before he nuzzled his face into Toki’s chest, giving a pleased sound as he pressed a few kisses into her soft skin.

Toki sighed pleasantly as Papyrus nuzzled her chest. She stretched, and sighed warmly. Her fingers moved and let the boys touch her.
"Hey Tenne... Why don't you take a good look in my belly?" She grins slowly. Her womb as visible which was how she had known.

Tenne blinked up at her before he nodded and slowly shifted down to look at her belly. His eyes went wide and he gave an awed sound as he moved to sit between her legs, his face pressed to her transparent skin like a child pressing against glass. "You... You can see them!"

She laughed. "Yeah!" She beams. "Isn't it amazing?" Her laugh bounced her womb and his face, so she strove to hold still so he could see better. The soft bean shape wasn't big yet, but it was there, dark green and settled in the curve of her pelvic bone. It would grow and they would be able to watch as it got bigger. "Skeletons are neat, eh?"

"Oh my goodness~" He cooed happily, "how wonderful~" He trilled as he nuzzled her stomach, "We'll get to see them grow~"

"Or at least watch me expand." She laughs. "We can't do the flashlight trick until they're a lot bigger."

"Oh the flashlight trick!" Papyrus laughed. "Good times!" He then blinked and realized that he still had something that went along with their topic of conversation. "Oh... oh, oh! Be right back!"

Aliquam rolled out of bed and practically dove into the closet to rummage around, Tenne sitting up to watch him curiously.

Toki blinked and half leaned up. "Eh? What are you looking for, Papyrus?"

"If I have them, something to make his night." He answered, before he laughed and leaned back. "I got it!" He announced.

"Noooo, you didn't." Toki gave a laugh, pleasantly surprised. She hadn't known he'd gotten them off his phone. "You printed off the pictures of when I was pregnant with Honey and Skylar?"

"Yeeeeeesss?" He gave an innocent smile as he brought the box over.

"Oh good lord." She laughed, and sat up. She wiggled her hands at him. "Gimme! I wanna see my babies again. They were so little- they grow too fast." She pouts a little. "It's also been so long since I saw my old body, I hardly remember what I looked like."

Papyrus gleefully handed her some of the photos, taking a couple to look at himself and remember.

Tenne curiously took one to look at it, his eyes first catching on the skeletal maid that the photo contained. He made a soft hum of surprise. "Mhh... is this what you looked like before you came to my world?" He asked.

"Indeed so! I've got my horns back, but the rest is still a mix of beast and bone. And, ah... I don't have any more pictures of me human, I don't think." She realized with a sudden start that the scrapbook that Tenebris had painstakingly put together for her after her initial change had been forgotten when they fled to the mountain.

The inferno that claimed the forest before she'd gone to Tenne's world had taken her album again, and with it claimed all of her old family photos that had been saved prior.

There was a flash of sorrow in her eyes and scent that she quickly buried under a smile to instead point out the shape of Skylar's body and Honey's butt curled in her old body's belly.

Tenne momentarily shifted on her 'human' comment but had caught a glimpse of her face before he
looked to that which she pointed out, cooing in adoration. "How wonderful~ that's absolutely amazing~"

Glad for him having taken the distraction bait, Toki gave a coo. "Isn't it? I'm hoping we can do that this time. The pups were too tightly packed to get much of a reading last time, but if we have less then six, it should work to see individual limbs." She glances at them both with a soft smile. "Now... I want honesty. Are you both happy? I know it's fast that I got pregnant, and the three of us were working on settling, but..."

She just wanted to make sure they were happy.

They looked to one another before smiling back at her.

"Of course." Aliquam answered, giving a patient nod.

"This isn't what I expected for my future, but in all truth, very little would make me happier.” Tenne answered her honestly.

She looped her arms around the both of their necks, and pulled their faces down to hers so she could nuzzle them both. "Good.” She says. “Good. That makes me… Very, very happy. You have no idea just how happy. All three of us… This is our future now- and we're going to make the best out of every day of it.”

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