Magicae est Potestas
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Character: Frisk (Undertale), Chara (Undertale), Artemis Fowl II, Holly Short, Toriel (Undertale), Alphys (Undertale), Undyne (Undertale), Angeline Fowl, Muffet (Undertale), Flowey (Undertale), Foaly (Artemis Fowl), Myles Fowl, Beckett Fowl, Sans (Undertale), Papyrus (Undertale), Ivy Crane (FairyOC), O'Reilly (HumanOC)
Additional Tags: Post-Undertale Pacifist Route, Good Chara, Post-The Last Guardian (AF Book 8), Artemis has ulterior motives, Post-Techno Crash (Book 8), Temporary Character Death, Possibly Inaccurate Depictions of Child Abuse (only in early chapters), Sort-of-Narrator Chara, Racism, Monsterphobia, Violent Anti-Monster Hate Groups, Frisk and Chara CANNOT Control the Resets, Flowey Remembers Resets, Sort-of-Reredeemed Flowey (as in he's not as murderous as he used to be but still a violent jerk), Sans Is AWARE of Resets But Doesn't Actually Remember Them, Panicking Fairies (seriously they panic a lot), Magic, Uncovering Mysteries (on both sides), Scheming-but-Well-Intentioned Artemis, Souls, Fairies and Monsters, Monsters Don't Know About the Fairies (YET), Worldbuilding Questions Will Be Answered in the Notes!
I just realized I left out a tag for puns, so here lemme fix that, Puns & Word Play, Bad Puns, Sans Makes Puns, Developing Friendship Between Frisk and the Fowl Twins, Misunderstandings, The fairies are scared of the monsters and Frisk is wary of the fairies, Mind-Wipe, kidnappings, Rescues, Panic Attacks (sort of?), Frisk needs a therapist, Seriously the poor kiddo's got some pretty serious issues because of the Resets, Most prominent of them being an extremely Self-Sacrificing Attitude, Frisk will literally throw themselves in front of bullets for the monsters, that's not good, Negotiations, References to Undertale Genocide Route, Artemis and Co. watch Frisk's Genocide memories, they're not pretty, Time Travel, Time Loop, the fairy Council is one big collection of idiots, except for when they're actually smart for once, Racial Tension, Threats, Death Threats, Threats of Violence, Bombs, Paranoia, It's Not Paranoia If They're Really Out To Get You
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Summary
Run after run, the same constants are in place - the same politicians, the same prejudice, and no changes. Until Frisk and Chara decide to accept aid from yet another constant - an email sent by an anonymous supporter. They don't have much hope. After all, how much can one simple reply really change? (Post-Pacifist Run, Post-The Last Guardian. THERE WILL BE SPOILERS.)
Time is a strange, fickle thing. Despite common misconceptions, it is not a linear flow, a straight line into the future. It meanders, flexible and malleable as wet clay, twisting and turning and branching off into new streams, new timelines, where the events that seem just so set in stone never actually happened. And in some places, time is little more than a mess, a tangle.

But even something as abstract as the fourth dimension must have some constant, some anchor to hold it steady.

Frisk had memorized many of the common threads between timelines many, many resets ago. They began the same, with them falling through a mountain and onto a patch of golden flowers. They met Chara. Then their adventures through the Underground, and then the escape to the surface, where the monsters were met with reluctant open arms, forced into camps, or held at gunpoint until they retreated once again, while Frisk themselves either remained with the Dreemurrs, or, as they had this time, returned to the house they’d left behind.

The child’s finger hovered over the laptop keyboard. With their parents out of the house, they finally had the chance to check their pro-monster blog and forums, and the email they always set up soon after their return to the surface. Many of the comments were the same, repeating again and again - the same old support, advice, hate, complaints about the electronic curfews in various parts of the world.

*Nothing has changed. You are filling with apathy.*

Silently, they reached up to their shoulder and patted the invisible hand there. They could feel the other’s frustration, their determination waning with each new run, with every minute they failed to bring a happy ending.

That was another constant. Chara was never happy with just what they got. There was always too much prejudice, too much racism, too little rights for the monsters. It never got better, and yet the one time hope of humans and monsters still clung to their stubborn idealism.

Not too long ago, Frisk had felt the same way. But now, after hundreds upon hundreds of times seeing the sun again, of seeing the wonder on the monsters’ faces, of meeting the same politicians or traipsing back to the same house again and again, it was hard to feel as positive as before.

Sometimes they wondered how their ghostly friend managed it.

A familiar ding - an email notification from an unknown anonymous sender. *The* anonymous sender.

From Anonymous

To me

To F. Dreemurr, Online Ambassador and Supporter of Monsters Recent events have left many of us disheartened at your lack of success. However, unlike those charlatans who would rather express their hate rather than attempt to achieve the end goal, I am willing to assist you in your endeavors, be it politically or economically. If you wish for my aid, please do respond - but if you do not wish for it, then feel free to ignore or decline this message.

Yet another constant for the list. Two days later than the usual four months, but still there, still
glowing on the screen, tempting them to reply with a desperate plea of “Yes, yes! Please help us!”

But instead, they began to type the typical polite refusal. You couldn’t trust just anybody online - it had taken them at least sixteen runs to realize it. There was probably a virus in the message, or the anonymous user was far less than honest -

*Wait.*

They stopped, and looked up at where their friend was probably hovering. (They’d never seen them in person, so they couldn’t be entirely sure)

*Say yes.*

They almost asked why. Almost. But they didn’t need to. They already knew. They could feel Chara’s frustration, their desperation for something different, for anything. Even a computer virus would be a welcome distraction.

And on the off chance that maybe, just maybe, this mysterious person could really help them . . .

They sat, pondering the possible consequences, and then, gingerly, they began to type.

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**Reply from F. Dreemurr, Monster Ambassador**

**To Anonymous**

Normally I wouldn’t want help from someone I don’t know, but I’m at wit’s end here. Please, if you can do anything, help me out.

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Across the Atlantic, in a dim office just barely lit by a single lit monitor, a pale finger clicked on the new notification.

And the finger’s owner - too pale, easily visible in the gloom - smiled a sharp, vampiric smile.
This can go wrong in so many different ways.

Frisk rubbed sleep away from their eyes, glaring at the screen. This plan was INSANE. They’d tried many desperate things in previous runs, but never anything like this.

It wouldn’t work. It couldn’t work. Not with them as a main component. If somebody else were involved, maybe, but them? They were just a kid, a kid somewhere in the 10 to 12 year range (after so many runs, some of them lasting a year or more, they’d lost track of their actual age, and in any case, they’d felt far older than that for ages now), and were in no way qualified for this!

*It’ll be fine, partner.*

It would’ve been more reassuring if Chara didn’t sound a tad doubtful themselves, but it was nice to know they weren’t the only one with insecurities, the only one regretting making that reply three days ago. So much was already changing, and this plan concocted by their new online ally was not helping matters any.

They reopened their email and re-read the new message.

**From Anonymous**

**To Me**

I appreciate your choice to trust me, F. Dreemurr. I understand this could hardly have been an easy decision, and I will make it worth your while. Now, I already have a framework for a possible solution to your problems - however, in order to fine tune the details, I will need to know more about the monsters and the society they constructed for themselves underground. In the meantime, the initial stages of my plan should be simple enough for you. In order to force the government into freeing your monster acquaintances, first you must sway the public opinion to your favour.

It had been difficult enough to give away some of their precious information - obviously leaving out things related to the resets, for how could they explain those? - but “sway the public opinion,” in this case, could only mean protests. Protests that their ally insisted that they organize themselves.

A good number of those who follow your blog will no doubt agree to public protests - many of them have expressed an adamant disapproval of the monsters’ treatment, and will join you without much prompting. Should any one else organize such an event, it would eventually sway towards violence, or lose morale. But if someone with as much acclaim as you in the pro-monster community were to lead the flock, then it will make a much larger splash, and catch far more attention.

And if they were older, and actually were as acclaimed as the email claimed, it would certainly work. But as it was, they were only an anonymous presence online, barely able to even post on their blog without keeping it from their parents. They hardly had more than a few hundred followers, and at least a few of those people were only following them so they had the perfect opportunity to dish out hate. Even if they kept their anonymity, there was no reason for people to listen to them.

And yet here they were, staring at a blog entry they’d typed and revised and re-typed completely,
ready to be posted.

So, I’ve been thinking. I know that there are some people out there who are displeased about the monsters’ treatment, me amongst them. And the online blogs and pro-monster posters and presentations are truly something else! But . . . we’re not doing much good for the monsters like this.

Would anyone be willing to take our protests . . . public? I understand if no one does, honestly. Many governments wouldn’t take too kindly to this, and people could get arrested, and things could get violent if the rest of the public turns against us.

But if there are people interested in helping me with public support, please let me know somehow.

Should they even bother to post this? It wouldn’t do much good. They should wait until they were older, fifteen at least, before even trying this. If people found out . . .

*We can’t wait that long.

As impatient as Chara was, they knew it was warranted. If they didn’t change something soon, it was likely a reset would occur before they could make any more progress. And though they and Chara could handle a few more runs, they weren’t sure if they could handle more than that before things went wrong again, and they went on the genocidal warpath.

They might be able to recover from a third genocide run, but they were fairly certain that Sans wouldn’t.

They took a few more deep breaths, and posted the new entry before quickly erasing their internet history, sprinting downstairs, and placing the laptop down next to the empty wall socket, exactly where their parents had left it, with the power off. Then they ran upstairs again, and waited, until, right on schedule, their parents’ taxi (a little cart drawn by two athletic-looking bicycle riders, painted bright yellow) pulled up into the empty driveway.

They’d check the blog once their parents were asleep. Until then, they’d lay low. If this run was still anything like the last ones, then this was not the time to get underfoot.

Several hours later, once their parents were snoring carelessly in their giant waterbed (something Frisk wished they could use more often, because last night’s rest had been far more comfortable on their bed than the one in their room), they snuck back downstairs, and, keeping one ear out for movement, opened the laptop and turned it on. They had another half hour before the nightly curfew. They could get away with checking their blog.

The instant they opened up the messages for their blog, Frisk’s jaws dropped.

No way.

No way in heck. Was this real?

Their new entry had been reblogged. Reblogged over two hundred times. Stunned, they refreshed the page, just to make sure, and watched the number jump up from two hundred and eleven to two hundred and nineteen.
**Holy shit.**

They couldn’t even scold Chara for their language, because it was perfectly justified. They scrolled through the messages - there were a few scattered hate comments, but most of the replies fell along very different lines.

*Are you kidding me? I’d LOVE to! Let’s shove our opinions down the government’s collective throat!*

Sounds like a great idea, when do we start?

*As long as they’re peaceful protests, like sit-ins or something. Otherwise count me out.*

This is a great idea! We can’t do much for the monsters when we just stick to blogs and posters and graffiti. We need to take this to the next level ‘cause otherwise we’re not gonna get anybody to listen to us.

F.D. i know a lot of people who are totally pro-monster, have been from the beginning, and i’m sure i could get them to participate! We just need a date and time

People were listening to them.

People were agreeing with them .

Frisk clapped a hand over their mouth before the scream of astonished glee could escape.

This might work.

*This might actually work.*

“Chara,” they whispered. “When do they leave again?”

*About a week. They’re gone for a couple days, too.*

A huge grin crossed their features, and they were positive they were getting an invisible grin back.

“Then let’s do it. Let’s set the monsters free!”

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Across the Atlantic, in a large, dimly lit penthouse apartment, Artemis Fowl the Second leant back in his chair and smirked.

It had only been a few hours before the self-proclaimed “Online Ambassador’s” blog had positively erupted with positive replies. As per usual, he had read the crowds expertly. Now, so long as Dreemurr followed through the lax guidelines he’d sent them, it would be a simple matter to organize several rallies in favor of the monsters, even for a child.

Now, he did not surprise easily, but after some minor hacking and contacting one of his men within the next generation of Interpol, it had been rather easy to uncover F. Dreemurr’s identity - which was that of Frisk McNamara, a ten-year old child from the town of Ebott, nestled into the shadows of Mount Ebott itself.

He was no stranger to intelligent children - after all, Artemis himself had hardly been a normal child.
by any one’s standards, and Myles, his younger brother by a little over a decade, was already dabbling in bioengineering and philosophy, but it was still quite astonishing. A ten-year old child, who had run away to escape from their mundane routines, had returned with an entire inhuman civilization of sapient beings trailing behind them.

Not only that, but, if they were to be believed, they had managed to earn the trust of every one of them with what seemed like hardly little effort, and thus were privy to things most of the public were unaware of. The information they’d sent him included some rather . . . interesting details that the government had managed to keep from the public, including knowledge of an enormous geothermic energy source in the monster Underground.

He may have been an intellectual marvel, but even he would not have been capable of such a feat in a mere month. It had taken at least a year and a half to earn the complete trust of his three closest fairy friends - and almost ten years after the fact to earn the trust of the majority of the LEP.

If he ever met the child in person, he would have to ask how they did it. But for now . . .

He switched to a different window, where a terminal was running strings of binary code. As he watched, one string gave way to a file link, and then others quickly followed, dozens of classified American files ready for a thorough scanning.

He smirked.

He may not have the same social prowess as a child (which he had to admit was rather embarrassing), but he certainly knew his way around secrets.

How could he pass up this opportunity?
Numerous countries worldwide. The rallies have been particularly prominent in Europe, Asia, and South America, as citizens protest what they believe to be ‘wrongful imprisonment’ by the American government – the most prominent of these being the most recent sit-in of local businesses in Dublin, Ireland. Over three hundred people participated, including several influential businessmen such as .”

Heart pounding, Frisk shut off the TV.

Over three hundred. *Three hundred*. That was just incredible. And that was just in one city! People all over the world were rallying around their cause, taking a stand as best they were able.

Even when they’d finally starting thinking that maybe, just maybe, the rallies could work, they’d never expected this.

But the real question at this point was whether or not they’d get a similar turnout here in Ebott. After all, it was one thing to support the rights of a group that lived across the Atlantic from you. It was another thing to support a group who, if their rights were granted, could feasibly be working and living alongside you, getting hired for jobs you couldn’t quite cut or getting the houses you could just barely afford. And since the first place the monsters would likely end up inhabiting was the town of Ebott itself . . .

Well, past resets had taught Frisk exactly how the monsters would be blamed for the lack of available jobs and dwellings that would soon follow their integration.

*There’s no use worrying about it now. You need to get going, remember?*

Right. They couldn’t just linger around the house and ponder. They had a sit-in to attend – and Lincoln Park, the place where the rally would theoretically be taking place, was a good half-hour walk away.

They double-checked everything electronic to make sure they were turned off (if there was a fine to the household because of overstepping the curfew, then their parents would know something was up), then left through the back door and locked it behind them.

They couldn’t risk one of the anti-monster locals spotting them and telling their parents when they returned. The side streets and alleyways could be dangerous, certainly, but it was preferable to being locked in their room for “associating with idiots like that,” and never seeing the light of day again.

*Defying the wishes of the bastards that dare call yourself your parents fills you with determination.*

Their parents were *not* bastards – nor the other b-word that Chara occasionally used to address them – but they didn’t feel like correcting the ghost at the moment. Right now, they had more important things to attend to.

They’d expected maybe three dozen people. In previous runs, there had been almost as many against the monsters as there had been *supporting* them, and the conflict between the two groups was often violent and had had to have been disbanded forcefully by the police. That conflict had been on the
news, too – countries under martial law threatening the crowds into mundane complacency, anti-
monster folk hurling rocks and bottles and various other projectiles into throngs of peaceful
protesters. There had even been some murders in previous timelines (though thankfully, not yet in
this one.)

So the two hundred-something people sitting in Lincoln Park, sprawled out on towels and blankets,
with pockets stuffed with an afternoon’s worth of snacks and huge, colorful signs reading “Free the
Monsters,” and “Let them see the Sun again,” and “ ‘Monster’ is not an insult, but an ethnicity,”
was a welcome surprise.

More than welcome.

They slipped as quietly as they could into the throng, walking about until they found an empty patch
of ground to sit on, and settled there.

Soon, the police would start to turn up. They wouldn’t actually do anything – America was still more
lenient than some of the more totalitarian nations that had sprung up since the Crash – but they
couldn’t help but feel nervous about the men in blue showing up.

What if their parents saw them? Their father (they heard Chara snort indignantly at the thought)
worked directly for the government, and was likely to be helping the supervision of the rallies. Or
what if the news people turned up?

*I think you mean when they turn up .

True. They wouldn’t not come, not when they caught wind of the hundreds of people sporting signs
and pro-monster sentiments. Anything monster-related, for or against, made for good news coverage.

In any case, this was risky, and it might not be able to fix everything. Public opinion was probably
not going to be enough, no matter how many joined their efforts.

Their new ally had to have more up their sleeve than just this, and considering the tiny hints they had
dropped – their manners, the pre-constructed plans for Frisk’s inhuman friends’ freedom, and, of
course, the insistence that Frisk not know everything about the plan - they could only assume that
whatever he or she was doing wasn’t exactly legal.

They could only hope it would be worth it in the end.

A faint buzzing drew Artemis’s attention away from hordes of classified data. The fairy
communicator – disguised as a hefty ring on his left hand – was vibrating against the wooden desk.
An incoming call from Holly.

It had been some time since they had last contacted one another – knowing the captain, as much as
she may want to call for purely social reasons, she was likely calling for some form of assistance.

Well, he could spare some time.

He turned the ring around so it rested on his palm, curled all digits but his thumb and little finger
around it, and lifted it to his ear.

“Hello, Holly.” he said.
“Hello, Mud Boy.” The LEP captain’s voice was wry. “Rob any national banks recently?”

He smirked. “No, I am afraid I’ve become rather lax when it comes to battles of wits with computerized locking mechanisms.”

A snort from the other end of the line, and he permitted his smile to grow a smidgen larger before he stifled it. “I assume that this is hardly a simple call between friends.”

“I wish. You know how it is with us – saving the world or nothing.”

Quite true. Even now, after the Berserker’s Gate and his own resurrection, each one of the greatest challenges any human or fairy could face, his relations with the People seemed to attract a monumental quantity of trouble. He had already assisted the fairies dozens of times since the Crash, putting a stop to fairy smuggling rings, hunting down escaped convicts, and hacking into government sites to delete sensitive data. They were about due for another disaster by now – and considering recent events, he was quite certain of the origin of their next task.

“Am I correct in thinking that your present concerns involve the civilization that unearthed itself four months ago?”

She sighed, years of frustration manifesting in one short sound. “Yep. The Council’s getting concerned.”

Artemis sniffed. Of course the Council was concerned – when were they not?

“I can only assume that their concern is that the presence of the monsters, a fully sapient race of magical beings, in human society, may endanger the People’s secrecy.”

The silence on the other end of the line was enough of an answer. The Irishman sighed, kneading his brow with his available hand.

“Luckily for our constricted schedules, I have already done research on the relevant information. Assuming my source left little out, I can paint a somewhat accurate picture of the monsters’ society, and therefore alleviate the Council’s concerns somewhat.”

“You’ve already done the research? D’Arvit, Artemis, are you sure you didn’t pick up on some sort of mind-reading magic while you were dead?”

“Hardly.” Artemis opened the file containing the information obtained from Frisk. “And mind-reading capabilities would not have allowed me access to this information any earlier, in any case. Prophetic abilities, perhaps. Now, I anticipated that the People may eventually want access to this information, so I have converted a copy of it into a Gnommish file. Shall I transfer it directly to Foaly’s system?”

“Yes please. Urgh, but now I’ll have to go through it all with him . . . this is going to be a nightmare.”

“Nonsense. The information was transferred to me in a rather simplified manner, and with no further data, I cannot complicate it further. It should make for a rather easy read.”

“Alright, who did you con this from, then? A child?”

He briefly considered this. Answer truthfully and clue Holly in that he may be up to his ears in something new, or let it lie?
But there was always the off chance that he might require her assistance.

“Actually,” he said calmly, “the child was not conned – they were desperate, and so accepted my aid in return for information that may be crucial to our success.”

Again, there was an extensive pause.

“Artemis,” Holly said in her alright what trouble are you leaving me out of this time tone of voice. “Are you saying this information literally came from a little kid? Don’t tell me you unearthed another child genius somewhere?”

“Genius? Perhaps.”

“And you’re not going to tell me who this kid is, are you?”

“Of course not. Client confidentiality, Captain.”

“‘Client?’ You know what, no. I won’t ask. Just please, please tell me that you’re planning on telling me eventually.”

“Of course. You have my word.”

On his desk, the computer let loose a faint beep.
“How could you?! How could you even consider following that crowd? You little –”

As their biological mother stormed back and forth, ranting with an almost rabid fury and calling them all manner of foul names, Frisk tried their best to look as small as possible and not like a target.

“How?! Why support those creatures?! You should know better than that by now! They’re monsters, abominations, they belong under that mountain, and you – you!”

Somewhere behind them, Chara was seething in rage, itching to ACT, to do something to the screaming woman, and it took every scrap of willpower Frisk had to keep them there.

“Don’t you have anything to say, you traitor?! Well?!”

Frisk shook their head – they knew from experience that actually answering would earn them a harsh smack – and the woman calmed down from a boil to a faint simmer.

“Go upstairs.” She spat. “Room. Now. No dinner, no breakfast.”

*God-damn it Frisk, say something! Put her in her place!*

But the child only obediently trudged up the stairs and to their room, and sat waiting on their uncomfortable bed until they heard the door lock with a sickeningly familiar click.

It had been going so well, too.

Usually, their “family” never found out about their involvement with the monsters unless they told them personally. They could continue their silent support with little parental interference, at least until the next reset.

But after going to seven protests, four of which had local news coverage and one of which – a record-breaking 800 people turning up at Lincoln Park – having footage broadcasted worldwide, they’d known it was only a matter of time before the beans were spilled. After all, the news was the only thing on TV for now, other channels having been disbanded years ago, and protests were always paid attention to.

*You should’ve fought back! There’s knives in the kitchen, you could’ve gotten her good -*

No, they wouldn’t do that. No matter how much they screamed or tore apart their room, these were the people responsible for them existing. They couldn’t kill them, couldn’t even hurt them, it wouldn’t be right. Not when everything was going so well.

Besides, in comparison to some people, they were fortunate. They had known people who were beaten by their own family – even Chara had had worse familial issues than they had, when the other child had still lived on the surface.

*It doesn’t matter! No one should call people like them family!!*

They ignored Chara’s ranting – another constant between timelines – and got up off their bed. They opened the sparsely populated drawer next to their bed, rooting through their clothes and finding all the hidden energy bars and drinks that they squirreled away for times like these. Then they knelt down, and felt around under their bed for the loose floorboard.
They’d hidden all kinds of things there, and for the next few days, it would hide not only their cellphone and photograph of the monsters, but also their food and water as well.

Even after two days "without food" – their father had extended their punishment when he got home from missing two meals to missing four – Frisk’s determination wouldn’t let them rest. After a false apology and a couple days of good behavior, Frisk was back on their blog, updating the schedules for the rallies and replying to the numerous comments on their page.

Their blog had exploded. Two weeks had earned them over 200 new followers from all over the world, and more were pouring in daily, along with all kinds of ideas for organized events to help spread awareness of the monsters’ plight.

Keeping one ear out for their parents, (they had only fallen asleep maybe an hour ago, but they weren’t about to wait any longer), they started flicking through the ideas they’d typed up. Fundraisers, petitions, lectures in parks and restaurants – some important businessman had organized a group of people to paint a mural in Dublin, depicting mount Ebott and the monsters that Frisk had described in one blog entry.

They were about to read a news feed someone had linked them, when Chara suddenly broadcasted a sense of alarm.

*Frisk! Turn off the laptop, hurry!

Before they could comply, a hand grabbed their shoulder and whipped them around.

“What are you doing?” Their father said. It was almost a snarl.

They sat frozen, the laptop still open in their hands, and he took the opportunity to snatch it from them and look at the screen. Even as they watched, his face grew livid as he read every blog post, every message – it turned full-on beat red when he read the name of the blog.

“You – you –” He was so besides himself in rage that he couldn’t speak for a few moments.

Frisk took the opportunity to snatch the laptop back and run.

“Get back here!”

*Hurry, make sure he can’t delete the account!

Quick as a flash, Frisk logged out of their account and erased their internet history, just before their father tripped them with a well-placed foot and grabbed the machine back. His face went from red to purple as he realized exactly what Frisk had done.

“You little bitch!” He yelled. He brought the laptop down hard on Frisk’s head, making them wince. “You’re the one who’s been organizing this shit?! Have you no loyalty?! We gave you a chance, took you back in after you ran away, forgave you for going to those rallies, and you repay us like this?!”

He grabbed them by the hair as they began to get up, and dragged them upstairs to their room.

“What else have you been hiding from us?! How long have you been doing this?” He whirled on them.
Frisk looked down, shuffling their feet.

“Well?! Answer me!! ”

“Four months,” they mumbled. He stopped and gawped at them, speechless.

“FFF – four months? Four months?!” If he got any angrier, steam would start erupting from his ears. “You’ve been going behind our backs for four months?!”

He whirled back around and began tearing through their belongings. He dumped all their clothes onto the floor, upturned the entire dresser, searched their meager books and toys for hidden pockets – he unearthed one energy bar as he did, but in his anger he overlooked it. Frisk held their breath, struggling to keep themselves from jumping in his path – maybe he’d overlook the loose floorboard, it was very hard to spot if you didn’t know what you were looking for.

Then his fingers found the floorboard, and he began to pull on it.

“No!” They yelped. They lunged forward, grappling with his arms and trying to yank him away, but he knocked them off their feet easily and pulled up the board. He pulled out the dozen energy bars, the energy drinks. He paused when he found the cell phone.

“Where did you steal this from?!” He snapped. Frisk shook their head wildly.

“I didn’t steal it! I – I found it! It was in the lost-in-found at school!”

He growled and stuffed it into his pocket, before straining to reach further into the gap, feeling around for anything else -

He pulled out the photograph.

There was silence for a moment, as his jaws dropped and his eyes bugged out. In that moment of silence, Frisk heard their “mother” step into the room behind them.

Then, slowly, dangerously calm, he turned to face Frisk.

“What.” he said flatly, holding out the photograph for them to see. “Is. This?”

*Lie!

But Frisk didn’t get the chance to lie, because their father shoved the photo into their face.

“What is this?! How did you get a photograph of yourself with those abominations?! When did you visit the mountain?!”

Behind them, their mother gasped.

“I didn’t –”

“Don’t lie to me, you little whelp! When did you visit the mountain?! How did you get past the guards?!”

Silence. Then, Frisk raised their head from the floor, took in a deep breath.

“I didn’t get past the guards.” They said, with as much false confidence as they could muster. “There weren’t any guards there when I went.”
“There have been guards there for the entire time!!”

“No before the monsters got out of the Underground!”

“Before - ”

“That’s where I was for the month that I was missing.” They said. “I fell into the mountain. I lived there with them for a month. And they’re not abominations! They have hopes, dreams, feelings, just like humans do!”


Frisk lifted their chin defiantly, radiating Determination.

“*I* was the one who helped them break the Barrier!”

Silence. Frisk held their breath, bracing themselves for the oncoming storm.

*Three. Two. One.*

“You what?!”

Frisk had stopped updating their blog.

Artemis frowned, tapping his fingers on the desk.

That was strange. They had seemed remarkably dedicated to the rallies, once they’d proved successful.

Most people would have dismissed it. After all, all manner of things could happen – their computer could malfunction, their household could have been fined and the presumed laptop temporarily appropriated by the local government, or even stolen.

But he’d been keeping careful track of the McNamara household. Their finances were in order, remarkably so, and their registered technology had not been appropriated, nor stolen, judging by their network usage.

Had something happened?

He switched from secure databases to the more public Internet, quickly navigating to one of the sites he had discovered that was run by Frisk’s parents – their father, he believed. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary – his schedules had not changed, the same political messages still tastefully placed and designed. He even checked the on-site biography, and the same information was in place, his name, age, wife, occupation -

Then something clicked, and he scanned the information again.

There were no signs of Frisk in the bio.

Surely a parent would at least mention their child . . . ?

A sneaking suspicion rose, fueled by evidence he had previously found coincidental – Frisk’s brief mentions of parental disapproval of the monsters, their apparently frequent *family problems*, their
parents leaving them alone in the house for days at a time (after all, with both parents gone, who else could have the network password, or be so active?). The wardrobe that consisted of old worn clothes that never had short sleeves or shorts, only skin-covering articles, the apparent frailty of the child’s health -

It might be a coincidence, but . . .

He opened his contact list, selecting the name of one of Butler’s previous acquaintances – a former bodyguard from lesser-known circles, now an investigator for the Ebott Police force.

It might be mere suspicion, but it had been many, many years since one of his suspicions had been wrong.
Chapter 4

Five days.

It had been five days since they had been caught. Five days since their hidden belongings had been found, and since their parents, in a fit of rage, had confiscated all of their hidden food and removed their furniture in their search for hiding spots.

They hadn’t found everything, but they’d found most of the important stuff. Frisk’s stashes of energy bars and drinks were gone, along with some of their clothes, the ones with lots of pockets. Their mattress had been dumped on the ground, their trash spilled in a corner, and the dresser scooted across the room into a corner where no loose floorboards had been found.

Frisk actually kinda found this funny, because their parents had unknowingly made the room look like Sans’s.

Still, it was hard to find things funny when you’d gone without any real food for days. A few pieces of bread had been delivered two days ago, but that was all they’d had since then. (At least they had water. Thank goodness for adjoining bathrooms.)

And their photograph was torn. Their father, in his rage, had torn the picture to shreds and dumped it the pile of trash the two adults had left behind. The child had found most of the pieces, but it still stung – these were their parents, and they’d done this.

Sometimes it wasn’t too hard for Frisk to understand how much Chara hated them.

Still, the threats of bodily harm and foul cussing were a bit much.

*I swear, the next time one of them lets us near a knife –*


*Sure it will! We can say it was in self-defense! We’re what, ten-to-twelve? We can probably get away with that kind of shit -

Downstairs, the TV came on, and news broadcasts began playing. The ghost went quiet, and Frisk crawled quietly (their legs were too wobbly to properly walk without falling over) to the door to listen.

“- in the field, Veronica?”

“Thank you, Robert. I’m currently standing in Lincoln Park, the site of the previous pro-monster gatherings here in Ebott. As you can see by my surroundings, many supporters have already begun coming together – right now the count is estimated to be somewhere around 600, and people are still pouring in, even half an hour before the protest is actually scheduled to start. That’s quite a number, but not too surprising if you consider the uproar that occurred on many social media sites after the events of last night –”

Frisk frowned. Uproar? What had happened last night that had warranted an uproar?

Had their ally finally begun their part of whatever plan they’d concocted? They had mentioned that when they went to the next stage, there would be some massive upheavals.
**I bet they hacked the FBI.**

Well, Frisk wouldn’t be entirely surprised if they’d hacked somebody, but the FBI? That seemed a little risky for them – in their emails, they had made a very strong emphasis on caution, insisting that Frisk not say anything to the public about their involvement.

But then again, Frisk hadn’t updated their blog in almost a week. Maybe that had been enough to prompt drastic measures.

Their parents were grumbling and barking out protests as the reporter continued describing the rally site.

"- surprising dedication, considering the one who organizes most of the protests, an online ‘ambassador’ by the name of F. Dreemurr, has not been heard from in several days. Many supporters have mentioned that this Dreemurr has mentioned that their family disapproves of the pro-monster community –”

The news feed was interrupted by heavy knocking on the front door. Their parents’ conversation lulled. One pair of footsteps – their father, probably – headed to answer the door, while the other pair started coming up the stairs. Their mother, coming to stand outside their door in case Frisk got any ideas to call for help.

Frisk craned their ears, struggling to hear what was going on over the news still playing. They knew Chara was trying to eavesdrop too, judging by the frustration emanating from them.

Suddenly, their invisible friend gasped.

**It’s a policeman!**

A policeman? What was a policeman doing here?

**Hold on – he’s saying . . . something about an anonymous tip?**

An anonymous tip?

Their mother was outside their door. It was locked – it would take a few seconds for it to be unlocked. A few precious seconds.

“Chara, plug your ears,” They whispered. Then they sucked in a huge breath.

“HELP!!” They screamed shrilly, the loudest they’d ever screamed.

The voices downstairs lulled, even as their mother hissed for them to be quiet from in the hallway. They heard their father say something hurriedly – oh that’s nothing, there’s nothing wrong – but they weren’t about to lose this opportunity.

“I’M UPSTAIRS!!” They shrieked. “THEY LOCKED ME IN MY ROOM!!”

Heavy unfamiliar footsteps came rushing up the stairs, and their mother, fumbling with keys outside the door, quickly said, “Oh, I’m s-sure she’s fine, officer, you know how kids are, they exaggerate, we’ve had problems with this lock before, and she’s always messing with it –”

“Enough,” a gruff voice interrupted. “Just unlock the door.”

“Oh, but there’s really no need to be so worried, really, she’s quite a dramatic little girl -”
“I said unlock the door.”

There was a pause, then the click of they key in the lock.

The door swung open. Frisk scrambled back to avoid being hit, putting on a terrified expression complete with wobbly lips and little tears.

The tall, burly officer looked at them – with their thin frame, baggy clothes, the greasy brown bob of hair and body odor thanks to five days without a shower, the bruises on their fingers from trying to pry open their window, and, of course, the crocodile tears – and scanned the obviously trashed room.

Then he turned to their mother and father, who were standing there looking like a nuclear bomb was about to go off in the hallway. Which seemed like a credible threat, judging by the man’s expression.

“No, ma’am,” the officer said icily. “I told you I came here on an anonymous tip – you want to know what that tip was? My contact had reasons to believe that there was neglect and possibly abuse going on in this household.”

He gestured pointedly at Frisk, who was still pretend-crying (very convincingly) on the floor.

“I’d say this counts, wouldn’t you?”

Their parents began stammering, and the officer turned back to Frisk. “You need some help, kid?”

They nodded. He held out a hand, and they grabbed it quickly, letting him hoist them up, then grabbed his leg in an attempt to stabilize their jello legs.

“What all have they done, kid?”

Frisk let their lip wobble more. “They – they –”

Behind them, their father glared at them, and they let out a fearful whimper. The officer cast another nuclear glare over his shoulder, making the man flinch, then turned a reassuring look on Frisk.

“It’s okay, kid, they can’t hurt you while I’m here.”

“But . . . they don’t like it when I talk . . .”

“It’s fine, kid. Just look at me, not them.”

Frisk did so. “They – they hit me. On the head, when t-they found me using the laptop. And dad grabbed my hair, and they got rid of all my stuff, and they tore up a picture of my friends that I had, and they wouldn’t let me have food, or wash, or – o-or –”

Chara started snickering as Frisk pretended to break down completely.

“A-and t-they called me bad names, and they l-locked me in my room and took all my stuff and nailed shut the window, and t-they told me I couldn’t come out until I l-learned that kids are s-supposed to not keep secrets from their parents or like monsters –”

The man’s eyebrows jumped up. “You’re not scared of the monsters? I know a lot of kids who think they’re scary.”

“No,” Frisk whimpered. “T-they’re not scary. They’re – they’re nice, a l-lot nicer than they are, and one of the monsters I met treated me like I was her kid and she gave me really good pie and told bad jokes and let me call her mom -”
Their mother’s face went livid.

“What?!” She screeched. The officer shot her another foul look.

“Well, I’d say that’s not a good thing to do to a kid, huh?”

He patted the top of Frisk’s head, then turned to their stunned parents. “I’m taking your kid into protective custody.”

“What?! You can’t –”

“I can sir, and I will. From what I just heard, it’s pretty obvious that you are not fit to care for a kid. They’re terrified of you, you don’t let them talk, and you’ve half starved them. On purpose.”

He bent down to Frisk’s level. “You have anything in here you want to take with you?”

Frisk nodded, biting their lip and wiping false tears from their eyes.

“I’ll help you grab it.”

He helped them gather up what little stuff they still had – some clothes, a book of old fairy tales they’d managed to keep hidden during the search, the pieces of their photograph with the monsters – and, when Frisk finally toppled over because their weak legs couldn’t carry them, gave them an energy bar from his pocket. Then he picked them and all their stuff up, and gently carried them down the stairs.

“Officer –”

“If you think this is all, sir, I can tell you right now that there will be legal action, especially considering what happened last night.”

That shut him up for good, and the last thing Frisk saw as the door shut was their parent’s horrified faces.

The officer carefully opened the door of the police cruiser parked in the driveway, and set Frisk down in the backseat.

“Officer?” Frisk whispered. He stopped.

“Yeah, kid?”

He sounded like Sans. Frisk almost smiled at the thought. “C-can you take me to Lincoln Park first?”

“Look, kid, you need something to eat, and I’m on duty –”

“Just for a couple minutes?” They pleaded. “And – and can I have something with internet? A phone or laptop?”

He considered this.

“No to the park, but you can use my phone,” he sighed. He pulled it out – a touchpad, very fancy – and handed it to them before shutting the door and sliding into the front seat. As he pulled out of the driveway, Frisk fumbled with the phone until they’d logged back into their blog’s account, and began to type.

Sorry I’ve been gone for so long. I was having some major family issues, and I didn’t have
access to the Internet for the past few days, but I’m back, and thank you to the 600-something people who have turned up at Lincoln Park for the protest in Ebott!

They hit enter.

“Mr. Officer?” They asked hesitantly.

“Yeah?”

“I h-heard on the news that there was some sort of uproar last night? What happened?”

He gave them a wry grin.

“The real question should be what didn’t happen.”

Barely two minutes after Frisk finally posted on their blog after almost a week-long absence, a man at the Lincoln Park rally checked his messages, then whooped.

“Dreemurr just posted!” He yelled at the top of his lungs. “Dreemurr’s back!”

Everybody around him burst into cheers.

Five minutes later, dozens of families all over the city dropped what they were doing and came running (some literally) to join the crowds, their motivation restored.

Half an hour later, as the bewildered reporter relayed the information over the live feed, people watching the news dropped what they were doing, and rushed to tell friends and family. The Internet exploded.

The rally that day broke every record held so far, over 1100 people crowding into the park and celebrating their leader’s return.

At the entrance to a certain Underground civilization, a guard checking the messages on her phone let out a whoop, catching the attention of everyone around her.

“Hey Dreemurrs!” she yelled at the giant horned monsters in royal regalia talking in hushed tones nearby. “Your kid’s back!”

And across the Atlantic, two hours later, as international news picked up on Frisk’s story and the world went ballistic once again, Artemis Fowl flicked off his television with a satisfied smirk.
Chapter 5

When the officer had told them that the real question should have been what hadn’t happened, he hadn’t been kidding around.

Frisk was sitting in the police station on a little cot the officers had set up for them in one of their offices, borrowed laptop in front of them and eagerly working through a plate of high-protein foods and donuts as they read the numerous articles that had sprouted up overnight.

Chara had almost been right. Someone had been hacked. An anonymous hacker (whose known usernames were all long strings of binary and random gibberish) had broken into a secure server that housed all of the information the American government had on the monsters, and had eagerly leaked the data all over the Internet.

And there was a lot in that data. The monster’s habits, including their non-violent, near-pacifist attitudes and their perfect willingness to stay Underground if it was preventing a war, the government’s deception when they had told the monsters that humanity was far too violent for them to integrate peacefully into society, and even first-hand accounts from the more sympathetic guards’ interactions with the monsters. There were a lot of mentions of Toriel’s kindness, Asgore’s regret at harming humans, Alphys’s social anxiety, Undyne’s willingness to give humanity another chance, and Papyrus’s innocent optimism and enthusiasm.

There were also quite a few mentions of Mettaton, Lesser Dog’s neck-lengthening trick, suplexing boulders, and lots and lots of mentions about Sans’s puns.

Mostly mentions along the lines of “whatever you do don’t encourage them, please ;” but still mentions nonetheless.

But the information that had gained the most interest was the stuff concerning the Core.

Now, Frisk had known that a brand-new clean energy source was not to be scoffed at. Even almost 6 years after the Techno-Crash, clean renewable energy was as valuable as gold.

But even they hadn’t foreseen the sheer amount of indignation that surfaced as people all over the world realized that a very large, very usable and very much working geothermic source was hidden under the United States, and the government had apparently had no intention of sharing it.

Needless to say, the pro-monster crowd had grown immensely overnight.

*I wonder if our new friend had anything to do with this?

They might have.

Frisk opened a new tab and logged in to their email account. There was a new message from Anonymous sitting in their inbox.

From Anonymous

It’s good to see you back in the limelight. I must admit, I became rather concerned when you ceased activity on your blog, but I’m glad to know it wasn’t from a lack of dedication, but rather from familial conflict.

Now that you are capable of answering my messages, I have something to ask you. I was the one
who exposed the information now running through hyperspace, and during my search I discovered several files stating monster accounts of your interactions and involvements in their society. Would you prefer this information remain private?

Frisk paused and considered this.

Maybe a few weeks ago they would have been more comfortable with remaining unknown. After all, this particular timeline was likely to be one of the more violent ones, and in their runs as an official ambassador, they were always met with flack and assassination attempts.

But the rallies had been successful. There were so many people willing to help now, far more than in any other timeline. Things were finally looking up.

They typed a reply.

From F. Dreemurr

I don’t mind the information becoming public. I think it’s about time people know what I’ve done.

They paused, then hesitantly added, And I have a question for you, too. Were you the one who sent that “tip” to the officer who came to my house?

They clicked Send, and waited.

After a couple of minutes, a notification popped up, and they clicked on the new message.

From Anonymous

Of course, Frisk. I doubt you know another Anonymous capable of such a feat.

And Frisk smiled.

Sitting in a chair in a large plain office, Artemis calmly folded his hands in his lap and suppressed a smile of his own at the screen before him. It was quite large, and split into multiple frames. In each box, the face of a representative in the United Nations Council gleamed in pixelated detail.

The American representative looked almost terrified at the sea of offended faces, and was visibly wilting in his seat.

“Tell me,” the French representative said, with deceptive patience, “exactly when waz thee American government planning on sharing this with uz?”

The balding man squirmed. “Er, well, I am afraid I don’t know, sir –”

“You mean ta’ say that they weren’t going ta’ tell us at all?” Someone else snapped.

“Er –”

“This is in direct violation of the Technological Advancement Agreement! It clearly states that, as of the year 201X, any nation with a delegate in the United Nations Council must share possible new advancements within the first three months!”
“There was no point in telling you all if the monsters were a threat to human society!” The American delegate snapped, nerves frayed. “They could have had malicious intentions –”

Artemis cleared his throat. All conversation immediately ceased as several pairs of eyes searched their respective screens for the interrupter. When they found him, the American visibly blanched.

“It seems is quite clear,” Artemis stated, “that these monsters had no such intentions, based on your observations of their culture?”

“Well, yes, but -”

Artemis cleared his throat again, picking up a copy of the data he had hacked. “In fact, the monsters seem rather harmless in comparison to humans, do they not? It states in some of your guard’s own accounts that the vast majority of these creatures seemed quite friendly and eager to avoid another war, and their ratio of violent individuals is significantly less than ours.”

“Well –”

“Of course,” the Irishman continued (the American onscreen was looking more and more haggard by the second), “the violent individuals that are present could be a concern, as they are quite powerful. However, these individuals – namely their king, Asgore Dreemurr, and their Captain of the Royal Guard, Undyne – have stated that they believe their own reasoning for this violence was flawed, and are perfectly willing to put aside any prejudice they had in order to forge a better relationship between humans and monsters. What wrongs they have done have been freely admitted to, and Asgore himself has made it quite clear that if we so wish, he will remain Underground while the rest of his kind go free.”

“Additionally,” he added, as some of the delegates onscreen began to murmur assent, “the benefits of these creatures entering our society far outweigh the hindrances. They claim to have both offensive and defensive magics, including powerful healing elements that are present in their foods and have been proven to work on humans. They possess historical knowledge that I know many would literally kill to get their hands on, and have scientific proof of the existence of souls. Finally, there is, of course, the Core, which has efficiently powered their entire kingdom for some decades now.”

More muttering. Artemis set down the paper, and cast a scathing look at the American.

“Not to mention that, according to information recently uncovered, the monsters were freed not by killing a seventh human, but by a child who, thanks to circumstances of abuse and neglect by their own parents, willingly considered the former monster Queen as their surrogate mother, and was perfectly willing to assist them in gaining their freedom.”

He crossed his arms. “Now, ladies and gentlemen, I hardly think that a society who required the help of a frail ten-year-old girl to break their centuries-old Barrier, and was perfectly willing to abandon their grudges in order to act as a surrogate family for said girl, is a threat to us.”

The majority of the other delegates nodded or voiced their agreement. The American ducked his head, looking uncomfortably like a deer caught in headlights.

“Now that we have come to an agreement,” The Irishman continued, allowing his signature vampiric smirk to surface, “I’d daresay we should take a higher moral ground and free these creatures, yes? Allow them access to the surface, and the option of international travel and citizenship, should they decide their American oppressors are unsuitable neighbors.”

Every eye turned to the American delegate. He struggled internally for a moment – then, seeing the
looks his peers were giving him (*daring* him to disagree and start a third World War), he sighed in defeat.

“I will speak to the cabinet and the President,” he mumbled.

Three months later, Frisk was shifting nervously next to a tall human bodyguard, watching the gates sealing the entrance to the Underground.

It had been a busy couple of months. The pro-monster community had been surprisingly okay with their leader (and near martyr, as some people had started suggesting that they had been killed for their political viewpoint) being a little kid. In fact, many of them had used this as a rallying cry, encouraging new people to join the cause. Many had taken Frisk’s story of parental abuse as evidence that the government was corrupt, and therefore in need of change, and at every rally that Frisk attended, they told stories about the Underground and it’s inhabitants.

Meanwhile, the United Nations had more or less forced the USA to begin the long, slow process of preparing for the monsters’ freedom. Segregated communities had been built in the suburbs of Ebott City, much nicer than the ones hastily built in previous runs. There were hardly enough for *all* the monsters yet, but there were enough that a few hundred monsters could easily move in and begin a new chapter of their lives under the stars. Several countries around the world had begun building similar neighborhoods, just in case some monsters chose to travel or live abroad. (Mettaton, Alphys, and Undyne were likely to be the first to take advantage of this, based on previous timelines.)

Now the big day was finally here. Today, the gates were going to be opened, and Frisk would see their friends for the first time in almost eight months.

Usually the world would have reset by now, and they and Chara would be waking up in the Ruins. But the strange stuttering sensation that came with time preparing to rewind had yet to come.

Hopefully it would stay that way. Hopefully this timeline would be the last.

A group of guards began appearing besides the gate, and the crowd of spectators and reporters around them began murmuring and preparing themselves for the emergence of a new sentient species into society.

*It’s almost time!*

Chara was *vibrating* with excitement, their invisible hands tightening on Frisk’s shoulders. The soon-to-be Ambassador grinned, hopping from one foot to the other. Their bodyguard cast them an amused look, then turned his attention back to the gate.

After another minute, the guards positioned themselves on either side of the gate, and the huge metal door slowly creaked open.

The monsters who had been waiting on the other side hesitated, then stepped forward into the sunlight. Hundreds of strange creatures, watching the crowds of humans with wary curiosity and varying amounts of enthusiasm, taking their first step onto sun-scorched earth.

In the front, standing tall and regal, and looking cautiously at the gathering before them, were a very familiar pair of horned, goat-like monsters.

“Mom!” Frisk cried. They leaped forward, racing across the gap separating them from their surrogate
mother, face split wide with a massive grin.

Toriel’s crimson eyes lit up with a warm smile, and she knelt down and swept the child up into a hug.

“Oh, my child, it is so good to see you!”

Frisk buried their face in her furry shoulder, and they distantly heard some cooing and murmurs from the crowd as they got over their trepidation, and the first reporters began coming forward.

The next minutes were a blur. Microphones were shoved into the faces of monsters and accompanying child alike. Pro-monster folk came forward to finally see the creatures they had been defending for so long, gasping and gawping. Mettaton, who was very visible as the only wheeled calculator among the monsters, was flocked by young admirers of both genders (mostly girls), and, after a minute or so of asking questions, transformed into his other form with a cloud of vibrant pink smoke.

As many reporters made a beeline for the monster celebrity, Toriel finally set Frisk down, and they were swarmed by their other friends from the Underground.

“Frisk!”

“HELLO FRISK!! I AM SURE YOU HAVE MISSED ME!! NO NEED TO WORRY, YOUR BESTEST FRIEND IS HERE TO STAY!”

“What are you talking about? Obviously it’s me who is their bestest friend! NGAAAAAAAH!”

“Hey kiddo.” Frisk turned away as the normal argument between Papyrus and Undyne progressed, which many shouts of “ngaaa!” and “nyeh-heh-heh.”

“Hey Sans.”

The skeleton closed on eye-socket in a lazy wink, stuffing his hands into his pockets. “Good to see ‘ya again. Y’know, I thought we wouldn’t be able ‘ta.”

*I was starting to think the same thing.*

“We didn’t think so either,” they admitted quietly.

“How’d you manage it?” He lowered his voice. “What’d you change?”

Frisk considered this, tilting their head to one side. Then, they gave him a hesitant smile, slow and mysterious.

“We just replied to an email,” they said innocently.
The Lower Elements were a scattering of super-massive caverns, carved out over the centuries by the fairy people, and interconnected by a massive, intricate system of chutes that wove throughout the Earth’s crust kilometers below the surface.

The monster Underground was, in the unanimous opinion of the entire Retrieval squad currently exploring it, considerably nicer. Close enough to the surface for sunlight to reach it in spots, plants growing absolutely everywhere they could – the vast majority of them being those hardy golden blossoms that you sometimes saw in gardens on the surface, especially in the Old Country. Hell, there were even trees! Dead, leafless trees, right smack dab in the middle of a freezing cold cavern, but still trees. How had the monsters managed that?

Still, the charm of the place wasn’t enough to make one feel less claustrophobic.

Especially when one was sprawled out on his behind on a bench in a tiny isolated room in Waterfall, with no company save the team’s medical warlock and one of those creepy whispering blue flowers.

He hadn’t been this bored since the aftermath of the Crash. He almost wished he could be dealing with that mess again, instead of sitting on his behind and waiting.

It was still more entertaining than sitting behind a desk, he supposed, but he had never been a sit and wait kind of fairy. He’d much rather be out there, flying with his squad, poking at dangerous-looking holes with the end of a Neutrino, but as the leader, he was not expendable. One stray monster blindly hurling a fireball could put him out of commission until the medic got to him, and without the captain, the team would be useless.

And considering that even two years after the monsters had gotten their hard-earned freedom, there was still the occasional straggler that chose to remain down here in the dark – well, you could never be too careful.

One of his officer’s coms switched on. “Captain, I’ve found another hotspot.”

The captain groaned.

The team had been equipped with new magically-sensitive scanners, or MagiScans. One of Foaly’s newer inventions, which had been in the works since six months after the Crash. The Captain couldn’t pretend to understand exactly how they worked – he knew that at least a platoon’s worth of elfin warlocks and two demonic ones had been involved, and that was more than he wanted to know. But he knew that they worked, and thanks to them, he also knew that whatever the monsters were throwing around was everywhere, and also insanely powerful.

It was an earth-shattering find. To know there was another race out there with magic was one thing, knowing that race’s magic was very different from theirs was another thing, but knowing that if a monster and a fairy went toe to toe the monster would likely come out top…

To say that it was an earth-shattering find was an understatement.

He was fairly certain that somewhere below ground, the Council was having a collective heart attack.

“Alright Corporal, what level is it?
A tapping of gloved fingers on a tiny wrist computer, and the scanner came into view. The color-coded readings were jumping about like crazy, seemingly unable to settle on a single signature. The only steady one was the little chart that, before every mission, was calibrated using the natural fields of magic surrounding a fairy city and the officer’s magic itself.

“I’m not sure, Captain, but I think it’s somewhere around a ten?”

A ten. A ten.

The average magical reading of Haven was somewhere in the two-to-three range. Whatever this was, it was heads and shoulders above anything the People could conjure – hell, above anything that they thought the monsters could conjure! Apparently, they’d been dead wrong about the creatures’ magical limitations.

And since the monsters were up on the surface now… who knew what humanity would do if they got their hands on whatever monster had produced this?

“Where are you, Corporal?”

He could almost hear the wince.

“You’re not going to like it, sir.”

“Tell me, Corporal.”

“… it’s in the Core, sir. It’s all over the Core.”

The Core. The massive geothermic energy source now powering Ebott and several other cities around the mountain’s base, and the very same technology that was falling into human hands all over the world as they spoke.

There was only one word to properly describe the situation here.

“D’Aarvit!”

*Friiiisk, stop bouncing so much!*

Inhaling a huge breath of salty sea air – they’d never get sick of it, in any timeline – Frisk grinned and, on their next bounce, bounced a little higher, putting an extra spring into their step.

*Friiiisk.

They giggled as Chara made the gagging sounds of the unfortunately seasick, and attempted to hold them still with insubstantial hands.

*Friiiisk, please!

What do we say?

* Ugh, fine! Please?!

Grin growing smug, they stopped bouncing, planting their feet firmly on the deck beneath them, and snickered at Chara’s undisguised noises of relief.

*Shut up!
Despite their shrill tone, Frisk knew that their friend wasn’t actually all that upset – perhaps, in previous runs, they might’ve held the grudge for longer, but right now, the excitement in both children was easily overpowering the nausea that usually accompanied one of their overseas trips.

For the first time in any timeline, they were about to see Ireland in person.

It had been two years since the monsters’ improbable escape from their underground prison. All together, that was almost three years since the last Reset – the longest they’d ever gone without one.

And it had been a busy two years.

The American government hadn’t been particularly happy about their subterranean neighbors’ new freedom. Immediately after the monsters’ settling into Ebott, they’d started throwing up every trick in the vile politician’s handbook in an attempt to encourage the monsters to stay where they were. Raised taxes in monster neighborhoods, lowered income for monster employees, even limited passports that required an overabundance of paperwork to obtain. Every time they’d tried something funny, there were an impossible number of negotiations, political meetings, and press conferences that ended up being called, and, of course, the Ambassador of monsterkind always had to be present to shoot down every “suggestion” and offer a newer, better one in it’s stead.

It had taken at least six months for the government to catch on, and decide that their taxes were better spent making everybody’s lives better instead of trying to legally persecute their newest citizens. After that, monsters had scattered pretty much to the four winds, and had ended up moving to countries all over the world.

And Frisk could hardly let any inequalities go unaddressed, no matter the country, right?

*Yeah right, you just wanted an excuse to play tourist.*

Frisk started bouncing up and down again.

*Urk! Okay, okay, I’m sorry, stop it!*

They hummed and settled again, tapping their fingers eagerly on the railing.

Regardless of excuses or not, Frisk was elated to be traveling. They’d never traveled farther than Mexico or Cuba in previous runs, since America had always been reluctant to let the monsters escape their borders, and other countries had been reluctant to accept the monsters as citizens.

Of course, the other countries had never been made aware of the Core before. Nothing like a bit of geothermic green energy to convince them to open their doors.

So now here they were, on a large metal boat that had probably once been a whaler, setting sail across the Irish Sea for Dublin, and positively buzzing with excitement.

“Oh dear, someone seems a bit hyper.”

Frisk shot a huge grin over their shoulder as Toriel approached, an amused look on her furry face.

“How much longer, Mom?” They asked. “Do you know?”

The goat monster laughed good-naturedly. “Patience, my child! The captain has informed me that we shall arrive shortly.”

Frisk let out an excited little squeal. “Finally! I’ll get to see Undyne and Alphys again!”
When the monsters had finally been free to move overseas, the lizard-fish couple had immediately made a beeline for the Emerald Isles – though not the most advanced country in the world, Ireland was pretty far up there when it came to the post-Crash technological market, and Alphys had been all too eager to get her hands on anything she could. Undyne had just tagged along. Last they had checked, the two of them had settled down in suburban Dublin, Undyne was working as a police officer, and Alphys was working as an assistant in some research facility.

Toriel chuckled. “And that is the only reason for your excitement, is it?”

“Well, no,” Frisk admitted. “I really want to see that mural that the forums were talking about. And Muffet’s Cafe, now that it’s open. And I heard Fuku is learning how to cook from somebody in Dublin since she couldn’t get into a school for it. And –”

Laughing, the Queen held up one clawed hand. “I was only teasing, my child! There’s no need to explain yourself!”

Frisk beamed at her before turning back to the railing.

Truth be told, though they were excited for all of those reasons, there was one more – something they’d read in their most recent message from Anonymous.

After the monsters’ freedom had been assured, Anonymous had stopped sending so many messages as before. They still sent an occasional email – usually with useful information (their most recent email concerning anti-witchcraft laws in some countries had been informative to say the least.)

Their most recent email had been a simple one: Frisk, as I understand it, you are visiting Ireland soon, yes? Be careful once you arrive – there has been some worrying circumstances surrounding several incidents here, particularly in the Dublin area. I would hate to lose such a valuable ally as yourself.

Which was worrying, true, but for now Frisk was less focused on worrying circumstances and more focused on here.

Here, not there or in Ireland. Here.

Which meant that Anonymous was in Ireland. Perhaps they were a citizen, perhaps they were traveling as a tourist, but that didn’t matter, because they were here.

They might finally get to meet their ally in person.

A little ways ahead of them, the mists hanging over the sea parted, revealing the outermost reaches of the Dublin docks.

And standing at the end of one dock, waving their hands and shouting, were two very familiar figures.

“Undyne!” they called, waving furiously. “Alphys!”

“Frisk!”

“Heya punk!” Even from this far away, Undyne’s grin was large enough to look sharklike. “You took long enough! Welcome to Ireland!”
Postcards just didn’t do Dublin justice.

Eyes blown wide, Frisk trailed along behind Undyne and Alphys, taking in the sights.

By now they’d been to many countries, many cities with unique architecture. Rome in particular had been one of their favorites, with it’s graceful but sturdy marble columns and archways and the famous Coliseum, but despite its lack of towering landmarks, Dublin was right up there next to Rome on their “favorite places to visit” list within the first five minutes of walking down the street. It had a kind of old-time Victorian charm to it, with some two-story buildings lining the narrow cobbled streets sporting ornate decorations around doors and windows, and many shops and theaters boasting ornate wooden signs rather than the neon lights still used by some first-world countries today. The horse-drawn carts that were obviously being used as taxis only added to the effect.

*And there were so many monsters.* They hadn’t seen this large a population of monsters since Ebott, and certainly not a population so at ease with their human neighbors! Everyone from dogs to the amphibious monsters of Waterfall were just strolling along the streets, chatting it up with humans left and right, or helping with bags or groceries – they saw one monster driving one of the taxi-carts!

It was absolutely incredible.

Noticing their awed silence, Undyne cackled and thumped Frisk enthusiastically on the back (nearly toppling them over).

“Yeah, it’s pretty great, isn’t it punk?” Her grin grew three sizes wider as a couple of humans in the unmistakable dark blue uniforms of police waved to her as they passed, calling out greetings. “Far cry from all those other snobs out there, right?!”

Frisk nodded emphatically, still gawping with all the tact of a tourist.

“How did this happen so quickly?” They breathed. “Monsters have only been able to live abroad for a year and a half, and in Ireland for a year and three months!”

Alphys gave them a shy little smile. “A l-lot of the officials here are pretty dedicated m-monster supporters, including the mayor. Dublin’s pretty monster-friendly because of it.”

*Pretty monster-friendly was an understatement.*

“It’s certainly a nice change of pace,” Toriel commented. “Most humans still give us frightened looks when they think we’re not looking – I don’t believe I have seen a single one do that here yet!”

*No, but I’ve seen a few nasty looks. And look at those shops over there.*

Chara’s grim comment drew Frisk’s attention to a couple of shopfronts boasting “no monster” signs and angry faces behind the windows. One of said faces, noticing them staring, snarled and turned away to finish his cup of steaming drink.

*Still, it’s way better than Australia.*
Pretty much anywhere is better than Australia.

Oh yes, Australia had been a nightmare. Living on an isolated island continent with barely any contact with the outside world since the Crash had hardly done wonders for their treatment of the monsters there, especially since Toriel had pretty much been the only monster there. Frisk was pretty sure that the only reason people didn’t attack them in the streets was because they had diplomatic immunity, plus several large, beefy human guards with very visible guns.

Here, hopefully, they wouldn’t have that problem.

“I heard that there’s going to be some sort of fostering program going on here,” they said, changing the subject. The two monsters exchanged glances.

“Yes!” Undyne confirmed. “The Minister suggested it, as well as the Irish UN representative! It’s awesome!”

They’d only heard a few rumors on route to Ireland, and to be honest, they’d thought that grinning crew member had been talking crap. Looked like he hadn’t been, after all.

*Swear properly, geeze!

“Do you know anything about it?”

They shook their heads.

“I think that’s one of the things the mayor wants to talk to you about.” Alphys explained. “We’re going t-to the town hall right now, so you can ask him about it yourself.”

Good. Frisk picked up the pace, focusing their most determined stare on the domed roof that they recognized as said town hall from the Internet. Time to get down to business.

The mayor of Dublin was a short, portly, wire-haired man with a beaklike nose and a gait with a weird kind of hop with every step, and a surprisingly high-pitched voice for your typical human male.

“Oh, it’s so good to meet you, your Majesty!” he trilled upon seeing Toriel, eagerly taking her hand and shaking it furiously. “It’s such an honor!” He turned to Frisk, who was struggling to keep a straight face. “And the young Ambassador! Welcome, welcome!”

Frisk accepted the offered handshake with a smile, trying desperately not to compare the man to a chirping bird and ignoring Chara’s sniggering. “It’s a pleasure to meet you, mister Mayor.”

“Oh please, my dear, the pleasure’s all mine!”

The man’s office was a messy rat’s nest (or bird’s nest?) of papers, and looked suspiciously like a tornado had come ripping through it. Frisk ignored this, simply moving a stack of papers off a chair and, when the man made a gesture for them to sit, sat. Toriel settled upon a chair of her own, hands folded in her lap and sitting with all the graceful poise of, well, a queen.

“I do hope you find yourself well, Mayor. How have things been here in your city? I imagine us monsters arriving was quite hectic.”

“Oh, no, no!” he assured them. “It’s been a right fine year so far, hardly any trouble at all! Why, even the anti-monster protests have ended, since your people’s arrival!”
“I couldn’t help but notice there are some shops that remain segregated?”

The man snorted. “Oh yes. Officially, monsters can enter those shops, but as I understand it, many of those managers aren’t particularly fond of you. I am sorry for that – I’m afraid there isn’t much I can do about it for now.”

Toriel nodded, and Frisk leaned forward, eager to get on with their real reason for talking with this man. “I heard you’ve agreed to test a fostering program suggested by the Minister?”

The man started, then smiled sheepishly. “Oh, yes, the fostering program. Well, as I’m sure you know, Miss Frisk –”

Frisk frowned at the pronoun, and the man quickly changed his tune. “Oh, sorry, Ambassador Frisk. As I’m sure you know, even here, monsters are segregated from humans, living in separate communities, and while that’s working well for now, it won’t in the long term – it’ll encourage prejudice against the monsters. So, the minister and his UN representative have suggested that some monsters move into human dwellings and take on more human-oriented jobs, to see if both they and their foster families can take it. Simple but quite ingenious, I do say!”

Frisk could see the logic behind it, but it brought up a whole slew of problems that needed to be addressed. “That’s all well and good,” they pointed out, “but I doubt everybody’s happy with that. Have you done background checks? Have the volunteers been checked for histories of violence or criminal activity? What about their incomes – can they support an extra mouth to feed without losing their houses? Are their bosses anti-monster, and willing to turn them away for volunteering? What about their neighbors? Are they pro-monster, or anti-monster? Are they likely to try to sabotage the program’s success? Or the local businesses? Will they turn monsters away at the door? Will they become targets if the anti-monster rallies begin again?”

The man stared at them with his jaw dropped, and Frisk stopped. Oops.

“G-good God,” the mayor muttered. “I thought they only came one to a planet. What are the odds...”

He cleared his throat uncomfortably. “Er, I mean, we have done background checks on all of the volunteers, and their closest neighbors... I d-don’t think anybody checked their employers...”

*Great, you scared him.

It’s not like I meant to. When they got started they just... tended to steamroll ahead. And they’d missed some of that stuff in the past, and missing details that crucial could mean death, and another Reset.

Sometimes they forgot that seeing that level of detail wasn’t exactly something other people would consider normal for a kid their age.

There was a knock on the office door, and a young woman with a tray of tea and what looked to be scones came in.

“Ah, Jennifer!” the mayor cried, obviously relieved for a distraction to present itself. “Thank you, thank you! Just set it down on the table!”

The woman complied, casting an unreadable look at the visitors, and just as she stood up and her hand brushed casually against her pants belt, underneath her jacket, Chara suddenly yelped, and with a sickening yanking feeling in their gut, Frisk was no longer in control of their body.

“She has a gun!” Chara yelled, using Frisk’s voice. They lunged forward, grabbing with suddenly
strong hands at the weapon as it began to emerge from inside the woman’s jacket. There was a yelp, and a gunshot that punched a hole open in the wall right where the mayor’s head been seconds before, and then Chara was wrenching the gun from the would-be assassin's grip and tossing it across the room, and tackling her with enough force to send her toppling to the ground.

“You little shit!” she hissed, rearing back one fist to strike them –

Then she froze, eyes blowing wide open in dawning terror as she stared at something over Frisk/Chara’s shoulder.

“Now,” Toriel said, with deceptive calmness. “There is no need for further violence, is there not? You will remain here, quietly, until security arrives. Is that understood?”

The woman gulped and nodded furiously.

*Chara, put me back in control!*

With a little huff, the ghost pulled back, allowing them access to their own muscles again. Frisk sucked in a deep breath – that odd possession trick always left them feeling dizzy and out of breath – and then got up slowly, turning back to the other occupants of the room.

The mayor was pale, already dialing for security. Toriel was standing tall, proud, and *royal*, a stormy look in her eyes, but whatever motherly death glare she’d leveled at the assassin was already gone. Upon seeing Frisk’s face (which they were certain was a little pale), her gaze softened.

“Are you alright, my child?”

They gulped, throat suddenly dry.

“Y-yeah,” they croaked. “I’m fine.”

After a moment, the mayor cleared his throat.

“S-security’s on its way!” he squeaked. “C-could we p-perhaps continue this disc-cussion on a later date? I-I’m afraid I’m rather shaken...”

Chapter End Notes

Wow, Frisk's only been in Dublin for, what, a few hours? And somebody's already tried to shoot the mayor? Damn. Well, good thing Chara has such good reflexes, huh? :)

Oh! Before I forget: someone on my DeviantArt account asked me about this fanfic, specifically how I was planning on explaining how the monsters and fairies aren't aware of each other. I gave them an answer, and since said answer isn't too integral to the story I have planned, I figured I'd let you guys see it too! Here's a little lore snippet for you guys!

-The main reason that monsters and fairies were never really too aware of each other is because of the distance between them. The two races lived on completely different continents, the monsters in the Americas and the fairies in Europe and Asia, and since in those days fairies had no shuttles to carry them to other continents (wings or dwarven digging talents can only take you so far over the Atlantic before you have to turn back
or die at sea), and would've eventually had to return to Ireland anyway to replenish their magic, they never really saw any point to going to the Americas. Why waste the energy/magic, when they had all they needed right here at home? And by the time they actually wanted to/developed the means to travel that far, the monsters had already been imprisoned underneath Mt. Ebott.

-Now, that being said, the monsters were never aware of the fairies, but that doesn't mean the fairies back in those days didn't know about the monsters. As I'm sure you noticed the last time you looked at a world map, there are places on the Eurasian continent that are very very close to part of the Americas - Russia and Alaska. Since the fairies don't like cold, they wouldn't have gone up there often, but there were rare occasions where a fairy would somehow end up there, and would get blown off course and end up in the Alaskan tundra. These fairies never stuck around, but since we know there are cold-climate monsters, it would be safe to assume that those fairies could have encountered them. However, even if those fairies made it back home and talked about what they found, most of their brethren were just like, "oh, these things live across the ocean from us? Okay, cool, can we talk about something more important now?" They never really cared about what was across the Atlantic, because they had enough problems at home. And because their ancestors didn't care, and there was no evidence to suggest that the monsters had ever been there once they got to the Americas, save for human legends about them, modern fairies never knew about the monsters until they resurfaced.
Chapter 8

Upon entering his penthouse apartment in Howth, Dublin, and feeling the unmistakable vibration of his fairy communicator, Artemis Fowl sighed.

Of all the days for Holly to contact him…

He hung up his coat besides the door, carefully buffed his shoes on the plain mat before the door (he was hardly about to use a "welcome" mat – he knew better than to leave implicit invitations lying about with so many fairy criminals cursing his name), and strode across the penthouse floor even as he answered the call.

“Hello, Holly,” he greeted, squashing the exhaustion for a later time. He would have plenty of time to collapse later, after whatever had come up underground had been rectified.

“Mud Boy.” Her greeting was just as terse as he’d dreaded it would be, complete with an undertone of frustration. “Sorry to bother you right after the UN meeting, but we have a situation down here.”

“Of course. I presume Foaly and the Commander are there as well?”

A snort in response – a sound easily translated, thanks to years of experience, as what do you think? Artemis allowed himself a small smirk but did not comment, instead settling down in his office chair and turning on his computer. He opened a drawer and fished around for a moment before removing a small, clear cable – a fiber optic, courtesy of Foaly – and plugged it into the laptop. The connection was near instantaneous, a window opening on the screen to reveal the images of a tense trio of familiar faces.

“Foaly,” he said. “Commander Kelp.”

“Fowl.” Kelp nodded back, scowl lines in his brow deepening.

“Heya, Mud Boy.” Foaly quipped. “How’s the plotting going?”

“Well, I suppose. I’ve already cracked your newest encryption.”

“What, already?! D’Arvit!”

Kelp grunted, even as Holly rolled her eyes at the exchange. “Focus, Foaly. You two can talk hacker tips all you want later.”

“Right, right, sorry.”

Artemis carefully folded his hands in front of him, fighting the urge to lean closer to the screen. “Well?”

Foaly started tapping furiously at a keyboard offscreen, and after several moments (and a few grumbling curses), several files in Gnommish popped up beside the window on his screen. He clicked on one, and several colorful graphs opened up.

“Ah. These are MagiScanner readings, yes?”

Another grunt in response, which Artemis took to be confirmation. He carefully scanned the graphs, blue eyes darting from column to column. He was familiar with the readings, at least somewhat – Foaly had recorded the results of the initial testing on his system, which, even after years of
experience, he had yet to prevent him from gaining access to – but the magic currently displayed as data was just as much gibberish to him as Gnommish once had been, several different categorical readings jumping all over the spectrum with no recognizable patterns.

“And what precisely am I looking at, Foaly?”

Holly picked up on his tone, and began the narrative. “Several days ago, a Retrieval team sent to scout out the monster Underground came across these readings. After several fly-bys, we determined it to be most heavily concentrated in Hotland, specifically the Core, though we found several other hotspots scattered throughout the Ruins, Snowdin, and Waterfall, as well as the King’s throne room and the Judgement Hall.”

Artemis opened another file, which seemed to be a map of the Underground, with each hotspot marked with bright red cautionary symbols. The Core was one massive blip, covered corner to corner in scarlet.

“And?”

Kelphuffed. “And it’s, by our current estimations, ten times more powerful than any other readings picked up in the Underground. Ten times, Fowl! That’s dozens, maybe even a hundred times more powerful than Haven or Atlantis, impossibly powerful! We’re talking something that could squash the Berserker Gate’s human-killing wave like a bug!”

Which was an alarming thought. The magic a deranged Opal Koboi had been about to unleash would have wiped out every human on the planet’s surface. And if this particular signature was found all over the Core… well, humans were struggling to get their hands on that technology, even now. If they somehow used that magic to find the People, then the already delicate political situation that the surface was struggling with would come crumbling down around their ears.

He studied the map again. Ruins, Snowdin, Waterfall, Core – hardly private locales, with hundreds of monsters capable of traveling there any time they so wished, and with no common characteristics, save the presence of monsters, that could explain the unusual energy.

“I see.”

The fairies nodded grimly. “Or information that could help track them down. I don’t suppose you have any contacts that could shed some light on this…?”

Artemis considered this. Magic was still an unknown quantity to most humans, and what few monsters he had established a rapport with hadn’t shown any signs of having more than an average knowledge of their magics, let alone something of this magnitude. Frisk wasn’t likely to know either – they may have been the Ambassador, but they were human, just like himself, and even if they did possess the necessary knowledge, it would be rather suspicious of Anonymous to suddenly show an interest in magic when none had been shown previously.

“I do not currently have the means of identifying a possible suspect at this time,” he admitted grudgingly. “I will keep an eye out, of course, but it may be some time…”

He paused as his sleep-deprived brain finally offered a relevant solution – the memory of a monster who had recently been hired by a research facility that he and his family had been funding for some time. A facility that he had already scheduled a tour for later that week.

He may have information for the fairies sooner than he’d thought.
Fidgeting in their hotel room, Frisk focused on their hands. *Calm thoughts, happy thoughts... you’re in your hotel room, no Reset, everybody’s here, try not to think about what Undyne just said...*

*Crap.* It hadn’t worked. “She was a *terrorist*?”

Undyne scowled, slinging her arm over Alphys’s shoulder even as the shorter monster started to look uneasy. “Pretty much. According to the guys who, uh, *interviewed* her - ” In other words, *interrogated.* “ - she claimed to be part of a group called Humanity’s Resurgence.”

Frisk scowled. *That is the most stereotypical anti-monster organization name I’ve ever heard, in any timeline.*

Undyne cackled at their expression. “I know, right? Cheesy as all hell!”

Toriel cleared her throat from beside Frisk.

“Er, I mean heck! I said heck!” She cleared her throat. “Anyway, up until a few months ago, they weren’t really all that trouble – they were basically just an anti-monster rally with a name. Then one of them got the bright idea to bomb a warehouse belonging to a company hiring monsters, and they kept doing that sort of stuff. Nobody ever really got hurt – there was never anybody around when the bombs went off – but still, the squads have been keeping their eyes out.”

“And now that one of them have attacked the mayor...?”

She shrugged. “They’re officially terrorists now. The occasional homemade bomb we can handle. Assassination? Those punks are going down.”

Well, wasn’t that just lovely?

Toriel shifted, putting one hand on their shoulder in a gesture of comfort. “Are we in danger from them, now that we are here?”

This time it was Alphys who responded. “I-I don’t think so. I m-mean, everybody knows you have diplomatic immunity now, so...”

**That won’t stop them.**

No, it most certainly wouldn’t. Frisk had lost track of the number of runs where some organization got their hands on the Ambassador and tried to blackmail the monsters back into the Underground. It *always* ended poorly, with spilled blood and a Reset, and diplomatic immunity had *never* made a difference.

*We can only hope it doesn’t end like that this time.*

They cleared their throat uncomfortably, then quickly changed the subject. “So, Alphys, how’s work?”

The scientist brightened up considerably. “Oh, it’s amazing! I’m working in Robotics, which is pretty familiar, but there’s a lot of other apartments that sometimes call me in to help with programming and such, and some of the things they’re working on I’ve never *seen* before! The Transportation Technology department has been working on a hydrogen-and-solar-powered car, maybe I can show it to you sometime –”

Frisk sighed in relief as the monster went off on her tangent. Good. They didn’t need the monsters worrying about this right now. They’d think of something to do about this later, but for now, they’d
much rather spend some stress-free time with their friends.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

There was a *fwoom* of displaced energy, and with a yelp, Foaly jerked back, almost stumbling over his own hooves to avoid the bright orange beam that came rushing right at his face.

“Oi! Watch where you’re throwing that stuff!”

One of the warlocks on the other side of the glass – the glass that should’ve *blocked* that magic, D’Arvit, not let it pass right through – looked sheepish. “Sorry, Foaly.”

“Sorry? You’d better be sorry, you have any idea how difficult it’d be to find a replacement for me?”

With in an indignant huff, the centaur retreated to what would hopefully be a *safer* distance.

“Sorry,” he muttered. “Sorry, he says. Well he’ll sure be sorry if the Commander hears about this...”

Behind him, the doors *whooshed* open. Holly paused, just on the other side of the portal, a look halfway between exasperation and amusement on her face.

“Foaly,” she began. “Since when did the doors go *whoosh*?”

Throughly distracted from his near-death experience, the centaur grinned and turned to his elfin friend. “Since three days ago. You like ‘em?”

Holly rolled her eyes, stepping fully into the room and letting the doors *whoosh* shut behind her.

“You just did that to annoy Artemis the next time he comes down, didn’t you.”

It wasn’t a question.

“I might have.”

The captain snickered, shaking her head ruefully for a moment before fixing a more serious expression in place. “So, how are things going?”

Foaly gestured to the lab before them. “See for yourself. Careful, the orange stuff can go through glass.”

Holly stepped forward, leaning forward slightly to get a better look through the little window and into the lab on the other side.

It looked pretty much like any other lab she’d seen – clean, white, and sterile, filled with cabinets, tables, counters, analysis screens (highest quality, of course, Section Eight didn’t skimp), and pretty much every other piece of equipment under the moon.

*Unlike* most labs, most of said equipment had been pushed alongside the wall or underneath the tables, covered in tarp, and probably covered with every magic-repellant in the Lower Elements, including a glowing, crackly substance that looked too much like dwarf spit for her comfort. The tell-tale white coats of lab workers were also conspicuously absent, instead replaced by the black uniforms of Section Eight warlocks. Some of the fairies nodded upon seeing her on the other side of the glass, others didn’t so much as look up, focusing with intense concentration on the tables before them or their hands – or, in several cases, the glowing lights *in* their hands.
Most of said lights were dim, flickering, and sputtering like candles in a breeze, but two familiar
demonic figures in the throng sported brighter lights dancing easily in their hands, more akin to
firecrackers than candles.

“Qwan, No. 1!” She called through the speaker beside the glass. “How have things been going?”

The two creatures looked up, and the slightly smaller of the two – No. 1 himself, in all his short,
grey-pebble-scaled and orange-runed glory – grinned upon seeing their visitor.

“How have you been? I haven’t seen you in months!”

The elf managed a wry grin. Almost a year ago, a small team of fairies had been sent to finally quote-
un-quote “rescue” the team that had been stranded on the LEP’s new moon base during the Crash.
Holly had been part of the welcoming party when they’d finally touched down to earth several
months later, and boy, had that been an emotional reunion.

“I’ve been doing alright.” She nodded to the little warlock’s hands. “I see you’ve been busy.”

He perked up considerably, and with a wave of one hand, summoned the dark blue light again. “Oh,
yes, we’ve been very busy, engaged, occupied! The reverse spellcasting process is very time-
consuming!”

Reverse spellcasting. Holly still couldn’t wrap her head around the idea. Reverse engineering she
could comprehend – well, okay, somewhat comprehend, but who could blame her for missing a few
details in Foaly’s impossibly complex lectures on the subject? – but magic? Magic was unique to the
caster, and shouldn’t be able to be mimicked.

But apparently, mimicry was possible with Section Eight’s specially trained research warlocks, and
No. 1 and his former teacher had eagerly risen to the occasion.

“I can only guess,” she said grudgingly. She eyed the swirling blue light in the demon’s claws. “I can
barely wrap my head around mimicking fairy magic, let alone monster magic.”

Qwan strode up, chuckling. “It’s actually a very simple process, Captain.”

Behind her, Foaly snorted. “Simple. Yeah, right.”

“Well, it is actually,” No. 1 said. “All we’re doing is translating the signatures picked up by the
MagiScanners into electrical currents, which our brains interpret as the sensation of magic usage, and
then all we have to do is match our magic to the sensation, and –”

Holly held up her hand quickly before he could continue. “Okay, thanks for explaining. You found anything yet?”

Qwan summoned a blob of violet energy into his own hand. “So far, we’ve successfully imitated
four forms of magic, and ascertained the function of three.” He dissipated the purple, and gestured to
his former apprentice besides him. “Dark blue magic seems to have a gravitational effect, changing
the way gravity effects an object and allowing for a sort of telekinetic control of it.” He summoned a
lighter blue orb into his hand. “Light blue magic, on the other hand, only seems to affect moving
objects. We found that out by accident.”

Foaly huffed again. “By using me for target practice!”

Holly stifled a snigger.
“I already apologized for that, my friend.” Qwan said mildly, though he too looked amused at the centaur’s whining. “Orange magic, which was the most recently identified, has a similar affect, but only effects objects standing still. If you move through it, you’re very much unharmed.”

How had the monsters even begun to figure this stuff out?

“Unfortunately,” Qwan continued, “that’s all we have so far. There seems to be some unknown factor affecting our ability to mimic these magicks – perhaps a lack of magical reserves, since No. 1 and I have had the least trouble so far.”

“What about the unidentified signature?”

He shook his head. “We’ve managed the electrical translation, but unfortunately, we have yet to be able to imitate it. I’m sorry.”

Holly waved her hand. “It’s fine. Just keep trying, alright?”

No. 1 looked up at her hopefully. “Has Artemis found anything?”

Foaly snorted. “If he had, we’d already be neck deep in troll dung.”

Holly smacked him on the shoulder. “We tried asking him yesterday. He doesn’t have anything yet, but knowing him, he’ll probably figure something out by the end of the week.”

The warlock nodded. “Alright. Well, we better have something for him too, by then!” He turned back to his table, an eager spark creeping into his eyes. “How about we try that purple magic again, Qwan?”

As the two demons wandered back to work, Holly shook her head and then turned back to the door. Just before she left, however, she stopped, and shot a grin at Foaly over her shoulder.

“Hey.”

“Yeah?” He sounded wary, and rightfully so, because that was Holly’s I’m about to offend you for shits and giggles expression.

“Why are you even working with these guys, anyway? Aren’t you useless with magic?”

Foaly’s angry braying could probably be heard all the way across Haven.

Muffet’s Bakery was a tiny little storefront strategically placed between one of Dublin’s monster communities and the business district, and decorated with an elaborate array of purple and white awnings and delicate spider decorations. It was very deliberately eye-catching, and when Frisk finally convinced Toriel to take them there for a break, the inside of the restaurant was just as elegant as the outside, and packed with a mix of human and monster customers.

Muffet herself was at the register, talking with one of the customers. Frisk waited until the man walked off with his muffin, and then sprung up to the counter, grinning.

“Hey, Muffet!” they chirped. The spider turned towards them, and then beamed upon seeing the ambassador.

“Why, if it isn’t my favorite customer! Hello dearie, it’s been some time!”

Several arachnids on the counter nearby lifted their front legs and waved eagerly at them in greeting.
Frisk waved back.

“Yeah, it has been. And it looks like you’re doing really well here, too, you’ve got a lot of customers!”

Muffet giggled, winking at them with one facetted eye and gesturing to some of her spiders with her many hands. “Oh, you wouldn’t believe it, but this is actually one of our slower days!” A small bag peeked into view over the counter, supported by a multitude of tiny legs, and she plucked it up easily, holding it up for Frisk to see. “I’ve fixed up a new treat recently that I think you’ll just love, dear! Spider rolls! Thick, sweet, and creamy, with chocolate drizzle!”

*Iooooooh, chocolate!*

*Stop drooling.*

*I’m not!*

Frisk shot the monster a *look*. “And how much do you want for it?”

She giggled again. “You know me too well! For you, dearie, a thirty-percent discount!”

Which meant that Frisk still ended up bartering for two rolls – one with chocolate, for Chara, one without – for almost all of the pocket money they had one their person, which was a *considerable* amount.

“Why does she charge you so much?” Toriel wondered, shooting the spider a glare as they sat down at one of the little tables. “Surely she knows a normal child cannot afford these?”

Mouth full of spider roll – it was really good, easily the best of Muffet’s pastries they’d eaten in sixteen Resets – Frisk shrugged.

“Most’ve her stuff is for catering, I think,” they mumbled. “Y’know, food for parties. That’s gotta be expensive.”

It probably was, though Frisk had a suspicion that the high prices were actually because of a threat posed by a certain *Humanity’s Resurgence* group. Muffet was probably saving up just in case she needed to pay for building repairs or medical care for her spiders.

**Stop sniggering.**

**We can’t just keep calling them Humanity’s Resurgence, it’s too long.**

*How about HR for short?*

*Nah, sounds too friendly of an acronym… how about HuRg?*

Frisk barely managed to stifle their laughter. *You mean, like the puking sound?*

*Exactly!*

Still struggling not to snicker, they took another bite of pastry, and cast a surreptitious look around the shop. It really *was* astonishing just how many human customers the spiders had – most people didn’t like creepy-crawlies. But, they supposed, if anybody here *didn’t* like spiders, they weren’t letting it get in the way of good food.

The bell above the door let out another tinkle as someone new came in, and Frisk automatically turned to see who it was. Two women had just come in. One, the shorter of the two by a couple of
inches, looked to be in her mid-forties, with small creases just beginning to appear in the skin at the corners of her eyes and mouth – smile lines – and an *amazingly* lush head of dark hair, streaked with grey, and bright, cheery eyes. The other woman looked younger by a couple decades, with a set of stunning Eurasian features, blonde hair, and had a build akin to Undyne’s, lean and muscled.

*Don’t flirt with her.*

Frisk huffed. *I won’t!*

*You sure?*

*I’m sure!*

Chara snorted in disbelief, but stayed quiet as Frisk turned away from the two new customers and dutifully finished their roll. There was a distant murmuring of conversation, and just as they were licking the last of the sweet taste off their fingers, Chara suddenly spoke up.

*Hey, those two ladies are coming over here.*

They looked up just as the two incoming reached their table.

“Pardon me,” the older woman said, “but are you Monster Ambassador Frisk?”

Frisk quickly wiped off their fingers on their napkin and sat up ramrod straight. “Yes ma’am, that’d be me.”

Her eyes lit up like fireworks. “I *thought* so!” She held out one hand. “My name is Angeline Fowl, it’s a pleasure to meet you!”

A little surprised – adults *never* shook their hand first, not when Toriel or one of the other monsters was around – Frisk accepted the handshake with a firm one of their own. “Nice to meet you two, Mrs. Fowl.”

Then the introduction finally registered, and it was all they could do not to gape. “Wait. Fowl as in the *United Nations* representative Fowl?”

The blonde woman snickered, and Mrs. Fowl looked a little sheepish. “Ah, well, yes. I take it you’ve heard of him…?”

Frisk grinned. “I’ve read a lot about him! Youngest representative ever, inventor of the solar-powered four-seater plane, openly pro-monster, and I heard he was one of the guys that funded that cool mural down by the docks!”

A look of relief and wry humor swept across the woman’s face, even as the blonde kept snickering. “Well, that would certainly be him. He’s done quite well for himself, hasn’t he?” *Now* she turned to Toriel, offering another smile. “And you would be Queen Toriel, I take it?”

The monster nodded. “Yes, that would be me.”

“Wonderful, wonderful!” She reached into her purse – *expensive*-looking purse, Frisk noted – fished around for a moment, then brought out a thick stack of envelopes, decorated in fine gold designs and sealed shut with what looked like *wax*, complete with a coat of arms. When Mrs. Fowl turned back towards them, her smile was a tad shy.

“I was hoping I would run into you, though I’ll admit I didn’t expect to!” She held out the envelopes,
and Frisk took them, handing one to Toriel before looking at the rest curiously. “My family and I are holding a gala three weeks from now – I would be honored if you and any of your monster acquaintances would come!”

Frisk’s jaw dropped. *Wait what?*

“Yeah, that’s Madam Fowl for you,” the blonde woman told them, grinning. “She and Mr. Fowl go all out, let me tell you –”

“I’d love to!” Frisk blurted. “Oh, uh, sorry, I mean –” They struggled to school their expression into something more proper. “I, uh, thank you for your invitation, and I fully intend on being there!”

Mrs. Fowl smiled in indulgent amusement. “There’s no need for such formality, Ambassador! Some people may care about that, but I already get far too much formality at home!” She turned towards Toriel, giving her a small little curtsey. “Will you be attending as well, Your Majesty?”

“But of course! I can hardly let my child go unsupervised, can I?”

This earned a knowing smile. “Oh, trust me, I know. My little Arty brought so much trouble when he was younger, and his younger brothers! The less said about their antics, the better!” She shook her head, bemused. “Well, since you and several other monsters will probably be attending, I can direct you towards some excellent tailors here in town, if you want...”

Barely a few minutes later, the two women left, and Frisk was struggling not to vibrate in their seat. Even when they said an enthusiastic goodbye to all the monsters there, it was an automatic gesture, because their mind was focused on the envelopes in their hand.

*We just got invited to a party held by the Fowl family! The Fowls! I can’t believe it!*

*We have got to be dreaming. We’ve got to be, there’s no way...*

Toriel chuckled at them. “Well, someone is excited!”

Frisk cast her a huge grin, so huge it might’ve even put Sans’s to shame. “You have no idea, mom. *No idea.*”

Chapter End Notes

Methinks those warlocks in the lab are having a bit too much fun with that magic, don't you? And poor Foaly, completely useless to them without being a target. >:D

And yay! Frisk's finally met one of the Fowls! Not Artemis, though. Don't worry, it'll happen!

And, since people will probably be confused about the whole "reverse engineering magic" thing, I might as well clarify that for you guys! Despite what Holly says in the chapter, the colored magicks aren't actually specific to the monsters - all three races in this story are capable of using them. It's just that the fairies never learned how, and have no records of humans being able to use that sort of magic since it was mostly used in the Americas, where the monsters were, so they didn't know it existed until they saw monsters using it.
And in case people don't get why I didn't classify the colored magic as purely monster magic, two reasons: Firstly, the six souls. The color of each of those souls is attributed to a single form of magic, some of which Frisk is capable of using with assistance (green magic and yellow magic, for instance). If it was monster-specific, Frisk probably couldn't use it even with help. Secondly: In the Artemis Fowl series, fairy magic is described at least once as a "blue plasma," but it does change color depending on the type of magic being used (at least, I think so? I think the Berserker Gate's magic in Book 8 was red, right?) So, therefore, for this fanfic, it would make sense if monster magic were the same, only it's white instead of blue. Make sense?
The Dublin Post-Crash Research Center for Experimental Technology (or DPCRET, as it was otherwise known) was a large facility that had been under construction up until almost four years ago. From the outside, it did not look like much – simply another expansive concrete building taking up precious space in the outskirts of Dublin that could otherwise be used for crops. However, once inside, and taking in the long, impressively sterile hallways, and the glimpses of laboratories through the wall-mounted windows, one would very quickly change their mind.

Artemis was of the not-so-humble opinion that a great many of these laboratories, and the projects being constructed within, were indeed a sorry waste of space. Half of them could hardly be any more than a whim cooked up by one of the employees, just to see if they could impress their employers, and at least another quarter was most likely human attempts to imitate monster technology.

Still, some were impressive. The Alternative Energy department had managed to piece together a very efficient hydrogen generator that, while still primitive in design (compared to fairy technology), could easily power an entire city, if the idea were expanded upon just a fraction. The solar-and-hydrogen powered vehicle was also quite impressive, if a tad unpractical, and he could easily see them taking to the road in a few year’s time, assuming development continued at a steady pace with few setbacks.

However, despite evidence to the contrary, he was not here to take a gander at technological progress. He had a goal in mind.

“And this is the Robotics department, sir,” his guide said, carefully sliding open a metal door opening into a laboratory with much, much thicker windows than previous ones. “Be careful – sometimes things explode in here.”

Artemis raised an eyebrow at him.

“Well, not quite explode,” the man allowed, “but… well, you’ll probably see soon enough.”

He stepped aside, allowing Artemis to enter the room.

At first glance, it seemed almost mundane. There were no eccentric projects being constructed, piece by piece, on the tables. No generators being tested, only to instantly burn out light bulbs. The lab workers here, though busy, actually seemed to be working on practical projects, rather than the theatrical “marvels” being concocted in other departments, and barely any seemed to even notice him, so absorbed were they in their work.

His first impression – of this being a surprisingly normal lab, despite the employee he intended to meet – was quickly dashed to pieces when there was a bright flash of light from the other room, accompanied by a fizzling pressure in the air that he easily recognized thanks to past experiences with fairy warlocks. Magic.

There was also a crunch of crumpling metal and screeching glass.

“O-oh stars,” a voice stuttered. “S-sorry everyone! Nobody w-was blinded permanently, r-right…?”

There was a chorus of assurances from the voice’s coworkers. Artemis blinked rapidly, clearing the
colored spots lingering in his vision, before turning a quizzical look to his guide.

“Magic, sir.” he offered, most helpfully.

Normally he would’ve had some caustic retort for the man, but right now he was more intrigued by the source of the “explosion.” He picked his way through the tables, making his way to a table sporting copious amounts of twisted steel and shattered glass, quite a bit of which appeared to have been fused to the table. The worker at said table was perhaps four and a half feet tall, with a hunched posture, and vaguely resembled some form of yellow dinosaur, with clawed hands, a digitigrade stance, short tail, a long snout, and a frill of bony protrusions fanning behind their skull. Even without the name tag pinned to the monster’s lab coat, she would be unmistakable.

Dr. Alphys, the former Royal Scientist of the Underground.

The monster pulled up the ridiculously large pair of goggles she was wearing, revealing a pair of glasses and eyes sporting the faintest of dark circles underneath them.

“P-put a little too much kick into it,” she muttered as Artemis approached. “Tone it down to only a few thousand, maybe? No, but then it wouldn’t produce enough power…” She began fiddling with something small and metallic, and glowing with a faint yellow-white light. It appeared to be some form of capsule.

“Pardon me for disturbing your work, Doctor,” Artemis said, “but are explosions, as my guide has referred to them, like this common?”

“Y-yeah.” the scientist answered without looking up. “Even when you’ve got the proper setup, magic just sometimes doesn’t want to cooperate… it can get really finicky sometimes...” She reached for a tool near the edge of the table, and Artemis pushed it closer. “Thanks. Sorry ‘bout t-that, earlier. I’ve been working on this for ages, I don’t know what went wrong...”

The Irishman leaned forward, studying the capsule. He could make out what appeared to be tiny circuits and protrusions inside the glass, some arranged in complex patterns similar to runes. Interesting. “What exactly are you trying to achieve? I may be of some assistance.”

The monster finally looked up. “Well, I’ve b-been trying to create a multi-platform magi-battery, but I haven’t been able t-to...”

He could see the exact moment that she registered exactly who she was talking to. Her face went blank for several moments, her voice petering out, and then her eyes went wide and her jaw dropped.

“Y-you’re,” she stammered, her voice rising in pitch until it was an almost comical squeak. “Y-y-you’re the UN r-representat-tive!”

“That I am.” With an amused huff – apparently he had a reputation, even amongst the monsters – Artemis gestured to the object in her claws. “May I have a look? I may be of some assistance.”

Apparently still stunned, Alphys passed him the battery, and he turned it over carefully in his hands, studying it in detail. Not only were there runic structures within the container, there also appeared to be symbols etched into the surface of the object. Some of them he recognized from Section Eight files – it appeared some runes were universal – but there were others he didn’t recognize.

“Fascinating,” he murmured. He tapped one line of runes, which glowed faintly beneath his fingertips. “These runes, I assume they’re for channeling the magic into the interior?”
“Uh, y-yes, actually, b-but t-they’re mostly meant to hold the m-magic inside.”

“And the structures on the inside?”

“T-they’re s-supposed to change the magic’s wavelength so it can be s-self-sustaining...”

“But they are not working as expected.”

“N-no. T-the energy n-never stabilizes, and it c-causes a l-literal meltdown. See there? That w-wire’s supposed to be curved in an upwards spiral...”

Artemis hummed thoughtfully. “And what purpose do each of these symbols have?”

Still stuttering, Alphys carefully pointed out each individual rune, and Artemis absorbed the new information as it came. Those are to channel the magic inwards. Those are to absorb ambient magic from the battery’s surroundings, in order to charge the battery. Those serve as valves, in order to allow the magical energy to connect to the device it is powering. Those are to cycle the magic through the wires, in order to maintain a constant flow. Those are to hold the magic within the confines of the container, and stop it from moving outwards -

Ah. “I believe the runes meant to contain the magic and halt it’s movement outwards may be interfering with the spiraling motion of the magic within the battery.” He pointed to one of the melted wires, which lay on the outside edge of the shapes. “See this? All the melted wires are the ones nearest to those constricting runes, and the magic is meant to stay in motion within the battery, yes?”

Alphys’s mouth opened and shut soundlessly for several moments.

“O-Oh… oh!” She quickly took the battery back, easily dismantling it with her bare hands and a few flashes of magic. Within moments she had the offending wires replaced, fingers deftly twisting them into the appropriate patterns and pulling them inwards into a tighter spiral, before reassembling the battery case almost as quickly as she’d taken it apart. The entire process couldn’t have taken more than ten seconds. Even Foaly wasn’t that quick!

Holding her breath, Alphys placed her fingers on either end of the capsule, and sent bursts of light into the device. It boiled chaotically for a moment, and then settled, streams of white-yellow plasma swirling about in a steady, continuous spiral.

“I-It worked,” Alphys breathed. She groaned and slapped herself in the forehead. “I-I should’ve thought of that! I can’t believe I m-missed it...”

She cast a sheepish look at Artemis from between her fingers. “S-sorry about t-that... I’m n-not usually t-this s-slow, b-but I haven’t g-gotten m-much s-sleep l-lately, and...”

He waved his hand dismissively. “Nonsense. It was hardly a bother.”

“B-but I sorta d-dragged y-you into helping m-me...?”

“Technically, Doctor, I dragged you.” And he had no doubt that he would have found some way of asserting himself regardless. He was a bit ashamed to admit it, now that the moment had passed, but he’d actually been quite excited to finally examine monster tech. Imagine that, Artemis Fowl the Second, excited over a battery.

Artemis cleared his throat, dispelling his embarrassment. The moment had passed, and there was nothing to be done about it now. And, if nothing else, this could provide ample opportunity for a rapport with the monster. “I must apologize for that, Doctor. I’ve been rather interested in monster
technology for a while and I suppose my enthusiasm… got away from me.”

“R-really?”

“Oh yes.” He paused for *just* the right length of time to convey hesitation. “I don’t suppose you’d be willing to tell me more about how your magic works in conjunction with technology?”

Alphys looked positively startled by the idea. “Y-you want to know *more*? Wow. I mean, s-sorry, it’s j-just – most humans t-think magic is f-freaky!”

He smirked. *Success.* “I think you’ll find that I am not *most humans*, Dr. Alphys. Now, do you have any time free today?”

In the Underground, standing at the top of a set of carpeted stairs, one member of the fairy Retrieval team shook his head in bewilderment before activating his coms.

“Captain?”

“What, Corporal?”

The officer turned in a circle, giving the Captain a full 360 view of the oddity of his surroundings. “Monsters are *weird*. Who put the entrance to the Ruins in someone’s *house*?”

“How in Frond’s name am I supposed to know?”

Shaking his head incredulously, and thanking the universe in general for the foresight of allowing one demon warlock to remove the Rule of Dwellings *years* before this moment, the fairy set his wings buzzing and began exploring.

The house he’d emerged in was vaguely the same size and layout as a small human house – the room he’d started in lead into several others, including a sitting room with a large chair, a kitchen, and a hallway full of bedrooms, including one that seemed to have been furnished for a kid.

Huh. Hadn’t that Ambassador’s accounts included staying with the monster’s Queen for a few weeks, before moving on to the rest of these wretched caverns?

Regardless of who this place actually belonged to, though, the place felt warm and inviting. He was actually kind of reluctant to leave, and it took the Captain and a few of his team yelling at him over their coms to get his ass out the door and into the Ruins themselves.

The Ruins were *far* less friendly. They weren’t *menacing* or anything, not like the fire-and-brimstone landscape of Hotland (who came up with these names? “The Ruins” had to be the best name he’d heard so far!), but the purple stone, the dead leafless tree out in front of the house, the vines and other creepy-crawly plants, all gave the place an abandoned, melancholy vibe. Even the regal pillars of marble that sometimes jutted out of the paved ground only served to make the place feel more like some sorry, long-dead husk of what it once must’ve been.

Still, it wasn’t his place to express such a *poetic* opinion. He’d never hear the end of it if he did. So the fairy just flew on, shielded and shooting over the heads of the occasional Froggit and dodging one or two Whinsums in observant silence.

He reached the flowers only a few minutes after leaving the house. Even compared to the rest of the claustrophobic Underground, this place was *tiny*. How on earth could anybody *live* here?
Somebody definitely had lived here once. And died here, by the looks of it, because there was no way that rectangular patch of yellow flowers – buttercups, maybe – all alone underneath a solitary beam of sunlight and covering a small, equally rectangular patch of disturbed earth could be anything but a grave.

D’Arvit, it was tiny. Large enough for a fairy, or maybe a child. Hadn’t the Queen had a kid of her own once…?

He paused long enough to bow respectfully at the grave – never knew, there might be a ghost here that wasn’t the sort that looked like a bedsheet – before turning on his heels to leave. Didn’t look like there was anything here, anyway.

“Frisk?”

The officer whirled about in midair, hands flying to his Neutrino and leveling at the head of…

… another flower?

A flower with a face?

Making sure his helmet was sealed, so sound couldn’t escape, he said, “Captain, are you seeing this, or am I going crazy?”

“Congratulations, Corporal, you’re 100% sane.”

“Great. Just wondering.”

The flower monster – that was ALL it was, literally, just a giant yellow flower, with a face, growing out of the ground in a place where it definitely hadn’t been before – squinted around in apparent confusion. It was actually kind of cute, in a freaky moving plant sort of way, with little button eyes and a little mouth.

“Frisk?” It repeated again, in a little high-pitched voice that sounded a bit like a kid’s. “Are you there?”

Silence. After a few moments, the flower scowled, and grumbled something under it’s breath, and then disappeared under the ground with a faint pfft of displaced soil.

The Corporal stayed perfectly still, save for the high-frequency vibrations of his shielding, for another couple of minutes, before sighing with relief, and turning to leave. That had been too close, way too close. Flower or no, they couldn’t risk being seen by anything down here – not until they knew whether or not a mind-wipe could work on a monster, at least.

As he passed through a door, his wings suddenly spluttered, and, cursing, because of course the damned things couldn’t wait until he got out of the Ruins to break down, he landed a bit more heavily than usual, and swiped the activation key embedded into his glove across the necessary location.

Nothing.

“D’Arvit,” he cursed. “Stupid low-budget equipment, this thing’s as old as –”

There was a familiar pfft, and a cheery little voice said, “Well, howdy! I thought there was someone down here with me!”
Uh oh, looks like Flowey finally made an appearance! Let's hope he doesn't cause too much trouble for the fairies, eh?

This is the last chapter I had pre-written, by the way. So, depending on how much I feel like writing this week, there MIGHT not be another chapter for you guys next Sunday. Figured I'd let you guys know.

And WHOA, almost 250 hits?! Almost 30 kudos? Man, you guys are just too nice!
Despite his area of expertise lying with technology, Foaly had jumped at the opportunity to oversee Section Eight’s experiments with monster magic. He had done so for three reasons.

Firstly, he was curious, and itching to see some monster magic in action.

Secondly, there was a lot of incredibly expensive equipment in the Section Eight laboratories, and he wasn’t about to let some careless warlock slinging spells around blow it all up.

Thirdly, it got him out of yelling distance from Commander Kelp in the event of an emergency.

Apparently, the centaur thought, that doesn’t stop him from sending a messenger. “The Commander wants me to what?”

The messenger – a young sprite who couldn’t have been out of the Academy for more than a couple months – shifted nervously, clutching the equipment in his arms like a lifeline. “H-he wants you to keep a line open for the Retrieval team in the monster’s Underground, sir.”

Foaly let out an explosive sigh. “Ugh, I don’t have time for this. Tell the Commander that as long as I’m working here with Section Eight—”

The sprite interrupted him. “He said you’d try to refuse, sir, and told me to tell you that if you do, he’ll be docking your research budget by half once you get back to the Operations Booth.”

Foaly blanched. “By half?”

“He said he was considering docking it by three-quarters, sir.”

Foaly let out an alarmed whinny at the thought. Three-quarters!

Which meant this was serious. Kelp may have been slowly transforming into Julius Root as the years went by, but he was far less trigger-happy when it came to budget cuts of that magnitude.

“So what’re we dealing with this time? Megalomaniacs, teenage criminal masterminds, what?”

The sprite grimaced. “Nothing so simple, sir.” He took a deep breath. “The Retrieval team encountered a monster that could detect a shielded fairy.”

The centaur’s face went carefully blank for a moment. Then he let lose with a string of unprintable centaurian profanity that lasted a full minute.

“D’Arvit,” he said finally, once the gale had subsided. “Alright, where, what kind of monster, and is it hostile?”

“In the Ruins, a, ah, flower monster of some sort, and… it’s definitely hostile now, sir.”

In other words, some Retrieval jock down there was seriously hurting.

“How badly did it injure them?” he demanded. “Was anybody killed?”
“No, sir! The officer that encountered it is fine now – he was running hot, so he had enough magic to heal the injuries, but...” He gulped. “The injuries he got were really bad, sir. The team’s retreated from the Ruins for now.”

“D’Arvit,” Foaly repeated. “Okay, tell the Commander I’ll keep a line open, but I’ll need all the files gathered from the encounter!”

“Already in your database, sir.”

“Good, now get going! I got this.”

The sprite left, and Foaly took a moment to calm himself down before turning back to his computer and opening a line to the Retrieval team’s communications.

*Of all the times for things to end up chin deep in the troll dung, why now?!*

“Thank you for your time, madam!”

Frisk kept a bright smile on their face as their latest interviewee nodded politely and closed her door, then sagged in relief.

*Thank god that’s over.*

*I don’t think I’ve ever seen someone so uptight in my life! Or my afterlife!*

Stifling a grin – the woman really had been a stick in the mud, though she seemed nice enough – they checked the woman’s name off their list, and turned to the second page. *Okay, we’re almost done... we’ve got three more families and one more loner to interview, and then we’ve got everybody that signed up for the fostering program.*

They turned away from the door, putting the bright smile back on their face. “I guess we’re done here, Mom – next place is in the business district!”

Toriel frowned, concerned. “Are you sure you are up for it, my child? You seem rather tired.”

Frisk waved the comment off. “No, I’m fine, Mom! Besides, we’ve still got to interview the rest of the families, and then go to their workplaces and make sure their bosses will leave them be –”

“Frisk.”

“- and we need to interview those shops downtown, too, to make sure they’re okay with hiring monsters for human jobs –”

“Frisk.”

“- and I heard there’s some new monsters arriving in port today, so we should go meet them at the docks and make sure they’re settled in fine –”

“Frisk.” Toriel put one gentle but firm hand on their shoulder, giving them a stern look. “You are clearly exhausted.”

“No, Mom, I’m –” They stifled a yawn. “I’m fine.”

“Frisk,” Toriel reprimanded. “Do not lie to me, child. Will the families you intend to interview disappear in the next half hour?”
...They might. “No,” they said, aloud.

“And will the shops go out of business, or the boat suddenly capsize, if you are not there in the next half hour?”

“...No.”

The monster nodded firmly. “Then it will do you no harm to rest, will it?”

“But we need to finish the interviews!” Frisk protested. “The sooner we get them done, the sooner monsters can start moving into human dwellings!” And the less likely it is a Reset will happen before we can talk to them!

Toriel placed her other hand on their other shoulder, bending down to look them in the eyes. “Frisk, I understand that you have dedicated yourself to helping monsterkind, but you will do us no good if you fall asleep on your feet. We will take a half-hour rest, and then we may continue the interviews, if you are feeling better, yes?”

It may have been phrased as a question, but Frisk knew that tone. Toriel was in this is for your own good mode. There was no arguing with her when she was like this.

“... Okay, Mom.”

“Good.” Toriel straightened, then scooped them up off the ground. “Now, where shall we go?”

“Mom!” Frisk practically shrieked. “You don’t need to pick me up!”

Now the goat woman’s stern look had turned slightly mischievous. “But my child, you can barely walk!”

“I can walk!”

“Nonsense. You need your rest!”

“Mooooom!”

“I shall set you down once we have reached our destination.”

Frisk gave up, and sighed. They really were too tired for this. “How about that sushi place Undyne and Alphys told us about?”

“Sounds delightful.” Toriel strode purposefully down the street, still cradling them in her massive furry arms. “Now rest.”

Chara snickered.

Shut up! Huffing in indignation – and embarrassment – Frisk leaned back against Toriel’s shoulder, and watched houses pass by.

Several minutes passed. The suburban houses, with their simple colors and vegetable gardens, soon gave way to the slightly taller buildings of Dublin’s business district, and crowds of people milling around. Many of them took a double take as the monster passed by with her human passenger, and Frisk ignored the stares as best they could. It was easier to ignore them than usual – they really were very tired, and it was getting harder and harder to keep their eyes open. They’d been working themselves down to the bone – heh, Sans would’ve appreciated that – for hours now.
Frisk was just about to actually drift off when a familiar voice shouted, pretty much right into their ear, “Hey, PUNK!”

Frisk yelped and flailed back into awareness. “I’m up! I’m up!”

Undyne guffawed at them. Toriel shot the fish monster a glare, obviously upset that she’d woken Frisk up from their well-needed nap.

“Aww, is the little weenie tired?”

Frisk huffed and crossed their arms defiantly. “No! It’s just that Mom’s really comfortable…”

Undyne snickered. “Suuuure, that’s totally what’s going on.”

Frisk stuck their tongue out at her petulantly. She stuck her tongue out right back at them, then went uncharacteristically serious. “So, Frisk, Your Majesty? Can I talk to you for a second? I know you’ve got the interviews and stuff to do, but this is important.”

Exchanging a concerned look with Toriel, they nodded. “Sure.”

“Sweet! How about that sushi place?”

After sitting down inside the restaurant and ordering their food (“Are you sure you don’t have any shark?” Undyne asked the waitress that came to their table), the former Royal Guard waited until they were more or less alone before leaning forward a little.

“So, it’s about the party we’re going to next week, at the Fowl estate,” she began. “We’re gonna have to be careful there.”

Frisk blinked. “Why? Is there going to be trouble?”

“No, no, that’s not it! It’s just… well, okay, after you gave us our invitations and after Alphys finished freaking out –” (Freaking out had been an understatement – Frisk hadn’t seen the scientist that excited since she’d met one of the voice actors from Mew Mew Kissy Cutie.) “- we decided to do a little research. You know, how large the estate was, what kind of manners the Fowls might be expecting from us, that sort of thing.”

Frisk nodded. That sounded like a sensible idea.

“That is,” Undyne continued. “While we were researching, I decided to ask some of the squad for advice. I figured they’d know some things about these kinds of events, you know? Only when they heard that we were invited to the Fowl estate, some of them just kinda… freaked out.” She glanced around, then leaned even further forward, lowering her voice. “Apparently, before the Crash? The Fowls had a reputation, and it wasn’t the good sort. They were a family of criminals.”

They could already see where this was going. But still, they couldn’t believe it! Angeline Fowl hadn’t seemed like a criminal when they’d met her, but…
Wait a second. “If the Fowls are a family of criminals, then why was one of them elected to be the United Nations representative? Surely the Minister would’ve known?”

“I told you, their crimes were never confirmed. And the Fowls did go straight, and helped a lot of people in the aftermath of the Crash. That probably helped their reputation a bit.” She grimaced. “We’ll have to be really careful at that party.”

Toriel frowned, puzzled. “Why the caution? If they are no longer criminals...”

Frisk winced, immediately getting where Undyne was coming from. “Even if they’re not criminals anymore, Mom, they might still have some of those connections from their criminal days. Which means that if we upset them, we could be in serious trouble.”

The queen looked downright alarmed, and Frisk was quick to assure her. “But we’ll be fine! I mean, they’re basically philanthropists now, and they helped a lot of people during the Crash, so they can’t be bad people! We’ll just have to be super polite, and we’ll be fine!”

“Yeah, sounds about right,” Undyne agreed, nodding. “That’s what one of my pals at work said, too. Mr. and Mrs. Fowl are okay people, and so are their kids.”

Toriel visibly relaxed. “Well, I suppose that is good news... we’ll be certain to warn the others that are going as well. Thank you, Captain.”

Undyne grinned widely. “Hey, no problem!” She reached over the table to give Frisk an affectionate noogie. “Gotta look out for my BESTIE, right?”

The waitress came back with their food then, and they abandoned the conversation in favor of eating. Well, the monsters did. Frisk could barely stomach their food, so intense was their sudden nervousness.

The Fowls were criminals pre-Crash, and had been criminals for hundreds of years. If they didn’t go straight until just before the Crash... that was eight years ago.

Which means that the UN representative, the guy who paid a visit to Alphys’s lab and apparently spent a couple of hours talking to her about magic and technology, was raised by a criminal, possibly to be a criminal.

And if he was raised to be criminal, who’s to say he wasn’t up to something?

Chapter End Notes

Phew, managed to get another chapter out for you guys! And double-phew, looks like that officer that encountered Flowey lived, though it's still not obvious whether that floral abomination was trying to kill the fairy or not! Depending on what happens next chapter, we may find out... >:3

Same deal with new chapters as last week - I may not be able to post a new chapter next Sunday. Actually, here, I'll make this easy: whenever I DO update, it will be on a Sunday! Happy reading~
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Warning: Flowey. (He gets his own warning!) And there are brief mentions of gore in this chapter! Nothing too graphic, but the warning still stands!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Alright, everyone sound off!”

“One, here!”

“Two, here and not dead, sir!”

“Three, here!”

“Four, here! Hey, does anybody know if a dwarf would be willing to come and eat the flower for us?”

In the Section Eight laboratories, Foaly snickered as that particular suggestion reached him through his earpiece.

“Don’t be stupid, Corporal. Poor dwarf would probably get indigestion or something. Keep sounding off!”

“Five, here!”

“Six, alive sir!”

“Seven, still in one piece!”

Foaly waited until the last of the jocks called in, then quipped, “Hey Captain, don’t I get a number?”

“For the last time, no! If you don’t have anything useful to say, then get off the airwaves!”

Foaly rolled his eyes. Sticks in the mud, the lot of them.

For once, though, he didn’t really blame the fairy. It had to be stressful, having to relocate to a stifling hot cavern in Hotland because of a homicidal plant. It had probably been especially stressful to find out that there were operational cameras scattered all over the Underground that nobody had noticed until Foaly hacked into them and started broadcasting the camera feeds to the team’s helmets.

Tapping his fingers impatiently, Foaly took his eyes off his plasma monitors to glance through the lab window. Most of the warlocks had packed up what little equipment they’d brought with them and left, but No.1 and Qwan were still hard at work – the younger frowning at his hands, the older absently sending strings of purple light flying through the air to pick up random objects and send them whirling on a little orbit around him.

Well, that was boring.
Everything was boring right now.

D’Arvit, something happen already!

A voice barked over the coms. “Centaur! Anything new?”

That wasn’t what I meant! Groaning melodramatically, Foaly turned back to the monitors.

“No, Captain, nothing new. Unless the Mud Boy somehow added more data to my system, which isn’t possible, since I literally just re-encrypted my codes.”

Someone else, one of the other jocks, muttered something that sounded suspiciously like you shouldn’t need to encrypt your system at all.

“What was that, Private –” Foaly checked his screen. “Private Leech?”

“Nothing!”

“Didn’t think so.”

With an explosive sigh, the technical consultant leaned back in his specially modified chair.

“D’Arvit, stop making those infernal noises!”

“But I’m bored,” Foaly groaned. “There’s nothing happening, and I’ve already crunched all the numbers I can crunch, I’ve finished the coding, there’s nothing interesting going on in the labs, I’ve already figured out how that flower detected a shielded fairy, and I’ve nobody to talk to except a bunch of –”

“You’ve what?”

“As I was about to say, Captain –”

“You’ve figured out how the flower detected us?”

Foaly paused, considered this, realized that yes, he had said that, and proceeded to explain.

“Well, duh.” He said. “It couldn’t see the officer it encountered, judging by the camera footage, and it’s a burrower. A lot of tunneling creatures can sense vibrations – I mean, look at dwarves! So, one vibration sensing flower plus a fairy vibrating at high speeds equals something that can detect a shielded fairy. Simple.”

“Dwarves can’t detect shielded fairies like that.”

Foaly made a note to check with Mulch the next time he called, to see if that was true or not. “Well, I don’t see you coming up with anything else! Anyway, it’s just an educated guess at this point. We won’t actually know for sure unless the flower turns up and proves me right!”

There is a human epigram by the name of Murphy’s Law, which essentially states that anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. This epigram was practically a proven fact for anyone who was, or had any kind of acquaintance with, Artemis Fowl, so, in retrospect, Foaly really should have known better than to say that out loud.

“Well lookie here!” A high-pitched, childlike voice said. “I thought there’d be someone here! You’re the boss, aren’t cha?”
In the moment it took Foaly’s heart to stop beating, the Retrieval captain cursed colorfully and whipped around, a hand coming into view to with a Neutrino leveled at the voice’s source and firing. Instead of hitting it’s target, the energy beam apparently hit thin air, and at that exact same moment, the MagiScanner on the fairy’s wrist went berserk.

“D’Arvit!” The captain yelled.

Directly in front of the fairy, and safe behind the invisible barrier that had sprung up, the flower monster beamed at him with a disturbingly angelic grin, a grin so sickeningly innocent that it couldn’t mean anything but oncoming hellfire.

“Tsk tsk!” The flower tutted. “There’s no need for that! I just want to talk, that’s all!”

“D’Arvit,” the captain repeated. “Foaly, you getting this?!”

Finally recovering from his sudden heart attack, the centaur sent his fingers flying across the keyboard. “You mean the murder-flower? How could I miss that?!”

“No! I mean –” The fairy gestured around himself with his gun. “This! The white lines on the ground, the blackness, the glowing thing floating in front of me!”

Foaly glanced at the officer’s bio-readings. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, save strange brainwave spikes originating from the officer’s visual cortex.

“No, I’m not getting anything like that!” He switched to a different channel, and immediately ordered all the fairies in Hotland to bring their leader backup. “Nearest fairy, ETA three minutes!”

Onscreen, the floral monster’s grin grew even wider and even more terrifyingly innocent. “How about you stop vibrating so much, friend? I can’t talk to you if I can’t see your face, that’s just rude!”

Foaly mentally noted that down to crow about later – I was right again! Ha! – and started talking.

“Okay, listen Captain, according to your MagiScanner, you’re completely surrounded in monster magic. Nothing’s happening yet, but if I were to guess, I’d say there’s a barrier keeping you in place, and that’s what your Neutrino hit earlier. You’re probably not gonna be able to leave until it’s gone, which means either until backup arrives and chases this weed off, or until it gets what it wants from you, and since it apparently wants to talk to you, that means it’s going to stay there until you start talking. My advice is to play along until help gets there, so unshield!”

“There’s no other option?”

The flower’s face twitched, and Foaly flinched. “Unless you want a repeat of what happened to your Corporal earlier, then no! There isn’t! Unshield!”

There was an audible intake of breath on the other side of the line, and the fairy unshielded.

The monster’s face twisted into something even more disturbing than the cherubic smile – a truly monstrous twisted grin that was somehow even more horrifying than it’d been when he’d seen it in the footage before.

“Well well well!” It said. “You’re a new one! I’ve never seen anyone like you before!”

The captain reached up and pressed the button that would broadcast his voice through the helmet speakers.
“What do you want, monster?” He demanded, in English.

“Wow, rude! I told you, I just want to talk!”

Foaly started chewing anxiously on his nails, wishing he had a carrot to calm his nerves instead. Or Caballine! That would be even more comforting.

“What do you want to talk about?” The captain growled through gritted teeth.

*Please don’t say what I think you’re about to say, you little –*

The flower beamed at him again. “I want to ask you some questions!”

*D’Arvit!*


“Oh, you know, just questions! Like, for example, what are you doing down here?”

Foaly glanced at the other camera feeds. The nearest fairy was still two minutes away.

“Sightseeing,” the captain deadpanned.

There was no warning. One moment, his vitals were fine. The next, sensors went off, and the captain yelped in pain, looking down to see a *frond-damned vine* sticking up through his *reinforced boot*, surrounded by gushing blood.

“Don’t try play games with me!” The flower hissed. Gone was the innocent smile, and a leering glare that promised fire and brimstone had replaced it. “I asked you a question, and I want a *real* answer, or that vine isn’t coming out any time soon!”

A moment of hesitation. Again, Foaly glanced to another feed. Nearest fairy was a little over a minute away, and closing fast, but *not fast enough!*

“Well?” The vine twisted in the captain’s foot, but this time the fairy didn’t react audibly, even though his bio-readings were spiking in all areas.

“I told you,” he growled. “We’re *sightseeing.*”

The flower’s snarl grew more pronounced. “*Is that so?* Well, then, Mr. *Sightseer,* if you think you’re so smart, answer this one!”

It leaned forward, and, in a voice that would haunt Foaly’s nightmares for weeks to come, said, “*What are you?*”

*D’Arvit!*

“I’m human,” the captain lied. Another vine burst through his other foot, and vitals spiked again.

“Don’t lie! I can see your soul, right there in front of me! Human souls don’t look like that! Neither do monster souls!”

He couldn’t take it anymore. “Mesmer!” Foaly hissed. “Try the mesmer!”

The captain didn’t answer verbally, but lifted one hand and raised his visor. When he spoke next, his voice was layered with crystalline, bell-like tones.
“You don’t want to ask any more questions,” he intoned. The flower blinked once, twice.

“I… I don’t want to ask any more questions?”

Yes! Foaly pumped his fist in victory. *The mesmer works on it!*

“You don’t want to ask any more questions,” the officer repeated. “You want to leave me and my team alone, and never bother us again.”

“I…” The monster frowned, obviously confused. “I want to… leave you alone?”

“Yes. You want to leave us alone.”

“…” And then it’s face twisted. “Hold on a second!”

Luckily, for every fairy involved, the flower never got a chance to react more strongly than that, because that was the point that the backup arrived, Neutrino blasting. One beam of energy, set to the highest stun setting available, hit the monster right in the back of it’s head, and sent it careening.

“Fly!” Foaly blurted. “Get out of there!”

And before the monster could recover, the fairies were gone.

“Frisk?”

Frisk started as a small reptilian hand tapped them on the shoulder, and quickly turned their head.

“Is something wrong?” Alphys asked, wringing her hands. “It’s just… you seem a little out of it?”

They blinked a couple times at the worried monster, before glancing back around. Nothing *seemed* amiss – the horses drawing their cart were still trotting along at a fairly fast pace, the emerald countryside passing them by. Behind them, the other carts followed, each sporting their own passengers – a caravan of monsters, all dressed in their finest formal wear. There were no gunshots, no sign of a Reset, no dust on the wind, just the sound of excited or nervous chatter.

Nothing was wrong – *so why did they feel like something was?*

“No,” they managed. “Everything’s fine. Sorry, I guess I’m just a little overwhelmed? I mean,” they gestured pointedly at themselves, at the formal black dress and bright purple-and-white shawl that they’d put on for the occasion, and their normally messy hair drawn up into a french braid. “I’ve never been to a… a ball, you know?”

Alphys gave them a timid smile, and was quickly distracted by an enthusiastic slap on the back from Undyne. Frisk didn’t pay attention to the conversation that came next – that feeling of dread was only getting worse, and that dread had never let them down before.

*Okay Spiderman, leave off with that for now.*

They wished they could, honestly, but they knew that they were an obsessive worrier once they got started. It would take something pretty big to distract them.

The cart was trotted around a long, meandering bend, and Frisk got their distraction.

“WHOA!!” Undyne sprang to the front of the cart, eye wide. “Look at that! That’s so COOL!!”
The other monsters murmured agreement, and Frisk nodded, gawping at the manor that had just come into view. Despite being surrounded by a wall of towers and stones, they could see the building clearly through the metal gate – it was huge, a veritable castle made of cut stone, an epitome of gothic architecture with all it’s arched windows and huge entrance hall doorway, and elegant carvings adorning every inch. A smattering of carts and carriages were already “parked” along the driveway, and light was seeping through the open doorway, along with the soft background noise of music and chatter.

*Fowl Manor. We’re here!*

Chapter End Notes

Frisk’s spidey-senses are tingling. ;P

And WOOOOO, the gala’s about to start! There's gonna be some really important stuff going on at this party - but like a good (or horrible, depending on your POV) author, I shall not spoil anything for you guys, save for this: Frisk finds out their poker face isn't as good as they thought it was!
Once, when Frisk had been very, very young, they’d toddled into the living room to find their biological parents watching a movie on the television. They couldn’t remember precisely what the movie had been called – something to do with princesses – but they remembered the scene they’d seen clearly: a ballroom, golden and unbelievably fancy, with ornate pillars and paintings on the ceilings and polished floors, and gold-and-crystal chandeliers, and the entire room filled with people dancing, eating, laughing, in frilly dresses and suits that looked like something straight out of a fairytale.

When Mrs. Fowl had given them the invitations, one of the first things they’d wondered – once the excitement had lessened enough for them to actually think – was if the party at the Fowl estate would be just as fancy and fantastical.

It was.

Well, almost. As they had been escorted in by a mountainous butler in formal wear, Frisk had noted that, although the interior of the estate was just as ornate and castle-like as the exterior suggested, it wasn’t quite as gaudy, and what ornate decorations there were – the oaken banister of a staircase, paintings hanging from the walls, and some sort of glass and metal light fixture, to name but a few – were a bit more simplistic, more minimalist than what they’d seen in that movie.

The ballroom the actual party was being hosted in (to start off with, at least) was the same. Though there was a painting on the ceiling – they couldn’t make it out thanks to the lights that shone almost directly in their eyes when they tried to look up.

The frilly dresses and suits were spot on, though.

*Geeze, look at that one! Who needs that much lace?!

Frisk glanced around to find the outfit that had caught Chara’s attention this time, and their eyes landed on a woman wearing a dress with a lacy, multi-layered skirt that had to have been at least three feet wider than it actually needed to be. It was very pretty, just like most of the other dresses here, and decorated with complex Celtic-knot patterns.

*I’m starting to feel underdressed*, they thought, fiddling anxiously with the hem of their shawl. Compared to the vast array of breathtaking apparel around them, their own outfit stuck out like a very plain sore thumb.

*Pfft, you’d rather be in one of those gaudy things?

Frisk eyed another party-goer as he passed by, giving the monsters and their ambassador a curious look. *Well, I kinda stand out like this…*

*Well, yeah, but I’m pretty sure Mom might protest us wearing these things. I mean, seriously, look how low some of those necklines are!*

True. But Frisk still couldn’t shake the uncertainty. Maybe coming here hadn’t been a good idea after all.
*Now that’s an understatement. It’d probably be really easy to hide weaponry underneath those skirts…*

That thought had crossed their mind, too, but they’d been hoping Chara wouldn’t remind them. It was one thing to admire the pretty dresses, and quite another to know that each dress could hide a knife or a pistol *far* more easily than a casual jacket, and yet that woman in the mayor’s office had managed it. How many weapons were hidden in this crowd?

If there were any, at least it didn’t look like anybody was pulling them out. The monsters were slowly mingling into the crowd of human guests, and so far there hadn’t even been any dirty looks – in fact, most of the looks they got were ones of awe or curiosity, or, in the case of a blonde boy around their own age they’d seen earlier, overeager enthusiasm.

*But who knows how things could go wrong? Especially with HuRg around…*

Toriel, who Frisk had been tailing after for a little while now, turned to look down at them, and Frisk quickly put a little smile on their face and tried *not* to look like they were calculating the possibility of everyone in here being an assassin.

“How are you doing, my child?” The Queen asked, smiling. “I imagine this has been quite boring for you, so far.”

*Not even close, Mom. “No, I’m fine,”* they said. “I’ve just been looking around a lot – I mean, *look* at this place!” They gestured around them with only somewhat-faked enthusiasm. “It’s like I’m in a princess movie or something!”

The monster chuckled. “Well, I suppose that’s true.”

Frisk caught some movement out of the corner of their eyes – a group of monsters and humans chatting, munching on familiar spider-themed pastries.

*Looks like Muffet’s here.*

*Maybe we should go check on her? You know, make sure people aren’t giving her shit for being a spider.*

*You just want more chocolate, don’t you?*

A general feeling of irritation, from Chara’s usual location somewhere behind them.

*I’m not *that* obsessed with chocolate! I’m serious, Frisk! You know what some humans are like with spiders! And then there’s Fuku, too – I saw her earlier. And who knows what Undyne’s gotten up to!*

That was actually a really good point. It wasn’t just Muffet they needed to check on.

*But what about Mom?*

*We won’t be gone long, and anyway, she’s a boss monster!*

Taking a deep breath, Frisk looked back up at Toriel – who was watching them with a slightly worried expression. Darn, they’d zoned out right in front of her.

“Actually,” they said, slowly, letting just a tiny smidgen of their nervousness creep back in, “I’m getting a little bored. Would you mind if I went to see how everybody else is doing…?”
The worry cleared from Toriel’s expression, softening into a look of proud understanding. “Of course, Frisk. Feel free. I shall meet you at the entrance to the dining hall once dinner has been served, yes?”

Frisk nodded and quickly darted away.

Muffet, as it turned out, was doing quite well behind the concessions table. Though a couple people had given her trouble for letting her spiders touch the food she’d brought, the misunderstandings had been easy to get over, and she was looking smugger than Frisk had seen her in ages.

The other monsters they stopped to talk to hadn’t run across any trouble, either – all the humans had been polite and at least somewhat understanding, and some had been downright enthusiastic.

Still, they hadn’t talked to everybody yet, and they still hadn’t found Undyne –

“HOLY SHIT THAT’S SO BADASS!”

Never mind.

Frisk sidled their way through the crowds, apologizing and smiling sheepishly if they accidentally bumped into someone, until they found a reasonably clear spot on the floor that everyone seemed to be giving a wide berth. There, they found Undyne, who looked for all the world like she’d just won the Olympics, Alphys, who looked just the tiniest bit stunned, and a trio of humans – a tall, athletic-looking woman with a blonde, jade-bead tipped braid, and two kids, boys, one with curly blonde hair and the other with black.

“I know, right?” The woman was saying, snickering, as Frisk approached. “And that wasn’t even the best part! After I clobbered the guy, I managed to get him right in the –”

“Jules!” The blonde boy complained. “Don’t say it out loud!”

“Aww, why not?” She teased, turning to him. “Don’t tell me you’re squeamish about that kind of thing!”

The other boy scoffed “Hardly,” he said. “However, it’s not something for polite company.” He glanced pointedly around them – and caught sight of Frisk, standing awkwardly and watching. Realizing they’d been caught staring, Frisk shifted uncomfortably.

“Um, hello?” They managed.

The other boy leaned over to see what his brother (they looked similar enough, with the same dark blue eyes and facial features, they had to be related somehow) was looking at, and, upon seeing them, gasped.

“You’re the monster ambassador!” He squealed, and the next thing Frisk knew their hand had been grabbed and was being furiously shaken with enthusiasm to rival Undyne’s cooking lessons. “Hi! Oh my god, Mom told me she invited you but I didn’t know you were already here! Your name’s Frisk, right? Mine’s Beckett!”

“Um,” Frisk repeated. “I mean, y-yeah, my name’s Frisk. It’s nice to be here…?”

*Wow, so articulate.

Hey!
The woman snickered.

“Beck, back up and give the poor thing some space.” She said, grinning. “And you’re gonna take their hand off if you keep that up, you know!”

“Oops!” Beckett quickly let go of their hand. “Sorry!”

“It’s fine.” They assured him, quickly, even though their hand was actually hurting a bit. He had a strong grip for a twelve-year-old.

“Ha! As if!” Undyne boasted. “A little wimpy handshake like that is nothing!”

“Hey! My handshake isn’t wimpy!”

“Actually,” the black haired boy interrupted, “compared to hers, ours probably are ‘wimpy.’ We simply don’t have the musculature to compete.” He glared at Undyne. “That being said, you do not need to gloat.”

“Whoa, whoa!” Undyne grinned sharkishly at him. “Calm down, tough guy, I didn’t mean anything by it!” She marched over to Frisk and gave them a ferocious noogie. “I mean, Frisk is the biggest wimp I know!”

Frisk grinned a little at the backhand compliment, then glanced at the woman, who was watching this whole exchange with obvious amusement. She looked familiar, and after a moment, Frisk realized where they’d seen the Eurasian before.

“Weren’t you with Mrs. Fowl, in Muffet’s bakery?” They asked. “Sorry, I never got your name…?

“Juliet.” She smirked. “I’d offer to shake your hand, but I’m a little worried it’d be too wimpy.”

“No way, yours wouldn’t be wimpy!”

Seeing her so buddy-buddy with another human, and so quickly – they couldn’t have been talking longer than an hour or two, surely – was more than a little strange.

Noticing the look, Alphys finally shuffled over.

“Y-you remember those old human wrestling videos we watched once?” She asked.

They did, actually. If they stayed in the Underground for longer than a week after befriending Undyne, she usually called them over to the skeleton household, where they’d put in some old VHS tapes that had fallen into the dump. One of these tapes was a recording of a series of wrestling matches, between a young blonde human woman called the Jade Princess and various big, meaty looking guys. The Princess won every match, usually with spectacular wrestling moves and some sort of snarky quip.

The monster had never said it, but Frisk was fairly sure that Undyne had based a lot of her moves off of those videos. It would definitely explain where she’d learned the suplex from.

“W-well, uh,” Alphys glanced sideways at the woman, almost sheepishly. “She’s, um…”

They caught on to what Alphys was implying, and turned to gawp at the newly-introduced Juliet.
“You’re the Jade Princess?!” They blurted.

Juliet laughed. “Yup, that’s me! I retired a while ago to come watch over these little rascals.” She reached over to ruffle the black-haired boy’s hair, which he reluctantly accepted with a small roll of his eyes. “Lemme tell you, it never gets boring. You should see some of the stuff Beck and Myles here have pulled off, I swear, they’re almost as troublesome as their older brother was!”

“Juliet!” Beckett complained, flushing.

“Hey, you’re Fowls, you should be proud of it!” She snickered. She turned towards Undyne, a shit-eating grin splitting her face almost in half. “Once, when they were three, we were messing around in the gardens, and Myles –”

Noticing the embarrassment on the two boys’ faces, Frisk decided to take pity on them and leave instead of hearing Juliet’s recalling of whatever humiliating childhood incident she was going on about. They excused themselves with the excuse that they were going to check up on the other monsters, and quickly beat a retreat back into the crowd.

Only to turn around and find the boys following them.

“Sorry,” Beckett apologized, “but can we come with you?”

Myles nodded. “We’d rather not hear what Juliet has to say about us to your friend, and we’ve been rather eager to meet the monsters for some time now.”

“Oh. Um, sure, I guess?”

“Sweet!” Beckett crowed, and scurried to catch up to them as they kept walking. “So is it really true that you lived underneath Mount Ebott for a month, with the monsters? What was it like down there?”

Frisk wasn’t too sure what to think of Myles and Beckett.

Oh, they were nice enough, in different ways. Beckett was a bundle of energy, always talking with contagious enthusiasm and greeting people with a huge smile that was so bright you could’ve sworn he was a literal beam of sunshine. Myles was calm and considerably more subdued than his brother, and had interesting questions to ask the monsters Frisk introduced them to – everything from how their magic worked to how they’d fed themselves without access to the sun for farming – without accidentally asking something offensive, and if a monster wasn’t comfortable with the question, he apologized and backed down.

But they felt a little… awkward, talking to them.

After the monsters had started traveling abroad, Frisk had been busy chatting it up with politicians, mayors, presidents, ministers – all people of great importance, and all adults. They were used to people looking down on them, because in their eyes Frisk was just a child and had no place in politics.

But whenever Beckett turned to them, either to exclaim about how cool the monsters were, or to ask them a question, he looked starstruck. It was weird.

Myles was another thing entirely. He didn’t look like he’d just met a celebrity whenever he talked to them, more respectful than anything else. But sometimes Frisk caught him studying them with a very scrutinizing look, as if looking at them through a microscope and trying to spot all the flaws.
It was nerve-wracking, and Frisk couldn’t help but feel like they’d slip up, somehow, and expose all those secrets to those scathing eyes.

*Calm down, partner. They’re just kids.*

*I’m just a kid, too,* they argued, as they introduced the twins (“Myles is older by ten minutes,” Beckett had informed them cheerfully) to another monster. *And so are you, technically, and look at how good we are at reading people!*

*But we’ve had a couple thousand Resets to figure out this stuff. They haven’t.*

*True,* Frisk admitted, watching Beckett ask the Ice Cap if he could try on their hat, and beaming when the monster said yes and helped him put it on. *I guess I’m being a little paranoid, huh?*

*Yeah, you are. Relax a little.*

As if Chara themselves wasn’t tense. They were almost more nervous about their two tagalongs than Frisk was, though they’d been getting a little calmer once the unofficial meet-n-greets had started.

Frisk waved goodbye to the Ice Cap as they toddled off with their hat perched securely back on their head, and turned back to the twins.

“Monsters are so cool!” Beckett gushed, for the billionth time. Myles nodded.

“Literally, in this case.” He said. Frisk grinned a little, in spite of their nervousness.

“I see what you did there.”

Myles raised an eyebrow at them. “I see or icy?”

It took Frisk a moment to get it, but when they did, it startled a laugh out of them.

Okay, maybe he’s not so bad.

The twins ended up departing a little later, when Juliet came to find them. Once they’d wandered off (“We’ll come back later, before you leave!” Beckett had promised), Frisk didn’t actually see them again, save for an occasional glimpse, until after dinner.

Dinner was actually more nerve-wracking than the rest of the gala had been. At least when everyone had been standing around in pretty dresses and gossiping, Frisk had been able to carefully work their way around awkward-sounding conversations, and find places where not as many people would stare at them and their sore-thumb-plain attire.

At the table, which was long and ornate and covered in huge dishes of practically every food Frisk had ever seen and some they hadn’t, they couldn’t do that. They had to sit down in a chair in full view of everybody, where they couldn’t so much as twiddle their thumbs without at least a dozen people seeing them.

On top of that, they were sitting in the middle of a big group of monsters, many of whom were loud and very, very obvious, and, before the food was properly served, Mrs. Fowl and a man Frisk could only assume to be her husband stood up, and literally introduced them and the monsters to everyone in the room as special guests.
“Please make certain to make them feel welcome,” Mr. Fowl had added at the end of his wife’s speech, and after that, it felt like every eye in the room had stayed focused on the ambassador for the rest of the meal.

So when the boys came by again, and offered to show them around the Fowl Estate gardens as thanks for introducing them to so many monsters, Frisk was all too eager to agree.

Besides, they really wanted to see what the gardens were like. Asgore’s garden in New Home had been impressive, and bright and cheerful – what would a human manor’s garden be like?

As it turned out, the answer to that question was big.

Seriously, the grounds were enormous. They hadn’t even gone halfway around the front of the manor before their feet were aching in their dressy shoes. There was just so much out here – flower patches, bustling with exotic blooms, decorative vines that snaked up stone columns, decorative ponds – sorry, water features – surrounded by carved stones and filled with colorful fish. Frisk could’ve sworn they’d seen a peacock, too, somewhere in between the water and the section with the community gardens where local farmers helped grow crops.

“Yes, there are peacocks on the grounds,” Myles had said when they’d asked. “Not as many as there used to be, though – they were difficult to care for directly after the Crash.”

“Peacocks,” Frisk repeated, stunned, as they followed the boys around another corner. “You have pet peacocks. That’s so cool.”

Beckett flushed, apparently flattered, and Myles himself looked a little smug at the praise.

However, despite how amazing the gardens were, Frisk was soon feeling a little nervous again.

Not because of the twins, though Myles’ scrutinizing looks hadn’t stopped. No, it was because they couldn’t see any of the monsters.

*Of course not. They’re all inside.

I know, but I’m not in there with them. I’ve left them on their own in there, just because I was uncomfortable! What if they get hurt?

*I’ve been keeping an eye on them.

From here? You can’t go far!

*Well, no, but I can see in those big fancy windows. Nobody in the ballroom is panicking yet, so no HuRg, or anybody else.

Still, Frisk fretted. What if somebody in there pulls a gun? I should really go back in –

“Hey, are you okay, Ambassador?”

Frisk flinched and quickly turned what they hoped was a reassuring smile in Beckett’s direction.

“Y-yeah, I’m fine,” they said. “Sorry, I zone out like that sometimes.”

The twins exchanged looks, then turned back to them.

“You have no reason to fear for the monsters’ safety here,” Myles said.
“W-what do y-you –”

Myles gave them a slightly irritated look. “Do not try to play dumb, Ambassador. I’ve been observing you since we first met. You, up until now, have refused to wander far from the monsters. You have repeatedly visited numerous monsters, including the spider monster Muffet and several other monsters with appearances similar to things many humans find distasteful. You consistently scan the crowds around you, paying particular attention to people’s hands, and to any particularly frivolous articles of clothing which could be used to hide the presence of a weapon. If a human approaches a monster – such as ourselves – you tense, and watch them carefully until they have proven they are not a threat. And,” he raised a finger to punctuate his final point. “I happen to know, for a fact, that none of this can be explained as a simple fear of crowds, which would have been the next most logical conclusion, as I have seen videos of many of your speeches, and you show no signs of such nervousness amongst crowds that are known to be predominantly pro-monster or are obviously secured and therefore safe.”

Frisk stared at him, stunned, and was distantly aware of Chara swearing.

“We might be kids,” Beckett added, seriously, “but even we know an event like this could be dangerous to the monsters, especially with that terrorist group active. Mom and Dad were very careful when they were vetting the security guards.”

“They were especially careful concerning their guests,” Myles continued for him. “The guards were ordered to check every individual here for weapons discretely, so as not to provoke others that may have been armed into taking more drastic action, and any suspicious individuals were taken aside and thoroughly searched for weaponry.” He stared at Frisk, full in the face, as if daring them to argue. “This is undoubtedly one of the safest places on the planet for the monsters at present time, Ambassador. You have no reason to fear for them.”

He finally fell silent, watching them.

*Holy shit.*

There were no words that could have put it better. How the heck? They’d – he’d – how –

After a few moments of wrestling with their emotions, Frisk managed to croak out, “Was it really that obvious?”

Beckett grinned sheepishly. “Not for normal people,” he admitted. “I didn’t catch any of that until Myles told me right after dinner. But he’s really smart!” He beamed with inherited pride at his brother, who nodded.

“I have a doctorate in psychology,” he said, as if it was no big deal.

*He has a what?*

“I… I see.” Frisk gulped. This kid, who couldn’t be any older, than they were (biologically, at least), had a doctorate in psychology.

Wow. That was just… wow.

Nobody had ever read them so easily before.

Their unease must’ve shown (of course it would, there was no way it wouldn’t), because Myles
finally stopped watching them so intensely, and actually looked a little abashed.

“I apologize,” he said. “I did not mean to scare you.”

“No, no, it’s fine!” Frisk assured him quickly. “It – it just caught me off guard.” They forced a laugh. “You really have a doctorate?”

“Several.”

*Several?!

“R-really?”

He nodded seriously. Beckett quickly butted in before Frisk could ask what *those* doctorates were for, though.

“Okay, come on, we still have one more place to show you!” He grabbed their hand. “This is the best place in the gardens!”

Still shaken and somewhat glad for the distraction, Frisk let him drag them after him. “The b-best, huh?”

“Uh-huh!” He shot them his beaming ray-of-sunshine smile. “You seemed to really like the flower plots earlier, so I bet you’ll love this!”

They rounded a corner, and Beckett dropped their hand in order to spread his own in a wide, dramatic gesture. “Tah-dah!”

In front of them, a large crater had been bored into the earth, almost as if a meteor had landed here. (Considering how many satellites had fallen during the Crash, it probably might as well have been.) The rubble remains of what must have been some sort of stone structure were scattered around it in a rough circle. And amongst the bits of carved stones, a spiral of bright orange roses was in full bloom.

Seeing their stunned expression, Beckett grinned.

“See? Isn’t this great?”

Frisk nodded. It was, easily, the best place on the grounds, but *not* because of the flowers. The roses *were* pretty amazing, they couldn’t deny that – they’d *never* seen flowers like this before. The blooms were *enormous*, easily the biggest roses they’d ever seen, and their orange color was impossibly bright – the same shade of orange as one of the human souls in the Underground, the soul of Bravery.

But that wasn’t why this place was amazing.

No, the *real* reason was the golden light floating at the exact center of the rose spiral, brilliant even against the fluorescent petals.

*A SAVE point.*

Chapter End Notes
This chapter wasn't, uh, meant to be this long. It kinda... got out of hand? I mean, I had so much fun writing Frisk's interactions with the twins (and figuring out how to make Myles not quite sound like a mini-Artemis - I tried to make him at least a little different, but I'm not sure how successful I was), especially at the end there... *sweats*

But hey, you guys get a long chapter now, and look! Important plot stuff, right there at the end, so it's not really a filler chapter, either! Success!
Frisk was hyper aware of everything around them in that moment. The smell of the flowers, so intense that they could almost taste it. The golden glow reflecting off the petals that they knew only they could see. Chara’s stunned silence, and their slightly chilly presence hanging over their shoulder.

A SAVE point.

There was a SAVE point. Here. On the surface.

They had never found one on the surface. Never, not in any of the almost two thousand runs that they’d lived through. The SAVE points only ever appeared in the Underground.

But here was one now. Right in front of them. Complete even with the odd sensation that seemed to surround every one of them like an aura – a shivering, gut-wrenching tremor, and a strange warping of the world around it that you could feel but never see.

A SAVE point. I can SAVE. We can SAVE!!

Euphoria bloomed in their chest - then a prickling feeling on the back of their neck reminded them that there were two people watching them, including someone with a doctorate in psychology, someone who’d read them like a book, and they quickly stomped down on the emotion, smothering it.

Bad! They scolded themselves. You can’t forget something like that!

Still, it was hard, to not just melt from sheer relieved glee, right then and there. It had been almost a year and a half since they’d last SAVED – just before they’d left Ebott to begin their extended trip around the world – and they’d thought they’d have to wait until they got back to America, an estimated three years later, before they got another chance. Three years of watching their every step, of overwhelming paranoia that something would happen, and they’d be one Reset closer to waking up in a yellow flowerbed in the Underground with their mind all skewed and wrong.

And, what with HuRg and the near assassination of Dublin’s mayor, it had started looking more and more that it would be here in Ireland that the luck they’d managed to keep ahold of would finally run out.

It might still run out. It would run out, they were sure of it.

Which meant that even though there were two pairs of eyes on them, they couldn’t pass this up. They had to SAVE. They might not get another chance.

Slowly, cautiously, they took a step, then a few more, letting their feet bring them up to the edge of the rose spiral.

“Wow,” they breathed, hoping fervently that they didn’t sound too happy all of a sudden – hardly anyone had mood swings just like that, and the people that did were generally unstable, and they did not want the boys questioning their sanity, or anything at all, right now. “These are beautiful.”
They glanced at the Fowl twins out of the corner of their eyes and saw Beckett puff up his chest in pride. Myles was still watching Frisk themselves, however, so they quickly averted their eyes. *Let’s not give him anymore reasons to exercise that brain of his yet.*

They knelt down to study a rose close up – they needed to look like they were appreciating the blooms. Which they did – the flowers really were spectacular – though not as much as they did the glowing golden salvation hovering at the spiral’s center.

“What kind of roses are these?” They asked. “I’ve never seen ones with orange petals before.”

One of the boys *hmmed* thoughtfully.

“You know, we really don’t know,” Beckett mused. “Most people around here just call them fairy roses.”

“They may be some variation of Mister Lincoln roses,” his brother suggested. “If I am remembering correctly, they are significantly larger than many other rose species.”

“Shouldn’t your gardener know what sort of roses they are? I mean, if the gardener you have now is the one that planted them…?”

The twins lapsed into silence for several long moments. Frisk meandered a few steps closer to the center of the spiral before risking another sidelong glance back at them, in time to see what could only be called a silent conversation – Beckett cast Myles a quizzical and slightly pleading glance, which the other boy responded to with a deadpan look, which was countered by an even more pleading glance plus a pair of skeptical raised eyebrows, and so on and so forth.

*Must be a sibling thing. I’ve seen Sans and Pap have conversations like that before.*

Finally, whatever psychic argument the boys had been having was apparently settled, and when they turned back to Frisk, Beckett had a tiny smile on his face.

“The thing is,” he whispered conspiratorially, “nobody knows who planted them!”

Frisk stopped and looked at him with genuine surprise. “What do you mean nobody?”

“Nobody ever admitted to planting them! They just started growing one day, a couple months after the Crash, and no-one knew who did it!”

“That’s the main reason the locals took to calling them fairy roses,” Myles added reluctantly. “During the Crash, many people claimed to have sighted small fairy-like beings, and the roses began to bloom at the height of the rumors concerning said sightings.”

“That, and they appeared from nowhere,” Beckett stressed. “Like fairy circles, out of the old stories!”

*They appeared from nowhere, right after the Crash,* Frisk mused, carefully advancing farther towards the center of the spiral. *I wonder... did the SAVE point have anything to do with that?*

The SAVE points in the Underground had never seen to affect their surroundings all that much, save for that odd warpage. It was almost as if they didn’t actually exist except to Frisk, and nothing else could interact with them.

However, that had been in the *Underground.* The rules might be different up here.

Though if that were the case, and the flowers *had* been caused by the SAVE point, then that meant
that said SAVE point had only appeared sometime during or after the Crash. Which didn’t sound normal at all, because they weren’t supposed to just appear like that…

Right?

* You can ask Sans about it later! Hurry up and SAVE!

Frisk blinked as Chara finally spoke up, realizing that they were only a few feet away from their glowing golden lifeline. They’d still been walking while they were thinking.

“That’s a little odd,” they said, weakly.

“Mmm-hmm!” Beckett agreed. “But in a cool sort of way!”

“Definitely,” Frisk agreed. “I mean, who knows, maybe this means that fairies are real or something. I mean, monsters are real, right? Why wouldn’t fairies be?”

They took a couple more steps, and knelt down, reaching out gingerly as if to touch one Bravery-orange bloom –

The world twisted, colors and sounds and smells glitching furiously in a maelstrom of chaotic paradoxes, and then settled again, the sensations of the world becoming that much sharper as reality solidified again.

* The realization that you can stave off another Reset for that much longer… it fills you with Determination!

Frisk grinned triumphantly, finishing their reach to gently touch a petal.

Safe. This timeline’s safe!

For now. The SAVE points didn’t last forever. Frisk had found that out the hard way – by dying over and over again until, when they blindly reached out to LOAD, they found themselves waking back up in the Ruins again, right back at the beginning.

The longest number of LOADS they’d ever gotten from a single point had been a hundred and fifty, and that had been in the Judgement Hall, during the Genocide run…

No, don’t think about that. You’ve SAVED, that’s not going to happen yet, you’ve got time!

How much time, they didn’t know.

Wiping the smile from their face and putting on a calmer expression – the face of someone still jittery with nerves, but not as much as they had been before – they turned to face the Fowl twins again.

“Thank you for showing me these,” they said, meekly. “You’re right, this is definitely the best place in the gardens.”

Beckett beamed, innocently ignorant to the space-time shenanigans that had happened right in front of his nose. Myles, too, seemed to not have noticed anything – at least, the level of scrutiny he’d been giving the ambassador hadn’t changed, and he didn’t look suspicious.

That didn’t actually mean that he hadn’t seen anything, though.

“If you say so,” Myles said after a second, a bit dubiously. “I honestly prefer the barn.”
“You only like the barn because that’s where Artemis was working on that plane of his!” Beckett accused his sibling, scowling playfully.

“You have a barn?” Frisk asked, taking advantage of the subject change to hopefully distract the boys from anything odd they may or may not have just witnessed. “What would you need a barn for?”

“We don’t need a barn for anything, though we use it as a workshop for larger projects and a place to store our carriage,” Myles corrected them. “However, the manor was originally a castle, built by one of our distant ancestors during the Crusades, so a barn would have been necessary to house livestock, in case of famine or siege…”

“Show off!” Beckett snickered.

“Can I see it?” Frisk asked. “I mean, if it’s basically a workshop now, that sounds cool!”

“Well, I guess, but it doesn’t look anything too special.” Beckett gestured for them to follow, and they did, quickly navigating their way out of the rose spiral and following the boys as they led them back across the garden. “It’s just a barn – Artemis didn’t change anything inside, and Myles hasn’t worked on any big projects for a while now…”

As the boy kept talking, Frisk took one last glance over their shoulder in time to see the point of yellow light disappear behind a corner of the manor.

After that, the remainder of the tour seemed to pass by very quickly. Frisk was shown the barn, which was, in fact, a barn, though a barn severely lacking in farming equipment and packed with odd metal bits that were, apparently, leftovers from one of Myles’ bioengineering projects, some sort of life-support and diagnostic system, several months back. (“I finished the prototype months ago,” the boy had said matter-of-factly, “and have tested it on several animals and found it to work well and without harm to the users or the ‘patients’. Now it’s simply a matter of waiting for human volunteers…”) Then they were shown the pond outside the barn, which apparently glowed like hellfire at certain times of the day, several more flowerbeds, and a small corner of the grounds where several peacocks were nestled away from the hustle of activity indoors, where they managed to get close enough to pet one.

Then the boys were called away back inside by their mother, and Frisk was left on their own until they wandered back inside to check on all the monsters again. They picked their way through the lessening crowds – apparently some guests had decided to leave while they were gone – and spoke to every monster they could find. Not one weapon had been pulled, nor any insults thrown – not even at Muffet, who was still looking very smug at her table – and most of the remaining human attendees had been very polite.

The only one who hadn’t, apparently, was Juliet, who had used the Fowl twins’ absence to trade less-than-kid-friendly stories with the former royal guard. By the time Frisk managed to drag themselves away again (making the excuse that they needed to check in with Toriel), the two were already making plans to meet up at a local gym on one of and do some light sparring – which, knowing Undyne, would mean wrecking all of the equipment in said gym, and possibly breaking the windows.

Hopefully the poor building would still be standing afterward. Frisk didn’t think the Fowls would be too happy about having to pay for the construction of a new one.

They found Toriel nodding and waving farewells to several human guests leaving for the night near
the front hall. She seemed tired, but otherwise okay, if her smile upon seeing them was any indication.

“Hello, Frisk! How was the tour?”

They smiled back. “Great,” they said honestly. “The gardens are really cool – they’ve got peacocks and water features and some exotic flowers out there! They’ve even got some they call fairy roses – they’re these huge roses that are bright orange!” They grinned even wider, and shot their adoptive mother a wink. “They’re fairy pretty!”

Toriel chuckled. “Shall I grant you some brownie points for a pun well done?”

Frisk snickered.

“What about the Fowl children?” Toriel continued. “I trust they treated you well?”

The ambassador nodded. Apart from that little hey-I-read-you-like-a-book thing.

“Good, good.” The Queen stretched, then sighed. “I am afraid I have not have had quite so fun a time as you, my child. Many of the guests here were quite curious about a… certain someone back home.”

Frisk winced. Toriel and Asgore had managed to reconcile somewhat, in the several months that the American government had forced the monsters to remain underground, but they were still on thin ice, and the matter wasn’t helped any by the old king having to stay under Mt. Ebott until the humans deemed him trustworthy. That had probably upset Toriel more than anything else, and someone bringing it up in conversation… well, the less said the better.

“Apart from that, many of the humans here are very nice, if a bit formal,” Toriel continued. “They have had many interesting questions for me and the other monsters – oh! Hello, sir!”

Frisk looked up at the human that had just approached them – a balding, elderly man, who they vaguely recognized as a politician they’d seen on the news once maybe a couple of weeks ago.

“Hello, Your Majesty,” the man said, bowing his head to Toriel and completely ignoring Frisk. “I assume you’ve been doing well?”

Frisk stood there awkwardly as the man began pestering Toriel with questions. Well, maybe not pestering, not exactly – he did have a lot of questions, but Toriel didn’t seem particularly bothered by them.

Finally, after a long five minutes of conversation, the man finally said “I understand that you’re working on the fostering program suggested to the mayor, yes? How is that coming along?”

Frisk took the opportunity to speak up, just a little fed up with the way the man was ignoring them. “It’s coming along pretty well, actually. We’ve already interviewed all of the original volunteers and narrowed them down to the people who would actually be able to successfully foster a mon –”

The man shot them an imperious glare, and the ambassador’s voice trailed off.

“I did not ask you, little girl,” he said flatly. “The Queen needs no proxy to speak of what she’s been doing, yes?”

Toriel bristled, and Chara growled over Frisk’s shoulder, but before either of them could react, a new voice interrupted the conversation.
“With all due respect, Mr. Yew, from my knowledge, the Queen has actually had little involvement with the developments involving the fostering.”

Frisk nearly leaped out of their skin, and Chara yelped.

* Where they hell did he come from?!

The young man standing a few scant yards behind them had, indeed, seemed to have appeared out of nowhere, his black suited and black haired form just melting right out of the crowds.

“Ah,” the now-named Mr. Yew said. “An honest mistake, I’m sure.”

The newcomer’s sharp blue eyes narrowed. “Hardly an innocent mistake, considering that it is already well-known and very public knowledge how active the monsters’ young Ambassador is, that they were the one to suggest the measures taken to ensure the monsters’ safety whilst dwelling in the same building as a human family, and that they were the one to actually perform each interview and vet the volunteers afterwards. As I understand it,” here he turned to Frisk, raising an eyebrow, “you are also working on personally matching each monster to a human family you believe to be a match to their personality and needs, isn’t that correct, Ambassador?”

Frisk nodded in confirmation, even as Mr. Yew’s face began to pale rapidly.

“Surely you jest!” The politician blustered. “A mere child can’t have done all that!”

The air seemed to grow cold, and the man took a step back, face blanching even further, as an intense glare was turned on him.

“I am sure I have no need to tell you who I am, yes?” The man’s voice was cold, too, every syllable as sharp and precise as a diamond-edged scalpel. “After all, before your current profession, you were one of my father’s business partners, and you spent much of your time in this very manor. I am sure you have seen what my younger brothers are capable of, and you have certainly had the chance to hear, from them, what I was capable of as a mere child.” He leaned forward. “Need I remind you of just what I was capable of, and what I still am capable of?”

* “My younger brothers?” “My father’s?” What?

Frisk’s jaw dropped. No way. There’s no way.

Now sweating profusely, the politician backed off, let out a trembling apology and an “I have places to be, excuse me,” and fled back into the safety of the crowds. The man watched him go for a moment, then turned to the astonished ambassador.

“I apologize for that, Ambassador. Had my parents known of his personality shortcomings, I doubt they would have invited him.”

“I-It’s fine,” Frisk stammered. “I’ve gotten worse than that. Um, a-are – I mean, are you…?”

The man’s expression turned into subtle amusement.

“It would seem my reputation has proceeded me yet again,” he said wryly, offering one outstretched hand for a handshake. “It is a pleasure to finally meet you in person, Ambassador Frisk. I am Artemis Fowl II.”

Chapter End Notes
And with this chapter, FRISK HAS OFFICIALLY MET ARTEMIS IN PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME!! I hope I did it justice!

And yes, I'm posting this chapter a little early for you guys - I'm going on a day-long trip tomorrow, and I'm not sure if I'll be back in time to upload this in a timely manner, so early Saturday upload it is! Happy reading, and enjoy the cliffhanger! >:D
One could tell a great deal about a person by the way they acted and reacted towards others, and the young ambassador’s actions, as they reached out hesitantly to shake his hand, spoke volumes.

_Surprised, Artemis noted. Though it seems they can’t decide whether to be pleasantly or unpleasantly so._

Which, honestly, was a relief. Considering Alphys’s reaction to him appearing before her, he wasn’t sure he could handle yet another individual fawning over him and everything he did that wasn’t his mother or his brothers.

On the other hand, Alphys had never looked so cautious as to be just shy of suspicious.

_Which means they do not trust me._

He had anticipated such a reaction, especially after hearing what one of Butler’s contacts in the police had passed along. Undyne was a former Royal Guard, a policewoman, and above all, a known acquaintance of Frisk’s, a friend as well as an ally. She would not have held back such crucial information as the Fowls are suspected criminals and left them in the dark and possibly in danger.

_Admirable, but this will complicate matters somewhat._

He had come to this occasion only because the Ambassador was here. No matter how uncomfortable such events might make him, he was not passing up the opportunity to establish the beginning of proper rapport with them, and thus plant the seeds for further communication and information exchange.

_Well, that still shouldn’t be too difficult._

“H-hello, Mr. Fowl,” Frisk said, stuttering for a moment before forcing their voice to steady again. “You’re doing well?”

“I am.” Artemis inclined his head. “And you are as well? I can only assume that the interviews and other such preparations for the fostering program are quite tiring.”

They nodded, and Artemis pulled his hand back and turned to the monster standing just behind the child, bowing his head respectfully.

“And I trust you are well, Your Majesty? I understand that many of Mother’s guests have been asking you rather uncomfortable questions.”

“Nothing I cannot handle;” Toriel said firmly.

“Good.” Artemis let his lips twitch upwards at the edges, just a hint of his trademark smirk. “If they should give you further problems, however, please, feel free to come to me for aid. I know a great many of the guests here, and they know me by reputation – I’m certain I could persuade them into silence if need be.”
The monster’s eyes narrowed a fraction, and Artemis turned back to Frisk, who was watching him with the intense concentration of a hawk – a concentration they immediately hid behind one of the most impressive poker faces Artemis had ever borne witness to. “The same applies to you as well, Ambassador. If someone such as Mr. Yew should bother you as well, feel free to ask for my assistance. After all, people of our ilk should stick together, yes?”

Frisk blinked, some of the suspicion quickly being replaced by confusion. “‘Our ilk?’”

His smirk grew a little wider. “Of course. I hardly think you are a normal child in terms of intellect. How many other children can have claimed to have organized worldwide protests and become an acclaimed politician in the short span of a few months, let alone hold onto said position as a politician and soundly counteract the arguments of numerous more experienced men and woman in several different countries? I know of nobody else who could do such things save us two, and perhaps a contact of mine in France.”

For a long few moments, the ambassador’s confusion remained unchanged. He could all but see the metaphorical gears turning, as they processed his words and the implications within.

Then something clicked, and the child’s eyes widened in shock.

“What? You –” They shook their head frantically. “I’m not a genius, not like you! I just – I just did a lot of research! And improvised a lot! That’s it!”

“Even genii have need for research on occasion,” he pointed out wryly. “And obviously, what research you have done has been done expertly. The field of politics is a difficult one to get steady footing in, and yet I’d almost say you were a professional after a mere two years. You pick up on nuances that many others in your field do not, think everything through quickly and efficiently, and rarely hesitate. That is more than I can say of someone like Mr. Yew.”

Frisk reeled back as if struck, eyes widening.

“In addition to that, you discovered and freed an entire sentient species that nobody else on the planet even knew existed. You earned the trust of the entirety of said species in a mere month, including the details of much of their technology. You convinced them to give humanity another chance when heavens know many of us do not deserve it.” He shrugged, and continued a tad reluctantly, “That alone puts you head and shoulders above me.”

He paused, allowing the child a moment to regain their bearings.

“So, taking all that into consideration, I’d daresay that you are, if not already there, well on your way to becoming my intellectual equal.”

Frisk gaped openly at him, mouth opening and closing as they struggled to come up with some response to his argument.

Despite their skills, they are far from confident. Which is understandable, seeing what their upbringing was like.

Giving the child another smirk, he fished around in one suit pocket for a moment, then pulled out the business card he had brought with him – one printed just this morning, in preparation for the gala.

“Really, Ambassador, you should be more confident in your abilities. There is an advantage in someone else underestimating you, but to underestimate yourself is hardly advantageous.” He held out the card, and the child took it numbly, still visibly in shock. “I meant what I said. You and I are very much alike. It would be a shame not to keep in contact. Should you need my assistance, and I
am available, I will do what I can to help.”

Frisk nodded, and Artemis turned briefly to Toriel once again, giving the monster queen a bow and a polite farewell, before turning to leave.

He paused again, calculating his next words carefully. Should I?

Yes, I do believe I should.

“Oh, yes. Ambassador, do be careful. There have been some worrying circumstances surrounding several incidents here, particularly in the Dublin area. I would hate to lose such a valuable ally as yourself. Farewell."

Final words delivered, the Irishman departed, disappearing into the crowd and leaving the Ambassador behind.

I would hate to lose such a valuable ally as yourself.

Still shell-shocked, clutching the man’s business card like a lifeline, Frisk stared at where Artemis Fowl had vanished from sight.

There was… there was no way. It had to be a coincidence. After all, everybody knew about Humanity’s Resurgence by now – how could they not? It was all over the news after the attack on the mayor. It was only sensible to want to warn someone, especially when they were a viable target of said group. And as a pro-monster politician, and a representative of Ireland, it would be sensible to want the Monster Ambassador as an ally.

But the way he’d said it. The wording. That was familiar.

That was almost exactly what Anonymous said, the last time they contacted me.

No, it couldn’t be them. What were the odds of Anonymous being Artemis Fowl II?

* Maybe not all that low…

What?

* Well, think about it. He talks the way Anonymous types, doesn’t he? All proper and stuff. And he’s a suspected former criminal. Anonymous isn’t exactly moral.

That doesn’t mean that it was him! And why would he…

They didn’t need Chara to intervene on their thoughts. They cut themselves off as another occurred to them.

He’s pro-monster. Very pro-monster – he funded that mural, attended sit-in protests, everything. And he was one of the people to recommend the fostering program in the first place, Undyne said so.

Whether or not he had moral reasons to help the monsters, he could possibly have the motivation – and the skills, thanks to his upbringing – to hack into classified documents in order to free them.

And if he did do something like that, he probably would want to be anonymous, wouldn’t he? It’s not good to advertise that sort of thing.
Chara was right. It wasn’t as far-fetched of an idea as they thought.

Just very, very unlikely.

“Frisk?”

Frisk started, then looked up at Toriel. “Sorry, Mom.” They grinned, a little sheepishly. “It’s just… well, it’s not every day that someone says your a genius, right?”

The Queen chuckled and ruffled their hair affectionately. “No, it is not. Though I must say, he is correct, my child. What you’ve done is very impressive for your age.”

Even though they were grinning, internally, they were wincing.

*We’re only as good as we are because of the Resets. Because we’ve lived through this before, and if we don’t get things right, we know we might end up killed.*

Time loops or not, dying, and the mistakes that lead up to dying, was very memorable.

*I’m no genius. I’ve just lived for a lot longer than people think.*

The rest of the gala passed without incident.

Most of the guests gradually left, trickling away to board their carts and carriages and trot away into the distance. Some lingered, but that number grew fewer and fewer, until finally, only a few dozen people remained, most of them monsters. Food was packed up and loaded into pantries or carts, tables were carefully rearranged along the walls, and quiet, brief conversations were had.

Then it was time to leave. As one group, the monsters that had come started getting up into the carts, rearranging clothes and shuffling to make sure everybody who’d come, plus the monsters who had arrived earlier to provide food and drink, would have room to sit.

Just as everybody else had gotten seated, and Frisk was about to climb up into the cart themselves, they heard a shout.

“Hey! Frisk, wait!”

They blinked, then turned around to find Myles and Beckett racing up to a stop behind them. Myles was red in the face and very out of breath, while his brother looked fit as a fiddle, and kept bouncing on his feet when he stopped.

“Sorry, we just wanted to make sure we could say goodbye before you left,” Beckett said. “And, uh… maybe also invite you back in, I don’t know, a month?”

Frisk blinked again. “What?”

“We wish to invite you to our birthday celebration, one month from now.” Myles clarified.

“Why?”

“Er, well…”

“We like you,” Beckett said bluntly, with a casual shrug. “You’re nice, and you’re really smart.”

“You do make for refreshing company,” Myles agreed reluctantly. “And even if we didn’t invite
you, our mother likely would, considering how much of a fuss she’s been making over us ‘finally having a normal friend.’”

Frisk couldn’t help but snicker at that. Normal? They were so far from normal it sometimes hurt to think about it!

Beckett grinned at them a little sheepishly, and Myles smirked – no doubt understanding somewhat why Frisk was snickering.

“So… would you like to come?” The blonde twin asked hopefully. “You don’t have to buy a gift or anything…”

They hesitated, but only for a moment.

I’d be able to SAVE again. And, realistically, it can’t hurt to be friends with them, if that’s what they really want. I definitely wouldn’t have to worry about the Fowls anymore, and if something did happen…

And they did kind of like the twins. Myles may have terrified them with his super-sized brain and borderline psychic intuition, but he was at least polite, and Beckett was a huge sweetheart.

Yeah. Yeah, this could turn out okay.

“Sure.” They said. “I’d like to… and I wouldn’t mind being friends with you guys, either.”

Beckett beamed. Myles visibly sagged in relief.

“See you in a month, then! Or maybe sooner! Oh, and you can bring any of your monster friends you want, too!”

“Except Undyne,” Myles muttered. “I don’t think I could handle her and Juliet in the same room ever again…”

Frisk giggled in spite of themselves, and, with a wave and a goodbye, got up into the cart.

When they glanced back at the manor, just before the cart trundled around the corner and out of sight, the entire Fowl family was standing there, watching them leave – the twins waving, the parents smiling…

And Artemis Fowl II, upon catching their eye, gave them a nod and a tiny, almost conspiratorial smirk.

Chapter End Notes

MAN, this took me way too long to write.

But hey, better late than never! Sorry it took me so long, guys!

Things are gonna start picking up after this, now that the gala's over, so hold onto your seats! ;P
As soon as the last of the monsters' carts disappeared around the bend, and the gates had been shut, cutting off the rest of the outside world, Artemis turned to his parents with a slight smile, knowing exactly what he would see.

"Artemis," his father greeted, not unkindly, but not without a note of suspicion. "You've been doing well?"

"Father." He nodded back. "Yes, quite well."

"I trust you didn't bring any of your more… unusual business contacts with you?"

"No, of course not. This was, after all, a private occasion."

Angeline chuckled, taking ahold of one of Artemis Sr.'s hands. "Oh Timmy, you know perfectly well that his 'business contacts' are already here."

True enough. After the Berserker Gate had been deactivated and, with assistance from two demon warlocks, dismantled, so as to never be used again, the LEP had taken no chances. There was constantly a small team of Section Eight fairies patrolling the grounds, some so heavily armed with magical countermeasures that it was a small miracle they didn't clank when they walked. They usually stayed well out of sight of the manor's human residence – except for Holly, whenever she was assigned here – but his family was well aware of their presence.

The man sniffed. "Yes, dear, but I was thinking more along the lines of that dwarf."

Beckett snickered, and Artemis smirked, amused in spite of himself. Oh yes, Mulch had made a very poor impression, the first time he and his father had met.

"I can assure you that, so far as I know, Mulch is currently nowhere in Ireland."

"Thank the Lord."

"Now, now," his mother chided. She turned back to Artemis with a soft smile. "Shall we meet you inside, once you've done your usual circuit around the grounds?"

He nodded in confirmation, and, once his family had filtered away – without a backward glance save for Myles, who cast back the meaningful stare that he'd come to know as his little brother's we need to talk expression – turned sharply on his heels and began his own patrols of the grounds.

He'd begun doing this almost as soon as he could walk again following his resurrection. No matter how many fairies had dropped by to assure him that the manor was safe, that Opal Koboi really was gone, he hadn't quite been able to shake the paranoia. Even after he'd assured himself many times over that no, the fairies really hadn't missed something, and yes, everything was fine, it had simply become habit.

He strolled along the edges of the grounds, checking the pond, the barn, the flower beds, every tiny alcove he could find until, eventually, he reached his final stop – the site of his own death, the spiral of brilliant orange roses.
There was a distinct shimmer in the air there, a heat haze above cool grass.

"Ah," Artemis said. "Is something amiss, officer?"

The haze shuddered, and then solidified into the form of a small winged form in severe matte black.

"Fowl." The sprite nodded to him, icily polite. "No, nothing's amiss, so far as I can tell… not yet, at any rate."

He lifted one eyebrow quizzically. "Any particular reason for your caution?"

The fairy lifted one arm – the one that had the familiar flashing screen of an active MagiScanner built into the already present tech. "Your brothers brought the monster's ambassador here. They might not have magic themselves, but there might have been some residual from the monsters clinging to them."

And monster magic is many times stronger than that produced by fairies. Artemis nodded, needing no further clarification. Who knew just what effects that kind of power could have on what still lingered here? "No monsters themselves?"

"No, they all remained inside for the duration of the ball. Just the Ambassador. They looked pretty nervous, too..." The officer cast him a look as he began scanning again. "I bet your little clone had something to do with that."

The Irishman's lips twitched up in amusement. Ah, yes, Myles. The boy had expressed interest in psycho-analyzing the Ambassador, should he get the chance, and if Frisk was anything like him, which they most definitely were at least in some respects, then someone reading them so easily would be just a little unnerving.

"Probably," he agreed. "Though I wouldn't say he is a clone..."

This earned a snort of disbelief, but otherwise, the fairy stayed quiet, passing his scanner arm over another stretch of roses.

This continued in silence for several minutes, the fairy flying in gradually decreasing circles and noting whatever magical anomalies he came across, and Artemis watching him impassively.

Then he asked, faux-casually, "I take it your team was keeping an eye on the Ambassador, whilst they were here?"

"What do you take me for, a moron?" The officer turned an irritated look at him. "We did. From a distance. They spent a solid month completely surrounded by monster magic, and a couple of years with a monster chaperone. High concentrations of fairy magic can make humans more inclined to believe in and search for magic – what would monster magic do?"

Fair point, though now he was curious if that magic had had some odd effects on Frisk –

The officer's MagiScanner went berserk, a high pitched beeping piercing unprepared eardrums.

Hands clamped over his ears – undignified, but far better than going deaf – Artemis grimaced. "Problem?"

"Hold on a damn second!" The sprite furiously tapped various buttons and the device's touch screen, scowling. "D'Arvit, this thing better not be malfunctioning, that'll be the third one this month –"
He stopped and stared. He looked up from the scanner to stare at the bare earth in the center of the rose spiral, then back down again.

"D'Arvit," he repeated. "Actually, I take that back, please let this be a malfunction..."

"Care to elaborate?"

The officer didn't even glare at him, still focused on the scanner.

"The readings," he said. "They're an exact match for the unidentified signature from the Underground."

Within a short three hours, a Section Eight research team was set up on the Fowl grounds, surrounding the suspect location. Lots of complicated machinery, and almost a dozen fairies milling about with an air of grim determination so thick one could choke on it.

One of which being one Holly Short, who was already thoroughly fed up with every officer here.

"I don't care if it's inefficient," she snapped to an irate nome technician. "Just get it set up quickly, we're burning moonlight here!"

"But –"

"Not now Private! Just get it done!"

With a huff, she turned away, stalking across trampled grass. Oh, how she wished she could just take a buzz baton to this whole bunch – or, better yet, let Foaly deal with them all!

But the centaur had to remain underground, coordinating information and assisting with the warlocks' studies, and, above all, keeping an eye out for that homicidal flower as the monster Underground's Retrieval team packed up and beat a hasty retreat.

Sometimes she loathed her job.

"Holly."

Blinking herself out of her angry stupor, she looked up at the familiar face of one of her human friends and grinned tiredly.

"Hey Mud Boy."

Said Mud Boy raised a concerned eyebrow that, to anyone unused to his subtle expressions, would have looked quizzical. "Troublesome subordinates?"

"More than troublesome," she groused. "Honestly, how does Foaly even work with these idiots... oh, who am I kidding, he probably enjoys it."

"Having so many around with such poor intellect no doubt makes him feel that much smarter," he agreed, giving her a sharp, amused smirk.

Then his expression softened. "How have you been, Holly? Rather stressed, I imagine."

"More than a little. We've been neck deep in the troll dung for a few days now, and the entire force is hopped up on caffeine and nerves." Holly sniffed. "Especially Retrieval..."
"Is there anything I can do to assist?"

"Sure. You can tell us how in Frond's name this magic ended up here. Up until now, it's only been in the Underground!"

Artemis sighed. "I've been running over all possibilities for several hours. The only suspicious activity in this general area was when my brothers brought the monster Ambassador here, likely to show off." He shook his head. "It seems unlikely, but the only explanation I have come up with so far is that they were somehow responsible."

Holly scowled, opened her mouth to say something along the lines of that's impossible – Then remembered who she was speaking to, and shut her mouth.

That's right. Impossible happens every day around Artemis Fowl.

"Pretty unlikely," she agreed reluctantly, "but not impossible." She sighed, and kneaded her forehead with one hand. "We'll have to get a couple fairies on that, but after what happened in the Underground, I don't think Retrieval will be too happy about patrolling near monsters again..."

"What happened in the Underground?"


"You don't know?"

Artemis coughed, looking as close to embarrassed as she'd seen him in years. "I have been… unable to indulge in my usual hacking habits, lately."

"Of course," she muttered. "Well, Mud Boy, let me tell you, you've missed a lot. I don't suppose you have any information for us on flower monsters...?"

The city was quiet. The lights in several windows they could see through their own had gone out for the night. And in the other bed, Toriel was fast asleep, breaths soft and even.

Quietly, carefully, Frisk reached for their cell phone.

As relieving as it had been to find that SAVE point, it was also a little worrying. A SAVE point on the surface – they had no idea how that had happened. And not knowing was dangerous.

But they knew someone who might have at least an inkling. And they really should let him know what had happened anyway.

Muting their phone so that any rings or noises it made wouldn't give them away, the child texted one of the many numbers on their contact list.

From FriskyBits: Sans you awake?

They waited with bated breath until, after a few minutes, a reply popped up.

From HumerusPnmaster: yup. wassup kiddo

FriskyBits: Sorry but I need to tell you something

They paused, then forged onwards.
FriskyBits: We found a save point in Ireland

HumerusPnmaster: what

Despite the solemnity of their subject matter, Frisk couldn't help but giggle softly at Sans's response.

FriskyBits: We found a save point

FriskyBits: And used it

FriskyBits: Not joking

Another pause, presumably as Sans struggled to come up with a reply.

HumerusPnmaster: well

HumerusPnmaster: shit

HumerusPnmaster: where

FriskyBits: Fowl Manor. Its just outside of Dublin

They bit their lip, then continued.

FriskyBits: Do you know why its there?

FriskyBits: Never found one on the surface before

Toriel shifted in her bed, letting out a soft snort in her sleep, and Frisk froze. Once the monster had stopped moving, they turned their attention back to their phone.

HumerusPnmaster: no

Frisk sighed, a little disappointed, but not surprised. Sans may have been living through the Resets for longer than them, but that didn't mean he knew everything.

When no new reply came for several minutes, they turned their phone to vibrate, stuck it underneath their pillow, and laid their head back down.

Even if Sans didn't know, he'd probably have some idea soon. He was smarter than most people seemed to think, and he had a bunch of notes from previous Resets – notes that they were pretty sure weren't his, considering the handwriting. Which meant someone else might have known, and left information for others to find.

They'd figure it out.

And, in the meantime, they'd SAVED. They'd be fine.

Chapter End Notes

I've had least one person on fanfiction.net ask me if Gaster was going to be involved in this story - and, since I'm sure people will likely be wondering about the good ol' doctor,
I'm going to clarify things: NO, Gaster is not going to be appearing in this story.

Now, that being said, that doesn't mean he's not important to the plot! >:3
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Warning: Depictions of mild gore and temporary main character death. Nothing too graphic, but better safe than sorry, right?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

In retrospect, they really should have known better than to think they’d be fine.

The day started more or less the same as the last two had – Frisk woke up early, and checked their phone for new messages from Sans. There were none, the newest text being from a couple of days ago, the morning after they’d informed the skeleton of the SAVE point – a text telling them that Sans and Papyrus were en route to America, theoretically to visit the Underground.

Then they got ready for the day as Toriel woke up, waited patiently until she was ready as well, and then they were out the door for a brief breakfast, and then a long day of work.

The day after the gala, Frisk and Toriel had begun the final step in the process of preparing the volunteers for the fostering program – escorting the monster volunteers to arranged meeting places in order to become acquainted with the human volunteers, so that they could be sure of no bad blood between the two parties before they lived under the same roof.

It was harder than it sounded. Even though they’d carefully vetted the volunteers, made certain that the personalities and likes of each party were at least compatible, and assured the human volunteers that the monsters would not harm them (and vice versa for some of the more timid monsters), there was still an air of nervousness at every meeting, from the moment they first approached with magical beings in tow to the moment they left. Much of the meeting was usually spent giving further reassurances to each of the volunteers, and actively (and sometimes non-so-subtly) encouraging them to actually talk to each other.

It was frustrating. Thankfully, by the sixth meeting, they’d gotten the hang of it, and both parties usually walked away somewhat happy.

By the third day of meetings, the meetings were even what they’d dare to call fun.

Though only a little fun. They were still pretty frustrating.

This particular one had been really frustrating, but, like all the others, it had worked out in the end.

“Well,” one of the human volunteers, a middle-aged man with salt-and-pepper hair, said, holding out his hand across the table. “This has certainly been interesting. I suppose I’ll be seeing you again, Mr. Drake?”

The dragon-bird-like monster gave a little huff, but held out one pale wing and accepted the offered hand in the closest approximation of a handshake that he could manage. “I guess so.”

To his credit, the man barely batted an eye at what Frisk knew to be an incredibly cold wing with incredibly sharp feathers. “We’ll be seeing you two later, then. Have a good day.”
“You too.”

The man nodded, and then got up and headed for the door. His wife, a middle-aged woman with short-cropped blonde hair and dimples, gave them a kindly smile and a friendly little wave as she followed him out the restaurant door.

As soon as the door swung shut, Snowdrake’s dad let out a sigh of relief.

“Well, that could have gone better,” he muttered.

With a chuckle, Toriel leaned over to put a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “It could have gone far worse. At least Mrs. Winnick seemed to like you.” She turned to Snowdrake himself and gave the monster teenager a wink. “Especially once you let loose that first pun.”

Snowdrake puffed up in pride, grinning, and Frisk grinned as well, albeit tiredly. Oh yes, they’d had great fun once the puns had started. Back in the Underground, Snowdrake’s puns left plenty to be desired, but, well, *that* had been taken care of by oh-so-subtly prodding Sans in his general direction. Within weeks, *every* monster (and human) that enjoyed puns was laughing *honestly* at his jokes, whilst the others were screeching in frustration.

Evidently, that had paid off, because Mrs. Winnick had almost laughed herself to death when the first pun had slipped out. The rest of the meeting had been *much* less tense, and the humans had agreed to take the two monsters in in the end.

Still chuckling, Toriel lifted a hand to flag down one of the waiting staff for the bill. “Shall we leave? This place is lovely, but I think we may have disturbed many of their customers.”

“Yeah, sure.”

When the bill had been taken care of, and they began the short trek to the door, Snowdrake bounced up to Frisk (literally bounced, in a gait not too dissimilar to that of a bird) and began chattering.

“You really think that pun was great? I used that one on Dad a couple days ago and he *laughed*, it was great, and now humans like it too! Maybe I can become a great comedian after all! Like maybe a stand-up comedian, one of those ones that stand up on a stage, like Dad was Underground –”

Frisk politely kept an ear on his blabbering, even as they silently scolded Chara for groaning loudly and obnoxiously when the monster had started talking.

* But Friiiüsssk, he’s so annoying! *That doesn’t mean you have to be rude about it! *It’s not like he can hear me! *That’s not the point!*

The bickering continued all the way to the door, interrupted only by some of Snowdrake’s gleeful puns (that they made a point to laugh at, even if they’d heard most of them before) and Toriel’s own amused contributions to the jokes.

Their high spirits didn’t last long, because that was the moment that, as they were opening the door, there was a sharp *crack.*

The punning gave way to shrieks of shock and terror, and Frisk slowly looked down at the red
gushing out of them to stain their shirt, barely noticing the pain.

A bullet wound, right in the middle of the chest. Deep, and, judging by the blackness already eating away at their vision, probably fatal.

They looked back up in time to see the shooter, a short, pudgy man in a hoodie and jeans and a startlingly blank expression, load another magazine into the gun and lift it to aim right between their eyes –

And pull the trigger.

LOADing from a SAVE point was always unsettling. The first time Frisk had done it, they’d ended up vomiting all over their own sneakers, and they were pretty sure that Chara had been vomiting too – as much as you could when one was a ghost with no digestive tract.

This time was no less unpleasant. The blackness of cold, unfeeling nothingness that came with every death gave way to a confusing array of colors – green and orange and yellow – and a strange sharp feeling, like they were pressing a knife against their skin without breaking it and spilling blood.

Moving as if through a thick tar, Frisk reached out, grasping numbly for something in that odd array –

And then they were bending double, gasping for breath and nausea boiling in their gut, as sweet, flower-scented air flooded their nose.

“Frisk?!”

Two voices, both male, crying out in alarm from behind them. Running footsteps, a hand landing on each of their shoulders as they struggled not to hurl. And the distant sound of conversation and orange flowers visible just behind the glowing golden star before them, almost right in their face…

*I’m back at the gala.*

Swallowing down rising bile, and trying not to pay attention to the throbbing phantom pains of bullets in their chest and forehead (unscathed chest and forehead, not even a bruise to show, no matter how much they hurt), they let their eyes come up to find the worried faces of Myles and Beckett Fowl hovering over them.

“Are you okay?!” Beckett was almost wailing, blue eyes wide with worry.

“F-fine,” they managed, even as their stomach did a flip-flop of protest. “Just feeling a little sick, that’s all…”

Their voice trailed off as Myles leaned closer, frowning. He didn’t look as worried for them as Beckett did, but he still seemed concerned.

“What kind of sick?” He asked, eyes narrowing. “Dizzy? Nauseous? Feverish or clammy? Do you have any allergies that could cause this kind of extreme reaction?”

Frisk blinked numbly.

“Nauseous…? And no allergies...”

He *hmmed* softly, eyes narrowing, but he pulled back, giving them a bit more space – space which was quickly filled with his blonde twin.
“We should get you inside!” Beckett insisted, grabbing one of their hands and pulling them all the way upright.

“What?” Frisk almost stumbled over their own feet – no, their skirt, they were back in that dress they’d worn – as the boy gently pulled them away from the center of the flower patch. “N-no, I’m fine…”

“You most certainly are not,” Myles scoffed. “You are queasy, obviously unsteady on your feet, and quite pale.” When Frisk opened their mouth to argue, he gave them a stern glare. “I will assist Beckett in dragging you back inside if need be.”

He managed to make that statement sound like a threat, even if it was well-meant.

*Just go along with it…*

Frisk paused just as they were about to protest again, then sighed. Chara was right. It wouldn’t do them much good to protest – there was a stubborn jut to both twins’ jaws, and an equally stubborn look in each of their eyes. They weren’t about to take no for an answer.

Plus, they reminded themselves, Myles was likely to notice something was off if they kept it up.

Decided, they nodded, and let the twins pull them the rest of the way out of the rose spiral and back towards the manor.

The gala played out almost exactly the same as before – there were no guns pulled on any of the guests, Mr. Yew was still easily the rudest person there, and their following conversation with Artemis Fowl was still the same, word-for-word (it was almost as shocking to listen to the first time as well – they still weren’t entirely certain what to make of being called a genius, by a genius no less). In fact, the only thing that really changed was that the twins repeatedly visited them to ask them if they were okay (and reassured themselves of this fact as Frisk was leaving.)

It wasn’t until they were back in their hotel room, and Toriel had gone to begin her own nightly bedtime routine (which would without a doubt leave the shower drain clogged with white monster fur), that something different happened, that something different being their phone, which had been left behind for the gala, buzzing furiously as some message arrived. They scooped the device up quickly.

From >HumerusPnmaster: hey what happened

Chara grumbled something unintelligible from over their shoulder that sounded suspiciously like what do you think smiley trashbag. They ignored the ghost, instead texting back a reply.

>FriskyBits: Assassin outside meeting site

>FriskyBits: Got me with 2 bullets

>FriskyBits: Chest and between the eyes

The shower in the hotel bathroom shut off, and they hurriedly shoved their phone underneath their pillow before Toriel could emerge and see it.

When, almost an hour later, the monster queen had fallen into peaceful slumber on her own bed, they quickly retrieved their phone to find a new message.
An image of the man’s blank, emotionless eyes bubbled up to the surface, and Frisk shivered, suddenly cold.

>FriskyBits: Yeah

>FriskyBits: We’ve got this

>FriskyBits: Now that we know he’s gonna be there we can call the police

They took a deep breath. Two. Three.

* We’ll be fine. I can take over and dodge for both of us if he’s still there.

Strangely, those so-called words of comfort weren’t all that comforting.

Their phone buzzed again, alerting them to a new message.

>HumerusPnmast: ok

A pause. Then another message, before Frisk shut off their phone and shoved it back underneath their pillow for the night.

>HumerusPnmast: good luck kiddo

Chapter End Notes

Welp, Frisk's died for the first time in this fanfiction, and it's not the last time, either. Yay?

From now on, in chapters where they've died, I'll include a little death counter down at the bottom showing how many times they've died. Just because I can.

Frisk Deaths: 1

On a lighter note, I have a question for you guys: I've got a couple of ideas for some new fanfictions, and I want to know which people would be more interested in reading.

The first one is a Steven Universe/NiGHTS crossover (NiGHTS as in NiGHTS into Dreams and NiGHTS Journey of Dreams, the games by Sega, if there's someone that for some reason doesn't know), where Steven has adventures in the Night Dimension with NiGHTS and Owl alongside what goes on in real life. It's gonna be episodic, a new little adventure in every chapter, and eventually have an overarching plot, though what exactly that plot is I have yet to decide (though it's probably going to involve, SPOILER ALERT, Steven's dream-visiting/manipulating powers - how can it not? I mean, c'mon, Dream World here). I've already started working on the first chapter of this.

The second idea is an Artemis Fowl/D. Gray-Man crossover. It's technically post-Holy War - the Akuma are all gone and most of the Noah are dead, and the ones that have survived have gone into hiding in the Arc while the Black Order tries to hunt them
down. Then, on his way back from Ho Chi Minh City in the first book, Artemis suddenly starts going through the transformation into a Noah, the first one since the end of the war. I haven't decided on plot yet, save for the whole, you know, turning-into-a-Noah-on-the-way-back-home thing, but I have decided that this will eventually include some sort of battle of wits between Artemis and the Black Order, and possibly end up involving the fairies with the Noah family as well, so it could be entertaining... >: 3
Chapter 18

Artemis had been having curious flashes of deja vu for the entire evening.

The first instance had been that rather unfortunate conversation with Mr. Yew. Even as he’d talked circles around the man, he’d felt as if he’d done it before.

The second instance had been the following conversation with the monster ambassador. Again, word for word, he’d felt as if he was repeating an entire conversation.

The third instance, his conversation with the officer checking on the rose spiral.

And the fourth instance, his brief banter with Holly, and her informing him of the dangerous floral monster encountered in the Underground.

He had, of course, had feelings of deja vu before. When one often danced metaphorical circles around the idiots of the world, doing so once again tended to become monotonous.

But this felt different somehow.

Standing at a distance as he watched Holly terrorizing the more dim-witted of the technicians setting up their equipment, Artemis frowned, analyzing his memories and the day’s events. So far as he could tell, nothing had occurred that was out of the ordinary… save for the monsters and the odd fluctuation of the magical hotspot, of course.

So why did it feel as if he was missing crucial information? As if he’d missed something?

His thought process was interrupted by a soft voice behind him. “Artemis?”

The Irishman turned his head to find Myles and Beckett standing behind him – Myles more or less unmoving, Beckett shuffling his feet nervously, and both sparing brief, serious glances towards the fairies in their garden.

“What’s going on?” The blonde twin asked. “I haven’t seen so many fairies here in ages.”

Artemis sighed, then turned fully around to face his younger brothers, bending down so he was closer to their eye level. “They’ve found an unusual magical fluctuation here.”

At the sight of the boys’ alarmed expressions, (of course they would be alarmed – after all, they knew that something had happened here almost eight years ago, even if their memories of the actual events were hazy) he was quick to reassure them. “There’s no need for alarm. The fluctuation simply appeared without warning, and as it matches an unknown magical signature recently discovered in the Underground, they wish to investigate it, and make certain it will not harm anybody on the grounds.”

This seemed to calm them down somewhat, and Artemis continued, “I don’t suppose there were any monsters near this location during the gala? The fairies’ patrols should have spotted them if there were, but things have been slipped past them before.”

“Nope.” Beckett turned his head, owl-like, to watch a passing technician, who gave the human
Ah, yes. Even if they were not a monster themselves, the ambassador had spent close to two years 
with constant exposure to monster magic – magic that was several times stronger than that of the 
People, and therefore more likely to influence an already delicate magical field. That could very well 
explain the sudden change, even if it was a tad unlikely…

He sincerely doubted that even that sort of magical residue could cause this large a change, however, 
so perhaps not.

Myles’ eyes narrowed thoughtfully, drifting to rest on the patch of ground at the exact center of 
flower spiral.

“Where precisely is this fluctuation?”

“Center of the spiral.” The boys jumped as Holly appeared seemingly out of nowhere, frowning 
without any real ire at the two children. “Right where your little ambassador friend started looking 
more than a little sick, at least according to the officers on patrol.” One of her brows crept up. “I 
don’t suppose you know what happened to them?”

They shook their heads in unison.

“They just said that they were feeling sick all of a sudden,” Beckett mumbled. “Queasy, wobbly 
knees, looked kinda pale…”

The fairy sighed in exasperation but turned her attention to the little computer embedded in the wrist 
of her Section Eight suit. “Great. Recon’s not going to be happy about this, but at least they’ll be 
across the ocean from the Underground…”

Noticing the concern on the young Fowls’ faces, she sighed. “Look, they’re probably fine, okay? 
I’m just requesting a couple of small teams to keep an eye on them until we know for sure.”

Beckett sighed in relief, and Myles looked considerably less tense. Artemis raised a curious eyebrow 
at their reactions.

“You seem remarkably… concerned for a child you barely know.”

Myles flushed in embarrassment, but his twin merely shrugged.

“They’re nice,” he pointed out. “They didn’t stick around to listen to Juliet telling embarrassing 
stories about us, and they helped us meet a bunch of cool monsters.”

“They’re also an intriguing subject for psycho-analysis,” Myles added quickly. “Even though they 
seem to have no professional training, they’re fairly adept at hiding their emotions if need be – 
though, obviously, not adept enough to hide them from me.”

Holly snorted. “Real humble, Mud Boy Jr.,” she muttered. “Real humble.”

“It’s hardly humility if it’s true, Captain. There’s also the matter of their paranoia – whenever an 
unfamiliar human drew near a monster within their line of sight, they grew visibly tense, and they 
were even more so when unable to see any of the monsters.”

The boy paused, then hummed thoughtfully. “I didn’t think of this before, but why would the 
Ambassador be so concerned for the monsters when they were the closest thing to armed of any of 
the guests? If anything, it’s the humans that should have reason to be alarmed in the event of an
attack, not the monsters.”

There was a moment of silence.

“That’s true,” Holly admitted grudgingly. “With all that magic they have, you’d think that nothing could hurt them, but...”

She didn’t need to complete her thought, even though it was guaranteed to be right on the tip of her tongue.

What secrets did the monsters have for the Ambassador to be so frightened for them?

Time seemed to be slowing down to a sluggish crawl from the very first moment that Frisk, Toriel, and the Drakes had sat down at the table across from the human volunteers and started talking.

It was thanks to their nervousness, they knew. Even though they’d already made what preparations they needed to – called the police and told them they’d had an anonymous tip about a gunman posted outside the restaurant, figured out when Chara would take over and what to actually do when confronted with the gun – they couldn’t help but feel a little paranoid now that they knew what was waiting for them outside.

* Calm down, already. This isn’t the first time we’ve done this.

True. They had done something like this before in a previous timeline – in several previous timelines, actually – and it had worked every time, more or less.

But that didn’t stop them from feeling nervous. There were so many ways this could go wrong – once they started changing the timelines, people became unpredictable. The man could shoot one of the monsters by accident, or he could panic and run, only to come back with backup later.

They needed to get this right.

* We’ll be fine. Stop being such a scaredy-cat, geeze.

Like you’re not nervous, too.

*Of course not!

........

*… Okay, maybe a little, but still, we’ll be fine.

Eventually, the meeting wound down. Mr. Winnick offered a handshake to Snowdrake’s dad, the two humans left, the monsters spoke briefly, expressing their relief...

Then they were getting up and moving towards the door.

Okay. Ready?

*Ready!

They reached out to grab the door handle, hoping the slight trembling they could see in their own fingers hadn’t been noticed.

Now!
Chara wrenched control away from them as the door was pulled open, and quickly half-skipped to one side, in front of the still-chattering Snowdrake, as the gun fired.

The *crack* cut off all conversation, replacing them with familiar cries of shock and terror, and a grunt of pain that slipped out as the bullet hit, not its intended target of the middle of their chest, but several inches to the left and up, just below their collarbone.

*Go, go, go!*

With a yell, Chara lunged forward, grappling for the gun and managing to twist it in the man’s grip so that the next shot went careening up and over peoples’ heads.

**“Police!”** They yelled. **“Over here! Here!”**

The meager crowds were panicking, men and women and children rushing in every direction in a panic, but several people pushed against the crowd, running *for* them instead of away. The first undercover cop hit the assassin at a dead run, tackling the blank-eyed man into the ground, and the others followed, quickly piling on top of him. The man’s hand didn’t so much as twitch, keeping a death grip on the gun until Chara snarled and wrenched his fingers open, forcing him to drop it. They kicked the gun away quickly, gasping for breath, and one of the officers that hadn’t dog-piled the culprit quickly snatched the weapon up, pointing it at the man’s head.

There was a moment of silence, as people seemed to catch their bearings. Wheezing a little, Chara stumbled a few steps backward, glaring at the would-be killer.

He didn’t so much as blink, his face entirely, creepily blank. It hadn’t changed once during the entire confrontation.

“Frisk!!”

Large, furry hands grabbed ahold of them, scooping them up off the ground, and Chara quickly pulled back, pushing Frisk back into control. The ambassador yelped, the pain from their wound, which had felt like nothing but a numb ache to them while their ghostly ally was in control, suddenly screaming in agony at the sudden movement.

“Oh stars, you’re injured!”

Frisk managed a trembling smile up at Toriel’s horrified expression, aiming for reassuring and probably failing. “It’s not as bad as it looks?” They offered weakly.

“You’ll need to get them to a hospital, ‘mam,” one of the officers grunted. The police had dragged the assassin to his feet, cuffing his hands behind his back, and some of them were already leading him to an inconspicuous looking horse-drawn cart waiting a little ways away. “We’ve already called an ambulance. You’ll need to get that bullet out before you use any of that healing food of yours – we don’t want it to get stuck in there.”

He turned to Frisk. “You know, kid, you could have just asked us to stick closer to the door.”

The ambassador shook their head, wincing as a bout of dizziness hit them. “I didn’t know who the assassin was,” they lied, voice shaking, “or where he was gonna be. Just that he’d be there...”

The distant sound of a siren reached them, and they felt more than heard Toriel sigh in relief.

“Stay awake, my child,” she ordered. “Stay awake, you hear me?”
Frisk nodded. They weren’t feeling particularly tired – they hadn’t lost quite enough blood for that yet – but they weren’t about to argue with a terrified mother, especially not their own.

They waited in tense silence as Toriel used her own wide sleeves to attempt to staunch the blood flow from the bullet hole.

*... See? Everything turned out fine.

They almost smiled at that. Only Chara could consider going to the emergency room fine.

But all things considered...

Yeah. I guess it did...

Chapter End Notes

In case people are wondering, Myles and Beckett don’t really remember what happened with the Berserker Gate during the Crash, or know that Artemis technically died there because they were both only three or four at the time, and it's been almost a decade. Even a genius three-year-old isn’t going to remember something that long ago, especially if he's been reassured by someone he trusts that whatever happened isn't going to happen again, and Mr. and Mrs. Fowl were likely to want to protect them from the knowledge that the older brother they look up to died on their favorite place on the grounds.

They are aware that what happened there was something the fairies were very concerned about, though, which is why they were nervous about the magical changes at the rose spiral - they know that whatever happened was bad, and that nobody will want it repeating itself.
Frisk had never actually been inside a hospital before. A doctor’s office, certainly – even if their biological parents tried not to call much attention to them, they were still required, by law, to bring their child in for a checkup at least once a year. But never a hospital.

They might have been fascinated by the experience, if they hadn’t been rushed straight into surgery, and by the time the bullet had been removed and they were actually mostly coherent and no longer bleeding out (thank the stars for monster candy!), the novelty of being there had worn off, and their ambassador instincts were kicking in.

“How long am I going to be staying here?” Was the first thing that came out of their mouth when they were rolled out of the operating room on another stretcher.

“At least overnight,” the nurse accompanying them said, checking the patch of newly-grown tissue on their shoulder with a frown. “We’ve never used monster food to heal such a deep injury before, so we want to make sure there are no side effects.”

There wouldn’t be. Even monster candy, which took at least two pieces to put someone back at full health, was more than capable of healing injuries much more extreme than this. They’d recovered from falling into lava once.

No need to point that out, though – that hadn’t actually happened in this timeline and the last thing they wanted was questions.

“Will I be allowed visitors?”

The man shrugged. “Probably.”

Several minutes later, they were lying in a bed in one of many rooms on the first floor, sipping orange juice from a cup and listening to the worried conversation between several voices outside their door and Chara’s incredulous comments.

*Since when do hospitals have TVs?!

*Since now?

*I’m serious, Frisk! I thought hospitals were just full of big rooms with cots surrounded by curtains and lots of windows and IV drips, so why is there a TV?!

They almost laughed, but quickly stopped themselves as the conversation outside finally stopped, and the door was opened to allow Toriel to hurry to their bedside.

“Are you well now, Frisk? Did they remove the bullet?”

Frisk sat still, letting the monster check their shoulder for herself. “Yeah, they got it out. I’m fine.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure, Mom.” Now they pushed her hands away, giving her as reassuring a smile as they could
before smoothing their expression to something a little more serious. “What happened to the shooter? Do you know?”

A look of disdain swept across her features. “That man had the gall to pretend that he hadn’t done anything wrong – he even denied shooting you, claimed that he suddenly awoke in the police’s wagon with no memory of how he got there!”

They blinked. “Really?”

“Yes! Obviously, they didn’t believe him… Undyne told me she’d let me know what they found out once her shift’s over.”

The ambassador nodded, barely even paying attention at that point as their brain sparked off several thoughts at once.

*Why would he try to pretend that he didn’t know how he got there? Is he going to try to plead for amnesia in court? Is that even a valid defense? I’ll have to check, once I have access to the Internet again…*

A sigh drew them out of their musing. Toriel had sunken down to sit heavily in one of the chairs in the room, looking at them with an expression somewhere between sadness and disappointment.

“Frisk, if you knew that man would be there… why didn’t you tell me? We could have arranged for a different location, while there was still time…”

A lump rose in their throat.

Toriel had asked that question before. In every run where they had used the *call the police and make themselves a target* technique (or the *call and charge* technique, as Chara had taken to calling it), she *always* asked the same thing, almost word for word, with the same expression and the same sad, mildly frightened tone of voice.

No matter how many times it happened, or how they tried to reassure themselves that it had been the right thing to do, they *always* felt guilty for making her worry.

“If we’d gone somewhere else, he could have still found us,” they said softly, “and… and I didn’t tell you because you would have been keeping watch for and if he noticed that… who knows what he might’ve done? At least this way, he’s been arrested, and he’s not going to hurt anybody else…”

Their voice trailed off as Toriel engulfed them in a hug, arms wrapped protectively around them. They tried not to pay attention to how the monster’s arms were trembling, or how her breath was hitching as if she were about to cry.

They just hugged her back.

Night had fallen, pitching the city into darkness, only interrupted by the occasional light from the window of some building – and even those were going out, one at a time, winking out like stars behind thick cloud cover. Wagons and carts had been parked out of the main thoroughfares, horses tied up in their stables (or garages, in some cases), and overall, Dublin’s streets were lifeless, save for the shape of a human or monster shuffling along the sidewalks every now and then.

In contrast to the emptied streets, however, the police station was still brightly lit, standing out like a beacon.
Sitting as only a faint shimmer above the station’s main door, a LEPrecon captain shifted uncomfortably.

He shouldn’t be here. He really shouldn’t. As a rule, fairies were encouraged to avoid areas of dense human population and were especially encouraged to avoid monster populations, and Dublin had both now. Even if the People’s only human allies lived here, it was too big of a risk.

But that hadn’t stopped his superiors from assigning him and several other Recon officers to watch over the monster ambassador, and it was probably just as well that they had, considering today’s events.

That shooter had looked a little too blank-faced to just be some emotionless assassin, and a brief scan of the man with a MagiScanner had earned some worrying results.

There was magic on the man. Not a lot, but roughly the same amount that one might expect from a mesmer.

They couldn’t be certain, not without speaking to the man himself, but the Commander had deemed it enough of a risk to send someone to check it out. In all likelihood, it was just residual from being too close to a monster.

But on the off chance that it wasn’t…

The station door swung open, and one of the humans on the night shift that night stepped out, bringing a newly lit cigarette to her mouth. The fairy slipped in before the door could close behind her, whatever noise he was making covered by the sound of the woman exhaling a puff of smoke into the air.

The inside of the station was lit by florescent bulbs, putting shadows into sharp, cool-colored contrast. There were no other humans in sight, the room empty.

There was a camera, though, just as expected, pointed towards the door. Not a particularly advanced one, but still, if the security guard watching the video feeds paid enough attention, they might just see a faint haze hanging in the air near the door. Best not to linger.

“Commander, do we have any of their video feeds?” There was no verbal reply, but several camera feeds appeared on the edges of his visor. The station was almost empty, save for a few officers lingering in the break room and a couple standing guard outside one of the holding cells. Inside the cell itself, the figure of a man in a hoodie sat hunched on a cot in the corner, looking positively miserable.

“The techies are sending you the building schematics now.” The Commander’s voice said. “Stand by.”

A moment later, said schematics appeared alongside the camera feeds, several pulsing red dots marking the locations of the humans still in the building.

“Got’em, sir. Moving now.”

Sparing a brief moment to focus on the images and memorizing the recommended route to the cells, the Recon officer flitted down the appropriate corridor. Several turns and a couple long hallways later, he turned a corner to find the two officers and the door they were guarding.

“Can the techies set up a loop?”
There was some muttering on the other end of the line as he fingered a small compartment in the wrist of his suit, waiting for the all clear before he snapped it open.

“They should be able to,” the Commander said after a moment. “Only for a couple of minutes, since we don’t want to risk the humans noticing anything off with their cameras.”

“That’ll be more than enough time, Commander.”

The camera feeds in his visor jittered for a nanosecond before settling again.

“The loop’s started. Get moving.”

The fairy darted forward, popping open the little compartment on his wrist and pulling out two paralytic patches (new mandatory equipment for LEP jaunts in high-population areas). He quickly poked one into place on the back of both humans’ necks with hardly any pressure at all – at most, the humans might feel a slight breeze – and then pulled back.

A few seconds later, both men stiffened and went rock still.

Good. That left him three minutes to do his thing, and neither policeman would remember their brief paralysis or notice the lost time.

The cell door was unlocked quickly with his omnitool, and pushed open just wide enough to allow the elf’s small form to slip through. Inside, the prisoner’s head jerked up to stare at the door.

“Hello?”

The man likely did not expect a response, but he got one anyway, in the form of a small, dull-green suited figure materializing seemingly from mid-air, visor already down to reveal elfin eyes.

“Hello,” the LEP officer intoned with the hypnotic mesmer. “I mean you no harm, human.”

The man’s frame tensed for a moment, then loosened, his face relaxing and his eyes glazing over as the magic took hold.

“Okay,” he slurred.

“How are you today?”

“No’ good… got arrested…”

“What for?”

“They ’ I shot somebody… Some ambassador…”

“And did you?”

“No!” The human , the sudden loud sound nearly popping the elf’s unfortunate eardrums. “No, I didn’t, I swear!”

“Okay, okay, I believe you.” The captain assured him quickly. “You didn’t shoot anybody.”

When the man settled down again (and the fairy checked his moonometer – two minutes to go), he continued.

“Do you know why they thought you shot somebody?”
“They said they saw me shoot… said I had a gun, but I don’t own a gun…”

“Do you remember where the gun might’ve come from?”

“No…”

“What is the last thing you do remember, then?”

The man’s brows furrowed, his daze fading just a tad as he struggled to recall the information.

“I remem’er a… a voice…?”

“A voice?” Dread was rising in his gut like a rotten nettle smoothie, and by the sounds of the muffled cursing in his earpiece, the Commander must have felt the same.

“Yeah… a voice… really pretty… choir of angels… and eyes…”

D’Arvit.

Their hunch had been right. Some fairy had mesmerized this and tried to use him to kill the monster ambassador. But who…?

Well, there were a fair number of fairies below ground who had been clamoring for the Council to take out the monsters right in the beginning, but as the creatures had spread all over the world, those voices had died down, and some had changed their tune completely, cheering the monsters on. And wanting the creatures gone wasn’t the same thing as wanting to cause a full-out war between them and humanity, which would probably have happened if the shooter had succeeded…

Who would want that? Why take that risk, if fairies might get caught in the crossfire?

“Thank you, human,” he said. “Please forget this conversation ever happened, and that I was ever here.”

“Okay…”

The visor was lowered, and the tiny figure shimmered out of sight. A few moments later, the cell door swung gently shut and locked behind him.

In the darkened interior of a cozy hotel room a few nights later, the buzzing of a mobile phone woke Frisk up. They fumbled quickly for the device, flipping it open before the loud noise could wake a fretfully sleeping Toriel (she had been waking up at the smallest of noises ever since they had returned from the hospital, no doubt paranoid about another attack).

>HumerusPnmaster: kiddo

>HumerusPnmaster: just saw the news

>HumerusPnmaster: p stupid thing you did there

Frisk groaned quietly.

>FriskyBits: Really

>FriskyBits: Did you text me in the middle of the night
>FriskyBits: just to tell me how stupid I was being?

>HumerusPnmaster: nah

>HumerusPnmaster: did it to tell you me n paps r on our way to ireln

>HumerusPnmaster: and uh

>HumerusPnmaster: the weeds coming too

Frisk started, eyes widening.

>FriskyBits: What

>FriskyBits: Floweys coming with you?

>HumerusPnmaster: yep

For a long moment, no other texts popped up. Then, after several long, pregnant moments, one finally arrived.

>HumerusPnmaster: he says he has somethin he needs to tell you

Chapter End Notes

Prepare for some terrified fairies in the future! They are NOT going to be happy that Flowey's coming to Ireland, AT ALL. And who can blame them?

I've been chatting with someone called danielxcutter on Tumblr quite a bit, and somehow most of the chatting ended up being about the world this fic takes place in, so I got a lot of lore stuff to tell you guys! (And thanks for making me think of some of this stuff, daniel! Pretty sure I wouldn't have come up with some of this without you asking those questions!)

So, worldbuilding stuff: Can Sans actually remember the different timelines?

Sans doesn’t actually remember the actual events that happen in each timeline – he retains the memories to an extent, but he can’t consciously remember them. However, thanks to certain unorthodox circumstances (that may or may not be addressed later in the fanfiction, depending on how things go), he IS able to sense when time’s been messed with – in other words, he can sense when Resets or LOADS occur, if not what happened before/after them.

He does get nightmares about some of the more violent timelines, though. He never remembers exactly what they’re about, but they still leave him pretty shaken.
Author's Note and a Fanfiction Idea I want Your Opinions On!

Sorry guys, I know this isn't a new chapter, but I figured I should let you guys know that I don't anticipate being able to write any new chapters for a couple of weeks. I have a metric crap ton of homework I need to finish, and since said homework involves research for and the writing of a massive 7-10 page research paper... yeah, I won't have time to write. Don't worry, though, I'll start writing some new chapters as soon as that's done - I'll try not to leave you all on that little cliffhanger for too long.

Now that that's been said, I have another idea for a fanfiction that I want to run by you guys. I know I've already asked for people's opinions/interest in a Steven Universe/NiGHTS crossover and an Artemis Fowl/D. Gray-Man crossover... now I've got an idea for an Artemis Fowl/Starbound crossover! (If someone here doesn't know what Starbound is... it's a game that's basically Terraria, but in space with space exploration and an actual plot you can follow if you want. Just look it up on YouTube or Steam, I guess.)

So, basic premise of this idea - as Artemis, Holly, Qwan, and No. 1 are in the time-tunnel thing bringing Hybras and all the demons out of Limbo (book 5), something interferes with the process, and Artemis ends up as what me and my little sister have lovingly decided to call a quantum ghost. He's stuck half in, half out of the timestream, able to observe and to briefly materialize as a ghost-like apparition in places where time has been messed with or in places where history-making events are taking place, but unable to interact with it, and unable to be seen by anyone still living in normal time - and he cannot look back in time. He still observes things in chronological order. Which means that he's forced to watch as friends and family grow old and die, and the world marches on without him.

Fast forward several thousand years (yes several thousand), and a pair of scientists working for the Terrane Protectorate (an organization based on Earth that appears briefly in the Starbound game) are looking for approval to revamp some time-travel experiments that were being worked on a couple centuries previously - experiments that caused several of the scientists working on it to go all quantum ghost, thanks to previously unforeseen interference by silver. The lady in charge grants them permission, provided they can find a way to un-ghost the people affected by the experiments. They figure out a way to do so, pluck those scientists out of quantum-ghost limbo - and Artemis along with them, forcing him to adapt to a time where humans and aliens are working together in tandem, faster-than-light travel is possible along with other futuristic technology, and with catastrophic disaster looming on the horizon.

Now, I won't be working on any new fanfics until I've gotten through a lot more of Magicae est Potestas, or even finished it, but once I do start writing new fanfictions, would you guys be interested in this fanfic? If not, or if you prefer one of the other ideas previously mentioned, then please let me know!
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

Just to let people know, I will probably be posting the next chapter late. I'm going to an anime convention this weekend, and I'll be there for at least three days and probably not have any Internet connection, so I'll either post the next chapter immediately after getting home (which will be late in the evening) or on Monday morning. Sorry that I forgot to tell you guys earlier!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Despite being in Dublin for a little under two months, Frisk had yet to actually visit the city docks more than twice – the first time being when they first arrived in Ireland, and the second to greet a ship full of new prospective monster citizens. Though they would’ve liked to explore every last inch of the city, like they explored the Underground, their duties as an active ambassador – and now the threat of unknown assassins – had left no time for playing tourist.

Still, they couldn’t help but notice, in all their travels, that city docks tended to look more or less the same. Wooden boardways leading up to where ships docked, people rushing back and forth even in the early, foggy hours of the morning, unloading and loading crates of goods to be shipped overseas, and, of course, the open sea. If you faced the sea and didn’t look at the backdrop of the city behind you, there would be no real difference between them. Heck, even the ships looked the same – old vessels that had been repaired in the aftermath of the Crash, rather than repairing the significantly more technologically advanced ones that had been almost completely destroyed.

This was the third time they’d visited the docks, and they looked no different than the previous two. There was a ship resting just at the end of the boardwalk, a great big metal thing, where crates of goods were being unloaded, but save for that, there wasn’t much activity, and the dock hands were sitting in groups, mercifully ignoring the tiny ambassador shifting their weight from foot to foot and their adopted mother as they waited for another ship to pull into shore.

“Frisk?”

Frisk jumped, then fixed a small smile on their face and looked up at Toriel.

“Yes, Mom?”

“And you alright? You seem a bit nervous…”

The monster’s voice trailed off, and Frisk stifled a grimace. She noticed.

“I’m fine, Mom. I’m just a bit…” Their grimace began to surface then, as they cobbled together a quick excuse. “I’m a little worried. I mean, that assassin came after me only a little over a week ago. What if someone comes after Sans and Papyrus?”

The Queen’s gaze softened, and she reached out to ruffle their hair with affectionate reassurance. “They will be fine, my child. They are adult monsters, are they not? More than capable of taking care of themselves.”
Frisk kept their expression until the Boss monster had turned to stare back out to sea, then let the half-smile, half grimace shift into a worried frown.

It was true that the skeletons could take care of themselves. It was also true that they were worried about the assassin, and any of his comrades that might be around. Too many runs had been ended by them being careless, and getting a bullet in their ribs from behind just as they thought they might be safe.

But that wasn’t why they were worried, not today. They knew that Sans and Papyrus could take care of an attacker – they were the monsters that were killed the least in timelines post-Barrier. They were worried because of who was coming with them.

In all the runs they’d gone through, Flowey had never, ever left the Underground before. When other monsters surfaced, he always remained behind – partially out of leftover guilt, they were fairly sure, from when he turned briefly back into Asriel, and partially out of a leftover sense of Mercy. After all, who would want a soulless, murderous flower who could kill people out of boredom wandering the surface?

But Flowey was coming here. Now. In this timeline, which had already changed so much in the course of a couple years, just because they had replied to an email.

Regardless of what he actually had to tell them, the flower monster’s presence here might be enough to launch yet another series of changes that could severely alter the timeline – or, for all they knew, spur on the next Reset.

And that was without worrying how violent he might’ve gotten with his main visitors traveling overseas. Hopefully he would behave himself.

* Hey, stop brooding, the ship’s here!

Frisk started out of their thoughtful silence, not brooding, and looked up. From the early morning fog, the shape of a boat was emerging – large, metal, possibly a refurbished whaling ship that had been adapted for the world after the Crash, and approaching with surprisingly little sound for such a large vessel. They squinted up at where the deck was, scanning what few figures they could make out from this distance for familiar ones – and found them. Two pale figures, one extremely tall and topped with a splotch of red, one arm up in the air and waving furiously in another blur of scarlet, and one shorter, leaning on the railing, and mostly blue.

They were here.

When the ship docked, Frisk was halfway expecting Papyrus to launch himself over the ship’s railing with a cry of “HELLO HUMAN FRIEND!” regardless of how far it was to the ground. They’d seen him jump out of a three story building once – twice – actually, they’d seen him do that a lot.

So it was a surprise to see him actually use the ship’s exit ramp once it had anchored at the docks – admittedly at a dead run (Chara snickered at the unintentional pun), and still waving one arm furiously, because he wouldn’t be Papyrus if he didn’t, but still. Ramp.

The reason for this abnormal behavior quickly became apparent when Frisk spotted a blur of yellow petals and ceramic clutched in the skeleton’s other hand, just before Papyrus literally swept them off their feet with his greeting.

“HELLO FRISK!! IT IS I, YOUR BEST FRIEND, THE GREAT PAPYRUS!!”
Suspended in the air by a deceptively strong one-armed skeleton hug, Frisk couldn’t help but laugh, and did their very best to return the hug, despite both of their arms being pinned. They ended up just squirming a bit instead.

“Hi, Papyrus!”

“Papyrus, please, be a little more careful!” Toriel scolded. “Frisk is still recovering –”

“Mom, I’m fine.” Frisk interrupted, turning their smile to her. “The monster candy fixed me up, remember?”

“ARE YOU SURE, FRIEND? I SAW THE CHANNEL THAT HUMANS CALL ‘THE NEWS!’”

Their smile turned rueful. So he saw, huh?

“Oh come on, they’re fine!” Yellow petals peeked up and around Papyrus’s other arm, along with beady little black eyes. “You don’t see them crying or screaming or anything, right?”

And there went the moment. Frisk sighed heavily. “That doesn’t necessarily mean that someone’s fine, Flowey.”

“Oh trust me, I know!” The flower gave them a sickeningly innocent smile.

Uh-oh. I know that smile. That’s his “I hurt somebody while you were gone and I don’t want to tell you about it” smile.

Unable to demand an answer out of the monster in their present company, Frisk instead satisfied themselves with a stern glare. Flowey only looked more innocent in response.

* Shit, he hurt somebody really bad.*

They swallowed, then quickly forced themselves back into a chipper act. “Well then! Where’s Sans, Pap? We should get going! I want to show you guys around Dublin before we head back to the hotel!”

“’m right here, kiddo.”

Flowey gave a little shriek, and Frisk almost followed suit – even though they’d expected it, Sans had this habit of appearing right behind them and startling them out of their skin, regardless of the timeline. Luckily, though, they managed to keep their head and instead turned to look down at the shorter skeleton.

“Hi Sans.”

“Hey.” He gave them a lazy little wave, eye sockets half-lidded in apparent lazy disinterest. “Ya said something about showin’ us around?” Just out of sight from the other monsters, one hand made a series of signs in quick succession.

How soon can we talk kid?

“Yep!” They squirmed a bit more until Papyrus put them back down, then grabbed the tall skeleton’s hand and gave both of them a wide grin. “And some stuff to tell you guys, too! You’ll never believe who invited me to a party this month!” With their other hand, as Toriel and Papyrus turned forward and Flowey was blocked from sight, they signed back.
Several hours later, they got their wish. The skeletons were settling down in their own hotel room, a little down the hall from Frisk’s, when Toriel left the room to make a call – apparently the skellebros had met a couple of monsters on-ship that had said something about Asgore wanting to talk to her – and some sweet-talking on Flowey’s behalf got Papyrus out of the room soon after.

“Y’know, I bet that Undyne will be reaaaally happy to hear from you, Papyrus!” The little flower said with another beaming smile. “You should go surprise her before the queen tells her you’re here!”

“What a good idea, Flowey! I shall run to her house immediately!”

“Might be better to just call her, bro. She might be at work now, remember?”

“OH! OF COURSE, HOW COULD I FORGET! I SHALL CALL HER IMMEDIATELY!”

The taller skeleton bolted from the room, practically slamming the door shut behind him.

There was silence, for a moment, as the three remaining listened for footsteps, voices, or other signs that people were returning. Once they were certain they had at least a few minutes without interruption, Frisk turned to Flowey with a frown.

“Okay, Flowey, Sans said you wanted to talk to me?”

“Wait!” Several vines sprouted from his pot and began feeling around the room. “I have to make sure there’s nothing here.”

Bewildered, Frisk exchanged a glance with Sans – who shrugged – then watched as Flowey carefully checked every corner, the bed, the air above the bed and around the room, and as much of the floor as he could reach before he finally sighed and pulled the vines back into his pot.

“There were some things in the Underground,” he said bluntly. “They were vibrating so fast I couldn’t see them, but I could feel them.”

Things that he couldn’t see – wait.

“What do you mean by things?”

A huge grin – excited, a touch malicious – spread across the flower’s face.

“Things.” He stressed. “People. People that weren’t humans or monsters.”

Chapter End Notes

Hey, would you look at that, new chapter! I almost thought I wouldn’t finish this in time – the computer I use to type this stuff up had to be taken into a shop for repairs, and it took several days, so…

Hope you guys are hyped for this! I’d say that I was sorry about leaving you on a
cliffhanger like this but… I’d be lying. Gotta get my kicks somehow, right? >:3

Also, thank you to the people that told me what they thought about my Artemis Fowl/Starbound fanfic idea, and for asking questions! Once Magicae est Potestas is over, I’ll probably start working on that, since people seemed so interested in the idea, but eh, we’ll just have to wait and see.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Frisk’s jaws dropped.

*People that weren’t humans or monsters.*

People that weren’t humans or monsters.

No matter how many times they ran those words through their head, they couldn’t seem to make them make any sense.

How was that even possible? They’d looked through monster history books, and not once had there been mention of something other than humans living on Earth with them -

“What’ya mean, not human or monster?”

Sans. Sounding just as shocked as Frisk felt, which meant that his voice was almost more emotional than they’d ever heard it. No lazy indifference or calm good humor – just pure, undiluted shock.

“Exactly what I said!” Flowey was practically bouncing in his pot, the excitement in his face so obvious that even a blind man couldn’t have missed it. “They were something different. I don’t know what they were, but they were there, and they were something new!” A giggle escaped from him.

*I haven’t seen him so excited in a long time.*

Not that they were entirely surprised. Flowey may have shaped up a lot since that first timeline so many Resets ago, but the one thing that hadn’t changed was that the emotion that usually drove him was *boredom.* He’d spent thousands of different timelines changing the smallest of details just for his own *entertainment,* and then hoping – as much as a soulless being could hope – that something, anything new would happen because he’d done everything else he could.

And once Frisk had learned how to get the monsters to the surface, and focused their determination on getting them to *stay* there, they hadn’t tried much of anything new.

*Yeah, it’s no wonder he’s so excited.*

“Are ‘ya sure they were something new.” Sans’s sockets narrowed in thought, pupils flickering back into view (they hadn’t even noticed they’d disappeared, they should pay more attention.) “They weren’t just… mutant humans or something?”

Flowey’s good mood vanished, and he scowled angrily at the skeleton. “I’m not an *idiot,* trashbag! I know they weren’t human!” He smirked. “I *looked.* Their souls were different!”

*Their souls were…? Frisk started. “Flowey. You attacked one?!”*

And now the flower’s eyes turned shifty, one grin out of a multitude emerging that meant *huh? I didn’t say anything, what are you talking about? “What? Noooooo, I wouldn’t ever do that, Frisk! I promised you, didn’t I?”*

Frisk glared at him.
A bead of sweat appeared on Flowey’s forehead.

Frisk glared some more, and felt Chara glaring too. They didn’t think the ghost was slipping into control, but something of them must have shown, because Flowey actually started, and then quickly blurted out, “Okay, I did fight a couple, but they’re not hurt and they healed themselves and I didn’t kill anybody! I didn’t break my promise, Frisk, I didn’t kill anybody!”

The ambassador sighed, backing down a bit.

“Okay, Flowey, I believe you. But why did you attack them?”

“I didn’t attack them. I was just… curious.”

“How would ‘ya know they could heal themselves then?” Sans sounded suspicious – and for good reason. Flowey and curious had, at one point in time, been two words that Frisk feared with every ounce of their being.

“Okay fine, maybe I attacked them, but they were fine afterward! They didn’t even need any food, there were just these blue sparks and then they weren’t hurt anymore!”

“Blue sparks?” That definitely didn’t sound like monster healing. There were no lights at all when Frisk used monster food to heal, and the few times that a monster had healed them directly, there had been little flickers of white light, not blue.

“Yup!” The monster bounced in his pot again, then paused and scowled. “That wasn’t the only thing they did, either. The second one? It did something to me, just by talking.”

***Something?***

“Something?” Frisk echoed. “What did they do?”

“I told you. It talked.” His scowl grew deeper and his voice took on a low, angry growl as he kept talking. “It said you will leave us alone or something like that, and for a moment? I wanted to. I wanted to leave it alone, to stop asking questions and never confront them again!” One of his leaves made an angry gesture. “It made me want to!”

A chill ran down their spine.

They made Flowey want to leave them alone? No one’s that persuasive!

*I don’t think it was persuasion, Frisk. They made him. They were trying to control him!*

Chara hadn’t sounded that angry for at least a year, since the last time someone had brought up the topic of their biological parents. And Frisk didn’t blame them one bit.

They were a little angry, too.

Flowey doesn’t make the right choices all the time, but they’re his choices! Not theirs! His! How could somebody do that, taking choice away from someone like that!

“Damn.” Sans leaned back against the wall, his brow furrowed. “Do’ya think that was magic, too? I’ve never heard of a monster who could do that, but…”

“Of course it was magic! What else could it be? And golly, when I get my vines on that thing again –” Murderous intent radiated from the monster.
“Whoa, whoa, calm down, calm down!” Frisk made frantic gestures with their hands until Flowey did so with a reluctant grumble, then took a moment to think.

_Some creature that can turn invisible, heal, and magically make someone want to follow their orders._

They’d never heard of anything like that, but they _needed_ to research it. _Anything_ that could almost bend Flowey to their will like that…

_What could they do, if it was a monster like Alphys? Or Napstablook? Or Snowdrake?_ Monsters whose willpower wasn’t even _close_ to that of Flowey, and with so many insecurities…

And if whatever these people were had _malicious intentions_… the monsters would literally _never see them coming._

*I have to find out what they are, and what they were doing down there, quickly!*

_And…_ Frisk glanced nervously at Sans. “Sans, do you think that maybe it’s these… people responsible for the SAVE point? I mean, we’ve never encountered anything like them in the other timelines, and I’ve _never_ found a SAVE point on the surface before –”

“Wait wait wait!” Flowey made a frantic _hold on a second_ gesture with his leaves. “You’ve found a what?”

A sudden shpeal of centaurian profanity roared out of Holly’s earpiece just as she reached up to remove her helmet inside the safety of Fowl Manor, and she winced.

“Foaly?” She hissed. “What in the world –”

“I’ve got an alert from one of the Recon officers watching the monster Ambassador! We got a Code Flora!”

Holly’s heart nearly stopped.

_Code Flora._

_The flower’s here?! In Ireland?!_

“D’Arvit!”

**Chapter End Notes**

“Code Flora” is basically official LEP-speak for “D’ARVIT FLOWEY’S HERE RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!!!”

Though honestly, they should fear more for their own secrets. Frisk will _NOT_ let this sort of thing lie, and if there’s one thing that SAVEs, LOADs, and Resets are good for, it’s uncovering secrets that nobody else wants you to know.

Sorry for the shorter chapter this week, but it felt like a good place to leave off.

And, finally, some worldbuilding stuff (again with help from danielxcutter), who
basically asked: "Has Flowey been down there in the Underground all alone ever since the Barrier was broken?"

And my answer is: He hasn’t been completely alone. Whenever Frisk is in Ebott, they make certain to visit him whenever possible, to keep him company. Whenever Frisk is out of the country, Papyrus and Sans will visit him – Papyrus because he considers Flowey his friend, and Sans to keep an eye on him. Generally, the skelebros stay in the United States, so company isn’t usually a problem.

However, in this run, Sans and Papyrus actually left the US a few months previous to Frisk arriving in Ireland – they took a trip to Italy. So Flowey’s been alone, without having someone to actually talk to, for several months now – and when he’s alone for too long, well… that’s why he was so stab-happy with the fairies in the Underground. He was bored, and a bored Flowey is a dangerous Flowey.
“What in Frond’s name is that thing doing here?”

“I did not sign up for this! D’Arvit, I’m literally right outside the window, I can see the damn flower from here!”

“Recon Captain Evergreen requesting orders for an immediate retreat from our current location!”

Listening to the panicking voices of various fairies over the new LEP earpiece Holly had given him (“Apparently the Council’s decided you’re trustworthy enough to hear police broadcasts, what with all the monster trouble.” she’d told him, rolling her eyes), Artemis couldn’t help but wonder how it was that every fairy catastrophe that he got wind of seemed to make itself known just as he was walking through his own front door.

“Everybody be quiet!” Holly’s voice barked over the airwaves, a sharp blade of authority slicing through the storm of words.

The hubbub fell to near radio silence, and, after an irritated huff, she continued. “Finally. Alright, one at a time – Captain Evergreen, there’re currently no other Recon officers available to take your team’s place – you’ll have to wait a few days. In the meantime, stay off the ground.”

“But –”

“D’Arvit, are you LEP or not?! Stop whining, it’s not as if you’re trapped in the room with it! Make sure you’re all running hot, stay shielded, and call in every hour. Foaly, any estimate on the flower’s sensory range?”

“Uh...” There was a frantic clicking as the centaur began running lightning-quick calculations. “Well, I’d estimate the minimum range being… at least five meters, but it’s probably greater than that.”

“Right. Evergreen, keep a minimum of five meters away from the monster at all times, preferably further away than that. Got it?”

“Yessir!”

The remaining fearful murmurs went silent as, presumably, fairies rushed to follow her orders rather than keep their minds on the source of their panic.

Once there had been nothing save the slight background hum of ambient noise for at least a minute, and he had settled in his office chair, Artemis said wryly, “Forgive me, Holly, but I do believe that Recon’s standards have taken a steep dive since you joined Section Eight.”

There was an amused snicker from Foaly. “Well, Holly is pretty exceptional –”

“Exceptional I may be, but we have other things to worry about right now.” Holly interrupted. “Artemis, I don’t suppose you’ve somehow managed to unearth this flower monster’s biography in the last couple of weeks?”

“No, unfortunately.” He had already scoured the Internet for information upon hearing of the
incidents involving the Underground Retrieval team. He had found nothing – a novelty, for him – even when taking more questionable routes to obtain said information. So far as the Worldwide Web was concerned, the flower was a rude, childish creature who barely even existed.

Navigating through Frisk’s blog on his laptop, Artemis continued, “However, it does appear that the monster ambassador was aware of this monster – according to their official accounts of the Underground, this flower was actually the first monster they met when they fell into the Ruins.” His eyes picked out a particular detail in the text, and his nose wrinkled. “And it seems that monsters are truly wretched at naming themselves as well as places. Of all the names he could go by, why Flowey?”

A choking, spluttering sound came from Foaly’s channel, and Holly groaned loudly. “You’re kidding. That’s actually its name?”

“*His* name, yes.”

“And what else is in there? A warning, *stay away, murderous plant here*?”

“Surprisingly, no.” Artemis began scanning through the rest of the blog, looking for other mentions of the monster. “Several comments have been left concerning his *personality*, but there hasn’t been a single mention of an attack, or the possibility of one.”

“So we get special treatment.” Holly’s voice was dripping with sarcasm. “Great. What about the two monsters that Flowey arrived with? The skeletons? They wouldn’t happen to be murderers as well, would they?”

Another click of the mouse brought up a different page, and several blog entries concerning said skeletons. “It would *appear* not. Of course, considering that the Ambassador apparently missed the flower’s murderous tendencies, appearances can be deceiving.” The Internet would not likely be an accurate source of information in this endeavor.

“Right. It’s probably best if we just keep a safe distance from all of them. Let us know if you find anything else, alright?”

“Of course.”

The communicator fell completely silent, and Artemis carefully pulled the earpiece out of his ear and set it aside.

Well, if the Internet could not supply the necessary data, then he could set aside some time for questioning a reliable source directly, couldn’t he?

Frisk bit down a groan, sorely tempted to start beating their head against the table in frustration.

Unfortunately, since the computer’s keyboard was there, there was no room to beat their head against the table without breaking something, so instead, they satisfied themselves by drawing angry scribbles in the margins of the notepad resting at their elbow.

* It shouldn’t be this damn hard to find one stupid creature!

However much they agreed with Chara’s sentiments, though, it was very clear that it really was this hard to find the information they were looking for. Rubbing at their eyes, Frisk glared at the computer screen and the rows upon rows of results from their most recent Internet search.
They’d been at this for a couple of days now. After Sans had admitted he’d found little to no explanation as to how a SAVE point had appeared on the surface (“Best guess at this point is that there’s some sort of ambient magic there, or maybe there were some space-time shenanigans goin’ on, but I won’t know for sure without having a look around, kid.”), they’d moved on to something they could actually research themselves. Since their schedule was the most open it had been in weeks, Frisk had taken advantage of it and, under the guise of giving Sans, Papyrus and Flowey tours around their favorite places in Dublin, gone to the local public library in the hopes of finding some mention of whatever creatures had been wandering around the Underground.

They’d originally started off with books, trawling through several sections of mythology, but, as was often the case in areas with large monster populations, many of those books had been checked out in bulk – probably by either historians of both species trying to find stories of possible real-life events, or monsters who felt like giggling at the odd interpretations of monsters that turned up in human folklore.

So they’d turned to the Internet instead, and was finding it woefully… well, *lacking* wasn’t the right word. It would be more accurate to say woefully *overwhelming*. There were just so many different mythological creatures from so many cultures to sort through.

Blinking furiously (they’d been glaring at the computer too long), Frisk turned back to their written list and started running down it again, just in case they’d missed something.

**Sirens:** either bird-people or mermaids depending on the source, not humanoid. 

**Selkie:** seals that can turn into people by shedding their seal skin and then can turn back so long as they have their seal skins. Some stories say they can create illusions? Invisibility possibly illusion. Flowey said they were vibrating too fast to see, no illusions. Too far from sea?

**Kitsune:** fox spirits with lots of tails. Shapeshifters, illusionists, tricksters, can take human forms, can be perfect copy of a person, mentions of controlling fire and lightning people in Underground used guns not fire or lightning. Can kitsunes heal themselves?

**Leshy:** some sort of forest spirit thing that has a horrible cry and imitates voices to lead people astray. Also shapeshifter, can grow and shrink. Maybe?

**Púca:** Celtic shape-shifting fairy that can turn into animals like dogs, horses, rabbits, etc. Gives good advice but also likes terrorizing humans. Likes riddles. Creatures of hills and mountains?

**Encantado – dolphin-like creature that can change into humans at night, has superior musical abilities (voice?), seductive, attracted to parties. Uses hats to hide protruding foreheads – Flowey said people in UG wore helmets? Uses various mind control techniques**

**Trow:** Small ugly deformed creatures, sometimes invisible to humans. (What about to monsters) Would sneak into houses to warm themselves by fires. Lived underground in ancient mounds called howes. Kidnapped humans, pranksters, made milk and ale spoil and things go missing.

**Pixies:** tiny fairy pranksters – loved to pull pranks and cause trouble, blamed on tons of minor things like blown out candles, mysterious taping, getting lost, etc. Probably not

**Dokkaebi:** Korean goblins created by haunted household items? Tricksters, use powers of persuasion to convince people to do pointless things like wrestling all night (or to make people stop asking questions?), shapeshifters.

**Addonexus:** something human-like that can control light and shadow, heal people’s wounds, control
their bones (like that guy from Naruto, Kimi-something?) See people’s natural auras, age slowly, difficult to hurt because they heal really fast

“Have you had any luck finding what you’re looking for?”

Frisk yelped, nearly leaping out of their seat, and spun around to find one of the librarians hovering over their shoulder.

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” The man blustered. “I didn’t mean to startle you!”

“It’s fine, mister, I just wasn’t paying attention.” Flushing, and more than a little miffed at Chara for not warning them that someone was coming, Frisk considered their list, then the man.

What the heck, might as well try. “Actually, mister, could you help me?” They put on their most innocent face. “A friend of mine was talking about some sort of mythological creature he knew about, but he couldn’t remember what they were called, just that they looked kind of human, and could turn invisible, control people with their voices, and heal themselves really fast. Do you know of anything like that?”

“Hmm…” The librarian tapped her chin thoughtfully, thinking about it. “Can’t say I have.”

Someone who had been working at the computer opposite Frisk’s – a pimply blonde teenager with a round, friendly face – peered up over the top of the monitor. “You mean like those creatures lots of people kept seeing after the Crash?”

*Say what now?*

Blinking, Frisk peered at the girl. “After the Crash?”

“Yup.” She nodded. “Right after the Crash, there were all these odd little people that popped up. Just appeared out of nowhere, along with a bunch of weird technology that was, like, way more advanced than human stuff should be, then disappeared again.”

She turned back to her own computer, and Frisk stared for a couple more seconds in disbelief. They’d never heard about anything like that, but, well, they’d only been maybe four at the time, and their biological parents had probably been too busy in the Crash’s aftermath to really care about odd sightings like that.

“I think the library still has some old newspaper clippings from then,” the librarian offered. “Hardly anybody ever wants to read them, though. Do you want me to get some for you?”

Frisk didn’t hesitate. “Yes please!”

Several minutes later, the man came back with several slightly yellowed newspaper clippings kept safe inside plastic page protectors and handed them over. Frisk only had to flip through a couple before a title leaped out at them.

Strange Creatures Spotted off the Coast of Duncade! Aliens or Something more Magical in Origin?

*What the hell?*

A brief scan through the article revealed that it was mostly a debate concerning several strange small, humanoid creatures that had appeared in unidentified submarine-like ships, and whether or not they were actually aliens. There were little details about the creatures themselves, only described as “small and humanoid, with pointed ears,” and apparently the beings had disappeared without a trace – and
their technology self-destructed – before much could be found out.

* Okay, that’s… a little suspicious.

Silently agreeing, Frisk flipped through more articles, no headlines really jumping out at them until one that read *Fairy Fort found Near Tara Disappears Overnight*, and the sight of that first word sent a thrill up their spine.

*Fairies.*

They checked their list again. A good number of the creatures on their list so far were *fairies* – there were goblins and pixies and elf-like creatures, plus beings like the Leshy which could be seen as nature spirits, just the same as fairies sometimes were depicted as, and there were many more besides that shared similar characteristics.

*But those things in the Underground were using technology, and I don’t know about fairies healing themselves…? Is that a thing?*

Frisk flipped through the articles again.

*“Fairy” Sightings near Stonehenge!*

*Elves or Aliens? Speculative Theories on “Little People” Sightings All Over the World!*

*What Are They and Where Did They Come From?*

*Man Looses Memories After Calling in a Fairy Sighting in Canada!*

*Missing Criminals and AWOLs found in Africa – Possible Supernatural Involvement?*

Each article was relatively short – obviously, the Crash and the aftermath of it had been more important to people – but there were still enough constants to ring several alarm bells, and in every article, the descriptions of the creatures were relatively consistent.

*Short humanoid creatures with pointed ears, in high-tech-looking suits, some with mechanical wings. Some were injured but healed themselves quickly. They appeared suddenly, as if from nowhere, along with technology that should have been noticed by human technology pre-Crash, but, for whatever reason, wasn’t. And that man that lost his memory in Canada said something about dreaming about a voice like a choir of angels…*

*Flowey said something about that creature’s voice sounding musical, didn’t he?*

He had – after he’d stopped sulking about being left out of the loop about the SAVE point.

*Which means that if these things are the same ones as the ones that appeared in the Underground…*

...then not only can they control people, but they can erase their memories.

The thought sent a chill down Frisk’s spine. They’d lost memories before, in previous runs – if a Reset occurred too far into a timeline, then there was a risk of side effects. Losing memories seemed to be the most common side effect – heck, they’d even forgotten about the *Resets* completely once, and, apart from a sense of déjà vu, had no idea they were repeating their journey until they’d regained those memories in the next run.
But it wasn’t always memories that got erased.

*If they can alter memories, what else can they change? And why would they? Why did they want that person not to know about them?*

Frisk handed the articles back to the librarian, thanked him (and the teenager, who was still on her computer), then turned and walked as quickly as they could without looking too urgent towards the mythology section, where they’d last seen Sans.

Things had just gotten a lot more confusing.

Chapter End Notes

If this chapter had a title, it would probably be “the Internet fails everybody.” Also, I think this might’ve been the longest chapter yet. Yay!

Fun fact: I literally typed in several search words into Google, just to see what kind of results Frisk might get if they did the same thing. Those creatures from Frisk’s list are things I actually researched, feel free to look them up!

Also, someone on fanfiction.net pointed out that “People that weren’t humans or monsters” from the last two chapters is actually a pun. Geez, Sans was only really here for one chapter, and we’re already seeing really bad puns! That weren’t even done on purpose! (On the other hand, now I can’t wait for them to find out about the fairies – the PEOPLE – so that Sans can realize that was a pun and start snickering.)

And now worldbuilding stuff, presented by me and danielxcutter. Today’s lesson: Why do the Genocide Runs happen?

The reason why the Genocide runs occurred is actually tied into the Resets. People who’ve read the Artemis Fowl books know that time travel, or anything similar such as interdimensional travel (*cough, cough, limbo, cough*), has a risk of adverse side-effects, everything from switching body-parts with another person to losing memories or being de-aged both physically and mentally (all of which has been seen to happen in canon). This is also true for this little universe I’ve created.

When the Resets occur, or when Frisk LOADs, they’re traveling backward in time to either the moment they last SAVED, or the moment they landed in the Underground. For whatever reason, Frisk has yet to experience any physical side-effects – however, MENTAL side-effects have occurred, and the farther back in time Frisk goes, the higher likelihood there is of those occurring. Usually, the effects are something akin to memory loss, but in the case of the Genocide runs, what actually happened is that Frisk lost both their memories of the monsters and their EMPATHY. That combination, combined with the stress they were going through by the time those runs came around (and, in the case of the first Genocide run, Chara sort of encouraging them to keep killing after a while, because they were desperate and also a huge jerk back then) made them go on the genocidal warpath. They stayed on said warpath until being killed too many times by Sans, at which point a Reset occurred again and they regained what they lost.

They still remember what they did during those runs, and the more Resets they go through, the more likely it is they might end up losing their empathy for more than one
run in a row. That’s why they’re so concerned about another Reset happening, especially now – they know that the Genocide timelines both happened after a Reset ending a very long timeline, and this is the longest timeline they’ve gone through yet. And they REALLY don’t want another Genocide timeline – or any other timeline at all, really.
“Fairies, huh?”

Tucked into a solitary corner of the library as far from other people as possible, and holding a small pile of books they’d snatched from shelves on their way there, Frisk grimaced and nodded.

“It definitely seems like they could be fairies, though for all we know there could be something else involved here.” They waved at the various tomes. “I don’t think we’ll know for sure unless we do some more research, right?”

Sans dropped down into a chair directly across from them, and, with a lazy flick of his fingers and a spark of blue, levitated one of the books from the top of the pile and turned it so he could read the cover.

“Eh, I guess that’s true.” With a noise that sounded suspiciously like a yawn, he plucked the book out of the air and flipped it open to the table of contents. “I’m surprised you’re not using the internet, though. S’ a lot more info there.”

With a groan, Frisk flopped into another chair and reached for a book themselves – a thin tome of fairy folktales. “There’s a ton more information there. Too much. I think if I read any more articles without proper spellings and paragraph breaks, then my head would explode. Heck, maybe Chara’s would explode.”

* Hey! The computer would explode, thank you so very much!

“Heh.” The corners of Sans’s permanent grin twitched up a little higher. “Gotta give you brownie points for stickin’ with it as long as you did.”

It took Frisk a couple seconds to recognize the pun for what it was, and then they leveled the most unimpressed expression they could muster at the skeleton. “Sans, I like puns as much as the next person, but is now really the time for them?”

“You don’t know me fairy well if ‘ya have to ask that, kiddo. There’s always time for puns.”

They snorted but otherwise didn’t react as they opened the book of folktales and started reading.

Almost three hours later, Frisk shut their fifth book with a huff of frustration and set it aside.

Folktales were only marginally more helpful than online articles, it seemed. There was definitely more attention to detail, but they were still stories, obviously geared more towards entertainment than anything else, and while there was somewhat accurate info – fairies appearing seemingly from nowhere, only to disappear again, sometimes hostile personalities, etcetera – it was far too often hemmed in by both sides by things that seemed much more fantastical. Food that made human food taste like sawdust? Babies being snatched and replaced with fairy infants without the parents noticing? That seemed unrealistic even by their own very skewed standards.

“Have you had any luck, Sans?”
The monster shrugged, white pupils still steadily reading on. “Depends on what you see as ‘luck.’ Anythin’ about fairy rings, changelings, that sorta stuff?”

Frisk groaned and let their head flop back to stare at the ceiling.

“Take it that’s a ‘no.’”

“I haven’t found anything!” They complained. Then, remembering where they were, they lowered their voice to almost a whisper as the continued. “There’s nothing that could help us explain why they were Underground, or why they’d want people to forget about them!”

Sans shrugged again – a remarkable effort for him, to perform the same action two times in a row. “Can’t say I know anythin’ either, kid.”

With another angry noise, Frisk reached for the next book. This one had caught their eye as they were passing by the non-fiction section – it was titled, in bold, professional letters, *Sightings of the Fairy Kind: A Chronicle of Fairy Sightings and Unexplained Phenomenon in the Aftermath of the Crash.*

It was a remarkably long title for such a small book – it couldn’t have been wider than maybe half an inch, at the most – but Frisk had briefly scanned the first chapter when they’d found it, and the text was small, densely packed, and had a very professional tone to it, so maybe it’d be more helpful.

They opened it, turning to the table of contents and scanning the chapter titles –

And found one that made them start. Hardly daring to believe their eyes, they quickly flipped to that chapter and found that they had not been mistaken.

*The Fairy Roses of Dublin.*

Beneath the chapter title, there was a small aerial photograph of the familiar orange blooms from the Fowl Estate.

*Well, that’s… interesting. Didn’t expect to see them in a book.*

Frisk could safely say they hadn’t expected it, either, certainly not in this book, listed among the ranks of post-Crash fairy sightings, of all things –

*Fairy sightings. Fairy roses.*

*No. No way. How did we miss this?*

“Sans?”

“Hmm?” He didn’t even glance up from his book, even though his sockets were visibly drooping with greater-than-usual fatigue.

“Those flowers I told you about, the ones planted in a spiral around the SAVE point? They’re mentioned in a book of fairy sightings.”

*That* caught his attention. Sans didn’t quite sit bolt upright, but he *did* stop slouching and look up from his own reading.

Frisk held up the book for him to see, and pointed at the picture for emphasis. “See?”

His brows rose a fraction, and he made a *gimme that* gesture with one hand. Frisk complied, handing
it over so he could have a look at it himself.

“Huh.” The skeleton squinted as if to get a better look at the picture, a definite flicker of blue creeping into one eye. “That looks almost like magical discoloration.”

* What the hell is magical discoloration?

Seeing Frisk’s quizzical expression, Sans narrowed his eye sockets in consideration, for a moment, before he started to explain.

“Y’know there’s a lot of plants in the Underground?” When they nodded, he continued. “Well, ‘cause they didn’t have sunlight when they were bein’ grown, we had to use magic, and that caused stuff like this.” He waved the book a little in his hand. “Wasn’t common, but some plants would change color if exposed to too much magic. Before they lost their needles, there were some trees ‘n Snowdin that were blue.”

“Blue-green, or…?”

“Nah, bright blue. Almost the same color as Patience.”

* Wait a second… if plants can change color when there’s too much magic around, and the roses are almost exactly the same shade of orange as Bravery…

Frisk gulped.

“Then do you think that that’s what happened here? Magical discoloration?”

He shrugged and tossed the book back at them carelessly. “Dunno. Wouldn’t know for sure unless I could see them in person, and I can’t really see that happening.”

Frisk looked back down at the book, then back up at Sans.

“Actually, there is a way you can see them in person… how do you feel about coming to a birthday party?”

The peace of a quiet room, near silent save for the soft humming of electricity running in the background, crickets chirping outside the open window, and pages turning, was broken by a harsh ring.

Myles slipped a strip of paper in to mark his place in his book – a second edition copy of *Algal and Cyanobacteria Symboses* – and quickly stood up, crossing the floor of what had once been his older brother’s study to pick up the phone.

“This is Myles Fowl speaking.”

“Ah, Myles. Just who I was looking to speak to. I trust you’re doing well?”

The boy’s lips twitched up into a small, surprisingly soft smile. “Hello, Artemis! I have to admit, I wasn’t expecting you – are you alright?”

“Perfectly fine, I can assure you, though I will not deny that I am becoming quite fed up with recent political ventures.”

“I can only imagine.” Myles’ voice was dryly humorous at the admission. “I take it this isn’t a social
“No, unfortunately.” The faint sound of clicking keys echoed out of the receiver— it seemed that his brother was working while he spoke, as he was often wont to do. “I wish to ask you a favor, assuming of course that you would be willing to help your eldest sibling?”

“It depends on the favor.” Myles remembered the last favor that Artemis had asked of him in vivid detail, and what it involved, and though it had been intellectually stimulating, he had no desire to walk blindly into a situation like that ever again. Juliet had enough ammunition to tease him with as it was.

“It’s not nearly so harrowing as the last favor, I promise.” The man sounded vaguely amused, though only vaguely, thankfully. “It has to do with the monster Ambassador and the fairies.”

Myles blinked. He couldn’t have heard that right. “Pardon?”

“You heard me correctly, Myles.” More clicking, then a rustling of fabric—he could almost see Artemis steepling his fingers as if he was right in front of him. “A monster that recently made the trip overseas to Ireland—and has, so far as we are aware, been in Ambassador Frisk’s immediate presence with some frequency since his arrival—is aware of the People.”

Oh. He already knew about the monster, as he’d heard the fairies still lingering on the grounds around the roses speaking about it in hushed, fearful tones, but he had been unaware of the company it kept. With that and the People’s dedication to secrecy in mind, he immediately had an educated hypothesis as to what exactly Artemis’s new favor was going to be.

“You wish me to supervise them, while they are here?”

“Yes, for a time, at least. There will still be fairies on the grounds by that point, and I know they’ll appreciate having an extra pair of observant eyes on their side, especially since there will be at least one monster present. They’ve become rather jittery of late, as I’m sure you’ve noticed.”

“How could I not? I wouldn’t be surprised if I could hear their nervous whispering from my bedroom window.”

Artemis chuckled. “Don’t let Holly hear you say that— I can only imagine how she would react.”

“I have no intention of her hearing me.” Myles cast a glance around the office once, just to be certain that the fiery LEP captain was nowhere in sight—not that she would be, when she and half of the other fairies were spending most of their nighttime airborne and shielded. “How long do you wish me to watch them?”

“Only until my arrival. After that, you may leave it to me.”

“I understand.”

“Good. And Myles, be careful.”

There was a click, and then a soft tone as the speaker near his ear informed him that the other caller had hung up.

Myles eyed the receiver skeptically for several moments, wondering what precisely Artemis had neglected to mention, for such a warning to be viable, then carefully set the phone back on its cradle, and left through the office door, intending to find his twin. After all, unlike the previous favor, Artemis had not specifically stated he had to keep this a secret.
Welp, looks like Frisk and Sans has already made a connection between the Fowl Estate and fairies – I will point out, however, that they don’t know that the Fowls themselves are involved, not yet. They’ll find out eventually.

You all may have noticed that I like writing panicking fairies. Heheheheheheh, you have NO idea.

There WILL be a sequel to this fanfic – be sure to say thank you to danielxcutter for that, because without the very enthusiastic chats we had (VERY enthusiastic chats), I might not have decided to work on one at all! (Also, thanks for helping me figure out the transitional scenes in this chapter, daniel! You’re a lifesaver!) While I'm on the subject, does anyone here know how to list someone as a co-author on Ao3? I know it's a possibility, but I have no idea how to do it.

And now, for today’s worldbuilding tidbit, brought to you by me and daniel: How much do people (fairies and humans) know about the colored magic used by the monsters?

The fairies have started learning colored magic, as we have seen, though they’re having some difficulty identifying some of the magic’s capabilities. They’ll figure them out eventually. Humans, on the other hand, know next to nothing, mostly because there are no humans with magic – apart from Frisk, maybe (yes I am considering giving them magic, but not any time soon) – and therefore none capable of learning colored magic (colored magic in this universe can be learned on top of any original magic a person may have, but without magic of your own, you can’t learn them). Also, the monsters are hiding all that they’re capable of, including how they use colored magic so that humans aren’t as scared of them, and therefore less violent towards monsters.

That’s not the only thing the monsters are hiding, either – they’re also hiding how vulnerable monster souls are to malicious intent (at Frisk’s insistence). They don’t want to encourage the more violent anti-monster folks to take action by letting that become public knowledge.
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Magicae est Potestas now has a TVTropes page, made and edited by me and daniel! Feel free to check it out! Here's a link:
http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/MagicaeEstPotestas

Also, we're still looking for other tropes that match things that have happened so far, so feel free to look for some yourselves! If you find one that really seems to fit, feel free to tell us so we can post it with the others we've already found!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

On the day they returned to the Fowl estate, Frisk had woken up halfway expecting the sky to be gray, overcast, and gloomy, maybe with ominous rumbling on the horizon. It seemed appropriate enough to expect, considering what they had found out only a few days previously.

However, by the time that they and the monsters accompanying them were in a cart riding through the Irish countryside, the sky was clear and almost cloudless, and peacefully quiet without a single grumbling of thunder.

Well, peacefully quiet wasn’t exactly accurate, what with who they were sharing the cart with.

“FRIEND FRISK, IS IT NORMAL FOR HUMANS TO NAME THEIR HOUSES?”

Frisk blinked at the taller of the two skelebros directly across from them. Papyrus was leaning forward with a look of avid curiosity on his face, and his posture was forcing a grumbling Flowey (whose pot was practically being cuddled right next to the skeleton’s chest) to lean forward as well.

“No, not really.”

“THEN WHY IS THIS HUMAN FAMILY’S HOME NAMED FOWL?”

“Well, it’s not actually named ‘Fowl.’ It’s like calling your house ‘Papyrus’s house’ or ‘Papyrus and Sans’s house.’”

“Oh, I SEE! IT IS SIMPLY A FANCY WAY OF SAYING WHAT FAMILY LIVES THERE!”

The skeleton’s sockets scrunched up in confusion as another thought occurred to him. “BUT WHY WOULD THEY BE CALLED ‘FOWL?’ IT SOUNDS VERY… DUBIOUS!”

“That’s easy, bro.” Sans cracked open an eye socket. “It’s ‘cause they’re suspected of fowl play.”

“SANS!”

Frisk stifled a giggle. Next to them, Toriel openly chuckled.

“Aww, there’s no need for that, Pap.” The shorter skeleton’s grin seemed to grow by several teeth. “Gotta get my kicks in somehow.”

“Can’t you just take a nap or something?” Flowey snapped, glowering at him. “If I have to hear
another one of your stupid puns –”

The cart trundled around a bend, and the stone wall and medieval gate of Fowl Manor were suddenly looming over them. Flowey’s threat petered out at the sight of it.

“WOWIE!” Papyrus blurted. “THAT IS A VERY LARGE HOUSE!”

“It’s almost too large.” Sans’s sockets were both open now, pupils flickering back into view after the shock of seeing the manor for the first time had rendered them invisible. “I thought you said only four people lived here, kid?”

“Well, there might be a few more people here keeping the house clean,” they admitted. “The place is too big for the Fowls to do it themselves.”

The horses pulling their cart slowed to a halt at the base of the gate, and the man who’d been steering them scrambled down from the cart, fishing a large key from his pocket and trotting up to unlock a large padlock hanging from the metal bars.

As he did, Frisk took a moment to study the manor. The last time they’d been here, most of their focus had been on the other guests, not on the building itself (though it was hard not to make note of its more impressive or ornate features.) Without so many distractions, though, they could see some of the more subtle details that they’d missed before – some window boxes on the upper stories, the tell-tale blue glint of solar panels on some of the roofs, and small plots of garden along the building’s walls, hidden partially in shadow.

When the gate swung open, they also saw something else – or rather someone else. There was a quartet of figures waiting on the steps leading to the front door – a pair of familiar adults with dark hair, and unfamiliar one as tall and clean-shaven as a mountain peak, and one kid, with sunshine-blonde hair.

Beckett didn’t wait for them at the door, but instead rushed forward to meet them as soon as they came within shouting distance, face split with a wide, eager grin.

“Hi, Frisk! Hi, Your Majesty!”

“Hi.”

“Hello, Beckett,” Toriel said warmly. “How have you and your parents been?”

“We’ve been fine, thanks!” The boy turned his attention fully on Frisk, his smile fading a little. “I heard you got shot. Are you okay?”

“Fine,” they assured him quickly. They pulled down the collar of their shirt a little, showing him where the bullet had gone in. “See? I don’t even have a scar.”

“Oh, good!” He perked up again and held out a hand. “You want help getting down?”

Frisk hesitated, before reluctantly taking his hand to steady themselves as they clambered down, mumbling a soft thank you.

“Not a problem!” He assured them, then turned wide eyes towards the monsters in the cart that he hadn’t already greeted. “I’ve seen you guys somewhere before… um, weren’t you on Frisk’s blog?”

Papyrus puffed up his chest proudly. “INDEED I WAS! I AM THE GREAT PAPYRUS, and THIS LAZYBONES HERE IS SANS!”
“‘Sup.” Sans lifted one hand off his lap, hardly bothering to move more than an inch.

“IT’S NICE TO MEET YOU, SMALL HUMAN BECKETT!” Papyrus added. He jumped down from the cart – literally jumped, landing perfectly on his feet – and stuck out one hand for the boy to shake. “ANY FRIEND OF FRISK’S IS A FRIEND OF MINE!”

Apparently the skeleton’s enthusiasm was just as contagious for the Fowl boy as it was for Frisk on some days, because his grin just grew even bigger and sunnier, and he accepted the handshake with enthusiasm to rival Undyne’s. “Thanks!”

He paused, looking at the grumbling flower held in the crook of Papyrus’s other elbow. “And who’re you?”

“None of your beeswax, that’s who,” Flowey grumbled.

“That’s Flowey,” Frisk said apologetically. “He’s, um… really rude. Sorry if he upsets you while he’s here, but I didn’t want to leave him behind, so…”

“It’s fine, it’s fine!”

By this point, the adults at the door had reached them – Mr. and Mrs. Fowl, and the huge stranger. As they introduced themselves to the new monsters and exchanged greetings with Toriel, Frisk looked around for the last Fowl that seemed to be missing from the group.

“Where’s Myles?”

Beckett made a face. It was an odd face, somewhere between a reaction to biting into a lemon and frustration.

“He’s in his laboratory,” he complained. “He’s been in there for days, working on some stupid new project, and he hasn’t come out except for meals! I tried getting him to come out earlier, but I don’t think he heard me! I think he doesn’t even know what day it is!”

“If it’s any consolation,” a rumbling, deep voice said, “your older brother often did the same when he still lived here.” Frisk started, looking up to find the massive stranger practically looming over them.

“That doesn’t make me feel any better,” Beckett grumbled. Then, after a moment, he perked up. “I know! I bet he’d come out once he knew you were here, Frisk!”

“W-what?” They blustered.

“He’s been really excited about getting to see you again, even if he doesn’t show it well!”

“Umm…”

Before they could really fully process this (the only reason that they could think for Myles to be excited to see them again was for the same reason that monsters and now some humans were generally excited to see Mettaton, and they just couldn’t wrap their head around the idea of being someone’s celebrity), Beckett grabbed their hand and started tugging them towards the manor door.

“Come on! Let’s go get him!”

“W-wait a second!” Frisk protested. They turned towards the monsters. “Will you guys be fine on your own..?”

“We will be fine, my child,” Toriel assured them, affectionately amused by their skittishness. “I
hardly think that we will come under attack here.”

“But –” Frisk glanced at the skeletons and Flowey.

“Go on, kiddo.” Sans waved them away lazily. “Me ’n Pap and Flowey will just go look at the
gardens or something.”

Translation: *Flowey and I will look at the SAVE point.* Frisk wanted to relax a bit at that statement –
they needed whatever information Sans could find, if not concerning the SAVE point then at least
concerning the odd, possibly magical roses – but they couldn’t, not just like that.

“Is… that okay?” That was aimed at the two adult Fowls, who had paused in their conversation to
listen.

“Oh, of course, Ambassador,” Mrs. Fowl assured them. “We’ll have Butler show them around.” She
nodded to the man-mountain.

Frisk hesitated, then nodded, and then let finally Beckett drag them away into the manor.

“Dinner will be at six!” Mrs. Fowl called after them before the door was shut behind them. “Have
fun, dear!”

It was kinda funny, how panicked the kiddo got around strangers, Sans mused. Frisk had faced
down Flowey multiple times, and faced down Sans himself, when he was actually *serious* about
fighting, twice.

(Well, at least they *claimed* they had – he had no evidence apart from Flowey’s own claims, and the
way Chara would flinch whenever they were in control and he took a shortcut to them without
warning, and that wasn’t enough to be sure.)

And yet, if a total stranger came up to them asking for an autograph, it was like they were being
faced with the apocalypse.

“They’re a bit shy, aren’t they?” The dark-haired human lady asked, laughter in her eyes. Her
posture was relaxed and welcoming, without a hint of tension or malicious intent, but, well, who
knew if that was true or not.

Careful not to give anything away by changing his posture, Sans focused on her LV, one of the only
two of the human’s stats he could see without initiating an encounter or a proper CHECK.

*Angeline Fowl*

*LV 1*

She’d never killed anybody, then. Good.

“I’VE NEVER SEEN FRISK ACT SHY BEFORE!” Pap scratched his chin with his free hand,
looking thoughtfully at the manor door. “I THINK ALPHYS SAID SOMETHING ABOUT
HUMANS ACTING NERVOUS OR EMBARRASSED AROUND OTHER HUMANS –
SOMETHING ABOUT THEM BEING SOMETHING CALLED A HAJIDERE?”

Sans snorted.

“SANS, WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?”
“No reason, bro.”

Papyrus squinted at him suspiciously.

“No, now, Papyrus,” Toriel chided gently. “As amusing as puns are, I’m sure that Sans still finds other things just as amusing.”

“Isn’t hajidere a Japanese term?” The other dark-haired human’s brows furrowed. “I don’t think that Japan has allowed many monsters within their borders yet. Where did your friend learn it?”

Sans used the moment between the question and his bro’s answer to quickly scan the male human. Non-aggressive posture, mismatched stance – he was putting more weight on one leg than the other. An injury, maybe? And his stats…

Artemis Fowl Sr.

LV 2

He’d had to kill, but only once before. He was still a relatively low threat.

“OH, SHE LEARNED IT FROM A HUMAN THING CALLED ANIME!”

The Fowls started, and the enormous human behind them raised a skeptical eyebrow. “Isn’t that some sort of television show?”

Sans focused on him next. Easily almost as tall as Tori, with bulky arm muscles that could’ve put Aaron’s to shame, this human looked like he could one-up Undyne despite his apparent age and heft the mountain he resembled over his head and run a marathon holding it there. There was also several suspicious bulges of something underneath his carefully maintained suit in several places – if he were to hazard a guess, based on the shape and size of the bulges, they were guns.

The human probably didn’t need those to cause damage, though – his stance might have been meant to look casual, but there was definitely tension in there, muscles ready to move at a moment’s notice. This human was dangerous, and a quick glance at his stats only confirmed it.

Domovoi Butler

LV 7

Yeah, that was far too much blood on his hands for Sans to feel comfortable with this human being near his brother or Tori, but he couldn’t do much about it now. He’d just have to keep an eye on him.

“Hey, are we just going to stand around here chatting, or are we actually doing something?” Flowey growled.

“NOW NOW, FLOWEY,” Pap scolded, “WHAT DID FRISK SAY ABOUT BEING RUDE?”

The flower grumbled, hunching up in his pot. “But I’m bored.” He complained. “And I’ve been stuck underground for ages. I wanna actually see stuff. Like those flowers Frisk talked about! I’ve never seen orange roses before!”

Butler’s eyes narrowed a fraction before his face settled back into an impassive look that wouldn’t have looked amiss on a statue. It was barely noticeable, but Sans noted it all the same.

Why’s he so on edge about it? Flowey doesn’t exactly look dangerous, and as far as he knows,
we’re just looking at flowers.

That expression had meant *something*, though, and if he were to guess, it either meant that Butler had taken offense to Flowey’s comment somehow, or he had seen it as a threat.

_Huh. Guess I’ll have to figure out which one it is for myself_.

“Maybe we should get the little weed out of here so you guys can, y’know, talk.” He suggested impassively. “He’s not exactly easy on the ears.”

“Hey, for your information, trashbag –”

“See?”

Butler’s brow furrowed a little, but he nodded. “Might as well. I won’t be able to show you around the entirety of the grounds, but I can show you some of them, and we can stop at the roses on the way.”

Sans made a lazy gesture at him. “Lead the way, then, pal.”

_Threatening human or no, I’m not passing up this chance. Let’s see what those roses might shed some light on._

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about not posting this earlier – I was busy most of last week, and as a result, though I did know what I wanted to write, I never got around to it. I’ll try not to let that happen again!

And wait a second, we have a Sans POV? Whaaaaat? Heh. Anyway, I hope I managed to keep him relatively in character.

The whole “Sans seeing peoples’ LV” thing is a head-canon of mine, by the way. Originally I thought about making him be able to see peoples’ souls without initiating an encounter, like I’ve seen some fanfics do, but that would be too OP, so instead he can see people’s LV.

On peoples’ LVs: Artemis Sr. has an LV of 2 because, even though he never actively tried to kill anybody, even while he was still a criminal, he was bound to have had to lethally defend himself or his family against an attack eventually. It just makes sense. Butler’s LV of 7 is because, before he was a bodyguard for Artemis, he worked as a mercenary. He was bound to have killed a heck of a lot of people, and he’s pretty numb to death of non-family by now, but at the same time, he tries not to kill if he can help it, so his LV isn’t as high as it could be.

“Hajidere” is a term used in anime to describe a character who acts very nervous or embarrassed around their crush. Considering who he’s friends with, Papyrus (and Sans too for that matter) was bound to hear some anime terms like this at some point, which is why it was him that brought it up. And no, Frisk doesn’t have a crush on Beckett. That being said, I have joked with my sister about shipping Frisk and the Fowl twins… >:3

And now for this week’s worldbuilding note (which is really freaking long): this one’s
about the 7 wizards/mages/shamans that fought against the monsters and made the Barrier!

Firstly, on human magic – human magic is very, very different from monster and fairy magic (I’ll probably go over the differences in another note later on in the fic). Basically, while fairies and monsters have a higher variation of abilities that every individual can use (normal monster magic can appear pretty much in any form, and fairies have basic abilities that most have such as healing, mesmer, shielding, gift of tongues, etc.) humans can only have one or two magical abilities per individual. Basically, human mages have very specific-to-them superpowers. However, these abilities can be OP as heck.

So, moving onto the wizards – each of the wizards had one dominant soul trait, kinda like the human souls used to break the Barrier in modern times. Their soul colors and magic are as follows:

--The Red Wizard: Time magic. They were capable of traveling back in time to certain events marked by their magic, and then altering the following events paradox-free, while still remembering what never happened. In other words, they could create and use SAVE points.

--The Green Wizard: Magical shields and barriers. Basically a tank without offensive capabilities, and able of deflecting even the strongest of magical attacks, though not without using up a lot of energy. Theoretically, they could crush people with their shields, but probably wouldn’t want to – that would be gross.

--The Purple Wizard: They could control humans and monsters a la puppeteer style, using magical strings, not always visible ones either, to force them to move against their will.

--The Yellow Wizard: Could redirect magical energy and magical attacks that were launched at them. If a fireball was thrown at them, they could absorb it and then return it to where it came from at full strength. Basically, their power was a manifestation of “an eye for an eye.”

--The Dark Blue Wizard: Power over gravity, like what dark blue magic does, but super over-powered. They had enough power to lift entire armies of monsters or humans off the ground at once, though it would leave them exhausted, and it required massive amounts of concentration – wave a hand in front of their face at the wrong time, and all the floating people would crash back to earth.

--The Light Blue Wizard: Had a killer combination of teleportation and crazy good magical eyesight. They could see things from miles away, and zoom their vision in like a camera’s zoom if they needed to. Could teleport a couple hundred people at once. Favorite way to use their teleportation was mainly for hand-to-hand combat, though – they’d teleport behind monsters with a knife, stab them, then teleport away to repeat it all over.

--The Orange Wizard: Could summon a skin-covering armor that enhanced their strength to epic proportions – think Hulk-like strength. Not very fast, but incredibly strong, though without that magic armor, they only had ordinary human strength.

Been considering drawing pics of the 7 wizards - I’ll let you guys know when I have!
Chapter Notes

If the exterior of the Fowl estate was impressive just simply because of the sheer amount of ornate decorations it had, its interior was equally impressive in a different way – the inside of the manor seemed to Frisk to be one massive, labyrinthine tangle of painting-lined corridors, stairs, and a wide array of doors. If they had been directionally challenged in any way, they would’ve gotten lost barely a minute into the building.

And yet, admittedly unsurprisingly but also admirably, Beckett was able to navigate the building with the ease of over a decade’s worth of practice, not hesitating even once, even as he gave them short designations for each room they passed.

“That’s the East Wing library,” he told them as they passed by a set of doors hanging open a crack, revealing scores of books in the room beyond. “Myles spends a lot of time in there!”

Then there was “our father’s study,” several guest bedrooms, an observatory of sorts, which apparently had wide skylights installed so that people could not only have a wide panoramic view of the grounds and the distant lights of Dublin beyond, but also a good view of the stars and moon on clear nights, several bathrooms, one of which they caught a glimpse of through the door – it was, predictably enough, massive and very fancy-looking, much to Chara’s exaggerated disapproval (*Who needs a bathtub huge enough to fit more than one person in it? Come on!*), and many other rooms besides, before they finally turned a corner to find a hall more sparsely furnished with doors, and one marked with a small, metallic, and very professional-looking plaque.

*Laboratory,* it read, simple and to the point.

*Wow, they can afford all this and yet there’s only a dinky little sign? What a waste.*

“He’s still in here – he always flips that sign around when he leaves.” Beckett finally let go of their hand, and Frisk took advantage of his distraction to discretely check for bruises – for a twelve-year-old, he had a very strong grip. “See that little sign on the door?”

He was pointing, not at the plague, but at a little violet tag hanging from the doorknob, decorated with cartoonish pictures of various atoms and scientific-looking vials, and a line of text reading *science in progress* – something indefinitely more cutesy than Frisk had expected of a room that only Myles seemed to use.

“He’s still in here – he always flips that sign around when he leaves.” Beckett marched up to the door and knocked.

“Hey Myles, are you done yet?”

There was the sound of a muffled and distinctly annoyed response from inside.

“Myles, *come out* already! Frisk’s here!”

*That* earned a pause. After it had lasted for several moments, the door was unlocked from the other side with several clicks, and swung open to reveal a familiar head of curly black hair and narrowed blue eyes which looked distinctly more weary than the last time they’d seen them.
Myles blinked at them, then sighed.  

“If you would allow me a few minutes to put away my equipment?” He asked, looking more at Frisk than his brother.  

Unable to really voice anything past their astonishment, Frisk nodded, and watched the door swing back shut.  

Seeing their expression, Beckett grinned cheerfully. “What, did you think I was joking about him leaving his lab for you?”  

Actually, Frisk had. Myles didn’t seem like the sort that would put aside his precious time for something so trivial as someone he’d met once –  

Except I’m not just someone to him, am I? I’m the monster Ambassador.  

Stars, they still weren’t used to the privileges that gave them, even after all these timelines.  

A couple minutes passed in relative silence – despite his talkativeness, Beckett apparently understood that they weren’t certain about conversation right now – and before they knew it, the door had swung open, and Myles stepped through, locking the door behind him and, just like Beckett had said, flipping the silly little tab on the doorknob to reveal a cheerfully bright yellow hand making an a-okay sign.  

“I apologize for the delay, Frisk.” Despite his crisp tone, Myles looked embarrassed, with a visible red tint to his cheeks. “I tend to lose track of time when I concentrate on my work.”  

“It’s fine,” Frisk managed, still staring at the goofy sign, because seriously, that was not something they’d expected of Myles at all.  

Noticing their stare, the darker-haired twin sighed again, and gestured pointedly at Beckett. “The sign on the doorknob was Beckett’s idea, not mine.”  

“You don’t have to keep using it,” the blonde countered cheekily. “Anyway, now that you’re actually out of the lab, you should help me show Frisk the inside of the building! I was in a hurry on the way here, so I didn’t have the chance to.”  

Myles turned towards Frisk and raised one eyebrow. “Presuming you want that? You didn’t wish to leave the monsters alone for long periods of time during the gala.”  

That was actually a good question – should they leave their monster friends alone for a little while? During the gala, there had been enormous crowds of people, all wearing fancy clothes that weapons could be easily hidden beneath, and coldly formal language to hide ill intent behind. Here and now though…  

The Fowls themselves don’t seem to mean the monsters harm.  

“Is the estate still… guarded?” They asked hesitantly. “Is there a security team to keep out attackers?”  

“We have the best guards in the world!” Beckett assured them. “Juliet lives here full time, and she’s a Butler. She could take out anybody with her hands tied behind her back and blindfolded!”  

“Not to mention Butler himself,” Myles added with a very pointed look at his brother. “He may not be in his prime now, but he was once known as the third most dangerous man in the world. He’ll
keep them safe."

That wasn’t exactly as reassuring as he seemed to think it was – after all, one of the most dangerous in the world could mean really high levels of LV. And this was only talking about two people.

“Anybody else…?”

“We have several security teams hidden around the grounds to keep an eye out for intruders, but two Butlers are more than enough to deal with them.” Myles voice was impossibly confident – it was without a doubt that he believed what he said.

Then again, if those fairies came by…

*I think we can risk it this time.

Frisk almost started, and it took every ounce of self-control they had not to.

Really? But -

Chara never took any risks with the monsters’ safety, never took anybody’s word for granted – not even Frisk’s, in those timelines far in their relative past when they’d still been naive enough to believe that just reaching the surface was the solution to all their problems. For them to suddenly decide it was safe…

*Hey, I didn’t say anything about safe . Think about it – these fairies mess with people’s memories, right? But so far as we know, they only mess with people that already know about them.

And oddly-named roses or no, the Fowls probably aren’t involved with them directly.

Which meant, surprisingly, that the Fowl estate was still probably one of the safest places on the planet. Even if there were invisible fairies here, they wouldn’t do anything in view of the Fowls.

Probably. Hopefully .

*Besides, Flowey’s here, and if they’re anything like you were when you first fell, they’re probably scared shitless of him right now.

Stifling a helpless snicker at the comment, they turned an uneasy smile on the Fowl twins.

“Then… I guess I’m okay with leaving them alone for a little while.”

Butler hadn’t expected anyone to need his help anytime soon, not after the last major fiasco that they’d dealt with for the fairies. His near-death at the hands of Opal Koboi’s dark magic had left his heart a stuttering mess, and he was hardly fit for active duty anymore.

That, he knew, had crossed his old friend’s mind, likely several times (Artemis was nothing if not thorough) and yet he had been called for assistance anyway.

“I’ve already requested for Myles to keep a close eye on Frisk whilst they’re at the estate,” Artemis had said. “But I’d feel more… at ease, if you were there to offer backup, in case, for whatever reason, he might need it, and I have no doubt that the fairies will feel the same. Monster or no, I
doubt that flower could stand up to you in a fair fight.”

His old charge still trusted him, an old man out of his prime (if only barely), to keep his little brother, his family, safe. It was, he had to admit, a heartwarming thought.

Still, despite that, he couldn’t help but wonder if there was really any reason for him to be here at all. The flower monster (he refused to think of it as Flowey unless directly addressing him, because that was indeed a truly horrible name) hadn’t made a single suspicious move, save for the mentioning of the fairy roses, the entire time they’d been walking around the grounds, and nothing particularly hostile had left his mouth, either – well, nothing more hostile than childishly rude, and he was reprimanded for it every time. So far, Butler’s presence here was useless –

“WOWIE, YOU MEAN THIS HUGE HOUSE WAS BUILT WITHOUT MAGIC?! HOW DO HUMANS DO THAT?”

- save for answering the questions of the taller of the two skeleton monsters. And there were a great deal of questions.

“With lots of stones, ropes, pulleys, and horses and carts, I’d imagine.” He said curtly. “I wasn’t actually there.”

“BUT STILL! WITHOUT MAGIC? THAT’S AMAZING, HUMAN!”

Despite his frequent use of the word “human,” the skeleton named Papyrus didn’t seem to mean it in the same insulting manner that the rare racist fairy used “Mud Man” when they thought he wasn’t listening. In fact, he seemed overly enthusiastic about everything that Butler had to say. It reminded him heavily of years several decades past, when Juliet was just a little girl and before her training as a Butler had really begun in earnest, when she’d had boundless enthusiasm for everything, not just wrestling or, more recently, teasing the twins.

“Sounds like a lot of work to me. You humans really like working yourselves down to the bone, huh?”

“SAAANSSS!”

Butler kept his face carefully blank as he turned the last corner of the mansion before the fairy roses. Unlike the taller (and, he was fairly certain, younger) skeleton, the smaller one, Sans, just got on his nerves.

And not because of the puns, though those were contributing somewhat. He had been watching Butler like a hawk for several long minutes now, and possibly for the entire time they’d been walking.

He hadn’t noticed it at first, focused more on Papyrus and his dangerous floral passenger than on the hoodie-wearing skeleton, but somewhere around the pond near the barn, he’d turned his head just far enough to look at the monster, and found those odd white pupils fixed unerringly on him.

He’d glanced surreptitiously back several times since then, and if the skeleton had noticed, he’d never commented on it, nor averted his gaze.

It was silly, honestly, to be on edge because of a small, pun-loving skeleton who had yet to even take his hands out of his pockets, but the stares didn’t feel… normal. Butler’s first impression of Sans had been that he was lazy, uncaring, with an easy-going personality to match Juliet on one of her off days, but those stares made him feel uncomfortably like he was being viewed underneath a microscope, like they were somehow seeing things they shouldn’t, and it was making Butler review
his first impressions of him very, very carefully.

*He’s analyzing me, sizing me up.*

For what, he didn’t know. It was a bodyguard’s *job* to stay informed about this sort of thing, to read others for their intentions, and yet he couldn’t read Sans at *all.*

“**WOWIE, FRISK WASN’T JOKING AROUND WHEN THEY SAID THESE FLOWERS WERE COOL!”** Papyrus seemed almost to be vibrating in excitement, eye sockets wide. **“NO WONDER YOU WANTED TO SEE THEM, FLOWEY!”**

“Yeah, I know right?”

Despite the cheerful words, Butler couldn’t help but size up the flower again. Small, *looked* harmless, but most definitely was *not*. He *had* to be up to something. He had spoken to the Ambassador at length since arriving, and visited the library with them, the same day the LEP officers watching them had seen the human child working their way diligently through several books on fairies, and Butler knew for a fact there was at least *one* book in the non-fiction section that had listed these roses as a fairy sighting. That, combined with what the flower had expressed interest in specifically, mounted up to an enormous amount of suspicion, even for one used to Artemis Fowl.

Unfortunately, he’d stared just long enough for the flower to notice, and glare back at him.

“What’re you looking at?” It snapped.

“FLOWEY! BE NICE!”

“But –”

“APOLOGIZE, FLOWEY!”

“Ugh.” The flower looked like it wanted to hurl. “*Fine, I’m sorry.*”

“You gotta really mean it, *bud.*”

The flower’s eye twitched. “Shut up, tras – *Sans.*”

“AS RUDE AS THAT WAS, I MUST AGREE WITH MY GOOD FRIEND, BROTHER! PLEASE CEASE YOUR PUNS IMMEDIATELY!”

“But bro, it’s not my fault they get *under your skin.*”

With an angry *NYEH*, the other monster stomped away to get a closer look at the roses, and out of range of the word play.

“Not even a twitch, huh?”

Butler didn’t look at the skeleton, instead keeping his eye on the scene directly in front of him. “I’ve heard worse.”

“As in puns?” That was definitely disbelief, and if it weren’t for his incredible self-control, Butler might have told Sans about the various aliases that Artemis still used at times when writing new papers for professional purposes, if only to prove his point.

“Hey Papyrus, can I get out of the pot please? I want to get a closer look, and I’ll just fall out of the pot if you keep holding me!”
Butler tensed as Papyrus cheerfully said it was fine, and the flower unrooted itself, pulling itself out of the pot using its roots and re-planting itself in the ground near the roses, presumably to get a closer look.

*The fairies better be up in the air, otherwise they’re in serious trouble.*

“Hey buddy, ease up a bit. He’s not gonna hurt anybody, and I’m pretty sure you could kick his Butler.”

He glanced back at the monster, one eyebrow raising. “Did you just make my name into a *pun*?”

Sans shrugged. “Yup. Relax, pal, e’s not gonna hurt anybody here.”

Then his sockets darkened, the pupils completely disappearing and turning his sockets into unsettling black voids. “Though that doesn’t mean that you won’t.”

The bodyguard was too well-trained to startle, but, still, the comment (and the look that came with it) took him off-guard – and was, quite frankly, a bit insulting.

“I don’t hurt innocent people,” he said, firmly.

“Really? So those couple dozen people you’ve killed were all criminals?”

Even Butler was hardpressed to avoid looking surprised at a comment like that. So far as he knew, the monster had no way of knowing he’d killed anybody – his former career as a mercenary wasn’t exactly something that was brought up in everyday conversation. And yet the skeleton knew, somehow.

*How did he know?*

“I don’t kill innocent people,” he repeated, deciding that, at least for now, that particular answer was best – it was true, if a bit misleading.

Sans shrugged. “If you say so.”

His pupils flickered back into existence, remaining locked on Butler’s for a moment before turning to glance back at the other monsters. Butler kept his eyes on him for a moment longer, before glancing back at the flower in time to see it disappear into the ground at the center of the spiral, and reappear several meters farther out.

It had been in exactly the same spot Frisk had been when they’d suffered their mysterious sickness – and exactly the same spot that the fairies had found the unusual magical hotspot.

*I didn’t see what he did there. I should’ve been paying more attention, instead of letting Sans distract me –*

Sans. Sans had *distracted* him while the flower had been poking around there.

*Was that on purpose? Are they working together?*

It seemed unlikely. The two of them seemed to be metaphorically at each other’s throats the entire time…

Then again, that wouldn’t stop cooperation, just make it difficult. And if that were the case…

*If the two of them are working together, then there might be more than one monster that knows*
about the fairies.

He’d need to talk to Artemis about this. And soon.

Chapter End Notes

Daniel pointed out to me a while back that in-game, Chara’s narration is a lot more snarky and makes more puns than they’ve done so far in this story. The reason for that is that Chara and Frisk are extremely focused on making sure that things in this timeline go right, and as a result are always stressed. Now that they’re in a safer place, and think they can afford to relax a little, expect some snark and maybe puns from Chara later on!

Speaking of which, does anybody know some good puns they could use? Chara tends to go for more complicated puns – for example, “pomer-granite,” which is a pun they use if someone CHECKs during the fight with Greater Dog. “Pomer” is incorporating dogs, “granite” is obviously stone, and both combined are also a pun of a sort of fruit/veggie, pomegranate. (Definitely more effort there than what Sans puts into his puns, right? They had to have taken a little while to think of that one.)

(Blame - er, I mean credit - daniel for the “kicking Butler” pun.)

Now, here’s lore on fairy, human, and monster magic, brought to you by me and daniel!

Human magic is generally very specialized to the individual – each human with magic has a single unique power, or a couple of very closely related powers, such as, say, controlling water and growing and creating ice (so, basically, they have superpowers). Humans also have massive magical reserves, and as a result generally have greater endurance than both fairies and monsters. (Luckily for both fairies and monsters, however, human magic is very, very rare, especially nowadays – even with billions of humans on the planet, it’s unlikely for more than a few dozen humans per each generation to be born with it.) Humans are capable of learning colored magic the same color as their own dominant soul traits (so, for example, a human with a green soul could learn green magic, which can be used for shields and healing). Also, human magic, unless specialized for use with technology, doesn’t effect technology at all, negatively or positively – to most tech, it simply doesn’t exist.

Fairy magic is generally less specialized to the individual, and considerably less rare. Every fairy that can use magic usually has the same basic set of magical skills – healing, gift of tongues, mesmer, and shielding. Fairy warlocks have a wider variance of skills, including possession, shapeshifting, illusions, etc, but are still fairly specialized, usually undergoing training for one or more skills over others. Fairies are also capable of learning colored magic that are the same color as their own dominant soul traits, the same as humans. As far as technology compatibility, it’s pretty much the same as human magic, except some types of magic can be stored in specially prepared and rune-decorated technological containers – think time-stops and maybe bio-bombs. However, the technology has to be specifically designed to do so and have the right runes added onto it – it can’t just randomly be shoved into a container, otherwise the tech won’t work.

Monster magic is also somewhat specific to the individual, like with humans, though not
as much as you might expect. All monsters are born with the exact same kind of magical energy, and are capable of manifesting it. However, because of its direct link to their souls, as they grow older, their magic changes depending on the monster’s personality and how they use it, adapting and growing with them, until, when they’re adults, their personal magicks look and act completely different from each other’s. For instance: a monster who usually attacks with their magic will have magic that manifests as a weapon, a monster who uses their magic to cook (or has a generally angry or fiery personality) will develop fire magic, or a monster who often helps other monsters will develop healing magic. Unlike fairies and humans, though, monsters can learn almost any kind of colored magic regardless of soul colors and traits (monster souls are white, and white light is actually made up of several different colors! Light splits when passing through a prism), and use it to augment their natural magic. As far as technology is concerned, monster magic is the most compatible. All you really need to use it in conjunction with technology are runes to channel and direct it, and you can imbue any tech with it without having to specially design it, save for those runes. However, if you get the runes wrong, and there’s enough magic involved, the results are far less usable and far more explosive, like what happened in chapter 10 with Alphys’s magic battery.

On top of each of these, colored magics can also be used to enhance any of the three races’ natural magical abilities. For example, a fairy’s healing magics would be strengthened considerably by green colored magic, projectile magics like fire or lightning would be enhanced by yellow magic, etc.
Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

As of this chapter, I am officially listing danielxcutter as a co-creator for this story! You earned it, dude. ^.^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*Oh my stars. Frisk, stop for a second!

Surrounded by shelves and shelves of books, with the twins bickering (well, Beckett bickering, Myles didn’t sound nearly so agitated) in the background, Frisk paused, confused at the ghost’s downright gleeful tone.

*You’ve got to look at this book. No no, this one!

Following the ghost’s directions, Frisk meandered over to a shelf of books they’d passed by earlier and ran their fingers hesitantly along the spines until –

F. Roy Dean Schlippe. Okay, so –

*Say it out loud!

“F. Roy Dean Schlippe.” They said, and then they got it.

Oh my stars.

“Is this author’s name a pun?!” they blurted out loud in sheer disbelief.

Chara sniggered. They actually sniggered.

“If you’re interested in that book, there’s another one you might like over there.”

Frisk nearly jumped out of their skin when Myles’ voice spoke up literally right behind them, and followed his pointing finger to another shelf a little ways away.

“Really?”

Myles didn’t answer out loud, but there was what could almost be called a mischievous look in his eyes, and Frisk decided to satisfy their curiosity by following his advice and headed over to the shelf.

It took them exactly one minute to find the book Myles meant, and when they found it, Chara started laughing.

*Oh my god.

A book on one of the middle shelves – a romance book by the looks of it – had, brightly but tastefully printed on the spine, the name Violet Tsirblu.

Violets are blue.
Laughter bubbled up in their own throat, and they stifled it with one hand.

“Are these for real?” They managed in between giggles. “Oh my stars, Mom would love these.”

They turned back to the twins – Myles definitely looked amused now, and Beckett was rolling his eyes at his brother. “Please tell me that there’s more,” they managed through their grin.

“Of course.” Myles went back to the first shelf that had punned at them, and pulled what appeared to be a psychology magazine from its spot off to one side of several textbooks, holding it out for them to see. “Page thirty,” he recommended.

*Oh man, what’s this one going to be? Dr. I. N. Somnia? C. Nile Dementia?

Chara sounded downright excited, and Frisk quickly flipped to the recommended page with their own grin rapidly becoming wider. They hadn’t heard Chara so happy in ages.

They snorted when they found the page. “Sir. E. Brum? Cerebrum?”

*Oh my god!

“There is one by a C. Nyle Dementia in another volume of the same magazine,” Myles said, smirking.

Chara cackled.

*I was joking about that one! Frisk, we need these magazines!

*I’ll subscribe to them when we get the chance, Frisk promised. We’ll get them mail-ordered right to us, so we can show them to Mom.

*Stars, yes!!

“They’re not that funny.” Beckett huffed. He looked a bit put out.

“I beg to differ.” Still grinning, they handed the magazine back to Myles. “These are hilarious.”

“How are psychology puns funny?”

*Because they are.

“Because someone made them and used them as pen-names.” They muffled another snerk, and somehow Myles managed to give the impression of laughing without his expression changing too much.

“Can we not talk about puns right now?” Beckett pleaded. “My pun limit is one or two a week!”

The Ambassador paused, their brain immediately throwing out a suggestion.

Should I? Beckett doesn’t seem to be the sort of person to hold a grudge for something as minor as this, but you never know.

Well, if Chara was willing to risk the monsters’ safety here, then Frisk could risk something less life-threatening.

They turned towards Beckett with an oh-so-innocent expression and smiled widely in anticipation. If he’s anything like Papyrus, this is gonna be good.” What, is all this pun talk psych ing you out?”
There was a pause.

“You did not just say that,” Beckett said finally, narrowing his eyes at them.

“I believe they just did.” Oh yes, Myles definitely sounded amused.

“No they didn’t! I refuse to believe that the monster Ambassador would tell a pun that awful!”

*Aww, poor Beck’s in denial. That’s adorable.*

“So you believe them to be a freud?”

Frisk snorted, slapping a hand over their mouth to muffle the sound, (Chara had no such dignity, they started laughing) but Beckett had already heard it, and turned a glare on his brother – not a heated one, but a glare nonetheless.

“Myles. Stop.”

“I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“Myles!”

And thus began the bickering. Frisk struggled not to tune out after a few more sentences – Myles’ puns were rapidly becoming more and more obscure, using more complicated psychological terms that they didn’t understand, and though Beckett’s reactions were rapidly becoming more extreme, they were nothing compared to Papyrus’s.

*God, how did he come up with even half of these? I mean – wait, hold on a second…*

The sudden change in tone – from awed and maliciously gleeful to see someone suffering from exposure to puns, to suspicious, cautious – caught Frisk’s attention, and they finally stopped paying attention to the twins.

Is something wrong?

*I’m not sure, but… do you feel that? It almost feels like we’re being watched.*

They blinked, then surreptitiously glanced around the library. They hadn’t advanced too far into the room – they were still near the door, and there were a great many shelves hiding corners of the room from view, but they couldn’t see or hear a single sign of eavesdroppers from where they were standing – no books lying around haphazardly, no shuffling of feet as someone shifted positions to listen in more closely. Just shelves and a window opening up to view the grounds outside.

*There’s gotta be something here – I’m almost never wrong about this stuff!*

That was true. The two fallen children were both observant, but Chara was considerably more so than Frisk – probably because they weren’t alive anymore, and therefore were no longer confined to the limited senses of a human body.

So if they thought someone was watching them, then someone probably was.

*Keep an eye out.*

*Don’t need to tell me twice.*

“That’s it!” Beckett’s yell drew their attention back to the twins’ conversation. “Since you’re so keen
Those words meant next to nothing to Frisk, but apparently they meant a great deal of something to the black-haired twin, because his amused expression quickly gave way to blatant horror.

“You wouldn’t.”

Beckett turned to Frisk with a wide, and definitely evil-looking grin. “So, Artemis likes to call Myles up with intellectual challenges and favors —”

“Beckett!”

“— and last time, he asked Myles to —”

“Beckett, if you stop right now, then I will play any game of your choice for as long as you wish,” Myles said quickly.

The blonde twin paused. “Any game?”

“Any game. Those atrocious video games you play, ones involving physical exertion… anything.”

He sounded desperate. Whatever Beckett had been about to tell them must’ve been humiliating.

They decided to grant him mercy. No one liked to be embarrassed like that.

“I haven’t been able to play like a normal kid for a long time,” they offered quietly. “My Ambassador duties get in the way, and there usually aren’t other kids around…”

The blonde boy turned to look at them as they said this, and they put a slightly wistful expression on their face. It wouldn’t fool Myles, they were sure, but Beckett, so far as they knew, had no psychology doctorates.

It worked. Beckett took one look at their face and immediately agreed. “Okay, I guess I’m okay with that!” He jabbed a finger at Myles, who was trying desperately not to look relieved. “But if you say so much as one more pun —”

“Oh yes, they had a great deal of fun playing that with the monsters. Papyrus was an incredibly fast runner, and Undyne a great deal faster – it was an entertaining (if slightly terrifying, when Undyne was it) challenge to keep ahead of them. Playing with a couple of human kids wasn’t going to be as much of an adrenaline rush, but they had a feeling that it’d still be fun.

Judging by Myles’s reluctant expression, he wasn’t particularly fond of the game himself, but he nodded anyway, and Beckett grinned.
“In that case...”

He flung himself at his brother and practically slapped him on the shoulder.

“You’re It!”

Then he disappeared out the library door in a blur of motion.

When the pitter-pattering of his feet had disappeared, Myles turned to Frisk.

“Thank you, Frisk. You didn’t need to offer anything for my sake.”

They gave him a faint smile. “You looked pretty uncomfortable. Um, you don’t actually have to play if you don’t want to – I can just go after Beckett and say you tagged me before I could run away...?”

He shook his head. “I do not know how, but he will know if I do not play. Twin intuition is far from a myth, apparently.” He eyed them for a moment, sizing them up – then smirked reluctantly.

“I’d advise you run.”

They took his advice.

It was sometimes hard to remember that the monster’s Ambassador wasn’t an average human child, especially when they were with the Fowl twins. They never quite acted childish, but compared to Myles or Artemis (especially Artemis) they seemed... well, sort of normal.

Still, that impression of normality didn’t last for long, Holly couldn’t help but muse from her position hovering outside the East Wing library’s window. She’d almost had a heart attack when the kid had glanced at the window, eyes narrowed with suspicion.

Eyes that sharp did not belong on such a round, friendly face.

Still, though it had seemed for a moment that the Mud Kid had seen her, it had been a false alarm. They’d looked away, obviously scanning the rest of the library for potential eavesdroppers before turning away and back to the twins’ bantering.

Thank Frond for these uniforms. I don’t think they’d overlook a heat haze hovering right outside the window.

So, possible crisis averted. The ambassador had run off with a grin on their face, and Myles had given chase, which meant he was still sticking close to the Ambassador like Artemis had requested. Not a single one of the team here on the grounds had been spotted yet. So far, things were going well.

Unfortunately, none of the rest of the fairies she could hear through her helmet seemed to think so.

“Oh Frond, oh Frond, oh Frond –”

Holly groaned and turned on her mike. “If you’re so worried about the D’Arviting flower, then have someone take your place!”

“N-no offense, Captain, but that won’t help. It’s right here, it’s on the Fowl Estate, it’s poking around where the Berserker Gate used to be -!”
“Honestly, pull yourself together! Are you Section Eight or not?! Look, I’m not happy about this either. That monster is definitely a threat to our team. But we can’t pull out! Myles is keeping an eye on the Ambassador, but if they get away from him, we need to keep an eye on them. We don’t know how much they know about the People, or who else does.”

“Yessir.” The officer sounded none-too-happy, but at least he wasn’t arguing or flailing in panic anymore. Well, so far as she could see.

“And besides,” Holly smirked. “Monster or no, Butler’s here. Juliet’s here. Would you pit that flower against the Mud Man who took down a troll?”

“No sir.” The officer sounded considerably happier now.

“Exactly. Back to work, Private.”

“Yessir.”

The line went silent, and the elf sighed, unsealing her helmet briefly so she could rub her temples.

“And I thought Recon was bad,” she muttered.

Butler didn’t act on any violent inclinations he had on the way back into the manor, despite him obviously taking Sans’s threat for what it was. That plus him still answering Pap’s questions earned him some points in his book.

He was definitely keeping an eye on Flowey, though, and the short skeleton was starting to wonder if there was something else going on he didn’t know about. Had the weed done something to make the human suspicious? As far as he knew, no.

Welp, no use worrying about it for now. He could talk to the kid later. At least in this run, they were as dedicated to the safety of monsters in general as he was to Pap’s, and that included the weed, unfortunately. If they picked up on something, they might tell him.

Though judging by the shrieks of laughter and running footsteps he heard a few minutes after being inside, they might be a little distracted to be picking up on important things like that.

“’s that the kiddo?” He asked Tori, just to be sure. He hadn’t heard them laugh like that on the Surface – the last time they’d sounded so happy had been in the Underground.

“It would seem so.” She was smiling wistfully. “They are playing a game, I believe.”

A game? It was hard to wrap his skull around the idea of the kid, what with their dead tagalong and being a time-traveling anomaly, just playing a game with another human kid.

Still, that definitely turned out to be the case, because a few minutes later, Frisk and the other human kid from earlier, the one with yellow hair, came charging around a corner and slammed into Toriel’s legs at Mach 1.

“Oof!” Frisk stumbled back, wincing, giggles still slipping from them.

“Ohmygod, I’m so sorry, Your Majesty!” The other human blustered, blue eyes wide. “We weren’t looking where we were going, and – ”
“It’s quite alright, child.” Toriel chuckled warmly.

Sans took that moment, with the blonde kid sighing with relief at Tori’s motherly approval, to quickly check the boy’s LV.

**Beckett Fowl.**

**LV 1**

He hadn’t expected any differently, but it didn’t hurt to make sure.

“WHO ARE YOU RUNNING FROM?” His bro questioned. “ARE YOU PLAYING TAG?”

“Yeah!” Frisk managed, grinning up at him. “Me, Beckett, and Myles.” They snickered weakly. “Myles is It.”

“He’s not very good at it!” Beckett added cheerfully.

There was the pattering of running footsteps coming from the way the kids had come from, and Beckett gasped dramatically.

“Oh no! Frisk, quick, this way!” He bolted down another hallway.

The kid paused for a moment, glancing briefly, questioningly, at the monsters.

Tori smiled at them. Papyrus went “NYEH-HEH-HEH.” Sans lifted up a hand next to his side and signed *Go play kid.* Time anomaly or no, the kid needed to have some fun every now and then, right? They’d probably go crazy if they were serious all the time.

They grinned and followed the blonde.

Barely a few moments later, another human kid stumbled into the room, obviously out of breath. He paused when he saw Sans and his bro, obviously not having expected walking skeletons in his house.

“’sup.”

“HELLO OTHER SMALL HUMAN! ARE YOU THE MYLES HUMAN THAT THE OTHER NEW SMALL HUMAN MENTIONED?”

“Yes,” he managed. “G-good to meet you.”

Sans checked again.

**Myles Fowl**

**LV 1**

The boy turned his head a little to glance at Sans – his eyes were *sharp*, incredibly so, and narrowed with suspicion.

Then they slid past him to glance at his bro – or, rather, at the yellow flower still grumbling in the crook of his bro’s elbow. *Huh.*

“’kiddo and your bro went that way,” he said, deciding not to comment. Too much effort. Besides, if he did comment on it, or distract him, then the kid would only get more suspicious.
“Thank you,” he said, audibly out of breath.

“YOU SOUND VERY TIRED, SMALL HUMAN MYLES!”

Myles flinched at the skeleton’s boisterously loud voice, but nodded.

“I am… not the best at physical activities. And Beckett has been training with Juliet in his free time.”

“IS JULIET THE YELLOW-HAIRED HUMAN PRINCESS THAT UNDYNE HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT?”

He nodded again, and started off in the direction the other kids had run.

“WAIT, HUMAN MYLES! SINCE YOU ARE SO OBVIOUSLY TIRED, WOULD YOU PERHAPS LIKE SOME ASSISTANCE IN CATCHING UP TO YOUR BROTHER FROM THE GREAT PAPYRUS?”

Myles eyed Pap for a moment, obviously skeptical.

“I… would appreciate it, yes.”

“NYEH-HEH-HEH! IN THAT CASE –” Pap scooped up the kid in one arm and took off running. “LET US MAKE HASTE!”

“Hey hey hey!” Flowey protested. “Put me down first, you big oaf!”

They disappeared down the hall, and Sans snickered. The kid’s expression as Papyrus had easily lifted him up off the ground had been priceless.

“Well, it looks like they’re having fun.” Tori chuckled again. “I do not believe I have seen Frisk so carefree in a long time.”

“Yeah.” Despite the answer, Sans wasn’t really paying attention to the Queen right at that moment.

Why are all the humans here so suspicious of Flowey? Something’s goin’ on.

Chapter End Notes

Looks like someone’s starting to put the pieces together...

Unlike Artemis at age twelve, Myles is willing to put up with childish antics and indulge in them himself. And despite his cinnamon-roll personality, Beckett IS a Fowl. He knows the value of blackmail, especially when it comes to his brother. After all, what else is a sibling supposed to do to stop the bad jokes? >:3

Oh look, Chara’s actually not at all serious for, like, the first page of this chapter. And then immediately dives right back into seriousness again. Lighten up a bit, kiddo. At least Frisk’s having fun. Being an Ambassador is stressful enough on it’s own without adding mysterious invisible unknowns and death into the equation, they kinda need to de-stress a bit.

(And oh look, more panicked fairies.)
Daniel and I have worked out a basic idea for a cover image for M est P – or, more accurately, the series it’ll be a part of (which we have yet to name, though I kinda like the idea of calling it “Tales of Humans, Fairies, and Monsters”). Tentative plan now is for there to be at least two sequels. You’re welcome!

And now for worldbuilding, brought to you by danielxcutter and me: What do fairy souls look like?

Fairy souls look like a mix between monster souls and human souls – they’re upside-down heart shapes, like monsters, but colored the same way as human souls. They also have a transparent glowing blue veined shell around their soul, kinda like a network of tree roots. That shell represents their magic, and the more magic a fairy has in their system, the brighter blue the shell is. Fairies who are out of magic or who have lost their magic completely no longer have that shell.

Interestingly enough, Artemis’s soul had a similar shell of magic around it after he stole magic from the fairies in the time-tunnel that went to and from Limbo – a very faint shell of magic. When he ran out of magic, the shell disappeared – though considering the circumstances of his resurrection after the Crash, who knows what his soul actually looks like now?
Chapter 27

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Keeping tabs on the goings-on in the manor had been… interesting, to say the least. The fairies were in a constant state of panic from the moment the monsters arrived, and Holly had her hands full keeping them calm and professional. This meant that much of what Artemis heard through his fairy communicator en route to the manor was her complaints about the mediocrity of Section Eight in the face of sudden confrontation with their worst nightmare, rather than accounts of what was happening in present time. Fortunately for his patience, Holly knew him well enough to have taken note of several events herself, and passed the information along to him as well, so by the time his carriage (technically, it was a cart, but Fowls did not take such undignified modes of transportation as a cart) pulled up to the manor door, he was already well-informed of what was currently occurring within the manor walls.

_Myles is staying close to the Ambassador._ Albeit using childish games such as tag and hide and seek, but still, he was in a prime position to keep an eye on them.

_The twins and the Ambassador are getting along well._ This was not entirely surprising. He knew the twins had been looking forward to Frisk’s arrival for some time – Beckett had hardly talked about anything else for at least a couple of days after the invitation had been extended, and Myles had joined his enthusiastic discussions with surprisingly little restraint. The ambassador had made quite the impression on the two of them, it seemed.

_Flowey the flower is here on the manor grounds, along with the two skeleton monsters that brought him to Dublin._ That information had only lead to a sigh, and two fingers pinching his brow to still the rising headache. _Of course_ the flower would be on the grounds at the same time as an entire Section Eight team. Fortunately, the fairies had enough sense to stay shielded and up in the air, and had yet to be spotted. The two skeleton monsters, too, could be a problem, though if both Holly’s and Butler’s observations were any indication, then it was the shorter of the two who would pose more of a problem.

“The tall one, Papyrus, he’s probably the most innocent creature I’ve ever seen in my life,” Holly had said. “He’s like an elfling in a candy store. His brother though, Sans… there’s not much about him on the Ambassador’s blog, save for various recordings of his puns and pranks, and we need more information on this guy, Artemis.”

Indeed they did. Knowledge of Butler’s mercenary kills, seemingly without knowledge of the mercenary career itself, some sort of hand-sign based language that both he and Frisk seemed capable of understanding, but didn’t match any known dialect of sign language… Sans the skeleton seemed to have a repertoire of abilities and knowledge that had never made it onto Frisk’s blog. Combine that with the presence of Flowey, and their apparent cooperation to investigate the site of Frisk’s sudden illness at the center of the fairy rose spiral without Butler witnessing it for himself…

Needless to say, remaining ignorant of the skeleton’s knowledge or abilities could prove a dire mistake.

However, that would have to wait for now.
Once the cart had drawn level with the manor door, and Artemis had exchanged quick, pleasant greetings with his parents, he immediately sought out his brothers’ location.

“They were running amok earlier, but it looks like they’re in your old study, now.” Holly informed him. “They’re with the ambassador, the skeletons, and the flower…”

“Thank you, Holly.” Made a beeline for the study, and within a few minutes, as he approached the door, he could hear the distinct sound of conversation with crystal clarity.

“WOWIE, THIS ‘CHESS’ IS HARD! HUMANS MUST ALL BE VERY CLEVER, TO PLAY SUCH TRICKY GAMES!”

A loud, voice, full of innocent enthusiasm and admiration. Artemis didn’t need Holly’s muttered confirmation in his ear to guess that this voice belonged to the skeleton Papyrus.

“Yeah, it is pretty hard.” Beckett’s voice. He was smiling, no doubt – he could hear it in the boy’s voice. “There’s lots of humans that can’t play it well at all. I should know, I’m one of them!”

“You’re not quite as poor a player as some of my fellow students at school.” And there was Myles, his tone a bit distant and thoughtful – no doubt concentrating on the game. “That one boy I told you of… I believe his name was Jeremy? He was atrocious.”

At this point, Artemis had reached the study door, and very carefully pushed it open, so as not to disturb the room’s occupants.

Indeed, just as he had suspected, Myles was sitting at the room’s chess table, eyeing the board with thoughtful concentration and a laser focus that would have put a fairy scope to shame. Across from him, the almost ridiculously tall figure of a skeleton in an armor-like ensemble and a long red scarf and gloves was leaning forward to get a better look at the board himself. One gloved hand was in the process of moving one of the white pieces on the board. The monster ambassador was leaning around the seated monster, watching the board with interest, and Beckett was hovering over his brother’s shoulder, as he often did, looking halfway between bored and awed.

The reason for his awe was blatantly obvious when Artemis glanced at the chess pieces. Myles had lost a good three-quarters of his pieces on the board, and several of the skeleton’s were only a few moves away from checkmate. Considering that Myles could keep up reasonably well with Artemis himself…

It seemed that, despite his innocence, Papyrus’s intellect was not one to be trifled with.

He carefully closed the door behind him, and the faintest click of the latch as it caught was enough to draw Frisk’s attention. They looked up from the game, and their eyes widened when they saw him in the doorway. Before they could speak a word, Artemis put a finger to his lips and nodded at the two game-players.

No need to disturb them quite yet.

The child hesitated, then nodded their understanding and turned back to the game in time to see Myles move another piece.

“Checkmate.”

“NYEH-HEH-HEH! YOU WON AGAIN! YOU ARE VERY GOOD AT THIS GAME, SMALL HUMAN MYLES!”
Rather than mourning his own loss, the monster saw fit to compliment Myles’s win. Fascinating. Most people would at least look a little put out…

“Good job, bro. Keep this up, and you’ll be a king of chess at no time.”

The new voice drew Artemis’s attention to the last two occupants of the room. The short skeleton – Sans – in one of the study’s armchairs was slumped back, posture relaxed and shoulders slouching, the epitome of relaxed indifference. A flowerpot was held loosely in his elbow, and in said flowerpot, was the flower.

“Ha!” Flowey said, glowering at the board. “I bet I could do better than that!”

“I dunno, bud, kinda hard to beat my bro at his own game, y’know?”

Artemis cleared his throat as the flower turned towards the other monster with a face bordering on murderous.

“As riveting as a game of chess may be,” he said, “could you spare a moment for a proper greeting, Myles, Beckett?”

The boys looked up, and their faces lit up like Christmas lights.

“Artemis!” Beckett went from zero to one hundred in a mere second, slamming into the older Fowl’s legs like a small freight train. Myles followed with less force, but no less enthusiasm.

“You’re here early!” Beckett grinned, eyes practically sparkling with glee. “I thought you weren’t going to be here until supper!”

“Ah, well…” He cleared his throat, reaching down to ruffle each of the twins’ heads (and pointedly ignoring the gagging noises the flower was making at this showing of familial affection). “I completed my work for today far more quickly than I anticipated. I take it you’ve been enjoying yourselves?” This last sentence was aimed both at his brothers and at Frisk, who shuffled their feet nervously where they still stood and nodded shyly.

“HELLO, NEW HUMAN!” Papyrus sprang to his feet eagerly. “YOU ARE SMALL HUMAN MYLES’S AND BECKETT’S TALLER SIBLING? WOWIE, I HAD NO IDEA OLDER BROTHERS COULD BE TALLER THAN THEIR YOUNGER ONES!”

There was a muted snort from the other skeleton in the room, the flower groaned, one of his vines creeping out to slap himself in the face, and Frisk now looked downright embarrassed.

And was that a snicker that Artemis could hear through the fairy earpiece in his ear?

Artemis’s only reaction to the comment was a raised eyebrow and, in spite of himself, a slight hint of an amused smirk.

“I can assure you,” he said dryly, “that such things, though rare, are not impossible.”

Now it was Frisk that snorted, quickly covering their mouth with one hand to hide their grin. The twins seemed amused as well, if their smiles were any indication – however, Papyrus seemed to take his dry wit at face value.

“OF COURSE I KNOW THAT, TALL HUMAN!” he boomed. His dark sockets scrunched up as if in a smile. “THE GREAT PAPYRUS KNOWS THAT MOST OLDER SIBLINGS ARE TALLER THAN THE YOUNGER ONES! THAT WAS A MERE JAPE! NYEH-HEH-HEH!” He posed dramatically, red scarf flapping in an unseen breeze. “WELL THEN, TALLER OLDER
BROTHER HUMAN, IT IS NICE TO MEET YOU! I AM THE GREAT PAPYRUS!!"

The amused smirk grew a little wider. “Artemis Fowl the Second.”

Papyrus gasped – as in, he actually began his next sentence with the word.

“GASP! YOU ARE THE MONSTER-FRIENDLY REPRESENTATIVE THAT FRISK MET A MONTH AGO!”

“Indeed I am.”

“WOWIE! FRISK, WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL ME WHO HE WAS?! I COULD HAVE MADE A POOR FIRST IMPRESSION!”

Oh goodness, no wonder Holly had compared this monster to an elfin child – he was both clueless and innocent, and positively brimming with eager, naïve enthusiasm, with a sunny view of the world that could only come with a lack of experience with it.

*How on earth has that kind of attitude remained intact amongst us cynical human beings?*

Artemis cleared his throat. “Well, it is a pleasure to meet you, Papyrus.” He paused for a moment of calculation, and then continued with the greetings as if nothing had happened, inclining his head at the other two monsters. “Sans. Flowey.”

The flower stiffened, shooting him a shocked, suspicious look. Sans barely reacted at all, but the white dots of light that served as his pupils seemed to sharpen, and his sockets narrowed the slightest of amounts.

A flicker of blue lit in one, and, just for a moment, Artemis felt an odd sensation, a prickling flow of sparks down his spine. It reminded him heavily of both the sensation of being watched… and of the flow of fairy magic, which he had felt far too many times now to mistake for anything else.

*Is this what Butler felt, when this skeleton was watching him? And, if so, is the skeleton’s knowledge of him somehow linked to this?*

Then the moment was over, and the skeleton’s gaze was normal again, though still subtly suspicious. He did not respond to Artemis’s greeting, now that he had done whatever he had done, but instead merely raised one hand in a limp wave.

*I’m not particularly inclined to speak to him at the moment, either.*

“Well,” Artemis said, with deceptive calmness. “Now that introductions have been had, I’m afraid I would rather not stay here for the duration of time until supper – I have yet to make my usual trip around the grounds, and I’d much like to refresh my memory of my childhood home.” He ruffled the twins’ hair again. “I shall give you two your presents after our evening meal, yes?”

“Alright.” Beckett didn’t look or sound particularly happy at this, but not nearly so unhappy as he usually would be. Both boys had made the quickest of sideways glances – evidently, both boys had realized there was something else going on, but were hardly about to pry in their present company.

*Smart decision.*

He inclined his head towards Frisk and the monsters once more, this time in farewell, and took his leave.
*Okay, that was... a little weird.*

Chara’s suspicion was mirrored by Frisk’s own, and they shot a look at Sans as Artemis Fowl left the room at a brisk walk.

The skeleton just shrugged at them, closing his right socket in a lazy wink. His free hand, now hanging over the side of the armchair, made a very short, very quick series of signs.

**LV 1**

**Something off**

*There was something off about Artemis Fowl, even though he only had an LV of one?*

“NYEH-HEH-HEH!! SHOULD WE KEEP PLAYING CHESS THEN, SMALL HUMANS?”

“Well, we can if you want... I’m kinda getting bored though.”

Frisk tuned back into the conversation quickly, before either twin could notice their thoughtful look. Both looked a little dejected at their brother leaving, but Beckett was obviously trying his hardest to bounce back, his grin fixed back in place.

“**WELL, THAT WILL NOT DO! FRISK! IS THERE ANOTHER GAME WE COULD PLAY THAT WOULD NOT BE BORING?”**

“Uh, well...” They thought quickly. They needed to talk to Sans, the sooner the better, and make sure that they wouldn’t be interrupted while also lifting the mood...

**Hmmmm.** “What about hide and seek?” They offered. That could work.

“Aww, but Myles cheats at hide and seek!”

Frisk blinked. Even Sans raised a brow at this. “How can you cheat at hide and seek?”

“I do not cheat.”

“Yes, you do! Tracking lessons from Butler count as cheating!”

Butler? As in the man mountain from outside? Huh. Frisk put that information aside for now.

“It’s hardly cheating if you leave obvious trails behind when you run, Beck.”

“Still, you always win!”

Papyrus straightened, posing heroically once again. “NYEH-HEH-HEH! IN THAT CASE, I SHALL ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE OF BEING THE FIRST SEEKER! SO HE CANNOT CHEAT!”

“But what about when it’s his turn? He can cheat then!”

“Beckett, I do not cheat.”

“Well, if Myles can track us down, what if we ask for help from others?” Frisk suggested. “You know, they can help us find a place to hide, or help leave false trails?”
“That’s cheating too, though!”
“It’s fair if both sides cheat.”
“… Good point.”

Myles sighed, apparently giving up his protests of innocence. “I suppose that would work. Is that acceptable to everyone?”

“OF COURSE, SMALL HUMAN!”

“Welp, guess that’s my cue to skelle-daddle.”

“SANS, NO. YOU WILL PLAY AS WELL!”

“Okay.”

Papyrus covered his eye sockets with both hands and started counting loudly. Beckett grabbed Myles’s hand and took off running, and Frisk quickly glanced over at Sans, who gave them a few more hand signs before disappearing using one of his shortcuts.

*Roses.*

Right. To the roses it was.

Chapter End Notes

Even Artemis will agree that Papyrus is too innocent for this world, even if he wouldn’t go so far as to call him precious! XD

Despite his failures to capture Frisk in the Underground, I like to think that Papyrus is actually very smart – maybe not good at common sense or normal logic, but he’s still clever enough to strategize and work his way around a problem. Otherwise, how could he have made all those frankly pretty clever puzzles in the Underground? I mean, electric maze? The X O puzzles? You clearly have to know how those things work to set them up, and the ideas themselves are actually very good – it’s just that he forgets some of the fine details sometimes.

Also, geeze, I’m running out of worldbuilding stuff to tell you all that isn’t possible major spoilers for later chapters! Feel free to start asking me questions in the comments, guys, and I’ll answer them as I see fit!

Now that that’s out of the way, here’s another worldbuilding tidbit that daniel helped me come up with: Artemis’s deja vu from the first time Frisk LOADED in this story, after the assassination attempt.

Okay, firstly, I can't remember if I told you guys this or not, but in the M est P universe, human souls are usually multicolored, rather than having a single hue like the ones we see in-game. Artemis’s deja vu is related to his having Determination as one of his dominant soul traits, though that’s not the only factor in play here. He’s one of the only people on the face of the earth apart from Frisk that’s come back from the dead, plus he’s been exposed to a ton of magic thanks to fairy shenanigans and the Berserker Gate.
on the manor grounds, AND, most importantly, there were his jaunts in Limbo and time travel to take into consideration. All those factors combined are what’s allowing him those flashes of deja vu across timelines, and anybody who’s experienced all those same events, or similar ones, will experience similar deja vu.
Chapter Notes

Two things for you guys! Firstly, I've drawn a picture of what Frisk looks like in this fic, both in their usual casual clothes and in their formal wear from the gala chapters! Here's a link: https://wingd1.deviantart.com/art/Magicae-est-Potestas-Frisk-705822439

Secondly, there is now a Discord chatroom for Magicae est Potestas! There aren't very many people that chat there, but if you guys wanna stop by, chat about the fic or ask questions about it, or even just hang out, then I'll be sure to keep an eye out for new people there! I usually hop on Discord around 7:30-ish, USA Mountain Time. Here's an invite link to the chatroom: https://discord.gg/chXZWqM

And if you don't have Discord, it was free for me to sign up, so it'll probably be the same for you guys! ^.^
Discolored plants usually take on color of most prominent trait that influences the magic around them.

They blinked. So the magic around here was influenced by Bravery?

He nodded. Brave act of some sort. Probably something really major.

Frisk couldn’t think of anything they knew right off the top of their head that could be a brave enough act to influence magic, not on the Fowl Estate at least. There hadn’t been anything about it in that book they’d found the fairy roses’ entry in, at least.

Moving on, then. Magic?

He shrugged again. Probably.

Was it the fairies?

Don’t know. Could be.

Frisk squinted at him. It has to be the fairies – humans don’t have magic anymore, right?

He actually snorted at that. Just ‘cause you haven’t met one with magic doesn’t mean they’re not there.

They actually stopped in their tracks at this. What? Why didn’t you say anything about that before?

He showed no sign he had heard them, not even so much as another shrug.

*Well isn’t that just typical of him.*

It was typical of him, unfortunately. Unless Frisk asked him for specific information, he kept pretty quiet about what he knew, and even when they did ask, he usually only gave them the bare minimum.

They weren’t particularly surprised by it, though, now that they thought about it. It stood to reason that Sans wouldn’t trust them with everything he knew, when the monster knew about the Resets, and what had happened in previous timelines… and what might happen in future ones. Any one of those little facts could be remembered and then used against him, the next time that… that those runs happened.

So instead of repeating their question, Frisk just sighed and moved on.

It’s still more likely to involve the fairies, right?

He didn’t answer immediately, and Frisk felt a bubbling sensation of dread beginning to rise in their gut.

Sans. It is more likely to involve the fairies, right?

Not sure, he signed back finally. The people here are acting… odd. Man that took me n Paps n Flowey to the roses earlier was suspicious of all of us.

They started and stared at Sans incredulously.

Seriously?
Yup. Not just him either. Your little psychologist buddy was too. Gave Flowey an odd look when he first saw him.

Myles had been suspicious of Flowey? Had the flower monster done anything around any of the Fowls that warranted suspicion? For that matter, had Sans? They couldn’t think of anything… being rude wasn’t the same thing as being up to something, and Sans had been at his usual level of laziness the whole time he was here, at least so far as they knew…

Any idea why?

Not for the weed, no. Me – Sans shrugged. Confronted the big guy about his LV.

They’d almost reached a corner of the mansion by that point, and Frisk glanced around again, just in case someone had appeared when they weren’t looking and was watching them.

Ok. They continued uncertainly. We’ll figure more of that out later, then. What about… what happened in the study? You said there was something… off, about Artemis Fowl?

Yes. One – at this point, instead of spelling out the word or using the sign for the number, which Frisk knew existed, Sans just lifted one finger, but the meaning was clear enough. He was a bit too quick to address me and the weed. Could’ve at least pretended to be polite and wait for introductions, right?

That was a little odd – Frisk had noticed that themselves, though they hadn’t thought about it much until now.

Two – again, Sans just held up two fingers instead of signing the number – he reacted to my CHECK.

“What?” They were so surprised at this that they actually blurted the word out loud. Startled, they glanced around, and then switched back to speaking in hands quickly. What do you mean, reacted? They’d seen Sans CHECK people outside of encounters before, in other timelines – no other human had ever noticed it before!

He didn’t react much to it. The skeleton admitted. But he kind of flinched. Twitched, really. Then he left pretty quickly afterward.

So he felt it?

Maybe. Not 100% sure. But something was going on, for certain.

Frisk took a deep breath. And you don’t know what could’ve been going on, do you?

The skeleton shook his head and finally stuffed his hands back into his pockets. Apparently, he had nothing else to share. With another sigh, they lowered their own hands.

“We’ll have to figure it out,” they told him. “Do research, that kind of thing. Do you at least have an idea of where to start?”

“Yup.” He didn’t say anything else, though, so Frisk left it be for now. Sans may hold back information with some frequency, but if it turned out to be important, then he would share it. He’d never held back when it came to the important stuff, after all.

“So, kiddo, already know where you’re gonna hide? Bet Paps is already looking.”
They were confused for a moment, then remembered. Right. They were supposed to be playing hide and seek now, weren’t they?

“I spotted a couple of spots on my way outside,” they admitted. “You are actually playing too, aren’t you?”

Sans shrugged. He’d been doing that a lot.

“Might as well. Spotted a vase on the bottom floor I could hide behind.”

He gave Frisk a mock salute. “See ya later then, kid.”

And with that, he walked off in what was presumably the opposite direction of the vase, leaving Frisk alone with their thoughts.

The rest of the afternoon passed surprisingly quickly, considering what they’d learned, and the uneasiness that had come with the information. Barely fifteen minutes after Frisk had hidden themselves properly in what appeared to be a lounge on the ground floor, Papyrus had marched into the room and found them pretty much immediately. To no great surprise, he’d already found Sans standing behind a vase that wasn’t even wide enough to hide him, and much of the rest of that round was spent scolding him.

The rounds that followed took a bit longer than Papyrus’s. The twins were almost experts at hide and seek, if there was such a thing, and, since Frisk and the monsters didn’t know the manor nearly as well as the boys did, their hiding spots were always the hardest to find, and Beckett, at least, found them remarkably quickly when it was his turn to seek.

When it came to be Myles’s turn, on the other hand…

“Oh man, this is so cheating,” Beckett snickered.

Frisk grinned. The two of them apparently had come up with the same idea, because both of them were hiding on top of sturdy library bookcases standing up against the wall, using various potted plants and sculptures for cover. And both of them had definitely had the same idea when they’d gone to Papyrus for help getting up there, so as to avoid moving the library ladders and giving Myles a clue about their whereabouts.

“He cheats, we cheat,” they pointed out cheerfully.

They sat up there for maybe another four minutes before a sudden loud sound nearly made Frisk start off the top of the shelf.

“Myles, Beckett, Frisk, supper will be ready in fifteen minutes! Finish up your game soon, please!”

*Holy shit, what the hell?!

When Mrs. Fowl’s voice had faded away and Frisk’s ears had stopped ringing, they shot a suspicious look in the direction of the sound and spotted what appeared to be a speaker embedded into the wall – a speaker the same color as the walls, that they hadn’t noticed until just now.

“Loudspeaker?” They asked.
“Yeah, sorry about that,” The blonde grinned sheepishly. “I forget sometimes that other people aren’t used to having those in their homes.”

A little while later, Myles came into the library. It took him exactly a minute of looking around to spot them up on top of the shelf, and when he saw them, he leveled a stern glare at the other two children.

“How on earth did you get up there without a ladder?” He demanded.

Beckett giggled, and Frisk grinned slyly. “That’s for us to know, and you to find out.”

He sighed, shook his head, and walked over to one of the unused ladders and began dragging it over.

The rest of that round passed in a blur, and then Frisk, Papyrus, and Sans were following the boys through the manor’s corridors to a dining room a few doors down from the entrance hall.

“This is… a lot smaller than I was expecting,” Frisk admitted when they walked in. The room was still impressively ornate, with a reasonably tall ceiling and some decorative carvings on the walls, but it was closer to the size of a normal dining room than the enormous hall they’d eaten in during the gala.

“This is where we normally eat,” Beckett said cheerfully. “We don’t need as big a room when there’re fewer guests around, so Mom and Dad decided here was probably fine, so long as you didn’t bring too many monsters this time!”

“I guess that makes sense…”

The other Fowls were already seated at the table, along with Toriel, who gave Frisk a surprisingly sunny smile upon seeing them – not that they’d expected her to be frowning, per se, but she seemed remarkably relaxed. She must have really hit it off with the Fowls, to be so at ease around them.

“Having fun, Mom?” They asked.

“Aren’t I supposed to be the one to ask that, my child?” She teased warmly. “Yes, I am enjoying myself. There’s no need to worry.” She patted the seat next to her, and Frisk followed the unspoken suggestion, settling down in that chair and reaching for a napkin to spread across their lap. The others followed suit, the twins hesitating for a moment before Beckett chose to scramble for the seat next to Papyrus, and Myles settled in the next seat over.

Then the huge man from earlier – Butler, wasn’t it? - started bringing out food, and Frisk stopped paying as much attention to their surroundings in order to stare at the food and try not to drool, because stars, it all looked so good! There were dishes of meats, potatoes, breads, tons of different cheeses, some sort of thick, hearty-looking stew, and lots of different seafood dishes – fish, lobster, some sort of shellfish, mussels maybe, or oysters, among other things. And there was just so much of it all.

There were also, they were pleasantly surprised to notice, dishes labeled as monster food.

Noticing their look, Toriel chuckled. “The Fowls were polite enough to order specially prepared food for us, in case we did not wish to partake of their other options. They have escargot, as well!” She seemed positively excited at the prospect of eating snails – something Frisk still didn’t entirely understand, but decided not to comment on, instead waiting as patiently as possible for the cue that they were allowed to start dishing up food of their own, and then trying not to look like they were diving for that stew and a dish they vaguely recognized from a restaurant in Dublin that they remembered liking.
Chara snickered.

*Oh, shut up! I like Irish food, okay?*

After a few minutes, when everyone had their plates filled, conversation started – soft and formal at first, but gradually easing into more natural conversation as people relaxed and enjoyed the meal.

“So monster food is made of magic?” Beckett looked curious, almost bouncing up and down in his seat and eyeing one of the plates of monster food on the table, obviously considering trying it.

“Well, there *is* a great deal of magic involved, yes, but there are some physical ingredients as well.” Toriel gestured to her escargot. “For instance, there are real snails in this dish, as well as a great deal of magic.”

“Huh.” Beckett considered the plate for a moment longer, then dished himself up a portion.

“How did you acquire the ingredients when you were underground?” This question was from Artemis Fowl, from his own seat further down the table – he looked genuinely curious. “I hardly imagine there is adequate room for farms underground, nor enough sunlight.”

“I think they use magic for that.” Frisk offered uncertainly. “Sans mentioned once that the monsters used to use magic to grow the trees in the Snowdin area, and I think they do the same with crops, right?” They glanced at the monsters for confirmation.

“WELL, OF COURSE!” Papyrus puffed up his chest. “WHERE ELSE WOULD I GET THE SUPER-FRESH INGREDIENTS FOR MY EXCELLENT PASTAS?”

“Well, I’m sure there were other pasta-ilities, bro.”

“SANS, STOP! NO PUNS AT THE DINNER TABLE!”

“You guys use magic for everything, huh?” Beckett took a bite of his food, and his eyes brightened. “Whoa, that’s a rush! Myles, try this! It’s like a sugar rush, but with less sugar!”

Myles reluctantly tried the food, and then looked thoughtful as he chewed.

“Monsters use magic for a great deal,” he considered. “And yet you’re still capable of using technology… there are many people, most notably creators of fictional media, who thought that magic and technology would not function well together.”

And thus the conversation continued along that vein for a time. The twins were absolutely *bursting* with questions about magic and how the monsters used it (and their older brother, too, seemed curious, adding his own questions and observations at times), and the meal seemed to pass remarkably quickly.

When Butler brought out an armful of brightly wrapped presents, Frisk frowned. They knew that the twins had said that they didn’t need to bring a present with them, and they hadn’t really had time to look for presents in any case, what with the assassination attempt and their ambassadorial duties, but…

*You don’t need to feel bad about not giving them anything, Frisk.*

*But I feel like I should give them* something.

Then an idea struck them while watching Myles unwrap what turned out to be a large package full of
several-inch thick books.

*Well, go ahead, if you really want to. Just don’t tell them about the Resets or monster souls.*

I know, Chara. I’m not stupid.

Their idea firmly in mind, they waited until the twins had finished unwrapping the last of their packages (some of the presents were ones they hadn’t expected – Beckett had been given a pad of watercolor paper and some watercolor paints as well, and he hadn’t struck them as the artistic type), and then cleared their throat nervously.

“Well, I don’t have a *physical* present for you, but...” they glanced at Toriel, and hoped she and the other monsters wouldn’t mind this *too* much. “If you have any questions about the monsters that haven’t already been answered that I know the answers to or questions about my experiences in the Underground, then I guess I could answer some for you?”

Beckett’s eyes lit up, and a question immediately came rushing out of his mouth. “The monsters were sealed underground by humans, right? Does that mean that humans have magic? I mean, they built the Barrier and everything, so - ”

Then he paused, seemed to realize what he’d said, and looked sheepish. “Sorry, um, you don’t have to answer that one... I mean, if it makes you guys too uncomfortable...”

Frisk glanced towards the monsters again. Toriel and Flowey seemed a little uncomfortable – Flowey had even gone so far as to hunch up in his flowerpot – but the skelebros didn’t seem particularly upset at the idea, and, after a moment and a reluctant nod from Toriel, Frisk decided to answer the question anyway.

“Well, I know that humans had magic eight thousand years ago, at least.” They said. “That was when the Barrier was created. And *apparently,*” they glanced at Sans pointedly, “it’s still a possibility, but I guess if there are humans with magic around they’re in hiding.”

The boy looked positively elated at the idea, and his brother immediately jumped in with a question of his own. “How did human magic work, precisely? Did it differ from the monster variety?”

“I think so. From what I can see, monsters don’t really have a limit to what their magic can do – each monster’s magic sort of... develops as they age, and looks and acts differently for every monster. But, well, two of the wizards, or shamans, I guess, since they were Native Americans, only really had one or two abilities, and couldn’t do much else, at least according to Gerson...”

“Gerson?”

“He’s an old turtle monster that owned a shop in Waterfall before he moved to the surface,” Frisk explained. “He was alive before the Barrier went up, and supposedly fought a couple of the wizards himself, so he knew how their magic worked, at least to an extent.”

“Whoa, cool!” Beckett actually leaned forward now. “What could they do?”

Frisk frowned, sorting through their memories until they found the information they were looking for. “The Cyan and Yellow shamans... Cyan could teleport and might have had some sort of enhanced eyesight as well. The monsters could never sneak up on them, and they used the
teleportation for...” they glanced at the monsters again. “… hand to hand combat. Yellow, on the other hand, could absorb magical attacks and then throw them back at the monsters. You throw a fireball at them, you got a fireball thrown right back.”

Myles tilted his head to one side. “They were known by colors, rather than names? That seems rather… dehumanizing.”

Frisk grimaced. “I think that’s referring to their soul colors, more than anything.”

“Soul colors?” This was not from either of the twins, but Mrs. Fowl, who leaned forward with a look of interest herself. “I was aware that monsters knew that souls existed, but… they have colors? How can you tell?”

Now that the conversation had slipped a little away from the topic of human magic and the Barrier, Toriel seemed comfortable enough to add her own voice to the conversation.

“Monsters are able to draw out a human’s soul, under the right conditions,” she explained. “It was usually used for combat, but it can also be used to check on the state of a human’s health.” She glanced at Frisk. “Humans have a number of different traits, each with a color that represents them, but only the most dominant of these traits, the ones most important to who they are, will show on their soul.”

“Red, purple, green, yellow, orange, dark blue, and cyan,” Frisk offered, counting each color off on their fingers. “Red is Determination, purple is Perseverance, green is Kindness, yellow is Justice, orange is Bravery, blue is Integrity, and cyan is Patience.”

“Most humans have two to four dominant soul traits, and as such have two to four colors,” Toriel continued, smiling at Frisk in thanks. “But the wizards…” she hesitated, then continued. “The wizards all had single colored souls, rather than multi-colored. That is very rare, especially for humans at their ages… children will sometimes have single-colored souls, if I am remembering correctly, but they generally gain more colors as they get older, as they mature and experience more of the world.”

“WOWIE, I HAD NO IDEA!” Papyrus looked just as intrigued by this as the Fowls. “ALL THE HUMANS THAT FELL UNDERGROUND HAD ONE SOUL COLOR!”

“Yes, I noticed that as well… it is very strange, but it is also believed that single-colored souls were more likely to develop magic, so perhaps that had something to do with it...”

The twins exchanged glanced, then, after a moment of apparent psychic sibling communication, turned to look at Frisk.

“What color is your soul, Frisk?” Beckett asked curiously. “Yours only has one, right? You fell into the Underground.”

Frisk hesitated, then smiled a little uncertainly. “Mine’s red.” They admitted. “For Determination.”

“Color me surprised,” Artemis Fowl said, a tad dryly and with a hint of sarcasm. “Or, perhaps not.”

There was an ungainly snort. Frisk glanced over at Sans, whose grin had grown a little wider.

“Nice one,” the skeleton snickered.

Artemis paused and seemed to consider what he’d said for a moment, even as Beckett (and Papyrus) groaned.
“Arty, really? I reached my pun limit for the week hours ago!”

“The pun was not intentional, Beckett, I can assure you.” The Irishman’s lips quirked up at the corners. “And I can also assure you, Sans, that my usual pun quality is far better than that.”

“Your usual pun quality is still horrible.” Beckett was actually groaning into the table at this point, apparently having abandoned his near-perfect posture in order to stew in his pun-induced anguish properly. “Come on, Artemis! C. Nyle Dementia? Sir. E. Brum? Those’re awful.”

Frisk blinked. “You wrote those books in the library? Those were your punny pen-names?” Somehow, the words Artemis Fowl the Second and punster didn’t seem to belong in the same sentence, but considering the ghost of a smile on his face, that impression was pretty far from being true.

“Indeed they were.” His smile grew into a small smirk. “As were Violet Tsirblu, and F. Roy Dean Schlippe.”

Sans actually snickered, and a familiar look had crept onto his face – a look that Frisk easily recognized as his look for incoming hurricane of puns. Oh dear.

“So you’re a sciency kinda guy, huh?”

“I’d daresay so, yes.” The elder Fowl sibling raised an eyebrow – apparently he’d noticed the look as well, though he didn’t recognize it for what it was.

“Just psychology?

“I know a great deal of physics and chemistry as well.”

“Chemistry, huh?” Sans’s grin grew a little wider. “Say, do you know the names of the recycling triplets?”

Artemis’s eyebrow rose farther, and he looked visibly nonplussed. “I am afraid not.”

“What, you don’t know Polly, Ethel, and Ian? Shame.”

The Fowl blinked – and then, as he translated the joke, his smirk returned. “Oh, I see. Polyethylene. That was atrocious.”

“Well, all the good chemistry jokes Argon.”

“SANS.”

“Ah, well, that’s a problem, now, isn’t it.” And – yup, his smirk was definitely growing, if only by a smidgen. “Just as well I am here, yes? After all, as an accomplished chemist, I have all the solutions.”

Beckett, Papyrus, and Flowey groaned loudly, in perfect harmony.

“Good one.” Sans’s smile grew even larger. “You wanna hear a Potassium joke?”

“I suppose so.”

“K.”

“OH MY GOD SANS, STOP!”
“Artemis, please stop!”

The elder Fowl did not, in fact, stop. “I suppose you wouldn’t have heard about the famous microbiologist who visited dozens of different countries and spoke over six languages?”

“Nope.”

“Pity that. He was a man of many cultures .”

“Oh nooo,” Flowey whined. “He’s as bad as the smiley trashbag!”

“Aww, c’mon buddy.” Sans winked at the flower. “No need to be so soulless.”

* Ouch. Low blow, smiley, low blow. *

Frisk aimed a disapproving stare at the skeleton, fully in agreement.

Flowey twitched, and his eyes narrowed. “Keep it up, Sans. Go ahead and keep punning. I dare you.”

“FLOWEY, THERE IS NO NEED TO BE THREATENING AMONGST FRIENDS! THAT BEING SAID, SANS, I FULLY AGREE! NO MORE PUNS!”

Judging by Sans’s almost gleeful expression, and the calculating look in Artemis Fowl’s eyes as he probably came up with more puns, it didn’t seem like Papyrus’s wish would come true just yet.

They almost felt sorry for him.

Chapter End Notes

And now Sans finally knows why Butler was unaffected by most of his puns in the garden. >:3

Artemis has used a lot of punny pen-names and aliases in the books, amongst which are the ones mentioned here, along with Emmisey Squire – E=mc^2. He’s also been shown to have a rather punny sense of humor in book 5, during a conversation with Minerva Paradizo – however, most people don’t understand his puns, because they are, of course, based off of well-known scientific terms, or sometimes more obscure ones (like the Freudian Slip one, F. Roy Dean Schlippe. I certainly didn’t know what that was before I looked it up on google.)

In this case, the punning between Sans and Artemis is not just a case of them sharing a sense of humor, but also a case of “I sense a challenge, let’s see if I can come up with better puns than his,” on Artemis’s behalf.

If people are getting sick of all the puns in the latest chapters, sorry, but I had to. They were too good to pass up. Plus, Undertale fanfic. You entered at your own risk.

Some worldbuilding in this chapter, as well, involving human souls and magic. And, to keep with that theme, I’ve decided that the worldbuilding I’m gonna share in the notes today is the soul colors of Artemis and Co.! I actually came up with these a while back, long before Daniel was actively helping me with the fanfic, (though he WAS the guy
who asked about the soul colors in the first place, so I guess it still comes from the both of us!)

Artemis - Purple (Perseverance), Red (Determination), Dark blue (Integrity), and Orange (Bravery)
Butler - Cyan (Patience), Dark blue
Juliet - Orange, Green (Kindness)
Angeline Fowl - Green, Dark blue
Artemis Senior - Purple, Yellow, Dark blue
Myles - Purple, Green, Red
Beckett - Orange, Green
Holly - Dark blue, Orange, Red
Foaly - Purple, Yellow (Justice)
Mulch - Cyan, Purple
No. 1 - Green, Red, Dark blue, Orange
Qwan - Purple, Yellow
Commander Kelp - Yellow, Orange, Red

(And just for fun, since these people aren't going to turn up in person in the fic: Opal's was Purple and Red, Commander Root's was Yellow and Red, and Minvera's is Purple, Cyan, and Red)
Chapter 29

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry that this took so long to update, guys! A combination of lackluster inspiration and intensive schoolwork will do that to you, I’m afraid… and since the classes I’m in now have a ton of homework, updates might be a little sporadic for the next several weeks! Just figured I’d let you know!

Also, quick warning for this chapter: descriptions of character death and violence. Nothing too graphic, but better safe than sorry!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When it finally came time for them to leave the Fowl estate, Frisk was caught squarely between a sense of disappointment, and a sense of relief.

The disappointment was because, for the first time in this timeline since the monsters had made it to the surface, they’d been able to relax. The Fowls, despite their possible former criminal status, obviously meant the monsters no harm, and neither did their possibly high-LV bodyguard (they’d have to ask Sans what his LV had actually been, now that they thought about it). They had security teams around the place, and no hordes of other guests that could all possibly be hiding a weapon. It had been broad daylight when they’d arrived, so sneaking in probably would’ve been incredibly difficult. For once, they didn’t need to worry about the safety of the monsters accompanying them, and had been able to focus on being an actual kid for once – which they wouldn’t be able to do once they left the walled manor grounds.

On the other hand, they were also incredibly relieved, for multiple reasons.

They were unused to being around other human kids, and although they did like Myles and Beckett (enough so to offer them their phone number and private email address, which they didn’t do often outside of their ambassadorial duties), it had started to become a little suffocating after a while. The twins were nice enough, but apart from the games of tag and hide and seek, they seemed to cling to them for the entire duration of the visit. It would be nice to have a little privacy when they got back.

Then there was the conversation with Sans – the roses’ magical discoloration which, considering the roses had been here before the monsters, meant probable fairy activity on the manor grounds, Myles and that huge bodyguard being suspicious of Flowey, Artemis Fowl’s reaction to Sans’s check… there was a lot going on here that they didn’t understand, and the unknown was dangerous.

And then, of course, there was the final straw – the conversation they’d had with Artemis Fowl, shortly after dinner.

“Ambassador Frisk, would you mind if we spoke in private?”

It had been hard to read his expression, but if they had to guess, they would call it worried – pursed lips, narrowed eyes, a slightly furrowed brow. When they’d followed him to another corner of the room (far enough away not to be overheard, but close enough they were still in view of the monsters
– had Myles told him about Frisk’s worry about the monsters?), the Irishman had then proceeded to bring what remained of their levity crashing back down to earth.

“Humanity’s Resurgence has been very quiet as of late,” he’d told them, the furrow in his brow deepening. “Up until recently, they’ve still been making minor nuisances of themselves when not staging assassination attempts or bombings. However, after their most recent attempt on your life…”

Frisk gulped. “They’ve been too quiet,” they agreed quietly. “You think they’re up to something?”

“Unfortunately, yes. Please do be careful out there, Frisk.”

Then he had paused, glanced back at the monsters, and then turned back to them with a deceptively curious look on his face.

“Now that the warning is out of the way, I must admit, I’m curious about your… flower friend. I was unaware that there were flower monsters in the Underground, and he seems very… different from your other monster acquaintances.”

“Different?” At this, they’d felt their heart starting to sink. Was Artemis Fowl suspicious of Flowey, too?

“Well, his behavior is very unique, for a monster. He’s extraordinarily hostile towards more or less everyone, aggressive, irritable… most other monsters I’ve met are very friendly, if sometimes shy or uncertain.” His eyes had narrowed a fraction. “And his expression during supper, when he threatened your punning skeletal friend… well.”

“He is pretty different from the other monsters, but that’s just… how he is.”

“Is that so? May I ask if you know why he is the way he is?”

Frisk had gulped again, and given him an uncertain smile. “That’s, um, private.”

Now, sitting in their cart and watching the countryside roll by as they fidgeted, Frisk couldn’t help but frown worriedly yet again at the memory.

That makes three people now who were suspicious of Flowey, even though he gave them almost no reason for it. I’ll grant that his reaction to Sans’s soulless jibe was pretty violent, so that could explain Artemis’s suspicion of him, but… he didn’t act that way around Myles, right? Or Butler. And yet…

*Hey, we’re almost back. Might want to snap out of it, partner.*

Frisk blinked, and came out of their reverie as the first of the farms and buildings of Dublin’s outskirts began to roll past them. Across from them, Papyrus was still chatting eagerly to both Sans and Flowey (who was looking very, very disgruntled, but, surprisingly, less so than usual) about how he, the Great Papyrus, had made made yet more human friends, and even acquired the phone number of his new small human friends, and more things besides. Sans was paying careful attention to his brother with a fond look on his face, and Toriel…

Their adoptive mother was frowning worriedly at them.

“Frisk, are you alright?” Her question was very soft, so as not to catch the attention of the other monsters.

They gave her as cheery a smile as they could. “Yeah, I’m fine, Mom. Just… thinking about stuff, I
“Artemis Fowl wanted to talk to me before we left. He said to keep an eye out for HuRg – I mean, Humanity’s Resurgence –” (at this Toriel raised one brow at the acronym, but being a monster and therefore being familiar with monster acronyms, she didn’t question it) “- because they’ve been too quiet lately, and he thinks they might be up to something.”

The monster considered this, then nodded. “Yes, I suppose that would be a reason to worry. But do not fear, Frisk. I will not let anything happen to you.”

They pursed their lips.

"It's not me I'm worried about, Mom. I'm not the one that turns to dust after only a couple of hits.

That was what they wanted to say, what was on the tip of their tongue, but they swallowed the words before they could escape, and gave her a shaky smile before turning their attention back to their surroundings.

They sat in silence for a while after that, watching the suburbs give way to the more packed, bustling city center. It was dusk, by now, and people were lighting candles and old oil-burning lamps in some of their windows and shops, and others turning on battery-powered lights. There were people doing the same for the streetlamps on the street, as well, or flipping switches to turn them on after a full day of using their little solar panels to charge. There was no sign of panic, no rushing crowds, no hostile expressions aimed at the monsters that were still active and walking on the streets alongside humans.

It was all very peaceful and quiet, and more than a little unnerving, because now they couldn’t stop thinking about the possibility of gun-wielding extremists leaping out of the darkening shadows to start mowing people down.

Just keep an eye out, they told themselves. Chara’s watching our back for us, and you’ve SAVEd recently, so if anything happens, you can avoid it next time. You’re doing fine.

As it turned out, thinking that was a mistake, because just as their cart was starting to pull up in front of their hotel, Chara suddenly yanked them out of control with a yell.

“I saw someone with a gun!”

No. No no no, where?!

The deafening crack of a gunshot split the air, and a white wall of fire roared up on the left side of the cart. A gap opened in the fire for just a moment, split open by the bullet that had been fired, and then the tiny lump of metal disintegrated in the heat of the flames.

“Are you alright, my child?” Toriel managed, eyes wide. Her hand was outstretched, the glow of monster magic outlining her furry fingers in a pale aura.

“Y-yeah, I’m fine.” Chara looked away quickly, squinting with Frisk’s eyes to peer through the wall of magic, desperately hunting for the gunner through the blinding light.

*Where is he? C’mon, he’s here, I know he is! Frisk, do you –*
body tumbling to the ground along with Flowey’s pot.

*Papyrus!!*

*Shit, shit shit! There’s more than one shooter? Where is –*

Sans’s sockets had turned to dark voids, and with a wave of his hand, white and blue bones dancing in familiar, complicated patterns were racing upwards into the air, towards the distant hunched form of someone on a rooftop opposite the hotel. Small bullets of magic – Flowey’s “friendliness pellets” followed quickly in pursuit.

And then they saw the third shooter, aiming a rifle from the second floor of another building, and even Chara didn’t have time to react when he pulled the trigger.

---

LOAD.

Blackness gave way to familiar blurs of green and orange and gold, and with a choking sound, Frisk lurched forward, back on the familiar grounds of the Fowl estate.

“Kid?”

The voice was familiar, but Frisk couldn’t concentrate on it for the moment – Chara was cursing up a storm in the back of their head, using all kinds of words that Toriel would’ve washed out of their mouth with soap if she was able to hear them, and the image of a tall skeleton turning to dust was still imprinted firmly on the inside of their eyelids, and a phantom pain pulsing behind their left eye, where the bullet had gone in, and it was all they could do not to puke –

“Kid.”

A whimper escaped from them, but they managed to look up as Sans stopped in front of them, and held out a hand to them.

“Get up kid. C’mon, you can do it.”

Get up…?

Oh. They were on their knees. When had that happened? Trembling, and still more than a little queasy, Frisk grabbed the offered hand and pulled themselves back up to their feet.

“Calm down, kiddo. Deep breaths.”

They obeyed, sucking in a huge lungful of air, letting it out, then sucking in another and repeating.

When the trembling stopped, Sans’s sockets narrowed, and his tone turned sharp. “What happened, Frisk?”

They shivered.

“Assassins,” they croaked. “At the hotel, when we go back. One on the ground, two on the roof – shot at us – P-Papyrus - !”

Sans’s sockets went dark, and his fingers curled around theirs, which were still clutching his in a death grip.
“Only three?”

“I-I think so… oh stars, Sans, I’m s-so –”

He stopped them, squeezing their hand maybe a little bit harder than necessary in order to catch their attention. “Frisk.”

When they looked back at him, his sockets were still dark, though they could’ve sworn there was flicker of blue in the left one.

“D o n ‘ t   l e t   i t   h a p p e n   a g a i n.”

Frisk shivered at the dark, unnerving voice, and nodded wildly. Sans relaxed a fraction, his eye-lights flickering back to life, and he let go of their hand and signed a question.

I’ve already told you what I’ve found out?

They nodded again, and he tucked his hands back into his pockets, closing his right eye in one of his typical lazy winks.

“In that case… you still up to the game, kiddo?”

Frisk blinked, then remembered. Right. We’re playing hide and seek.

“Y-yeah.”

“Welp. Better go hide then.”

They nodded again, not entirely trusting their voice, and then quickly picked their way around the orange roses and ran for their hiding spot in the manor.

Okay, Sans gets found first, and then Papyrus finds me, right…? A-and he was still carrying Flowey around…

They needed to talk to the flower, and soon.

Their second run in the manor went more or less the same as it had before, save for a few distinct differences. The first was that Flowey had already told Papyrus that he wanted to go with Frisk after they got caught, so Frisk didn’t even have to ask Papyrus to hand the flower over.

Flowey waited until the skeleton had run off and Frisk had started “searching” for the twins’ hiding spots, before hissing, “Did you already tell the smiley trashbag?” When they nodded, he grinned – it wasn’t a nice grin. It was the grin of a furious serial killer.

“Good. I’m gonna kill those shits.”

“No!”

“Frisk –”

“No killing, Flowey. If a monster kills a human, even in self-defense -! You know what happened the last time that happened!”
The second difference was that Myles had noticed their odd behavior, and kept glancing at them whenever they were in sight. Frisk tried their best to act like they had before, but they knew that something was off about their behavior, and there was only so much they could do about that. Myles could read them like a book, and unfortunately there was nothing they could do about it. Thankfully, he didn’t pry as to what had upset them, and everything played out more or less the way it had before, right up to the questions about monsters and souls during dinner, and the puns that followed soon afterward.

The third difference came right after their conversation with Artemis Fowl. The Irishman suddenly frowned, a look of confusion on his face, as Frisk was turning away.

“I have the strangest sense of deja vu,” he murmured, and Frisk barely kept themselves from choking in shock at the words.

*What the hell? Does he remember, or…?*

*I don’t think so?*

Finally, they were back in the cart, the twins’ contact information tucked into a pocket, goodbyes were had, and they were rolling back out into the countryside, towards imminent disaster.

When they reached the edge of Dublin once more, Frisk took a deep breath.

“Mom,” they said quietly. “I have a bad feeling about this…”

She glanced at them worriedly as the conversation around them stopped. “About what, my child?”

“I just… I feel like something bad is going to happen, you know?”

The monster frowned but did not question them, and neither did the other monsters. Papyrus looked worried, but otherwise still himself, Sans’s sockets had gone black again, and Flowey’s beady eyes darted from side to side, looking for the assassins he knew were coming.

This time, when the shots came in front of the hotel, the monsters were ready. As soon as Chara took control once more, and yelled about the gun, Toriel threw up a wall of white fire and, on the other side of the cart, Flowey hissed and immediately aimed a swarm of friendliness pellets at the rooftop shooters. There were distant yells of alarm over the sounds of the crowds running for safety, and the two snipers went down, one tossing aside his smoking, ruined weapon, and the other clutching at his hands. When they turned back to look for the third one, Toriel had surrounded him in a ring of fire, and the gun had been knocked from his hand.

*Oh thank stars.*

Frisk would have sagged with relief if they were in control of their own body.

*Did we get them all?*

*Think so –

There was a sharp crack, and the world went black again.

Frisk gasped, stumbling but managing to stay on their feet this time, staring down at the familiar grass
and petals.

*There was another shooter? Where were they? Chara, did you -?*

*I didn’t see them!*

The ghost sounded almost panicked, and more than a little angry, and Frisk didn’t blame them one bit.

“Kid? What happened?”

They gulped, looking up at Sans.

“A-assassins at the hotel,” they whispered. And since we don’t know where they are… “We can’t go back to the hotel. They’re waiting for us!”

This time, as the cart was approaching the last street corner before their hotel and before they were in firing range, Frisk asked the man driving the cart to stop.

“Frisk? What is - ”

“I saw someone with a gun!” They said urgently, gesturing in the direction of the hotel. “I only saw it for a moment, but he had a gun, and he was headed towards the hotel!”

Toriel stiffened. “Are you sure there is an armed man there, my child?”

“I’m not sure,” they lied. “But -”

“I thought I saw something big moving on the roof!” Flowey piped in, and Frisk made a mental note to let him out of his pot in a nearby park as thanks later.

The monster looked uncertain, glancing at the others. Sans shrugged.

“Probably better safe than sorry, Tori. I mean, that terrorist group’s tried to kill Frisk before, right?”

Toriel looked visibly shaken, then steeled herself and nodded. “Yes, that is true...” She turned to the man driving the cart. “Please turn here, and drive us to the police station. It might be a false alarm, but it is better to be cautious rather than risk our lives, yes?”

The man gulped and nodded furiously in agreement.

Frisk didn’t relax until the street corner, their hotel, and all the shooters were far, far behind them.

Chapter End Notes

Total Frisk Deaths: 3

Let’s hope that Frisk wasn’t overheard by the fairies after they LOADed, otherwise their secret might be out really, really quickly! :3
And now for worldbuilding, brought to you by Som and Daniel (and inspired by a question from MemorySteel on fanfiction.net): Where are all the monsters living now?

As of this moment, the monsters are living in various communities scattered across various countries in the Americas and Europe. I haven’t had time to come up with where all of them are living, but here’s a few!

Grillby: Still in America. He’s managed to set up a new restaurant on the surface in Ebott, and it’s pretty popular.

Fuku (that green fire elemental, who is Grillby’s daughter in this ‘verse): Ireland. She struck out on her own once monsters were able to travel and live overseas, and is currently employed by a small restaurant in Dublin. She’s also taking cooking lessons from a human tutor, hoping to open a monster/human restaurant of her own eventually.

Mettaton: He’s on tour as of a few months after Frisk and Tori left America, along with Blooky and Shyren. They’re in France, right now.

Alphys and Undyne: Ireland, obviously.

Sans and Papyrus: They live in Ebott when they’re not traveling around. Sans does various odd-jobs around the place, and Papyrus helps with monster-human relations there (as the monster’s amazing mascot should! XD)

Asgore: Currently in the Underground. He agreed to remain there until humans were comfortable with him wandering around on his own. He is allowed on the surface every now and then, though, so he’s not entirely trapped down there.

Muffet: Ireland, obviously.

The Temmies: The entirety of Temmie Village (including Bob) lives in a little house in the suburbs of Ebott – as in there’s literally like all twenty, thirty of them living in the same house. Most of them work full jobs in various places around the city, so every morning, like clockwork, a swarm of Temmies comes pouring out of the house.

Vulkins, Pyropes, other Hotland monsters: They’re scattered across some more tropical climates, including Brazil and Hawaii (and yes that means Vulkins in grass skirts doing the hula dance is a thing. Probably.)

Snowdrake, Ice Cap, and other Snowdin monsters: Most monsters from Snowdin stick to more chilly climates, such as Canada, Greenland (which opened its borders to monsters six months before Frisk arrived in Ireland), Ireland, etc.

Waterfall monsters: The monsters of Waterfall are kind of scattered across the Northern Hemisphere, by now – and not all of them live on land, either. Onion-San, for instance, managed to get to the ocean and was actually hired by a shipping company to escort ships across the ocean in case of extreme weather. And then there’s an entire ship whose crew is practically nothing but Waterfall monsters that works for another shipping company…

Gerson: Living in Ebott – he moved his shop from Waterfall up onto the surface, near the base of the mountain. Avid historians of both species who want to know more about the war or monster society before the Barrier will come to talk to him.

Burgerpants: Moved to Canada, and is currently working towards his dream of being an
actor. Also, he’s praying to never, ever meet Mettaton again.

Froggits, Whinsums, Moldsmals, other Ruin monsters: All still in Ebott. They didn’t want to move too far from their old homes.

A few monsters decided they wanted to remain Underground, as well – so long as they are able to access the surface, they’re perfectly happy to still live underneath the mountain.
The police were understandably concerned when a cart full of nervous monsters, their Ambassador, and their cart driver pulled up in front of the station. They graduated from concerned to downright alarmed when Frisk and Flowey repeated their claims of having seen people with guns near the hotel, and within a few minutes, the group had been ushered inside and was sitting huddled in a group in the waiting room. It was at this point, when they were finally out of immediate danger and one of the policemen was barking orders to people through a walkie-talkie, that Frisk wondered if they’d made the right choice.

Maybe I should have dealt with them myself, they fretted silently, watching as one of the station’s carts was trotted away towards the city, full of a small squad of officers. If the gunmen aren’t there, then that means they got away, and they’re still at large. If they are there, then... people could get hurt.

*Come on, Frisk, it was this or risk the monsters’ safety again. Stop fretting already, it’s getting on my nerves.

They frowned uncertainly. But Chara –

*Look, I get it. You’re worried about the officers. You’re worried about the people on the street. Worrying about them won’t do any good now.

The impatience in Chara’s voice was nearly palpable, and so was the anxiety underneath it. Despite their words, the ghost was just as worried as Frisk was – likely not for the officers, since despite Frisk’s best efforts Chara’s hatred of humanity had only been diminished to a simmering dislike - but for any monster bystanders near the hotel. They almost called the ghost out on it, but after a moment, decided not to. In all likelihood, they’d only make Chara’s mood worse, and it wouldn’t do them any favors.

After that, it was a waiting game. A couple of minutes passed. Then five. Then ten.

The rest of the group had calmed down somewhat, even the trembling cart driver, but Frisk still remained nervous, watching through the station’s glass front doors for any sign of the squadron of officers returning and fidgeting anxiously. So focused on the doors were they, that they nearly didn’t notice a furry arm loop around them in a one-armed hug, a gesture clearly meant to comfort. When they glanced up at Toriel, she gave them a shaken smile, but didn’t ask them if they were okay. In all likelihood, she already knew that they weren’t.

Fifteen minutes. Twenty. Twenty-five.
Someone appeared from the depths of the building with several steaming mugs. Toriel accepted the one offered to her with a soft thank you, and Frisk reluctantly tore their attention away from the doors to do the same. It was hot chocolate – they could smell it before they even looked into the mug to be sure. They took a couple of sips, only able to take the smallest amount of comfort from the sweet taste before their eyes were drawn back to the doors.

Thirty minutes. Forty.

At forty-three minutes, the walkie-talkie on a nearby officer’s belt screamed to life as an too familiar voice made itself known over the airwaves, only slightly muffled by the speakers.

“NGAAAAA, WHY THE HELL DIDN’T ANYBODY TELL ME ABOUT THE GUNMEN NEAR FRISK’S HOTEL?! MY BESTIE BETTER BE ALRIGHT, YOU HEAR ME?!??!”

Undyne. Frisk cracked a weak grin as the officer whose walkie-talkie had screamed winced, and then pulled the device off his belt and lifted it up next to his ear with a look of trepidation on his face.

“The Ambassador is fine, Officer Undyne,” he managed. “They’re here at the station, along with several other monsters, including the Queen.” He began to walk away, wincing as Undyne kept yelling through the speakers (no doubt permanently damaging his poor, poor eardrums), until he was not quite out of earshot, stopping just inside the doorway that opened to the rest of the station.

“Well, at least Undyne is perfectly fine,” Toriel said, sounding slightly strained. “I’ll admit I was a little worried, but it seems my worry was unwarranted.”

Then the still-audible, if not understandable, voice was cut off by another over the radio, one considerably softer and unfamiliar. The officer’s eyes widened, then narrowed, his lips pursing. After several long moments, he replied tersely, and then lowered the walkie-talkie from his mouth and turned back to their little group.

“You are an incredibly lucky kid, you know that?” He asked Frisk, raising an eyebrow. “You nearly rolled right into a death trap. If you hadn’t spotted that gunman…”

They caught the assassins? “There really were gunmen there? At the hotel?”

He nodded in confirmation. “The squad managed to arrest two of them, and there were at least two others that got away, possibly more. They’re bringing the perps to the station now.” He grimaced. “One of the two they caught was… in your hotel room.”

A startled squeak escaped from them before they could stop it. In our -?

“What?” Flowey, finally piping up for the first time in a little over half an hour. He sounded more angry than shocked, and hearing that, Frisk quickly pulled themselves back together. The more shaken they looked, the more likely it was for Flowey to stay angry, and an angry Flowey tended to do things that could cause some serious problems later on. The last thing they needed was him attacking one of the officers or something, and getting arrested for assault.

“How did they get in?” They asked softly. “Is anybody… hurt?”

The man shook his head. “A couple of casualties, but no fatalities. The ones that got away held civilians at gunpoint until they could make a break for it. Couple people got shot, but not anywhere vital – at most, they’ll need some surgery and maybe some monster food, and they’ll be golden. As for how the perp got in…” At this point, he grimaced again. “We think he stole one of the hotel keys from the front desk, while the receptionist was distracted by the commotion outside, but we’re not one hundred percent sure.”
Frisk sighed with relief. *So nobody’s dead. Thank goodness.*

“It’d probably be a good idea to change hotels, then.” Sans pointed out from his seat. He was still faux-relaxed, with his hands in his pockets, when they glanced over at him, but his grin looked a little more strained than usual. “All of us. Me ’n Pap are only a few doors down from Tori and the kiddo.”

“That would probably be for the best, yes,” the officer admitted, then winced as Undyne’s voice roared over the speakers once more – she was demanding to be involved with interrogating the suspects. “Excuse me, can we discuss this later? I’d like to be able to save the squadron’s ears.”

When he got confirmation, he walked off at a brisk pace, disappearing into the depths of the station as he reached for his walkie-talkie once more.

Almost thirty minutes later, Undyne almost kicked down the front door with a yell of “ALRIGHT, WHERE ARE THE ASSHOLES THAT TRIED TO HURT MY BESTIE?!”

“Oh, hello Undyne!” Papyrus waved cheerfully at her. “Wowie, that uniform makes you look almost as cool as me!”

The monster paused, visibly torn between preening at the compliment – she *did* look pretty cool in that uniform – and mild terror, because she’d noticed that Toriel was in the same room as her, and was giving her the Toriel-patented disapproving stare. “Er...”

Frisk quickly waved to catch the monster’s attention. “You’re alright, right Undyne? I know you weren’t involved with what was going on at the hotel, but if the ones that got away are still at large...”

Undyne bared her teeth in a sharkish grin. “Ha! As if those punks could hurt me.” She strode over and bent down to give them an affectionate noogie. “If they tried anything, they’d get a face full of spears!”

A voice crackled over her radio, and she quickly snatched it off her belt with a roll of her visible eye. “Talk to you later, punk, I gotta go pester someone about the interrogation. No way I’m missing out on getting those jerks to shit – to poop in their pants out of fear!”

She stomped off, her footsteps seeming to echo off the walls even after she was no longer in sight.

After a moment, the cart driver, who’d been sitting a couple chairs away from the monsters the entire time they’d been waiting, asked meekly, “Is she... always like that?”

“Of course!” Papyrus practically beamed at the man. “She wouldn’t be Undyne without well-intentioned violence!”

“O-oh...”

A couple of minutes later, the cart that had left a little over an hour previously rolled past the door, chock full of serious-faced officers and two slightly dazed men in handcuffs, and Frisk finally, *finally* let themselves relax.

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Frisk must have fallen asleep sometime after the cart had arrived because they were jolted out of a mercifully dreamless sleep by a door slamming open. Groggily, they opened their eyes to see
Undyne stride across the room towards them and practically hurl herself into a chair next to them with a *ngah* of intense frustration.

Blinking, they checked the clock on the wall (it looked like another hour or so had passed since the last time they’d checked), and then turned to the fish monster, reaching up to rub the sleep out of their eyes.

“Is the interrogation over?” they managed, struggling to stifle a yawn. “What’d you find out?”

“Pretty much *nothing!*” Undyne growled. She leveled a death glare at the door she’d just come stomped through. “What’s with criminals and the whole amnesia shtick all of a sudden?!?” She pitched her voice higher, presumably mockingly. “‘Oh no officer, I can’t remember a damn thing about who gave me my orders! All I can remember is that they had a voice like a choir of angels and church bells ringing, I can’t even tell you what gender they were!’ *Bullshit.*”

Sleepiness gone, Frisk stared at Undyne for a moment, unsure if they’d heard the monster correctly.

*Chara?*

*I heard her, too. *Voice like a choir of angels*… *What the hell.*

They swallowed, fully agreeing with Chara’s sentiment. *A musical voice, and lack of memory… Was there a fairy involved with this?*

---

Fowl Manor had become blissfully calm as soon as the Ambassador and their escort of monsters had left, and the fairies still present were taking full advantage of this. Most of them had been up in the air for the entire duration of the afternoon, too paranoid to risk even so much as a single toe touching the ground, and although their suits and wingsets had been built with such things in mind, there was only so much hovering a fairy could handle before they needed to land, dump the excess gear, and stretch their limbs on solid ground.

Of course, the tranquility of the grounds was only temporary, and nobody knew that better than Holly, but she was doing to take full advantage of the peace and quiet before it was ruined for her by some unforeseen complication in the near future, and so had settled herself down in one of the Fowl gardens far away from the rest of the squadron. She had no patience for the rest of her team right now.

Unfortunately, time had this awful tendency to speed past when she wasn’t involved in a high-stakes situation, and so it seemed like only a few minutes before a certain centaur’s voice in her ear ended her well-earned break.

“Er, Holly? Something’s just come up.”

The elf groaned loudly. “If it’s not the end of the world as we know it, I don’t want to hear it. I’ve already had enough troll dung to wade through today, thanks.”

“Sorry, no new apocalypse starting anytime soon, but I think this is something you really have to see. I’m sending a link to a video to your helmet feed.”

Tiredly, Holly reached up to lower the visor of her helmet over her eyes once more, and, when the link to the video appeared in the display, she blinked at it to select it. The image that expanded to fill
her view appeared to be something off of a human news station, two humans behind a desk in front of screens of images, with titles rolling past on the bottom of the screen.

“Foaly, what am I su -” She didn’t need to finish her question, because that was when she spotted what had likely caught the centaur’s attention – the words scrolling across the bottom of the screen currently read *Assassination Attempt of the Monster Ambassador Fails – Two Shooters Apprehended, Others Still at Large.*

“Thanks to Ambassador Frisk’s keen sense of observation, the police were made aware of the threat quickly, and moved in to apprehend the suspects,” one news anchor was saying. “The Ambassador was returning to their hotel with a small company of monsters, and barely a block away from the building, claimed to have spotted one of the suspects with gun in hand –”

Holly blinked, then gritted her teeth. “Foaly, important as this is –”

“Holly, they didn’t see any gunmen. A couple of officers had been tailing them since the Manor, and they did a brief scan of their surroundings only a few moments before Frisk claimed to have seen one, and there were no guns visible! If fairy cameras couldn’t pick them up, what makes you think human eyes could?” The centaur sucked in an aggravated breath. “Remember the report from earlier? The one about what happened at the roses?”

Holly hadn’t been the fairy patrolling near the fairy roses when Frisk had had another odd series of symptoms similar to what had occurred at the gala, but as the team leader, she’d received the report afterward. One of the sprites watching over them had spotted the ambassador approaching the center of the spiral, reach out to what seemed to be thin air – and then suddenly double over as if in pain. The sprite hadn’t been able to get much closer to eavesdrop – one of the monsters, the short skeleton monster, had accompanied the child, and it hadn’t been worth the risk. However, the fairy had used the zoom function of their visor’s cameras to see the Ambassador’s face in clearer detail, and read their lips.

“‘Assassins at the hotel,’” Holly muttered. “‘We can’t go back, they’re waiting for us.’” Her eyes widened. “Wait – they knew the assassins were there?!” Her eyes widened. “Wait – they knew the assassins were there? How?! Was it another anonymous call, like with the first assassin?”

“Actually,” Artemis’s voice sounded over the communicator before Foaly could reply, “it appears that there was no anonymous call then, either.”

“What?”

The clacking of a keyboard followed Holly’s exclamation, and then Artemis continued, sounding slightly distracted, “Perhaps a week ago I managed to obtain a copy of their calls from the days shortly before and after the gala – the only calls made that corresponded to the assassination attempt was one made by Frisk themselves, addressed to the police, only two days before the attempt.”

“D’Arvit.” The elf raised her visor once more so she could massage her forehead in an attempt to take care of the rising headache. “Are you sure the call wasn’t from earlier, maybe a few weeks back?”

“If they had known for that period of time, then Frisk would have contacted the police much sooner, and sounded far less panicked whilst doing so,” the human pointed out dryly. “They are a prodigy such as myself – I have no doubt they understand the merit of a few weeks of planning.” More keyboard sounds. “This combined with the information I learned today has some… *interesting* implications.”
Holly’s subconscious immediately threw up several warnings. Artemis could obtain important information almost as fast as Foaly’s best hacking attempts, but unlike the centaur, he had a tendency to hold that information back until he was absolutely certain of its accuracy.

“What information?” Foaly sounded incredibly suspicious, as per usual when Artemis was about to drop a metaphorical bombshell on them.

The Mud Boy hummed thoughtfully. “During supper, in lieu of having actual presents for the twins, Frisk offered to answer any questions they may have about the monsters or their history that hadn’t already been answered. Their initial question concerned the individuals responsible for construction of the Barrier, more specifically what their magic may have been like, and while answering, the Ambassador hinted it was a possibility for humans in today’s society to still possess magic.”

“What? But there haven’t been humans with magic since –”

“And, more intriguingly,” Artemis continued calmly, not acknowledging the centaur’s interruption, “the conversation was quickly turned towards the topic of souls – more specifically, soul colors that represent certain personality traits. Most humans apparently have multiple said colors, but the souls of the humans responsible for the Barrier had only a single hue – as did the souls of all eight human children that fell into the Underground, including Frisk – and, apparently, humans possessing a single-colored soul are more likely to develop magic.

“With this in mind,” he continued, and Holly could almost see him steepling his fingers as he spoke, “if we look at what we already know, then we have a very interesting series of events. A human child with a single-colored soul falls through the Barrier, a massive magical construction, into an underground kingdom full of ambient magic. They make their way through the entire Underground, miraculously avoiding permanent harm despite monsters attacking them at every turn, at times almost seeming to predict what certain monsters will do. As they do, they pass through several locations which later show odd magical readings whose cause is unknown. Once they reach the surface once more, they become the monster ambassador and somehow manage to evade multiple attempts on their life that they should have no knowledge of, eventually culminating in them reacting oddly to the unusual magical signatures and then shortly afterwards somehow acquiring the knowledge of assassination attempts days or only hours previous to them occurring.”

There was a long moment of silence.

“Are you saying,” Holly said slowly, “that the monster Ambassador has magic?”

“It is certainly a possibility, yes.”

“But humans don’t –”


“That’s different!” Foaly blustered. “That proves that humans can use magic, yes, but that’s not the same thing as having it naturally! Artemis stole that magic, he didn’t develop it on his own, and we would’ve noticed if some humans started healing themselves or shooting fireballs everywhere –”

“Humans are not necessarily limited to what fairies are capable of,” Artemis pointed out. “If I were to hazard a guess at this point, if Frisk does possess magic, it’s likely some form of prophetic ability, which isn’t something the People are capable of at this time so far as I know.”

Foaly groaned. “D’Arvit, that’s even worse than fireballs… this is the kid who might know about the People that we’re talking about here –”
He paused. Holly, about to interject with a comment of her own, went quiet as well, a feeling of dread bubbling up in her gut.

*That’s not a good pause… that’s an “everything’s about to be chin deep in the troll dung” pause.*

“Foaly?” She asked, after a moment longer of silence.

A couple of curse words were her reply a few moments later – a couple of centaurean cusses and at least one *d’arvit.*

“Strike that. This is the kid who might know about the People and *now has a reason to think we might be the enemy* that we’re talking about here! I don’t get paid enough for this…”

“What?!”

“I’ve been monitoring the Dublin police databases since I saw the news report,” the centaur said miserably. “They just updated their information – the two perps were interrogated, and what they said suggests they might have been mesmerized like the first assassin was.” He paused again to grumble. “And guess who helped with the interrogation?”

Holly swallowed. “Was it – was it Undyne?”

“Got it in one. The very same monster who’s shared police info with the Ambassador before, and would probably do it again. And if she does, and our little ‘prophet’ learned about the mesmer from Flowey…”

*They’ll know that it was a fairy responsible for this attempt on their life, and that’s more than enough of a reason to consider us a threat… and if the monster Ambassador considers us a threat… then the monsters will too.*

*D’Arvit, what did we ever do to deserve this?*

Chapter End Notes

Technically speaking, Artemis and Co. aren’t exactly WRONG about Frisk having magic - they do have magic. It just hasn’t started developing properly yet, and right now is more of a passive ability – it’s what allows Frisk to be aware of the naturally-occurring SAVE points. However, that’s pretty much ALL it does at this point – Frisk isn’t like their Red Shaman ancestor, who could create SAVE points as well as use them, and they’re certainly not someone with future-sight in the conventional sense of the word. Most of what they do with the SAVE points depends upon their Determination, not their magic.

Speaking of Determination, today’s worldbuilding, from a question asked by MemorySteel on fanfiction.net, is about Determination: more specifically, “Is DT a form of magic?”

I’m guessing by Determination you mean the substance produced by human souls, and not the soul-trait itself. TECHNICALLY speaking, DT is not a form of magic, since it is something that all humans possess in at least small quantities, and magic is something very few humans have. However, Determination does affect the odds of someone
having magic, as well as the strength of said magic! Humans such as Frisk or Chara, who have massive amounts of DT, are considerably more likely to develop strong magic than, say, a shy little kid with very little Determination. That being said, magic is not a 100% guarantee even with highly Determined humans - the only way to guarantee that such a human could develop magic is if they had a single colored soul, and came into contact with a massive amount of magical energy... enough energy to, say, equal seven human souls? Just a hypothetical example, of course, and if said hypothetical example were true, then it would also hypothetically take a fair length of time for the magic to develop to the point where it was capable of being controlled by the new mage... and hypothetically the Resets would get in the way of that... :3
Chapter 31

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Hey, guess what? Two whole chapters for you guys this week! Consider this an early Christmas present~

Also, I’ve been considering making a new “story” here on Ao3 for pictures and illustrations related to MestP, since I know there’s at least one person who reads this who can’t access my Deviantart account and I know that people can post pictures in Ao3 documents. However, I don’t know how to put images into a story here?? Could someone tell me how, please?

Most people tended to see paranoia as harmful – it could easily overwhelm you, and make it impossible to function during everyday life.

Frisk was not most people. Being one of the public faces of monsterkind was a dangerous job, and it hadn’t taken many timelines for them to figure out that being a paranoid monster ambassador that jumped at every shadow meant they survived longer than they did when they just naively skipped through the rest of a timeline thinking everything was fine and dandy because the monsters had reached the surface.

That being said, their paranoia was sometimes less of a shield than it was a double-edged sword, and right now, as they were waiting anxiously for Toriel to finish packing up her belongings in their hotel room, was one such time. Frisk themselves had already packed up their own meager belongings – they rarely traveled with more than a laptop, a charger, their phone, a wallet with spare cash, essentials like a toothbrush and hairbrush, and several changes of casual and formal clothing whenever they left the United States. It just made hasty hotel transfers like this one that much quicker. Toriel had no such luxury, as she carried more or less everything that Frisk didn’t bring in their own bags, and the amount of time it was taking for her to pack up her various belongings seemed far, far too long for Frisk to feel anything but uneasy about it.

Chara, is there –

*Still nothing. Not a single gunshot and if there are any fairies here, then they’re keeping a really low profile.

They let out a breath and glanced nervously at the window. Small hints of the honey-gold light of sunrise were creeping in, tainting the world outside the glass in faint warm hues, but otherwise, the glimpse they got of the city outside was very still, and very, very quiet. Almost too quiet.

Would we even hear them coming, if the fairies decided to attack?

They shivered and turned to look back at Toriel as she zipped up the last of her tote bags.

“Are you ready, my child?”
They nodded, picking up their own bag and hoisting it over their shoulder, stifling a yawn as they did. Their little group of humans and monsters had spent most of the night at the police station, waiting for a second squad of police officers to finish scouring the hotel for bombs or other possible threats, and considering that a good portion of that time had been spent making arrangements with the officers there to provide them an armed guard when they transferred to a different hotel, and the rest of the time had been spent subtly checking shadows and corners for invisible threats, Frisk had gotten next to no sleep.

They were regretting that now. They should have slept – the police station was a heck of a lot safer than a hotel room at this point, and they had a long cart ride in their near future. They’d be lucky to stay awake for a couple more minutes at this rate, let alone the hour it would supposedly take to reach their new hotel.

Noticing their exhaustion, Toriel frowned and held out one hand. “Shall I carry your luggage for you?”

Frisk handed it over without a single protest, and also did not protest when Toriel also saw fit to scoop them up off the ground and carry them out of the room. They were too busy trying not to drift off to sleep.

Despite their best efforts, they fell asleep a few minutes into the cart ride, just as they’d predicted, and woke up maybe ten minutes before arriving at their destination. They spent those ten minutes frantically peeking out from underneath the roof on their cart to check side streets, alleys, and the air for possible threats that the monsters and their incognito police guards might have missed.

Despite their worry, however, nothing happened. There were no gunshots, no winged figures suddenly appearing out of thin air – there were hardly even any people out and about, most of Dublin’s residents being either still fast asleep in bed or avoiding a thin, cold drizzle that had begun sometime after they’d passed out by sheltering in dry spots under awnings or inside buildings. The few people they could see didn’t so much as glance oddly at them, the drizzle easily explaining away why their cart had a roof that might otherwise look out of place.

They reached the covered garage next to their new hotel safely and their luggage was moved into their new rooms without incident as well. Frisk didn’t bother to start unpacking their belongings once inside, instead taking the opportunity to scout the room for potential threats the police might have missed and, more importantly, alternate escape routes, in case the hotel was infiltrated again. There weren’t many – there was only one exit that opened to the interior of the building, and that was the door they used to enter the room in the first place.

There was, Frisk was pleasantly surprised to see, an old and slightly rickety fire escape outside their window. It was somewhat well-kept, with only a few hints of rust to be seen on the metal, and leaning out the window revealed that it reached almost all the way to the ground, stopping only a single story above. It was far from an ideal escape route, namely because it could just as easily be accessed by attackers as it could be by escapees, but it could work in a pinch.

“We should probably keep the curtains closed,” they said finally, as Toriel began tiredly removing some of her more immediate necessities – a brush for her fur, a change of clothes for the day – from her bags. “We’re still close enough to the ground for people to see us if they’re open.”

“Of course, my child,” she murmured, apparently only half paying attention. She was visibly exhausted, her eyes sagging in the closest approximation to a human’s dark circles as they could and
her movements sluggish and lacking their usual grace. Frisk grimaced sympathetically – they may have managed to rest in the station and in the cart ride, but Toriel hadn’t, by the looks of things.

“We have today free, right? There’s no meetings or interviews we have to attend until tomorrow?”

Toriel nodded, her eyes drifting closed a little before snapping open again.

“How about we get some sleep, then?” They suggested gently. “We can ask the guards to stay and keep watch for us.”

The monster started to nod, then paused and chuckled weakly. “Aren’t I supposed to be the mother?”

“Only when you’re not falling asleep on your feet.” Frisk jumped up onto one of the beds and patted the mattress with both hands. “C’mon, Mom, you can’t protect me if you’re on the brink of passing out.”

Toriel hesitated for only a moment before sighing and complying with their suggestion. Within a couple of minutes, she was sound asleep, curled up on the mattress.

It was only once they were absolutely certain that their adoptive mother was asleep that Frisk pulled out their phone.

They wanted to sleep. They wanted to sleep desperately. A couple of hours wasn’t enough rest for them, stars knew, and the more well-rested they were, the more likely they’d be able to avoid the next assassination attempt that would soon be coming.

But they needed to figure out a plan of action first, and knowing Sans, he was probably still awake even after having such an exhausting night.

Their phone was practically overflowing with missed calls and texts when they turned it on. There were several calls and texts from Alphys, as well as from several other monsters they had the numbers of that lived here in the city, including Undyne, who must’ve tried to call them sometime before arriving at the station.

There were also, they noted with some surprise, messages from a couple of numbers which turned out to belong to the Fowl twins. When they opened one message, their ears were accosted by a long string of frantic words that were being spoken so fast that they were almost gibberish. They managed to catch some of them – there were at least a couple are you okays and a you didn’t get shot again, did you – but Beckett had been speaking far too quickly into the speaker for anything else to be understandable. Myles’s messages were considerably more understandable, though just as worried, and he’d requested that Frisk call them back once they were fine.

Grimacing, Frisk sent a quick text to everyone who’d called or texted them about their well being, assuring them that they were fine, and then texted Sans.

>FriskyBits: Sans you still awake

The reply came a few seconds later, surprisingly prompt for Sans.

>HumerusPnmaster: yup

>FriskyBits: And Pap?

His reply came in the form of a photo, obviously taken with his phone’s camera – Papyrus lay sprawled across his bed in a very haphazard tangle of skeletal limbs, one arm thrown over the
bedside table. Flowey was in the picture too, and apparently also asleep – his head was hanging low, and his petals had closed over his face the same way a normal flower’s would have closed for the night.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** weeds asleep 2

*Gee, you don’t say.*

Frisk sighed and kneaded their temple. Normally they might have snickered at the comment, but right now they just didn’t have the energy. If only they were old enough for Toriel to let them drink coffee...

>**FriskyBits:** Sorry to ask

>**FriskyBits:** but could you do me a favor

A pause.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** depends on the favor

>**FriskyBits:** Moms gonna be hovering over me because of all this

>**FriskyBits:** Rather she not know about the fairies

>**FriskyBits:** So could you do some research for me

They waited. Sans’s reply came after a long thirty seconds.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** not gonna tell her?

Frisk winced.

>**FriskyBits:** Not yet

>**FriskyBits:** I will eventually

>**FriskyBits:** But until we know more about the fairies I wont

>**FriskyBits:** For all we know they might send assassins after her too

>**FriskyBits:** If I die I can load

>**FriskyBits:** Mom cant

Another pause.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** ok

They smiled, relieved, typed a quick *thank you*, and then closed their phone once the message had been sent, setting it on mute. Then they flopped backward onto the mattress next to the slumbering Toriel and were unconscious in what seemed like mere seconds.
Holly had halfway expected the news that a human child other than Artemis had magic would have sent her team into a panic again, but thankfully, that seemed not to be the case. The other fairies had simply gone very quiet and were now working to re-assemble the machines that had been taken apart for the Ambassador’s visit with intense concentration.

Foaly, on the other hand, was still keeping up a constant stream of agitated babble even as he worked, apparently still not over the fact that yet another impossibility had become possible.

“Seriously, what are the odds?” He complained again, clacking away at his keyboard on the other side of the line. “A human falls into the Underground and apparently just develops magic right then and there? Magic isn’t supposed to do that, is it?” This last question was directed less at Holly and more at someone on his side – considering he was still overseeing the warlocks in the Section Eight laboratories, presumably a warlock. Holly couldn’t quite hear the reply, but whatever the fairy being addressed had said didn’t seem to comfort Foaly in the slightest, earning a grumble.

“Fairy magic’s definitely not supposed to do that,” Holly agreed. She eyed one of her squadron’s techies as he walked past – he was one of the whiny ones. Thankfully, he didn’t complain about anything, though whether or not that was because of her glare or because he’d found nothing to complain about for now was yet to be seen. “Then again, we’re not dealing with fairy magic here. Humans used to be able to cast as well as the People, but it stands to reason that they might’ve had a few other tricks up their sleeves. Add the monsters into the mix… I don’t suppose No. 1 or Qwan have anything to add?”

Another grumble. “They’re too busy working on identifying that signature.”

“And have they made any progress?”

“Not with the magic that’s popped up on the grounds. They’re still working on that. The other warlocks have made some progress with the colored magic stuff, though.” He huffed indignantly. “They nearly gave me a bald patch with that yellow magic!”

Holly stifled a reluctant grin at this. “So what was it? Fireballs?”

“Energy projectiles of some sort, yeah. And they think the green magic is for healing and shields to block other spells with, but they’re not sure.”

He fell silent for a time, and Holly followed suit, watching her squad and offering her help when needed.

She broke their unofficial radio silence when the last of the machines had been reassembled. “Have you found anything on who the fairy behind this might be?”

Foaly snorted. “Not yet, though I’ve found some stuff that might connect to them. There’s a smaller shipping company that operates in Dublin – not as well-off as Fowl Senior’s, but they’re not going out of business yet either. Some unnamed customer ordered a shipment of mandrakes and rice wine, enough to have a meal of ‘em once a day for a month.”

Holly blinked. Mandrakes and rice wine… of course. Turnbull Root had supposedly used a combination of mandrakes and rice wine to maintain a small spark of magic in prison, just enough to mesmerize one of his guards, and the warlocks that had been assigned to study the claim had confirmed it to be possible. Rice wine in particular was harder to get below ground, since the People and human alcohol just didn’t mix all that well and therefore shipping for it was incredibly expensive, but if a fairy on the surface had enough human currency…
“If they’re ordering that… do you think we’re dealing with someone who lost their magic? A former criminal, maybe, from before the Rule of Dwellings was dismantled?”

She could imagine the centaur shrugging. “It’s possible, but there’re not many fairy criminals willing to stay in the Dublin area, what with our infamous Mud Boy living there, and anybody crazy enough to do that isn’t currently on record.”

“D’Arvit.” The elf folded her arms with a huff of frustration. “So no leads.”

“Nope.”

“D’Arvit,” she repeated. “I hope Artemis has more luck than you, Foaly, because the last thing we need right now is a criminal ruining things for us. Hopefully the Ambassador is as intelligent and open-minded as they seem, otherwise…”

*Otherwise they might not realize that the entire fairy race isn’t behind this and act accordingly.*

*F pond, I hope that they realize that.*

Chapter End Notes

Frisk needs SO much sleep and/or caffeine right now, poor kid.

Also, Foaly being a bulls-eye target for wayward magic gives me life right now. Seriously, I might turn it into a running gag throughout the series.

And now for today’s worldbuilding – once again, an answer to a question from MemorySteel, who asked: Do monsters naturally radiate magic?

Yes, monsters naturally radiate magic - they are pretty much made of the stuff after all, and they sort of expel magic naturally while they go about their day. Some monsters radiate more than others, and some monsters, namely those without other means, can even use this aura of magic to communicate basic things like emotions or states of being to other monsters! (For instance, Froggits! How else do you know that they’re deeply flattered by you when you compliment them? They may be sentient frogs, but they still have froglike faces that wouldn’t necessarily be the best at expressing emotion!) Mages radiate magic as well, though to a lesser extent, as their naturally more solid bodies suppress some of the energy that might otherwise seep out. Same goes for the fairies as well!
The week following the second assassination attempt was one of the most suspenseful and frustrating weeks that Frisk had experienced in the current timeline.

Just as they’d predicted, Toriel’s anxious presence practically hovered over their shoulder for what seemed like twenty-four hours a day – she didn’t dare so much as take a step too far away from them, no doubt ready to throw up a protective wall of fire in the event of another attack. While touched by the concern, Frisk couldn’t help but wish that Toriel was a little less prone to worry, because while they didn’t fault the monster for her caution, it was also incredibly inconvenient when there was research to be done that may or may not save lives in the near future – and while they trusted that Sans would at least be thorough in his research in their stead, Frisk would be less at risk than he would if it came down to avoiding an attack.

Well, perhaps not less at risk, exactly, but certainly more likely to recover from it. A few more deaths to add to their list, while far from fun, would spare others from having to die in their stead. But they couldn’t risk that.

They hadn’t been lying to Sans when they’d said they intended to tell Toriel about the fairies eventually, but they also didn’t want to see her dusted because she knew too much and acted accordingly. The longer they spent researching the fairies, and the more research they actually completed, the less of a risk there would be of that happening when they finally did tell her.

Which made their current predicament even more frustrating, because Sans hadn’t been able to find anything they didn’t already know despite a couple of days of research.

“Lots of the fairy stuff has gone missing or been checked out,” Sans told them when they managed to get a moment of privacy in their hotel room to call him. “Including those articles you got a look at, apparently. Only stuff that’s left is mostly mythology stuff, and that’s not exactly helpful, buddy.”

While it could have been a coincidence, Frisk (and Chara, judging by the ghost’s cursing at this information) didn’t think so. It was just too convenient. A couple of assassins get caught claiming little to no memory of their boss, save for a musical voice, when the monster Ambassador had been snooping around fairy mythology barely a week before? No, that wasn’t just a coincidence.

*Someone removed those texts from the library so I couldn’t get ahold of them. Stars, what do I do now?*

There wasn’t much they *could* do, which made it doubly frustrating when a few days after the two criminals had been arrested, Undyne had called them up with information.

“We’ve been going through the files on these guys that the technical guys have uncovered, and the
files we gathered on the first assassin,” she told them, with surprising professionalism, considering the slew of foul language that had been roaring through the speakers when Frisk had picked up their phone. “The first guy was claiming amnesia too, so we figured why not? According to the files, though, the first assassin was acting completely out of character when he came after you – he’s apparently never been a violent sort of human, not like the HuRg guys are. He’s supposedly one of those sorts of humans that doesn’t like the monsters but isn’t willing to raise a fuss over it. Ha!” She snorted. “The rest of the squad seem pretty convinced by the whole act, but I’m not convinced yet! He’s probably in league with those HuRg guys, considering the whole ‘I can’t remember anything but an angel choir voice’ shtick!”

That last sentence had chilled Frisk almost down to the bone. *Angel choir voice.*

Did that mean the fairies were involved in that first assassination attempt, as well?

The third assassination attempt came a week after the second. There was no warning – one moment, Frisk was leaving a restaurant after one last successful interview with a monster and a future human family willing to foster them, already coming up with plans on moving the monsters in with their new human housemates as soon as possible, and then the next, the sound of gunfire went off, and a pair of bullets hit them in the chest, right over the heart.

When they LOADed and were on the Fowl Manor grounds once more, and once they’d warned Sans quietly about the impending threats, they took a moment to sit down in their hiding spot and just… shiver. And think. And listen to Chara ranting from their usual place just behind them.

*I didn’t even see them! They were somewhere in front of you, but I didn’t see where the shots were coming from!*

*And without knowing where the bullets come from, we can’t dodge them nearly so easily.*

Frisk held true to the events of the first run of the week – once upon a time, they might have tried to upend the timeline completely in order to make sure the assassination never happened, but sometimes predictability was more advantageous than *un* predictability, and now was one of those times. The day before the third attempt on their life, they called the police, once again using the excuse of an anonymous call to justify their information. Then they called the interviewees and asked if they could move to a different restaurant. They agreed, and the day after the attempt, the news declared that two more suspected terrorists and would-be-assassins had been arrested by the Dublin police – and, like the previous three, were pleading amnesia when it came to their actions and to the one giving them orders, and, also like the previous three, described an individual with a melodious voice, but no other distinguishing features.

“This is getting ridiculous!” Undyne complained when they called her for information. “Seriously, how are these dumbasses not getting that the amnesia excuse doesn’t work?! You’d think they’d smarten up by now! These guys are either stupid or there’s some human out there who really can mind control people!”

A third assassination attempt by fairies, using humans as puppets. Frisk didn’t normally swear, but the *damn it* they used in the privacy of their own head upon realizing this was fully justifiable in this case. *This is the third time… they really want me dead. Why?*

*Why does anybody want you dead?*
To get at the monsters. Frisk shook their head, and sent a quick text to Sans, asking for an update on how the research was going. But why?

*Covering their tracks, maybe? Humans aren’t really aware of them either, apart from those sightings during the Crash, and there haven’t been many sightings since then, so they’re lying low.

Frisk shook their head. But I wouldn’t even know about them now if they hadn’t encountered Flowey. If they really wanted to be kept a secret from monsters, then they should have just kept their distance. Their phone jingled lightly, announcing a text from Sans – whose response to their request for information was a very disappointing still nothing new, might need to try something else.

*Well, most monsters still don’t know, right? Only Sans, Flowey, and the two of us know about them for right now. Four people are easier to get rid of than an entire species.

They shook their head again. Maybe, but... I can’t help but feel like we’re missing something.

The fourth assassination attempt came maybe four days after the third. This time, however, Frisk didn’t need to LOAD from their SAVE point again to avoid it. They’d been stepping out of the town hall doors after a long day of meetings and planning for moving monsters into human dwellings when Chara had suddenly shouted a warning.

*Duck!!

Frisk ducked – Chara might have better reflexes overall, but their own dodging capabilities were nothing to scoff at – and a bullet went whistling past, grazing their scalp and leaving behind a thin stripe of pain. They raised their head just in time to see the assassin drop his gun and run for it.

Frisk had the police called ASAP, and several minutes later a forensics team was carefully sweeping the area while a paramedic from the local hospital was carefully tending to their head injury. The gun was very carefully picked up with gloved hands and slipped into an evidence bag, presumably for testing later.

A couple hours later, Undyne called them to let them know that the fingerprints on the gun had led them to the new assassin, who had been promptly arrested and, of course, was claiming to remember next to nothing about his boss.

“Yet another wacko talking about a musical voice,” Undyne grumbled. “Some of the squad actually came and asked me if there were any monsters that could mind-control people, can you believe that?! As if we’d do that, even if we could!”

That statement sent a chill rushing down their spine that remained long after Undyne had hung up.

The police are starting to distrust monsters.

They needed to get to the bottom of this, preferably now. Whether they intended for it or not, the fairies’ attempts to kill them through human puppets were odd enough now that, with magic being on the table for otherwise inexplicable events, the human police were starting to suspect the monsters of being involved somehow, because they had no idea the fairies even existed, and therefore had no other magical suspects.
Sans had nothing new for them, information-wise, when they texted him the next day.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** nothing in any of the books here

>**HumerusPnmaster:** checked online too

>**HumerusPnmaster:** found couple of blogs by people who spotted fairies during the crash

>**HumerusPnmaster:** nothing else

Frisk frowned, rubbing at the top of their head. The graze from the bullet had been easily healed using monster food, but for some reason that area felt particularly sensitive, even after being healed.

>**FriskyBits:** Do any of those people live in Dublin?

>**HumerusPnmaster:** 1

>**FriskyBits:** Could you and Flowey talk to them, maybe

>**FriskyBits:** If this person’s seen the fairies, even only once

>**FriskyBits:** then they might be more helpful than books or websites

>**HumerusPnmaster:** maybe

>**HumerusPnmaster:** might need a cover story for that tho

>**HumerusPnmaster:** cant have the fairies knowing just how far were going to look for them right

They pursed their lips in thought for a moment and then glanced over at Flowey, who had insisted on coming along with them on non-ambassadorial duties today. The flower noticed the glance, and have them a slightly miffed *what?* look.

When they showed him their texts, he groaned, but then made an offer.

“What if I go with them? I can pretend to be a smiley, curious little monster brat who stumbled across human mythology and wants to know more, or something.” His tone of voice was more akin to the tone he used when calling someone an *idiot* than honestly helpful, but Frisk didn’t particularly mind that, instead telling Sans about the flower’s suggestion.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** wont that just make the fairies more suspicious

>**FriskyBits:** It might, but its better than you just turning up out of the blue to ask questions

>**FriskyBits:** They already know about Flowey

>**FriskyBits:** I don’t think they know about you yet

There was a pause.

>**HumerusPnmaster:** ok

>**HumerusPnmaster:** works for me

Frisk sighed and smiled, relieved, but Sans’s next words brought them back down to earth.
>HumerusPnmaster: kiddo if this doesn't work out I want you should tell tori about the fairies

*What?!

Frisk gulped.

>FriskyBits: Sans I can't do that

>HumerusPnmaster: cant or wont

They winced and typed out their reply quickly

>FriskyBits: Cant

>FriskyBits: If the fairies find out she knows about them she'll be a target too

>FriskyBits: We need more info first

>HumerusPnmaster: kiddo

>HumerusPnmaster: listen

>HumerusPnmaster: I get you wanna protect her

>HumerusPnmaster: but you can't keep her in the dark forever

>HumerusPnmaster: and I don't want to keep another big secret from my bro forever either

>FriskyBits: But what if they keep coming after me?

>HumerusPnmaster: then she'll be another pair of eyes to keep an eye out for things

>HumerusPnmaster: look you can't just rely on that save

>HumerusPnmaster: who knows how long it'll last if you keep using it like this

>HumerusPnmaster: if tori knows that'll help some

>HumerusPnmaster: so tell her

Frisk hesitated. They didn’t want to risk telling Toriel about the fairies so soon, but… well, Sans had a point. They couldn’t keep relying on that SAVE point. Sooner or later, it would run out of LOADs and disappear, and then… well, it wouldn’t be exactly good. Having another pair of eyes keeping watch for fairy threats probably would help preserve their life for longer and make it less likely that things would get that bad but at the same time…

No, they decided. I can't keep putting it off forever, but...

>FriskyBits: Not yet

>FriskyBits: But if I die to puppet assassins again then I will

>FriskyBits: That sound okay?

They waited anxiously for the skeleton’s reply.
>HumerusPnmaster: promise

Frisk grimaced but did so.

>FriskyBits: I promise I’ll tell her about the fairies if I die to puppet assassins again

>HumerusPnmaster: ok

>HumerusPnmaster: keep that promise kid

I will, Frisk thought, taking a deep shuddering breath to steel themselves. They had yet to break a promise to the skeleton, and they weren’t about to break that trend now.

Chapter End Notes

Total Frisk Deaths: 4

The one behind the mesmerized assassins sure ain’t the sort to give up, huh? Hopefully Frisk won’t die to them again… but then again, the story wouldn’t be interesting if they didn’t! >:3

And wait, Flowey’s actually being willingly helpful there at the end? What the hey? Who’s this flower and what did he do with the real Flowey? XD

Shit will be hitting the fan once more in upcoming chapters! Hold onto your seats~

And here’s one more worldbuilding tidbit, again based on a question (actually, technically a series of statements, I guess?) from MemorySteel: MAGES. WHAT WERE THEY LIKE. HOW WERE THEY TREATED IN THEIR CULTURE. *flailing*

I will not say much about modern mages save for this: if they do exist, they are in hiding, possibly a la Harry-Potter-wizarding-world style, but in all honesty probably just doing their best not to use magic in sight of prying eyes or security cameras by only using magic inside their own homes or hidden in secretive shacks or lairs in remote locations. The ancient mages, on the other hand, I will talk freely about!

Mages tended to differ depending on what parts of the world they were from. Though at this point in the fic, where the only documented mages are the seven Shamans who created the Barrier, there were many other communities as well. For instance, there were once mages in Ireland as well (these being the human magic users mentioned by Opal Koboi in book 8 of the Artemis Fowl series, when she mentioned that the reason for the Berserker Gate being so complicated was because humans knew almost as much about magic as the fairies.)

Anyway, yeah, different groups of mages, what were they like... in Europe and Asia, especially during the Dark Ages, mages were, if I were to pick one word, secretive. They liked their privacy, especially in places where people accused of being magic users were burned at the stake or drowned. For the most part, people in those areas never even really trained themselves in how to use their magic, save in small ways, so as to go unnoticed. As a result, mages in those parts of the world tended to also be very
conservative - they have magic and know how to use it in some respects at least, but for the most part would rather just do things the normal, non-magical way, save when their magic was needed most. Modern mages have this viewpoint as well, save in very, very isolated locations where there's nobody around but mages, where they will sometimes go wild a la Hogwarts castle.

On the other hand, in more Tribal groups, such as native Africans and Native Americans, mages were often actively encouraged to use their magic as freely as they saw fit to. Feeling lazy and don't want to lift a bunch of firewood? Levitate it or teleport it! Buffalo herd or a pack of lions giving the hunters trouble? Summon a ring of fire to trap them! Did someone lose a leg? Grow them a new one out of a tree or something! An animal being feisty? Talk it down with your gift of tongues! As a result, those people tended to use their magic for more or less anything, often in flashy and impressive ways, and so long as it was for the benefit of your tribe, it was a-okay, even expected of them. (On the other hand, a rival tribe without a mage or without one that could match yours in strength would basically think of them as an equivalent to the Boogeyman - "Don't bother this tribe or the all-powerful shaman will get you!")
Chapter 33

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone, so me ’n Daniel are trying to come up with a name for the series this story’s gonna be a part of, and we decided to ask you guys if you had any ideas! So if you have any name ideas, please tell us in the comments! Once we have a number of titles we like, we’ll do a poll of sorts for you guys to vote on your favorite titles.

Possible names for the series so far:
The Magic of Souls
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As the weeks passed following the second attempt on the monster Ambassador’s life, Artemis’s theory concerning the child’s possible prophetic capabilities began to look more and more plausible.

This was absolutely no surprise to anyone involved. Artemis often would not even voice a theory of his until he was absolutely – or at least mostly – certain of its validity, and this time was no different. However, even Artemis would reluctantly admit that sometimes his information was lacking, and so, in cases such as this where a theory had yet to be proven, the fairies usually went about gathering what they could find that might prove or disprove it.

They usually never found anything to suggest he might be wrong, despite their doubts, and this time was no different.

 Barely a week after the second assassination attempt, there was a third, which the child completely avoided by simply moving the location of a meeting site. When Artemis once again hacked into their call records, he found yet another claim of an “anonymous call” without evidence of such an occurrence. Four days later, the Ambassador quite literally dodged a bullet, ducking under it with hardly a scratch to show for the trouble – almost as if they had known it was coming.

“D’Arvit, this is insane,” Holly muttered when she passed this information along barely a day after the most recent assassin’s arrest. “Maybe they really do have magic. I mean, how else could they have dodged an actual bullet?”

“Why Holly, are you suggesting that you doubted me until now? I’m wounded, truly I am.”

“Oh, hardy-har.” No doubt the fairy captain was rolling her eyes on the other end of the line. “You know, Mud Boy, sometimes you being right is really inconvenient. Couldn’t you have waited a month or two for another earth-shaking epiphany?”

“Now why would I do that?” Artemis smirked for a moment, enjoying the banter, then frowned when he heard the elf sigh, audibly irritated. “I take it things below ground are not progressing in a satisfactory manner?”

“Of course not. We hardly know a Frond-dammed thing about what’s going on or who might be
behind this, there’s a Mud Kid with magic and at least one monster running around on the surface looking for us, and on top of all that, the Council finally got wind of this whole mess and are arguing about whether or not to mind-wipe the monster Ambassador. Nothing is ‘progressing in a satisfactory manner.’”

His lips curled downward into a frown. Ah, yes, that would explain Holly’s foul attitude. The fairy Council, while excellent at running the day to day life of the People, had a very predictable tendency to panic when things had the potential to go catastrophically wrong, especially when there were humans that weren’t the Fowls involved. And panicking Council members tended to do very foolish things – case in point, their current scenario.

“Sometimes I wonder why fairies ever chose a Council as their governing body,” he sighed. “Don’t they realize that a mind-wipe in this situation would most likely backfire? Frisk has at least one, perhaps two monsters they’ve already confided in, and possibly others as well – at least one of them could be trustworthy enough to help those memories resurface, and then the mind-wipe would literally be useless. The only way to guarantee such a thing wouldn’t happen would be to mind-wipe the monsters as well, and considering the mind-wiping equipment is specifically designed for human central nervous systems, it may not work on the monsters at all.”

“I know.” She groaned. “The Commander’s already gone to try to snap them out of it, but knowing the Council, they might just end up ordering it done anyway.”

“If they do, then I’m inviting you all into my emergency end-of-the-world bunker,” Foaly put in over his own earpiece. “Might be a bit of a tight fit, but I’m sure you could fit if you suck your stomach in, Mud Boy!”

“Foaly, please, be serious.”

“I’m being serious! I don’t want to see what’ll happen if the Council accidentally declares war on the monsters or something! I’m gonna be in my solid steel bunker, with decades worth of preserved food and Caballine and my old tinfoil hats, and there is nothing either of you can do to stop me.”

“Riiiight.” Holly’s voice was dripping with sarcasm. “At least until Caballine kicks you out so you can go save the world again.”

“Or until the Commander threatens your precious paycheck,” Artemis added with a smirk.

“Okay, you two are the worst friends a centaur could ever have. No sympathy, none whatsoever!”

“Gee, look at you, using that famous brain of yours.”

“Fine! See if I invite you into my bunker again!” The centaur huffed indignantly, and then went silent, audibly sulking as the clicking of keys began to sound.

“Frond, you’re such a pain sometimes,” Holly muttered, but despite the complaint, she sounded less stressed, even borderline amused.

“One must wonder how someone so immature could be so intelligent,” Artemis agreed. “Are you feeling a little better, Holly?”

“Little bit,” she admitted. “I’d feel even better if I could scream at the Council for being a bunch of idiots instead, but I guess making fun of Foaly is almost as good a stress-reliever.”

There was a grumble from the other line, but otherwise, the centaur continued his silent treatment.
“Course, I’d feel even better if we could actually figure out how to deal with this mess,” the elf sighed. “We won’t even know for sure if the Ambassador has magic unless we can get a good scan of them using the MagiScanners, and those things can’t get an accurate reading when the fairies using them are shielding. If only there was a way to separate the Ambassador and the monsters for a few minutes...”

One of Foaly’s keyboard keys clacked louder than strictly necessary as he groaned and gave up on sulking.

“Holly, did you have to jinx us like that? Now the Ambassador’s gonna get kidnapped or something!”

“What with the Ambassador’s future vision, I kinda doubt they’d let something like that happen.”

At which point, the universe proved Holly wrong and Foaly absolutely correct, for that was the moment Artemis’s phone rang.

“Arty, something happened to Frisk!” Beckett’s voice blurted when he answered it. “I was talking to them and there was an explosion and their phone cut out and now they’re not answering and Myles can’t contact them either!!”

For the first time in several days, now that all the monster-human interviews were out of the way, Frisk tentatively planned on taking a break from their ambassador duties while Sans and Flowey were off pestering that blogger the skeleton had found for info. And, so far at least, it seemed that the universe was no longer gunning for them because despite having been out in public with a minimal escort (which essentially meant that only Toriel was with them), they had yet to be shot at. No whizzing bullets, no panicking bystanders, and everything was... surprisingly peaceful.

Of course, that didn’t mean they could let their guard down, but still. They felt remarkably calm right now, all things considered, and they’d already visited a few places – a bookstore, a restaurant where they’d had a full and very enjoyable meal, and a park – without once getting hit by a projectile or weapon of any sort.

It was something just short of a miracle, a miracle that they were fully intending to take advantage of while they could, and not even the unexpected call on their cell phone could shake them up too much. And when they’d realized who was calling, they’d been able to relax again, because it wasn’t a monster or human politician calling them, but Beckett, sounding just as sunnily cheerful as he always had whenever greeting them.

They’d been talking to the Fowl boy for several minutes now, as they walked down a street just south of the library, and so far, at least, the boy hadn’t asked any awkward questions, despite the storm of them that had come flooding through the speakers.

“So what kinds of monsters have you met? I know there’s gotta be a lot more than the ones living here in Dublin!”

“What kinds of magic can the Queen use? There’re lots of different types of monster magic, right?”

“I heard from Juliet that the last time she and Undyne sparred, they accidentally broke a bunch of windows and got kicked out of the gym! I know Juliet’s more subtle than that when she wants to be, so how strong is your friend and how did she break so many windows? ‘Cause I don’t think it was Jules!”
“That Alphys monster from the gala was Undyne’s girlfriend, right? What are monster relationships like? Do you know?”

“Why is that flower monster so grumpy?”

That last question had actually startled a sheepish laugh and an apology out of them. “Sorry about Flowey, he’s just... like that. For personal reasons. Sorry, but it’s not my place to talk about it.”

Beckett had taken that in stride and just started launching more enthusiastic questions at them, and before they knew it, they’d been talking to him for almost a full half-hour, the longest they’d ever had a conversation with another human without it being about politics or Resets in any timeline.

Which, of course, meant that it had to end with a very violent bang – a literal one. Not a gunshot, but rather a sudden explosion of noise and fire that came pouring out of a nearby shop.

The crowds around them hardly hesitated – they all, almost as one, screamed and ran. People bumped into each other, bowled other people over, stumbled over their own feet, and all around simply panicked, fear turning the relatively organized street into a swarming mob.

“Frisk?! What happened?!”

Grabbing ahold of Toriel’s sleeve so as to avoid getting swept away by the stampede of people, Frisk could barely hear themselves reply over the noise. “There was some sort of explosion in one of the stores! I -” They spotted a crumpled form inside the shop, barely visible past the smoke, and swallowed, throat dry. “There’re still people in there! Mom, can you –”

Grim-faced, Toriel quickly walked forward, hands already rising and glowing with white light. Her own considerably cooler flames rose up out of the ash, forming protective rings around the bodies and shoving the ugly red fire away from them.

“Call the firefighters and an ambulance, my child,” she ordered. “Fire cannot fight fire forever.”

“R-right. Sorry Beckett, I’m –”

*Frisk, look out!*

But Chara’s warning came too late. Someone grabbed them from behind, a cloth-covered and oddly-smelling hand clapping over their mouth, and then their vision blurred.

The last thing they saw was Toriel’s shocked, scared expression, and then everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

Good on you Holly, you jinxed it, Frisk LITERALLY just got kidnapped because of you. A++ job there, you just made everybody’s lives more difficult.

I’ve had a few people ask if Opal Koboi is involved with these assassins somehow. My answer to that is a very definite NO. Opal died in the last book of the Artemis Fowl series, has not come back to life in any way shape or form since then, and at most will only have passing mentions in the fic, so don’t worry, the pixie megalomaniac that everyone loves to hate is not behind this! ^.^
And now for more worldbuilding from me 'n daniel, and once again inspired by one of MemorySteel’s questions: “So what does thaumic(magical) buildup lead to in your 'verse?”

Alright, magical buildup... In this 'verse, it takes a metric crap ton of magic in order for it to cause odd things to happen. A little spark of the stuff isn't enough to cause much in the way of change, while, on the other hand, a huge concentration of it could cause some very, very interesting side-effects. Also, some things are more receptive to magic in different amounts.

For example, plants in this world are actually incredibly sensitive to magic, and, in areas with a large enough concentration of it, will absorb it just like they would other forms of energy to use as nourishment. As a result, plants tend to show a wider variety of effects caused by magic - magical discoloration, sudden unexpected growth, odd mutations that give them new characteristics such as glowing bits or unique behaviors, amongst other things. On the other hand, animals that were exposed to the same amount of magic wouldn't be nearly as affected by it, and even if they did suffer any side-effects, they would not be permanent ones - for instance, they might become more skittish or violent than normal, until they leave the area and are no longer beset by magic from all sides. It takes considerably more magic to cause any changes that won't revert back to normal once there's less magic around.

The same basic principle goes for humans, as well - most humans, once no longer exposed to large amounts of magic, will not show much in the way of sudden changes or side-effects, and what few they do show are usually emotional ones (sudden agitation, paranoia, etc.) which will usually fade away once they are no longer being exposed to it. However, there are two exceptions to this rule - normal humans exposed to large amounts of magic can risk having those personality affects becoming permanent (in other words, it can change your dominant soul traits) and humans with single-colored souls, or others with the potential to have magic, WILL develop magic of their own if exposed to enough ambient magic in their immediate surroundings - it's something that's pretty much guaranteed. That takes a MASSIVE amount of magic though - we're talking Barrier levels of magic here, something so impossibly powerful that no modern mages could ever hope to equal it.
Visiting that blogger he’d found online wasn’t *nearly* as helpful as Sans might’ve hoped.

That wasn’t to say it was a waste of time – if nothing else, they had a solid secondary source of information to confirm some things they suspected. However, the man had had absolutely nothing *new* to tell them – it was all stuff they’d already known or strongly suspected.

Even Sans was getting a little frustrated at the lack of info by the time he and the weed left via the man’s front door, which of course meant that Flowey was about two steps away from going *rabid*.

“Well, that was helpful – *not!*” The flower snarled, dropping the curious child facade he’d put on when they’d entered the building. “‘Fairies have advanced technology that allows them to fly!’ ‘Fairies can turn invisible or otherwise disappear in the blink of an eye!’ ‘Fairies can make people lose their memories!’ *Idiot, we already knew that!’”

Sans shrugged. “Eh, tough luck. Guess fairies are good at covering their tracks.”

The flower ignored him, still grumbling complaints. Sans let the brat be – it wasn’t his place to make the little abomination behave, that was Frisk and their ghostly hitchhiker’s job – and pulled his phone out of his pocket, lazily texting a brief update to the kid. Even if they hadn’t found anything useful, letting Frisk know couldn’t hurt.

The phone suddenly rang just as he was about to put it away. Blinking, the skeleton glanced at the caller I.D, one brow rising.

*Huh. What’s Tori calling me for?* With another shrug, he answered it.

“‘Sup, Tori?”
“Sans.” The skeleton was immediately on alert – Toriel was audibly upset, her voice shaking and strained. Whatever she’d called him for, it wasn’t good. “We need you at the police station. Please, hurry.”

“What happened?”

She took in a trembling breath, and in the pause between said breath and her next words, Sans thought he could hear someone shouting in the background that sounded suspiciously like Undyne.

“Frisk’s been kidnapped.”

Sans almost dropped the phone in shock. His first instinct was to blurt out “how,” because this was Frisk they were talking about here, who was so paranoid they’d wake up from a deep sleep at the drop of a pin, but, well, that’d be a waste of time.

“On my way,” was what he said instead, and hung up, quickly stuffing his phone into his pocket again. “We’re taking a shortcut, weed, hold on.”

“What? No no no, no shortcuts-!”

But by the time the flower had started protesting, Sans had already taken a step. The world went black for a nanosecond, magic unfamiliar to most other monsters swirling around them, and then they were in front of the police station doors, and Flowey was groaning.

“Ugh, I don’t even think I have a stomach and I’m gonna barf-”

The flower’s protests were cut off by a new round of shouting from, yup, Undyne. She was straining against two human officers, who were struggling to keep ahold of her arms while she screamed at another human in handcuffs in the cart in front of her, and she looked positively furious.

“TELL ME WHERE THE HELL THEY ARE BEFORE I SUPLEX YOU INTO NEXT WEEK!! NO, BEFORE I SUPLEX YOU AND THAT STUPID CART INTO NEXT WEEK AND FILL YOUR MOUTH FULL OF SPEARS!! ”

“I don’t know where they are!” The handcuffed human whimpered. He was shaking so hard that Sans was honestly surprised that the guy wasn’t toppling over from sheer terror. “I-I already –”

“You think I’m gonna buy that amnesia shtick, scumbag?!”

“Sans.” The skeleton turned around to find Tori hovering behind him, looking relieved and worried, and for once apparently not feeling like correcting Undyne’s coarse language. Papyrus was twiddling his thumbs worriedly next to her, but still managed the skeletal equivalent of a shaky smile at Sans.

“What happened?”

“Yeah, what the heck happened?!” Flowey demanded, still more miffed about the sudden shortcut than anything else. “Trashbag didn’t tell me anything before, you know, stepping across freaking time and space!!”

The Boss Monster took a few deep breaths, trying to calm herself.

“Frisk and I were walking down a street,” she began, still visibly shaken despite her efforts. “We were… taking a day off from their ambassador duties. While we were walking, there was an explosion in one of the shops. I cast a few flame walls to keep the normal fire away from the survivors, and then… I heard a sound and turned around, and that man there,” she nodded to the
terrified prisoner in the police cart, “had knocked Frisk out and was fleeing. I couldn’t chase after him, not without leaving the people trapped by the flames to d-die...”

Her voice hitched at the very end of that sentence, and she went quiet, obviously not trusting herself to speak anymore.

“You mean...” Flowey began, very slowly and in a very, very dangerous tone of voice, “Frisk got kidnapped?!” The flower’s head whipped around to glower at the prisoner in the cart, his entire face twisting into an expression that could very easily be called someone’s worst nightmare.

“**I’LL KILL HIM!**” Vines decorated with red thorns erupted from inside the flower’s pot, writhing in the air around him like the tentacles of a frenzied octopus.

“What there, bud.” Sans quickly snagged the angry abomination with blue magic – it may have been harder to hold onto him without a soul, but not impossible – before the weed could do whatever it was he was going to do. “No killing. Remember the promise to Frisk?”

“**I don’t give a single fuck about that promise! I’M GONNA KILL HIM!!**”

“**FLOWEY, MURDER IS NOT THE ANSWER TO OUR CURRENT PREDICAMENT!**” Papyrus scolded. “**AND UNDYNE, DON’T SUPLEX THE HUMAN! IT WILL NOT HELP!!**”

Undyne, who had been steadily dragging the officers trying to hold her back with her as she had advanced threateningly towards the cart, shot the skeleton an incredulous look. “But Papyrus, he –”

“**WE CANNOT FIND FRISK IF YOU SUPLEX HIM INTO NEXT WEEK!**” *That* visibly calmed her – she stopped advancing with a grunt and muttered something that sounded suspiciously like *I hate it when you make sense*.

Now satisfied that neither Flowey nor Undyne were going to attack the man in cuffs, Papyrus marched forward himself, coming right up to the side of the cart to look the human prisoner full in the face. “**YOU SAID YOU DO NOT REMEMBER KIDNAPPING FRISK?**”

The man nodded, eyes wide and leaning back away from the tall skeleton.

“**THEN WHAT IS THE VERY LAST THING YOU REMEMBER BEFORE NOT REMEMBERING THE KIDNAPPING?**”

He bit his lip for a moment, eyeing the still dangerously angry monsters hovering around the cart, then looked back at Papyrus. “A voice. Someone was talking to me...”

“**WAS IT A MUSICAL-SOUNDING VOICE?**”

He nodded.

“**AND WHAT ABOUT BEFORE THAT?**”

“I... had just gotten down from a cart?”

“**WAS THIS THE SAME CART THE POLICE HUMANS FOUND YOU IN?**”

“I think so?”

Papyrus beamed at him. “**WELL THEN, WE CAN USE THAT INFORMATION TO START LOOKING FOR FRISK! YOUR CART DRIVER MIGHT KNOW WHERE YOU WENT! OR PERHAPS WE COULD ASK ABOUT THAT CART, AND SEE IF SOMEONE SAW IT**
The man hesitated. “Then you… believe me? When I say I don’t remember…?”

“OF COURSE!!”

“Seriously?!” Undyne snarled. “You actually believe this crap?!”

“HE HAS NO REASON TO LIE! AND IF IT WERE NOT TRUE, HE WOULD NOT USE THE SAME EXCUSE AS THE OTHER CRIMINALS! THAT JUST WOULDN’T MAKE SENSE!”

This gave Undyne pause. She seemed to consider the skeleton’s words, then let out a frustrated noise, turned sharply on her heels, and stormed into the station.

After a moment of silence, Papyrus clapped his gloved hands together. “WELL, AT LEAST SHE’S NO LONGER ABOUT TO DO A VIOLENCE!”

That seemed to snap the other officers, the human ones, out of whatever reverie the fish-lady’s rage had put them into. A couple of them approached the cart and led the still shaking prisoner down, and the third turned on his walkie-talkie, barking orders into it.

“Make sure we get the number of the cart the perp was disembarking earlier today! We might be able to get some information from the driver, or track where the cart went!”

Once an affirmative had been sent via radio, the man turned to Toriel and gave her a faint smile. “Don’t worry, Your Majesty. We’ll let you know if we find any leads – we will find your kid.”

She nodded, apparently not trusting herself to speak, and the man turned and walked inside the building, leaving the small group of worried monsters lingering outside.

Hovering high over the monsters’ heads, Holly suppressed a shiver and turned on her communicator.

“Foaly, did you get all that?”

“Loud and clear.”

The elf sighed in relief, eyeing the people below as they slowly began to disperse. She kept a particularly close eye on the flower – those red-thorned vines were still out, and the little monster’s face still sported a very ugly, very angry expression.

And I thought the Frond-damned thing was intimidating before.

“Do you think you could track the cart this guy was riding in?”

“Yeah, no problem.” A keyboard began clicking on the other end of the line, and the centaur added grudgingly, “Smart idea, to track the cart. Gotta give the skeleton that much, at least.”

Holly snorted. She hadn’t been surprised one bit by the tall skeleton’s smarts – after all, this was the same monster that had nearly beat Myles at chess despite having never played the game before.

Another minute or so passed in silence, aside from Foaly’s keyboard in the background, before the
centaur broke radio silence.

“Alright, I think I found the cart – I scanned some of the patrol’s camera feeds for it. Public cart number 223, makes runs through the business district and down to the docks. That can narrow down the search area, at least, but there’s a bunch of businesses and warehouses and abandoned buildings in the area.”

“Good.” Holly’s eyes narrowed in the direction of the docks. “We’d better find the kid fast.”

*The last thing we want is for whoever’s behind all this to have their hands on them for too long. I can think of a few things a fairy criminal might want with the Monster Ambassador, and none of them are pretty.*

The trip to unconsciousness to being awake once more was a jarring one, with the very first sensations Frisk was aware of being a weak, aching pain running throughout their entire body, the very, very uncomfortable feeling of hard, slightly chilly concrete underneath them, and of course, Chara’s worried voice in the back of their head.

*Frisk! Damn it, wake up!*

Frisk groaned weakly. Their ghostly partner’s voice was making their head pound like someone was taking a hammer to it.

*Oh my God, finally! Took you long enough! Get up, get up!*

Wincing, Frisk took careful note of their body’s various aches and pains (nothing too severe, so far as they could tell – there certainly weren’t any bleeding wounds, so far as they could tell. They did, however, discover that their arms were tied behind their back, and their legs bound together), and then gingerly tried to squirm upright. It took a few tries – trying to sit up without their hands, they found, was incredibly difficult, and the wave of dizziness that hit them the first time they tried didn’t help matters any – but they finally managed to sit up, and prop themselves up against the wall.

They were in a very small room – it couldn’t have been much larger than a closet, at most – with a concrete floor and walls, a few dim, flickering lights in the ceiling, and a single plain door without even a window to see through. There was no furniture, not even a blanket or anything, and dust covered the floor, save for a few blank square patches on the floor that suggested that something large and box-shaped had recently been moved.

*Chara? What… ugh. Frisk grimaced again as another bout of dizziness interrupted their train of thought. What happened? I remember the building exploding, then…*

*Someone nabbed you while Mom was busy saving people from the fire.*

Chara sounded furious, the worry in their voice now gone. Honestly, they didn’t blame the ghost one bit – they’d be angry too if their brain was working at a hundred percent.

*Did you see who…?*

*Yeah, but it won’t do us any good. We got handed off to someone else partway here, and the guy who snatched us to begin with looked pretty out of it. Glazed eyes, emotionless face, the works.*
Damn. Frisk shook their head, trying to clear it. You think a… a fairy got to him? Mind-controlled him?

*I mean, I wouldn’t exactly be surprised .

Something in the ghost’s tone, however, suggested that they were skeptical about that possibility.

Chara?

*Well, if he did get mind-controlled or hypnotized or something, then why kidnap you? They’ve been trying to kill you up until now.

That was an unfortunately good point. Why would someone who had been gunning for their life up until now suddenly change their tune? Frisk ran a few ideas through their head, but because they were still pretty discombobulated, they couldn’t quite make any of those ideas work. It was like trying to jam a triangle-shaped puzzle piece into a circular hole.

…Where are we? Do you know…?

*Warehouse, I think. We’re not quite at the docks, but we’re closer to them than the business district. I don’t know the address, though, so if we escape the building, we’ll get lost pretty damn quick.

So it’s best to… ugh, my head…

*Probably best to stay put for now, yeah.

Great. Frisk let their head fall back to rest heavily against the wall. What about guards…? Are there guards?

*Yup. One outside, one left sometime since you woke up, I heard his footsteps.

The ghost paused, then continued carefully.

*There was a third guy here earlier, who told them to come let him know when you’re awake. I think that’s who the guard went to find.

Great, Frisk repeated numbly. They closed their eyes. So they want to interrogate me.

*Probably.

Any idea why?

Before Chara could answer, there were footsteps outside. Frisk lifted their head, squinting at the door, as two sets of feet stopped outside the door. There was a brief murmuring of conversation, too soft to make out the words, and then a jingling of keys.

The man that stepped through the door after it was unlocked looked, honestly, like he was some average guy you might walk past on the street. Average build, nondescript clothes consisting of a plain long-sleeved shirt, jeans, and sneakers, short-cropped brown hair, brown eyes. His skin was considerably more ruddy than average, though, and his face looked more like it belonged a picture Frisk had seen once online of a native American than an Irishman – high cheekbones, square-ish jaw, slightly slanted eyes.

And something about the man’s expression immediately put them on guard. It wasn’t a downright
hostile look, exactly, but the man’s eyes were sharp with obvious dislike, and his face carefully, purposefully subdued.

“I see you’re awake, Ambassador,” the man said, and Frisk noted distantly that his accent was considerably more subtle than some Irish accents that they’d encountered. “Good. I have some questions for you.”

Chapter End Notes

I don’t know why, but I really, REALLY loved writing Flowey and Undyne freaking out at that poor kidnapper. I was also tempted to include a more humorous freak-out on the fairies’ behalf, but that would’ve ruined the more serious tone of this chapter, so… (shrugs)

And, uh, out of curiosity (that in no way has anything to do with the fact that the mesmerizer’s identity will be revealed soon, nope, not at all), who do people think is behind the assassins and now, presumably, Frisk’s kidnapping? Do you think they’re a fairy criminal? What do you think their motivations are? I’d like to see what you guys think! :3

And now for today’s worldbuilding, once again inspired by one of MemorySteel’s questions: “What did the European mages think of normal humans, and vice-versa?”

Now, as for the whole "what did European mages think of normal humans and vice-versa" thing... European mages, before the witch hunts during the Dark Ages, tended to see other humans as anything from unfortunate to foolish to way, WAY beneath them - their magic gave them great power, and as such tended to make their lives a bit easier and, in the process, often gave them more than a little bit of an ego boost. During the Dark Ages, on the other hand... they unlearned that REALLY quickly and began to fear normal people instead. The normies outnumbered them by a LOT, and it's unfortunately just a part of human nature to shun things that are too different, and sometimes even lash out at them. As a result, though some still retained those egos of old, most European mages just plain old feared their non-magical neighbors – or, rather, what their neighbors might do to them if they found out they were mages.

Normal European humans, on the other hand, mostly feared their mages. That fear was originally more of a fear of upsetting them than anything else - mages were beyond what a normal human could achieve, and some could do things to people when upset that made their skins crawl, so as a general rule of thumb people were politely encouraged to stay the hell away from them, though not disrespect them. After a while, though, this fear turned from "don't upset them, they'll smite you" to "smite them before they smite us!" Or, in other words, to a philosophy we Undertale fans have all heard at some point or another... "Kill or be killed." They began to hunt down mages because they feared that eventually, the mages would do the same to them.

In modern day society, normal humans have forgotten about magic, for the most part, believing it was never actually real until the monsters surfaced. If they knew about human mages now, they'd treat them considerably better than their ancestors. The mages, on the other hand, are still holding onto their fear of normies, and refuse to show themselves out of fear that the witch hunts might start again... though they've been
becoming more optimistic, since the monsters, a clearly magical race, surfaced, and have been treated fairly well in many countries.
Chapter 35

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry about how late this chapter is, guys – I came down with the flu the week after the last update, and it’s really hard to concentrate on writing when you’re practically hacking up a lung, PLUS trying to keep up on class assignments you’re missing at the same time. Luckily, I managed to find enough free time to write this for you guys! (And by that I mean I was suddenly hit by the sledgehammer of inspiration, abandoned my homework, and jotted down this whole chapter last night)

Name suggestions for the series are still welcome! So far the roster of titles we’ve got includes:
- The Magic of Souls (1)
- Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies
- Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (1)
- Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
- Fairytales (Daniel and I both like this one, but your votes still matter to us)
- Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined
- Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (this suggestion made me laugh SO MUCH guys XD)
- Underground Fairies

I’ll only be asking for name ideas for a couple more chapters, at most, and after that, you guys’ll have to pick from the list we’ve got at that point! Some people have already voted, too. Feel free to let us know which title you like best!

Warning: F-bomb. (Not from Flowey this time, though.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was a tense few hours that followed the news of Frisk’s kidnapping.

The monsters were silent in their hotel rooms. They’d lingered at the police station, waiting with baited breath for news of their missing Ambassador to come in, and Holly had waited, unseen and unheard, with them.

But so far, nothing. The human police hadn’t been able to track the unwilling kidnapper’s cart very far, the driver that had been driving said cart when the perp had supposedly boarded with an unconscious Frisk was nowhere to be found, and no other witnesses had come forward with information that could help track him or the missing Mud Kid down.

In other words, not a single lead to be found. Not on the human and monster side of things.

Foaly hadn’t had much luck, either. He’d been clacking away at his keyboard the entire time, silent save for the occasional curse or especially loud sound of frustration – and save for the groaning of disbelief when confirmed Council orders were made known to the pair of fairies.

Holly had done more than just groan when she heard those orders. She’d had it up to her ears with
the Council’s stupidity.

“I thought the new Council members were smarter than this!” She hissed. “ ‘Mind-wipe the Ambassador when we find them?!’ Are they nuts?!”

“Nah,” Foaly said, immediately and without hesitation. “They’re just stupid.” A gusty sigh rushed through the speakers. “But orders are orders, Holly.”

“They’re stupid orders!” Holly glowered through the hotel room windows before her – the monsters were all still awake, and she had a good view of the flower and the short skeleton from here. The flower looked exactly as furious as she felt right now. “If the Ambassador overcomes the mind-wipe – and we know that humans can do that, and the kid’s just as smart as Artemis was at that age - !”

“Holly,” Foaly interrupted. “Look, I know you don’t like it, but unless you want the Ambassador running around and possibly spilling fairy secrets they may or may not have recovered to human civilians and terrorists, then we’ve got no better options.”

The elfin captain kept glaring for several long moments but then sighed and deflated. Unfortunately, Foaly was right, and though she knew, in all likelihood, that both the centaur and Artemis (and the twins, if they found about this) would take their protests directly to the Council, sometimes the Council’s mind just couldn’t be changed.

“I know, D’Arvit,” she grumbled. “I know. That doesn’t mean I have to like it.” She narrowed her eyes at the monsters still clearly visible inside the building and tried really hard not to think of what might happen if any of the powerful beings found their Ambassador missing Frond knows how many memories that couldn’t be explained away by trauma from a kidnapping. “I really don’t like it.”

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*I have some questions for you.*

Those words sent a shiver of trepidation down their spine. They could count on one hand the number of times those words, or any variation of them, had led to anything less than a headache after their initial fall into the Underground, and that had been when the statement was made by a monster, or Chara, someone who meant them and their adopted family no real harm.

This man was not a monster, was not Chara. He was someone at least somewhat involved with HuRg, enough so that someone would send him to interrogate them – someone involved with a monster-hating terrorist organization. Even if, by some miracle, the man meant Frisk no harm, the same could most certainly not be said for the monsters, and that was so much worse than just a measly little headache.

The man seemed not to take their silence for the refusal to cooperate that it was, because once the door he’d stepped through had been carefully closed behind him, he crossed what little floor space remained between the two of them and crouched down in front of Frisk, sharp eyes making contact with theirs.

“I’m sure it goes without saying that your day’s been less than stellar, Ambassador Frisk. If you cooperate and answer my questions, you will be released.” His tone was cool, impartial, oddly professional – in all honesty, the clinical tone reminded Frisk heavily of the politicians they talked to during meetings. The man definitely was too calm to be the raving, fanatical monsterphobe that they’d halfway expected – which meant one of two things. Either the man was completely unshaken
by having assisted, however indirectly, with the abduction of a twelve-year-old kid, which was a worrying thought, or he was very, very good at hiding that he was.

Either way, there was definitely no way the man would let them go if they answered his questions, no matter how honestly they did.

“I don’t believe you,” Frisk said, bluntly. “If you let me go, I’d be able to name you as an accomplice to the police.”

The man blinked. “That would be a risk,” he admitted, somewhat grudgingly, after a moment’s pause, and Frisk silently congratulated themselves on unbalancing the man before he could do the same to them. “But regardless of your doubts, I fully intend to release you in the event of your cooperation.” His words were carefully measured, carefully chosen… and Frisk noted that the man didn’t specifically say what state of health they’d be in upon their “release.”

*Probably in a body bag. Or at least in need of a hospital.

Unfortunately, that was probably true. Generally, terrorists willing to kidnap a kid were also likely to put said kid’s life in danger.

*Well, if they tried to ship me out in a body bag, then at least I’d be able to LOAD, and avoid the kidnapping attempt the second time around...*

But then again, they might also decide to take it out on the monsters, and they couldn’t let that happen, no matter how temporary those deaths would be.

“What are your questions?” They said, carefully. They wouldn’t like the questions, they knew it in their bones -

“How did you know about the assassination attempts beforehand?”

And their bones were absolutely right. They really didn’t like the question.

*Someone knows that something weird was going on there, and sent this guy to pry the info out of me. Does that mean that there’s a fairy controlling this guy? If there is...*

*I can’t tell him about the SAVEs or LOADING, or the Resets. Even if he’s not being controlled, he’d be able to keep me from dying, and I need that option in case things go too far south.*

Their best bet was probably to use their “anonymous call” excuse, and any half-truth they could get away with.

“Luck,” they said. “I saw the assassin in front of City Hall before he could shoot me, and managed to duck. I spotted one of the assassins near the hotel before we could get shot. And the two other times I got anonymous calls from people I didn’t know, warning me in time for me to avoid them and inform the police.”

Their interrogator raised a skeptical eyebrow. “Well, wouldn’t that be convenient, if that actually happened.”

Frisk pursed their lips. *He doesn’t believe me. Crap. “It did happen,” they lied, hoping fervently that, despite the lingering headache and dizziness, their poker face held up. “I don’t know who called me – they altered their voice somehow. I couldn’t tell if they were a man or a woman. I think they waited until the attempts were only a few days away so people wouldn’t suspect an information leak.”*
The eyebrow rose a fraction higher.

“Impressive poker face, Ambassador,” he said, after another pause. “And your story is surprisingly well thought-out. But I know for a fact that there is no-one who could give away information like that, even anonymously.” His expression hardened. “I made sure of that personally. And I’ve been with Humanity’s Resurgence for far too long to miss something that important.”

*If he can make sure of people’s loyalties like that, he must be pretty high up.*

Or whoever has been hypnotizing these people got to him, and is using him as a puppet to speak their own minds… though if there was a fairy controlling him, presuming that they have to at least be audible to the guy, wouldn’t we notice them at this short a range?

Regardless of how the man actually knew they were bluffing, he clearly wasn’t going to be fooled. They needed to think of something else, and fast.

“Tell me the truth, Ambassador.” The man said calmly, though his expression was still hard and sharp and unforgiving, just several icy inches short of being a full-fledged glare. “How did you know about the assassination attempts?”

*Crap crap crap -

*Paranoia!*

“Paranoia,” Frisk said as calmly as they could, silently thanking Chara for the suggestion. “Humanity’s Resurgence isn’t the first group that’s tried to have me killed.” And this wasn’t a lie either, which was a plus.

The man *hmmed*, still skeptical. “Is that so? Then why haven’t we heard about these other attempts? That’s something that would be on the news.”

“We asked the news to keep quiet about it. If people didn’t know about the attempts, then they’d underestimate me if they tried to have me killed.” Again, not strictly a lie. They’d used this tactic in previous timelines, just not this one.

And again, the man *hmmed*, his eyes narrowing. “Clever, or at least it would be if that was actually what was going on. Paranoia alone can’t explain how you’ve managed to avoid so many attempts in a row.”

*Damn it, what’s going to convince this guy?*

“I don’t want to have to repeat myself, Ambassador.” The man’s voice was downright icy now. “I’ve never considered myself a patient man. The truth.”

Frisk’s mind drew a blank, and, considering Chara’s cursing, they couldn’t think of something to say either. So instead of digging themselves in deeper with clumsy lies, they clamped their mouth shut and refused to answer, going so far as to avert their gaze.

The man let out an irritated sigh, and then leaned forward and used one hand to jerk Frisk’s face back up so he could make eye contact again.

“The silent treatment won’t do you any good, Ambassador,” he said, and… did his voice sound different? No, surely that was just the stress getting to them.
Frisk blinked uncertainly. *He’s… not wrong. The silent treatment will just make things worse, right?*

*Yeah, maybe, but what else can we do?! I’m thinking as hard as I can here, I can’t come up with anything else!*

“All I want is the truth,” the man continued, soothingly. “It can’t be that hard to tell me what’s really going on.”

*Oh shut up, asshole, we’re not telling you diddly-shit, no matter how you try to sweet-talk us…*

But the ghost’s voice felt vaguely fuzzy in the back of their head, like they were speaking into a pillow or through a thick wall, and Frisk’s thoughts were slowly, uncertainly taking a different route.

*It’s… I can’t just tell him. So why does it seem like such a good idea now?*

“I can’t tell you,” they mumbled, suddenly unsure of themselves. “You wouldn’t believe me.”

*Frisk? That’s a really bad cover-up. Come up with something better, damn it!*

“I wouldn’t be so sure about that,” the man said, almost conspiratorially. “I’ve seen some odd things. And monsters are something people used to claim didn’t exist, and yet they do.”

Well, when you put it like that…

*… Frisk?*

“I promise I won’t tell anybody,” he continued gently. “I can keep a few secrets, you have my word.” His tone of voice was almost fatherly now, and they couldn’t help but suddenly think of Asgore, who despite all they’d heard from Toriel, warning them about death and the children that had fallen before them, had turned out to be one of the kindest people they’d ever met.

… Can it really hurt to tell him?

*… Oh my God. Frisk, you can’t be serious.*

Can it really hurt to tell him? Frisk repeated uncertainly. Something deep down was screaming at them that this was a bad idea, something other than their ghostly partner, but… If… if he won’t tell anyone…

*Frisk, he’s lying.*

I don’t think he is. It’s… it’s like with Asgore. Mom told me he was bad when I first fell, but he’s not, not really, right? I think this guy’s the same.

*Frisk, he’s with HuRg. He wouldn’t join them if he didn’t agree with them about the monsters!*

But how do we know that? Frisk protested, the idea gaining traction. How do we know he wasn’t blackmailed into this?

*Then he can be blackmailed into giving up the information anyway! Frisk, what the hell is wrong with you?!*

“Well, Ambassador?” The man said, still in that oh-so-soothing, strangely lyrical voice. “Come
now, what’s the harm? What’re a few harmless secrets in exchange for your freedom?”

He’s right, Frisk thought.

*No he’s NOT.

He’s right, Chara! We need to get out of here, right? And if he won’t tell anyone –

*Frisk, what the fuck. This isn’t like you at all! You’re smarter than this, why –

But Frisk was already tuning the ghost out. Chara was just being paranoid, and while their paranoia was usually a boon, this time they were wrong. They didn’t know how they knew, but they just knew. This man wasn’t a bad person, no matter who he worked with. Someone with a voice like that could never be bad.

*… “Voice?”

Determined, Frisk opened their mouth.

*Voice… Wait a second. Frisk, STOP!

They ignored their desperate partner. “I knew becau –”

*Frisk STOP!

And then just like that, they were no longer in control. Their mouth twisted into a snarl, and instead of finishing the sentence that had been on Frisk’s lips, Chara surged forward and smashed Frisk’s forehead into their interrogator’s nose with a crack.

The man yelped, and tumbled backward, obviously taken off guard.

Chara! Frisk yelled, equally surprised. What –

“You bastard!” Chara roared, struggling furiously to free Frisk’s hands of their bonds. “It was you!”

Chara! Stop!

“It was you!!” Chara repeated, practically rabid with fury. “You were the one that sent those assassins!”

Frisk’s currently non-existent breath caught in their non-existent throat. What?

“I have no i-idea – ” The man began, visibly shaken.

“Shut UP!! Your voice!! Those assassins all said they heard a musical voice giving them orders, and your voice sounds like a freaking angel choir!!”

And just like that, the spell, the literal spell that had been cast over them, snapped.

Oh my God. Horror overwhelmed them, and had Frisk still been in control of their own body, they were certain that their heart would have stopped. Oh my God, he – I – I –

The man’s eyes narrowed.
“Well,” he said, coldly, all the perceived gentleness gone. “I can certainly say that this is a first. No-one’s been able to resist this magic before.”

Chara hissed at him. They were downright feral in their rage, now, and for once, Frisk wasn’t about to try to calm them down.

*I almost told him about the Resets. I – oh my God, I nearly told him –*

The man stood up, reaching up to pinch his nose closed. There was a thin stream of blood oozing out of one nostril – that crack when Chara had headbutted him was definitely the sound of his nose breaking.

“I thought there was something unusual about you. ” Despite his voice being so nasal with his nose pinched between his fingers, he still managed to sound viciously satisfied. “In the months I’ve been using this magic, nobody has ever shaken it off like you have. No matter.”

He turned towards the door, and as he did his face twisted into an expression that gave even Chara pause. Gone was the subtle chilliness in his eyes, and in its place was something downright menacing.

“ It might’ve made things easier for me, but I don’t need this magic to get the answers I want out of you, Frisk Dreemurr.”

Frisk just stared after him as he left the room, dread freezing them in place even as Chara slowly relinquished control to them once more.

*The person controlling the assassins was a human. Not a fairy. A human.*

*A human that’s a member of HuRg.*

Their next thought, had it been out loud, would have been a whimper.

*Oh God. Oh God, we need to get out of here. We need to get out!*

Chapter End Notes

*eagerly awaiting reactions to this chapter, rubbing her hands together and laughing maniacally * We’ve been SO looking forward to this chapter, guys, you have NO IDEA

And now, worldbuilding, MemorySteel questions again: “And on a calmer topic, what was human magic like? ‘Power from within?’ ‘Believe in it and it will happen?’ Or more physical, like potions and runes? Did it differ from mage to mage?”

Human magic varies greatly from person to person and so functions differently for each mage (though some magic naturally acts similarly to other types). Magics that have more to do with elements of nature tend to have an aspect of willpower to them - someone who controls or creates fire, for instance, has to WILL it to happen, and overwhelm said fire with their will. If they don’t have strong enough willpower, it can backfire or just plain not work.

On the other hand, some kinds of magic had more to do with knowledge, and others
occur based on outside circumstances, rather than something created by the mage themselves. An example of the first would be, for instance, a mage with power over complicated machines and other technologies. They would need to know how the machines worked, at least on the mechanical level, and the more they know about the machines, the better their magic works with them. An example of the second, on the other hand, would be magic that's constantly active or activates itself on its own - for example, someone having enhanced senses wouldn't be something they could concentrate on or necessarily control, it would just be something that is.

Potions aren't really a thing in this 'verse - magic is limited mostly to sentient beings, and differs from being to being, so magic as a general rule is too unstable for delicate potion-brewing, unless a human or monster specifically develops magic that could be used for it (which IS possible.) Runes are a thing, though - all you have to do is channel magical energy into them to make them work, so humans can use them for a variety of effects, though they tend to use runes that are related to their powers - runes for fire with fire magic, ice runes with ice magic, etc.
Chapter 36

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Name suggestions for the series are still welcome, though I’ll only be accepting new ideas for one more chapter after this one! So far the roster of titles we’ve got includes:

- The Magic of Souls (1)
- Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies
- Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (1)
- Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
- Fairytales (1)
- Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (1)
- Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies
- Underground Fairies

Also, feel free to vote on any one of the titles you like! As you can see, 4 people have already done this...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It had been a very, very long time since Frisk had been frightened of a kidnapper.

Kidnappings were yet another constant between timelines. In any run where the monsters were free to live under the stars and Frisk was acting as their ambassador, there were always at least one or two attempts to abduct them, usually to use them as blackmail to send the monsters back Underground. However, they had long since lost their fear of kidnappers in general – their paranoia made it easy enough to avoid them, and if a kidnapping actually succeeded, they were easily escaped, if not by actually escaping, then by suffering through another death. Dying may not have been pleasant, but it definitely gave them an out if they needed it.

But this time, Frisk was horribly, terribly certain that dying and ushering on another LOAD would only delay the inevitable.

How are you supposed to evade a man – a wizard – who can convince almost any human being on the planet to come after you?

They’d already run those odds through their head several times, and they honestly couldn’t think of a way, and that only made the noose of panic tighten even more tightly around them. The nameless wizard had heavily implied that, before Chara had stepped in, that hypnotizing magic he used had never failed – and considering how easily his voice had pulled Frisk under its spell, they were inclined to believe him.

And there was the main reason for their newfound terror, right there: he’d controlled them so easily. If Chara hadn’t taken over, they were one hundred percent certain that they would’ve spilled the secret of the Resets, of SAVEs and LOADs, to a man they didn’t know and who likely at least disliked, maybe even hated the monsters.
*Please stop thinking about that. Seriously. I don’t need the reminder.*

Frisk winced. Chara sounded just as nervous as they felt, and they couldn’t help but feel guilty about it. *Sorry.*

*Just stop dwelling on it. So long as I’m here, he won’t be able to get any secrets out of you that way.*

True. That was a very comforting thought, especially considering their current situation.

Frisk took a deep breath, trying to calm themselves down with limited success, and, in an effort to distract themselves, began trying to pull their bound wrists apart. The ropes were tied tightly, with a knot they didn’t recognize – it had been a very long time since they’d been tied up like this, and they hadn’t bothered reminding themselves of different sorts of knots recently – and pulling on them was making them chafe painfully against their skin. They’d probably end up with rope burns if they kept this up…

Then again, rope burns were nothing compared to Sans’s Karmic Retribution magic. *That* felt like they were being covered in acid. So they kept at it.

They stayed silent for a long time, Frisk working stubbornly on the ropes (anything to distract them from thoughts about *the wizard*), and Chara probably invisibly pacing around the room. The only other noise that they could hear was the faint buzz of the light bulb hanging overhead, and the occasional whisper of conversation from who they presumed to be guards in the hallway outside.

Eventually, though, the silence was broken by footsteps, and the door unlocking. Frisk stiffened, fighting the urge to squirm backward into a corner where it was safer. *Crap is he back already?!

It was someone else. When the door swung open, it was a tall man in a plain grey hoodie with a black ski mask covering his entire face save for his eyes. Once Frisk ascertained that no, this was not *the wizard*, they relaxed a little and eyed the man. Their attention was quickly drawn by the crinkling of foil – clutched in one of the man’s hands were what looked like energy bars. *Food.* They hadn’t even noticed it before now – their panic must have distracted them – but they were incredibly hungry. They hadn’t eaten since before they’d been kidnapped!

“Hey, kid,” the man said gruffly, though not unkindly. He unwrapped one of the bars and held it close to their (totally not drooling) mouth. “Here, eat. I bet you’re hungry. I’ll bring some water in later, too.”

Frisk was sorely tempted to lunge for the bar, but paranoia won over baser instincts. *Chara, do you think it’s poisoned?*

*Even if it is, that’ll just get us out of here sooner, right?*

*True.* Gingerly, Frisk leaned forward and took a bite out of the bar. It was one of those sweetened granola bars – bland in comparison to Toriel’s butterscotch-cinnamon pie, but still far better than, say, Dog Residue. They eagerly ate the rest of the bar, careful not to bite the man’s fingers by accident.

The man waited until they were finished with the first bar and had started on the second before he said, very quietly, “Kid, if you’d answered the questions, you’d be out of here by now. So why didn’t you?”
Frisk blinked at him. “Why would I give away answers to the person that kidnapped me?”

He winced and didn’t say another word. As soon as Frisk finished the second bar, he stood up and hastily left the room, locking it behind him. After another moment, Frisk could hear a slightly muffled conversation through the door.

“Hey man, you okay?”

“What do you think? We’re holding a little kid hostage.” That was the man who’d just been in the room.

“A little kid that knows a lot about the monsters,” another voice, a woman’s, pointed out. “And that O’Reilly said we’ll be letting them go once they’ve answered his questions.”

O’Reilly. Was that the wizard’s name? Frisk swallowed, throat suddenly dry. Somehow I don’t think he’s going to just let me go anymore.

“Doesn’t mean I have to like this. I really don’t like this.”

And with those words, the guards went quiet, leaving Frisk to stew in silence once more.

Hours later, the wizard whose name may or may not have been O’Reilly returned. His arrival was betrayed by the soft murmur of conversation that had started up again suddenly coming to a screeching halt, and by Chara’s hissed warning – still, Frisk couldn’t quite stop themselves from flinching and curling up a little on themselves when the door swung open.

The man had a bandage over his nose and seemed to have calmed down since he’d left – that cold, menacing look was no longer there, and instead had been replaced by an impassive calm. He stood in the doorway for a few moments, studying them with narrowed eyes, then crossed the room to crouch in front of them, like he had the first time – though, Frisk couldn’t help but notice, he stayed a little farther away this time, well out of headbutting range (much to Chara’s amusement, if the vicious snickering was any indication.)

He said nothing at first, letting Frisk stew in their nervousness for several seconds. Then, finally, he spoke.

“So, Ambassador,” he said, and his voice was just as impassively calm as his face. “Are you ready to answer my question? Truthfully, this time?”

Instead of answering out loud, Frisk just gritted their teeth and stayed silent.

The wizard sighed and rocked back on his heels. “Look, ki – Dreemurr. I’m going to get the answers I need, one way or another. I don’t want to have to force you.”

More silence. The man’s eyes narrowed, a flash of angry frustration flying across his face for a moment before his expression smoothed once more.

“Very well, if you’re not willing to answer my original question, what about a new one?” He leaned forward – still being careful not to lean in too close. “What weaknesses do the monsters have that they’ve kept hidden from the public?”

Despite their best efforts to stay poker-faced, Frisk’s eyes still widened before they could stop them.
They quickly stifled their shock, but the damage had already been done – the man had noticed their reaction, and smiled grimly.

“Don’t bother trying to deny it, Ambassador. There’s not much information on the human-monster war, but it’s common knowledge that the monsters lost, and that’s more than a little fishy. An entire race of powerful, magical beings, driven underground by a human army with next to no magic, with **no** human casualties? Somehow I doubt they lost just because they were outnumbered.”

*No, they didn’t.* Frisk’s teeth were clenched so hard now that they were hurting. But I’m not about to tell you what did make them lose. Not in a million years.

Their determination to not say another word must’ve shown, because another flicker of frustration swept across the man’s face before he grimaced and continued talking, sounding slightly strained. “Dreemurr, it’ll be easier for all of us if you just answer a question, already. What’s one question for your freedom?”

Frisk stared at him. “It won’t be easier for the monsters.”

His expression twisted into something somewhere between irritation and hate, this time. “You’re willing to risk your own well-being for a race of creatures that killed six children before you?”

They squared their shoulders, mustering all of their Determination and using it to steel themselves for what was probably going to be a downright explosive reaction. “Yes.” They said firmly.

Silence dragged itself out between them for moments that felt more like small eternities. The man gritted his teeth, choking down furious words. There was so much venom struggling to escape from his mouth that Frisk could practically see it.

*He really hates the monsters. Why?*

They didn’t dare ask that question out loud. They sincerely doubted the man would kill them at this point if he was willing to keep trying to get answers out of them, but they wouldn’t put it past him to take out his fury on the monsters if they said something wrong.

“Fine,” the man growled, finally. “Have it your way, Ambassador, but I will get the answers I’m looking for, and you’re running out of time.”

And with that chilling statement, he stood up and left the room, the door swinging shut behind him with a resounding click.

The morning after the Ambassador’s abduction was far too bright and sunny. It just didn’t feel right for such a dark mood to be accompanied by sunshine and birds singing, especially after said dark mood had lasted the entire night.

Some of that dark mood was, most likely, because Holly had been right when she’d suspected Artemis would protest the orders to mind-wipe Frisk. She’d invited herself into the human’s penthouse apartment at the exact same time that he’d been arguing with a member of the Council, a crotchety old elf that, by the looks of his clothes, practically had gold coming out of his ears. The Mud Boy had spent at least another five minutes attempting to convince the fairy that the decision the Council had made was wrong, but to no avail – no matter how many logical points he made as to why the mind-wipe was a bad idea, the first and foremost being they had no idea how the monsters would react when they found out, the fairy refused to listen.
“We don’t have to worry about that, because the monsters won’t find out, Fowl,” he’d said, completely ignoring the fact that Artemis had stated it was a matter of when, not if, before cutting off communications. He’d left behind an extremely frustrated and borderline infuriated Fowl, who then proceeded to stay up the rest of the night, waiting for the fairy search teams to find something while he hacked his way through several databases looking for information himself.

Holly had wisely kept her mouth shut that entire time, knowing that speaking up too soon would only result in an icy glare and possibly some scathing comments, and so the night had passed in relative silence, save for whenever one of the teams or Foaly contacted the two of them with updates.

Well, until the aforementioned way-too-bright-and-sunny-morning came around, at which point Holly decided enough was enough.

“Artemis, you should take a break.” She sighed. When he ignored her and continued to type away at his laptop, she grumbled under her breath – Frond-damned geniuses getting absorbed in their work – and hopped down from the office chair she’d spent the night in. She walked around the Mud Boy’s desk, and then punched him hard enough on the arm that it might have left a bruise.

That worked. Artemis winced in pain, then turned away from the screen to give her one of his patented Looks.

“Don’t bother with the death glare.” Holly rolled her eyes at him. “You’ve been up for almost fifteen hours straight. You should get some sleep, before you drop dead of exhaustion and give the Council a reason to declare a new holiday or something.”

Artemis made an irritated noise, pinching his nose between thumb and forefinger. After a few moments, however, he sighed.

“I suppose some rest would be advantageous,” he relented, grudgingly.

That was one advantage to having a logical genius as a friend – even if they didn’t want to stop whatever they were doing to take care of themselves, once it was pointed out to them they could usually work out the logic of why doing so was a good idea, and you didn’t need to prod them too much to actually get up and do it.

Well, didn’t usually need to prod them too much. There were always exceptions.

“I’ll keep an ear on things,” she promised, tapping her earpiece pointedly. “Go give that genius brain some shut-eye. Go dream about robbing a bank or something.”

Artemis looked very reluctantly amused at this but didn’t comment, for once, instead shutting down his laptop and disappearing into his bedroom, leaving the LEP captain alone in his office.

“Well,” Foaly said through her earpiece a moment later. “Somehow I expected him to protest more about being sent to bed.” He pitched his voice in an imitation of what he apparently had expected. “‘You are not my mother, Holly!’”

She snorted. “He knows better.”

“Yeah, right.”

The elf shook her head, cracking a grin, and returned to her chair, plopping down heavily on the cushion. She was halfway tempted to close her eyes and take a quick nap – she hadn’t had much in the way of sleep either – but if she did, there would be no one to keep an ear out.
Oh well. She’d just have to wait until Artemis woke up.

“So, anything new?”

Foaly huffed irritably. “I’ve started looking through camera records. The city’s started putting up some experimental solar-powered cameras in some of the intersections. It’s possible that one or more of them managed to catch the mesmerized kidnapper on camera while he was leaving the scene – not exactly likely, but still possible.” He made another guttural sound of annoyance. “But because the cameras are so new, and all over the city, all the recordings get shunted into random databases! They’re so disorganized! And if the kidnapper knew about the cameras, he might’ve tried to avoid them completely!”

“Well, the perp that actually did the abducting was mesmerized. Maybe he overlooked the cameras – it wouldn’t be the first time a mesmerized human didn’t pay attention to some of the finer details.”

“Let’s hope so, otherwise this is just gonna be another dead end, and we might have to search the entire city by wing!”

And with that oh-so-heartening grumble, Foaly fell silent, leaving Holly hoping fervently that they wouldn’t actually have to search the entire city. They couldn’t afford to waste that much time.

Chapter End Notes

Frisk’s guards, despite being terrorists, do have things they’d rather not get involved with, and in the case of at least one of them so far, one thing they’d rather not get involved with is kidnapping. (Even terrorists have standards!)

And Foaly, you better hurry up with those cameras! I have a feeling that the kidnapper’s not gonna be patient for much longer…

And now for worldbuilding – this is the last group of questions I got from MemorySteel: “Are there bloodlines for mage families? Can there even be a Half-Mage, or is Magedom effectively an on-off genetic switch? It is genetic, right?”

Human magedom in this ‘verse is an odd mixture of genetic and spiritual, in the sense of actually being one. People descended from mages are considerably more likely to be mages themselves. However, the magic each mage develops tends to be heavily affected by their soul - their soul will either effect how their magic functions (willpower vs knowledge vs instinct or unable to be controlled) or what their magic does (certain kinds of magic only appear in people with certain dominant soul traits - for instance, the kind of magic that the Yellow Shaman was capable of, the whole “absorb magic and then throw it back at the source” thing, is only something that someone with Justice as one of their dominant traits is capable of.)

So, basically, the potential to use magic is passed down through genetics, while the actual functionalities and development of magic are dictated by the soul (and anything that affects the soul, like large concentrations of magic.)
Chapter 37

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Last chapter to suggest names for the series! (And since people are getting confused, just to clarify, I’m NOT renaming Magicae est Potestas – I’m looking for a name for the SERIES of stories it’ll be a part of!) So far the roster of titles we’ve got includes:

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (3)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (7)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (5)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (3)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

So far, judging by the number of people on both Ao3 and fanfiction.net that have voted for them, Fairytales and Temporal Dynamics are the top title choices for the series! Also, feel free to vote on one of the titles you like the best if you haven't already! (Thank you to the peeps who have already voted!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

There was no clock in their cell.

It was a little detail that Frisk had noticed off-hand, maybe a few minutes after their head had properly cleared of the remaining symptoms of whatever knockout drug had been used on them. The room they were tied up in was completely bare, including the walls, and so it was no surprise to them that there wasn’t a clock, or anything else, on the walls.

However, after several hours they found themselves wishing there was a clock in the room somewhere. It had nothing to do with time-keeping – according to Chara, at least one of the guards outside their door had a watch, and so the ghost would sometimes invisibly pop their head out of the cell through the wall to check the watch and see what time it was. No, their irrational wish for a clock was less a matter of knowing what hour it was, and more a matter of having something to distract them from the silence.

The guards outside did talk to each other, every now and then – soft murmurs of conversation that Frisk couldn’t quite make out, most of the time, but even though they couldn’t understand the words being spoken, the voices at least filled up the piercing silence, gave them something to listen to. Whenever the guards fell silent, however, they were left in silence again, with nothing to distract them from their thoughts save for Chara’s occasional attempt to break the silence or their updates on the time. A ticking clock would have been a great distraction for the worried jumble of neurons that was their brain right now.

Frisk had taken to making their own noises to fill the quiet whenever the guards weren’t doing it for
them. Tapping their foot against the floor, keeping track of the seconds with mutters of “one Mississippi, two Mississippi,” humming. They’d been humming for several minutes now, a jaunty little tune they’d sometimes hear Papyrus humming while he was cooking.

But there was only so much one person could do to keep their mind off things, and the music wasn’t helping matters any, not anymore – as their thoughts had once more turned towards their wizard captor, the tune had turned into something darker and less cheerful.

*Why does he hate the monsters so much?*

They’d been rolling that question over and over again in their head for a while now. They didn’t want to think about it, not really, but it had been pestering them from their subconscious almost since the man had left, visibly enraged to the point that Frisk wouldn’t be halfway surprised if he spat acid the next time he spoke.

There were a number of reasons they could think of that would explain it. The first was simply that he hated the monsters because they weren’t human. Humans didn’t always need any more of a reason than “they’re different” to hate someone – there was more than enough proof of that already. However, something told them that this wasn’t the reason for the wizard’s ire.

The second option was that he was scared of the monsters. Humans were often frightened of what they didn’t understand, and many of the monsters were downright intimidating if you didn’t know them personally. Gyftrot came to mind, for instance. Somehow, though, they didn’t think fear was the answer, either. They knew how to read people pretty well by now, and there hadn’t been even so much a flicker of nervousness showing in the man’s face. Just hate.

The third option was that he hated the monsters because they’d killed children. They’d run across humans like that before – killing a child, in some people’s eyes, was the worst possible crime you could commit. Killing six? It practically made you a *demon.*

Considering the sheer hatred in the man’s eyes when he’d mentioned the fallen children, Frisk had a feeling that he was one of those sorts of people – but they weren’t sure. It was entirely possible that they could be wrong, or they were missing some crucial bit of information that would paint a clearer picture of the whole. Thus, their thoughts were going in circles, going over every one of the reasons that humans in previous timelines had found to hate their new non-human neighbors.

It only made the suspense of waiting for the wizard to return that much more unbearable.

*One of the guards from earlier is coming back. The one that brought food.*

Frisk stopped humming, and sat up straight, watching the door. Sure enough, after a few more moments, the door swung open, revealing the same man from earlier – this time, though, instead of bringing in granola bars, he had a bottle of water tucked under one arm.

*Well, would you look at that. He actually kept his promise.*

They didn’t comment on the ghost’s surprise, instead simply smiling at the man thankfully as he silently uncapped the water and held it out for them to drink from.

He didn’t say a word, very carefully keeping his eyes averted until the bottle was empty, at which point he capped it again and stood up to leave.

Well, Frisk wasn’t about to let him go just like that. “Thank you.”

He stiffened, coming to a halt in the doorway. Then, after a moment, he nodded uncertainly, let out a
raspy you’re welcome kid, and then left twice as fast as he’d come in, closing the door behind him hastily.

There was no conversation between him and the guards outside this time, but Frisk didn’t need to hear it said out loud to know the man felt guilty.

The wizard came back three hours later.

By this point, Frisk was sick and tired of their roundabout conclusions and, after another hour of careful thought, had come up with a risky plan of action. They needed to know why the man hated the monsters, or at least get a definite clue. So they’d wait until the man inevitably returned to try and pry answers out of them again, and instead try to pry answers out of him.

It was a dangerous idea. So many things could go wrong – all it would take was one wrong word, one wrong sentence, and the man might order them killed, or order the monsters killed. And the guards outside wouldn’t be able to disobey him. And although the guards might have technically been accomplices, might have yet to let them go like moral people should have, they didn’t deserve that kind of guilt. Taking a kid hostage was one thing. Taking a life was something else entirely.

So Frisk was a bundle of nerves when Chara warned them of the wizard’s approach – a bundle of highly determined nerves that steeled themselves for the door to open the moment the warning came. This time, when the door opened to reveal the man, they did not flinch. They did not avert their eyes. Instead, they locked their eyes with his and stared.

His eyes narrowed, but he didn’t comment on the change of behavior. Instead, he once more took up the same position as the previous two times, crouched in front of them just out of reach.

“Are you ready to answer my questions?” He said coldly. Once again, he’d calmed down sometime between his last attempted interrogation and now – this time, however, he wasn’t bothering to sound friendly.

This might be a mistake. It probably is a mistake. I’m going to end up dead, or a monster will.

But I’m not backing down.

Frisk didn’t let their eyes drift away like they wanted to. Instead, they kept eye contact and asked a question of their own.

“Why do you hate the monsters so much?”

He blinked. Apparently, he hadn’t actually expected them to talk right off the bat – not that they were surprised at this. They’d been giving him the silent treatment for the vast majority of the time they’d spent in the same room, after all.

“I’m the one asking the questions here, Ambassador.” His syllables were carefully measured, short and clipped and as indifferent as possible.

“No,” Frisk said, watching him carefully. “We’re both asking questions. Why do you hate the monsters?”

He was visibly irritated by this – his jaw clenched, his brow furrowed.
“Don’t get smart with me. This has nothing to do with your current situation, Dreemurr.”

“Actually, it does.” They drew on as much of their determination as they could – and borrowed a little from Chara, too, because they needed as much as they could get right now. “So why do you hate the monsters?”

He scoffed and rocked backward on his heels.

“I fail to see how this has anything to do with,” he gestured at the cell around them, “this.”

“I won’t give answers about the monsters to someone who hates them unless they have a good reason to.”

That gave him pause. His eyes narrowed to slits, focusing on them with an eerie intensity. He actually seemed to be considering this. Good.

“And if I were to answer your question, would you answer mine?”

Frisk pursed their lips.

*Say yes!

That would probably be the safest answer, but Frisk tried their best not to lie when not concealing the Resets… or important monster secrets. Lying, in this case, would likely only make the man angry, anyway.

“That’d depend on your answer.” They said, honestly.

He sniffed. “Then consider my answer to be I’m not telling you.”

Well, the more indirect approach hadn’t worked. Time for the considerably more risky, blunt approach.

“Is it because of what happened to the other fallen children?”

The wizard went very, very still.

“It is, isn’t it?” They said, quietly, with less confidence than before. “You hate them because those six kids died down there.”

They would have said more – something along the lines of you know that not all the monsters were involved in their deaths, right – but that was when the wizard’s face, which had been so carefully subdued up until now, twisted into an ugly, coldly furious expression that sent chills running down their spine, and seemed to suck the warmth out of the entire room.

“‘Died?’” He sneered. A spark of light lit at the tip of one of his fingers – a roiling spark of brilliant yellow, rather than the blue that they’d expected – and then went out almost as quickly as it had appeared. “Don’t you dare sugarcoat it, Ambassador, those kids were murdered, in cold blood.”

Frisk shivered, eyes widening. “I’m not saying they weren’t…” They shut up quickly as the wizard’s glare intensified – if looks could kill, then they would’ve been LOADING, back on the Fowl estate by now.

“And yet you’re still helping them.” Sheer, undiluted rage flared in his eyes. “The monsters killed six kids before you, but they didn’t kill you and now you’re helping them.” His teeth bared in a near-feral snarl. “What’s so special about you, Ambassador, that they weren’t willing to kill you? Why
are you helping them?"

That wasn’t just fury there. That was resentment.

He resents me for not being killed like the other kids.

They sucked in a shaky lungful of air.

“Because,” they whispered, unable to bring themselves to speak any louder, “everyone deserves a second chance.”

“They don’t!”

“They do!” They snapped. “Everyone deserves a second chance, including the monsters!”

For a moment, only silence reigned, and despite the rising dread in their gut, Frisk forced themselves to keep eye contact with the angry man before them. Looking away would only make them seem ashamed of what they’d just said, and they weren’t. They meant what they said. Everyone deserved a second chance, and they weren’t going to change their mind on that, not ever.

“… No.”

_Uh oh. That wasn’t a good tone of voice. The fury was still there, but now it was colder, sharper, like every sound that came out of the man’s mouth had been sharpened into a tiny blade of ice._

“No,” he repeated icily. “You’re too naive, Ambassador. Nobody like them deserves a second chance.” Another angry spark of yellow flickered along his fingers. “The world doesn’t work like that. Murderers don’t get a second chance – they get prison cells.” He stood up and turned sharply on his heels to leave the room. But before he did, he stopped at the door and turned once more to glare at them, and his expression…

_His expression. Oh, stars, just the sight of it sent their heart plummeting into their stomach and made little droplets of sweat start dripping down their forehead._

“If you really want to think that way about those monsters,” he hissed, and Frisk was positive that he didn’t mean monsters as in the ethnic group this time, “then I’m not going to stop you. But if you keep quiet about their secrets for much longer… well, a few less murderers in the world isn’t going to hurt anybody, now is it?”

The door slammed shut behind him, leaving Frisk staring in wide-eyed horror at the wooden surface.

“A few less murderers in the world isn’t going to hurt anybody, now is it?”

_Oh stars. Stars, no! He’s planning on killing monsters. He’s going to kill monsters, innocent monsters that never did anything to him -!_ 

*That does it! Frisk, we’ve gotta get out of here! We can’t just keep waiting around, we’ve got to warn them!*

_But how?! They were almost hyperventilating at this point, horror making it near impossible to breathe. We have no idea where we actually are, the monsters don’t know where we are -!_ 

*We’ll figure something out! We have to.*

_The before it’s too late that almost made it onto the end of the ghost’s sentence didn’t need to be said._
It was all too obvious.

Long, agonizing hours of waiting were something Holly hated with a burning, fiery passion. She was a fairy of action, not one to just sit and wait, and yet there was literally nothing she could do but wait, for hours on end, as Foaly sifted through “nonsensical disorganized human databases” looking for a clue, any clue, to the monster Ambassador’s whereabouts, while time slowed to a crawl.

Fortunately, it seemed that for once the universe was somewhat on their side, because several hours after the sun had risen, and the elf was just about to throw up her hands in defeat, set an alarm in her helmet, and doze off, Foaly suddenly let out a triumphant noise.

“I got something!”

Holly sat bolt upright. “Thank Frond. What did you find?!”

“Hold on a damn second, Holly – there! I sent the footage I just found to your helmet!”

A small video icon appeared on the inside of her visor, and Holly blinked once at it to open it. The image that appeared in the small video window was in one of the smaller intersections in town, by the looks of it – there was only a single lane on each side of the street, and no carts whatsoever, save for a public transit cart turning to the right and around the corner of one of the abandoned warehouses partway between the business district and the docks.

“This was filmed an hour after the kidnapping!” Foaly said ecstatically. “Look, there’s the mesmerized perp, right there, and then, several minutes later,” the film fast-forwarded itself until another cart came into view – the man in the driver’s seat definitely wasn’t the public cart driver, and the cart was considerably smaller and un-numbered, as well. “Look! That’s definitely a Mud Kid-sized bundle in the back of that cart, wouldn’t you say?”

It was. The bundle was wrapped up completely in dark fabric, and impossible to make out any details on, but it was definitely the right size to be an unconscious monster Ambassador.

“So the mesmerized perp passed off the Ambassador to someone else, probably another goon, to transfer them to a safer location,” Holly mused.

“And here’s the real kicker!” Foaly crowed. “We actually got this cart on fairy cameras! The officers dismissed it at the time because they were busy searching the immediate area around where the kidnapping happened and keeping an eye on the monsters, but we got this one on camera, and we know where it went!” A photograph of an old warehouse popped up in her visor. “It parked just outside this warehouse about halfway between the docks and the business district. The place hasn’t been in use for years, but it’s not abandoned, either, so it’s in reasonably good shape. Out of the way and secure –”

“And therefore a good place to store a human prisoner,” Holly finished. “Are you sure that’s where they are?”

“When have I ever been wrong?”

“Well, let’s see… Fowl Manor Siege, Opal’s escape from Argon’s clinic –”

“Alright, alright, it was a rhetorical question, Holly!” The centaur huffed in irritation. “I’m not a hundred percent sure, but it’s very likely!”
“We’ll have to send a couple of Recon officers to check it out, then,” she sighed. “But at least it’s a lead. And if the Ambassador’s really in there, we might be able to break them out – ”

There was a slight crackling as a new line opened to her helmet speakers. “You won’t be breaking anybody out, Captain Short.” It was Commander Kelp, and he sounded extremely put out and more than a little exhausted. “Council’s orders.”

Holly stopped. “Sir?” She said incredulously. “What do you – ”

Kelp sighed, and she could easily imagine the foul-tempered elf rubbing his temple in frustration. “Look, Captain, we all know how much of a wild card you are by now. It’s obvious to anyone who has eyes and read even one of your case files. And the Council thinks that mind-wiping the Ambassador will work.”

Holly’s stomach did an uneasy flip-flop. “They’re ordering me not to get involved?”

“Technically, since you’re in charge of the Section Eight squad that’ll theoretically be doing the rescuing, you will be – but you’re only supposed to be giving orders from off-site, and Internal Affairs is going to be keeping a close eye on your communications during it.” He grunted. “Sorry, Captain, but the Council’s got my hands tied here.”

“What about me?” Foaly demanded.

“You’re ordering to be a part of the mind-wipe team. Some troll dung about ‘wanting to be absolutely certain that the mind-wipe holds.’”

“Me being there won’t change anything!”

“Look, centaur,” Kelp snapped, his Root-esque temper apparently having been worn too thin, “I know that, but I can’t do anything about it! Which is why I’m ordering you to try to do a little damage control, just in case the mind-wipe doesn’t hold!”

Foaly fell silent. Holly pursed her lips.

“You don’t think the wipe will work either, do you, Commander?”

“I think,” Kelp said, pointedly, “I want to cover all my bases.”

Which wasn’t an outright no, which probably meant he did think that the wipe wouldn’t hold. After all, they already had proof that Frisk wasn’t exactly a normal, baseline human being, and they were a genius. Just like Artemis was. And Artemis had regained his memories after his mind-wipe.

“Right, Sir,” she said, quietly. It rankled her that she wouldn’t be directly involved with the Ambassador’s rescue, but, well, Foaly might be able to divert a disaster, if the Commander was giving him a chance to do “damage control.” It was better than nothing.

She only hoped it would be enough.

Chapter End Notes

Someone commented on previous chapters and made a very good point that Holly wouldn’t let the mind-wipe happen, orders or no orders, if she thought it was stupid. So,
while I would have originally liked Holly to be on the rescue team that goes in to save Frisk, I decided not to do that in the end. So yup, no Holly to get in the way of the Council’s stupidity when the rescue happens! (Don’t worry though, it’s practically a given at this point that the mind-wipe won’t be permanent. Holly, Foaly, Artemis, and every other fairy or human that’s protested the mind-wipe so far will be able to go “I told you so” in the Council’s faces.)

And those fairies better hurry up with their rescuing – the wizard (whose last name IS O’Reilly, by the way, but Frisk and Chara don’t know that for sure right now, thus “the wizard”) is getting impatient, and it’s pretty damn clear now what he thinks of the monsters – and how far he’s willing to go to get that information he wants.

And now for worldbuilding! Someone on fanfiction.net called Jack54311 asked me this: “Speaking of Chara, I have a world building question. If humans aren't able to absorb a human soul, then how is Chara hitching a ride with Frisk? If one of them is soulless, then how are both present? Did Frisk's soul become damaged somehow, and Chara repair it with their own? I'm confused about that.” This was my answer:

I know that it's more or less implied to be canon that Chara is soulless, but personally, I've never really liked that idea?? I mean, Chara doesn't act "soulless" until the Genocide Run, presuming that they are the narrator in-game, as I like to think, and their so-called soulless behavior could just be learned from the protagonist instead of something that occurred naturally. So in M est P, I decided to ignore that particular aspect of canon - Chara does, in fact, have a soul still. It's not a particularly intact soul - Chara's technically died twice, if you consider Asriel's death as their second one, and that amongst other things sort of put their soul through the wringer - but it's still a soul regardless.

As for how Chara's hitching a ride with Frisk without their soul being absorbed... well, it has to do with Determination and both fallen kids' souls. After their second death, Chara basically lost their will to keep going (their plan had failed, Asriel was dead because of them, and now they couldn't do anything to help with the aftermath), and with that their ability to produce their own Determination - and since their soul is Red, that means they were losing something pretty crucial to who they were. It was this loss of Determination that really started to damage their soul, and it basically sent their consciousness into a vegetative state as their soul degenerated. However, they lasted long enough that when Frisk, another human with a Red soul, huge reserves of Determination, and the same shaman ancestors as Chara, fell into the Underground in close proximity to what was left of them, Chara's soul "woke up" and was able to latch onto theirs and begin siphoning off their Determination to begin repairing itself. Until Chara's soul is fully repaired - a process which isn't easily completed with the Resets messing with both kids - their soul will remain directly linked to Frisk's, and thus Chara gets sort of dragged around with them where-ever they go.

That being said, it won't be too much longer before that happens, relatively speaking, assuming the two of them manage to keep avoiding another Reset. Chara's been linked to Frisk for almost three consecutive years in this timeline, and many other timelines before that, which means that their soul is almost fully repaired. Give it roughly another year or so without a Reset, and Chara’s soul will be whole again, and after they no longer need that direct link to Frisk’s soul, who knows what’ll happen to them?
Chapter 38

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry for taking so long to update, guys, college workloads are a son of a b****. I’ve got three classes I’ve got to work on this term. THREE. However, I’ll still hopefully have enough time to actually work on chapters for you guys!

Alright, the last chapter to suggest a name for the series has passed – so now it’s time to vote if you haven’t already! Feel free to vote for any one of these titles below! (And again, thank you to the people who’ve already voted!)

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (5)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (8)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (5)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (4)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

(Looks like Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl is catching up, and so is Okay Flowey!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

LEPRecon was a notoriously dangerous career, no matter where you were on the planet. In the Lower Elements, Recon officers were the first responders, the fairies sent in to determine whether a simple Traffic officer or a Retrieval assault team was needed to resolve the situation. On the surface, Recon officers were the ones sent to track down rogue fairies and, in the rare cases where humans caught glimpses of a fairy, the ones sent in to determine said human’s defenses and how dangerous it might be for a larger team of officers to be sent in. As a result, Recon casualties were incredibly high, and many of the officers that survived for long enough soon began to hate their jobs almost as much as they loved being able to fly through fresh surface air.

They also tended to become justifiably paranoid, and this was very true for the two Recon officers sent to investigate the warehouse where the monster’s Ambassador might be being held captive. After getting their assignment (and after having cussed out their commander when the coms had been shut off, for assigning them what could very well be the most dangerous job for a Recon fairy since before the Crash), they’d double-checked absolutely every piece of equipment on their person, from their anti-shield visor filters to their com units to the airtight seals on their helmets to keep the sound in. Only when the two fairies were completely, utterly certain that their equipment wouldn’t malfunction, beep, or do anything else to put them in danger while investigating a warehouse possibly full of violent human extremists, did they move in – even then, though, they were none too happy about it.

“I did not sign up for this troll dung.”
The older of the two fairies, a sprite Lieutenant who had joined Recon shortly after the infamous Captain Holly Short had been reassigned permanently to Section Eight, rolled her eyes. Her partner for this particular mission had been extremely vocal in his protests since the moment they’d reached the surface, and her patience was wearing extremely thin by now.

“Private, will you shut up?” She snapped. “I get it, already – you don’t want to do this. Guess what? I don’t either. But this has the potential to be the worst disaster since the Techno Crash, and like it or not we’re here now, so just shut your Frond-dammed mouth.”

The other officer shut up, thank Frond, and the sprite turned her attention fully back to the warehouse window in front of her. One careful application of the omni-tool in her hand had the window neatly unlocked and swinging open on thankfully silent hinges, and the two fairies were flitting inside as silently as a pair of ghosts.

The warehouse was a large one, a sprawling concrete building that was a veritable maze of hallways and rooms tucked into a relatively remote corner of the city that hadn’t seen any substantial use in at least nine months. According to the files that their technical support had managed to get ahold of, the building belonged to one of the smaller shipping companies that operated out of the Dublin docks – and since it had been used too recently to be abandoned, the security systems were still theoretically online.

The very first thing the two fairies did was locate a video cable, and attach one of their fiber-optics to it. A brief minute later, and their technical support contacted them via their coms.

“Alright,” the fairy said, “there’s good news and bad news, Lieutenant. Good news is that although the security system here is pretty good, for human tech, it looks like a number of the cameras are offline for some reason, possibly for maintenance, so if you need to unshield for whatever reason, there’s a lot of blind spots for you to take advantage of.”

“And the bad news?”

“A lot of the cameras are offline. Those blind spots in human security are blind spots for me as well, so I won’t be able to tell if there’s a human there or not. And it looks like there’re at least a dozen humans in the building right now, maybe more. If you’re not careful enough…”

The Lieutenant groaned and muttered a few curses under her breath. “Of course… just our luck. Please tell me there are enough cameras online to get a layout of the building, at least?”

“Don’t need the cameras for that.” The techie sounded just barely shy of proud. “I’ve got the building schematics right here.”

“Well, that’s something, at least… got any clues to where a human prisoner might be being kept?”

A light tapping of fingers on keys echoed over the speakers for a few moments.

“Well, there’re a few rooms with stationary guards you can check out. Two on the ground floor – one on the east side of the building, one in the north-west corner – and one not too far from where you are now, actually. Just head to left, take a couple of right turns, and you’re there.”

“Right.” The Lieutenant turned to her partner. “Private, you go there first and then head for the north-west room on the bottom floor. I’ll check out the room to the east.”

She set off at a slow pace, walking quietly on the balls of her feet rather than flying. Though she would have preferred to use her wings, there was enough dust on the ground that the air displacement from might be noticed by human cameras or human eyes that might come wandering
around the corner – and the last thing she wanted was for a human to get suspicious enough to try shooting at her. Her wings were flesh and blood, not metal – one shot and she would be down for the count.

The first room the Private had gone to scout out turned out to be some sort of storage room – there were boxes of food and medical supplies, according to him, but not much else despite the armed guard. Several minutes later, just as the Lieutenant was rounding the corner and finally found a staircase going down, he contacted her again, sounding a little breathless.

“Lieutenant, there’s an entire room full of weapons down here!”

“What?”

“Weapons! Lots of them! Handguns, at least a couple of sniper rifles… I swear there’s a machine gun in the corner over there… there’s enough stuff in here to arm all these humans to the teeth!” The fairy sounded downright frantic.

“Calm down, Private. Don’t give them a reason to use any of those weapons on you, and you’ll be fine.”

“Easy for you to say! You’re not the one in an armory right now!”

The sprite sighed and was sorely tempted to unseal her helmet just so she could slap a hand to her forehead. Seriously, what was with all the nervous fairies nowadays? Once upon a time, the LEP was chock-full of no-nonsense, experienced officers – now it seemed all they had were these lily-livered elflings that were scared of their own damn shadows.

She wisely didn’t say this out loud. After all, their technical support was technically one of these elflings, and he might very well take offense – and where would that leave her?

“Calm down, Private. I’m almost at the third room. We might get lucky, and find the Ambassador in here – and if we do, then all we have to do is stick around long enough to figure out the guard shifts and who all is in here.”

“Like our luck is that good. We got stuck with this job, didn’t we?”

“Resign from Recon when we get home, then, if you’re so scared.”

Silence was her only response, and the sprite rolled her eyes before moving on.

The room on the east of the ground floor was, according to the building schematics now being broadcasted to her helmet feed, nothing more than a broom closet. It was small, very small, without any real decent storage space and probably lacking severely in the furniture category as well – she wouldn’t be surprised if there wasn’t even a shelf in there. All in all, it wasn’t a room you’d expect to have two armed guards watching over – nor a room you’d expect to apparently have three camera feeds fixed on. There were no blind spots anywhere near that door – complete camera coverage.

More than a little suspicious.

What was also more than a little suspicious was the angry-looking human emerging from the room as she arrived. He didn’t look anything special – average build, brown hair, slightly redder skin than what was normal but not much else to set him apart.

But his expression… well, it could’ve given the patented Fowl glare, which she’d only ever seen once in her entire life, a real run for its money in a Most Terrifying Glare on the Planet contest.
The door to the room was swinging shut behind him, and by the looks of it, he hadn’t locked it. There were two guards right there, one of them already approaching the door to close it all the way, and there was no camera inside the room to give her a clue of what might be inside.

So she did what any reasonable female Recon officer would do – she quickly attached the quick-acting sedative pads in one of her suit pockets to the backs of their necks before they could do anything, asked the techie to put the three cameras watching the door into a loop for a few minutes, and slipped inside the cell.

After their disastrous attempt at information-gathering, Frisk had gone back to the silent treatment when the wizard returned to their cell. They didn’t speak a word, didn’t even look at the man, and wouldn’t have listened to him either if they hadn’t been craning their ears for any sign of when he was considering going after monsters.

He’d visited their little cell twice more, now, and they could tell that he was becoming incredibly impatient. They didn’t know how much longer he could wait before he carried out his threat to kill monsters, and they hadn’t been able to come up with a way to escape, either. They were tied up far too tightly, the guards outside were too alert for them to sneak past them even if they had been able to move, and above all else, there was nothing in the room they could use to end the current timeline and LOAD.

They were more than a little frantic by now, to put it lightly. It was only a matter of time before the wizard decided enough was enough and started dusting people, and they had no way of warning anyone. None.

So the door to their cell apparently swinging open on its own, without the guards having noticed, was a welcome distraction.

Frisk blinked and squinted at the door. There was absolutely nothing there.

… Chara?

The ghost was quiet for several long moments, before finally speaking up.

*There’s someone watching us. It almost feels like when we were on the Fowl estate, in the library…*

Someone watching us. Someone we can’t see.

Something unidentifiable – was it hope? Fear? – gripped their chest like a vice. A fairy?

True, they may have considered the fairies a threat not too long ago – and they still could possibly be a threat, even if they weren’t behind the assassins – but still. Someone the guards couldn’t see, and that the wizard knew nothing about.

Someone who could warn the monsters.

Mind made up and fueled by determined desperation, Frisk opened their mouth.

“Hello?” They whispered.

There was no answer. Not in words. But there was definitely someone there if the sudden scuffling
of extremely quiet footsteps headed back to the door was any indication.

“Wait!”

The footsteps paused.

“You’re a fairy, right?” Their voice was trembling – and they were trying so, so hard not to let it show, but they couldn’t help it. Don’t leave, not yet, please!

No reply. Well, not at first. But the footsteps, after a few moments, came a little closer, and a bit of dust flew up in front of them.

“Can...” Frisk gulped. “Can you leave a message for... for the monsters? Or the police?” When the silence stretched on, they continued with quiet desperation. “I-I know you don’t want to be seen. I don’t know why, but you do, and I’m not going to ask you to show yourself! You can j-just leave a written message, or a flash drive or something! You don’t have to show yourself!”

They swallowed and tried very hard not to notice the way their eyes were stinging. “Please. They’re going to... they’re going to kill monsters! Innocent people that never did anything to them! That can’t happen, not now, so p-please – ”

A light touch on their shoulder silenced them, and they stared up at where they hoped the fairy’s face was with a pleading expression.

Please, they thought. Please, I know you’ve been trying to hide up until now, but please, I don’t have anyone else to turn to!

And then – a voice. A woman’s voice, very quiet and slightly mechanical sounding, like it was coming out through a speaker.

“I can’t guarantee anything, Ambassador,” it said softly. “But I’ll see what I can do.” A pause. “Try to hold on a little while longer, alright?”

And then the soft touch on their shoulder was gone, and the door was swinging shut with a soft click, locking behind the unseen intruder.

“Try to hold on a little while longer, alright?”

Frisk swallowed, and the something with a stranglehold on their chest was most definitely becoming something akin to hope.

“I’ll try,” they whispered. “I’ll try.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh look, a competent LEP fairy that isn’t Holly, Foaly, No. 1, Qwan, or Commander Kelp! Incredible! Amazing!

In all honesty, though, I needed to include a competent non-main-character fairy sometime, right? It just wouldn’t be fair to the rest of the LEP to paint them all as spineless cowards, no matter how fun that would be!
… May or may not be tentatively considering having this sprite Lieutenant be a reoccurring character. Not sure yet.

And now for worldbuilding, based on more questions from Jack54311: “Is it possible for Chara to talk to anyone other than Frisk, or is it only Frisk as a result of their souls being tied together? I mean, they're a ghost, and so is Napstablook. Also, is there a difference between human ghosts and monster ghosts? How do they come to be?”

No, Chara is not able to talk to anyone other than Frisk as they are right now. Because human ghosts are pretty much nothing more than a soul, their capabilities of doing normal human things like picking up objects and talking are pretty limited. A really really STRONG ghost might manage to, say, whisper in someone's ear really quietly, or kick a pebble around, but without having a body of their own, they can’t do much else. And Chara's soul, though stronger than most, is still damaged enough to put a damper on any attempts they might make to talk to someone on their own. The reason that Chara's able to talk to Frisk at all is because of the link between their two souls - without that link, Frisk wouldn’t be able to hear Chara at all, even if they tried to talk. So in order to speak to anyone else at this point, Chara would need to possess Frisk's body and use their mouth to talk, which they generally only do if they view it as an emergency or unless Frisk offers (such as if they have a chocolate pastry or something that they want Chara to try.)

In this 'verse, the main difference between human ghosts and monster ghosts is that human ghosts are very much dead and monster ghosts are very much alive. Basically, monster ghosts like Blookey or Mettaton are monsters with characteristics similar to that of human ghosts, namely intangibility, flight, and the incapability of touching some normal matter unless it was made specifically for them to do so (like Blookey's ghost sandwich), whereas human ghosts are, well, dead human souls that are still lingering after their death. As for how each kind of ghost comes to be... well, monster ghosts are born, just like any other monster. So long as one of a monster pair trying for a child is a ghost monster, the child will have a good chance of being a ghost monster. Human ghosts are, well, dead humans whose souls refuse to move on to wherever human souls go after death, generally because they have unfinished business. In Chara's case, their unfinished business is getting the monsters their happy ending on the surface... which means they won't be moving on for a while, if at all. It depends on what Chara views as a "happy ending."
Chapter 39

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Feel free to vote for any one of these titles below! I think I’ll leave the voting open for… I dunno, is another five chapters enough for you guys? Or do you all need longer? (And again, thank you to the people who’ve already voted!)

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (6)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (11)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (6)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (5)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

Someone on fanfiction.net pointed out to me that some people that read this might not necessarily know a lot about the canons of Undertale or the Artemis Fowl series, or might need reminders about canon events. So, whenever something entirely from Undertale or Artemis Fowl canon pops up from now on, I’ll put an asterisk next to it and then make a note about it at the end of the chapters for you guys! (Also, if you need something mentioned before this chapter clarified, go ahead and ask!) ^_^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Holly, you do realize that the Council will have your badge for this if they find out.”

Holly, hunched over Artemis’s commandeered laptop, snorted in amusement. She could tell without even looking around that Artemis didn’t give a damn what the Council did at this point, and she full-heartedly agreed with the sentiment.

“What the Council doesn’t know won’t hurt them until it comes back to bite them in the ass later,” she retorted cheerfully. She carefully read over the email she’d just finished composing to send to the Dublin police.

Dublin Chief of Police

I don’t have much time, so I’ll make this quick. I have a contact in the group called Humanity’s Resurgence, and they’ve warned me that one of the people in the group, probably one of the people in charge, has threatened to have innocent monsters killed in order to threaten the Ambassador into doing something for him. You might want to keep an eye out, maybe have the important monsters, like the Queen, escorted by guards at all times, just in case.

Anonymous
“Short, and to the point, leaving no room for doubt and dropping no names. Satisfied with the message, and making sure that she was using the email account Artemis had specified, Holly clicked the Send button and smirked in satisfaction as her tiny rebellion against the idiots on the Council was sent flying through hyperspace towards its destination.

“Why do you even have this ‘Anonymous’ email address, anyway?” She asked. “Please tell me this isn’t an account for criminal activities.”

He shook his head. “No, I use a different account for that. That account is simply for anonymous communications, namely advice.”

“Advice?” Holly scrolled briefly through Artemis’s inbox, and her eyebrows jumped up when one of the more recent emails grabbed her attention. That was –

“Artemis, you’ve been talking to the monster ambassador with this account?! For how long?!”

He hummed thoughtfully and held out one hand to take his computer back. “Since three months after the public was made aware of monsterkind’s existence. May I have my laptop back?”

Stunned, Holly handed it over. “For that long? Why – ” A memory surfaced, of Artemis handing over information about monsters and their society, claiming to have received it from a reliable source. “Oh my Frond, is that the child you were talking about back then, the one you got the information about monsters from? The Ambassador?”

“Of course.”

“And you’ve been talking to them ever since?”

“In fits and bursts,” he nodded and turned to return his computer to its desk. “I keep an eye on the political climates of numerous countries around the world as part of my job as UN representative. I simply took advantage of that information to warn the Ambassador about any possible complications that may come up when they visit certain countries, and any laws or loopholes in said laws that may assist them.”

Holly narrowed her eyes at him. “You haven’t been doing that while they’re here in Ireland.”

The Irishman waved his hand dismissively. “I’ve had no need to. Frisk is, after all, a genius in both politics and social interactions – I would not deign to insult their intelligence by giving them advice when they clearly have next to no need for it.”

The elf huffed, reluctantly conceding to his point. Frisk had been doing very well on their own, in everything from everyday politics to avoiding assassination attempts, until their kidnapping. They hadn’t needed help until now.

Then again, it seemed now that Frisk might only openly ask for help if they had hit rock bottom, as they had now if what the Recon sprite that had contacted her had said was true.

“I’ve never seen a human that looked so desperate before,” the Lieutenant had said after her official report the day before. “And especially not a kid, Captain. They looked like their world was about to fall apart around them, and I could’ve sworn I saw them beginning to cry when I left.”

No matter what had happened, Frisk had never cried in public. Not once. Not even when they’d had a bullet in their shoulder, which Holly could only imagine would be debilitatingly painful to an untrained civilian fairy, let alone a more physically fragile human. Let alone a human child.
But they hadn’t cried. They’d just smiled and tried to reassure the distressed monsters around them even as they were bleeding. That Mud Kid was probably one of the strongest people Holly had ever seen, just for that. Even some LEP officers were hard-pressed to think past their own afflictions, even while their teammates were injured or otherwise distressed.

And yet they had been *crying* when the sprite, Lieutenant Crane, had agreed to try to get a warning to the monsters.

Honestly, thinking about it now, the kid’s behavior was a little disturbing. By all rights, Frisk should have been more worried about themselves in life-threatening situations than the monsters, especially if *they* were the one injured, but it almost seemed to her like Frisk was putting the monsters first no matter what, even over their own life.

Holly wasn’t sure if this was because of their abusive upbringing or because of their theoretical prophetic magic, or if it was just her, but either way, no little kid, human or fairy, should think that way.

“You look concerned. I am assuming that it is not because I contact Frisk so rarely these days.”

The elf shook her head. “No, it’s not because of that, it’s just…” She huffed. “It might just be me, but something about the way Frisk acts is just… wrong. They’ve always put the monsters first. Even when they got shot, even when they’ve been kidnapped, they’re still putting the monsters first.”

Artemis hummed thoughtfully, his brow furrowing. “Hmm. You have a point. They hardly have a healthy mindset for a human child…”

Before he could say anything else on the subject, however, Holly’s com unit came to life.

“Captain.” It was the Lieutenant again – the sprite had volunteered to take a shift patrolling around the warehouse while she eavesdropped using the tiny microphone she had planted in the Ambassador’s cell. And she sounded worried, with a note of grim determination that Holly had heard from herself on some of her bad days. “I don’t think we can wait any longer to get the Ambassador out. The human that’s been interrogating them? He just threatened to *torture* them.”

“You really are a stubborn kid, aren’t you, Ambassador?”

Tucked even further back into the corner of their cell for comfort, Frisk stifled a desperate, distressed sob as the wizard’s most recent words repeated themselves over and over in their head, long after the door had shut behind him.

“If you were any other kid, I’d let you keep being stubborn. It might have taken longer to get what I need, but I’d still get it eventually. But you’re not a normal kid, are you? You’re too stubborn. You aren’t going to give up the information I need that easily.”

“I was hoping it wouldn’t come to this, Ambassador, but if this is what it takes to get you to talk… I’m giving you your last ultimatum.”

“If you don’t start talking, then I’m going to find a monster, and make you watch every moment of it as I kill them. I’ll end its life, and if you don’t start talking, I’ll find another monster, and do the same thing all over again, and again… until you finally talk.

“Why?” They’d croaked. “The monsters have never done anything to you -!”"
“I’m done with Twenty Questions, Ambassador. You will talk, otherwise, those murderers you’re protecting will die, one by one… even if it means I have to kill the Queen herself right in front of you.”

They couldn’t get the words out of their head. They were on a loop, like they were suffering through their own, personal Resets while the rest of the world marched on.

Why? Why would he do something like that?

They knew the answer to that. Hate could make anyone into a monster – not the friendly monsters so dear to them and Chara, but the sort of monster that would make any human shiver and try not to think too hard about what might be hiding under the bed.

_I have to do something, but I can’t. I’ve tried everything to get free, and nothing’s worked! And whether or not I talk, and give him what he wants, the monsters will die! What am I supposed to do?_! A sob leaked out of their mouth, despite their best efforts. _Chara, what should I do?!_

*…

The ghost had no answers for them. They’d already raged, roared their anger at the walls and cursed at the back of the wizard’s head as he left, and now, apparently, they’d run out of words to say.

Now their only hope was that, somehow, the fairy from earlier had managed to get a warning to the monsters. But there was no way to know if they had.

_Please. I’m not asking for much._ Frisk squeezed their eyes shut. _Please just let her have sent the warning. Please let something just go right for once!

And that was when the door swung open.

Frisk’s head came up, eyes wide, half-expecting to see the wizard standing there again with a helpless monster and a knife in tow, but instead, to their shock, relief, and confusion, there was a small, unfamiliar figure standing in the doorway.

Only at most a meter tall. A dull green, professional-looking jumpsuit complete with armored patches and a sleek futuristic helmet. An honest-to-God ray gun on her belt. Green gossamer wings laid across her back.

Despite the wings of flesh and blood* and the color of the jumpsuit that set her apart from the ones in the Underground that Flowey had described, the figure was most certainly a fairy.

“Chin up, Ambassador.” It was the same woman’s voice from before, coming out from underneath the fairy’s helmet. “The monsters have been warned, and we’re getting you out of here.”

Lieutenant Ivy Crane had never seen a kid that looked so relieved to see a Recon officer in her life, and the feeling it gave her was somewhere between gratifying and furious.

Gratifying because, although Recon officers were often more at risk than any other surface-going officer, most of the attention and the thanks went to the Retrieval teams that came in their wake. She’d never held it against those fairies, but it got more than a little frustrating when you risked your life for them with nothing but a simple Neutrino and a wingset, and the heavily-armed Retrieval team that hardly did any work got the credit. The only people that seemed to appreciate Recon sometimes
were the Retrieval officers themselves.

_Furious_ because, thanks to her microphone, she’d heard every damn thing that bastard of a human had said to the Mud Kid, and what he’d said…

_He threatened to not only kill their friends in front of their very eyes but their adopted mother as well._

You didn’t _do_ that to a child, no matter the species, and if she ever got the chance, she was going to shoot that bastard between the eyes, no matter the consequences.

Thank goodness the Captain (and hadn’t that been a shock, realizing the one technically in charge of this operation was _the_ Captain Holly Short) agreed with her full-heartedly, and had been more than willing to agree with her insistence to rescue the kid _now_ , no matter the grumbling from other fairies.

_Of course_ , she thought grimly as she cut the ropes binding the stunned human’s wrists and feet (and that was another thing that ticked her off, right there, the blasted human had tied those ropes so tightly they’d left _rope burns_. Painful looking ones, on a _kid_), _that means that this rescue’s gonna be as tricky as luring a troll out of its den without being eaten._

The original plan for getting the kid out was fairly simple. The techies and Recon officers would use a combination of human cameras and on-site patrols over the course of a couple of days to determine the schedule of the human guards, and then the techies would put all the cameras on loop so that she and her partner could knock out the guards the same way she had the day before, and sneak the Ambassador out and past the guards using gaps in between the patrols.

But they didn’t have time to wait a couple of days anymore. Not with the threat of _emotional torment_ looming over the kid’s head. So the schedule had changed drastically. They had no idea when The Bastard was coming back – he didn’t seem to have a schedule like the guards did, just came and went at random hours of the day and now the night (another tick on her “Ways to Piss Me Off” List – the son of a troll had the kid so paranoid by coming at night that it was obvious that they hadn’t _slept_ and there were dark circles the size of Jupiter’s Great Red Spot under their eyes! ) That meant that they had to move as quickly as possible because, for all they knew, he would be back in five minutes to keep tormenting his prisoner. Which meant there was no time to set up more than a few loops on the cameras watching the Ambassador’s cell door, nor to set up the mind-wiping equipment in the building they’d been considering beforehand. They’d have to make do with the Tara shuttleport**.

“Why not?” the Captain had reasoned when asked about this. “We’re going to be mind-wiping the kid anyway, right?”

She’d sounded more than a little bitter as she’d said this, and Crane was inclined to agree with the sentiment, now that she was standing in front of the kid she’d just untied, and they were looking ever-so-slightly down on her in unadulterated relief.

“You’re here to get me out?” They breathed, with so much rawness in their voice that it was clear they didn’t quite believe their ears.

Crane smiled grimly beneath her helmet. “Yeah, I am. We can’t let humans like these know about us, and considering the threat that human that left just made, I don’t think you could’ve held out much longer without telling him _something._”

She turned sharply on her heels and gestured for the kid to follow her. “Come on, Ambassador. Let’s hurry up and get you out of that bastard’s reach before it’s too late.”
Due to multiple people requesting more of the sprite Lieutenant from the last chapter, she will now be a reoccurring character and maybe even a main character in the series! Thus, she has been named. Her full name is Ivy Crane, but until one or more of the main characters get to know her better on a personal level, she’ll either be referred to as “Lieutenant” or “Crane.”

While I’d love to have Frisk constantly interacting with Artemis’s fairy friends once they're on better terms with the fairies, it just logically makes more sense for them to encounter other, non-Fowl-related fairies first, and those fairies would have just as much of an impact on how Frisk sees the fairies as a whole. Lieutenant Crane here is making a great first impression on someone who doesn’t know their memories are going to be erased later, eh?

*”Wings of flesh and blood:” Lieutenant Crane is a sprite, and sprites in the AF books are the only fairy race that has actual wings instead of using mechanical wingsets like all the other fairies. Their wings are one of the most vulnerable spots on their bodies and contain several major arteries. A sprite that gets shot down via the wings and doesn’t get medical attention can die, either from the fall or by bleeding out. They also have green skin, and the male sprites are apparently very flirtatious… or at Chix Verbil is.

**”The Tara Shuttleport:” in the AF ‘verse, the LEP fairies get to the surface via shuttles that travel up through vents in the earth’s crust – they fly up them or they ride magma bursts to make better time if they’re in a rush. There are several shuttleports scattered across the world, and Tara is their shuttleport in Ireland. During the Techno-Crash, the Tara shuttleport was exposed thanks to all the explosions going on but has since been repaired, re-hidden, and the memories of all humans that saw it have been wiped. Speaking of the Techno Crash, I'll talk about that in the notes in the next chapter if there's enough space for it... I'm running out of room here...

Now worldbuilding, with questions from Jack54311 again: They asked about what happens when Frisk Loads, specifically what happens in that abandoned timeline, to that timeline's Frisk/Chara, and whether or not loading creates a new one.

In M est P, though the different timelines of Undertale all start with the same starting point. The way I think of it is that the timeline as a whole (let’s call it the timestream so as to be less confusing), including all the different possibilities of Undertale routes, is like a string that’s started to fray at one end. Some of those split ends have been woven together again into a number of new strands, and some simply cut themselves off before they can join any new strands. The things that take place before Frisk falls into the Underground is the intact part of the string – those events are set in stone and cannot be changed (unraveled) because the Resets only take Frisk back to when they fell. However, at the point where Frisk HAS fallen, the “string” that is the timestream has frayed into a chaotic mess of strands – these are the different timelines. Depending on the actions Frisk (or Flowey, when he was in control) takes, they’ll travel along one of these many strands until they reach one of the possible “ endings”, meaning they either die (the strands that cut themselves short) or reach a Pacifist, Neutral, or Genocide ending (the ones that weave themselves back together at the ends.)
What Frisk does when they LOAD using a SAVE star is backtrack along the particular strand of time they’re currently traveling on, while keeping their memories of what has yet to happen. They’re essentially rewinding time on everything around them and even their own body while leaving their SOUL somewhat untouched. (Another, simpler way of putting it would be to say that Frisk’s soul is traveling back in time, and ONLY Frisk’s soul.) This is what allows them to keep their memories of the different paths they’ve gone down, even while their body has been restored to a previous state (and in Chara’s case, they remember because they are literally nothing BUT a soul at this point). As a result of this, it’s actually unknown if the Frisk and Chara of those timelines that never come to pass actually exist. On one hand, you’d think they wouldn’t, because when Frisk changes events in the timeline, the events that lead to those “other” Frisk/Chara duos existing never happened in the first place. On the other hand, Frisk and Chara still have the memories of those “other” Frisks and Charas, which implies that they still exist – after all, memories are what make you who you are. It’s a real paradox. In order to avoid existential headaches, the kiddos prefer to think of there being only one Frisk and Chara that have memories of different timelines.
Chapter 40

Chapter Notes

Feel free to vote for any one of these titles below! Since nobody’s told me otherwise, voting for the series title will close in… four chapters now. Yeah, that sounds about right.

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (6)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (13)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (9)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (6)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

(Thank you for voting!)

Frisk could count on one hand the number of times they’d felt the same overwhelming relief they were feeling now.

The first time had been when, after dozens of timelines of only seeing black after “escaping” from the Underground without the monsters, they’d finally freed the monsters and been able to see the sun they’d once taken for granted. That relief had been a joyful one – standing under the sky in that glorious moment had felt so final, like every last problem in the world had been solved just like that.

It had only taken three months after that for a Reset to bring them crashing back down to Earth, and make them realize that getting to the surface was only the beginning of their problems, but the relief they’d felt before then was still genuine.

The second time had been a far less joyous occasion – it had been relief tempered with guilt, and horror, and a general feeling of why did I do that, when they’d woken up in the timeline following on the heels of their first Genocide Run, and realized that while yes, they’d done all those horrible things to the monsters and filled the Underground with their dust, now the monsters were alive again, every last one. They’d never been as thankful for the Resets as they were in that moment, no matter the guilt and visceral horror that had accompanied the gratitude.

The third time had been the first time Frisk had taken a bullet for a monster on the surface after the Genocide Run. The moment it registered that the metal slug had torn through their lung, and not through the head of the monster behind them, Frisk had felt wildly, hysterically thankful that it was them dying on the ground, and not the monster, even if their death meant time rewinding again. It was worth it because that meant they didn’t have to see another monster turn to dust.

The hysterical gratefulness mobbing their thoughts now, as they were freed from their bonds by the
green-winged fairy, was almost so intense as to rival every last one of those moments.

I’m getting out of here. Someone came to get me out. A fairy came to get me out.

The fairies aren’t the enemy here, and I don’t think they ever were.

It was a stupidly idealistic thought to have, considering that they had no idea why the fairy was breaking them out – well, no idea save for her comment of we can’t let humans like these know about us. But despite this, well, Frisk felt that just this once, they could afford to be idealistic, because they could think of several, less risky ways the fairies could’ve chosen to make them keep quiet about them – they could have tried to use that hypnotic power of theirs to make them forget, or simply killed them, to name a couple.

But instead, they were risking themselves to get Frisk out of here. Not killing them. Not erasing their memories. They had mounted a rescue.

*Oi, come down from Cloud Nine, Frisk. We’re not out of the woods yet. And get some of that rope!

*Chara’s right. Mind still whirling, Frisk numbly obeyed Chara’s command, picking up the longest length of rope that had fallen around them when the fairy had cut them free and tying it around their waist before following the fairy out of their cell. Can’t afford to be distracted now… there are so many ways this could go wrong.

And they’d never been in a violent situation where a length of rope wouldn’t have been handy. Worst case scenario – and this was very much a worst-case scenario – they could use the rope to strangle themselves. It wouldn’t be the first time they’d had to kill themselves in order to LOAD.

They nearly had a heart attack when they stepped out of the cell, and found themselves between two guards still very much on their feet, and staring at the wall in front of them.

*Crap, crap, crap, they’re gonna see me -!

“Hey, kid relax.” The fairy’s voiced was pitched low, so as not to carry in the empty hallway. “They can’t see you, and even if they could, they won’t be moving for a while yet.”

Frisk gulped and turned to look at the tiny woman. “W-what did you…?”

“P-paralytic patches,” a new voice said softly, and Frisk let out a little squeak of shock as another fairy – apparently male and with mechanical wings, this time – appeared from thin air next to them, and pushed past them to close their cell door and begin fiddling with the lock using an odd tool and trembling fingers.

“Standard Recon equipment since a couple of years ago,” the first fairy confirmed quietly and gestured for them to come closer. “Slap them on any exposed skin, and the human’s dead to the world for at least a few minutes.” She produced what looked like some sort of fabric sheet from a pouch on her belt – a sheet which promptly crackled with unseen electricity and turned the same colors as the floors and walls, much to Frisk’s (and Chara’s, if the startled noise was any indication) shock. “Under here, quickly! We need to get out of here before they come to again.”

Despite the shock of seeing what amounted to a real-life invisibility cloak, Frisk didn’t hesitate, ducking under the sheet. It was just barely big enough to cover them completely, and somewhat see-through on the inside – the same way that those one-way veils you saw on Halloween costumes were see-through.
The second fairy finished locking the cell door again with a resounding click and then disappeared again as the woman pulled a cord off of her belt, and held it out to Frisk.

“Clip this onto anything you can,” she ordered. “You might lose track of me without it.”

They took the cord in one hand. “Lose track of -?

The woman vanished. One moment she was there, and the next there was nothing but empty air, and bone-jarring vibrations were humming down the length of the cord from where the other end had to be. With a yelp, Frisk quickly clipped the cord to one of their belt loops before they dropped and lost it.

“G-got it!” They managed.

“Good.” The fairy’s voice sounded like it was coming through a fan – a really powerful, intense fan. Considering the strength of the vibrations rolling up and down the cable, it was a shock they could understand her at all. “Follow me.”

There was a tug from the other end of the cord, and, wrapping their concealing fabric more securely around them, Frisk followed it.

“Hey, would you look at that, a Mud Kid with sense. T-took long enough to find one.”

Crane’s eyes narrowed inside her helmet, and she glanced back at where the Ambassador was trailing behind her before reaching up and switching off her microphone so that the human wouldn’t hear her response. “Private, now is not the time for racism. Or sarcasm. Eyes forward and ears open.”

“C-come on, Lieutenant, you know how I am by now.” The Private’s voice wheedled – despite his words, however, which were obviously intended to be nonchalant, his voice was trembling with repressed nerves. “I have to take a jab at something, otherwise I’m going to lose my n-nerves and fly out the nearest window.”

“Well, take a jab at something else! The kid doesn’t deserve any of your flak, even if they can’t hear it. So you’d better shut your damn mouth and scout ahead like you’re supposed to, otherwise I’m stuffing you into a cell filled with goblins when we head back underground!”

The other officer squeaked and went blissfully silent. Thank Frond. She had a hard time dealing with idiots on her best days, and considering that she wanted desperately to break protocol and hunt down a certain human Bastard but wasn’t able to without endangering the mission, and therefore the Ambassador… no, this wasn’t one of her good days.

“Got a couple of guards coming around the corner soon,” one of the techies on the other communication channels said, sounding almost sympathetic. “Better warn the kid.”

Crane made sure to take several deep breaths to calm down before she un-muted her exterior microphone again.

“We got a couple guards nearby,” she whispered. “Stay quiet, okay?”

There was the faintest of rustling behind them, suggesting that the human had nodded, but other than that they were eerily silent.

No kid should be this quiet.
Kids were supposed to be noisy. Running around, breaking things, flying on new wingsets, yelling and screaming as they played or picked fights with one another. Even the quieter kids still made noise, if you knew what to listen for, even if it was only humming or walking off to find a calmer place to read or draw or do whatever else they wanted to do on their own.

But the Ambassador? Their footsteps were dead silent. If Crane hadn’t been able to tell by the tension of the cable on her belt that the kid was following her, she would’ve thought she’d left them standing back at the cell door.

*I don’t think I want to know why they’re so good at being quiet. If I did know, I’d probably just want to break The Bastard’s face even more.*

Not that The Bastard was necessarily to blame, but still, how she longed to take out her anger on something. Hell, even a rock to melt with her Neutrino would be better than nothing!

*Now there’s a thought – find a convenient boulder, pretend it’s The Bastard’s face, and turn it to rubble.*

The Private hissed a warning from up ahead, and Crane quickly stepped back, grabbed the Ambassador’s arm, and drew them with her to press up against the wall, trying as hard as she could to ignore the kid’s flinch when her hand had made contact, and failing miserably.

*And maybe after that boulder is rubble, I can have a dwarf eat what’s left* so *I can pretend that the Bastard’s getting chewed into little bitty pieces,* she mused, more to distract herself than anything else. *Yes, that sounds like a good idea.*

“You doing okay, kid?” She whispered when the guards had passed them by.

“I’m f-fine…”

_Translation – I just about died from fright._ “Uh-huh,” Crane said, making her skepticism clear. “You’re being rescued from a kidnapping and you’re in the middle of your kidnapper’s lair, and you’re fine?”

“I’ve d-dealt with worse…” D’Arvit, that was _utter conviction_ behind that stutter, like they actually _believed_ that. But getting shot with a bullet and dealing with politicians was nothing like sneaking out from a heavily guarded terrorists’ base.

“Well, worse case scenario, kid, I can always shoot the guards.”

“No!”

The word came out as a startled yelp, and Crane stiffened, scanning her surroundings for anyone that might’ve heard, before turning back to look at the kid, never mind that they couldn’t see her looking.

“What?”

“No,” they repeated, more softly this time. “They don’t deserve that. They might be terrorists, but these are people that still have _families_ to go home to…” They took a deep breath. “And killing someone would only make things _worse_ .”

_Little kids shouldn’t know how bad a death can make things._

But that, at least, she could put down to the kid being an _Ambassador_, instead of it being The Bastard’s fault again.
“I said shoot, not kill,” she muttered, and dragged the human down the hallway again.

Several minutes passed by in relative silence after that. No more guards came – if their read on the patrols was right, there shouldn’t be any more guards passing by for at least another ten minutes, and that was more than enough time to get to the room marked on her schematics of the building as where they’d make their escape from.

Well, presuming that dwarf actually dug an escape tunnel like he’d said he would. Or was ready to. Frond-damn it all, he’d better be ready, and she hoped fervently that she had enough good karma to warrant getting out of this without any more trouble –

Her coms suddenly blared to life, and the Private’s panicked voice pierced her eardrums. “Lieutenant! The human from earlier is coming down the hall, and he looks pissed!”

D’Arvit. “Calm down, Private,” she said. “Where is he?”

“I just said he’s - !” He yelped, suddenly, and went silent.

A feeling of dread began to curdle in her gut.

“Private?”

Her only response was panicked breathing, and the dread worsened.

Oh no. No, no, no, please let my instincts be wrong for once, and let nothing have actually happened and he just bumped into a wall or something, please…

No such luck, because the other fairy’s next words sent chills running down her spine.

“Lieutenant, he saw me!”

“What?!”

“He saw me! My shield flickered when he got close, it was like my magic got drained out of me for a second, I couldn’t move and he saw me and he stole my magic, Lieutenant, there’s blue sparks all over him!!!!”

For once, Crane didn’t scold him for his panic. This time, it was completely warranted.

He stole my magic. Most fairies would say that was impossible. Most fairies had obviously never read any of the case files on Artemis Fowl and the Hybras incident**.

If he said that his magic was drained by a human, then it probably was. There’s no way to mistake something like that. “D’Arvit! Kid, move, we gotta move, now!”

The kid could run impossibly fast, too, she noted as they threw stealth aside in favor of speed, and tried very hard not to think about why.

Chapter End Notes

As y’all can probably tell, I’m having a lot of fun writing Crane. She’s rapidly turning into a Momma Bear character, and it’s GREAT.
* “I can have a dwarf eat what’s left:” Dwarves eat rocks. And no, to those of you calling bullshit right now, I am not kidding. AF series dwarves dig their tunnels by literally eating through dirt, stone, and anything else in their way. They do have some limits – they can’t eat stuff like asphalt, which seals up their insides, or diamond, because it’s too hard and cuts up their insides – but other than that? Put anything remotely rocklike in front of them, and they can chew right through it.

**”The Hybras Incident”: The main plot point of Book 5 was that the demons (No. 1’s species) were isolated on their island of Hybras, which a team of warlocks had lifted out of the timestream during the events of the war between fairies and humans in Ireland ten thousand years ago – however, because the warlock team was killed afterwards, the spell they used was slowly degenerating, which meant that a) the island would eventually begin to fall apart and send demons flying all over space and time, and b) demons were already being sent flying through space and time and popping up at random intervals across history. Artemis, Holly, No. 1 and Qwan ended up using the spell’s proclivity for snatching up demons and sending them flying across the timestream to get to Hybras to save the demons, and on the way there, Artemis managed to steal magic from the fairies in the time tunnel with him. Good thing he did, too, otherwise the demons might not have ever made it back to Earth.

And now, what I promised last chapter: The Techno Crash. The Techno Crash was caused by Opal Koboi causing a literal time paradox by killing her younger self that had traveled into the future (yes I am being 100% serious here). Since her younger self had directly influenced all modern Koboi tech on the market at the time, and had illegally sold tons of obsolete fairy tech to human companies, this meant that all that tech ceased to exist – but instead of simply “ceasing to exist” in the way that you usually think when you think “time paradox,” everything Young Opal contributed to exploded. Including, technically, the older Opal herself, though she managed to turn that to her advantage by using said explosion of time-paradox magic to literally re-make herself, giving herself more magical power than any other living fairy at the time. (And again, being 100% serious here. This literally happened. Koboi was ridiculous. Thank God she’s dead, she would make things so much worse if she wasn’t.)

Jack54311 asked me if Frisk and Chara have experienced any Undertale AUs during the various timelines, and my answer to that was a hearty NO. Though the different AUs do exist in the same MULTiverse as M est P (I’m a sucker for UT multiverse shenanigans, haha, have to leave that option open at least!), they exist in their own separate universes, and not as timelines in this ‘verse. Also, nobody in the M est P ‘verse is currently aware that the various AUs exist – they have no means of knowing, as the extent of time/space shenanigans in their universe has mostly been limited to time loops, time travel, and Sans’s shortcuts (the whole Hybras thing was pretty much a once-in-a-lifetime event.) That being said, what with all the magic and monster tech being thrown around, it’s possible for the M est P folks to find out about other universes eventually… but that’s something that probably won’t be addressed in this series, or if it is, it won’t be in the main storyline… hmm, maybe I can make that into a short story or something, them finding out about AUs...

(Jack also asked about Core Frisk. Since Core Frisk is very much an AU character, the M est P folks aren’t aware of them either. That being said, Core is DEFINITELY aware of them, since they’re, you know, aware of everything.)
The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (6)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (13)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (10)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (7)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

(Thank you for voting!)

Also, warning for this chapter: the F-Bomb gets dropped at least twice.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Their fairy rescuer, Frisk couldn’t help but notice through their own rising anxiety, seemed strangely calm for someone who had sounded so afraid seconds before.

Of course, since they still couldn’t see her, and even if they could she was wearing a helmet, Frisk had no idea what the fairy’s face might’ve looked like at that moment. For all they knew, she was grinning and on an adrenaline high right now. But they were fairly certain she was afraid, if only because of the layers of urgency in her voice – that and she was tugging them forward so fast now that Frisk wouldn’t be entirely surprised if the fairy had decided running wasn’t fast enough and had taken to the air.

Whatever the other fairy had told her (because there was absolutely no way that the fairies weren’t communicating somehow, given the one-sided conversation in another language they’d been privy to seconds before), it wasn’t good. Not one bit. And considering that the little woman had been almost eerily calm when sneaking past guards, without even a single tremor in her voice or a single ounce of hesitation… well, they doubted that it was a guard that had made her so anxious.

Not a guard… oh God, please don’t tell me the wizard found out about my escape so soon!

*Knowing our luck? That’s exactly what happened.

They bit their lip, eyes darting back and forth to scan their surroundings as they passed by another empty hallway.

God, they really hoped it wasn’t the wizard. Frisk had absolutely no illusions now just how much the man hated the monsters – he loathed them, with every fiber of his being. He’d meant every single
venom-soaked word he’d spat out during his attempted interrogations. They’d seen it in his eyes.

_He hates them so much… if he catches me trying to escape… if I don’t manage to get away… he wouldn’t hesitate to carry out his threats. He’d grab a monster off the streets and dust them, and he’d keep doing it until I finally told him what I wanted to know… or until I found a way to LOAD._

They would never let that happen. They’d _never_ let another monster be dusted in front of them, not in a million Resets, not even if they had to die a billion times to make it happen. Not if they could help it.

_I can’t let him catch me again. I won’t let him catch me!_

That determined, forceful thought couldn’t stop them from flinching when the fairy pulling them along suddenly cursed and switched directions, and Frisk caught a glimpse of the wizard racing down the hallway towards them, his face so coldly furious they were shocked he wasn’t leaving ice in his wake.

_I won’t let him catch me_, they repeated in their head, more fearfully this time, as they were dragged down a different hallway. _He won’t catch me, he won’t catch me._

“All right, kids…” Oh stars, the wizard sounded even more furious than he’d looked – they could practically _feel_ the anger in every word, like a cold breeze that went rushing over their skin and made every hair stand up on end. “Get back here!”

“D’Arvit!” Their rescuer cursed (there was no way that word _wasn’t_ a curse, and if Frisk had to guess by the tone of voice, it was a particularly foul one too). “Kid, things might be about to get bumpy for you, I’m taking off!”

If she hadn’t warned them, Frisk might have actually lost their footing as there was suddenly a surge of motion from the other end of the cord. As it was, they nearly toppled over with a yelp, the camouflaging sheet wrapped around them nearly falling from their grip.

_Holy crap, she’s fast!

*Let me take over! I’m faster than you, Frisk, hurry up!*

They didn’t even _think_ about arguing. Within nanoseconds, they’d stepped out of the driver’s seat and let the ghost take over.

“If you don’t stop running _now_, you’ll _regret it_ when I catch you!” The wizard yelled behind them. He was catching up – Frisk saw him round a corner just before their body was hurled out of sight again around the next one.

Chara was biting their borrowed lip, visibly seething with aggression.

*God, I really want to tell him to fuck off!*

_Don’t! You’ll just make him angrier!*

*I know, I know!*

“Almost there, kid!” The fairy dragged them around another corner at top speed, and if Frisk had been in control, they _definitely_ would have slammed into the wall there – fortunately, Chara had better reflexes than that. “Hold on a bit longer!”
*Nooo*, I’m just going to unclip this cord and let you leave us behind. *Of course* I’m gonna hold on!!

Chara now is not the time!

“Ambassador, if you don’t stop now then the first monster I’m going after is the damn *Queen*, you hear me?!”

With another curse, the fairy turned sharply at the next corner, and this time kept turning, dragging Frisk and Chara behind her as she hurtled into an empty room.

An empty room with no windows and only one door, which the fairy promptly slammed shut behind them as she shimmered back into visibility. One hand flew to her belt, removing what looked for all the world like a hand-held futuristic laser gun, and then she fired the device at the door. A beam of searing plasma erupted from the nozzle, melting the doorknob and the lock along with it, sealing the door shut with a jarringly loud sizzle.

“What the hell?!” Chara hissed. “What do you think you’re –”

Frisk quickly shoved the ghost out of control before they could finish the sentence. Knowing Chara, they’d probably swear right in the fairy’s face in the heat of the moment, and the last thing they wanted was for their rescuer to have a reason to hold a grudge.

*Besides, she has to have a reason!*

The woman stepped back, shaking one hand as if to loosen stiff joints. “Don’t worry kid, we’ve got this under control.” She lifted her other hand to the side of her helmet. “Diggums! If you can hear me, we need that tunnel *now*! I’ve got an angry human coming down the hall –”

Footsteps screeched to a halt outside, and the doorknob jiggled furiously. Then there was a pained yelp, probably because the wizard had tried to open the door while the knob was still cooling down from being melted.

“Strike that – I’ve got an angry human *on the other side of the door*! Tunnel! *Now*!”

There was a loud bang. The door shook on its hinges.

“*Ambassador! I know you’re in there!*”

Frisk *eeped*. Oh God was he was trying to break down the door?!

*He is! Damn it, what was she thinking?!*

Another bang. Frisk took a step back, looking wildly around the room. The fairy had said *tunnel*, right? And she wouldn’t have trapped both of them in a room like this if she hadn’t thought they’d be able to get away! They had no idea how the fairies would dig a tunnel through solid stone and concrete fast enough to reach them before the door was forced open, but they *had* to have a way!

They did have a way, but Frisk had been expecting something more along the lines of some sort of super-powered drill instead of the enormous pair of *jaws* that came *bursting out of the ground*.

*What the actual *fuck* ?!?!*

For once, Frisk didn’t feel like reprimanding Chara for their language.
How the heck?! They thought, a tad hysterically, watching with a hanging jaw as the mouth’s owner, a dumpy, hairy little humanoid covered in dirt and with what looked for all the world like a vibrating beard, climb out of the hole he’d just made. Just – how?!?! Chara, how?!?!

*Like hell if I know!

“Finally!” Their rescuer snapped. “What took you so long, did you stop to sample some gourmet clay or something?!”

The new… fairy? He definitely wasn’t a monster, that was for sure – huffed indignantly. “Hey! I’ll have you know that that’s no good clay around here for at least two miles!” He winced, and then gave the shell-shocked Frisk a strained grin full of tombstone teeth. “Climb in, Mud Kid!”

The wizard slammed into the other side of the door again, shouting another threat, and although Frisk couldn’t comprehend what that threat was exactly through their disbelief, it spurred them into action. They beelined for the tunnel, dropping onto their hands and knees next to it.

“Where does this come out?!!”

“Just outside,” the dumpy little creature (Diggums, was that what their rescuer had called him?) grunted.

“There will be a couple others waiting for you out there to fly you away from here,” the first fairy added. “Hurry, and for Frond’s sake, hold your breath!”

“Hey! My breath isn’t that bad!”

“I’m not worried about your breath, I’m worried about what’s going to come out the other end!”

Oh God, Frisk thought, I really didn’t need to know that. I really didn’t need to wonder where all the dirt from the tunnel went, why did you make me think about that?!

But they did as they were told. They sucked in a breath and dived into the tunnel.

Frond, the little Ambassador was clearly desperate, if they were willing to dive down a dwarf’s tunnel to get out of here. Most people would have put it down to them simply not knowing how dwarves dug their tunnels, but Crane had seen the kid’s expression just before they’d nose-dived in, and it had had a look of horrified, no, mortified comprehension on it. The kid had figured out exactly where all the extra dirt had gone and had clearly been trying really, really hard to not think about it.

And they don’t even know how explosive* dwarf digestion gets, yet. I feel sorry for them. Nobody’s prepared for seeing that.

“How much longer can you hold it in, Diggums?” She asked, putting the Ambassador out of mind for the moment. There was still a furious Bastard trying to break down the door, and judging by the sounds of the footsteps out there, he had friends now. It was only a matter of time before the door went flying off its hinges.

“Not much,” the dwarf grunted. He was almost doubled over now, face scrunched up in visible discomfort underneath his vibrating beard and coating of grime – in other words, he looked like he was about to blow.
And then, with just that little observation, Crane was presented with a fantastic idea that went off in her brain like a firework.

*If he’s already about to blow, why not take advantage of it?*

An evil grin spread across her face.

“Say, Diggums,” she mused, as several human bodies hit the door and wood creaked dangerously, “how do you feel about reenacting a certain stunt involving a mountainous Mud Man during the Fowl Manor Siege?**”

When the Bastard and his fellow bastard humans broke down the door barely half a minute later, they were greeted by a small figure with a flap hanging open in his trousers doubled over on the ground. When one of them stepped forward, intending to take the being hostage, said being promptly blew tons of tunnel rubble and a huge cloud of smelly gas right into their faces with enough force to send every one of those humans flying.

The Bastard’s face was worth every painful second of waiting, but Crane couldn’t resist making things even worse for him by blowing up the cloud of unidentified gasses right in his face with a well-placed Neutrino beam. If anyone asked, well, the explosion was just to cover her escape… and the Bastard deserved a hell of a lot more than a few burns.

Chapter End Notes

And with this chapter, Frisk is officially out of the wizard/Bastard’s reach! Yay! (And he got pelted with dwarf gas! Double yay! Can’t wait to write the kiddos’ freak-out about that later… oh man, kids, if you thought dwarves were weird before, you ain’t seen ANYTHING yet!)

* “How explosive dwarf digestion gets:” AF dwarves, as shown in this chapter and mentioned in the previous chapter’s notes, literally eat through the ground itself to make their tunnels. However, their systems only take in nutrients from the soil/rock, and don’t digest the actual soil/rock… which means that all that tunnel debris has to go somewhere. And that somewhere is usually out the opposite end the stuff went in, usually at extremely high velocity. Dwarf gas has been canonically known to cause AVALANCHES, guys.

**”A certain stunt involving a mountainous Mud Man during the Fowl Manor Siege:” In the first book, Mulch Diggums, the dwarf in this chapter, was sent in by Commander Root to 1) determine whether or not Holly (who had been kidnapped by Artemis and was being held for ransom) was alive, and if so, try to help her get out, and 2) find out how Artemis knew so much about the People’s laws during negotiations earlier that night, when humanity hadn’t even known that the fairies existed for centuries before him. Mulch was picking a lock in the Fowl Manor safe room when the camera loop they were using to help him evade detection was noticed, and Butler went to check out the safe room. When he got there, he made the mistake of sneaking up BEHIND Mulch, and was sent flying by a burst of gas into the banister outside the room. REALLY embarrassing, for a bodyguard of his caliber. Later, when Mulch was trying to escape through the same route he used to get into the manor (through the floor of a wine cellar), Butler tried to grab him to stop him from escaping, and nearly got pelted with dwarf gas
again. He managed to avoid it… mostly. Sort of. I mean, a piece of tunnel debris clipped his ear, but other than that…

And now for today’s worldbuilding! Jack54311 asked what happens to Frisk’s LV and EXP when they LOAD or Reset, where it disappears to in the Pacifist timelines, if it can be retrieved, how it works, and whether or not LV or EXP works differently for determined souls. This is a loooong answer, so I’ll be splitting it up into two parts, one for this chapter and one for the next one, so I can get it all in.

While in the Undertale game LV levels up steadily as you kill, I’ve imagined it here as a bit more flexible. In the real world, intent to harm isn’t limited to psychopathic murderers, and the same applies here. While someone who kills a lot of people will still level up, that doesn’t necessarily mean that that person’s LV will stay at the level they gain thanks to those kills. Intent to harm is, for most people, not a permanent state of being and comes in fits and bursts depending on a person’s mood, and thus LV will change depending on a person’s state of mind. For example, someone with an LV of 1 who kills someone in self-defense will temporarily gain an LV of 2 or even 3 thanks to that kill, but once the fight is over, and the intent to harm that they mustered for the fight has passed, their LV will drop back down, even while that person retains the EXP from the kill. In order to rack up levels the same way that Frisk did in the Underground during the Genocide Runs, you basically have to either a) be someone with a genocidal mindset to begin with, b) hate the monsters with everything you have, c) have no empathy which can diminish your intent to hurt others, d) be so desperate to get out of the Underground that you’re willing to do ANYTHING to get out, including hurt people, or e) a combination of any of the above.

Frisk’s Genocide Runs were both examples of option “E.” One of the side effects that Frisk has suffered thanks to the Resets apart from occasionally losing memories is losing their empathy. But even that on its own wouldn’t make Frisk go on the warpath the way they did during the Geno Runs. What happened is a combination of loss of empathy, their desperation to get out of the Reset Loop… and they lost their good memories of the monsters. Basically, Frisk remembered that they had been stuck in the Reset Loop for what felt like forever, that they desperately wanted to get out, and nothing else. No good memories of times with the monsters, and because of their loss of empathy, they weren’t able to FEEL Mercy for them… that combined with the desperation is what led to them hunting down monsters until they were racking up LV. However, in the next timeline, when Frisk recovered their empathy and their memories of the monsters, the intent to harm nurtured in the previous timeline pretty much flat-lined because normally Frisk can’t bring themselves to hurt anyone.
Character 42

Chapter Notes

Feel free to vote for any one of these titles below! Since nobody’s told me otherwise, voting for the series title will close in two chapters.

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (6)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (14)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (13)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (7)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

Looks like Temporal Dynamics is catching up… (Thank you for voting!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Judging by the odd noises they were making, Chara was caught somewhere between helpless snickering and gagging. Once their head had stopped spinning and they’d finished recovering from being hit by whatever small boulder had sent them flying out of the tunnel out onto the hard pavement, they intended to find out why… though honestly, considering the gagging aspect of the noise, that might not turn out to be a good idea.

As it turned out, it was not a small boulder that had hit them. Instead of seeing a heavy rock when they managed to sit upright again, they were subjected to the sight of a massive toothy grin much too big for the hairy face it was attached to.

“Oh good, you’re still awake,” the grin, or, rather, the small dumpy fairy of questionable origin that had definitely still been inside the building last they checked, said. “You’re made of pretty tough stuff, Mud Kid! I’ve knocked out full-grown humans before with half that much gas!”

Frisk blinked at him dazedly for a moment, before another bout of sickened laughter from their ghostly companion caught their attention again.

...Chara?

The ghost’s answer to their unspoken question came out sounding a little strangled.

*F-Frisk, never, and I mean never, get behind this guy. EVER. Oh stars, he sent those assholes flying –

Frisk blinked again, not quite understanding the warning. Okay...?

And then they finally remembered the noise they’d heard just before the hairy fairy had apparently
sent them flying out of the tunnel – an awful noise like every whoopee cushion in the world had been gathered in one place and then had been set off, all at once.

... Oh my God. Oh my GOD, Chara, please tell me that wasn’t what I thought it was. Please tell me that noise I heard had nothing to do with this guy. PLEASE.

Chara outright cackled.

*Oh, it was exactly what you thought it was! Oh my God, that was so disgusting but so, so worth it, I wish I could have seen that wizard bastard’s face -!

Eyes widening until they were about to fall out of their skull, Frisk turned to gape in dawning horror at the squat little figure still grinning before them.

“That – y-you just –”

“Jettisoned all my tunnel waste into the faces of a bunch of angry human terrorists?” God, the little creature sounded way too cheerful admitting to something that, in Frisk’s mind, was basically tantamount to biological warfare. “Yup!”

Chara gagged again. Frisk almost followed suit.

“H-how on earth –”

They were cut off by a loud boom from somewhere behind them. Frisk yelped, springing to their feet and whipping around, fully expecting to see smoke rising from the building they’d just escaped from. There wasn’t any.

“What was that?!” They demanded.

The fairy – no, Diggums, that was what the lady inside had called him, they’d almost forgotten – scratched his beard, still grinning far too widely. “Huh. Didn’t think I had enough vole curry this morning for that big of a boom.”

In perfect unison, both Frisk and Chara choked in shock.

*Oh my God. No. No.

T-that was – he – that – A swarm of bewildered words built up in their head for a moment, swirling in confusing eddies, and then exploded into full sentences. How?! Human gas can’t do that! Monsters can’t do that! There wasn’t any magic involved, right?! I didn’t see any, there weren’t even any sparks or anything, just – HOW??!!

*What even ARE fairies?! What the actual fuck?!?

Something of their inner freak-out must have shown on their face, because Diggums’ grin grew even wider than before, and he laughed at them.

“Oh Frond, kid, your face! Haha! ”

“Leave off the teasing, dwarf, we’re on a time crunch here.” A new voice, male, by the sounds of it, and sounding somewhat sympathetic. Frisk yelped and spun around again, and the new fairy, this time in a matte black suit instead of the dull green one the woman inside had worn, put up his hands in a calm down gesture.
“Easy there, Ambassador.” The fairy soothed. “Didn’t mean to startle you. Just ignore Diggums for now, alright? We’ve got to fly you out of here before the humans inside come looking.” The helmeted head tilted to one side slightly, and a sigh gusted out through unseen speakers. “We’ll need to get you one of the spare cam-foils, though. Looks like you lost yours underground.”

Honestly, Frisk had been more concerned with the borderline *biological weapon* that was still laughing in their face to notice that they no longer had the cam-foil. Heck, they hadn’t even really registered that they’d still been holding onto it when they’d first climbed into the tunnel. They’d been too busy being focused on getting away, and trying as hard as they could not to think about how the tunnel had been excavated. But sure enough, when they glanced down, their hands were clenched only on air.

“Sorry,” they mumbled. They hadn’t *meant* to lose the cam-foil, and God, that kind of tech must have cost a *fortune*.

The fairy huffed, and, reaching into a large pocket on the leg of his suit, pulled out another sheet of the foil. “It’s not your fault kid, it’s all on Diggums’ shoulders.”

“Hey! It wasn’t my fault!”

“I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of people that actually give a damn, Diggums.” The fairy slung the foil over Frisk’s head. “Head back underground. Last thing we need is you getting shot because you can’t shield and didn’t get away from a bunch of gun-wielding humans in time.”

The dwarf made what was probably some sort of rude gesture, though he didn’t seem particularly upset if the seemingly-perpetual smile was any indication, and then his jaw unhinged like a snake’s and he dived headfirst into the ground. Within seconds he was gone, and there was only a patch of moving dirt where he’d been.

“Here, Ambassador.” The fairy held out a cord attached to his belt, just like the woman inside had done. “Same drill as inside.”

They took the cord with shaking fingers. While Diggums had been a mortifying distraction, now the severity of the situation was bearing down on them again, and they sort of wished that he’d come back. They weren’t out of the woods yet.

Then a thought struck them, and they turned back towards the building. “Wait, what about the lady inside? We can’t leave without her!”

“She’s fine, kid. She and the Private in there just got out, I got word over the coms.” He snorted suddenly. “Knowing Crane, she’s probably the one that set off that explosion. She’s got a vengeful streak as wide as the Atlantic when it comes to people that target *children*.”

A little heartened, though still trembling with nerves, Frisk connected the cord to their belt loops, just like they had inside. “She’ll be okay?”

“She’s already up in the air.” The fairy tapped something on one wrist – Frisk caught a glimpse of some sort of panel with a little computer screen displaying some sort of graph and unfamiliar symbols, plus some buttons – and then Frisk’s mind was suddenly far from the fairy inside the building, because they felt for all the world like they’d just been hit with blue magic. They felt almost *weightless*, like they were floating in a pool of water instead of standing on solid ground.

“W-what –”
The fairy didn’t wait long enough for them to finish their sentence. A pair of mechanical wings slid out of the back of his suit, and then he was taking to the air.

Flying, Frisk decided after a heart-pounding minute, was both amazing and terrifying at the same time, and honestly, the terror was probably only because they weren’t actually flying themselves, but dangling off of a fairy’s belt by a thin cord hundreds of feet off the ground.

Apart from that? Well. There weren’t many planes that hadn’t fallen to Earth during the Crash, and even fewer that had been repaired – those few that were open to passengers were often very, very expensive to get seats on. And their biological parents had never brought them with whenever they’d left for their business trips, so even if they had flown, Frisk never had.

This was nothing like Frisk imagined flying on a plane would be like. They weren’t encased in a machine that did the flying with them, sheltered from the elements. The wind was blowing right into their face, making their eyes water, and the sharp smell of humidity and distant rain came right along with it, and they could hear the distant, faint nighttime sounds of the city below, they could see the city below for what looked like miles – it was exhilarating. The closest they’d ever come to this had been… well, a long time ago, when after a particularly horrible surface run, they’d climbed to the top of the tallest building they could find and jumped. This was so much better, mostly because the apprehension from knowing that the ground was coming up to meet their face in a few seconds’ time wasn’t there.

That didn’t mean there wasn’t still some apprehension, though for an entirely different reason than because of how high they were.

I might be out of HuRg’s reach, for now, but… I feel like something else is going to happen soon. And I’m not going to like it.

A faint flicker of movement in the corner of their eye caught their attention, and Frisk looked up from gawping at Dublin through the gap in their concealing foil to see a familiar green-suited figure flitting up to fall into formation right beside them.

“Hey kid,” the woman said. “You doing okay?”

Frisk gave her a brief smile. “Y-yeah. Um, y-you’re Crane, right? That’s what your… teammate? That’s what he called you.”

“Yes, that’s me.”

Their smile grew a little wider, a little more sincere. “Thank you,” they said, with feeling. “Thank you for getting me out of there.”

The fairy might have smiled. Frisk still couldn’t see her face and find out. But that didn’t stop them from seeing Crane’s shoulders twitch, and see the slight stuttering of green wings as they missed a beat.

“Don’t thank me, kid,” she said, so quietly they almost didn’t hear her over the wind – or the sudden pounding of their heart. But heard her they did, and she sounded guilty.

Why does she sound guilty? Unless –

*Unless there’s something else going on here. And considering that our hotel’s not near here,
Frisk glanced down and back – as much as they could, it was a little difficult with the foil covering them – and sure enough, there was the distant but still familiar police station disappearing behind several taller buildings behind them.

They turned back to look at their rescuer – no, the fairy beside them and swallowed.

“Where are you taking me?” They whispered.

Crane didn’t answer. She just looked away, and then shimmered out of visibility, leaving nothing behind to show that she was there save for the occasional buffeting of wind from her wings.

Minutes later, what little exhilaration Frisk was still feeling was disappearing behind them along with Dublin, as the fairies left the city behind and struck out into the rolling green countryside.

Frisk wasn’t sure exactly how long the fairies had been flying for, nor how far they were from Dublin. Clouds had long since covered the moon (a moon which was a sliver over full, whereas the last time Frisk had seen it, it had been a sliver under – how long had they spent in that cell?), thus completely ridding them of the only celestial navigation tool they’d been able to see, and throwing the countryside below into deep shadow. And while years ago, the hills below might have been dotted with tiny blobs or large streams of bright lights as they passed over small towns and homesteads and packed roads, now they couldn’t make out a single landmark. Nothing but green, tinted ever-so-slightly blue by the moon.

That alone would have made them nervous, but Frisk was honestly more unnerved by the fact that the fairies hadn’t said a single word during the entire flight. At least, not one that they’d been able to hear. And though Chara had apparently been able to make out a few brief murmurs through the fairies’ visors, they hadn’t been able to understand them.

*Think it’s the same language that Crane was speaking in back in the warehouse.*

The word Crane came out with scathing contempt, and Frisk winced, glancing to the side again where they thought the green-winged fairy was still flying.

*It’s… probably not her fault this is happening, Chara, they thought weakly. She seemed… guilty, back in the city.*

*I don’t give a damn.*

A lie. A big one. If Chara hadn’t given a damn, they wouldn’t have been so upset right now, but Frisk could tell that, though they weren’t feeling as foul-mouthed as they had been when the wizard had been chasing them, they were still seething internally.

They didn’t blame the ghost, not one bit. Had they been any more temperamental a person, they probably would have been seething too. Instead, all they could feel was a cold little tendril of dread and resignation curling up in their stomach and making itself right at home.

*I don’t think they’re going to kill me. If they were going to do that, they would have done it back at the warehouse, where it would’ve been easier, and could be blamed on HuRg. But that still leaves a lot of options open.*
Options like memory-erasing. Which they still could have done back at the warehouse, possibly, assuming that the enthralling-voice-trick was something all fairies could learn, and not just a few.

*I guess it’s possible that these ones don’t know how… and that someone where they’re going does.*

They took in a shuddering breath, holding the sheet of cam-foil closer in a weak attempt to comfort themselves. It didn’t work.

*Chara? If… if they are planning on making me forget them somehow… you won’t let them, will you?*

*Not in a million years.*

The wind blowing into their face suddenly lessened, and Frisk jolted, heart beating faster as the fairy flying them started to descend. They squinted towards the ground, trying to make out any defining landmarks. Nothing but green farmland, barely visible without the moonlight -

No. Wait a second. While the relatively flat farmland was difficult to make out, there was a little bit of moonlight slipping through the clouds and illuminating some of the earth below, and amongst the fields, they could see a little farmhouse, and two odd mounds, surrounded by rings of raised earth –

*No. No way.*

They knew those mounds. They’d looked up pictures of them a couple weeks before getting on the boat to Ireland when looking through tourist sites to visit with Toriel after their duties in Dublin were done.

*No way. Is that Tara?*

Chapter End Notes

Daniel pointed out to me that the worldbuilding notes, though cool, tend to take up a lot of space, and pointed me to a site called Pastebin.com where people can store text online for a theoretically limitless period of time. I'm thinking about possibly moving M*est* P worldbuilding notes to that site. I know that not everybody who reads this fic is using their own computer, though - there's at least one person that's mentioned using a school computer, which blocks some sites - so I wanted to check and see if people are a) okay with the worldbuilding being moved to Pastebin, and b) are able to access Pastebin from their computers in the first place before actually posting anything there.

I had a little trouble writing Mulch’s dialogue this chapter, as little of it there was, so I ended up checking out a couple of Artemis Fowl audiobooks to listen to while I was writing this, and that sort of helped. I’m gonna listen to the books while writing from now on, at least until I have to return them. And wow, would you look at that, they’re at Tara now. Mind-wipe is incoming, people.

On a brighter note, at least Frisk got to fly. I’ve sort of had the idea in my head now that if this Frisk ever got to fly, they’d absolutely love it. The bit about jumping off of a building wasn’t something I meant to slip into that bit, but at the same time, Frisk is Frisk, they can’t really BE a normal kid, in any way, for very long. (Don’t worry, the jumping off a building thing was more for the sake of being able to LOAD than because Frisk wanted to kill themselves. Doesn’t make it any easier to stomach, but still.)
And now let’s continue the rest of the worldbuilding from the last chapter: the stuff about LV and Frisk and Chara.

That being said, Frisk still has all the EXP they’ve gotten from the various timelines. Killing people leaves a mark, even if the LV earned from a kill isn’t necessarily permanent. (And ironically enough, that means that Frisk has a higher EXP than Chara, even though the ghost has a significantly more violent nature than they do – Frisk’s killed more people in their lifetime than Chara ever did.)

People with highly Determined souls tend to stubbornly hang onto a certain level of violence that varies from person to person, depending on what kinds of experiences that person has had in their life. A Determined soul who’s been through a crap ton of violent experiences (like Chara, for example) will hang onto a higher LV for longer periods of time – in fact, depending on what they’ve been through, and how Determined they are to hang onto that violent mindset, they may never drop down to LV 1 ever again, and therefore have a higher default LV. On the other hand, kinder Determined souls who’ve been through less violent experiences (like Frisk) find it easier to get back into a merciful mindset after a violent situation has passed.
Chapter 43

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Welp, looks like that’s a big NO for Pastebin. Worldbuilding notes will stay as they are! ^_^

Feel free to vote for any one of these titles below! Since nobody’s told me otherwise, voting for the series title will close in one chapter.

- The Magic of Souls (1)
- Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
- Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (6)
- Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
- Fairytales (16)
- Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (16)
- Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (8)
- Underground Fairies
- A Fairy Strange Crossover

Fairytales and Temporal Dynamics are tied now, wow (Thank you for voting!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Frisk was actually physically trembling by the time the fairies, and they themselves, had landed. Even passing through the honest-to-God holographic projection that hid their landing site from view couldn’t rid them of their anxiety, and the closer the ground had gotten, the more nervous they’d found themselves becoming. When their feet had finally touched down on solid earth once more, they were one big bundle of panicked nerves, shaking and clinging even more tightly to their cam-foil for some semblance of comfort.

Around them, several fairies materialized, shimmering into view like mirages in a desert. The dull green-suited figure of Crane was still there, but now there were also a couple of fairies that Frisk distinctly did not remember from Dublin that seemed to have joined the little group – and every one of them, just like Crane and the fairy that had flown them in, had futuristic weaponry on their belts. Frisk tried their hardest not to gulp at the sight, and to keep the fear off their face.

*God, I really hope I can talk the fairies out of whatever they’re planning to do… otherwise, I might not be able to get away, not with all these fairies keeping an eye on me.*

The fairy that had flown them in tapped something on his wrist, the same wrist he’d tapped back in Dublin, and Frisk stumbled with a yelp as gravity abruptly returned and their limbs felt like they’d turned to heavy lead.

“Whoa there, kid. Careful.” Crane put one gloved hand on their shoulder, steadying them. “Sorry about that. Moonbelts can be a little disorienting if you’re not used to them.”

Sucking in a breath to calm themselves and steady their voice, Frisk glanced at her uncertainly.
“Moonbelt…?”

The woman nodded, and, with her hand still on Frisk’s shoulder, gently started leading them forward, towards the small hill they’d seen from above. “Lessens the pull of gravity on you and whatever you’re carrying to one-fifth of the Earth’s norm. Pretty useful, especially when you need to carry heavy equipment with you. Come on, we’re almost there.”

From above, the small hill had looked just like that, a small hill. But when Frisk looked up at Crane’s words, what they saw was, although more or less the same size and shape as the hill, definitely NOT a hill. Though there was still enough grass and dirt to suggest that it might have been just a hill once, the structure in front of them was made of weathered metal, supported by solid steel pillars and topped with a shining dome of some sort of dark glasslike material. It honestly looked like someone had taken a futuristic moon base and dumped it into the middle of Ireland, and the contrast between the metal and the rolling green that stretched them around them was more than a little jarring.

It was even more jarring once they’d actually reached the hill, and Crane had done something with a keypad that opened a sliding door into the interior of the building, revealing an interior that would definitely have been right at home in a sci-fi movie. The glassy dome on the ceiling turned out to be a massive skylight with an amazing view of the moon, though thanks to how bright the inside of the building actually was, it didn’t give the best view of the stars. Everything was all metal or some sort of plastic, carefully cleaned and polished. Frisk’s first thought was that the place might be some sort of laboratory, with how clean and bright everything was, but then they spotted what looked like some sort of waiting area, reception desks, an odd clear tube filled with clear liquid running along the ceiling that looked big enough to hold a car. There were signs attached to the ceilings, too at intervals along the roof, with arrows pointing to different parts of the building and labels in an odd language that looked like it was entirely composed of nature-based symbols – possibly the written form of the same language they’d heard Crane speaking.

All in all, except for the weird tube on the ceiling, the place looked more like some sort of station than a laboratory. Maybe a train station, or even an airport, and probably a place that normally got a lot of traffic.

And though it didn’t have a lot of traffic right now, there was definitely activity, because there were at least another couple dozen or so fairies inside. Some stood to attention – guards, maybe – but some were running around with machinery in their arms. Still others were disappearing out of view through a door on the other side of the room that seemed to lead down, deeper into the hill. All of them were dressed in the same futuristic armored suits as Crane and the other fairies they’d already seen, and all of them had the same weapons on their belts.

This time, Frisk didn’t try to stop their nervous gulp. God, there were so many of them…

A sigh drew their attention back to Crane. She’d reached up and taken off her helmet, revealing a very pretty and definitely adult face, with feminine features, high cheekbones, and long pointed ears which Frisk had admittedly been expecting. What Frisk hadn’t been expecting exactly was the woman’s jade-green skin, and the short hair so blonde that it was practically white that had been swept back from the woman’s face and held back with what were probably barrettes.

“Much better,” Crane mumbled, rubbing at the tip of one of her ears with a grimace. “Those helmets are more than a little stifling.” Noticing Frisk’s stare, she gave them a faint smile. “Yes, the green is natural.”

Frisk flinched, and quickly looked away, scanning the room around them. They saw Crane’s smile drop out of the corner of their eye, giving way to what was definitely an unhappy and guilty expression.
"Hey," the fairy said softly. "Don’t worry, kid. You’re not in any danger. We don’t kill people if we can help it. That’s not the way we operate."

*I’m not worried about dying. I’m worried about whatever else it is you might do.*

Crane put a hand back on their shoulder, obviously meant to be comforting this time. “Don’t worry. We’ll get you back to the monsters soon, and we’ll be sure to tip off the police about the threats made against you and them as well, okay?”

We’ll get you back to the monsters soon.

Those words *would* have been comforting under any other circumstances, but now they just made Frisk’s heart skip a beat.

They’re not going to kill me, and they’re not going to lock me up again. That means that memory-erasing is still a possibility.

And memory-erasing was *worse* than being killed or locked up. Erasing a memory was like erasing a piece of what made you *you*, taking away a piece of self. And, even worse, who knew what sort of side effects there were in the long run? Best case scenario, none, and Frisk would simply keep on living and doing their thing without ever remembering the fairies. But the worst case scenario?

If the fairies messed up, for all Frisk knew they’d be sent spiraling back into the same horrible mindset they’d had during the Genocide Runs. And having that happen when the monsters were finally on the surface again, when Frisk had been helping them for years as they worked towards their happy ending, when the monsters knew them as their Ambassador and their *friend* …

They’d never see it coming, and I’d slaughter them. Them and maybe anybody who got in the way.

They couldn’t risk that happening. They *couldn’t*.

*That won’t happen. I won’t let it.*

Chara’s grim determination was almost comforting, but it wasn’t enough to completely calm them down – especially not when Crane started leading them towards the door on the other side of the room. Deeper into the building, and farther away from the door. Farther away from an easy escape. And the other fairies were definitely keeping an eye on them too. Even though most of them were still wearing helmets, Frisk could see their heads following them as they walked.

If they did try to make a break for it now, they probably wouldn’t be able to get away, at least not without having to hurt someone. Not with so many eyes on them, and so many people to run interference.

Then the entrance was out of sight, and Crane was leading Frisk down a low-ceilinged corridor made of the same metal as the rest of the building. There were more fairies here, bustling to and fro – most of them in the same black or dull green uniforms as the fairies they’d already seen, but there were also others in less combative looking gear, and some in what honestly looked like the sort of uniforms that someone at a reception desk might wear. *Those* fairies took double-takes when they saw Frisk, and some even went so far as to edge away from them to stick close to the wall with wary expressions.

“Don’t mind them,” Crane murmured. “Most civilian fairies have never seen an actual human in person before.”

Frisk nodded numbly, watching another nervous fairy edge past them. Then they were moving out of
the hallway and through a large sliding door that wooshed open like something out of Star Trek, into a small room. Judging by the screens on the wall surveying the building, including the entrance area they’d just walked through and what looked like an honest to God docking bay for some sort of spaceship-like craft, this was probably some sort of security center.

There was a big machine in the middle of the room, with lots of buttons, and a big screen. Fiddling with the buttons was a figure considerably taller than the other fairies with four legs, a tail, and a definitely human-like torso.

*Oh my god. Is that a centaur?*

They definitely looked like a centaur. Frisk tried really hard not to gawp as the fairy looked up from the machine to look at them, revealing a long face with horsey features.

“Finally,” the centaur groaned. “What took you so long? Did you decide to stop and enjoy the scenery?”

There was a huff from behind them, as one of the other fairies that had escorted them from Dublin – possibly the one that had actually carried them – audibly took offense to this. “Well, some of us had a Mud Kid to carry, centaur. I’d like to see you try that.”

This earned an offended whinny. “Hey!”

Crane squeezed Frisk’s shoulder once, then finally let go. “Leave the banter for later please, Foaly. Now’s not the time.”

“Alright, alright, fine…” The centaur – Foaly – waved off her concerns, and then turned his full attention onto Frisk. “So, you’re the little monster Ambassador, huh? You’re even smaller than you look on TV!”

They shifted uncomfortably and tried for a smile. It came out more scared than they would have liked.

Foaly let out a blustering sigh and shooed some of the other fairies in the room away. “Guess I should have expected this… don’t worry kid, I’m not gonna hurt you. Hell, I don’t even really have any magic to use against you!”

Frisk pursed their lips, giving him a skeptical look. He might have been telling the truth, but they weren’t entirely sure.

“Don’t give me that look kid. I mean it. Nothing bad’s gonna happen to you here.”

“Then you’re not erasing my memories?”

That gave the centaur pause for a moment, and he shifted uncomfortably. “Well, yeah, I am.”

Frisk narrowed their eyes at him, heart pounding. “Without magic?”

He snorted, turning to gesture at the machine he’d been working on, picking up an odd little headpiece thing as he did. “Don’t need magic with this baby, and the mesmer’s not good at erasing loads of memory at a time anyway. *Come on over here, Mud Kid. I don’t want to do this, but the sooner we get this done, the sooner we can send you back to the monsters, and the sooner I can go and yell at the Council for being idiots.”

Frisk was barely even listening to him. Their heart had started pounding too loudly to hear him over
after the first six words.

*The fairies don’t need magic to erase people’s memories.*

Having a memory-erasing hypnosis power was frightening enough, but at least that power could be *negated*. All it would take was Chara taking over their body and the effects wouldn’t hold. But a machine? Real life ghosts couldn’t mess with machines the same way the ones in movies could. Chara had told them so, hundreds of timelines ago.

*Which means that Chara can’t do anything. If I let them use that machine on me, there’s nothing either of us can do to stop our memories from being erased.*

Crane gave them a gentle pat on the head. “It’s alright. It won’t hurt. Come on.” Her hand brushed against Frisk’s own hand – maybe intending to hold onto it to lead them this time – but Frisk jerked away before she could, taking a step back away from the machine.

One of the other fairies sighed. “Kid, come on. You’re not going anywhere until you’ve been mind-wiped.”

Frisk shook their head, eyes wide in growing panic. *I can’t let them do this. I can’t! There’s too much that can go wrong!*

“Y-you can’t,” they whispered desperately, not even bothering to filter the fear out of their voice. “Please.”

Crane winced, looking very much like she wanted to reassure them but couldn’t find the words for it. The other fairies were far from reassuring though – they seemed downright impatient.

“Come on, Ambassador. We don’t have all day. Just go sit down in the damn chair.”

*They’re not going to take no for an answer, are they? They’re not going to let me go until they erase my memories.*

“Hey, be a little nicer about it, would ya?” Foaly rolled his eyes at the fairy that had spoken. “The kid’s scared enough as it is, and they’re not anything like the humans we’re used to, you know.”

*I can’t let them do that. I can’t let them do that, but they’re not going to let me go! What do I do?! Chara, what do I do?!*

One of the black-suited fairies groaned and took off his helmet. Dark green eyes made eye contact with Frisk’s wide, terrified ones.

*Don’t bother trying to talk them down! Just run!*

The fairy’s voice came out sounding like a choir of tinkling, beautiful notes. “*Ambassador, go sit –*”

Chara wrenched control away from one of Frisk’s legs, and they kicked the fairy in the groin. *Hard.*

The mesmerizing voice petered out into a pained squeak, the fairy stumbled back, face going white with pain, and then Frisk and Chara, as one child, *ran.*

*I can’t let them. I can’t let them.*

Behind them, Frisk heard surprised shouts, as the fairies in the room realized exactly what they’d just done and came after them.
Their legs suddenly darted to one side – Chara had wrenched them off a collision path with a fairy that had come rushing at them from the other side of the hall.

*Frisk pay attention damn it!!*

But Frisk could barely hear them. Their vision was tunneling, and the only thoughts in their head was a repeated mantra of can’t let them can’t let them, run away, run away. They were well and truly panicking now, heart beating so wildly it should have come bursting out of their chest, and the fear was pushing Chara’s voice to the back of their mind, out of the way. Pushing the ghost out of the way, too, though Frisk barely registered that. They weren’t taking full control of their shared body like they usually would, just taking over control of limbs in fits and bursts to send them careening away from an onrushing fairy.

Then Frisk was tearing out of the hall and headed for the door to the outside, and every fairy in the room leapt after them. There still couldn’t have been more than a couple dozen fairies, but a couple dozen people were still rushing at them, in between them and freedom, and so Frisk, already in full fight or flight mode, acted without thinking.

Chara may have been the physically stronger and faster of the two of them when they were in control, but that didn’t mean that Frisk couldn’t fight.

The first fairy to get too close got clocked right in the face, so hard it sent him stumbling back into another fairy.

The second was hit with a whirling kick, a move that looked more like part of a dance than an attack, but still strong enough to send him tumbling to the ground.

Frisk barreled through the fairies like a tiny missile, punching and kicking and biting anything that came close enough to bite, almost feral with panic.

With every kick and punch, they could have sworn they saw an orange glove or a ballerina slipper... where they had only bare hands and sneakers.

One of the fairies finally got lucky enough to slam into Frisk in a full-body tackle, sending them toppling to the ground. His visor was up, revealing his eyes, wide and shocked but grimly determined.

“Calm down, human,” the fairy said, voice tinkling like crystal. “We –”

Frisk hit him hard in the stomach.

One of their hands brushed against a weapon on his belt – some sort of baton, with a button on the handle – and Frisk grabbed it automatically and shoved it through the fairy’s visor while he was still winded. Chara twitched their thumb over the button and there was a crackle of electricity and a sharp yelp.

The fairy stumbled back, tumbling onto the floor and landing flat on his behind, and looked up just as they were readying the still electrified baton to bring it down on his head, blue sparks of magic lighting up in and around his left eye.

For one moment, just one, horrible moment, they weren’t in a futuristic fairy fort anymore. They were standing in a golden hall, with sun streaming in the windows, with their knife raised over their head to bring down on a head sporting familiar sockets, one lit up with a glowing blue pupil.
Frisk froze.

Then something hit them over the head, and everything went dark.

About a minute later, several fairies dragged the unconscious Ambassador into the security room, and Foaly was thanking every lucky star he had that he wasn’t an LEP jock.

“You lot look like you lost a fight with a troll,” he said.

One of the fairies, an elf with a huge bruise on his face already being erased by blue sparks, scowled at him, and let go of the human with one hand to make a rude gesture at the centaur.

“Couldn’t you have helped?” One of the other officers huffed. Foaly snorted loudly.

“And get myself beat up by a little kid? No thank you, I still have some pride left.”

The looks he got in response to that made it very, very clear that if he didn’t shut up immediately, then every fairy in the room was going to be guilty of murder, and he balked. “Alright, alright, don’t give me that look! Just get the kid onto the chair, and I’ll mind-wipe them and we can all be on our way home!”

Still glowering at him, and looking very much like they wanted to commit homicide, the officers maneuvered the unconscious kid onto the chair. The sprite Lieutenant that had come in with the kid flitted over to them as they did, hovering like a helicopter over their shoulders with a frown on her face. When the other officers had moved out of the way, she flitted right up to the chair, pausing for a moment, and then reaching out to touch the back of the kid’s hand. Sparks of blue flickered along her fingers, targeting the Ambassador’s fingers. The magic raced along the surface of their skin, targeting bruises that Foaly barely had time to notice before they were wiped away. Some of the magic actually sunk beneath the skin as well, healing unseen injuries.

Swelling, maybe? Bruising beneath the skin, or maybe a tendon got torn?

The sprite pulled her hand back once the bruises were gone. For a moment, she hovered over the kid, a guilty look on her face. Then, after a brief glance at Foaly, the sprite left the room along with everybody that wasn’t a techie, leaving Foaly to finish setting up the mind-wipe with trembling fingers.

He’d seen every last second of the little Ambassador’s escape attempt on the monitors. There was no way he wasn’t going to watch, if only because he needed to make sure the kid didn’t get away. And in all his years, he’d never seen a human child go on the attack like this. He’d never seen a human so… vicious.

He’d also never thought a Mud Kid that wasn’t a Butler could take down armored LEP fairies, but it had happened only a hallway away from him, played out right there on the monitors in front of them. The kid had been like a miniature troll* that had been driven mad by light and noise and fear –

Fear. Gods above, they were scared. The kid had been so frightened of them – no, of the mind wipe – that they’d almost trampled the officers between them and escape underfoot. So frightened that they hadn’t noticed they were injuring themselves in the process of trying to escape.

Why were they so frightened of losing their memories that they’d ignore injuries and barrel right through a group of armed military personnel to get away?
Well, he wasn’t going to get an answer by stalling. He may not have agreed with mind-wiping the kid, but recording their memories could answer a lot of questions, and orders were orders.

Speaking of orders…

Foaly trotted over to the Ambassador once the fairies had finished securing them to the chair, just in case, and stared at them for a moment. They looked so calm now. It was almost unnerving, since they’d practically been going rabid with terror barely a minute or two ago.

“Hey, Mud Kid,” he said, quietly. “I’m not sure if you can hear me, but for the record, I’m sorry about all this. The Council’s ordered the mind-wipe, and while they’re a bunch of morons that are practically gushing stupidity out of their pointy ears, orders are orders.” He huffed indignantly. “Me and the Commander and a bunch of other people are positive the mind-wipe won’t work on you for long, anyway. You’ve already got at least one monster that can tell you about the fairies, and all it takes is one trustworthy person telling you what you forgot to bring it all rushing back.”

He carefully fixed the headpiece, sedative seals and all, over the human’s face. “That and you’re clearly not a normal human. You’re a genius, and running theory is that you’ve got some sort of magic on top of that… we’re gonna have to check that, actually… and we’ve got no idea how that might affect things. Your memories will probably be right as rain soon… hell, maybe even by the time you wake up.”

He stepped back, eyed the kid for a moment, then sighed. “Just… just don’t hold it against us, okay? I know you’ve got every right to, but the People can’t afford a war with the monsters. We’d lose, big time.” He shivered. “And I’d like to, you know, not die. I’ve got a wife to get home to, and she’d probably come after my ghost with a vengeance.”

He trotted back to the screen, swiping his hands across the mind-wipe terminal and activating it. Gnommish symbols flashed across the screen as the machine began filtering through the human’s memories.

“Welp,” Foaly muttered. “No more use in stalling. See you later, Mud Kid.”

He activated the machine, and the erasing of the Ambassador’s fairy memories was underway.

Chapter End Notes

I wonder how many people are gonna hate me for this chapter…? >:3

To those people who thought that Frisk and Chara would get away before Frisk’s memories were messed with… haha, nope. The Council didn’t want to take any chances – while they may be stupid when it comes to dealing with potential catastrophes, they’re not stupid enough to risk Frisk getting away when they wanted them mind-wiped so badly that they were willing to save them from terrorists to do it.

And yes, to those that might think to ask, the reason Frisk’s good at fighting is mainly because of the Genocide Runs, and some Neutral runs as well – they fought a LOT of monsters during those timelines, and because of the SAVES, LOADs, and RESETs, they had loads of practice. They prefer not to use those skills if they can help it, though… mostly because of what you saw in this chapter with the flashbacks. Poor Frisky needs some serious therapy to help with those, methinks…
*Trolls: Trolls in the AF 'verse are huge ape-like creatures with serrated tusks, natural sedatives, and dreadlocks (for some reason). They're deep-tunnel dwelling predators, vicious, and generally considered the most dangerous of deep-tunnel creatures by the fairies. However, because they're deep-tunnel creatures, they hate, hate, HATE light, and too much noise is ALMOST as bad as light to them. Any troll that ends up either in an area with too much of either of those or the surface tends to go crazy, and attacks everything around them out of fear... and this can cause a LOT of damage, if there isn't a Retrieval team on standby to take care of them... and sometimes even if there is one. Fairies loose a lot of officers to troll attacks underground, and that's in familiar territory...

And now for worldbuilding: Jack54311 asked "Frisk becomes more powerful the higher their LV got. Does it work that way here, or is it just a representation of killing intent? Finally, since Chara is tied to Frisk, does that mean that they share EXP? When Chara takes control, is it Chara's LV and EXP that is drawn upon, or Frisk, or both?"

With most people, their LV doesn't affect their strength and is a representation of killing intent only. Frisk is amongst these people, at the moment. However, there are a couple kinds of people whose intent to hurt can increase their strength - one of those groups is human mages/wizards/magic users. Since magic is tied directly to the soul in this 'verse, that means it's also connected to a person's LV - this means that if their magic is combat oriented or can be used in combat their magic grows in strength along with their LV. The other group of people that have a similar relationship between magic and LV is the monsters themselves - the more a monster wants to fight (or in other words, the greater their intent to harm someone) the stronger their magic will get until they decide they don't want to fight anymore.

Frisk and Chara do not share LV or EXP. The link between their souls means they share Determination, not stats. This means that when they take over, Chara is drawing on their own LV when they muster intent to harm, and not Frisk's. And possibly more than just their own LV too, because, interestingly enough, when they're in control (or partially in control) of Frisk's body, their physical strength and speed fluctuates depending on how much LV they have at the time... ;P
Four days. It had been four days since the kid had been kidnapped, and there had yet to be any sign of them.

Now, Sans considered himself a very patient monster. He was good at waiting, indefinitely if need be, for someone else to make a move – especially if that someone else was a certain human anomaly in the timestream. But four days? That was a very long time for anyone to wait, even for him – and it was an especially long time to wait when you had knowledge of Frisk’s… abilities.

What was taking them so long? The kid had dealt with kidnappings before, in previous timelines. It should’ve only taken them a couple of days to find out whatever they needed to find out about their kidnappers, and then initiate a LOAD to take them back to before the kidnapping. Frisk and their ghostly hitchhiker were astonishingly good at reading people, and tricking them into spilling their guts, and they wouldn’t stick around once they had what they needed, not when the monsters were waiting for them. He was certain of that.

… Almost certain. He’d been wrong about the kid before.

Still, four days. Four days of waiting with Papyrus and Tori and Alphys for any kind of news, four days of keeping an eye-socket on the weed to make sure he didn’t disappear to go murder some unfortunate human in a back alley somewhere or something. Four days, and no sign of the kid.

Not that they hadn’t looked. The Dublin police had been scouring the city for days, working their way from the warehouses near the docks to further inland. They’d been very thorough – not that they could be anything else, with Undyne amongst them. Undyne had no qualms about kicking down locked doors that the humans may have overlooked, and Sans wouldn’t have been entirely surprised if the fish-lady had been running on pure adrenaline these past few days. He sure as hell hadn’t seen her sleeping.
He hadn’t really been sleeping, either. It was a full-time job keeping the weed in check – how the hell did the kiddo manage to keep him in line so easily? – and his brother and the others needed someone to talk to. Pap and Tori especially were looking more and more devastated as time moved on.

In the chair next to him, Tori took in a shuddering breath as a police officer entered the room, face as grim as every other time an officer had approached them.

“Well, Officer Clark?” Her voice trembled just as much as the breath she’d taken in, with a touch of fragile hope in every syllable.

“It’s not good, Sans couldn’t help but think, that we’ve been to the police station often enough to know the officers by name.

The human grimaced and shook his head. “Nothing concrete yet, Your Majesty. We’re still looking. Whoever these people are, they’ve been very thorough. Not a peep about your kid anywhere.”

Toriel sagged in her chair, her impeccable posture dipping into a disheartened slouch for a moment. “No leads on the person who sent the anonymous email this morning, either,” the policeman continued. “We’ve tried tracing their IP, but we just don’t have the technology that we used to, and they know their stuff. We’re totally in the dark there.”

Right. The anonymous email. Sans would bet his last ketchup bottle that this anonymous email was from the same person that the kiddo had been contacting since before they’d left America, and if that was the case, it was no wonder that these people hadn’t been able to find them. Sans and Alphys both had tried their hand at tracking this Anonymous down, once they’d gotten ahold of a computer to do it with, but had had no luck. And considering the hints that Anonymous had dropped that they were less than a stellar example of human morality, and their blatantly honest admission to having hacked into government files months before the monsters resurfaced, it was no wonder that neither monster had been able to track the person down. Two somewhat moral monsters, without the motivation to develop any kind of hacking skills, trying to hunt down a human hacker who probably had a whole toolkit of nasty to use? They were better off beating up their computer. They’d make more progress that way.

Anonymous. That was another thing to think about. Sans slouched further down into his chair with a faint sigh, his eye-sockets closing in thought.

Until recently, Anonymous has been contacting the kid pretty punctually following them entering a new country. According to the kiddo’s email account, last message they got from Anonymous was before they boarded their ship here. Usually, Anonymous would have contacted them by now at least once since they came on-shore if only to check in on things that don’t make it onto national news. But here? They haven’t done that.

Considering how dedicatedly Anonymous had contacted Frisk until then, Sans didn’t think it was a matter of the unknown human losing interest. The only other reason he could think of right off the top of his head? Anonymous used the email to keep track of Frisk’s doings that they couldn’t find out themselves by watching the news – so them not using the email anymore meant that they no longer needed the email to keep track of what the kid was doing.

Not needing the email means that they have some other means of figuring out what’s going on out of the public eye, and there’re not many options there. Either this person’s been hacking into Frisk’s computer – and I kinda doubt that – or they’ve been keeping an eye on the kiddo personally, maybe even flat-out eavesdropping on them.
With a huff, Sans opened his sockets again. He couldn’t think of any people who might be watching the kid personally right off the top of his head except for the fairies, and he didn’t exactly see them wanting to help the kid with human politics.

Well, that wasn’t quite true. He wouldn’t be entirely surprised if the UN representative, Artemis Fowl, was keeping an eye on what Frisk was doing, though he doubted that even someone in as important a position as he was would have the resources to be able to eavesdrop on the kid without being noticed—

Everything slid into place like the pieces of Papyrus’s favorite jigsaw puzzle.

*The Fowls were once a family of suspected criminals, even if their crimes were never proven. Anonymous is a hacker.*

*The fairy roses on the Fowl manor grounds, that have been there for years before the monsters even surfaced – which means that the magic that discolored them wasn’t caused by monsters.*

*Artemis Fowl reacted to the CHECK, when no human had ever noticed the subtle magic before.*

That last piece of information was the really damning one. He’d been puzzling over that for some time now, ever since coming back from Fowl Manor. How come a human, one without magic so far as he could tell, had reacted to his magic when no other human he’d met ever had?

What if it was because he’d dealt with magic before?

*I think we’d know if someone in his position were to get heavily involved with the magi-tech experiments going on in the labs to the extent that he’d have been exposed to magic. It’d probably be all over the news. So that leaves out monster magic. And we haven’t seen any human wizards here, at least not yet.*

So, not monster magic and probably not human magic. The only other magical being that Fowl could have interacted with were the *fairies*.

Sans didn’t have much time to dwell on this concerning train of thought, however, because it was at this point that heavy, fast, and familiar footsteps came racing down the hall adjacent to the room he and Tori were sitting in, and the door slammed open to reveal Undyne, and a couple other harried officers who looked like they’d been bodily dragged in the fish-lady’s wake.

“We know where they are!” Undyne blurted out, a huge toothy grin stretching across her face. “That Anonymous punk sent us an address, they got Frisk out and we *know* where they are!”

Lids fluttered, and then Frisk’s eyes opened. For a moment, they simply lay there, staring blankly at the wall in front of them as their mind whirled, trying to place exactly where they were and how they’d gotten there.

Then they registered that *they didn’t know where they were,* and they bolted up from their position on the floor to look wildly around them for possible enemies.

There were none. Frisk was sprawled out on the floor in what seemed to be an empty office building. The large room they were in was completely empty, save for some light fixtures still on or embedded into the ceiling and a few boxes stacked along the walls – obviously, this building hadn’t been this empty all that long ago. No sign of any human threats…
… why did that thought feel like there was something missing at the end? Like there should have been more words to think there, after human threats?

Chara?

The ghost responded immediately, almost making Frisk’s ears ring with the intensity of their relief.

*Oh thank God, the sedative they used finally wore off! Frisk, how do you feel?*

Frisk blinked. *How do I feel?*

Quickly, they ran down a mental checklist in their head. Head still attached, as well as limbs, and the rest of their body. Physically, they felt a little dizzy and worn down, but that was easily explained by the limited food they’d been given by the guards in captivity. In other words, fine…

… Which Chara probably already knew. After all, they’d been awake during whatever happened while Frisk was sedated. So why were they asking?

Wait. *Sedated*. They’d been sedated? Who had sedated them?

Chara, what happened while I was –

*Frisk, how do you feel? What do you remember?*

Frisk’s heart leaped into their throat. *What do you remember?* Why would Chara ask that? Did they think something had happened to their memories when they’d been knocked out? They didn’t know of any kind of sedative that could do that, but maybe -!

They began running through their memories quickly. The first ones they checked were of the Underground and the Resets. There were too many memories of those to check each one individually, but the most important ones were still there, to Frisk’s relief – they still remembered the monsters, everything they’d ever learned about them from magic to the Core to how kind they were, and they still remembered that there were Resets, that there were different timelines that they’d lived through, including two that they… really didn’t want to think about. The Genocide timelines.

All there, all accounted for. They sagged in relief. Their memories were intact, and they weren’t going to go on a Genocidal rampage. The monsters were still safe from them.

*Anything else?*

Frisk blinked.

*You're not just worried about my memories of the monsters?*

*No! Look, what do you remember about the kidnapping? Being “rescued?”*

The kidnapping… right. They’d been kidnapped by members of HuRg. Frisk checked those memories as well, with a puzzled frown on their face. They’d been talking to Beckett on their phone, answering his questions about the monsters. A storefront had exploded, and Toriel had used her magic to protect people from the flames. Someone had slapped a cloth probably liberally soaked in some sort of knock-out drug over their face, and they’d blacked out and woken up in a small closet-sized room, where a human had come in and tried to interrogate them before leaving -

Wait a moment. *Wait.* There was a curling of dread in their gut at the thought of the unnamed man with cold eyes. Dread which didn’t quite make sense with what they were remembering of him.
What they remembered was him questioning them with increasing cold frustration, before Chara had decided they’d had enough and taken over to headbutt him, and then he’d left the room with a parting threat. As terrifying as his expression had been, that wasn’t enough to warrant this kind of foreboding thinking about him.

Which meant there was something missing. Frisk felt panic claw its way up their throat. They were missing memories.

Chara, what happened there?! What am I missing?!

*God damn it… okay, calm down, calm down! Deep breaths.*

They sucked in a deep breath, let it out, breathed in, breathed out. They kept doing this until their throat unclogged itself, and the felt like they could actually properly think again.

*Calm now?*

Frisk nodded, still breathing carefully.

*Good. Now listen carefully , Frisk. That human had magic –*

What?!

*That human had magic, I wasn’t done yet! That human had magic – he used his voice to try to hypnotize you into telling you about how you kept avoiding assassination attempts, and you nearly told him about the Resets.*

Their heart began to pound faster and faster in their chest. *There was no way. Humans didn’t have… no, humans could still have magic. Sans had told them so. They just hadn’t met a human wizard before.* That didn’t mean it wasn’t possible. And *Chara wouldn’t lie about this sort of thing.*

Frisk definitely wouldn’t trust Chara if it came down to figuring out who stole the last chocolate bar in the fridge, but when it came to things like this, things that threatened the monsters? *Chara didn’t lie.*

*That’s not all that happened, either. Do you remember all the research you did in the library? The stuff about fairies?*

Frisk shook their head. *Why would I research fairies? They're not real…*

*That’s what we thought before Flowey came to find us in Dublin and tell us about meeting people that weren’t humans or monsters poking around the Underground.*

Frisk shook their head in denial. *There’s no way… wouldn’t we have noticed them by now, if there were really fairies flying around?*

*Not if they can turn invisible. Flowey only noticed them because they were vibrating really fast, and he felt them through his roots. And not if they could erase memories. Like they erased yours.*

*But that’s… Frisk’s internal voice trailed off into silence. They’d been about to say that’s impossible, but…*

*Flowey wouldn’t leave the Underground unless something really big was to happen. Discovering a*
new magical species would be something really big. Invisibility? Unlikely, but… not impossible. Erasing memories would explain me missing some things that I should know, like the magic.

And above all else, Chara wouldn’t lie about this. Not in a billion years.

That certainty, the knowledge that to Chara, a potential threat to the monsters like these fairies would never, ever be treated as a joke, was enough. As if a switch had been flicked in their brain, every memory they were missing came rushing back.

Flowey grinning in his pot about having found something new, going through books upon books in the library with Sans, the newspaper clippings, the fairy roses on the Fowl Estate in a book of fairy sightings, the assassins all claiming to have heard a musical voice whose orders they couldn’t have disobeyed, Crane, escaping under a technological invisibility cloak and through a tunnel dug by a dwarf who’d literally eaten his way through the rock, the flight to the moon-base building at Tara, the centaur, the mind wipe – The mind-wipe!

“Oh God,” Frisk whimpered, the shock making them speak out loud. “They tried to erase my memories! They almost – they –”

Noises. Voices, calling out from somewhere below them. Frisk’s head came up, brain still swamped with new-old memories and barely able to make out the voices and what they were saying, or even recognize them. But Chara could, and did.

*That’s Undyne!

Undyne. Frisk didn’t need to think about their next move. They opened their mouth and shouted as loud as they could with a voice hoarse from a few days’ lack of use.

“Undyne! Undyne, I’m up here! Up here!”

The voices lulled, thundering footsteps came stampeding towards them, and Undyne literally broke down the door to the room with the loudest NGAH Frisk had ever heard from her, sending the wooden object crashing to the ground in so many splinters. When her yellow eye landed on Frisk in the middle of the floor, her mouth split into an enormous toothy grin.

“Frisk!” In two short strides, she was hoisting Frisk up into the air in a powerful bear hug, hardly giving them room to breathe. “What the hell, you’ve got the crummiest luck in the history of luck! You got shot, you got kidnapped -!”

More voices. Most were still unfamiliar, but one, softer but no less powerful for it, broke through the noise.

“Let me through! Please let me through! Frisk!”

The next thing Frisk knew, they’d swapped monsters, and gone from wiry, scaly arms to warm, furry ones. Toriel’s relieved face filled their vision, her eyes scrunched up and teary.

“Oh, my child, I thought – I thought I’d –” She stopped, her breath hitching, her arms shaking, her entire body shaking, and then with a quiet sob, she pulled them close, burying her face in their hair.

Frisk didn’t need to be told what the rest of her sentence would have been. They already knew.

I thought I’d lost you.

They forced a weak, guilty smile onto their face, and wrapped their own arms as far around the
monster Queen as they could, resting their head on her trembling shoulder.

“You didn’t lose me, Mom,” they whispered. “You didn’t lose me. I’m sorry…”

...I won’t let this happen again.

Chapter End Notes

As daniel put it after reading this chapter, “aaaaaaaaand the fairies are positively SCREWED.”

Yes. Yes they are. Poor fairies aren’t going to know what hit them. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

No asterisks in this chapter! Though there is some stuff about the mind-wipe I could talk about... but I don't have enough room for both that and this chapter's worldbuilding, so I'll wait to address that until later.

And now, worldbuilding: Jack54311 asked “Do all red SOUL types have the ability to RESET upon death? If so, then why aren't more RESETs occurring? Does it have anything to do with Frisk and Chara sharing Determination? Also, are RESETs only triggered by a violent death and a strong Determination to try again?”

Firstly, a reminder: Resets, SAVEs and LOADs aren’t the same thing in this 'verse. What Frisk and Chara do, with the whole "die and then come back to life in the past thing" is LOADing from a SAVE point, not Resetting. Resets send them all the way back to when Frisk originally fell into the Underground. Now that that's out of the way, no, not all red souls have the ability to SAVE or LOAD upon death. In order to use the SAVE points, aka in order to SAVE and LOAD, there's a number of conditions someone needs to fulfill.

Firstly, the person needs to be able to sense the SAVE points in some way (as SAVE points, at least in the Underground, are naturally occurring.) Not everybody knows they're there, and it's not just Determined people that have the ability to sense them somehow - they're just the ones that see them the most clearly.

Secondly, the person intending to use a SAVE point must not only have high concentrations of Determination but also have magic that is compatible with the SAVE points. Now that the Barrier is down, any Determined soul that doesn't already have magic that wanders down into the Underground won't be able to use the SAVE points, even if they might be able to see that they're there – the Barrier is what gave Frisk latent magic that let them use the SAVE points in the first place, after all.

Thirdly, who actually has the ability to LOAD is dependent on how much Determination that person has, on top of the magic they may or may not have. Generally speaking, the people that can use the SAVE points are those who are a magical being with the most Determination. Before Frisk fell into the Underground, this was Flowey, as he had both magic and Determination that was greater in quantity than anyone else with magic in the world at that time. After Frisk fell and before Flowey took the Souls, that being was technically Frisk (though an argument could be made that because they're sharing their DT, that being is both Frisk and Chara at once) because they now had...
developing magic and had a full Soul of Determination whereas Flowey didn't. And, initially, after Flowey took the Souls at the end of the first completed Neutral run, Flowey once again became the most powerful Determined magical being. However, this only lasted as long as Chara's soul was in poor condition. Once Chara's soul began to heal just enough that they could start producing their own Determination again, Frisk and Chara were once again the most Determined because even with all the Souls combined, Flowey just didn't have enough sheer Determination to match them. After all, none of the souls he stole were Red souls, which means that they didn't have nearly as much DT as Frisk and Chara did.

Finally, the Resets... the Resets are triggered by a variety of different events that don't seem to have any common characteristics between them, for the most part. The only guaranteed trigger is Frisk dying when they either haven't SAVED since the last Reset, or dying after they've run out of LOADs in a SAVE point without SAVING again. (Remember, SAVE points have a limited number of LOADs in them in this 'verse.) However, that's far from the ONLY trigger. Other events that have triggered a Reset include Frisk staying for a year in the Underground without the Barrier being broken, a huge group of humans in the United States rioting and slaughtering large numbers of monsters, and the monsters being forced back into the Underground after being free to live on the surface for several months, thanks to false accusations pitting the public against them, and many others besides.
Chapter 45
Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

The Magic of Souls (1)
Tales of Monsters, Humans, and Fairies (1)
Fairies and Monsters Gone Fowl (7)
Stories About Fairies, Monsters, and Two Bizarre Humans
Fairytales (16)
Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined (21)
Okay Flowey, Stop Traumatizing the Fairies (11)
Underground Fairies
A Fairy Strange Crossover

Voting is now over! The winning title is… *drumroll* Temporal Dynamics for the Magically Inclined! Sorry to everyone who voted for other series titles, but the votes have spoken! (And to those of you that voted Fairytales specifically, if it’s any consolation, if Frisk and Co. ever were to end up involved in UT Multiverse shenanigans their universe name would definitely be Fairytale!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“ Oh God. They tried to erase my memories! They almost – they –”

Foaly tapped a key on his keyboard, pausing the recording on the monster ambassador’s distraught face. Then he turned to the plasma screen showing the faces of the Council, and couldn’t suppress a flicker of grim satisfaction at the sight of every single one of those faces hosting expressions of shock and fearful comprehension.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I have four words for you,” he drawled. “ We told you so. ”

And, as predictable as human clockwork, and exactly as he’d expected them to, the entire Council began to panic.

“How is this possible?!”

“They regained their memories so quickly! That was less than a day following the wipe!”

“How did they do it? Even Artemis Fowl needed prior knowledge of his wipe in order to counteract it! How on earth did this… this child do it?!”

One elf, an older fairy in expensive clothes and with a naturally crotchety face that Foaly was pretty damn sure was the same elf that Artemis had contacted a while ago, slammed his hand down on the armrest of his seat, his face a rictus of angry denial. “This is preposterous! There is no feasible way that Dreemurr could have recovered their memories without prior preparation!” He jabbed an accusing finger at Foaly. “The centaur obviously thinks himself to be a clever fairy , and faked this footage!”
The centaur in question bristled, highly offended by the accusation. “Hey! I know that pointing fingers is something you politicians do best, but that’s taking it a bit too far! I work with the LEP, Councilman! I do what’s best for the People! Do you really think I’d go so far as to fake something like this?!” He gestured pointedly at the screen once more. “This is a serious situation, here! We have a human with high influence amongst monsterkind, knowledge of the People, and now a reason to potentially declare war on the fairy people, since you lot went and ignored me and Artemis and Holly and tried to erase their memories!”

The old geezer spluttered. “War?”

“Yes, you old codger, war! Why do you think we were so worried about the mind-wipe not taking this time?! Normally we wouldn’t have protested, heck, we would’ve helped! But little Frisky here isn’t like Artemis! They’re not a criminal that works in the shadows, they’re a highly influential political figure, both to humans and to monsters, and they’re the adopted kid of the monster queen. It’s entirely possible for them to get the monsters to declare war on us, and now? You’ve given them a reason to do that!”

The elf looked like he was about to faint. Foaly had absolutely no sympathy for him but still forced himself to calm down anyway. “I did not fake this footage. If you need more evidence for that, then here.” He tapped another key on the keyboard, bringing up two more video files of the exact same scene as the first – the little ambassador on the floor of an empty office building – viewed from two new angles. “All three of these files were recorded by the helmet cameras of the three LEP fairies that flew the Mud Kid to the drop point and stuck around until the human and monster police arrived. All three of them have already been interviewed, and they confirmed that what we see in the recordings is what they saw actually happening with their own eyes. That’s three unbiased eyewitness accounts to back me up.”

Well, to be more accurate, two unbiased eyewitness accounts and one eyewitness that had been very good at pretending to be unbiased. What with the concern she’d obviously had for the human in the shuttleport, even after their little rampage, Lieutenant Crane was probably very much biased in favor of the little ambassador. But the Council didn’t need to know that, now did they?

One of the other Council members tentatively cleared her throat. “Foaly, as concerning as this situation is – and I fully agree with you on that matter, this IS very serious – we still need to know how the Ambassador evaded a full memory erasure. Is it possible that the mind wipe was sabotaged somehow?”

Foaly snorted. “Hardly. I was overseeing the entire procedure myself, and I double-checked everything beforehand, just to make sure. No sabotage.”

The idiot elf that had already pissed him off once today apparently decided that doing it again was a great idea at this point because he opened his mouth. “And how do we know you’re telling the truth? How do we know that you didn’t sabotage the wipe yourself?”

The centaur seriously considered trampling the elf for a moment, nostrils flaring in agitation. “Really? You’re trying to place the blame on me again? What is this, the Bwa’Kel revolution?”

Fortunately, the rest of the Council seemed to agree with Foaly’s outrage, because they all glowered at the offending fairy, who didn’t quite cower under their stares but came pretty close to it.

“I think,” another Council fairy, a chubby gnome with lots of gold ornaments, began sternly, “that you should keep your thoughts to yourself unless you have actual evidence to support them.”

Cowed, for now, the elf sunk down in his hair. Foaly gave it maybe five minutes before the idiot
tried to blame him again, though – people like him never seemed to learn, and with this fairy being one of their esteemed Councilmen… well, now at least he understood why Kelp had demanded that Foaly be the one to deliver the bad news.

*The Commander’s probably having a right old giggle about ME being the fairy to deal with this troll dung. D’Arvit, I’d almost rather be forced to deal with Koboi again.*

With a huff, Foaly put his indigence aside to stew in later and went back to the matter at hand. “No sabotage,” he repeated. “Our running theory at this point is that the Ambassador’s quick recovery has something to do with the magic that they *definitely* have. One of the techies used a MagiScanner on the kid, and the damn thing practically blew itself up. Magic levels through the roof. We’re still not exactly sure what the magic *does*, so the Section Eight warlocks are still working on that. They’re going through every spell the fairies know manually and in alphabetical order. Think they’re at M right now.”

With a gusty sigh, Foaly tapped a command into the keyboard again, and the three windows of ambassador video footage disappeared back into the depths of hyperspace. “Unfortunately, since the warlocks could conceivably take anywhere from several more weeks to months to figure out exactly how this happens, that means we can’t do much about the Ambassador right now.”

The old elf from earlier (who Foaly decided from now on would be called Idiot with a capital “I” in his head) opened his mouth again, and Foaly interrupted him before he could spill more garbage out of it. “*No*, a bio-bomb is not an option. That’s even *more* grounds for inter-species warfare than the mind-wipe.”

The elf closed his mouth again, and Foaly continued. “All we can do about the Ambassador is hope they don’t tell too many people about us or declare war. It’s too soon to tell what they’ll do at this point, and we have an infinitely more immediate problem that needs dealing with.”

He typed in another command, and a screenshot from the helmet camera of the two-fairy Recon team that had gotten little Frisk out of the hands of terrorists appeared on the screen. The window was filled with the ruddy, coldly furious face of an adult human male with an unnatural spark of both fairy blue and yellow in one eye – barely noticeable really, but obvious if you knew what you were looking for.

“Luis Howahkan O’Reilly,” the centaur said, gesturing at the screen. “According to what I’ve seen of the Ambassador’s recorded memories, this human is capable of using a fully fledged mesmer and is behind both the Ambassador’s would-be-assassins and possibly behind a great deal more activity done by Humanity’s Resurgence. Not only that, but according to the Recon officer that we got this image from, the human bumped into him and actively or passively stole enough magic from him to unshield. I’ve got my techies running a background check on him as we speak, but we *need* to figure out how to deal with him, *now*. He knows about the People and considering his extremist anti-monster ideals, it’s safe to assume that he could be equally violent towards the People as well.”

Foaly grimaced and turned back to the screen of Council faces. “So, esteemed Council members, any suggestions?”

Several minutes full of anxiety and non-stop debate later, Foaly shut off the Council screen with a groan of relief and practically collapsed back into his specially modified swivel chair.
I have never been more glad in my life, he thought blearily, that I changed my mind about those Politics courses in college. The Commander had better raise my salary for this.

The Council had been exactly the opposite of thrilled that a LEPrecon fairy had been spotted by a psychopathic human while on-duty. Idiot had lived up to his title by oh-so-cleverly demanding that the man be bio-bombed, and this time, at least a couple members of the Council had immediately agreed with the decision. Foaly had spent a good four minutes trying to talk them down semi-politely before he’d metaphorically and literally put his hoof down.

“We can’t do that!” he’d snapped. “I don’t disagree that a bio-bomb might actually be reasonable, this time around, but we currently have no idea where he is right now, since he went underground after the Ambassador escaped, and he probably won’t come out of hiding for awhile, since he doesn’t need to be out in the open to cause trouble! He has the mesmer, for Frond’s sake! And we don’t know what his daily schedule looks like, how many innocent civilians and monsters might be around him at any given point of the day, or what kinds of limitations his magical abilities might have. For all we know, he could absorb the solinium** and throw it back in our faces without even so much as batting an eye! Do you really want to risk that?!”

In the end, the Council had agreed with him, and come up with a much more reasonable plan of action – that plan being that several Section Eight fairy patrols would scour Dublin and the surrounding countryside for signs of O’Reilly, and hope for the best. It was far from the best plan, but it was a lot better than the Council’s usual plan of “chuck a bio-bomb at the problem and hope it dies.”

With a gusty sigh, Foaly tore his mind away from its spiraling path of frustration and dislike for the Council’s stupidity and instead turned his attention to far more interesting matters. Namely, the memories of a certain monster Ambassador that had been downloaded into his lab computer’s databanks.

He had supervised many mind-wipes as the LEP’s technical consultant, and it was practically an official step in the procedure to record the wiped human’s memories. It allowed the LEP to find out how the fairies had been discovered or sighted by that particular human without risking an in-person investigation or interrogation, and gave their psychologists enough information to create a psychological profile on the human that, in the possible event of rediscovery, they knew how to deal with the human without taking violent action. But in all the recordings he’d gone over, he’d never seen memories like the ones sitting in his computer files right now. He may have only seen a few month’s worth of memories during the wipe, but what memories he had seen were so unusual that he couldn’t just leave them for the psych eval.

The first startling thing he’d noticed, and far from that last, was that apparently, the Ambassador heard voices.

Well, more accurately, one voice. Foaly hadn’t been able to use any of his audio enhancement programs yet, and the voice itself was extremely distorted and hard to understand, but it there was clearly only a single voice, a human child’s voice that followed the Ambassador around as they went about their days that had no discernible origin and nobody else seemed to realize was there.

Foaly’s first thought, that the Ambassador might have some sort of mental illness, had been immediately dismissed. While memories of actual physical events could be easily recorded by the mind-wipe equipment, actual thoughts were beyond their current level of technology. Thoughts were just too abstract for the memory drives to store – which meant that the voice that did everything from giving running commentary to laugh at stupid puns to possessing Frisk’s body and moving it for them wasn’t coming from inside Frisk’s head, but from an outside source.
The possessing Frisk’s body thing suggested that the voice might be some sort of ghost, but if it was, then it was nothing like the Berserkers*** that Holly, Artemis, and Butler had dealt with. The Berserkers hadn’t had a pact of symbiotic possession like the Ambassador and their possible ghostly friend seemed to have, for one thing, and honestly, that little unspoken pact the kid had was mildly disturbing. Who would willingly let a ghost take over their body more than once? Foaly couldn’t deny that there were clearly some advantages to be had there, what with Frisk being able to avoid spilling important information under the mesmer, but the entire thing was just… ugh, it gave him the shivers. And that was without him wondering if the ghost had been invisibly trying to strangle him while he was doing the mind-wiping, because they certainly seemed like a violent enough person to do so.

The second, and far less jarring, thing he’d noticed had been the glowing star that Frisk had been able to see hovering over the fairy roses. Bright yellow, big enough to be seen from the windows of Fowl Manor, and Frisk had clearly known that it was there since they’d interacted with it at least twice, and yet nobody on the Fowl grounds was able to see it. What exactly it was, Foaly wasn’t sure – he hadn’t had enough time to look at those memories in detail during the wipe – but if he had to hazard a guess, the star had something to do with the Mud Kid’s magic.

And finally, the third thing he’d noticed? Some of Frisk’s memories repeated.

His techies had thought the repeating memories were glitches. They had had problems like that before, with too many copies of certain memories being made by the system. That was why there was always an actual fairy overseeing the wipes, instead of relying on the machine. But Foaly wasn’t too sure. Sure, some of the memories were almost carbon copies of each other, but others? Others were completely different.

He’d almost thrown up when he’d seen the extra memory of Frisk being shot in the chest with a bullet, and then getting one between the eyes. No little kid, human, fairy, or monster, should have memories like that in their head, and yet the Ambassador did.

Anyway, regardless of what else was going on, something wasn’t adding up here, and Foaly intended to get to the bottom of it. He had an entire decade’s worth of memories to look through and analyze, and if he had to go through every last one to figure out what was going on, he would.

After retrieving Frisk from where the fairies had apparently seen fit to drop them off, Undyne, Toriel, and the squad of police officers that had come with them escorted Frisk back to the police station, and, as much as Frisk would have loved to simply sit down in a sitting area with all their friends and cry in sheer relief at being back and everyone being safe, they knew they couldn’t do that. Not yet. The police had been almost entirely in the dark about everything that had been going on, no matter their best efforts, and it was only fair for Frisk to fix that.

Once they’d been sequestered away into a private room in the station and the police had given up trying to get Toriel or Undyne to leave the room, (Toriel because she had made it very clear that she wasn’t letting Frisk out of her sight any time soon, Undyne because she’d threatened the officer that had tried to pull her out of the room that if she didn’t get to hear what had happened to her bestie, then she’d shove a spear were the sun didn’t shine) did Frisk tell them everything they could about what had happened after they’d woken up in a cell. They told them about the Wizard, about his hypnotism ability, about the threats he’d made, everything they could think of, while around them, humans and monsters grew more and more tense as they talked.

However, despite everything, they didn’t tell the officers about the fairies. They wanted to. They
wanted to desperately. But something told them that was a bad idea, and that something had come from someone by the name of Chara.

*I think the fairies are scared of us.*

The ghost had said this on the ride home, sounding incredulous, and Frisk hadn’t been able to let that lie, even with their mind still in chaos after the recovery of their memories. *Us?*

*Monsters. And humans, too, but mostly monsters. That centaur that wiped your memories? He said that if it came down to a war with the monsters, then the fairies would lose, and he meant it.*

Frisk hadn’t wanted to think about it. They were more than a little upset about the mind wipe (the monsters had come so close, *so close*, to being put in danger because of what the *fairies* had done), and they’d *wanted* to tell the police about the fairies. The fairies could clearly be a threat to humans, with that ability they seemed to have, and Frisk definitely hadn’t stopped thinking of them as being a threat to monsters either.

But Frisk knew what it was like to do something because you were scared. They didn’t approve, but they *knew*. So they’d held their tongue when talking to the human police, and spun a quick story about not remembering anything about their rescuer except that they were very short and might have been a woman, and then when the interview was over, they’d kept holding their tongue as Toriel had swept them down the hall to the waiting area where the rest of their friends were waiting for them.

The instant they were through the door, three voices practically screamed their name, and in a rush of motion, they were swept up in a bony hug with a flowerpot being pressed painfully against their ribs.

“FRISK! YOU’RE OKAY! I KNEW IT!! I KNEW YOU’D COME BACK SAFE AND SOUND, NYEH-HEH-HEH!!”

“Frisk don’t you ever fucking do that again, you hear me?! ”

Frisk couldn’t help the hiccupy laughter that slipped out of their mouth and wrapped their arms around both Flowey’s pot and as much of Papyrus’s ribcage as they could. “I’m sorry, guys,” they whispered. “I’m sorry, I’m back now, I won’t let this ever happen again, I promise.”

Flowey glowered at them, thorny red vines emerging from his pot to cling aggressively to the front of their shirt. “You’d better not! And if I ever get my hands on those assholes -!”

Frisk laughed again, louder this time, as Papyrus set them down on the ground and beamed at them with immeasurable relief. When the skeleton pulled away, Flowey remained clinging to the front of their shirt like a thorny limpet, stubbornly refusing to budge even as a harried Alphys rushed up to give Frisk a hug as well.

“Oh my goodness, thank God you’re okay! I was so worried, the police were looking everywhere, they couldn’t find you, I tried to help but I couldn’t do anything, I’m so sorry, I tried -!”

Frisk hugged her back, patting her back before pulling back and giving her a faint smile. “It’s okay, Alphys. It’s not your fault.”

“So do I get a hug too, or…?”

Frisk turned toward the last monster in the room. Sans stood a little ways away from everyone else, arms held ever-so-slightly apart in front of him and his grin looking a little strained.
He didn’t normally offer things like hugs, and he probably wasn’t doing it just for their sake right now, but Frisk didn’t care, and took full advantage of the offer by crossing the distance between them and throwing their arms around him too, burying their face in his hoodie and ignoring Flowey’s indignant yelp as he was squashed headlong into Sans’s ribcage.

For a moment he let them have their moment, rubbing their back comfortingly. Then the moment was over, and just as they’d expected him to, Sans said to them, in a quiet whisper, “What happened, kid? Was it the fairies?”

They shook their head, then sucked in a deep breath and pulled away, squaring their shoulders.

They may not have told the human police officers anything, and wouldn’t, not yet. But they wouldn’t lie to the monsters unless it was to reassure them, or unless it was about the Resets and the timelines, and although they might have said they wanted to wait until they died again, they couldn’t wait that long anymore. The monsters needed to know.

“Guys,” they said, quietly, turning to look at the rest of the room. “There’s something I need to tell you.”

Chapter End Notes

The wizard has been officially named, guys. Yay?

“Howahkan” is a Native American name that means “Of the mysterious voice.” Considering the wizard’s talent for the mesmer, it seemed fitting. And “Luis” is a European variant of “Louis”, it looks like, and means “famous warrior.” O’Reilly’s definitely making a name for himself, wouldn’t you say?

… Goddamnit it, did I just make a pun outside of the fic? Really?

*Bwa’Kel revolution: The Bwa’Kel were a gang of goblins that managed to corner the smuggling market in the Lower Elements in Book 2, and was the gang that Opal Koboi funded a rebellion for against the LEP. During the “revolution” in question, Opal disabled LEP weaponry, locked Foaly up in the Ops center in Police Plaza, and her partner in crime Cudgeon went to the Council and placed the blame for the entire affair on Foaly. If Opal and Cudgeon had managed to get away with the rebellion, Foaly would have been their scapegoat. Fortunately, that obviously didn’t happen.

**Solinium: the radioactive material used in fairy bio-bombs that actually makes them lethal. Solinium has a very, very short half-life – I think maybe fourteen seconds in the books – which makes it ideal for dealing lots of damage to BIOLOGICAL material without damaging infrastructure around it, and leaves next to no traces behind. As it was put once in the books, “murder made easy.” However, I actually have no idea if this is an actual material, so for all I know it could be magical in origin – and if it is, Foaly has every right to be concerned about a human that’s already stolen fairy magic possibly being able to do the same with solinium.

***The Berserkers: During the Crash, Koboi used an old fairy site that had been buried under a tower on the Fowl Estate called the Berserker’s Gate to control the spirits of fairy warriors that had been buried there during the last battle between humans and fairies ten thousand years ago. In order for these spirits to be of use to her, they had to
possess the bodies of creatures around the Gate, which meant pretty much anything on
the grounds. Some of these bodies included a hunting dog (which Mulch ate later that
night because of course he did), a number of small wildlife, and Myles, Beckett, and
Juliet, who were on the manor grounds at the time of the Gate’s activation. From what I
can tell, the Berserkers actively suppressed the consciousnesses of their hosts to take
control – I know this because the Berserker possessing Myles was having difficulty
keeping Myles suppressed, and the kid kept breaking through and exerting influence on
his own possessor. Go, Myles! :D

And now worldbuilding! Jack54311 asked “How exactly do SAVE points occur? In the
game they occurred in places where you felt a strong sense of Determination. I'm
assuming that is not the case here. Do they occur in places that had a high concentration
of magic? Also, do they still heal Frisk?”

SAVE points are heavily influenced by how much magic there is in an area. The more
magic there is in an area, the more likely it is for there to be a SAVE point there.
However, that's not the only factor - the whole game mechanic of the SAVE points
appearing in places you feel a lot of Determination also contributes, albeit not exactly as
it does in-game. SAVE points aren't influenced by current emotional states, but rather by
the combined feelings of Determination that Frisk/Chara have felt in previous timelines.
Which means that the SAVE points, though their functionality is more or less the same,
have changed locations a number of times throughout the different timelines that the
kiddos have gone through at this point. (And yes, the SAVE points still heal Frisk when
they're used.) The amount of magic and DT from previous timelines in a location also
affects how many SAVEs Frisk can LOAD at a specific SAVE point. The more magic
or more DT there is influencing a particular SAVE point, the more times Frisk/Chara
can LOAD using that particular SAVE star.

Jack also pointed out that, as SAVE points act as an anchor of sorts for a LOAD, and
that SAVE points are essentially nothing more than a cluster of an extremely high
concentration of magic, it would make sense for something even more powerful to serve
as an anchor for a Reset. They then asked me if this point in time that became an anchor
is when Frisk and Chara’s SOULS became linked to one another. And that is definitely
the case! Good job on Jack for figuring that out!
Chapter 46

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry about not updating until now, guys! I was having trouble writing this chapter, plus lots of schoolwork. I’ll try to do better in the future! ^.^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

In the aftermath of the monster Ambassador’s sudden reclaiming of lost memories, it seemed prudent to prepare for the worst possible scenarios. While Artemis sincerely doubted that Frisk would actually declare war themselves, or actively encourage the monsters to do so, it didn’t hurt to be cautious. It was entirely possible that the monsters would decide to initiate conflict themselves. And so, immediately following his last conversation with Holly before the elfin captain was required to return underground, Artemis had set about gathering as much information on the magical and technological capabilities of monsterkind as he could find.

Normally, such a task would not present any difficulties for him, and at first, it had not. Monsters were fairly open in their usage of magic, and so was Frisk, who had recounted their journey through the monster Underground in intensive detail. Monsters were capable of anything from throwing fireballs to healing, summoning spears to throwing bullets of pure magic, and were even capable of the manipulation of gravitational fields.

However, it was when analyzing the young Ambassador’s close-knit group of monster acquaintances that he came across a very frustrating lack of information on one particular monster.

Artemis leaned back in his chair with a frown, studying the screen before him.

While it was true that most monsters were open in their usage of magic, and seemed to have little to hide – Undyne with her spears, Toriel with her frankly impressive use of fire magic, Alphys with her equally impressive combinations of magic and technology (he really would have to pick her brain on the matter again, if he got the chance) – one monster, the skeleton Sans, seemed to have hidden much of what he was capable of. There were no records of him using offensive magic anywhere in Frisk’s account of the Underground, and hardly more than a few hints of what his powers may or may not have been. While it seemed reasonable to guess, based on his own previous observation of different monsters over the past few years, that Sans and his brother Papyrus used similar forms of magic, that didn’t mean that their magicks were identical. And indeed, their magic seemed not to be identical, as he had yet to observe Papyrus teleport.

What with their attention drawn to the agitation of the monsters following Frisk’s kidnapping, and the risk of an extremist group of human terrorists possibly finding out about the People, the fairies hadn’t taken the time to properly consider this particular ability. Artemis, however, had had considerably more free time to analyze what information the fairies had managed to gather, and that information was concerning.

Sans had teleported from miles away from the police station, right onto its doorstep. He had done so seemingly instantaneously and with very little effort, simply stepping out of thin air with the flowerpot of a certain floral monster in his arms. The other monsters hadn’t so much as batted an eye
at his sudden appearance, either, implying that Sans did this quite frequently and had quite a great deal of practice. Instantaneous travel across at least several miles’ worth of distance could prove a disastrous ability for the fairies to face, if it did come down to interspecies warfare. The short skeleton could quite literally appear from nowhere, carrying supplies or staging a very successful ambush, if he did indeed have some form of offensive magic as his enthusiastic brother did.

These worrying implications had prompted a fervent search through several internet sites and a couple of government databases in order to uncover the specifics of what Sans was capable of, only for Artemis to come up with almost nothing. Sans had barely any presence in any databases unless you counted his atrocious puns. The only thing he had uncovered that even so much as hinted at any more unusual abilities the skeleton had had been a very short post on one of his brother’s social media accounts, where Papyrus had complained about his brother “pranking him across time and space.”

That statement, said so casually, had given Artemis shivers. Teleportation, that was one thing. But time?

The unnerving implications of Sans having some sort of power over time had sent him diving back into trawling databases with even greater urgency than before, but so far, he hadn’t found a single iota of useful information in human databases or monster ones. He could only hope that Foaly would have more luck on the fairy side of things, once the Council had been dealt with and Foaly was, pardon the horse analogy, given free rein.

It was at this moment that Artemis’s fairy communicator buzzed gently on his finger. With a sigh, Artemis twisted the ring around to rest in his palm and held it up to his ear.

“Foaly, please tell me that you’ve had more luck than I in your pursuit for information.”

“One of these days, Mud Boy, I’m going to figure out how in Frond’s name you keep doing that without a caller I.D. feature on that old piece of junk.”

Normally such a comment would have made him smirk. This time, however, there was an audible note of worry underneath Foaly’s usual flippancy, and so Artemis pushed his amusement aside for a later date.

“You have found something, then? And, judging by your tone of voice, not something particularly pleasant.”

A gusty sigh rushed through the tiny speaker. “Not pleasant, definitely, but apart from that… I don’t know what I’ve got, exactly.”

Artemis’s eyebrows jumped up. Foaly had just admitted he didn’t know something. “Foaly, are you well?”

“Oh hardy-har, Artemis. Go ahead and rub it in later. Mind taking down your latest encryptions? I’ve got some files I’d like you to look at.”

Foaly was asking Artemis to give him access to a human computer. And he didn’t sound any more upset about it than he did about whatever it was he’d discovered.

Now greatly concerned, Artemis turned off the communicator, and with a series of deft keystrokes, he disabled his most recent firewalls. As soon as he did, two windows appeared on the screen – one showing the visage of an extremely worried centaur without a single sign of a bruised ego, and another a window of what seemed to be video files.
“These are copies of memories recorded during the little Ambassador’s mind-wipe,” Foaly said. “During the wipe, I noticed some… unusual patterns in their memories. After the Commander sent me to have a little talk with the Council, I decided to have a look through them, to see if I could figure out what was going on.” The fairy shook his head. “There are several series of memories over the past few months that repeat. The techies thought that they were just glitches in the system, but I wasn’t too sure, so I started going through them.”

The centaur moved a hand off screen, and one of the folders in the other window highlighted itself in bright orange. “Least confusing thing first, I’m pretty sure I figured out how Frisk got over the mind-wipe so quickly.”

Artemis clicked on that folder, bringing up several new video files. One video thumbnail showed what appeared to be the inside of some form of eatery, decorated with a spiderweb motif – Muffet’s Bakery if he wasn’t mistaken – and, one eyebrow raising, he clicked on the file. A first-person view of the front counter and the spider monster behind it appeared, and the Ambassador’s voice was negotiating a lowered price with her.

He was about to ask why this memory had been deemed important – it seemed fairly standard a memory, all things considered – when another voice with no discernible origin suddenly spoke. A child’s voice, one that wasn’t Frisk’s and was incredibly distorted.

Artemis’s other eyebrow rose. Foaly would not leave an audio distortion in any of his files unless he was incapable of fixing it.

“What on Earth?”

“That voice,” Foaly said with a frown, “turns up in a vast majority of the memories I’ve gone through so far. It doesn’t belong to anybody around the Ambassador, and the few times they speak at the same time as another person, that person acts like the voice isn’t there. On top of that, at times it almost seems to be having a conversation with someone that we can’t hear, and the few times that Frisk has spoken aloud in response to something it says, they seem very familiar with whoever the voice belongs to. They even know them by a name – Chara.”

Artemis considered this, frowning. “The fact that no one else reacts to it seems concerning… my first impulse would be to think it is a symptom of mental illness, but mind wipes cannot record thoughts, simply events, correct?”

“Right. Which means that this voice comes from an outside source. My best guess, going by these files here,” several files began glowing orange, “is that this voice belongs to some sort of spirit.”

Artemis clicked on one of the highlighted files. A video of a restaurant and a table populated by a pair of humans and two birdlike monsters appeared on the screen. The monsters and humans alike were rising from their seats, talking amiably, and as he watched, the Ambassador approached the door to the eatery. However, unlike the previous memory, where the voice had seemed reasonably light-hearted, this time it was considerably tense, and apparently attempting to reassure Frisk of something.

Then Frisk reached out, grabbing the door handle, and as the door opened, Frisk’s point of view was suddenly wrenched out of their own body, hovering over their own shoulder and watching as their body side-stepped right into the path of a bullet.

Artemis felt an involuntary chill run down his spine. If Frisk is not the one moving their body, then something else is. Possession.
“A spirit,” he said, carefully. “I can’t help but agree with that theory, seeing this…”

Foaly snorted. “That’s not the only time this Chara voice has done this, either. On several other occasions where the Ambassador was in physical danger, or the monsters were, they’ve taken over the Ambassador’s body and either gotten them into or out of harm’s way. And the transition between being in their own body to hovering over it is ridiculously smooth – they’ve obviously had practice.”

“Symbiotic possession,” Artemis murmured. He steepled his fingers with a frown. “I see. So that’s how Frisk regained their memories. Doubtless, the spirit is capable of observing the world around them, even when not in control of Frisk’s body. This Chara would know just as much about the People as Frisk does, but would not be affected by the mind wipe – and if Frisk trusts them enough to let them take control of their body, then they would undoubtedly trust Chara’s word in other extreme situations, as well.”

“Exactly,” Foaly said, with a nod. “Chara tells them about the People again, and boom, lost memories have been returned.”

Artemis closed the file, his brows furrowing. “If this is the ‘least confusing thing’ you’ve found, Foaly, then that means you’ve found something else, as well?”

The centaur went quiet, scowling and tapping a few keys off-screen. “Yeah, I’ve found something, but I’m not sure what. A lot of these memory repeats I’ve seen so far seem to more or less repeat the same sequence of events, as in what’s actually physically going on, but… there are differences in all of them. Sometimes it’s as simple as Frisk moving their hand a different way, or their ghostly friend saying something different than what they did in a previous version in the memory. But in others…”

Another file highlighted itself. “Well, see for yourself. And I’m warning you right now, it’s not pretty.”

The video file opened up to the same scene as the most recent file he’d viewed, the inside of an eatery. Frisk was reaching out towards the door handle, preparing to open the door, and their ghostly acquaintance seemed much more light-hearted than in previous memories.

Then the door opened, there was a loud crack, and Frisk looked down to find a bullet hole in their chest, already rapidly bleeding every drop of blood out of their body, and then looked up in time to find the assassin aiming the gun between their eyes and firing once more.

The memory went black, and Artemis found that his hand had gone up to his own chest, a chill running down his spine.

“That wasn’t what happened in the initial assassination attempt,” he whispered. Foaly grunted in agreement, looking rather pale himself.

“No kidding. And… this isn’t the only time that Frisk has died in their memories. The second assassination attempt? There’re two other copies of that, and in both of the memories that didn’t match the sequence of events as we know them, Frisk and the monsters went to the hotel. First time? Frisk and that Papyrus skeleton got shot. Second time? The monsters managed to take out some of the gunmen, but Frisk still got hit. It was only in the third copy of the memory that they went to the police station instead of to the hotel.”

“How are these visions, or actual memories?”

Foaly grimaced, stomping one hoof. “… I don’t know. Prophetic magic isn’t exactly something that
the People have on record. We have no idea how it would actually work. And on top of that, there are some memories that just plain don’t make sense.” Another file turned orange, and Artemis clicked on it immediately. A video still appeared on screen, an image of what he presumed to be taking place during the gala, judging by the gloves on Frisk’s hand in the picture. They seemed to be in the middle of the fairy roses, reaching out one hand towards a glowing golden star-like object that hovered in the exact center of the rose spiral.

“Every time Frisk has one of those memories of dying, their next chronological memory is of this object here.” Foaly jabbed a finger at something to the side of his screen, presumably another screen with the same image pulled up. “Whatever this is, both Sans and the flower know about it. Frisk told Sans about it in a text conversation later that night in one of the memories, and they called it a save point.”

The furrow between Artemis’s brows grew deeper. “A save point? Why on Earth do they call it that?”

Foaly grumbled. “I don’t know! It doesn’t make any sense! I can’t think of a single kind of magic that would use whatever this is – only Frisk, Chara, and maybe Flowey and Sans seem to be able to see it, by the way – or a reason for them calling it a save point if they have prophetic magic of some sort!” The centaur was practically tearing out the hair on his head at this point, scowling at the screen.

Artemis stared at the save point. Even in a still image, the object seemed oddly… animate, for a lack of better words. As if he could reach out and touch it through the screen.

Frisk has memories of dying, and then shortly afterward, their memories contain this object. A save point -

A thought hit him. A save point as in a save point in a video game?

“Foaly,” he said, the idea whirling through his head at speeds that would make light jealous, “you said that this save point only appears in Frisk’s memories after they’ve died, yes?”

“That’s what I said, Mud Boy!”

In a video game, save points save your progress and prevent you from having to do previous events over again in the event of your character’s death. They also allow you to load a previous save if you want to go back and do something differently…

Frisk’s memories repeat, but they are not perfect copies. In some of those memories, Frisk died, and in chronologically later memories, they found a means of avoiding dying again. It could be a vision, but…

“Foaly, in each of these memories that followed their deaths, did Frisk act as if they’d just literally experienced something traumatic? Did they show signs of nausea, or being disturbed?”

“Yeah, several times. One of those times was during the gala when they acted like they were sick. That was right after the memory where they got shot in the chest.”

Frisk acts as if they actively experienced those memory repeats, including the deaths. Which means that in their mind, these “save points” act exactly as they do in a video game. When Frisk dies, they get a chance to do things over, to change something for the better.

That is NOT prophetic magic. They’re not seeing something in the future. They’re experiencing it for themselves. And if the save points send them back to some point in time before whatever happened,
“then that means…”

“Foaly, are you still in the Section Eight labs with the warlocks?”

The centaur squinted at him suspiciously. “Yes… why?”

“Is No.1 or Qwan still there?”

“No. 1 is. He’s messing around with some orange ray beams of some sort. Why, Artemis?”

Artemis took in a deep breath. “Has he tried matching the unknown energy signature on the Fowl estate, which now I can only presume is this save point object, with the energy used in a time travel spell?”

Foaly stared at him uncomprehendingly. Then, after another long moment, his eyes widened in realization.

“No,” he breathed. The centaur disappeared from his screen with a clattering of hooves. Then voices began speaking off screen – the actual words were unrecognizable, but he recognized one of them as Foaly’s and the other as No. 1’s.

Several minutes later, Foaly reappeared in the screen, this time with a familiar gargoyle-esque little face accompanying him. Both fairies had expressions of wide-eyed astonishment – Foaly looked like his entire world had just started falling apart around him, and No. 1 looked somewhere between excited and worried.

“It’s a match!” The demon warlock blurted out. “It’s not identical, there are some parts of the energy that don’t quite match, and the magic is generally more… solid, more stable, but it’s the closest match we’ve gotten yet!”

Foaly collapsed back into his chair. “Closest match we’ve got is time travel. Which means –”

“Which means,” Artemis finished for him, quietly, “that we’re not dealing with a prophet, but a time traveler.”

In that moment of stunned silence, there was the soft ping of a notification from Artemis’s anonymous email account.

Minutes before, in a similarly stunned moment silence several miles away, Frisk waited with bated breath. They and the monsters were sitting around a conference table in one of the rooms in the police station, with the window blinds pulled down and the door carefully locked. There were no humans in the room save Frisk themselves, just the monsters, and every single monster in the room except Flowey and Sans wore an expression of shock on their faces.

Then the silence was broken by the scraping of a chair, and Undyne leaped to her feet.

“THAT’S IT, I’m going to Tara, breaking down their STUPID moonbase door, and then I’m going to kick some fairy creeps’ ASSES!”

And just like that, the entire room seemed to descend into chaos.

“Take me with you!!” Flowey screeched.
“UNDYNE NO!” Papyrus yelped. He bolted after the angry aquatic monster, grabbing her by the arm and digging his heels into the ground to keep her from going any farther. “DOING A VIOLENCE WILL NOT HELP!”

Alphys rushed up as well, grabbing her girlfriend’s other arm. “U-Undyne, calm down!”

“LIKE HELL I’M GOING TO CALM DOWN!!” Undyne roared. “THEY SPIED ON US! THEY TRIED TO ERASE FRISK’S MEMORIES! THEY TRIED TO MESS WITH FRISK’S SOUL!!”

“U-Undyne, humans don’t store m-memories in their souls like we do -!”

“I DON’T CARE!! THEY STILL MESSED WITH FRISK’S MEMORIES! THEY COULD HAVE HURT THEM!! SO I’M GONNA SHOW THEM A WORLD OF HURT RIGHT BACK!! IF THEY’RE SCARED OF US GOING TO WAR, THEN I’M BRINGING IT RIGHT TO THEIR TINY DOORSTEPS!!”

“Undyne!” Frisk yelled over the noise. “Stop!”

Thankfully, the monster listened to them, turning to look over her shoulder at Frisk with a wide yellow eye. “But Frisk -!

“Just stop.” Frisk took in a deep breath, let it out. “You have every right to be upset, but it’s not fair to declare war on the fairies if some of them didn’t want to erase my memories in the first place.”

“But –”

“The centaur that mind-wiped me said something about a Council, Undyne. He was just following orders. And Lieutenant Crane, the fairy that got me out of HuRg’s hands in the first place? I could tell she felt really guilty about the whole thing.”

Toriel, who up until this point had been very, very quiet, finally spoke her mind, her voice stern. “And regardless of whether or not it is fair to these fairies or not, Undyne, I will not force monsters who have never seen war to experience it for the first time because you lost your temper. ”

*… she’s using her Queen voice. I don’t think we’ve heard her use it since…*

Frisk grimaced. Since she scolded Asgore in the Underground for not using a single soul to get the other six… *

Undyne gulped. “But – Your Majesty -!”

“No, Undyne. War is nothing to wish for. I will not have my people suffer again, I will not let them lose hope again, not when we’ve come so far.” Toriel’s eyes narrowed and then darted to Flowey. “Besides, from what Flowey has told us about the appearance of fairy souls… it is entirely possible that their souls are stronger than monster ones, just like the souls of humans. It could very well end up a repeat of the monster-human war.”

Undyne opened and shut her mouth a few times, then grimaced. “But –”

“They could have killed me,” Frisk said quietly. The monsters all turned to look at them, eyes widening, and Frisk frowned and continued. “They wiped my memories because they were worried about HuRg finding out about them. There were easier ways to stop me from talking – they could have killed me, and placed the blame on HuRg, and no-one would have even known they were involved. But they didn’t do that. They staged a rescue. They showed me Mercy .”
They took a deep breath, letting it out in an unhappy sigh. “And no matter what people have done, they deserve a second chance, don’t they?”

*Even the fairies? They could have sparked another Genocide Run, Frisk.*

… Even the fairies. After all, it wasn’t as if the fairies had known what could happen if Frisk’s memories were erased.

That didn’t mean they were happy about it, though.

“Indeed they do,” Toriel said softly. She looked around the room at the other monsters. “We shall not declare war on them. They may have attempted to alter Frisk’s memories, but in the end, they meant no harm. If what Frisk says is true, then these fairies could very well have simply been acting out of fear, and no one is at their best when afraid.”

Her red eyes turned sharp. “That being said, we will not allow them to get away with what they’ve done so easily. I will not allow us to declare war, but that does not mean that we cannot find some way of contacting them, and making it very clear that they will not do this again.”

That seemed to satisfy Undyne. The fish-lady sat back down in her seat with a reluctant huff, and Papyrus and Alphys followed her lead, looking relieved. The only monster that didn’t seem happy about this was Flowey, who scowled angrily in his pot.

*He was probably hoping he’d get an excuse to kill someone.*

Frisk ignored Chara’s comment for now – they weren’t completely sure that was true, in any case. “That might be more difficult than it sounds, Mom. The fairies might have been keeping an eye on us, but unless Flowey can sense them, we have no idea where they are, and Flowey’s roots can only go so far.”

Flowey glowered at them, and Frisk patted the top of his head apologetically and continued. “On top of that, if they’re as scared of the monsters as I think they are, then they’re going to be keeping their distance. And humans don’t know about them right now, and letting them know the fairies exist might not be the best idea right now, so we can’t exactly go around shouting at thin air that we want to talk to the fairies. Unless we stumble across one by accident and get lucky enough that they’ll stick around to listen…”

“Actually,” Sans interrupted from his chair, “there might be another way, kiddo.”

Frisk blinked. “What?”

Sans sighed and leaned back in his seat, eye sockets narrowing. “While you were kidnapped ‘n all that, we kept getting emails from that Anonymous person that’s been helping you off and on for a few years now. They told us they had a contact who was keeping an eye on things in HuRg, who passed on a warning to us about keeping monsters under guard, and then later they claimed that contact made a move and got you out.” His brows rose pointedly. “And you were rescued by a fairy.”

It almost felt like a lead ball had dropped into their stomach. “You think that Anonymous… is in contact with the fairies?”

“THAT SEEMS A BIT OF A STRETCH, SANS!” Papyrus piped up. “IT WOULD INDEED BE VERY CONVENIENT, BUT IT ALSO SEEMS VERY UNLIKELY!”

Sans shrugged. “Not as unlikely as you think, if Anonymous is who I think they are.”
Frisk’s eyes widened. “You think you know who Anonymous is.”

“I have a theory at least, yeah.” Sans held up one hand and began ticking points off of his fingers, one at a time. “Think about it kiddo. Anonymous lives somewhere in Ireland. They’re not exactly one hundred percent moral, they’re a hacker, and have lots of political knowledge at their fingertips that sometimes isn’t even in the public eye yet. And they only stop contacting you when they have some other means of knowing what’s going on behind the scenes with the monsters, right?”

*Huh… good point.*

Frisk nodded in agreement. *Yeah…*

Sans paused for a moment and then continued.

“We’ve met someone who lives in Ireland and is of high political standing here. Someone whose family supposedly has a history of criminal activity. Someone who used to live on an estate with *magically discolored roses* that have been around since before the monsters ever reached the surface. Someone who’s experienced magic enough to be able to react to my CHECKs, when no other human ever has.”

* Oh… Oh shit.*

No. *No.* He couldn’t mean -

But he did. They could see it in his expression, his furrowed, worried eye sockets. He knew exactly what he was talking about, and now that the facts were being laid out before them, it was *obvious* to them, and not even unbelievable. After all, they’d thought a certain Irishman could be Anonymous as well.

“Artemis Fowl the Second,” they whispered.

Sans stuffed his hands back into his pockets and closed his sockets. “Can’t think of anyone else, kiddo. I could be wrong but…” he shrugged again.

Frisk took a few deep breaths, struggling to calm themselves down. They didn’t know for sure – it seemed likely now, all things considered, but they didn’t know for sure…

Except they did. Maybe it wasn’t concrete evidence, but somewhere deep down, Frisk was absolutely certain that Sans was *right*.

“… Does someone have a phone or computer I can borrow?” They asked quietly. “I need to send an email.”

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**To Anonymous**

**From Frisk Dreemurr**

You’re Artemis Fowl, aren’t you? I suspected for a while, but… now I’m sure.

I know about your more unusual *contacts*. I *remember* them.

We need to talk. *Fairy roses*, 9 AM tomorrow.
Artemis looked up from the message, looking more weary than he’d looked in years.

“I believe the correct invective for this scenario,” he said quietly, “would be D’Arvit.”

Chapter End Notes

Well the monsters know about the fairies now… and Artemis and Co. have figured out one of Frisk’s little secrets… this is gonna be FUN… >:3

The whole “humans don’t store memories in their souls” thing that Alphys mentioned is a personal headcanon of mine. The way I see it, monster souls serve a double purpose, both as the culmination of their beings and as a central nervous system of sorts. Souls allow monsters to move, think, learn, store memories, and do everything that a sentient being is able to do via the magic that makes up the monsters’ bodies. Human souls can do something similar, but instead of being the conscious mind of the human, they’re sort of a backup, in case something happens to the conscious mind that makes it forget something important – or, in the case of a Determined human caught up in the Resets, the soul will continuously make sure that the human’s memories of the different timelines are up to date by directly inputting them into the human’s physical memory storage, aka their brain. This is why Frisk’s memories of the different timelines were able to be recorded by the fairies, because their soul always “uploads” memories of the different timelines to their brain.

*Toriel scolding Asgore for not using a single soul: Wow, look at that, an asterisk that has to do with Undertale canon and not Artemis Fowl canon! Amazing! Anyway, this is referring to the scene just before the True Pacifist boss fight (with Asriel), when Toriel stops you and Asgore from having to fight. She tells Asgore flat out that once he’d had one human soul, he would’ve been able to exit the Barrier and get the other six needed souls peacefully, instead of having to kill children as they kept falling down. Instead, though, he just meekly waited underground, hoping that another human would never fall.

And now, worldbuilding: Someone called Chaotiquill on fanfiction.net asked me: “I guess my question is, whether their parents may have wanted a boy a little too much, which may have resulted in them suppressing their, er, feminine traits in order to please them? They DID live in a somewhat abusive household, so I could definitely see it happening. I was just wondering whether there was an actual reason for the gender neutralness other than ‘Oh, it was like that in the game, and now it's a pop culture staple, so I can't change it.’”

There IS a reason for that, actually! The way I see the monsters is that they're much more flexible about the whole gender thing than humans are. I mean, look at how many different types of monsters there are! Goat boss monsters, skeletons, living jello molds (hi moldsmals), bedsheet ghosts, lizard and fish people, creepy four-legged deer creatures, dogs... with so many different appearances for their kind to have, and all so very unique, how are you supposed to tell what gender a monster is just by looking at them, like humans generally do? So instead of relying on physical appearances like humans, monsters just let people decide what gender they want to be known as, and are okay with them changing the gender they identify as, as well.
While aboveground, Frisk never quite felt right being called a girl, even if they sometimes liked wearing dresses, but their parents never even introduced them to the possibility of there being people who are different genders from the ones they were born as. So, when Frisk fell into the Underground and noticed how the monsters viewed gender, they finally realized that hey, there were more options for them other than being a girl! And because the monsters were so okay with it, they had no qualms about deciding that they were genderless (as they didn't feel like they were a boy or a girl) once they'd been through the Underground enough times and gotten comfortable with monster views. Chara did much the same thing after they first fell into the Underground, too.
Chapter 47

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry about the long wait, guys. I started new classes, and then I kinda needed to recover my M est P writing mindset, because inspiration was NOT forthcoming (that’s what I get for looking at Bittybones stuff and watching Steven Universe when I should be writing fanfics, I guess, haha), but hey, I’m back! Better late than never!

(And on another note, holy shit over 300 kudos. Thank you guys so much!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There were many moments of self-doubt that had been had over the course of the various timelines they’d lived through. Being an ambassador of monster-kind was rarely smooth sailing – there were so many decisions to be made, people to talk to, and if the particular meeting or conversation they were participating in hadn’t been repeated yet, they had no way of knowing exactly what the consequences of their actions would be.

They’d experienced a lot of moments of doubt over the last several years since the monsters surfaced a second time, but those moments paled in comparison to the moment that Frisk was feeling right now.

Sitting wide awake in their hotel, with the sun having long since gone down, Frisk tried very, very hard not to think too much about their doubt, to no avail. The room was completely barren of distractions – it was eerily quiet. Toriel was asleep, her breathing quiet and calm. Flowey (who had refused to leave Frisk alone after everything that had happened) was disconcertingly quiet as well, head hanging and petals folded around his face. The faint shuffling and noises from the guards that the police chief had posted outside their door were no longer audible. Even the faint sounds of the outside world did nothing to break the uneasy hush floating in the air around them, and so Frisk was left with only Chara’s silent presence and their own worried thoughts.

Should I have waited longer before contacting him?

They’d gotten a reply to their email to Anonymous only a few minutes after they’d sent it. Their phone (which Toriel had picked up off the street after their abduction) had chimed just as they were mounting the cart waiting for them and their friends outside the station, and when they’d flipped the thing open and seen the notification, they hadn’t been able to suppress a touch of apprehension.

The apprehension had only grown when they’d read the email itself.

To Frisk Dreemurr

From Anonymous

Congratulations for correctly guessing my identity, Frisk. I apologize for the secrecy – however, I doubt that my apology is one that you are seeking at the moment.
The meeting time and place you specified are doable – however, if you have any wish to contact any of our mutual acquaintances, I must warn you that any that would be present at the meeting would not be there officially. Their superiors would certainly not approve of this meeting you have insisted upon.

Frisk let out a breath, and, after a brief glance at the monsters in the room, to make sure they were still asleep, they took out their phone and flipped it open to scan the email chain for what felt like the billionth time that night.

*Not there officially could mean many things. It could mean that the fairies there simply would not report to their superiors afterward. But it could also mean that, as they are not acting officially, their government can completely deny involvement with whatever happens there. Should I have been more careful?*

After reading Anonymous’s – Artemis’s – response, Frisk had shown it to the monsters, and Toriel had frowned, obviously picking up on the same worrisome undertones that Frisk themselves had. However, she’d left it up to Frisk to respond, and they had done so as the cart rattled through the streets of Dublin.

**From Frisk Dreemurr**

I will be bringing several monsters with me.

**From Anonymous**

I anticipated as much. The Queen and Flowey will be among them, I presume?

**From Frisk Dreemurr**

Yes, along with several others.

**From Anonymous**

Will you be in need of transport?

Frisk, at this point, had looked up at the monsters crowded around them in the cart, both to hide them from view and to read over their shoulder as they typed.

“Like hell I’d trust any transport from him now,” Undyne growled.

“B-But Undyne, h-how else are we going to get there? We don’t have the money for such a long trip at such short notice…”

The monsters had descended into uneasy conversation – conversation that had been interrupted when Frisk broke in with a suggestion.

“What about Sans’s shortcuts? He’s been to the fairy roses before.”

Sans and the other monsters had agreed to it – though Papyrus had insisted on coming along once his brother had agreed. Something about *making sure that lazybones can make the trip!* But regardless of whether or not they’d all agreed, Frisk couldn’t help but wonder if that had been yet another mistake.

*Should I have suggested that?*
They had no idea if Sans was even capable of transporting that many people at once. He hadn’t said if he was capable of it or not, either. And Papyrus’s explanation for wanting to come along…

And even without the magical side of things in mind, teleporting directly into the middle of a secure estate like Fowl Manor might send a message they weren’t prepared to back up. A message that said *see what we’re capable of? Don’t mess with us.*

Fairy souls might be stronger than monster souls. In fact, they probably are. I don’t think they’re going to risk an ambush since I didn’t specify how we would be arriving when I replied, but... what if they do? What if we teleport right into the middle of a trap? There’s no way the monsters would survive.

Frisk let out a shuddering breath and closed the phone again.

*It’s too late to worry about it now. What’s done is done. As long as I don’t SAVE until after the meeting, I’ll be able to LOAD and avoid all this…*

But at what cost?

---

Frisk wasn’t the only one wide awake and worried. In his apartment, Artemis paced quietly, too many thoughts whirling through his head for him to even consider sleeping.

He had not anticipated Frisk’s demand for a meeting. And their initial email had most certainly been a *demand*, short and abrupt and to the point. Frisk had never struck him as a particularly *demanding* person, even when faced with the political side of their duties.

However, being kidnapped, then being rescued, then technically abducted once again by their rescuers and having their memories wiped and then restored barely hours later would likely put a dent in anyone’s willingness for cooperation. Add to that the information that he, Foaly, and No. 1 had uncovered earlier that day… well, he really *should* have anticipated their message. Frisk was a genius approaching or perhaps even equal to his caliber, after all, and having powers over time did nothing to change that.

Artemis grimaced. Ah yes, and there was the other reason he was worried. *Time travel.*

Time travel, at least the variety that Artemis had experienced, was not a particularly *stable* magic. All it took was one wrong variable, and there would be a large variety of side effects which ranged from *unpleasant* to *dangerous*, and there was no way of knowing which side effect would actually occur until it had already done so. The fairy version of time travel could cause the wayward travelers any number of ailments, from the loss of a finger or the switching of eyes to losing minor memories, and probably was capable of causing much more in terms of damage. And that was in *semi-controlled environments*, with a warlock who knew what he was doing. On top of that, fairy magic most certainly complied with the theory of paradoxes – it was Artemis and Holly’s own jaunt back in time*, for instance, which had inspired his younger self’s interest in the fairies, thus beginning his search for the fairies that would eventually lead to him traveling back in time in the first place.

Frisk had none of those constraints. If their memories were any indication, and he and Foaly were indeed correct in guessing the nature of their magic, paradoxes simply didn’t apply to the child. Whenever they went back in time and tried to change something, they *succeeded*. They’d already changed the timestream several times that they knew of, completely overwriting their own deaths and the events that led to them. If something went wrong during the meeting, Frisk could conceivably
just go back in time once more, and stop them from ever finding out about their abilities.

And if they did… well, Frisk’s time-travel seemed relatively paradox-free, but judging by their panic when confronted with the erasure of their memories, it was entirely possible that though the timestream experienced no negative consequences, Frisk themselves probably did… and he had a very dire feeling that memory loss was more dangerous to Frisk than it would be to the fairies.

But a feeling was just that – a feeling. He had no evidence, no way of knowing unless he asked Frisk directly at this point, and, if the hints that Foaly had picked up in some of Frisk’s memories were accurate, trying to ask them at the meeting would not get him into their good books.

“Whether this is future vision or time travel,” Foaly had said, “the Ambassador hasn’t told anybody except Sans and the flower. Not the Queen, not the lizard-dinosaur scientist, not their fishy policewoman friend. None of them. They’re keeping it a secret – same with their ghost friend.”

He had no desire to earn more of Frisk’s ire than he likely had already by confronting them about what were likely some of their deepest, darkest secrets right in front of those they sought to protect. But, one way or another, he was going to get answers concerning Frisk’s abilities. He had to. The People’s lives could very well depend on it.

Morning broke, and with the rising sun came rising tension and high-strung nerves. Frisk had, somehow, managed to actually get some sleep despite their doubts, and woken up shortly after Toriel and Flowey had. Most kids might have lingered in bed for several minutes after waking up, but Frisk had never been one of those kids. They had too much to do, too much to think about, and so they’d paced anxiously in their room after freshening up and getting dressed, double-checking everything they could think of. They double-checked their email notifications, double checked their phone’s dimensional boxes, double-checked that all the monsters that would be coming with them were getting ready, double-checked with Flowey that there were no fairies that had snuck into their room when they were sleeping. But there were no new notifications, all the monsters were pretty much ready to go, and Flowey hadn’t sensed any new fairies, and eventually the flower monster had gotten irritated enough with their constant worrying that he’d pushed them back onto the bed with his vines and told them to shut up and stop thinking, idiot, overthinking things will just make everything worse.

*He’s right though, Frisk. Overthinking things won’t do any good for you right now.

Frisk sighed, and Flowey shot them a look from the bedside table, probably daring them to ask about fairies again in the privacy of his own petaled head.

_I know, Chara, but…_

They didn’t finish their sentence. Instead, they sat in nervous silence, listening to the bustle of Dublin waking up outside their window, of Toriel arranging her robes and making calls somewhere behind them, of the guards outside their door talking quietly (neither of the humans had been happy about being left behind, but when they’d been told where exactly Frisk and the monsters were going, the two officers had been suspiciously cooperative.) They pulled out their phone, flipping it open to check their inventory again.

**Dimensional Box A**

*Heart Locket*
The second dimensional box was completely empty aside from Chara’s old knife (which they fervently hoped they wouldn’t need to use), and Frisk couldn’t help but wonder if they could have been better prepared.

*I hope we won’t need anything else...*

Finally, things couldn’t be put off any longer. At 8:50, Sans, Papyrus, and Undyne came into the room, making sure the door was shut tight behind them.

“We’re all ready t’ go, kid,” Sans said.

Frisk sucked in a nervous breath. “You’ve got everything we might need?”

Undyne summoned a spear with a grin that was too toothy even by her regular standards. “You bet, punk! No fairy’s gonna get the drop on us when we get there!”

“INDEED!” Papyrus proclaimed, posing heroically. “NO FAIRY SCOUNDREL WILL CATCH US UNAWARES! HOWEVER, I DO NOT THINK WE WILL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT – IF THEY ARE REALLY SCARED OF US, THEN WHY ATTACK US WHEN ALL WE WANT TO DO IS TALK?”

Sans shrugged. “Better safe than sorry, bro.”

They let out the breath they’d been holding and stood up.

“One last thing before we go, my child,” Toriel said, gently. When Frisk glanced back at her, the Boss monster was holding a familiar purple shawl in her hands – the same one Frisk had worn to the gala, what felt like a small eternity ago. She slipped it on over Frisk’s head, carefully adjusting it so that the Delta Rune was hanging over Frisk’s chest in plain view, and then stood back and nodded.

Frisk didn’t need to ask why. They knew why. Toriel wanted absolutely no doubts in the fairies’ minds as to Frisk’s relation with the monsters – and, more specifically, with *her*.

Wearing the shawl was actually a little comforting. Frisk smiled weakly at the monster queen in thanks and then turned back to the others.

“Alright,” they said, very quietly. “Let’s go.”

They held out one hand to Sans, which he took with a wink extremely lacking in cheer, and the other monsters gathered around them.

“Are you positive you can take us all, Sans?” Toriel asked.
“NOT TO WORRY, YOUR MAJESTY! SANS WILL NOT BE THE ONLY PERSON TELEPORTING US TODAY!”

Undyne gaped at him. “Papyrus, you can do that teleporting thing too?!”

Papyrus let out one of his trademark “Nyeh heh heh”s. “OF COURSE I CAN! BUT UNLIKE MY BROTHER, I AM NOT SO LAZY THAT I WOULD RATHER BEND THE LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE INSTEAD OF WALKING!”

The air around them began to crackle with the familiar too-cold magic of one of Sans’s shortcuts.

“Hold on everyone,” Sans said. “Taking a shortcut in three…”

Frisk steeled themselves.

“Two…”

Flowey grimaced in his pot, hunching over.

“One.”

The world disappeared around them in a blur of magic and disconcerting nothingness. For a very long moment, or maybe a short eternity, there was no ground, no air, no feeling, like they were floating in the void of space.

Then bright greens and oranges and yellows blurred into existence, and the group was standing at the edge of a spiral of orange roses, the sun beaming down on them from a little above the horizon. The familiar gothic shapes of Fowl Manor rose in the distance, crickets and birds chirping in the gardens.

And on the other side of the rose spiral, flanked by a very familiar man mountain, a similarly familiar blonde woman, and several small, undeniably non-human figures, Artemis Fowl raised an eyebrow.

“Impressive,” he said, with surprising calm, and then continued as if they hadn’t just appeared out of thin air in front of him. “Welcome back to the Fowl Estate, Ambassador. I believe we have much to talk about.”

Chapter End Notes

What better gift to give my beloved readers after a long four weeks (ish) following a cliffhanger than ANOTHER cliffhanger? >:3

(Feel free to rage at me in the comments, haha)

Yes, Papyrus can use shortcuts like Sans can. That’s not the only ability he shares with Sans, either. However, I’m not going to go into detail about what all they each can do or why they can do what they do as of right now. That’s something I’m saving for later… possibly much, much later. As in, another story entirely later.

* “Artemis and Holly’s own jaunt back in time:” In The Time Paradox, aka book 6, Artemis and Holly were sent back in time by No. 1 to save a then-endangered lemur that was extinct in their time in order to bring it back to the present. Their reason for doing so was that Angeline had apparently contracted a magical illness usually confined to the
fairy people which cannot be healed via magic, and the lemur’s brain fluid contained the
cure. When they traveled back in time, Holly was de-aged into a teenager (at least in
terms of emotional maturity and hormones) and Artemis’s hair decided to rebel and do a
mullet impression. Also, they had to pit wits both against Artemis’s younger self and the
younger Opal Koboi that followed them to the present and eventually got herself killed
in order to cause the Techno Crash, so that was fun.

And for the first time in what’s probably like twenty-something chapters, there are no
worldbuilding things for you guys. Sorry ‘bout that! I was really tired right after I
finished writing this chapter, didn’t have time to look for new questions to answer, on
ANY of my fanfic accounts. That being said, if you have worldbuilding questions, feel
free to ask them!
Chapter 48
Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry, it took me a little while to get this done, but hey, better late than never! I typed this entire chapter hopped up on sugar and excitement. We’re (slowly) approaching the climax of the story at this point! *wriggles enthusiastically*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

If Frisk had thought they were just anxious before, then what they were feeling right now was anxiety that had transcended to godly proportions. Their heart felt like it was trying to both beat itself out of their chest and claw its way up their throat, and the fine tremor of tension they’d felt barely minutes before had transformed into a veritable earthquake that they could barely keep under control.

But keep it under control they did. The time for letting themselves panic openly was not now. So they kept their expression as empty as they could, forced themselves to stand stock still and tall instead of fidgeting and shrinking away like they wanted to, and kept their eyes on the group across from them.

Artemis Fowl’s expression was cool, calm, and collected. Unlike the rest of the group around him, fairies included, he showed no signs of agitation, and seemed entirely unruffled, save for the slightest furrowing of his brow. The looming figure to one side of him – Butler was his name, right? That’s what he’d been introduced as – was more obviously tense, feet placed carefully at shoulder width and muscles already straining in preparation to move. Juliet, on Artemis’s other side, had a similar posture, as did every single fairy flanking them.

None of the fairies, Frisk noted almost absently, had their helmets on. Most of them seemed to be some variation of normal-ish human coloring, all with pointed ears. The only exception to this unspoken rule was a familiar green-skinned, pale-haired fairy lingering near the edge of the little group.

Seeing Frisk’s glance, Lieutenant Crane’s eyes softened somewhat, and she gave Frisk an uncertain wave and an apologetic smile – and apparently, this was the cosmos’ signal to end the moment of silence.

“You.” Undyne’s voice. When Frisk glanced up at the fish monster, the former Captain’s yellow eye was fixed on Juliet, and the monster was practically trembling with repressed fury. “You’re on their side?”

She said the word their in the same tone of voice she had once upon a time said the word human when addressing Frisk – in other words, spitting it out like poison.

“I help them out, sometimes,” Juliet said, cautiously. She shifted her weight from one foot to the other and gave Undyne a half-hearted smile. “Sorry?”

“Sorry?!” Undyne snarled. “SORRY?! You’re buddy-buddy with the people that messed with Frisk, and THAT’S all you’ve got to say about it?! ” She started to take a step, teeth bared and muscles
already preparing to launch her across the expanse of roses between the two groups.

“Undyne,” Toriel said, calmly. “Stand down.”

The fish monster paused mid-step, gritted her teeth, and visibly forced herself to take a couple steps back, glowering at the blonde woman across from her with a glare that should have set Juliet on fire. “Sorry, Your Majesty.”

Frisk reached over and put a hand on her arm in a shaky attempt to comfort her. They weren’t all that surprised when it didn’t work.

Once calm had been returned for a couple moments, Artemis cleared his throat, and dipped his head respectfully. “You have every right to be upset, Officer Undyne.” His eyes flicked to Frisk. “As do the rest of you.”

Frisk pursed their lips, but before they could speak their mind, Toriel beat them to the punch, the goat monster’s tone clipped and chilly. “You are not going to attempt to make excuses for this Council?”

The Irishman shook his head. “There would be no point in doing so. The fairy Council’s intentions to mind-wipe Frisk was the wrong course of action to take, undeniably so. I attempted to warn them against it, as did several of my acquaintances amongst the fairy folk, but the Council is rather lacking in common sense, it seems.”

“Understatement,” one of the fairies – a woman with nut-brown skin and hazel eyes – snorted.

Toriel switched her focus to the fairy. “I take it you would be one of those who warned them against their actions, then?”

The woman nodded briskly. “Captain Holly Short, Lower Elements Police Section Eight.” She jerked her head at Artemis. “I’m usually in it with Artemis up to the pointy ears, so the Council trusts me about as far as they could throw a troll, which means, well, not at all.”

“Rather ironic, considering how often we must clean up their messes after them,” Artemis sighed. He turned to Frisk, who stiffened as the man’s gaze settled on them. “Unfortunately, it is unlikely that you will receive an official apology from the Council any time soon, Ambassador. They are leery of communication with any surface dweller, be they human or monster.”

He hesitated, a flicker of uncertainty sweeping through his eyes, then his eyes hardened, and he shifted as if expecting a physical blow. “While I cannot offer you an apology for what the fairies have done, Ambassador, I can offer you an apology for actions I have taken during this entire affair.”

*I don’t think he’s talking about keeping the fairies under wraps.*

Frisk swallowed, heartbeat picking up its pace. *I don’t think he is, either… “Your… actions?”*

He hesitated again. These pauses seemed impossibly out of character for what they’d seen of the unflappable Irishman, and that realization only made Frisk more anxious. What could he have done that had him so cautious to admit it out loud?

“… One of the steps taken during a mind-wipe,” the man finally said, very carefully, “is for the memories of the one being wiped to be recorded for later viewing, so that the People may use them to form a psychological profile.”

Frisk froze. In their arms, Flowey, who had been very quiet ever since their arrival and aiming glares at the group of fairies across from them, stiffened like a board, hints of red thorns boiling beneath the
soil of his pot.

“During your mind-wipe,” Artemis continued, just as tentatively as before, “Foaly recorded a little over a decade’s worth of your memories. Normally, these memories would have been left alone until an LEP psychologist could be granted access to them. However… Foaly looked into your memories personally when he noticed something unusual, and, when he ended up needing a second opinion, he sent those memories to me. And I don’t believe any of those memories were ones you wanted anyone to see.”

In the hush that followed, Frisk’s heartbeat sounded especially loud. As did their breathing, as the next lungful of air they sucked in stuttered in their airway, as did Chara’s cursing as the ghost realized exactly what Frisk’s body had realized before their brain could figure it out.

Almost a decade’s worth of memories. A decade.

And as far as Frisk knew, the past decade of their life as experienced by them had been nothing but endless time loops, nothing but repeats of the same days and months over and over again.

They knew about the Resets. Artemis Fowl and the fairies knew about the Resets.

Artemis could see the moment that Frisk realized exactly what he was admitting to, the moment of horrified comprehension as the blow that he’d tried to soften somewhat for the ambassador’s sake struck true. Their breathing quickened, their face went pale, the hands curled around the flower monster’s pot tightened until their knuckles went white with stress. The child looked like their world was falling apart around their ears.

He’d expected this. He’d anticipated it. That didn’t make Frisk’s expression – an expression that practically screamed the child’s thoughts for the world to see, thoughts reeking of terrified denial – any easier to stomach.

It also didn’t change the fact that once the monsters had registered what he was apologizing for, and Frisk’s reaction to it, the possibility of him being dealt physical harm had significantly increased.

“You BASTARD!” Undyne roared. Almost faster than his eyes could follow, the monster was suddenly right in front of him, one hand grabbing his shirt collar and nearly lifting him off his feet. “Trying to erase their memories wasn’t ENOUGH for you!?”

“UNDYNE, DON’T!” Papyrus shouted. “DOING A VIOLENCE WON’T HELP!”

Behind her, red-thorned vines erupted from the soil of Flowey’s pot, thrashing around him as the monster hissed in incandescent fury, but Artemis only saw this out of the corner of his eye. The flower was less of an immediate threat to him than the scaly fingers mere millimeters away from his throat.

“I am well aware that what I did is wrong,” Artemis said calmly, easily squashing the flicker of apprehension that tried to take hold of him. There was a time and place for such an emotion, and it would do him no good now. “That is why I am apologizing.”

“You knew it was wrong, and you didn’t think to NOT do it?!”

Artemis met the enraged aquatic monster’s eye with a stare of his own. “My priority at the time was the safety of the People. Frisk’s recovery from the mind-wipe occurred with unforeseen swiftness,
and considering that the fairies’ scanners picked up massive traces of magic that could not be explained by the presence of monsters –"

“SHUT UP!!” A blue spear of light materialized in the monster’s free hand, the sharp tip pointed directly at his face. “STOP TRYING TO JUSTIFY WHAT YOU DID!!”

Grass shifted, betraying a myriad of movement around him as Butler, Juliet, and at least two of the fairies, one of which likely being Holly, prepared to forcefully separate the irate monster from Artemis.

“I am not trying to justify my actions,” Artemis said patiently. “I am explaining my reasoning as to why –”

“I DON’T CARE ABOUT YOUR SHITTY REASONS!!”

“UNDYNE, PLEASE!” Papyrus again. The tall skeleton took several steps forward, obviously intending to try to reason with his acquaintance as he approached, and Artemis heard the very faint but distinct sound of several buzz batons flaring to life behind him as several of the LEP officers armed themselves. Butler, not about to be outdone, stepped forward threateningly in a wordless warning to the monster to keep his distance.

Or, rather, tried to. Butler’s first footstep hit the ground, but the second was not forthcoming, even though it should have been. A familiar buzz of energy, the same energy as when Frisk and the monsters had appeared from thin air, swirled in the air around him like agitated static.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you, Domovoi.”

Domovoi. Butler’s first name, whom no one but Artemis himself, his family, and Holly were supposed to know. And that voice, echoing with tones somewhere between church bells and death personified, was most certainly not the voice of one of those supposed to be in the know. Artemis’s eyes darted to one side, looking past Undyne to the rest of the group of monsters, looking for the origin of the voice.

His eyes found a pair of empty black sockets, sockets lacking the odd little pinpricks of white light that served as pupils. Sans had not moved from where he stood since he had first arrived, hands tucked into his pockets in a facsimile of casual posture, but Artemis had no doubt that the dreadful voice had come from the stocky skeleton.

“SANS, REALLY?” Papyrus complained. “MUST YOU DO A VIOLENCE TOO?”

Artemis immediately transferred his attention over his shoulder at this, trying to catch a glimpse of Butler and ascertain his current state of well being. He turned his head in time to see Butler attempt to take a step forward, only for the air around him to warp in an unnatural fashion and blip the man right back to where he had started - even in the same pose as he had been a split-second ago, no less.

He had no doubt as to who was responsible, and this time, he couldn’t quite suppress his apprehension as his thoughts immediately took off down a new track.

*He can only teleport what he comes into contact with but things that lie within his line of sight as well.* He could think of many, many ways that someone could use that ability, including a number of ways that one could teleport one’s foe into danger. Judging by the expressions of the fairies around them, Holly’s expression, in particular, the LEP officers present had thought of those uses as well.

“If you would please stand down, officer Undyne, Sans.” he requested as calmly as he could. “As rightful as your losses of temper may be, I am not particularly inclined to have our negotiations go
sour because my own acquaintances are attempting to defend me.”

“Stand down?” Undyne hissed, her grip on his collar tightening. “Like hell I’m gonna –”

Juliet started forward now, slowly, as did Holly and a number of other fairies, but before any of them could take more than a couple of steps, the feeling of magic in the air around them went from unsettling static to an overwhelming roar. The air above Sans’s head rippled, and then, like some sea monster from legend breaching ocean waves, a positively enormous object materialized. It was a skull, more animalistic in origin than either of the humanoid skeletons, vaguely reminiscent of a goat, or perhaps some form of reptile, adorned with aggressive horns and with a bisected lower jaw filled with sharp teeth. The construct was easily as large as Sans himself, large enough that had the skull been a part of an actual creature it likely could have swallowed any one of the people present whole with little to no trouble, and the magic pouring off of it was so overwhelmingly massive that even Artemis could not suppress a flinch as the hostile energy surged through the gardens.

There was a great deal of cursing, some shrieking, and several fairies lunged for cover behind any large object they could find – namely, Juliet and Butler. Only Holly, the sprite Lieutenant, and a couple other fairies stayed put, but even so, the fairies were practically trembling in their boots.

Artemis realized, distantly, that he was trembling himself. Though he was used to acting calmly in a crisis, the magic in the air around him seemed to have reached into the depths of his lizard hindbrain and flicked on every single self-preservation switch it had, sending a surge of fear-fueled adrenaline through his system that was too powerful for him to hide.

“D o n ’ t.” Empty sockets narrowed at the fairies, and at Juliet, a flicker of blue appearing in one eye for a brief moment before the azure light was overwhelmed by black void once more. “I f a n y o f y o u m a k e o n e . . . m o r e . . . m o v e . . . ”

The construct cracked open its mouth with a threatening growl, and a brilliant white orb appeared between its lower jaws, starting off small and then quickly growing until the creature’s entire maw was filled with light.

“… t h e n y o u ’ r e i n f o r a b a d t i m e. ”

There was a whimper. Not from one of the fairies, though Artemis would not have been surprised to hear one from one of them. No, the whimper came from beside the irate skeleton, from an increasingly pale-faced Frisk who looked just as terrified as the cowardly fairies using Butler as a living shield, and yet still reached out one hand to gingerly touch the skeleton’s shoulder.

“Sans, stop,” they croaked. “Please.”

For one impossibly long moment, nothing changed. Then, slowly, the white light in the toothy jaws hanging above the skeleton’s head died, and the enormous skull faded away. The crushing weight of magic faded along with it, until there was only breathless silence, and Artemis’s own heartbeat thumping furiously in his ears.

After another moment, Undyne let go of his collar, dropping him back on his own two feet, and with one last glower at him, she beat a hasty retreat back to Frisk’s side.

Artemis sucked in a trembling breath and held it, closing his eyes.

It seems, he thought, a touch sardonically, that we were worried about the wrong monster.

When he had somewhat calmed himself (how could one hope to ever be calm again, after that tsunami of violent magic that seemed to fill the entire world around him?), he opened his eyes again.
“I am not denying that what I did was wrong,” he said. “That is why I am apologizing, and why I am here as a part of this negotiation.” He spread his hands apart, ignoring the tremble still present in his fingers as the adrenaline left his system. “I have assisted the fairies for a very long time. I acted as if you were a threat to the People, as if you were an enemy to spy upon. Will you allow me to make up for that, Frisk?”

The child stared at him in silence, a measure of hesitance in their gaze.

“… Everyone deserves a second chance,” they said, quietly. “Fine. I’ll let you try to make it up to me. But first...”

Their eyes met his, and gone was the terrified denial from before. Instead, what was in those eyes was a grim determination as strong as steel.

“You think we’re a threat to the fairies. I want to know why.”

Chapter End Notes

… Well, that could have gone better. But hey, no-one’s dead, and Artemis didn’t expose any information on the Resets to people who didn’t already know, so I guess this is sort of a win-win situation for everyone?

I had a lot of fun writing Artemis and Company’s reactions to the Gaster Blaster, haha.

Again, no worldbuilding for this chapter, but feel free to ask any questions you might have!
Chapter 49

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Just to let people know, I might not be able to upload a chapter next week - we're going to be visiting my granddad over the weekend, and I have no idea if he has internet or not at this point. We'll just have to see, I guess!

Also, I'm thinking of putting the asterisk definition things from the chapters up here in the beginning notes of each chapter, so there's more room for the worldbuilding stuff at the bottom. Would people be okay with me doing that?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“The most important thing you must know about the fairy people,” Artemis said, folding his hands in front of himself (and Frisk couldn’t help but notice that his hands hadn’t stopped trembling yet, which, strangely, made them feel the tiniest bit better), “is that they find it extremely difficult to let go of the past.”

Besides him, the fairy that had been introduced as Captain Short rolled her eyes and gave the Irishman a sharp look that they were pretty sure meant something along the lines of get on with it already. Artemis, however, simply raised an eyebrow at the small woman and continued as if she hadn’t given him the look at all.

“The People have a similar history with the surface as monsterkind does,” he said calmly. “Ten thousand years ago, the fairies lived above ground alongside humanity here in Ireland, and, despite the guaranteed disagreements between the two races, did so relatively peacefully. However, for reasons that fairy historians either do not know or never bothered recording, humans decided they no longer wished to have their magical neighbors and declared war upon them. The war, though not as clean a victory for humanity as the monster-human conflict that drove your people underground, eventually led the fairy people to retreat below ground in a successful attempt to avoid extermination, and, as human civilizations advanced and developed, the fairies retreated farther and farther into the Earth’s crust until they came to rest where their underground cities lie today, miles beneath the surface.”

* Miles?!

Frisk swallowed down an incredulous noise of their own. The Underground, though mostly out of reach of the sun, was still close enough to the surface that in a few places, you could still see sunlight shining through – the hole in the roof of the caverns holding the Ruins, the Judgement Hall, Asgore’s throne room, and the Barrier’s room. They couldn’t imagine living miles underground, where even the hardiest of plants was bound to have trouble growing. How could anyone stand that?

They weren’t the only one thinking this, it looked like. Undyne and Flowey both had disbelieving expressions on their faces, and Papyrus looked downright sympathetic.

“IT MUST BE VERY DIFFICULT, LIVING SO FAR UNDERGROUND!”
One of the unnamed fairies that hadn’t dived for cover behind a human gave the tall skeleton a strange look, but Artemis had continued speaking before Frisk could make head or tails out of his expression. “Actually, the only major issue I have yet to see for their society is the threat of overpopulation, and even that is not as significant a problem as you might think. However, that is beside the point – I did not tell you a portion of fairy history to garner sympathy.” He pursed his lips. “The People have a very good memory when it comes to their history. Because of their near-extermination at the hands of humans, most fairies see humans as the same violent, barbaric species as they were ten thousand years ago, albeit more technologically advanced. We are the violent nightmares of fairykind, their boogeymen, and they are absolutely terrified of being discovered by us.”

“Can you blame us?” One of the fairies that had hidden behind Butler muttered. Another fairy, also hiding behind Butler, shushed him.

“The last thing we need is for humans to find out about us, and start another war,” Captain Short said, picking up where Artemis had left off. “We definitely don’t want them trying to exploit us, either, and if they caught wind of a new market below ground, they’d clamber over each other to get to us. It’s the LEP’s job to keep that from happening, to keep fairy civilians and criminals from making contact with humans, but there’s only so much you can do with just sheer manpower.”

“Thus,” Artemis said, “the creation of the mind-wipe, which allows for the fairies to erase the memories of any human who catches a glimpse of them, thus protecting them from human discovery.

...They’ve wiped other people’s memories before.

Frisk wasn’t particularly surprised by this. The mind-wipe seemed like a ridiculously advanced technology to have, and there was no way that they’d be so comfortable using it without practice. Still, the thought sent shivers up and down their spine, and they couldn’t help but wonder just how many people alive today were missing their memories.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me,” Undyne growled. “What the hell is wrong with you people?!”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” One of the other fairies demanded, crossing his arms. “It’s just a mind-wipe. It’s been standard LEP procedure for centuries.”

*Centuries?! They’ve been doing this to people for hundreds of years?!

Frisk gulped, feeling almost as nauseous now as they usually did in the aftermath of a LOAD. Toriel placed one hand on their shoulder in a gesture of comfort, and when Frisk looked up at the monster, her gaze, leveled now at the fairy that had spoken, was sharp and disapproving.

“Memories are supposed to be private, things to be held in your soul as your own,” the monster queen said harshly. “To intrude upon another’s privacy in such a way, to intrude upon their very self and change it to your whims – to do it by accident is one thing. To do it on purpose is abominable, and you say this is standard procedure?”

Her last words came out smoldering like embers, and the fairy flinched back, face pale.

“It is,” Captain Short confirmed, making a sharp dismissive gesture at the other fairy that had him clamping his mouth shut. “If it helps matters any, the mind-wipe is only a second-to-worst-case scenario. Most fairies are too careful to be seen, but if a fairy’s running low on magic, or is going up against an enemy that can see them coming regardless of what they do… well, sometimes you need another solution.”
“And your solution is *messing with people’s heads*?!” Undyne demanded.

Short narrowed her eyes at the fish-lady. “Would you rather the Council order us to bio-bomb all those humans instead? Because they could do that.”

**Bio-bomb? Bio as in biological? They have bio-weapons?**

“YOU WOULD KILL PEOPLE TO KEEP THEM FROM TALKING ABOUT YOU?” Papyrus asked, his mouth turning down at the corners. “WHY? ISN’T IT EASIER TO JUST ASK THEM TO STAY QUIET?”

There were several scoffs from the group. “Ask *humans* to keep quiet about us?” One of them said. “Might as well ask a dwarf to marry a goblin.”

**MISTER FOWL KEEPS QUIET ABOUT YOU, DOESN’T HE?**

“Fowl might b-be an a-ally now,” another fairy said, and Frisk recognized the voice as Crane’s partner from their rescue, “b-but he only kept q-quiet about us at first because he wanted to exploit us l-later on.”

“Hey!” Captain Short snapped, bristling.

“Holly,” Artemis said, calmly. “You cannot blame him for thinking that. It’s well within his rights to believe it, and it’s not a far-fetched conclusion to come to, either. That being said...” he gave the fairy in question, who had inched out from behind Butler, an icy stare, “I left the fairy people alone at first because our first encounter was much more dangerous and distasteful than I expected it to be. Keep that in mind, Private.”

The fairy wilted and nodded furiously.

“And how does this have anything to do with the monsters being a threat to you people?” Frisk said, quickly, before any more arguments could break out. “The monsters don’t want to go to war with anyone or exploit anyone. They just want to be able to live on the surface peacefully.”

“That may be the case,” Artemis acknowledged. “However, monsters are a *magical* race. They use magic for nearly everything, do they not? And they do not bother to hide it, nor do they bother to hide in the same way the fairies do.”

It took them a moment, but Frisk realized exactly what he was implying with this. “The monsters are a non-human race - something that humans thought couldn’t exist. So is magic. But now humans have *proof* that both do, and now that they know, they might go looking for others... and even if they *don’t*, the monsters might find out about them. And the fairies think that will put them in danger.”

“That was the People’s first concern, certainly, but it is no longer their only one.” Artemis spread his hands wide. “After the vast majority of monsterkind had relocated to the surface, an LEP Retrieval squadron – the same squadron that Flowey encountered and subsequently attacked – was sent to explore the Underground.” He looked pointedly at Flowey. “The fairy that told you they were *sightseeing* was technically *not* lying.”

Flowey rolled his eyes at him, obviously not caring about this technicality one bit.

“The fairies intended to use the knowledge they gained in the Underground, along with information I received from Frisk while assisting them with protests as Anonymous, to gain a further understanding of how they may deal with the monsters peacefully,” the Irishman continued. “They also intended to use MagiScanners, a new device that Foaly, the centaur who was in charge of
Frisk’s mind-wipe, had invented, in order to scan the Underground to gain an understanding of how the monsters used magic, and how it differed from the People. The average monster’s magic is many times more powerful than the average fairy’s. A single monster can achieve, with a single spell, what it takes several fairy warlocks with decades of training under their belts several hours’ worth of cantrips. And that is a normal monster, without any particularly earth-shatteringly powerful abilities or statistics.” He raised an eyebrow. “Imagine how powerful you are in comparison to a fairy, Your Majesty. Can you hardly blame them for being wary?”

Toriel inclined her head, acknowledging his point, but still looking disapproving. “And why would they choose to target Frisk over dangerously powerful monsters, Mister Fowl?”

“For the same reason that you have every right to target me – because the monsters will always be their first priority over the safety of others, just as I do the same for the sake of the fairy people. Or, at least, that was their original reason.”

Frisk twitched. They have a different reason now because they know about the Resets, SAVEs and LOAds, they thought, chilled. I’m more a danger to them than the monsters are, because I remember when time rewinds, and they don’t. I could know everything about them, and they’d never know, and that scares them.

They may not have enjoyed the Resets, may have been trying to find a way to stop them even as they fought for the monsters’ happy ending on the surface, but they were well aware just how much of an advantage the Resets gave them over any opponents they may face. Unlike everyone else, who only got one chance in everything they did in life, and had to live, or die, with the consequences, Frisk didn’t. All it took for them to do things over was to die, and then they could completely avoid the events that had caused them trouble in the first place.

“Their new reason,” Artemis said, in a very careful tone of voice, “is that we have reason to believe that Frisk has magic.”

Um. What?

How on Earth had the fairies somehow come up with that idea? Frisk didn’t have magic. They had encountered magic, definitely, and did so every day, but they didn’t have magic of their own!

“Shortly after the gala, the fairies discovered an odd hotspot of magic at the exact center of this very rose spiral,” Artemis tapped his foot on the ground, inches from orange blooms, “which matched a magical signature they discovered in the Underground. A magical signature several times more powerful than even monster magic, which had not appeared in this spot until my younger brothers brought Frisk here to show them the fairy roses. At first, we thought this was residual magic from the monsters – however, during the mind-wipe, the fairies present scanned Frisk with a MagiScanner, and found them to have the exact same magical signature. A magical signature which, after several warlocks below ground used a process they refer to as reverse spellcasting, they determined to have a function, rather than simply being residual energy.”

Frisk glanced at the SAVE point, hovering between the two groups, with wide eyes.

They found magic where the SAVE point is. That must be what their scanners picked up! I didn’t know that the SAVE points left magic on me… and if reverse spellcasting means what I think it does, that means they would have found out about the Resets, even without my memories.

“The last humans in our recorded history to have magic were the ones present during the last battle between fairies and humans**,” Captain Short said, sounding almost sympathetic. “Humans were once capable of using magic almost as well as the People do, and Frisk’s already subverted the mind-
wipe, without needing prior preparation for it. That alone speaks volumes for how much power they already have. Once the Council figures that out, they’ll start panicking all over again. Which is why we,” she jerked her thumb at herself, and then at the rest of her group, “are taking the initiative now because the last thing we want is that sort of power coming after us because some people got scared and launched a preemptive attack.”

“That, and for another more pragmatic reason,” Artemis said firmly, folding his hands in front of himself again. “The group known as Humanity’s Resurgence has magic on their side. One of their members seems to have the ability to steal fairy magic if the events that took place during Frisk’s escape are any indication, is capable of using it, and, most importantly of all, he is aware of the fairy people.” His eyes met first Frisk’s, then Toriel’s. “Until we know more about Luis O’Reilly, the man in question, we need every advantage we can get, and every eye we can use to find him before he makes a move. There is only so much that the fairies can do on their own without being ordered to, and we cannot afford to wait for that.”

Toriel straightened. “You are here with an offer as well as an apology, then. An offer of an alliance.”

“Alliance with these people?” Flowey scoffed. “When hell freezes over!”

Artemis smirked. “If you are referring to the version of hell first coined by Dante Alighieri, then I must make you aware of the fact that the very deepest circles of hell are frozen over, Flowey.”

“Shut up! We’re not -!”

“Last I checked, Flowey,” Toriel said sternly, “you are not someone who can make that decision for me.”

Flowey clamped his mouth shut, glowering at Artemis. Toriel turned back to the Irishman. “And why should I accept an offer such as this? You have done nothing for my people. You spied upon us without our knowledge and you have attempted to harm my child.”

“We don’t expect you to accept,” Captain Short said, stepping forward and making eye contact with the goat monster with a determined expression that Frisk had only seen in a mirror before. “But we’re offering anyway because if you do, we might have the chance be able to make up for our mistakes.”

For a long moment, there was nothing but empty silence. Toriel stared at the captain. The fairy refused to look away, her eyes stubbornly sincere, and besides her, Artemis had an expression of agreement that was the most obvious emotion that Frisk had seen on his face in all the months they’d known him for.

“… I think,” Toriel said, finally, “I am willing to give you that chance.”

Chapter End Notes

And thus, the Monster-Fairy alliance has been born. Or, as someone on Fanfiction keeps putting it, they have formed the Avengers.

Well, sort of. It’s not actually going to be official until the Council accepts the alliance, and their heads are still firmly lodged in the sand. But Artemis and Co. and Frisk and Co. are allies now! It’s gonna be far from smooth sailing from here on out, but hopefully
everyone here will manage not to cause an interspecies war.

On Frisk’s thinking the SAVE point got magic on them somehow, instead of thinking they might have magic themselves – Frisk’s thought process here is that they believe that if it weren’t for the Resets, they wouldn’t be capable of doing the extraordinary things they’ve done. This is because they have self-esteem issues left over from their upbringing by their biological parents, some self-hatred left over because of the Genocide Runs, and because they’ve made a lot of mistakes over the course of various timelines that they’re convinced an extraordinary person like people think they are would be able to avoid those mistakes completely. And magic falls under their definition of “extraordinary.”

* “Ask a dwarf to marry a goblin:” Dwarves and goblins (lizard-like people who can throw fireballs and are generally dumber than your average rock) do NOT get along. I don’t know exactly why they don’t, but it’s essentially the Lower Elements equivalent to a gang war between the two of them. As it’s said in the books (or at least, something similar is said in the books,) a goblin would rather eat his own hand than marry a dwarf.

** Humans with magic: In book 8, Opal Koboi is working to activate the Berserker Gate (which in turn will send a wave of magic over the earth that will theoretically kill all the humans on its surface – obviously this did not actually happen), and it’s taking her several hours of intensive magical work to do so. The reason for the Gate being as complicated as it is, according to Opal herself, is that humans were once just as good at magic (or at least almost as good at it) as the People, and the warlock that created the Gate wanted to be certain that no human could use it against the fairies.

And I finally have worldbuilding questions for you guys! Someone here on A03 called Bismarkingit asked me “Are there any other countries that are accepting of monsters? I can assume Germany would feel obliged at the least to let them in and treat them kindly (for obvious reasons)”

There are plenty of countries that are accepting of monsters, to varying degrees. Germany was actually one of the first European counties, alongside Ireland, to offer the monsters a place there. The monsters are treated pretty nicely there, both because of Germany’s... known past of racism they feel they have to make up for (*coughcoughnaziscaough*), and because since Germany opened their borders to monsters, they’ve started recovering from the Crash more quickly than they were doing it on their own. Other countries that accept the monsters for the latter reason include Japan (which was hit ridiculously hard by the Crash), England, France, China, and Greece. The USA is a little less accepting of them but has similar reasoning as the countries previously mentioned (though they also have a reason that goes something like "Shit we messed up we need to make it up to them fast" because of what initially happened with keeping the monsters trapped under Mt. Ebott).

Then there’s a number of other countries that accept the monsters because they’re generally improving the quality of life for citizens with their magic and technology – this category includes most of Central America, several countries in Africa, and Spain (which was also hit hard during the Crash). There are other countries that let the monsters in, of course, but these countries have been the most enthusiastic to do so so far.
Hey, sorry for getting you guys’ hopes up for a new chapter when this is just an author’s note, but I figured y’all would appreciate knowing why the heck I haven’t been updating this story just as things were getting good, and why it might be a little while longer before the next chapter is uploaded.

Firstly, I have not, for the life of me, been able to muster up the inspiration to write the next chapter. I’ve tried, believe you me, but inspiration has just not been coming, and it is frustrating as hell. Thankfully, at this point I pretty much know what I want to write for the next chapter, it’s just a matter of, you know, actually physically writing stuff down in a way that doesn’t feel like it sucks.

Secondly, I have started a new class yet again, and, oh joy, it’s another class with essay writing. Weekly essay writing. So, yeah, writing new chapters might not be feasible since I have to do research for and write an essay every week for the next eight weeks.

Thirdly, I’ve been looking for a part-time job, and I haven’t had any luck yet, though hopefully I’ll find something soon.

And finally, my fourth reason for not writing M est P stuff is that I’ve been dragged kicking and screaming into this wonderful thing called Katekyou Hitman Reborn. I started off by accidentally stumbling across a KHR/Harry Potter crossover, read it, liked it enough that I decided to read more fanfics, and then eventually started reading the KHR manga so I knew what the heck was going on with all the rainbow flame stuff, and I sort of binge-read the first, oh, 120 chapters of the manga last night when I should have been sleeping and/or doing homework, so yeah, that was fun.

Take it from me, nothing ruins your semi-serious Artemis Fowl/Undertale mindset like reading about baby hitman tutors, chameleons that turn into guns, Ten-Year Bazookas, kids running around in their boxers on fire screaming stuff about doing stuff with their dying will, biting people to death, and general mayhem involving everything from magic bullets to climbing up cliffs in your underwear to fighting hand-to-hand combat with garlic. (Garlic. Like, excuse my language, but what the actual fuck. GARLIC. KHR is ridiculous.)

On top of all that, thanks to a lot of the fanfics I’ve read (*coughHarry-is-Skullfanficscough*) I’ve got a brand-spanking-new idea for a fanfic series that may or may not involve everyone’s favorite teenage Irish criminal mastermind having Mist Flames (because honestly no other kind of Dying Will Flames would fit Artemis nearly as well as Mist flames do. Illusions. So cool.) and eventually becoming the World’s Best Information Broker (*coughcoughguesswhocough*) and illusionist on top of being a criminal mastermind, which in other words means that Artemis becomes complete and utter overkill.

So yeah. Progress will be made on the next M est P chapter, but it might be a while. Also, I may end up starting a new fanfiction series because seriously, the KHR/AF idea I mentioned above is screaming for me to write it. Sorry for the false-update alarm that was this note, and have a good rest of your day!
UGH, thank GOD I finally got this done. Sorry it took so long guys, but I managed to get back in the swing of things at least! Hopefully I’ll be able to stay in the swing of things this time, and not get distracted by another fandom and start a new fanfic series again *flails pointedly at my new fanfic Ignition*

And, since nobody said anything last chapter about putting asterisk notes (notes about canon events) up here at the top of the page instead of the bottom, I will ask again – would you guys be okay with me putting the canon-reference note thingies up here at the top of the page, so I can make more room for worldbuilding at the bottom? Or would you rather things stay as they are now?

Later, safe in their hotel room once again and pulling off their shawl, Frisk couldn’t help but think that every second after Toriel’s statement had just seemed to drag on and on and on. Like the timestream had decided to crawl through thick molasses and slow everything down to a painfully long eternity.

It wasn’t the rest of the parley to blame for that. They knew that. The fairies had been agonizingly sincere in their eagerness to get the pending negotiations (as much as they were able to negotiate without their government being directly involved) over and done with, some still trembling with nerves in the aftermath of Sans’s demonstration with the blaster. The monsters, too, were clearly intent on finishing negotiations as quickly as possible, no longer feeling safe on the Fowl grounds, and so they were quick to get to the point, easily getting the fairies to agree to stop spying on Frisk and their friends in private (“private” including political meetings, their hotel rooms and homes, and any rooms that they might want to use to discuss more delicate things), in exchange for keeping the existence of the fairies a secret from any other monsters not in their little group and no more monsters attacking fairies so long as they kept to their side of the bargain.

Flowey was still grumbling about that last bit. Probably because he had been one of the two monsters that the fairies had very definitely been eyeing when Captain Short had made that request. Still, it had been a fair point, and no amount of grumbling from anybody was going to change that.

Frisk took several deep breaths, clasping their hands together in an attempt to stop them shaking, and gallantly tried to ignore the worried stares boring into their back.

By all rights, they shouldn’t still be feeling so nervous. They’d dealt with stressful situations like this before, and compared to the political maneuvering that they were used to, the compromise made between the fairies and the monsters had been easy. They knew that, and they knew that Toriel knew that as well, since she had been there for many previous situations that Frisk had handled better than this one. But they couldn’t really help themselves, because this was the first time in a very, very long time that something new had been thrown down on the table for them to deal with without them having some idea how to deal with it.
Up until now, no one else apart from Flowey, Sans, and maybe Asgore* (they’d never found the courage to ask him) had ever known about the Resets. It was a secret strictly for them and them alone, because neither Frisk nor Chara had any illusions as to everyone else’s reactions if they did find out about it. The other monsters would be horrified and guilty about having killed them in previous timelines, especially Toriel, who would probably take it harder than everyone else, or angry and hurt if they ever learned of Frisk’s less moral runs. And humans… well. If human governments were willing to lock monsters underground claiming them to be a threat just because they didn’t understand them, then finding out about a child who had lived through more than a decade’s worth of Groundhog’s Day time-loops would probably get Frisk locked up in a lab to be experimented on, or used against the monsters until the next Reset came… at the very least (and they really really didn’t want to know what the most might be).

But now someone knew. Artemis Fowl and the fairies knew one of their deepest, darkest secrets, without even having to be told about the different timelines. They probably hadn’t had enough time to go through all their memories by now, because a decade’s worth of memories was a huge amount of memories to browse through, but they’d probably still seen enough to understand what was happening and understand why Frisk had been keeping it all a secret. And Frisk had no idea how they were going to use the information.

Would they blackmail Frisk into doing favors for them, in exchange for keeping the info to themselves? Would they try to have Frisk killed, to get rid of the threat they posed? Would they try to wheedle Frisk into using the Resets to their advantage? Would they tell the government? Would they tell anyone else at all?

*Would they tell the monsters?

Frisk shuddered as Chara quietly added their piece to the silent monologue, and wrapped their arms around themselves for comfort.

“Frisk…?”

Toriel. Her voice seemed awfully loud, in the quiet that the monsters had fallen into after shortcutting back. Frisk took a deep breath to steady themselves and then turned around to give the monsters a watery smile.

“I’m fine, Mom.” They said, quietly. “Just… just a little shaken still, I guess.”

Flowey, whose pot had been put down on their bedside table, snorted, not fooled one bit, and everyone else looked just as skeptical.

“YOU LOOK VERY SHAKEN, NOT JUST A LITTLE!” Papyrus pointed out, wringing his hands.

“Yeah, you look like someone walked over your dust,” Undyne said, bluntly.

Frisk winced, and carefully put aside the memories that phrase brought up, to hopefully never ever think about again.

“I’m fine,” they repeated, more softly. “I just… I’m fine. You don’t need to worry about me.”

Toriel studied them for a moment, warm red eyes worried. Then, she stood up from where she had sat down on the bed and moved forward, kneeling and reaching out to put warm, gentle hands on Frisk’s shoulders.

“Is this about what young Mr. Fowl said?” she asked, just as softly. “The memories he saw?”
They gulped, mind whirring frantically to come up with some response that wasn’t a big fat yes, and came up with nothing. Their nervousness must have shown, because Toriel gave them a faint smile, and drew them into a hug.

“It’s alright, my child,” she murmured. “I won’t ask. I won’t be like those fairies and insist upon knowing your thoughts when you are not ready to tell me about them. Just know that if you ever do need to talk, I am here for you.”

Not trusting themselves to speak, Frisk nodded, burying their face in her robes and holding onto the fabric with shaky fingers.

They didn’t think they’d ever be able to tell Toriel, for all her motherly support. Because of it, even. How were you supposed to tell your adopted mother that you’d lived far too long to really be called a child anymore and that one of the worst things you could ever imagine happening had just happened?

*… I can’t believe I’m saying this now, but Frisk? It could have gone much, much worse.

“Well,” Holly muttered under her breath, “I guess things could have gone worse.”

Around her, the rest of the little squad of fairies Artemis had called in for negotiations muttered their agreement.

The fairies, and their human allies had sequestered themselves away in Artemis’s former office in the Manor shortly after the monsters had blipped off to wherever they had come to the meeting from. Section Eight and Recon personnel alike had made themselves as comfortable as they could on various armchairs and the rug-covered floor, all looking incredibly, impossibly grateful to be alive, and for the first time in months Holly couldn’t help but feel sympathetic. After all, most fairies didn’t get themselves up to the ears in Fowl-level complications every few months. This had to have been jarring to them.

Holly felt more exhausted and resigned than jarred. Parley with monsters was far less stressful than dealing with hordes of trolls or demons**, even with all the implications of inter-species warfare if they failed.

And time travel. Couldn’t forget the time travel. D’Arvit , she did not get paid enough for this.

Thoroughly and unfortunately distracted from her moment of respite, Holly turned her head to look at Artemis, who had immediately beelined for the desk with his laptop upon entering the room and now sat tapping away at his keyboard, brows furrowed. He’d been there for several minutes, not saying a word, just typing, and though Holly would really much rather stay where she was in her comfy armchair, she knew that expression. That was Artemis’s data analysis expression, which meant he’d have some sort of insight on this situation that would probably make things needlessly complicated and would need to be included in a report later.

With a groan, the fairy captain hoisted herself up out of the chair, stretched, and turned to the other fairies still resting nearby.

“All right, unless you all want to get involved in Artemis’s latest scheme, I’d recommend you get out. Now.”

They didn’t need to be told twice. Within thirty seconds she was the only fairy left in the room and,
once she’d checked the hall outside for eavesdroppers, she strode over to the Mud Boy, fully prepared to hear the worst.

“So,” she said, flatly, “I don’t suppose there are any doomsday scenarios this whole disaster brought onto the table?”

Artemis snorted, reluctantly amused at this, and sat back in his chair. “No, fortunately enough. No apocalypses in the making, and certainly no megalomaniacs to deal with.”

“Oh good.” The elf pulled herself up onto the desk and sat down with her feet hanging over the edge. “But there is something going on?”

The Irishman’s eyes narrowed in thought at his computer screen. “… Possibly. I’m not entirely certain.” He sighed and reached out to save the word document he’d been typing in. Holly waited patiently, knowing that Artemis would elaborate once he’d gotten his thoughts together, and, sure enough, he continued only a few moments later.

“I think, even knowing what we do already, that we don’t have all the puzzle pieces yet.”

Holly scoffed. Loudly. “Even I know that much, Mud Boy. You were at the same meeting as me, right? I know you saw that giant dragon skull. There’s a lot we don’t know.”

“Yes, the ‘giant dragon skull’ was not expected in the slightest,” he agreed with a frown, beginning to type again, “and I will be analyzing that once I have everything I noticed written down. But I was thinking more along the lines of the fact that we apparently do not have all the facts about Frisk.”

“What?”

Blue eyes rose to meet hers. “Think about it, Holly. I might be the most intelligent person in the room, but you are no idiot.”

The fairy rolled her eyes at him, but did as she was told, going over the whole mess that was the parley in her mind. Once the actual terms of their budding alliance had been being set, things had calmed down, but the beginning had been almost nothing but chaos. Angry fish monsters, the skull blaster, all started by Frisk’s panic at Artemis telling them about having –

That was when the penny dropped.

“Frisk was scared,” she realized. “In the beginning, when you told them that you’d seen their memories. They weren’t angry or even indignant, they were just scared.”

Artemis nodded tiredly. “Precisely. I was honestly expecting them to be infuriated at worst and indignant at best when I admitted to having seen their memories, but instead, they reacted with fear. Now, why would a child with multiple concrete memories of dying be frightened of someone knowing about that?”

Holly’s brows furrowed as she tried to follow the human’s train of thought. “… maybe they don’t want people to worry about them? We’ve already seen how self-sacrificial they are, what with being shot and worrying more about the monsters than themselves.” She scowled. “Which, now that I think about it, might have something to do with those powers of theirs. Why worry about dying when you’re just going to get a chance to do everything over again afterward?”

“A worrying thing to think about for sure, but that is not the only thing that worries me.” Artemis steepled his fingers, the furrow between his brows growing deeper. “That alone would not warrant Frisk being frightened by someone else knowing their big secret.”
Finally, **finally**, Holly got it. “There’s something else we’re missing, isn’t there? Something else we haven’t found out about yet that Frisk doesn’t want anyone not already in the know to know about. And if they’re scared of someone finding out about it…”

Artemis nodded. “Precisely.”

Holly uttered several curses, loudly and not even bothering to lower her volume. “*D’Arvit*, this just keeps getting worse and worse… what did we miss the first time around?”

“We may not have missed it at all. After all, Foaly and No. 1 both are still trawling through their memories as we speak.” He pursed his lips. “But, if I were to hazard a guess… for all their genius and time-traveling ability, Frisk can still make mistakes. And with this sort of power at their fingertips, it’s entirely possible they’ve made some truly *disastrous* ones.”

Before the elfin captain could think too hard about that sinister statement, a notification blipped gently on Artemis’s computer screen, which he glanced at before opening a window. In the window, Foaly’s face appeared, and Holly immediately went on high alert. The centaur looked *awful*, most of the blood having rushed out of his face and leaving him as pale as a ghost. No. 1 was nowhere to be seen.

“Foaly?” She asked, worriedly. “What’s wrong? And where’s No. 1?”


Artemis leaned forward, frowning. “What did you find?”

Onscreen, the centaur turned bleary eyes on the Irishman. “Nothing good, Mud Boy. Nothing good.” He grimaced, looking distinctly green as he did so, and then his fingers moved offscreen and several video files popped up on Artemis’s monitor. “See for yourself. And, well… remember what I said last time about something not being pretty? That applies here too. ”

Artemis clicked on one of the video files and then hit play.

It didn’t take long for Holly to feel queasy as she watched the video. Barely a few minutes later, she couldn’t handle it anymore, and made a beeline for the nearest restroom, for once glad that humans built their toilets indoors***. She wouldn’t have been able to make it outside to barf.

And when she came back? Artemis looked like he was seconds away from throwing up as well, almost as green as a sprite as he paused the video and then let his face fall into his hands as he struggled to regain his composure.

“I think” he muttered, sounding nauseous, “this is information I could have very much *done without.*”

Chapter End Notes

… You know something’s bad when ARTEMIS of the ice-cold emotionless face starts looking like he wants to barf. I’m sure you guys can make some educated guesses as to exactly what they started watching.

*Asgore possibly knowing about the Resets: In the game, during the boss fights with
Asgore, if you die and then come back to fight him again, Frisk will sometimes tell him that he’s killed them before, and his only reaction is a sad nod. So either he’s run across humans that can SAVE and LOAD like your character can, or you were only confirming something he already knew.

**Hordes of trolls or demons:** In book 4, Artemis and Holly were dumped by Opal Koboi into an abandoned fairy amusement park exhibit right smack in the middle of a horde of hungry trolls. In book 5, when Artemis, Holly, No. 1 and Qwan arrived in Hybras, they were greeted by a horde of aggressive demons who were none too happy to see any of them there, lead by an egomaniac demon called Abott. Fun times.

***Toilets indoors:** Apparently fairies think that having a toilet inside your house is disgusting. (Presumably, they have outhouses or something.) If you don’t believe me, go read book 1, it’s mentioned during the same chapter Holly is introduced.

And here’s a little tidbit for you guys that’s not EXACTLY worldbuilding, but something I was still interested in sharing with people that might not read the comments. LiliaNox asked in the comments of the last chapter why the monsters were overreacting to the mind-wipe, pointing out that it was a relatively peaceful solution for the fairies’ secrecy problem. This was my answer:

I agree with you that the mind-wipe is a pretty peaceful solution to the fairies' human problems, but, peaceful though it may be, it's not precisely moral, is it? Not by our standards, at least. I mean, think about it, would YOU be happy if you found out that someone had poked around in your head, erased a few memories and then recorded the ones they didn't erase to watch later? I certainly wouldn't be.

That being said, the reasons why the monsters are "over-reacting," well...

The monsters never considered hiding from humans when they reached the surface, even before Frisk fell, and are an inherently honest people. They see no reason to keep secrets, for the most part, from their new human neighbors (the exception to this obviously being them hiding how weak their souls are from the public, and Frisk was the one who insisted on that.) They do not consider themselves above humanity, either. They consider themselves to be equals and want to prove as such. On top of that, monster memories are stored in their soul, and while they know that humans and monsters store magic very differently, they can't help but be indignant for Frisk's sake, after the mind-wipe, because messing with someone's sense of self (aka their soul) is a big NO-NO to them.

The fairies on the other hand? They've spent centuries lying to everybody who isn't a fairy by hiding their existence from the world. They spy on everyone who isn't a fairy, and do so without regret. They think of themselves as above humans (calling humanity a race of barbarians really doesn't imply they think of humans as their equals), even while they fear discovery by humans. On top of that, they have no qualms altering the memories of people who have seen them, sometimes even doing complete personality transplants (see Loafers, book 3) to keep them from blabbing about the People. And anybody they don't wipe the memories of that they don't want to know about the People is bio-bombed.

The monsters and the fairies, morally speaking, are very, very different. So different that I'd ALMOST consider this a case of Blue and Orange Morality (see TVTropes). Their morals and motivations are completely different from one another, and could, in fact,
could be called opposites of one another. And while they're not completely incompatible, these conflicting mindsets are different enough that, when they meet, they are going to clash something awful. THIS, plus the fact that monsters store memories in their souls, is why the monsters are "over-reacting" to the mind-wipe in the way that they are.
Chapter 51

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait, guys! I’d like to say this is the last time you have to wait a few weeks for new chapters, but, well… I still need a job, and on top of that I need to start preparing for possibly selling art as a freelance artist, and that takes a LOT of work.

On another note, here’s a question to anyone who’s read my KHR/Artemis Fowl fic Ignition: who would be willing to beta read any new chapters I write for it?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was amazing how quiet people could become when digesting information of implausible severity.

Artemis took a slow sip of the ginger tea Butler had prepared for him and Holly alike, hoping the warm drink would help settle his stomach. Across from him, his tiny elfin friend had once more laid claim to one of the armchairs in the office, curled up on the cushion and with a cup of her own cradled in her hands. The elf’s posture seemed disquietingly child-like, with her feet on the seat and knees pulled up to her chin, and her still decidedly green face didn’t exactly ruin that perception.

Not that he blamed her for that. If anything, he’d be more worried if she wasn’t visibly perturbed by what they’d just watched, because that would imply that their many, many misadventures had been significantly more dangerous and disturbing than he remembered. Trolls, megalomaniac pixies, goblin revolutions, and demonic hordes were bad enough, but they were still very different from watching through the point of view of a child as said child murdered their friends and adopted family in cold blood.

His stomach rolled unpleasantly, and he grimaced and took another sip of tea.

The memories had started innocuously enough, despite Artemis being on guard for upcoming horrors by Foaly’s warning, and the notion of No. 1 ridding himself of his lunch through the wrong end off camera. Each new timeline, or “Run” as Frisk had called them the few times they’d audibly addressed them in their recollections, began with the same vision – Frisk waking up in a bed of golden flowers that looked to be some variation of buttercups with overly-large petals, staring up at a jagged tunnel of unforgiving stone that gave way to a tiny pinprick of light high above. In most other sequences of memories Artemis had looked over, Frisk would immediately rise to their feet, brush themselves off, sometimes hold a conversation with “Chara” (whose words were still mostly unintelligible no matter what Foaly tried to do to enhance the audio), and then go on their way.

This time, however, Frisk spent several long moments staring up at the light above, blinking several times as if in confusion. It was only when Chara spoke (sounding even more unintelligible than ever) that Frisk moved, visibly starting at the ghost’s voice, before rising quickly to their feet and sending their eyes spinning around the small cavern they’d landed in.

Considering some of the possible side-effects of regular time travel, it was only logical to assume it was possible for Frisk to lose their memories, and their actions in the video certainly suggested that was what had happened, as did their sudden reaction to Chara, as if a voice talking in their head that
they were previously used to had startled them. The thought of possible consequences to their head-
achingly paradox-free loops in the timestream had been enough to set Artemis’s already fraying
nerves on edge… and that had been before they’d entered the next room, where Flowey was waiting
for them.

“Howdy, Frisk!” The flower monster had said cheerfully. “Boy, what a shame about that last
timeline not working out, huh? I guess dying of old age down here is impossible for you!” Then the
yellow menace had blinked, squinting at Frisk as they refused to answer, an odd look on his face.
“Hey, what’s up with you? …What’s with that weird expression?”

He hadn’t gotten an answer, because that was when Toriel had approached, and the flower had fled
to avoid her notice, but the questions had still left a curl of dread in his gut that was proven to be
logical by Frisk’s next actions following Toriel leaving them in a relatively safe room in the Ruins.
That action being Frisk turning towards the nearest visible monster (a creature that looked to be some
combination of a moth and a bedsheets ghost).

And brutally slaughtering them.

It had only taken a few more obviously deliberate and merciless kills before Holly had run from the
room to empty her stomach, and only ten more for Artemis’s own gut to begin to rebel against him. It
was immeasurably horrifying to see Frisk, the seemingly ever-merciful child determined to protect
their monster family at all possible costs, even their own life, murder those they sought to protect
without a single sign of recognizing them, nor even caring about the loss of life. Even more so as
Chara immediately reacted in shock and horror, shouting something that, though gibberish to his
ears, was easily translated to a what do you think you’re doing?! by tone of voice alone, and Frisk
still didn’t react.

It only got more horrifying from there. Frisk carved their way through the Ruins with only a stick,
leaving piles of dust and Chara’s increasingly more distressed cries in their wake, until they reached a
tiny house set into purple stone that turned out to belong to Toriel. Toriel, who was unaware of the
killer under her roof. Toriel, who clearly still thought that this blood-soaked (or perhaps dust-stained
would be more appropriate, considering what became of dead monsters) creature that he barely
recognized was an innocent child.

An “innocent child” that had turned on her when she tried to stop them from leaving out of a
misguided attempt to protect them, slashing their stick across her chest in a killing blow that left the
goat-woman dissolving slowly into dust before their eyes.

Artemis had been forced to pause the video at that point to gather his wits again, and if Butler hadn’t
left and come back with a kettle of ginger tea for the both of them at that point, he was certain that it
would have been his previous meal decorating the office carpet, as well as Holly’s, when they started
watching again. Frisk had killed their mother in all but blood, just like that, and didn’t seem to shed
so much as a single tear for her.

Something that even Flowey was horrified – or at least terrified – by, if the encounter with him in the
tunnel leading out to Snowdin was any indication.

“You really don’t remember them, huh?” The flower had said, in a voice just shy of a whimper.
“You wouldn’t be doing this otherwise.” He’d flinched back as Frisk took a step forward, “You’ll
regret this later when you remember, Frisk! I’m warning you! You’ve killed monsters before now,
and you always regret it later! But don’t worry, your old friend Flowey keeps his promises. I won’t
let this play out like last time, if only because you’ll be a blubbering mess later if I do!”

After that, the rest of the Underground had passed by in a sluggish blur, as if he were watching a
train wreck in slow motion with filthy lenses between his eyes and the screen. Frisk massacred their way through the entire subterranean kingdom one region at a time. Snowdin Forest was filled with nothing but inactive traps and monsters that fell to their hand one after another, the only respite from the literal *cold-blooded* butchering being one brief encounter with Papyrus and Sans before they disappeared – only for Papyrus to reappear in Waterfall, crouching down to talk urgently to a tiny saurian monster child in an orange striped sweater, warning them about the “TINY MURDEROUS HUMAN.” Upon seeing them, he simply urged the child to run, and then turned towards Frisk and tried to talk them into standing down, tried to appeal to their better nature.

He failed abysmally, and Artemis was sure that the sight of that tall skeleton’s body dissolving, only to leave a head that was crushed to powder beneath Frisk’s sneaker, would haunt his dreams for weeks. As would the following fight as Undyne, in all her furious knightly glory, lunged for Frisk with glowing spears poised to strike and murder in her eye, intent on avenging the fallen monsters yet failing to, literally *melting* before finally dissolving to nothingness like all the others before her. The next monster to attempt to stand in their way and actually succeed in any way was Mettaton, the robot celebrity that Artemis knew that Beckett adored for his flamboyant personality, and even he only managed to hold his own for a few minutes, dodging and attacking furiously in that odd black-and-white state that Frisk had entered with every battle, colored lasers landing only a few hits before a well-placed kick to his chest finally ended him in a massive explosion.

And then there was Sans, in that final golden hall, simply waiting for Frisk to arrive, and the creature that was supposed to be Frisk but wasn’t was put down over and over again by screaming blasters, laser beams, blue-and-white bones and telekinesis. One death after another, until finally the screen glitched furiously – and Frisk was sitting bolt upright back on the flowerbed at the beginning of their journey, sobbing.

Holly shuddered in her chair, and quickly gulped down her own tea. The haunted look in her eyes made it abundantly clear that her train of thought had been following the same track as his.

“*D’Arvit,*” she croaked, after another pregnant moment of eerie silence. “How was that Frisk? How was that the same kid that tried to comfort the Queen while they were *bleeding out*? That’s just – it’s not –” She waved one hand in the air, attempting to get across the sheer *impossibility* of what they had just witnessed.

“Unfortunately,” Artemis murmured, not trusting himself to speak any louder for the moment, “regardless of how impossible it seems, that was Frisk.”

“It can’t have been,” Holly insisted, firmly sticking to her denial. “Frisk is – Frisk is mercy and grudging forgiveness wrapped up in a striped package! They’re just a kid! That was *not* the same kid we just negotiated with!!”

“Those were Frisk’s memories we just watched, Holly,” he said, tiredly. “No matter how much we may dislike it, the fact is that *that was Frisk.* Perhaps not the Frisk we know now, but *still them.*”

The elf grimaced, putting aside her teacup and springing up from her chair to pace back and forth in front of the desk. Butler, having been a steady presence behind both of their shoulders as they watched the real-life equivalent of an R-Rated horror flick, quietly exited from behind the desk to retrieve the cup, his brow furrowed in uncertain thought.

“At least we know why they were so scared now,” Artemis’s former bodyguard said softly. “With something like that to cover up… how are you supposed to tell your own friends and family that at one point in time, you killed them and walked over their corpses?”

Holly grimaced, running her hands through her short-cropped hair. Artemis half-expected her to start
pulling out clumps of it in her agitation, but thankfully, she did not.

“How?” She said, helplessly. “How did all that,” she gestured violently at the laptop, “happen?”

“Considering Flowey’s words on the subject,” he said, flatly, “memory loss was at least a part of it. You heard him: ‘You really don’t remember them?’”

“That’s a pile of steaming troll dung!” Holly snarled, going back to her pacing. “How could memory loss even cause that?! If they forgot the monsters entirely, then that’d just mean their first memories would be of their life before falling into the mountain, and even their biological parents would have noticed their kid growing up to become a murderer! There’s no sign of that!” She paused. “Foaly, is there any sign of that?”

“Not a one,” the centaur grumbled. “Apart from the obvious neglect in that household, there’s nothing sinister that went on there. Heck, the kid’s apparently saved stray animals before. Practically a saint.”

“So how does a saint become a serial killer?” the captain hissed. “It can’t just be memories! No matter how many memories they lost of the monsters, that wouldn’t turn them into a genocidal miniature psychopath! There’s got to be another reason! There has to be!”

She went silent, trying to catch her breath after her rant, glaring at Artemis’s laptop as if it had personally offended her.

“I think I may have an idea,” Butler said.

They both turned to look at him, and on the screen, Foaly’s ears visibly twitched.

“Well?” Holly demanded.

The hulking manservant shifted his weight in a way that almost seemed… sheepish. “Well… Artemis, I know for a fact that you watched the movie Groundhog Day at least once. Frisk’s life seems to be a magically-inclined real-life equivalent to that, yes?”

“A rather more childlike equivalent at turns, yes,” Artemis admitted, reluctantly, while Holly visibly attempted to rearrange her world around the idea of Butler watching feature films, “only with considerably more deaths shown. Your point?”

“The protagonist in the film starts progressing towards gradually more self-destructive actions when he becomes truly desperate to stop the time loop,” Butler said firmly. “Who’s to say that desperation isn’t an equally powerful motivator in the real world as well?”

Artemis considered this, frowning and steepling his fingers.

“… that might be one reason,” Artemis said, quietly, “but I don’t think that’s the only one. Frisk obviously lost their memories of the Underground, and though desperation might explain why they were so dedicated to killing the monsters, but it doesn’t explain why a child who starts off practically oozing mercy from every pour would start killing them in the first place. There’s another piece of the puzzle we’re missing.”

“A piece of the puzzle we’re not likely to find here,” Holly said, grimly, “and considering what we just watched I’m not going anywhere near any of Frisk’s memories again with a ten-foot pole.”

“Agreed,” Artemis muttered, suppressing a shudder.
“So what next?”

There was another moment of silence.

“Foaly,” the Irishman said. “Have you already told the Council about this?”

“Not one word, yet,” Foaly admitted blearily. “I haven’t even told them about the whole time-travel issue yet. That’s what I was going through the memories for, to get proof together so that they’d actually take the idea seriously.”

Artemis took in a deep breath.

“I think,” he said carefully, “we should not tell them about this.”

“Artemis –”

“We will not tell them about this,” he insisted firmly. “We will not tell them of Frisk’s time-travel capabilities, and we will certainly not tell them of this… this genocide they committed. The Frisk we are dealing with now is obviously not the same Frisk as we are used to, and the Council would not see that. And because the mind-wipe wouldn’t work, the next thing the Council would attempt after finding out they could be a threat would be a bio-bomb.”

That cut off Holly’s protests at their source, and she scowled. “We should say something.”

“I don’t know, Holly,” Foaly muttered, “I don’t think we can afford to get on Frisk’s bad side by telling the Council outright that they can time travel. We’re already in thin ice as it is…”

“And all it would take,” Artemis finished for him with chilly finality, “is one more mistake on our behalf to ruin the new alliance we have now.”

“We can’t just leave it like this, though!” Holly protested.

“We won’t.” He assured her. “I have no intention of letting this go quite yet – not until we know exactly how this happened. But telling the Council isn’t the only mistake we can make. Considering the effort they’ve gone to to keep the monsters in the dark about these time loops, I have no intentions of confronting Frisk about any of them in full view and hearing of the monsters. So, for now… all we can do is wait for the opportunity to talk to them alone.”

Chapter End Notes

Ultimately, some things have to get worse before they get better, and this is one of those things. You can’t expect Artemis Fowl or any of his friends to just let something like the Genocide Runs go, even if it’s clear that Frisk isn’t actually a psychopath at present time.

Speaking of the Genocide Run – congrats to all of you who guessed correctly what was going on with the memories (not that it was difficult to guess haha!) You all win: an explanation on the events of the two Genocide Runs, specifically how the two timelines are different from one another, despite being the same kind of run.

First things first – the first Genocide timeline went more or less the same as it does in Undertale itself – Frisk kills their way through the entire Underground with Flowey
helping them with the traps, eventually reaching the Judgement Hall and the fight with Sans. Unlike the actual game, however, Frisk has a limited number of SAVEs and LOADs in each timeline, and so, when they died one too many times against Sans, there was a Reset that sent them back to the beginning with their memories and empathy (remember that author’s note from way, WAY back?) intact.

However, the second timeline went very, very differently, mostly because of one thing: after the first Geno timeline, and after technically befriending him, Frisk made Flowey promise that if another Geno run began, he would warn the monsters about the murderous human coming for them, in order to reduce monster casualties. After seeing Frisk killing monsters throughout the Ruins, Flowey went on to Snowdin, Waterfall, everywhere else in the Underground he could reach in time before Frisk got there, and warned all of the monsters that he deemed as “most important to Frisk” of the incoming danger, and anybody else around them. This means that many encounters with main character monsters like Sans and Papyrus happened very differently – such as Papyrus helping evacuating monsters in Waterfall when Frisk ruins through, and Undyne being there to see Frisk kill him LONG before where the in-game encounter with her is, OR the fight with Mettaton, as Flowey outright warned Mettaton that a single hit could kill him, and so he actually dodged Frisk’s first attacks a-la Sans while trying to get some hits in before he finally died. This ALSO means that when Frisk got to the Judgement Hall, they had a lower LV than in the previous Genocide Run, since they encountered far fewer monsters, which only made Sans’s fight that much harder on them.

(Also, just to clear things up, Flowey was NOT helping Geno!Frisk with the traps like he does in canon – they were disabled because Papyrus and other monsters setting up traps didn’t have time to finish setting them up before evacuating the area.)
Chapter 52

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

Uploading this a little early for you guys, since I'm going to be otherwise occupied tomorrow!

And guys guys guys listen there’s an Artemis Fowl movie that’s going to be coming out this summer, and THERE’S A TRAILER FOR IT OUT NOW. AND IT IS EPIC. I ORDER THEE TO GO WATCH IT NOW AND BE AMAZED AT IT’S EPICNESS (while praying along with me that Disney doesn’t fuck this up like they fucked up Black Cauldron. Fingers crossed, everyone.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ten days. It had been ten days since the parley at the Fowl Estate, and things were almost distressingly normal.

Following their frankly somewhat unnerving foray on the manor’s grounds, Frisk’s days had quickly gone back to normal, if you discounted the contingency of guards provided by the local police that followed them around almost everywhere in public. They’d gone to several political meetings (assuring the people present there that yes, Frisk and the monsters were fine, thank you for your concern, don’t worry, everything’s on schedule still), and had begun assisting with the fostering program that was thankfully ready to put into action. They helped monsters move out of their homes in segregated communities and into the homes of the human families that had volunteered to take them in, smoothed over misunderstandings and awkward moments, and by the end of that week four monster families had been situated in formerly human-only communities and were getting used to their new neighborhood.

If it weren’t for the fairies, Frisk might have thought that the kidnapping and the subsequent rescue-slash-second abduction had never happened. As it was, though, the fairies were definitely there and, in a surprising show of consideration for a species that had apparently had no qualms about rooting through people’s very private memories (yes, they were still more than a little upset about that, and for once Frisk wasn’t feeling particularly forgiving), would sometimes shimmer into existence somewhere where Frisk or their little group of monsters could see them and give them a brief nod before disappearing again.

Frisk almost wished they wouldn’t, willingness to show they were abiding by their own terms or not. If all they had was Flowey’s mutterings whenever a fairy was nearby, it would be easier to pretend that the kidnapping and the events following it had just been a figment of their imagination. Unfortunately, though, Frisk couldn’t afford to forget any of it. Not their abduction, not the man who’d done the interrogating after said abduction, and most certainly not the fact that the fairies and their human allies had access to one of their best-kept secrets. There were far too many things at stake – and the silence on behalf of both HuRg and the fairies was starting to get… unnerving.

On the one hand, silence on both accounts was probably a good thing. Silence on HuRg’s behalf meant that no one had been attacked and that the group was laying low, at least for now. Silence on behalf of the fairies meant that they were, in theory, abiding by the deal that they’d made with Frisk
and Toriel, and only watching them when they were out in public where none of the fairies seemed willing to show even a glimmer of their person to people not already in the know.

But, on the other hand, silence could also mean that something big was coming. The calm before a storm. Silence on HuRg’s behalf? An attack in the making, perhaps, or another abduction plan… or maybe something much, much worse. Frisk had met many, many people like their interrogator over the course of the Resets – extremists like O’Reilly (whom one of the fairies had, when Frisk had asked, confirmed that the man’s name was indeed O’Reilly), extremists that had a reason for their own personal philosophies, rarely gave up just because of what amounted to a tiny setback. And O’Reilly utterly loathed the monsters – they’d been able to see it in his eyes. One way or another, he would be making a move against the monsters.

And once he does… how on Earth can you stop someone who can literally force anyone in the world to hurt you?

Which brought up their second pressing concern. The fairies, and Artemis Fowl.

So far, the fairies had kept to their agreement. Flowey hadn’t caught a single sliver of vibration inside their hotel room, and save for the fairies that appeared briefly enough to show the monsters they were there before disappearing, Frisk had hardly seen hide or hair of any of them.

Ordinarily, this wouldn’t have worried them – if anything, it might have even reassured them, to see that the fairies were keeping their word despite everything they’d done. But these were no ordinary circumstances. After all, before now, no-one had ever found out about the Resets except the people that already knew or that Frisk wanted to know, and there was a good reason for that. The last thing they wanted was to give someone else leverage that they could hold over Frisk’s head and cause trouble for the monsters… and Artemis Fowl had gotten that leverage and passed it on to the fairies as well. They’d half-expected to get a threatening email or phone call from the Irishman, and had been so terrified of actually receiving one that they’d had a small heart attack every time their phone or email notifications went off. But, instead of incriminating emails or calls, Frisk had gotten nothing from Artemis Fowl, or any of the fairies they’d already been introduced to.

They could deal with the silence from HuRg. After all, they had a basic idea of what they wanted already, and what lengths they were willing to go to get it. But the fairies? They didn’t know if the silence was just them digesting the information, if it was them scheming to kill them, or whether or not they were just planning on ignoring their experiences. And without knowing what they wanted, or what they were going to do…

Frisk shivered where they were sitting on the floor next to where their laptop was charging and glanced nervously out the window.

I wish they would just do something already, they thought, miserably.

*Hey! Don’t jinx us!

Frisk took a second look at their earlier thought and winced. Chara was absolutely right – what had they been thinking, thinking something like that? Their luck was already horrid, they didn’t need to call down their dubious karma on their head!

Then there was a flicker of heat haze outside, on the fire escape, and Frisk realized with a sinking heart that they already had.

“Hello?” They said.
The haze shimmered for a moment, and then a small humanoid shape was settling into reality as if it had always been there. A small green and familiar humanoid shape, wings folding neatly behind her and worried eyes peering at them through a raised visor.

“Hello, Ambassador,” Lieutenant Crane greeted them softly.

Frisk hesitated, then gave her a careful nod. The fairy reached up and pulled off her helmet, tucking it under one arm and nervously brushing a strand of pale hair behind one ear.

“Can… Can I come in?”

“Why?” The word came out a bit more sharply than Frisk intended it to, and the green-skinned woman winced, putting up her hands in a gesture of surrender – revealing, Frisk couldn’t help but notice with a touch of surprise, that the lady’s weapons belt was empty. She didn’t have a single gun or baton with her, not a one.

“I just… can I talk to you? And Her Majesty, if she’s here?”

Toriel was, in fact, in the bathroom, removing fur from the drain after taking a shower. Frisk narrowed their eyes at the fairy distrustfully.

Chara?

The ghost was silent for several long moments.

*… She’s clean.

“Mom,” Frisk called, after another moment, “we’ve got a visitor…”

Toriel emerged from the bathroom in a purple bathrobe, looking puzzled. When the monster saw the fairy standing awkwardly outside the window, the confusion was replaced with distaste.

“Oh.”

Crane flinched. Toriel studied her for a moment, then sighed.

“Is this an urgent matter?”

The sprite shook her head mutely.

“Then allow me to get dressed first if you would. Please let her in, Frisk – we wouldn’t want someone spotting her from below.”

By the time the Queen of Monsters had exited the bathroom again in her usual attire, Crane had settled, kneeling, on the floor several arms-lengths away from where Frisk was still sitting, shoulders hunched and eyes averted in a sheepish expression. Toriel sank down to join her adopted child, and, when the awkward silence got a little too much for Frisk to handle, they finally spoke.

“Mom, this is… Lieutenant Crane, right?”

The fairy nodded, finally taking her eyes off the floor and meeting Toriel’s gaze. “Lieutenant Ivy Crane, Your Majesty.”

“You are one of the fairies that broke Frisk out of the cell they were being kept in, then. And one of the ones that escorted them to Tara for their… mind-wipe.”
The last word was positively *dripping* with disdain, and if Frisk hadn’t still felt distinctly wary at finally having a fairy actually physically here and here to *talk*, they might have felt sorry for the emerald-hued officer.

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Why are you here?”

Crane sucked in a deep breath, then straightened, squaring her shoulders and visibly bracing herself, as if expecting to be hit. “I’m here to apologize, Your Majesty. To you and to Frisk.”

“An apology has already been made to us,” Toriel said, frigidly.

“By Fowl, not by a fairy. It’s… it’s not fair to hide behind a human when it’s partially my fault that this happened in the first place. If I hadn’t followed my orders and helped bring you back to Tara… you might not have been wiped at all.”

Another deep breath and the Lieutenant leaned forward into a bow. “So, as a member of the LEPrecon unit, I want to officially apologize to both of you for my part in this whole mess of a situation.”

Silence reigned for what felt like an eternity. Then, Chara whispered quietly in the back of Frisk’s head, and Frisk straightened, frowning.

“What do you actually mean that?” They asked, then added, a touch bitterly, “After all, hasn’t the mind-wipe been standard procedure for centuries?”

“It has,” she confirmed quietly, without lifting her head, “but that doesn’t mean that everyone thinks it’s right. The idea’s never sat well with me at all… if I’d had a choice in the matter, I would have preferred we negotiate with you right from the get-go, rather than erase our encounter and then call it a day. But… well, you said it. It’s been done for centuries – no human can be allowed to know of the People.”

“Then why hasn’t Artemis Fowl been mind-wiped?” Frisk snapped. “Last I checked, he still has his memories! Has had them for years, if what he said is true!”

“He was.”

What?

“When he was thirteen years old,” Crane continued, “almost two years after he first made contact with us*, his memories of the People were erased, and the wipe took.” The fairy finally raised her head a little and gave Frisk a weak smile. “He got his memories back only six months later, and nobody ever tried to have him wiped again… though the idea did come up a few more times.”

Frisk stared at her, wide-eyed, and Toriel shifted, warm eyes going cold as ice. “And why would the fairy people try to erase the memories of one of their own allies?”

*Yeah, why the actual fuck?*

“He couldn’t even be called an ally back then, Your Majesty.” The officer’s eyes lowered back down to her lap, where her hands had been folded carefully, one on top of the other. “The Artemis Fowl from back then wouldn’t be someone you’d recognize today. He was far from an upstanding citizen – he was a *criminal*, a mastermind who was all too happy to exploit the fairies to get an edge over his opponents. He was a *threat.*”
“… is that why you wiped me, too?” Frisk asked, quietly. “Because I was a threat?”

“You were wiped because you might become a threat if you knew about the People.” The fairy’s voice had turned bitter. “And because the Council was paranoid. They’re scared. The last thing they want is a second Artemis Fowl after he caused so much trouble for them.”

“… they’re really that scared of humans?” The words slipped out of their mouth sounding… strangely meek. They hadn’t meant to sound so meek, but… scared? Scared when they had those impressive weapons that could take down a bunch of humans easy-peasy, humans that couldn’t see them?

“… there are, at most, only a million fairies alive today,” Crane said. “Fairies can only have children once every twenty years. Most fairy weapons are non-lethal, and the few that aren’t are either outlawed or too expensive to create in bulk. Fairies don’t really fight amongst themselves. And our magic isn’t unlimited. It takes years to train a good warlock, and fairies that don’t pay for that training with scholarships, or get it as a member of the Lower Elements Police force, rarely have the gold needed to pay for that training. On the other hand…”

Her hands clenched into fists. “There are a little over six billion humans alive today. There were about seven billion before the Techno Crash. Humans breed like rabbits, and make lethal weaponry that probably made Opal Koboi drool with envy. And almost every country has some sort of militia to defend its citizens and fight wars with, and you humans have fought so many wars against each other for stupid things like race, skin color, and religion, that I don’t really even really want keep count of them all.”

The fairy finally straightened up fully, looking Frisk full in the face. “We’re outnumbered and outgunned, and humanity is more violent than any fairy that’s not a part of the goblin-dwarf turf war can ever hope to be. Can you really blame the Council for being scared?”

Silence. Frisk stared at the fairy, shocked, eyes wide as they digested this new information.

Outnumbered and outgunned… a million fairies with laser stun guns against billions of humans with bombs and missiles and biological weapons and nukes … Good God, just the thought of those odds made them feel sick to their stomach. Could they stand up to those kinds of odds? Could they stand up against billions of people with a million people or less at their back, stare down billions of gun barrels or bombs in a war? Could anyone?

*...Not without LOADing a couple hundred times, at least.

Chara’s voice was grim, and Frisk gulped at the resonating absoluteness of the ghost’s voice.

With those kinds of odds, the only way to win any kind of conflict would be to hide everything. Hide their people, hide their cities, hide their weaknesses to avoid them being exploited…

Just like we’ve been hiding knowledge about the monsters’ souls.

Frisk had been hung up on the differences between what monsters would do and fairies would do ever since the mind-wipe, ever since the parley. The fairies hid and skulked about in the darkness – they’d never come out from underground like the monsters, intruded privacy in ways the monsters never could, even used their magic in ways that the monsters would never think of as right.

But could they really afford to judge them like that, when they doubted that even the nicest of monsters would remain so with the threat of potential extermination breathing down their neck every second of the day?
*Even Dad wouldn’t hesitate with those sorts of odds. After all, humans are the worst kind of scum – if you hesitated, you’d die.*

Chara’s bitter words dragged them back into the present, and Frisk frowned.

“Does the Council really believe that humanity would do that…?” They asked Crane hesitantly. “While it’s true humans can be violent, we’re not *all* like that.”

“You’d have to ask them about that, not me,” the sprite said, grimacing. “I know that not all humans are like that. LEP sees more of the surface than your average civilian, and *definitely* sees more of it than the Council does. How *can* they know they’re wrong unless they see it for themselves?”

Frisk opened their mouth – and then there was a soft beeping from Crane’s helmet.

The fairy blinked, then quickly picked up the helmet and slotted it back onto her head. Most of her face disappeared behind the visor, leaving only her eyes visible as they narrowed.

“Lieutenant Crane online. What’s going on?”

Whatever was being said on the other line, Frisk couldn’t hear it, but they watched, heart pounding, as what little of the emerald skin they could see through the reflective black of the helmet turned a pale mint-green as blood rushed from the fairy’s face.

“D’Arvit,” Crane hissed. “Frisk, Your Majesty, you need to get to the hospital downtown *fast*.”

“What?” Frisk squeaked.

“What has happened?” Toriel demanded.

The fairy’s eyes narrowed to slits.

“Humanity’s Resurgence,” she said flatly. “There’s been another attack.”

If Frisk had been able to, they would have *flew* to the hospital. Unfortunately, the only set of wings they could possibly use belonged to Crane, and she wouldn’t exactly be inconspicuous if she were to drop them off at the hospital’s front door, and so Frisk had to make do with a hastily called cart.

Their police guards had been all too happy to give them a ride, once Frisk had told them that a friend of theirs had gotten a call about an attack on a couple of monsters, and within an hour they were bursting into the hospital lobby.

“Frisk!!”

A large shape covered in icy feathers slammed into them like a boulder falling on top of their head (something they’d, unfortunately, experienced a few times underground – cave-ins were *not* fun), and suddenly Frisk’s arms were filled with blubbery Snowdrake.

“I heard you got attacked,” they managed around a mouthful of frost.

“We came as quickly as we could,” Toriel said urgently. “Are you two alright?”

*Two humans and three monsters a pair of ice birds and... something similar to them but made of some sort of dripping white fluid? Crane had said, brow furrowing, The monsters are fine, but the human couple they were with, not so much. The terrorists had guns.*
“We’re fine, but Mr. and Mrs. Winnick are in surgery,” Snowdrake’s dad rumbled, hopping over and gently using a clawed foot to tug on one of his hysterical son’s wings. “Son, let go, you’re smothering them.”

And then Frisk’s armful of blubbering Snowdrake was gone, and they could breathe again.

*Dear God, thank you.*

“What happened to them? The Winnicks?” Frisk asked, ignoring Chara’s comment for the moment while making a mental note to reprimand them later. It was perfectly reasonable for Snowdrake to be upset, after all.

*The couple stepped between them and the monsters, and they were hit several times when they refused to stand down. They should live, since hospitals have started using monster food.*

“How many times?” Mr. Drake said, breath hitching. “Several times. T-they stood between us and the bullets.”

“They’ll be okay,” Frisk reassured him. “They’ll be okay, Mr. Drake, I promise. Why did the shooters go after you two?”

*The terrorists wore masks but… they were definitely members of Humanity’s Resurgence. They’re on the run for now - the dripping monster chased them off - but the human police are giving chase, and with any luck they’ll be caught soon.*

“They were looking for you, Frisk,” Snowdrake warbled frantically. “They said – they said –”

*Frisk, be careful. The men were looking for you – they said...*  

“They said to tell you,” Mr. Drake said quietly, “that their boss had a message for you.”

*“Your time’s up, Ambassador. I gave you a chance, and you wasted it. Now, all the murderers die.”*

Chapter End Notes

… remember how I said last chapter that some things only get better after getting worse?  
*laughs nervously*

Anyway, yeah, Crane finally has more screen time (yay!), and O’Reilly’s finally making another move (boo!). Apparently, he’s decided that the best way to do that is by declaring outright war on the monsters in Dublin. This is gonna SUCK for poor Frisk and Co.

*Almost two years after he first made contact with us:* Artemis made first contact with the LEP, through Holly, on Christmas Eve the year he turned 12 years old. I looked up his birthday earlier this month (while doing research for Ignition) and it turns out it’s on September 1st. That means that technically Artemis was only 12 for a couple months before the kidnapping in the first book. The second book starts when Artemis was 13, which means it had to have been at least ten months since the last book, and considering that Butler had to avoid a lot of tourists while in Paris in the second book, I can only assume that meant the weather was decently fair, so it was probably closer to 14 months
from the end of book 1 to there, at the absolute minimum. Artemis was still 13 during
the third book (so far as I know), and since Artemis Sr. was being fitted for a high-tech
prosthetic limb (aka a very expensive and time-consuming one to make) at that point and
prosthetic limbs take anywhere from 2-6 months for the patient to have them finally
fitted, it’s reasonable to guess that the events of book 3 take place about 19 months after
Artemis kidnapped Holly. For the sake of this fanfic, that’s the timeframe of those
events. (Don’t take my words as gospel though, I could very well be wrong in my
calculations somewhere. Math is not my strong suit.)
Hey guys, I’m SO sorry this took so long for me to get finished! I got distracted by one of my Christmas presents… my sister got me the fourth Sims game and I’ve been playing it every day ever since (damn you Sims for being so addicting and fun – also, damn you brain for deciding that trying to create characters from KHR in the Sims was a good idea.) I’m going to be trying to get another chapter out for you guys before school starts again, but considering my track record so far, no guarantees on that happening, okay?

It was a little more than an hour later that the Winnicks emerged from the depths of the hospital. Frisk had spent that hour sitting with the Drakes in the lobby, trying their best to comfort the worried monsters and ignore their own anxiety. Mr. Drake had ended up perched on the edge of his chair, cold feathers fluffed up and eyes constantly darting to follow both patients and hospital staff in green scrubs as they went about their day; Snowdrake, on the other hand, hadn’t stopped moving once, fluttering about restlessly and persistently bothering the secretary behind the desk for news.

As soon as the human couple stepped out into the lobby, looking about with obvious anxiety but otherwise looking perfectly fine, Frisk stood up, drawing the monsters’ attention first to them, then to the Winnicks themselves – and the instant he recognized them, Snowdrake wasted absolutely no time in flinging himself bodily across the room with a frantic squawk, his father following closely behind.

“Are you two okay?! You’re okay, right?!”

“Oh thank goodness, the ‘surgery’ worked? You’re both healed now?”

“Er,” Mr. Winnick said, obviously bewildered at the monsters’ hysteria. His wife looked equally bewildered, and, under normal circumstances, it might have been funny, two humans looking so confused at monsters that they barely knew (by human standards, at least) fretting over them in what was nearly a full-blown mother-hen mode.

As it was, though, Frisk had already seen how the two of them were still hesitant to move, how sometimes Mr. Winnick’s hand would drift up towards his side as if expecting a wound, how Mrs. Winnick was practically clinging to her husband’s arm… nothing about this situation was funny.

“I’m glad to see you’re alright, Mr. and Mrs. Winnick,” they managed to get out, not bothering to hide their own relief. They’d spent so much of the last hour repeatedly going over every possible thing that could go wrong. It was one thing to get shot with a single bullet. It was another thing entirely to be shot with several. In previous runs, Frisk had learned the hard way some of the complications of healing gun wounds with monster food – the injury might be healed, yes, but the food wouldn’t get rid of the bullets, and that would leave bits of lead buried inside the human body that, if not removed, could cause problems later on. And since the surgeons were trying to remove bullets before using monster food to avoid that problem – if there were too many bullet wounds to get patched up in time…
They could have died, bled out on the operating table before they could be saved. And if they had, it would have been nobody’s fault but theirs, Frisk, the Monster Ambassador. Their fault for getting on HuRg’s radar, their fault for getting kidnapped, their fault for not giving O’Reilly the information he wanted, their fault for provoking him into ordering this assault –

Their fault for putting monsters under the Winnicks’ roof in the first place, and thus making them a target.

“I –” Mrs. Winnick still looked more than a little stunned. “Thank you, Ambassador. But – how did you know –?”

“We heard about the attack from a contact of ours,” Toriel said gently, reaching over Snowdrake (who had graduated from frantic chatter to clinging to the woman like a limpet) to rest one furry hand on the woman’s shoulder. “One of their friends saw the attack happen, and we came here as soon as we heard the news. How are you?”

“We’re fine,” Mr. Winnick managed, still looking uncertain. “Just a little shaken. Did – did anyone else get hurt?”

“As far as we know, no,” Toriel assured him. “You two were the only ones that were injured that we have heard about, though I’m sure that we will hear if there have been others.”

*Hey, Frisk, incoming policeman. He just came in.*

Frisk looked up at Chara’s words, and a new voice butted into the conversation.

“No other bystanders were hurt.” The officer approaching was short and stocky, with grey hair and a face tailor-made for frowning that he was obviously putting effort into smoothing out into something a little more approachable. “Officer Harrish at your service, sirs and madams. And Ambassador.”

Greetings were murmured, and Frisk silently questioned Chara if the man was armed. He was, apparently, but only with a single gun in a very visible holster on his belt, and his hands were crossed and far away from the weapon.

“Chief’s ordered us to provide you with a police escort until we’re sure you four aren’t under threat anymore,” the officer said, frowning and gesturing towards the door to the outside world. “The men that attacked you are still at large, and the patrols we’ve sent after them lost them a couple of minutes ago, so that might be a while.”

Frisk’s eyes widened in alarm – the police had lost the terrorists? – but before they could interject, the man continued.

“Do you four think you’re well enough for a few questions? The more we know about these people, the easier it’ll be to take care of them.”

The Winnicks grimaced. Their anxiety visibly intensified, and the policeman sighed.

“Fine, we can give you a little time to calm down first. We’ll escort you to the station –”

“Can we go home first?” Mr. Winnick blurted out, then wilted a little. “I – I mean –”

“We can stop there long enough for you to get anything you might want or need while you’re at the station,” Harrish said, gruffly, “but we need to pick up the fifth witness, and, to be blunt sir, your home might not be safe for you anymore.”
Mr. Winnick nodded jerkily, sucking in a fortifying breath. “Thank you, officer.” He glanced over at Frisk and Toriel. “Thank you too, Ambassador, Your Majesty. For your concern.”

Frisk nodded mutely and watched as the human-monster quartet were quickly hurried out of the lobby by several other officers.

“Officer,” Toriel said, quietly. “Is there anything we can do to help?”

The man’s eyes narrowed in thought.

“Maybe,” he said, after a long moment of terse silence. “Any idea of who these men might have been, or who they might have worked for?”

“Humanity’s Resurgence,” Frisk said, quickly. “The gunmen – they left a message for me, with the Drakes. *Now all the murderers die.* The man who kidnapped me, he was a member of HuRg too. And he – he kept trying to get information about the monsters out of me, and he threatened to kill monsters when I didn’t to what I was told, and he called them all *murderers.*”

The man cursed quietly under his breath. One hand went in his shirt pocket – Frisk caught a glimpse of a pack of cigarettes – before he stopped himself, and settled for scowling. “Of course it’s them,” he muttered under his breath. “They just keep getting bolder and bolder, don’t they? Any of your… Anonymous contacts know anything, Ambassador?”

Frisk pursed their lips, and then, after a long, hesitant moment, shook their head.

“It was one of Anonymous’s contacts that let us know about the attack in the first place, sir. They don’t know anything more than we do.”

“And you trust them, Ambassador?”

Frisk opened their mouth, a yes trotting onto the tip of their tongue – then, slowly, they closed their mouth again.

Once upon a time, they would have trusted Anonymous and anyone that Anonymous trusted. But now that they knew who Anonymous actually was, who he was affiliated with? Now that they knew what the fairies could do, and what they did do? When their philosophy of *everyone deserves a second chance* was being put to the test?

“I don’t know, sir,” they mumbled, lowering their eyes to the floor. “I really don’t know.”

Technically, Crane shouldn’t have apologized to the Ambassador. Fowl’s orders had been clear – *keep your distance, let the Ambassador know you’re there, but don’t actually make contact for now* – and Captain Short had insisted on giving them some breathing room, after everything they’d been put through. Normally, Crane would have agreed with the sentiment and obeyed her orders, but, well, the guilt had been eating away at her ever since seeing the kid’s panic attack at Tara. No kid should be put through something like that, and if she’d known how they’d react to the mind-wipe… well, when it was finally her shift to watch over the child, all she’d been able to think was *what kind of heartless sprite would I be, not to at least try to apologize?*

The apology hadn’t actually done anything for the guilt, though. Not really. Not when the kid’s eyes were so full of suspicion, not when their words kept coming out sharp and snappish in their distrust. Not when it was at least partially Crane’s fault that the kid felt like they had to distrust the fairies as a whole, and they had a pretty damn good reason to not trust Crane in particular.
(That was without mentioning the severe look Toriel had been giving her – cold, disapproving, just as suspicious as her child but with a lot more visible distaste. Having a monster giving her that look had been enough to have her fingers itching to reach for her Neutrino handgun, but she’d left it sequestered away on the roof for just this reason – so she couldn’t reach for it, even by instinct. She refused to give them yet another reason to distrust the fairies. It was for that same reason she kept her eyes averted whenever she could get away with it, too – she didn’t know if the kid or the monsters had figured out how the mesmer worked, but she wasn’t going to take any chances.)

Then word of the attack had come, and Crane had been mercifully distracted from their guilt, following the Ambassador to the hospital and then back to their hotel room again after the fully-recovered human couple and their monster boarders had left.

She fully expected Frisk (the Ambassador, she silently corrected herself – she doubted the kid nor the monsters’ Queen would appreciate the familiarity here) to ignore her again when she settled on the fire escape outside the window again, making sure to land heavily enough for it to creak underneath her. Instead, though, after only a couple of minutes making calls to various monsters, warning them about the attacks and organizing police escorts for their friends with the help of their overworked police guards, the Ambassador took a deep breath, and then raised their voice to address the room at large.

“Lieutenant Crane? Are you still here?”

Crane blinked – the Ambassador still wanted to talk to her? – and then slowly unshielded, raising her visor but keeping her eyes averted, ever-so-slightly, as she stepped back into the room.

“Right here, Ambassador,” she said, uncertainly. The kid’s eyes were still distrusting, but… the distrust was less intense this time. Less obvious. Instead, there was something that could almost be called indecision – as if they were debating with themselves how to continue.

After several moments of that indecision, though, the Ambassador’s gaze turned steely and determined – and suddenly, this wasn’t the same distrusting, scared kid she’d saved from Humanity’s Resurgence. This was truly an ambassador, unwilling to give ground or stand down, wielding their own willpower like a weapon.

“Are you keeping an eye on the terrorists from earlier? Any of you?”

Crane pursed her lips. As a matter of fact, yes, they were – the Private and one of Section Eight’s corporals had been tailing the group ever since the shooting had begun. The men had fled like a troll was on their heels – or, in this case, like a terrifying monster had been chasing after them. For all that white blobby creature had looked like “the Drakes,” there had been something distinctly unsettling about it. Maybe it was the fluid way it moved, like it was barely solid, maybe it was the unsettling sentences it uttered, maybe it was even the independently moving faces where there should have been nothing but frills and feathers, but the creature had been almost as intimidating as any troll could be. Almost.

So, yes, there were two fairies tailing the terrorists right now. And Crane could guess well enough why Frisk – the Ambassador – wanted to know. Know where the threats are, and you can avoid them.

“Yes,” she said, after a moment’s contemplation. Fowl and Short would hardly report her for telling the Ambassador – their entire mixed squadron was already going to be on thin ice as this was.

“We’ve got a couple of fairies tailing them. Four men, three middle-aged and one younger. They’ve holed up in a small motel on the other side of town. Gotten rid of the disguises, too – they even had voice modulators on, and they’re acting like nothing’s happened.”
Toriel frowned, and Crane spared her a slightly intimidated, apologetic look before turning her full attention back to the kid. She could practically see gears turning in the Ambassador’s head, taking in what little information she’d offered and running calculations over and over again in quick succession. Apart from the returning indecisiveness, that narrow-eyed, considering look was almost a dead ringer for the calculating looks of the two genii of the Fowl family, both the older and the younger. And considering what both of those Fowls got up to after said expressions were used… well, Crane could only hope that she wasn’t about to be dumped in a pit with her wings clipped, so to speak.

The Ambassador took a deep breath, then squared their shoulders, lifted up their chin, and looked her right in the eyes.

“The fairies have contacted the police about HuRg before,” the child said flatly (what was with monsters and their weird acronyms? Still, Crane had to admit it was easier to say and could actually be considered funny, so she wasn’t going to complain). “Would you be willing to do it again?”

She couldn’t hide her surprise, no matter how hard she might try to.

*They’re actually asking us to contact the police again? After everything the fairies have done to them when they have so many reasons to keep us at a distance, they’re willing to trust us again, just like that?

*No,* she corrected herself, after seeing the conflict in the kid’s eyes. *No, they don’t trust us. But…*

Were they willing to give them a second chance?

Slowly, she reached up to the side of her helmet, turning on the mic again and switching to Captain Short’s channel. “Captain? Lieutenant Crane speaking.”

There was a quiet sound that might have been a groan, and then the elf’s voice was ringing into her ears. “What is it, Lieutenant?”

She took a deep breath, and, consciously still speaking English so the Ambassador could hear what she was saying, asked, “The account you used to warn the Dublin police force about Humanity’s Resurgence, what they were planning to do – is it still active?”

The Ambassador’s eyes widened.

A pause.

“Yes. Why?”

Crane hesitated, and Short snorted. “Crane, I can assure you, whatever you’re thinking of doing, I’ve done things ten times worse over the course of my career. And that Artemis had done things several times worse than *that.*”

… Well, that was definitely *true.* A little more heartened, Crane kept talking. “The Ambassador wants to know if we’d be willing to contact the police again.”

Another pause – then another voice, Fowl’s, interjected over the com unit. “That would depend upon what they wish for the fairies to tell them.”

Crane glanced back at the Ambassador, who was still watching them with hesitant eyes.

“Do you… want us to tell the police where the terrorists are?” Crane guessed quietly.
The kid nodded. And there was definitely a sigh echoing through the speakers of her helmet at her words.

“Lieutenant, I seem to recall giving you all orders to leave the Ambassador alone for the moment, yes?”

“You did order that Fowl,” Crane agreed, testily (and couldn’t help but notice the kid and Toriel both tensing up at the Irishman’s name.) “But considering my own involvement in the whole mind-wiping affair, I thought an apology of my own was prudent.”

Captain Short snorted. “Fair enough. Tell the police where the terrorists from the attack today are. Yeah, I’ll do that. It’s not like it’s going to expose the People if one fairy makes contact over anonymous emails, and to be blunt, we still owe the kid. Expect those humans to be on the run again by evening, Lieutenant.”

Crane murmured a yes ma’am and muted her microphone again. When she turned her full attention back to the Ambassador and the Queen, both were watching her intently – the Ambassador, nervous, and Toriel, uncertain.

“Captain Short’s working on it, right now. The police should know where they are by evening.”

The kid swallowed, nodded once, apparently having no words, and something in their expression, something she couldn’t quite figure out, had Crane feeling suddenly uncomfortable and about ten times as guilty as she’d felt before. She grimaced, and then lowered her visor back over her face.

“I should get back to my patrol,” she said, quietly, and then tried very hard not to look like she was fleeing the suddenly unsettling conversation as she left through the window.

She paused, for a moment, after shielding again, when she heard Frisk speaking quietly behind her – hesitant, and sounding so much more like the kid she’d saved from Humanity’s Resurgence.

“Mom? Is it… is it bad that I wanted to give them another chance?”

A pause. And then, Toriel’s voice, much warmer than it had been when Crane was in the room.

“No, my child. It is not.”

Crane took off into the sky and shoved those very private words into a locked box in the back of her mind. It wasn’t her place to listen in, and if the Ambassador really wanted to give the fairies a second chance? She wasn’t going to be the one to ruin it.

Chapter End Notes

I was halfway through writing this chapter as fully Frisk POV before my brain suddenly remembered that Crane POV was a thing, and started writing that instead. I like how this turned out much better than when I was planning for it all to be all Frisk.

Also, yay, the Winnicks are fine! And poor Frisk is drowning in guilt. It's okay, Frisk, it's not your fault.

On why Snowdrake and his dad were so worried for the Winnicks after “barely knowing them:” in the game during a True Pacifist Run, all the monsters Frisk was nice
to turn up to support them against Flowey after barely having encountered them a few times. Plus, there’s what Asriel said - “they barely know you, yet they already love you.” Monsters get attached very quickly to people, and I figured that would carry over to the surface as well. Thus, limpet Snowdrake and frantic Mr. Drake. Don’t worry, Winnicks, you’ll get used to it eventually.

As for “dumped in a pit with her wings clipped,” that’s a sprite saying I came up with on the fly (heheh). All of the different fairy races are so different from one another that they’re bound to have a few unique sayings or maybe even unique slang that the other races don’t have. Crane saying something like “dumped in a pit with her wings clipped,” in this case, means “forced into a horrible/dangerous/lethal situation.” Remember, sprites have real, flesh-and-blood wings, so getting their wings clipped could cause them some serious trouble.
Chapter 54

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

*Explodes out of the Void with a screech* I’M ALIVE!!!!!

Sorry it took so long for me to get this chapter done for you, guys. Inspiration has been lacking, and my current classes have HUGE workloads. FUN workloads, at least, but still huge. It might be best to assume that each new chapter is going to take a while, considering the pattern that’s been developing with weeks between updates…

(On another note, something a little different from the norm – song recommendation! I found this song on YouTube a few days ago that I’ve been listening non-stop to, and I wanna share it! It’s called Godhunter, by Aviators. Give it a listen!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright, Lieutenant. Keep your eyes peeled – we don’t know when these humans are gonna make a move again, and the last thing we want is to be caught off guard when O’Reilly storms in.”

There was a tense affirmative from the other end of the line, and with a sigh, Holly flicked off her com unit. She scanned the office around her once, more out of habit than anything else, then leaned back in the armchair she was sitting in, a grimace drawing her lips taut.

It had been two days since the attack on those monsters and their human friends. Two days since Holly had commandeered Artemis’s Anonymous account to name-drop the motel that the escaped gunmen were hiding at, along with their room number, names, and credit card numbers just for good measure. (Artemis had been sardonically amused at her thoroughness, and had commented that maybe she should create an Anonymous account of her own if she was going to keep secretly contacting human law enforcement.) Two days since all four of the shooters had been apprehended by a squad of Dublin police officers, locked up in cells and interrogated with every technique short of torture, only for the police… and later Holly herself, when she snuck in to try to mesmerize the answers out of the perps… to not find out a single thing about the men’s leader.

The humans had been keeping at the interrogations, but Holly didn’t have any hopes for them finding anything. If a fairy with plenty of magic running through her veins couldn’t mesmerize the answers out of them, then that simply meant that they had next to no information in their heads to begin with. By the looks of things, these gunmen hadn’t even had to be mesmerized to agree to take this little “job” of theirs – and apparently, they had volunteered.

Holly hadn’t thought much about it since Humanity’s Resurgence had started making a move, but in retrospect, she really shouldn’t have been surprised that not all of the humans in the organization were mesmerized goons. Some humans feared what they didn’t understand, and when they didn’t fear it, they hated it. And this was exactly the kind of group that would attract humans like those like flies to amber, and people like those probably wouldn’t need to be mesmerized into doing O’Reilly’s will.

The captain’s thought process was interrupted by the sound of the lock on the apartment door
clicking as a key was turned in the slot, and she immediately switched on her shield. This may have been Artemis’s apartment, and therefore one of the safest places for a fairy to crash on the surface, but that didn’t mean that other people couldn’t get a hold of a key.

Thankfully, it was Artemis himself, looking more than a little tired, who stepped through the door, and not some random human, and so as soon as the door was shut and locked, Holly let herself shimmer back into the visible spectrum.

“Hey, Mud Boy,” she greeted. “Rough day?”

Artemis nodded, hanging his house key around his neck and tucking it under the collar of his shirt. “Unfortunately, the world does not stand still for those in the middle of dealing with an impending catastrophe, and I had a meeting with a few other UN representatives to attend.”

“Makes me wonder why you bothered trying for the position in the first place,” Holly snarked.

The Irishman sniffed. “Trust me, I wonder that sometimes as well. For all the position has earned me some prestige and resources that make helping the People avoid notice less complicated, it doesn’t leave me with much time to actively help the People when they are in peril. I’m considering stepping down once the next election comes around.” He took off his jacket and hung it on a hook by the door, and then strode across the room to retrieve his laptop from his desk. “Has Foaly had any luck on the information gathering front?”

Holly shook her head. “I don’t know – he hasn’t contacted us with anything to do with Humanity’s Resurgence for days now.”

Well, not with information at least. He had called Holly once, a couple days ago, to cackle about the Ambassador calling Humanity’s Resurgence HuRg of all things. Considering how mature Frisk was most of the time, the frankly childish acronym had caught her off guard… though she had to admit it had been funny, once she’d gotten over her exasperation at Foaly breaking his self-imposed radio silence for something so minor. Still, that wasn’t something Artemis would be interested in hearing about, so no point in mentioning it.

Artemis hmmed, his brow furrowing as he flipped open his laptop and turned it on. “That’s… rather worrying, actually. Normally he would not have so much trouble finding information on a human – the last time it was even remotely as difficult for him as it is now was when we were dealing with Minerva*, and that hardly turned out well.”

Either he’s having trouble or he’s been leaving it to his techies,” Holly agreed, “and either way, that doesn’t exactly bode well.”

As if to refute her statement, her com unit beeped, alerting her to a call coming in on Foaly’s line. Holly blinked, then answered the call.

“Going to crow more about the Ambassador’s immature nickname for Humanity’s Resurgence again, Foaly?” Holly said. “Because if you are, I’m muting you.”

Artemis raised an eyebrow at her, but didn’t ask the question obviously on the tip of his tongue. On the other end of the line, Foaly made a sound somewhere between a huff and a snicker.

“If only, Holly, if only. No, I’ve finally got some information on Mr. Luis O’Reilly to share with you and the Mud Boy, if he’s there.”

“Yup, he’s here,” Holly confirmed.
“Good. Tell him to plug in his fiber optic, I’ve got some files to share.”

Holly rolled her eyes – as if Artemis couldn’t hear Foaly, what with him having a police communicator now – and nodded to the Mud Boy, whose lips quirked up at the corners in a subtle smile. And who had already plugged in the fiber optic.

“I already have it plugged in, Foaly,” he said “And I must say, you’ve been loosing your touch if it took you twelve days to track down this man.”

At this point, Foaly would have normally whinnied something about being unappreciated or some friends you are, but this time… he didn’t sound the least bit insulted. In fact, when he spoke again, he was uncharacteristically serious – and with good reason, because the words that came out of his mouth had Holly sitting bolt upright in alarm.

“Either I’m losing my touch, or there’s a human out there with technology almost on par with that of the People that isn’t Artemis.”

“What?” Holly blurted.

“I thought the People are at least several decades ahead of humans, technologically speaking?” Artemis said, frowning.

“We are,” Foaly confirmed. “But that’s only humanity as a whole, not individual humans. You’re proof of that enough, Fowl – how many times have you upgraded that laptop of yours so you can keep up with me? All it takes is one human being ahead of the rest… and while me and the techies down here were looking for info, we kept stumbling across firewalls, anti-virus programs, all kinds of defenses that took ages for us to get through, much longer than it should have - if I hadn’t known better, I’d swear that some of those programs were practically alive. And considering that most of these programs were hiding information that was definitely very private, very personal information… I’d say it’s someone O’Reilly knows, and not just coincidence.”

“And you don’t have any idea of who this person could be?”

“Not a one,” the centaur confirmed, and Holly could practically hear the scowl in his voice. “I thought I managed to track down an IP address for one of them – it was being actively updated as I was trying to hack it – but it turned out to be a false lead. Whoever this person is, they’re good.”

“Perhaps I should try my hand at tracking them down?” Artemis suggested.

“Don’t think we have the time for that, Mud Boy. Besides, we got other things to worry about – like the info I found on O’Reilly, for instance.” Several files popped up on Artemis’s laptop, and he opened them in quick succession, frowning at the documents. Foaly began to summarize what he’d found as the files were opened, sounding, surprisingly, even more serious than he had before.

“Our terrorist friend was born in upperstate New York to your average American family – two parents, younger sibling he hasn’t talked to in years, yada-yada, all that fun stuff - as Luis Rivera. Gets married at 22 to Mary Heinsworth, they move to the Mt. Ebott area two years later, and a year after that they have a kid – a daughter, Diana – and they all live together as a nice, idyllic family for fourteen years.” The centaur grimaced. “Then, a couple months after Diana’s fourteenth birthday, she goes missing. The local police search for her, but they can’t find anything. No signs of a kidnapping, no body – it’s like she just up and disappeared off the face of the planet. They don’t even know if she’s dead or not. Mrs. Rivera moves on, after a couple of years, but O’Reilly doesn’t, and eventually their marriage falls apart. Mary stays in the Ebott area, O’Reilly moves overseas to Dublin and changes his last name to his mother’s maiden name in the process. He lives a more or less
normal life for some years, save for the occasional vacation with a suspiciously unspecified destination and making weekly visits to local psychiatrists and therapists.”

“And then the monsters surface,” Artemis said, quietly, “and with them, they bring the bodies of six children that fell into the Underground and were killed. And one of them is Diana.”

Holly winced. Oh no…

“Yeah,” Foaly agreed, scowling. “I don’t think O’Reilly ever really got over Diana disappearing. After the international news broadcast that showed the dead kids, O’Reilly stops coming to his therapy sessions and starts disappearing for long periods of time, and is often seen with people with heavily anti-monster sentiments, including members of the recently formed Humanity’s Resurgence. Then he vanishes completely, and Humanity’s Resurgence starts going down the road of becoming the terrorists we all know and could really do without today.”

Artemis frowned, steepling his fingers. “We need to tell Frisk about this…” he murmured.

“Judging by some of those memories I saw before I stopped looking through them, they probably already guessed something like that,” Foaly pointed out. “They were asking questions about the kids when he was trying to interrogate them.”

“They might not know for certain, however. This could at least give them confirmation.”

“Should we really be telling them about this at all, though?” Holly protested. “They’re just a…” She stopped before she could continue her sentence, and swallowed. Just a kid, she’d been about to say. Except… they weren’t just a kid. They were a kid who’d hiked their way through an underground kingdom of monsters all alone, befriended said monsters, and had come out of the Underground as their Ambassador – and they had to have already known about the kids that had fallen before them, otherwise they wouldn’t have helped the monsters apologize for their actions in the first place. And that was without the time loops they seemed to have lived through being added into the equation. Frisk had both seen and maybe done a lot worse than seeing or hearing about a dead kid.

“D’Arvit,” she muttered. “Okay. Lieutenant Crane’s still on duty, I’ll have her pass on the information if she gets the chance. Heck, I’ll stop by myself to tell them if have to.”

“That would probably be for the best,” Artemis agreed grimly. “In the meantime… Foaly, do you have any idea where Humanity’s Resurgence has set up shop, so to speak?”

“Not a one. Wish I could say otherwise, but…”

“Then we’ll have to try tracking them down manually. Can you start looking into where O’Reilly was disappearing to before he went underground?”

“I haven’t been able to find anything about those trips outside of Dublin,” Foaly admitted. “They’re encrypted by the same person that encrypted his files. But I can start trying to track him from that warehouse we found Frisk in, and see where we go from there.”

“That will do for now. Let me know what you find. In the meantime… I’ll see what I can find about this mysterious benefactor of O’Reilly’s that hid his information so thoroughly. If nothing else, I might stumble across other encrypted files that could shed some light onto the situation.”

“Yeah, yeah, good luck on that. If I couldn’t manage it…”
As the now familiar bickering between the two businesses began (finally, something normal for once), Holly sealed her helmet to cut out the noise, and turned on the com unit again.

“Lieutenant Crane, it’s Captain Short. I have some information we need to pass on to the Ambassador, if you have the time.”

There was a moment of quiet… and when the Lieutenant answered back, she sounded more than a little stressed, and her next words had Holly rolling her eyes up towards the heavens and silently wondering just how many gods she’d angered in a previous lifetime to have all this troll dung dumped on her in such quick succession.

“Sorry Captain… but we have a bit of a situation here.”

“Thanks, m’am, we’ll make sure you’re kept up to date about what’s going on. Please be careful.”

The door closed, and Frisk looked down at the paper in their hand and crossed off yet another name from the list.

“All right,” they muttered. “We’re down to the last four people in this neighborhood, and the police are going around informing everyone else we’ve missed.”

“Thank God,” Flowey complained from where his pot was tucked against their chest. “I’m getting sick of seeing all those scared faces whenever you start talking. It was funny at first, but now it’s getting boring.”

There was a pointed cough, and Flowey froze, then slowly turned his head to look up at the disapproving face of Toriel – and several of their police escort. “Um. I plead the fifth?”

Chara snorted.

“We’re in the wrong country for that, Flowey,” Frisk muttered. They raised their voice. “Sorry about that. I did warn you guys that Flowey’s not the nicest monster around…”

“He’s always like this?” One of the officers asked, wrinkling her nose.

“He’s usually like this,” Frisk confirmed with a sheepish nod. “It’s an, um, personal issue of his. He can be nice if he wants to, he just doesn’t want to except under, er, extenuating circumstances.”

“How extenuating, exactly?”

They winced. “Um…”

“Let’s leave it at that for now, officers,” Toriel interjected, finally turning her disapproving gaze from the nervous-looking flower monster. “If we were to begin talking about Flowey’s myriad of bad habits, we would be here all day and need an alphabetized list. And I don’t believe we have time for such things.”

Frisk nodded, and the whole group started down the street.

The last two days had been… busy, to say the least. The police had been working overtime all over the city, trying to track down O’Reilly or any of his fellow terrorists and minions. So far, none of them had had any luck. Attempting to track down any information on O’Reilly himself had fallen flat – apparently, someone, probably O’Reilly, had encrypted the files, and then put them behind layers
and layers of firewalls that none of the police’s technological consultants could break through. So instead, the police were having to go by word of mouth, and the search had slowed down to a crawl.

In light of all that… and the fact that Frisk felt they were at least partially responsible for this whole situation… they had volunteered to take some of the load off of the police’s shoulders and warn some of the families involved in the fostering program about the danger they could very well be in.

They’d already been to eight other houses already. Eight houses that might be in the crosshairs of HuRg’s impending extermination campaign. Eight houses full of innocent people that had never done anything wrong, just existed. Eight families who would probably be staying up tonight, paranoid and scared that a man with a gun would come breaking down their front door and shoot them dead.

All because of them.

*Okay, stop it right there, Frisk. Last I checked, it wasn’t us attacking monsters minding their own business. Save the self-loathing for later.*

They grimaced. Chara may have been right, but… they still couldn’t help but think that this was at least partially their fault. If they’d been more careful, if they’d actually LOADed like they considered doing when in that cell under O’Reilly’s metaphorical thumb…

*Then we’d probably end up in this whole mess all over again. No way a human like him would put off attacking monsters just to get ahold of little ol’ us.*

That was… unfortunately true. All that cold hate in O’Reilly’s eyes would need an outlet eventually, regardless of how Frisk was actually involved in the situation. That didn’t mean that they weren’t at least a little bit to blame, if only because those families had lost their peace of mind because of them.

*Better scared than dead, right? Stop moping about it.*

Frisk sighed, then tilted their head back to look up at the sky. It was reasonably clear, for once, few clouds and no sheets of rain or cold drizzle.

There were also no fairies in sight, which was expected but still a little unnerving. And that observation tugged their train of thought down a different track, something they weren’t entirely happy about.

*The fairies are actually trying to cooperate.*

Well, Crane was, at least. And so was Captain Short, apparently, since those men holed up at the motel had been caught by evening thanks to another Anonymous email – just like she’d said she would. Frisk hadn’t actually talked to any of the fairies since the negotiation at the fairy roses, so they had no idea if the others keeping an eye on them were doing the same as their commanding officer, but… regardless, at least some of them were trying.

And yet… for the first time in a long time, Frisk wasn’t sure if their slowly budding trust was warranted.

Generally, if people wronged the monsters or Frisk themselves and tried to make it up to them later, Frisk was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt after a while. They might not trust them for a while, but they’d at least try to give them another chance, and they generally didn’t feel any regret for doing so. But the fairies… for some reason trying to do the same for the fairies as they had always done – forgive but never forget – just didn’t sit well with them. And for once, it had nothing to do
with the monsters, and everything to do with Frisk themselves, because the whole reason they were so reluctant to trust them in the first place was because of that mind-wipe.

Holding a grudge of any sort was new for them. New and not something that they felt they should be doing, at that. Holding grudges had never gotten them anywhere in life, not before falling into the mountain and not afterward in any timeline, only made things harder for the monsters, in the long run, because it meant they didn’t always think things through.

They knew that, intellectually, but … for once they couldn’t help but hold onto their distaste. Despite what they now knew about the fairies, thanks to Crane’s explanation, despite them helping the monsters now. And Frisk wasn’t used to feeling something so selfish.

*For God’s sake, Frisk, it’s not selfish.

It is selfish! Frisk countered immediately. Hostility never gets us anywhere, and yet every time I even think about the fairies or talk to one, I just – it’s not right.

*It’s never hurt me any.

Says the ghost who’s been holding a grudge against humanity for the last couple of centuries.

* . . .

Frisk grimaced again, and reached up to knead their forehead in the hopes of the pounding headache going away. This wasn’t the first time that they’d argued with Chara about this little problem of theirs over the last forty-eight hours, but that wasn’t making it any easier. They couldn’t remember the last time they’d had a serious disagreement with the ghost taking up space in their head, and it was more than a little discombobulating.

Arguing isn’t going to get us anywhere, they thought miserably. I know Chara doesn’t see things the way I do, but… god, it’s so frustrating .

Frustrating enough that when one of their police escort reached for her buzzing walkie-talkie, they barely registered it until the woman called for them to stop.

“Ambassador, we’ve got a situation. I think you need to hear this.”

Frisk looked up, startled. “What?”

The woman flicked a switch on the device, and upped the volume several decibels – and Undyne’s voice was echoing out of the tinny speaker.

“- one, come in! This is Undyne, at the shopping plaza at 2 nd and Dunwich Street. HuRg’s making a move, repeat, HuRg’s finally making a move! Get all your asses over here now!”

Frisk practically felt their heart stop, and without thinking they grabbed the walkie-talkie from the policewoman.

“Undyne,” they said urgently. “Undyne, it’s Frisk, what’s going on?”

“Oh, hey! Listen, sorry, but you need to stay out of this. We’re not losing you to those losers again, NGAAAH!”

“ Undyne,” Frisk pleaded. “At least tell me what’s going on, please.”
“Okay, okay. Fine. As long as you promise not to run into here as soon as you hear. You’re just as awesome as I am, but you’re still a wimp, you’re only going to get hurt.”

They swallowed, throat dry.

“… I promise.”

“You better keep that promise, wimp! We’ve got a credible bomb threat over here. One of my squad found one in the fountain, and the doors on some of the shops have been jammed and the people inside can’t get out – and those things are primed to blow as soon as any of us try to open the doors!”

It felt like every breath was roaring in their ears through a long tunnel. And everything else was muffled, as if heard from far away through thick fog.

*Bomb threat. Bombs, and people can’t get away or be brought to safety.*

*This is… this is all my fault, again. People are going to die because of me.*

They mutely handed the police officer her walkie talkie, and she immediately started barking orders over the airwaves. Frisk barely paid attention to any of it. Instead… instead, they looked down at Flowey.

*People can’t get in or out to get rid of the bombs… so what if we have someone go in that can?*

“Oh no,” Flowey said, seeing their expression. “Frisk, I don’t want to get blown up! And I know almost nothing about how to get rid of bombs except for blowing them up! I am not tunneling in there!”

“Flowey,” Frisk pleaded.

“What happens if HuRg finds out about me being involved, huh?” Flowey demanded. “Everybody probably knows I’m with you by now! Besides, I’m a monster, they’d just try to blow me up too!”

That was – that was true, damn it. HuRg would take one look at Flowey and they’d just see another monster to be killed, they wouldn’t so much as hesitate. And they didn’t want Flowey to die – they didn’t want anybody to die, but unlike anybody else, Flowey would remember dying. They couldn’t do that to him, but…

*What do I do? What do I do?*

A shimmer caught their attention, out of the corner of their eye. A slight heat haze outside one of the many windows lining the street, where there shouldn’t have been a heat haze. And suddenly, Frisk remembered something very important.

*This isn’t like the other timelines. This time… this time it’s not just me and the monsters. This time, the fairies are here too.*

And selfish grudge or not… they might just be their best chance of getting those people that were going to die because of them out alive.

Chapter End Notes
Everybody who saw the bit about O’Reilly having a kid that fell into Mt. Ebott coming from a mile away, raise your hands! (raises hand, then realizes she’s the author so she doesn’t count) So yeah, O’Reilly’s daughter Diana was the yellow soul that fell into the Underground, and the most recent of the kids to fall other than Frisk themselves.

And Frisk, kiddo, holding a grudge is NOT selfish. Just don’t do it as often as Chara does and you’ll be fine, promise.

*“dealing with Minerva:” Minerva Paradizo was one of the antagonists of book 5 (only technically, she shaped up a bit near the end). She was, at the time, a blonde 12-year old from France with an intellect equal to Artemis’s own when he was 12. A regular juvenile mastermind, only with a slightly more normal upbringing than Artemis (as in she wasn’t raised to be a criminal but her dad still did occasionally illegal things. Her dad is a plastic surgeon, and I guarantee you that not all of his clients wanted a facelift just for the hell of it). Also, someone that Artemis, who was in the middle of puberty at the time, kept thinking of as pretty, so there you go. Nothing actually happened between them romance-wise, and I think it’s canon that Minerva has a boyfriend near the end of the series, but I figured that she and Artemis would keep in contact after he returned from Limbo (see previous notes), if only because the two of them are generally the smartest people in the room at a given point in time and they need decent conversation partners that can keep up with them.

(Also, remember Artemis mentioning a contact in France when talking to Frisk at the gala in like chapter 14? He was talking about Minerva.)
Chapter 55

Chapter by SomniumOfLight

Chapter Notes

I am so, so sorry this took so long to update, guys. Unfortunately, it’s probably gonna take a while for the next chapter as well – I just checked what my schedule for my next semester of classes is, and I have at least a couple of classes that will keep me on campus all day.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“ I d-don’t like this.”

“Private, be quiet. Now is not the time for your whining.” Crane snapped. Normally she could tolerate her partner’s attitude, even if she didn’t particularly like it – she knew that buried very deep underneath that simpering exterior was a fairy that actually gave a damn, unlike some members of the force – but considering what the two of them, a couple other volunteers, and their techies were about to try to pull… no, she really didn’t have the patience for his usual attitude.

“I still don’t think I l-like this. Why do we have to get involved? We’re not trained in bomb disposal, Lieutenant!”

“Which is why the techies are getting involved. If it bothers you so much, you can be one of the lookouts – just stop whining.”

Thankfully, he finally did shut up, and Crane took advantage of the silence to scan the multi-species squads of police officers down below, and the crowds of bystanders that had been moved to a safe distance away.

Crane hadn’t known what to expect when Frisk – the Ambassador – had, after waiting for their police escort to be otherwise occupied with the news of the bomb threat, used Queen Toriel’s massive form to shield them from view and gesture for the shielded sprite to come down. Crane hadn’t wasted a moment, lighting down on the ground in front of the child even while keeping an eye on the arguing police officers.

She supposed, considering what she’d just overheard, she should have expected the child’s question of “Can you take care of the bombs?” It was obvious, in hindsight, but it had taken her by surprise then.

“We could,” she’d whispered back.

“Will you?”

That was when Crane had stalled for time to call Captain Short and let her – and through her, Fowl – what was going on. And had gotten full permission for doing what the Ambassador asked.

“If the Council tries to take this out on you, I’ll take the blame,” Short had said bluntly. “After all, it’s their fault for putting a known loose cannon like me in charge of a squad of fairies, isn’t it? And you were just following orders.”
It would be easier said than done, “taking care of the bombs,” though. For one thing, there was the threat of the bombs blowing when the doors were opened – which was highly unlikely. Considering the public avenue being threatened, it would have been difficult enough for anyone to sneak in to plant those bombs, let alone rig them to blow like that, and this bomb threat was coming completely out of nowhere. It was, the fairies had agreed after some conversation between the techies and Fowl, much more likely that there were people with detonators nearby keeping an eye on the doors, ready to blow the buildings sky-high once one opened. Which meant that before the squad did anything with the bombs, they first needed to be able to make an educated guess as to who they should avoid.

“Any luck so far?” Crane asked the squad at large. “Anybody suspicious?”

“Not yet, Lieutenant, sorry.”

“N-no.”

“Not a one – wait, hold on a second –”

Crane sat bolt upright, listening intently. After a few moments, the fairy finally spoke again. “We’ve got possible hostiles. The techies just finished a face trace on a couple of people in the crowds – known anti-monster folk that were seen talking to O’Reilly at several anti-monster gatherings before Humanity’s Resurgence really took hold. No guarantee they’re involved, but it’s definitely a possibility.”

“Where?”

“Edge of the crowd of bystanders, just off to the side of the department store. Woman with hair dyed bright pink, man in a blue overcoat. And Pinkie looks a little too happy about this whole scenario to be completely innocent, I guarantee it.”

Crane quickly located the department store and scanned the crowds around it until she found one of the humans described. The woman was practically a beacon with how bright the pink in her hair was, and she grimaced when she saw that yes, the human looked far too happy to be anything but anti-monster.

“Alright,” she said. “Anybody else find anybody suspicious?”

“Couple others, but only a couple. No-one else is really standing out as dangerous.”

She took a deep breath. “Then we can’t afford to wait any longer. Everyone who’s volunteered for the bomb disposal, to me. Everyone else keep an eye on the crowds, especially those people that we think might be involved.”

A chorus of confirmations sounded over the airwaves, and within minutes, three other winged forms settled next to her on the roof.

“Right.” The sprite took another deep breath, and continued on grimly. “Here’s the plan – it’s not a good one, but it’s the best we got considering the circumstances here. The four of us will sneak into the buildings from the upper floors, and try to locate the bombs. Considering the bomb threat is credible even though nothing’s blown up yet, that means that the bombs must be somewhere that either the hostages or the police officers were able to see them – probably on the upper floors, since that would cause more damage to the hostages no matter where they are in the buildings. We scan each building from the top down until we find the bombs, make sure that nobody will stumble across us when we do, and disarm them as quickly as we can. The techies and Foaly will talk us through it once we get to that point – for now, just focus on finding the explosives. And whatever you do –
Another smattering of agreements, and as one “just following orders I swear” LEP officer, the fairies lifted off and flitted away to buildings scattered around the plaza.

Technically, the Private had been right to worry. Your typical Recon fairy was not trained in bomb disposal or retrieval – there was no need for them to know such things. The most that any Recon fairy was typically expected to do with a bomb was either retreat to a safe distance or, if they felt like being daring or wanted to prevent immediate loss of life, relocate the bomb to a location where it would cause less damage when it exploded. A situation like this – multiple bombs in an urban avenue that they didn’t have time to move to a safe distance, with an unknown detonation time – was usually a job for Retrieval – or, barring that, the LEP tech division or even Section Eight, if there were any of the latter’s officers in the area.

However, their little group of volunteers was composed mostly of Recon officers, as most of the Retrieval and Section Eight fairies were either sticking close to the Fowl Estate (in case Humanity’s Resurgence figured out that one of the Fowls were involved and tried to retaliate) or had taken up posts watching over the Ambassador (in case this was a double-pronged attack.) Which meant that the only reason they stood a chance at successfully disarming the bombs at all was several techies, including a certain centaur, watching via their helmet feeds and ready to broadcast instructions upon finding a bomb.

Considering that not all of the techies were good at dumbing down their lingo for the Recon jocks… well, Crane wasn’t exactly filled with confidence. Still, the situation could be worse, a lot worse, so she didn’t really have any room to complain. Or time, for that matter.

A window on the upper floor of a little store that was a combination of cafe and bookstore creaked open, and the sprite Lieutenant crept in, closing it carefully behind her.

“I’m in,” she whispered. “Techies, any cameras I need to watch out for?”

“None so far, Lieutenant,” one of the elves on the other end of the line reported. “Looks like you got lucky and ended up in an empty room – doesn’t even look like this place is used much.”

“What kind of bomb am I looking for here?”

“We don’t know exactly. Sneaking in a bomb would have been tricky, so our best guess is either some sort of plastic explosive, something that could be squashed into a smaller form or naturally small to begin with. Humanity’s Resurgence isn’t exactly a well-funded group either, we think, so it can’t have been anything ridiculously expensive either…”

Crane nodded, murmured an affirmative, and tread lightly across the floorboards towards the door, booted feet not making so much as a single creak as she moved.

“Careful, Lieutenant,” the techie murmured. “I’m not picking up any camera feeds anywhere on this floor, so you’re going in blind here.”

She nodded, and paused briefly at the door, tugging off her helmet so she could press a pointed ear against the wood. She listened for several long moments, and when she heard nothing but some scared murmurs from the hostages below, she decided that it was safe enough to open the door to the hallway beyond, and did so.
No people in the hallway, be they hostages or hostiles. No signs of a bomb, either, though there were several other doors. Moving quickly – they didn’t have time for her to dawdle – Crane snuck down the hall, pausing at each door to listen for movement on the other side before opening them and searching the rooms beyond.

She hit gold, figuratively speaking, at the third door – there was a box that looked very out of place in the little bathroom she’d just entered, and upon inspection there was what was definitely some form of plastic explosives, connected to wires and a remote detonator.

“Oh thank Frond,” she sighed. She’d been worried she’d have to disarm something a lot more complicated than this. All she’d really need to do was remove the remote detonator and the wires, and dispose of the explosive putty so no one could blow it up manually. She did both quickly under the instructions of the techie, carefully separating the explosives from the detonators and then stored the putty away in one of her suit’s pouches. With any luck, she’d be able to find the next bomb just as quickly as she’d found these ones. “Bomb disarmed and ready to be disposed of. I’ll check the rest of the rooms just to be safe, but I’m moving onto the next building afterwards.”

“You do that, Lieutenant. Remember –”

“Don’t get caught,” she confirmed. “I know.”

After that, the rest of the explosives were found with relative speed. The squad of fairies picked their way through the threatened buildings with the kind of grim efficiency that would drive a war veteran, removing plastic explosives and detonators alike while the remaining officers outside kept them posted about what was going on. None of the humans suspected to be holding detonators were doing anything overtly suspicious, and while some monster officers, including Undyne, were still milling around trying to find ways into the buildings without opening doors, they were keeping their distance – a boon for the fairies, for as long as it happened to last.

Crane herself disposed of four more explosives – two of which had been in two different rooms in the same building – before word came over the coms that most, if not all, of the explosives had been removed. At which point, she gave a sigh of relief, and retreated to a nearby creek to dump the plastic explosives. It wasn’t the best place to dispose of them, and normally she’d drop them off with another officer, but since this was an unofficial mission that could end up with their entire squad waist-deep in troll dung, she had to make do.

Then she flitted back to the plaza, pulled out a sheet of paper she’d snuck out of one of the buildings, along with a pen, and quickly jotted down a quick note.

*Bombs were plastic explosives. Have hopefully all been disposed of. Will send information on bystanders that might be involved – couple of them known to be anti-monster. Be careful. -Fs*

With that note scrawled, Crane quickly flitted over to one of the faces in the swarms of police she recognized – Frisk’s fish-lady friend, Undyne if she was remembering correctly – and, when nobody was looking in the monster’s direction, she quickly shoved the note into the monster’s hand and shot up into the sky before she could react.

Undyne started, summoning a spear and looking around wildly, then looked down at the note in her hand. Crane watched as the monster read her hasty note, and then scowled and stuffed the paper into one pocket, and reached for her walkie-talkie.

“Undyne here!” She barked. “I’ve just gotten word that someone dealt with the bombs in the buildings – something about plastic explosives? And apparently there’s people in the crowd that might be involved. Move in, everyone, move in!”
The squads, after some confusion, did so, and the sprite Lieutenant waited with bated breath to see if they had gotten all the bombs or not. Had they missed one? Were they wrong about the detonators?

“The pink-haired lady has a detonator!” The Private suddenly yelped over the coms. “She’s pressing the button, but –”

Crane looked around until she found the woman again… and found the pink-haired human scowling at a tiny device in her hand, looking confused and disgruntled.

“We’ll see if the Captain can send the police information on her later,” she said, relieved. Nothing’s happening. We got them all.

And it was then, just as she was turning in the air to fly back to where she’d left Frisk, that Crane saw him. A familiar ruddy-skinned human, partially hidden in a back alleyway, scowling down at a device similar to the one that the other human had been carrying – and then disappearing almost as soon as she’d seen him, stalking deeper into the alley until he was out of sight.

“Looks like they were telling the truth – the bombs have been dealt with! Move it, punks, let’s get these people out of here!”

Blocks away from where swarms of police officers were on the move, Frisk nearly went boneless with relief when they heard Undyne’s voice over the walkie-talkie once more.

“Oh thank God,” they whispered.

It was several hours later when Frisk and their escort arrived back at their hotel, and though the bone-deep relief that nobody had died was still at the forefront of their mind, they felt equally as paranoid as they were relieved – because barely a couple of minutes after hearing Undyne’s voice over the radio again, Frisk had felt something brushing against one hand, and had looked down to find a slip of paper pressed into their palm with a written message that sent chills down their spine.

O’Reilly spotted near shops. Looked upset that nothing exploded. Keep an eye out.

They’d spent the next several hours jumping at shadows as a result of that note – they wouldn’t be the least bit surprised if O’Reilly had decided to hit two birds with one stone, and come after them while the police were busy with dealing with the aftermath of the almost-catastrophe downtown. But nothing had happened. The police had kept Frisk informed of what was going on, and Undyne herself had eventually turned up, but other than that… nothing had happened. Not a single sign of O’Reilly or anybody that could be working for him or being controlled by him. Even now, as they signed in at the hotel lobby desk and started up the stairs with a smaller escort, Undyne, Flowey, and Toriel in tow, Frisk found themselves looking over their shoulder for an attack that didn’t come.

A vine poked their forehead. “There’s nobody else here but us, idiot. Stop looking so scared, it’s annoying.”

Frisk grimaced and gave the grumpy plant monster in his pot a sheepish grin. “Sorry. It’s just – I can’t help but feel like it’s not over. Those bombs were gotten rid of too easily, you know?”
Undyne snorted. “Relax, punk. There’s no way that O’Reilly guy will be able to get to you with all of us around!”

Frisk bit their lip and, noticing this, Undyne groaned, and turned to the rest of their escort. “You lot mind backing off a bit? I’ve got a wimp to reassure.”

When the other police had agreed and backed off, Undyne lowered her voice (which was surprising, since Frisk rarely heard her use anything less than a loud indoor voice, and this was practically a whisper). “Seriously, Frisk, it’s fine. We’ll keep an eye out still, but this guy’s probably gonna need some time to regroup before he attacks again. If he was going to use the bombs as a distraction, it’s too late for that, and we’re on guard and ready for him. We’ll be fine.”

The ambassador nodded uncertainly, not the least bit convinced.

“And while we’ve got a little privacy going for us,” Undyne added, lowering her voice into an actual, genuine whisper this time, “you were the one that asked the fairies to help, right?”

“Yeah…”

Undyne grimaced, looking none too happy about them confirming this. “Seriously? Why’d you ask them for help?”

“I asked Flowey first,” Frisk admitted quietly, “but he doesn’t know how to deal with a bomb unless he’s blowing it up. And… well, the fairies would be able to sneak around more easily. They can turn invisible, Undyne.”

“Yeah yeah yeah, I figured that bit out. Makes sense that invisible people would be better at sneaking. But seriously, Frisk, why? They messed with your memories for fuck’s sake, why would you trust them with something like that?”

Toriel cleared her throat. “Undyne, while it may be true that our new… allies have done some untrustworthy things in the past, we should still give them a chance to prove that such things will stay in the past from now on. And how are we to give them a chance if we don’t give them a little trust?”

“But –” Undyne protested.

“I don’t like what they did,” Frisk interjected quickly before the monster could dig any deeper into that vein of venom, “but they’re at least trying, Undyne. They’re willing to help.”

“But they mind-wiped you!” Undyne hissed.

“I know, but… holding a grudge won’t help us, Undyne. And we need all the help we can get with HuRg on the move.” They ignored the stab of guilt at them being such a hypocrite – they were still holding a grudge, even now – and gave Undyne a weak smile. “Besides, everyone deserves a second chance, right? And so far, they haven’t made us regret it.”

The fish-lady grumbled irritably. “…Okay, you’ve got a point. But I still don’t like it!”

“You don’t have to,” Frisk said, more firmly this time. “Just… keep an open mind, please?”

“…Fine.”

It was at this point that two things happened – firstly, their little group reached Frisk and Toriel’s hotel room. And secondly? A sudden commotion dragged their attention to the escort of police officers behind them – the escort of police officers apparently suddenly occupied with fending off
attacks from other police officers?

“The hell?” Undyne immediately whirled around and stormed back down the hall. “What the fuck is going on?”

One of the attackers looked up, blinking slowly as if in a daze and eyes oddly glazed over… and Frisk suddenly felt that tiny seed of unease that had taken root in their gut hours ago sprout and begin to grow.

“Undyne,” they said urgently. “Undyne, wait.”

The monster paused, looking over her shoulder at them in irritated puzzlement – then the man with the glazed eyes raised one hand, and Frisk’s eyes widened in alarm at the sight of the gun being aimed at their friend.

“Look out!” They shrieked.

With a whoosh, a wall of white fire surged up to the ceiling just as the bang of a gun firing pierced their eardrums. Frisk yelped as a bullet disintegrated in the wall of flames, and Undyne cursed colorfully.

“What the actual fuck?”

“They’re – they’re being controlled!” Frisk was almost certain of this now – the few times they’d seen eyes like that had been on the faces of men whose minds were not quite their own at the moment. On top of that… they knew that officer well enough by now to know that the man wouldn’t shoot at them. Heck, they knew for a fact that he wasn’t even supposed to have a gun! “Which means –”

“That the bastard that kidnapped you is nearby!” Undyne finished for them with a snarl. “Shit. Frisk, Your Majesty, get out of here! Now!”

There was the sound of footsteps, another bang – a yelp from one of the non-hostile officers, a yelp of there’s more of them coming, what the hell, and the next thing Frisk knew, Toriel had scooped them up off their feet and was barging into their room. The door banged shut behind them, a ball of white fire slamming the bolt across and locking their attackers out.

“The window!” They managed through their panic. “We can – the fire escape!”

Toriel wrenched the window open – only to come face to face with the barrel of a gun, and freeze.

*Fuck, there’s people on the fire escape too?!

Frisk’s heart felt like it was about to burst out of their chest.

People in the hall, people outside – and Mom locked the door behind us.

They were trapped. At the mercy of a mind-controlled goon with a gun, when they should have been safe here.

What do I do? What can I do? There’s gotta be something, there’s gotta be – c’mon Frisk, think!

Except they couldn’t think of anything. Toriel was still holding them, furry arms tightening protectively, so they couldn’t jump into the path of a bullet and LOAD. The dazed officer slinking in through the window was in the way, so they couldn’t jump. Flowey was hissing in his pot in their
arms, but because he was squashed between them and Toriel, he wouldn’t be able to see the attackers – and he’d probably kill them if he could, which was best avoided anyway. And for all Toriel could block bullets with her fire, there was no way she’d be able to raise a flame wall in time – even her reflexes weren’t that fast.

Someone’s going to die, Frisk realized, panic slowly growing into outright terror. And I can’t do anything to stop it!

And then there was a loud zap. And the mindless drone of an officer went down like a sack of bricks as a beam of neon light hit him in the back of the head.

For a moment, all Frisk could do was stare, dumbfounded, with their mouth hanging open. In the back of their mind, Chara was spluttering incredulously – and out of the corner of their eye, they saw Toriel looking almost as dumbfounded as both of the children themselves felt.

Then a black-suited winged figure materialized next to the unconscious man, a futuristic ray-gun in one hand.

“Sorry it took us so long to get here, Ambassador,” the fairy said. “But we’re here now.” There was flash of a grin underneath the visor. “You’re safe.”

And all Frisk could do was let out a hiccuping, hysterical sob of relief.

Chapter End Notes

I wasn’t entirely happy with how this chapter had been written until daniel got his claws into it and changed a few things, so THANK GOD for proofreaders/editors/coauthors, amiright?

Guess who the pink-haired woman is a reference to? :3

Also, nice to see the fairies making an effort to help the monsters out, eh? Now they only have to make sure that the Council doesn’t catch wind of what they’re doing before they can convince them that an official alliance would be beneficial.

(No asterisks or worldbuilding notes for this chapter, sorry guys.)
Hey, people, sorry but this isn’t a chapter. This is me letting you guys know that I’ve decided to take a break from M est P for the next six weeks or so. While I’d like to keep working on it and updating for you guys, these classes I’m in right now have been frying my brain and stressing me out something awful, and I haven’t been able to get anything done since I posted the last chapter. I don’t want to strain myself too much, plus if I keep working on M est P like this then the new chapters wouldn’t be as good. However, while I might not be working on M est P during these next few weeks, I might work on some of my other fanfics that haven’t seen any action recently or even write for new ideas, providing I have the time and inspiration to do so. So make sure to keep an eye on my other stories and my "Multiverse of Ideas" drabbles!

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