Doctor, Dear Doctor

by sansual

Summary

You're wrapping up medical school and living in a cutesy little apartment in a bustling city. You're even about to interview for this internship you've been dying for! It may sound picturesque, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Your classes, your friends, your job, your reputation... Everything you have is going to change. Your superior will be at the center of it all. It doesn't help that he's brimming with temptation.
"You're seriously wearing *that*?

"What's wrong with it?" You look down at your ensemble. The blue skater dress flares down and out, hiding your knees from view. Your self-examination continues down your legs and to the tan shoes you've donned, and ends at the sleeves of your cardigan.

Your roommate, Joanne, leans against the kitchen counter. "Your cardigan is *black*. Your shoes are *brown*. You're going to an *interview*." She raises her coffee mug to her lips and takes a long, slow sip. There's a bronze lipstick mark on the lip of the cup. "You gotta change one of those, girlie." Though you admit you're prone to exaggeration, you swear Joanne must be some sort of sun goddess. She stands tall, nearly reaching six feet on her own, but the curls of dark brown hair atop her head put her just there. Her bright amber eyes accent the acute freckles dusting her nose and cheeks. You always thought that between you two, she was by far the prettier one, but you digress.

"Kay, the shoes are going." You hurl the pumps off of your feet, throwing them into the ajar doorway of your bedroom. They bounce off of something and onto the floor with a few loud clunks and you sigh, "I'm guessing I need black now?"

"You guessed right." Joanne takes another sip of her coffee while you locate your black wedges. You have to give her credit, though, because they *do* look better with your outfit. Your purse is black, too, and you grab it just before you open the apartment door.

"Let's hope I don't fuck this up too bad," you snicker with one foot in the hallway.

"____! You're gonna be fine! At the very least, you *look* fine. Now go get that internship!" With all the strength she's got (which happens to be quite a bit), Joanne pushes you out the door before you can change your mind about going. You almost did it, too. Ever since you got the call a week ago, you've been at war with your anxiety over it. Yes, your physics professor from last year has ties within the research facility, and he wrote you a fabulous recommendation letter, but you can't help but worry still. What if you don't make a good first impression? What if you're not fit for work at the facility after all? What if you're too nervous and your interviewer brushes you off as just another anxious young adult, thus propelling you backwards into the blur of other anxious young adults?

What if you're overthinking things again? Well, you certainly didn't overthink your decision to get on the bus today, and now you figure you should've. Why in God's name did you get on public transport at 7 a.m. on a Monday? Why did you pick the seat that would inevitably sandwich you between a crying baby and a grouchy white-collar? Why, oh why did you forget your *headphones*?

You opt to risk blisters on your feet and get off a stop early. The walk to the facility isn't that bad; after all, it's a lovely day and you're in a bustling city. Everything here is intricately wedged together like one of those cute fruit arrangements. The recent overpopulation issue doesn't help much, either. Nevertheless, everything works. Businesses, services, humans, monsters, they all overlap. The breeze suddenly picks up, blowing leaves across the asphalt road. Your lovely day turns colder than your ideal, but you simply pull your cardigan close and your purse closer. You're almost there.

Nothing can stop you, not any wind, nor walk, nor anxiety. If someone were to describe the glint in your eye now, they probably would use the word "determined."
The glass doors of the facility slide open, and you step over sparkling marble floors. It's a fairly nice building, built in the last year or so with the influx of monsters coming from the mountain. Though you've always had a thing for antique, vintage styles of decorating, you appreciate the innovative, fresh design of the place.

You don't realize you're gawking until the receptionist fixes you with an arched eyebrow. "May I help you?"

"Oh!" You step across the spacious lobby and to the counter. "I'm here for an interview. The appointment's for 7:45, and if you need a name it's ______ ______."

Karen (according to her nameplate) taps away at the silver laptop in front of her for a second. "You're right. ______ ______, 7:45, in conference room 318. It's a bit early, but I'll call and see if they're ready for you, anyway."

Subconsciously, your teeth dig into your lower lip. "They?"

"Yes, your interview is being conducted by three of the doctors and researchers that will be in your wing with you. That is, if you're hired." Without waiting for so much as a nervous sigh (which you do, in fact, utter), Karen picks up one of two cell phones that sit on her desk. Her red manicured nails dart across the screen several times before she puts the phone to her ear. All you can do is stand idle while she talks.

"Yes, Dr. Archer? Ms. ______ is here for your 7:45. Is everyone present?" There's a pause. Her nails are acrylic. "Shall I send her up now, then?" Another pause while you take deep breaths in an attempt to abate the return of your anxiety. "Will do. Thank you." With a final chirping goodbye, Karen hangs up and her eyes lock with yours. "They're all there."

Suddenly, you can't breathe. "They are? Really? It's ten minutes early." Your knees nearly give way, and sweat threatens to gather in the centers of your palms.

Relentless, Karen gestures to the elevator bank across the lobby. "Go to floor three, and then go straight down the hall from there. 318 is on the right." She's merciless. Can't she tell you're dying on the inside?" Up three floors, straight down the hall, to 318?"

"Yes."

Up three floors, straight down the hall, to 318. Up three floors, straight down the hall, to 318. You repeat it in your head like a mantra, hoping it will soothe you at least slightly. It does some form of work on you, and eventually you can breathe a bit more. With a sigh of relief, you wipe your hands on your cardigan and will yourself to look your soon-to-be associate in the eye.

She says, "They're waiting on you."

You say, "Thank you." Pivoting smoothly on the marble floor, you stride to the elevator bank. The walls are glass, giving you a generous view of the facility while you go up. You reach floor three quickly and step out with renewed confidence. 318 is easy to find. Judging by the spaces between the doors, you conclude it's a fairly large room. Well, what could you expect from a conference room in a high-end, mass-populated research facility? You take one final deep breath and knock.

Almost immediately, there's an answer. A Korean woman in her early thirties opens the door to the conference room and gives you a small, gentle smile. "______?"
"That would be me." With a relaxed posture, you go to shake her hand. "It's lovely to be here, thank you for taking the time to do this today."

She introduces herself as Dr. Florence Hyung and motions for you to come in with a flutter of her lab-coat. You find that the only other person in the room (which is, in fact, extensive) is not quite a person at all, but instead a centaur-like monster.

He walks (trots? Is that politically correct?) around the long glass table to shake your hand. "Archer," is all he says, and you take his bluntness with a grain of salt and a dash of it's-just-his-personality. The second both of the doctors motion for you to sit down is the second you realize something is amiss.

"I don't want to intrude," you start with a nervous knitting of your eyebrows, "but I was told I'd be interviewed by three people, and I'm curious to know where the third is, if there is one."

Dr. Hyung turns to Dr. Archer. "Where'd he go? I turned my back to get the door and then-"

"You know how Gaster is. Said something about needing his laptop and disappeared." Archer supplies all he can and finishes with a shrug. You take note of the fact that he's wearing two coats, one for his human half and one for the rest of him. It's not until you're retrieving your file from your purse and passing it across the table that you register exactly what he's said.

"He disappeared?" You look to one of them, then the other, then both, for some sort of answer. Was it simply a poor word choice, or did Archer literally mean... You feel like you're about to get an answer when the door swings open.

"My most sincere apologies," a deep voice behind you says. "I've been waiting on certain test results, and I couldn't afford to miss receiving them while in here." You're only slightly aware that you're shaking from the sudden appearance of the voice. Something in your head tells you its owner is moving, but you don't hear a thing, and you don't dare look around. Your chest is tightening.

Then the voice is right at your ear. "My, my, don't we scare easily?"

Chapter End Notes

I've been waiting a while to start this!!! I hope everyone likes this, and I hope to update regularly! Comments and likes are appreciated!
Interview

Chapter Summary

You get interviewed. And scared.

Chapter Notes

Woo-hoo! I'm thrilled about this story, y'all, writing this chapter was so fun.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"My, my, don't we scare easily?" The words against your neck are smooth, syrupy, and ever so pernicious enough that your breath hitches. You're surprised you can breathe at all. Still, you sit rigid, trembling in your chair. There's a low chuckle from whoever stands right behind you.

Then Dr. Hyung says, "Gaster, that's plenty," and the air seems to shift. From the corner of your eye you see a dark figure rounding the table. He's tall, nearly seven feet tall, and in a lab-coat like the others. It's not until he sits down directly across from you that you will yourself to attempt to calm down.

A black-gloved hand reaches out across the glass. "My name is Dr. W. D. Gaster. It's quite lovely to meet you." Inevitably, your shaking grip finds his firm one, and you look up at him.

He's not quite a skeleton, but something more solid, more put-together. Well-dressed, Dr. Gaster is adorned in layers of greyscale, all of which seemingly-tailored to his lean body. His chiseled face is marked with scars that run from his eyes. How did he get them? Was it an accident? Will you ever know?

"_____ ____. It's nice to meet you, Dr. Gaster," you say, cutting off the handshake that carries on a bit longer than expected. Subconsciously, your lips curve into a small smile. The expression he returns to you is more amused than happy: it's something of a smirk, with his not-quite-sockets poised in a challenged arch. Gaster is... alluring? Handsome, in an odd sort of way? Whatever the appropriate word is, you like looking at him.

Dr. Archer chimes, "Let's begin. All your papers check out, so that's that." His human arms reach to gather all your forms, stack them, and return them to your folder. He gives you a curt nod. "We're going to ask you some questions now."

"I'm ready," you muse.

But you couldn't have possibly been ready for the pressure of three different people asking you each their own slews of questions, all at once. The way you go back and forth between the doctors so quickly reminds you of machine gun fire, or a pinball machine, or maybe Jeopardy. As time ticks by and more questions get answers, you come to notice that each one of your interviewers is centering around a main topic. Dr. Archer is asking you questions about your work ethics. Do you feel comfortable working with monsters? Of course. How flexible is your schedule? Fairly so, but you
have classes that you cannot skip. Dr. Hyung tests your scientific knowledge. What two elements are liquid at room temperature? Mercury and Bromine. Which planet in the solar system spins the fastest? Jupiter. At what temperature are Celsius and Fahrenheit equal? -40 degrees. And Dr. Gaster?

"_____, on a scale from one to ten, how afraid are you of the dark?"

You wince. "Maybe three?"

"Ah, I see." His questions don't make any sense. Long, gloved fingers tap away quickly at his keyboard. "Imagine you walk into the lab and there is a stray penguin wandering around. What would you do first?"

A penguin? A *stray fucking penguin*? You can feel six eyes staring into you and your teeth digging into your lip. "I'd... make sure it's okay?" With Gaster, you're always unsure. With him, your answers sound like questions. At this point, all you can really do is hope that your soft spot for animals doesn't cost you this internship.

"That's considerate of you," Dr. Hyung remarks.

"Indeed," agrees Dr. Gaster. He has a follow-up question. "Say that this interview concludes swimmingly and that we give you this internship, with promise of promotion to a paying position in the future."

"Okay?" You shower him with concentration and pleasantries. "That sounds nice, actually."

His face twists into that bemused smirk again, and he leans over the table to fix you with a glint in his large, dark eyes. "What would make you quit?"

Your initial response is, "I won't quit." Secondarily (and quite cautiously, you might add) you say, "Hardly anything would drive me off the edge enough to quit this internship, because I've worked so hard to get here." The three doctors have gone silent. You have their full attention as you continue. "However, I don't like to take any disrespect. Being underestimated is one of my pet peeves. If I'm treated like I'm stupid or inferior to someone, and the problem won't be fixed, then I might be tempted to leave. I love my field, but everyone here is an equal, and we all help each other, and I won't take anything less than equal treatment."

That's the most you've spoken during the entire session, and you're left feeling as if your interviewers are stunned. They silently exchange glances in front of you. As the three undergo a silent staring debate, you busy yourself with deep breaths and exploring the room with your eyes. Diagrams of assorted structures line the walls, and there's a beautifully-maintained Lily arrangement in the center of the table. Mirrors panel the ceilings. Oh, there you are. There's an irresistible urge within you to stick your tongue out and make stupid faces, but then you remember you're in a professional setting with professional (albeit slightly creepy) people.

Hyung stands suddenly, giving you a genuine smile. "Thank you so much for coming in. This was a lovely interview, and we're all in agreement that you did very well."

"Oh," you exclaim, "that's great! Thank you!" You like where this is going. In your mind, a daydream builds. You can see yourself walking into the facility every day. Working in the lab. Testing experiments and getting results. The entire vision is the first part of a dream come true, it's breathtaking, it's-

"We'll call you within the next 24 hours with our results." Dr. Archer's voice breaks your daydream and you have to fight from sulking.
"Of course. Thank you again." Handshakes are exchanged and you collect your folder quietly.

As you're pivoting to go to the door, Gaster's deep voice cuts through the room. "Allow me to get that for you." His coated, gloved hand reaches over your head to open and hold the door. "You'll hinder your pretty mind if you use too much energy." While you're passing under his arm, you can't help but feel flattered.

"Thank you," you tell him.

The door shuts behind him, leaving Hyung and Archer to finish gathering their things. Gaster strides confidently down the hallway with his laptop bag tucked under his left arm. "Would you allow me to walk you down to the lobby? I'm going that way regardless to retrieve my second cup of coffee."

"That'd be nice!" Despite the doctor's initial coldness, you feel somewhat... relieved? At ease around him now? Nevertheless, you're comfortable enough to step into the glass elevator alone with him. However, there's a pressing question. "By the way, why did you scare me when you first came into the conference room?"

Ah, there's that smirk again. "It was partially for my own amusement," he admits. "It allowed me to get a good gauge of how responsive and reflexive you are, especially to stressful situations."

"So it was psychological?"

"For the most part. However, I will tell you something confidential." In the elevator, Dr. Gaster leans close to you. Your foreheads nearly brush, and you watch as his sardonic smile tightens. His voice is a soft, dark murmur. "Our last intern... didn't last as long as expected. They got frightened incredibly easily, and I've concluded that they weren't quite as prepared for the work that goes on here as they presumed they were."

Suddenly, the cold elevator comes to a halt, and the realization that there is a person waiting at its bank causes the two of you to separate rather quickly. You walk out together, first you, shaking, and then Gaster, as his arm sweeps across the threshold of the sliding door he was holding open.

You're turning to leave when he adds, "Nevertheless, you dealt with that very well, comparatively." A smooth, gloved hand brushes your shoulder, and this time you're only slightly surprised by the hushed voice at your ear. "In fact, I'd say that you essentially have the internship already."

With simultaneous excitement and fear you whip around. "I do?"

But Gaster merely smiles and puts a finger to his lips before turning and walking in the other direction.

Chapter End Notes

So yeah. That happened.

Here's your reminder to leave comments and kudos (because I shit you not, I looooove them)
Chapter Summary

Gaster reflects on you.

Chapter Notes

Oh my lord, y'all. I'm so impressed with the feedback I've gotten since Friday on this. It warms my heart to know I've got so many people that enjoy this thing. Ahhh. I'm ecstatic. Enjoy the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

From the doorway of the lounge, Gaster watches you step out of both the door and his sight. As he goes to make his coffee, he wonders if Hyung will make the correct decision. While you were staring into space, he and Archer found absolute agreement in hiring you; Hyung, however, was hesitant. She will need more time, Gaster figures, perhaps a few more hours to reflect. The "majority rule" principle technically has you hired already; however, a unanimous agreement would run smoother with the facility.

Nevertheless, the doctor finds you quite interesting. Though he can tell you're anxious, you seem to compose yourself somewhat confidently. You're good at hiding your inner self (and, even as he wants to figure you out, Gaster admires that). In the hour-long interview he was charmed by your wittiness and cleverness. Even the questions meant to trip you up, you figured out or found a way around them. As Archer picked apart your ethics, Gaster picked apart your soul. The pretty thing is a myriad of colors he can't quite explain yet, but longs to see again, just for the intricacy of it all. He likes the look of it, simply because it's clean. Not pure, per se, but clean for the most part. You're a good human, one of the very few ones he's come across.

You're attractive, too. It's clear that you know how to dress yourself properly, and your features are easy on the eyes, and yet... Yet Gaster feels drawn to you, in some peculiar way. Even now as he sips at his coffee, he recounts your eyes in particular. Their exotic color, the way they'd widen so when you were surprised (or when he frightened you). Yes, you're a lovely little thing. Utterly perfect, actually. It'd be a damn shame if you slipped out of his grasp now.

With a new sense of urgency, the doctor takes the stairs instead of the elevator. He balances his coffee with his computer bag and still manages to beat the glass box to his floor. Lucky for him, Hyung and Archer still sit in the conference room, discussing you.

With the intensity of a raging fire Gaster bursts in, announcing, "Call her. I want that girl on our staff immediately."

"Dr. Gaster," Hyung starts, "don't you think that's a little-"

"Drastic?" He finishes. "Yes, a bit. Despite that factor, though, I know for a fact that Ms. _____ is more than qualified for this position. The interview was plenty for me to figure her out enough to
make the connections needed.

"Gaster-"

"I don't see why you need much more debate on the matter, to be honest." Again, he cuts Hyung off. The air grows thick and cold with the tension, or perhaps the air conditioner. Gaster realizes that no one thinks exactly the same, but how could she not see how wonderful you are?

She rises before he can get another word in. "Dr. Gaster, I don't understand why you're being so irrational about this. I simply want to take the time to make the proper decision. I agree with you, _____ is immensely qualified. However, she isn't the only one who applied for this internship. I'm going to look over all the applications this afternoon, and then if she proves to be truly the best candidate for the internship, then I will call her." Her hands are constantly busy, unrelenting, ceaseless. She releases her hair from the ponytail constraining it, only to gather it up and put it back.

As Dr. Hyung finishes, Dr. Gaster gets an idea. You're remarkable, yes, but there's no need for you to be expendable. You're not fit for that. The position of "intern" simply won't do, not for you. He can feel a wry smile surfacing on his face like bubbles in a swamp. Hyung, heading towards the door, must interpret this as a sign of surrender. This couldn't be more wrong, Gaster thinks as he intercepts her beelined path.

"Actually, I believe that this will go smoother if you simply give me her application. I have a better solution." Before she can even reply, he says, "I've been contemplating opening up a new position in my office, but I've been wary of applicants. I noticed today that _____ has all the necessary qualities for the position and:"

"So you're making a new position just for her?" Archer speaks from the other end of the table.

Gaster snorts, "In bluntest, crudest terms, yes. So, if you will," he strides across the room to grab hold of your file, "give me this, and I'll contact her of my own volition, thank you."

The doctor does not consider himself, by any means, a bully. He is not a tyrant in his work, nor is he a pestilence. In fact, he hardly ever asks anyone to do anything. After all, why get someone else to do what you can do better? However, he is aware of his capabilities. And Gaster knows how to acquire what he wants, when he wants. He may not be the boss here, but he is a boss monster.

So Archer willingly hands him the file while Hyung's protests curl up and die in her throat. Gaster's gloved fingers curl around the folder, your folder, and then it's his. With a satisfied smirk, he gathers it in his hands and turns to the door again.

"This is the best decision for everyone," he assures them, "That overly-qualified genius of a girl can get a better position, and you have one less applicant to leaf through for your disposable cookie-cutter intern."

Dr. Hyung gapes, and the ever-expressive Archer merely tightens his mouth.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a phone call to make and an assistant to hire." With that, Gaster exits the conference room and lets the door slip shut behind him.

The trip home from the facility is the same length as the one to it, but it seems longer. Your anxiety clouds your mind and forms at the corners of your eyes in bleary shadows. The interview was going so well, and then... You got the standard "we'll let you know" response. Frankly, it's worse than a "no." You'll be surprised if they even call.
And that Gaster acted as if you were the only choice! You don't quite know what to make of the Doctor, honestly. He frightened you, riddled the hell out of you, and then walked you down and comforted you in the elevator? And what was that he said, about the last intern? Did he mean to say that they...

When you get off of the bus, your mind is swimming. Your apartment building is quiet for an early Monday afternoon, and you're somewhat appreciative. Perhaps after you check with Joanne, you and her can go out for lunch. That Greek place down the street sounds-

*Buzz! Buzz!*

You are in the elevator and your phone is ringing. There's an unknown number on the screen. Biting your lip, you answer.

"Hello?"

"_____ _____?" There's a deep voice on the other line, one you've gotten quite familiar with. "This is Dr. Gaster, from the facility."

Joanne can hear your screams of joy from down the hallway.

Chapter End Notes

Comments give me life <3
"Oh my god," Joanne squeals, "I can't believe you! Getting a promotion before even getting hired!" Her long legs swing erratically over the arm of the couch. You've just told her about the interview and she couldn't be more enthusiastic. "Oh my lord, when do you start?"

"Tomorrow, 10 a.m.," you sigh, "I'm gonna have to book it over there after Social Psychology. Something tells me Gaster's hella strict about shit."

"What's up with him, anyway?" She asks. Her gold nails contrast with the velvety grey of the couch. "So he scares you, gives you riddles, and then after you're gone he makes you his assistant?" A loud snort comes out of her mouth and she muses, "Sounds like a book character to me. 20 bucks says he's into you. Watch him get all sexy and suave tomorrow."

You laugh, "Oh my god, hell no," and tuck your feet under your thighs. "It's not gonna be like that at all! Hell, I don't even know if he-"

"Oh, _____," Joanne cuts you off, her voice dropping several octaves in a crude imitation of what she supposes Gaster sounds like. "I need you to examine my tongue with yours. Please, it's for research-"

"Oh shut up!" You hit her in the arm with a decorative pillow. "If you keep it up, I won't even be able to look him in the eye!" Why is she doing this to you? Does she want you to fuck up at your job? Dammit, Joanne!

"You don't have to look at his eyes. If you really want another promotion I bet you could get one if you looked at his-"

"Joanne!" With an exasperated huff you stand, brushing your dress down. "I'm going to get food. You can either sit here and make more innuendos about my new boss, or you can come with me."

"Can I come with you and make innuendos?" Your roommate's got a shit-eating grin on her face as she stands. "It'll be fun," she purrs. When you don't acknowledge, she softens and prods, "_____? I'll buy?"

"Fine."
Holy shit, do you fucking love rice. Your fork grazes the tray as you scrape up the last of yours into a pile to scoop up. The remainder of your lamb is still warm, too. It's salty, but not excessively, so you enjoy it. Ah, Greek food.

"Do you ever want any meat? Like if I'm eating this in front of you, do you get cravings at all?"

"Not really," Joanne says amidst her salad, "Not for lamb, anyway, because I was never a huge fan of it. But if I'm passing by Burger King and I'm starving? Holy shit."

"Gotcha," you laugh. The restaurant's particularly busy for lunch on a Monday, but you're somewhat understanding; after all, it's in the middle of a bustling city. People are constantly working, moving, and therefore craving. It makes sense, you realize as you make your observation.

"I'll be right back," Joanne announces, standing and grabbing her purse. She walks off to the restroom, leaving you at the table with both your plates.

You're contemplating playing a game on your phone when there's a voice behind you.

"____ ______?" It's Dr. Hyung. She rounds your right shoulder, facing you. The doctor's still in her pristine dress and lab-coat from when you saw her earlier this morning, and she's carrying a to-go bag. She shakes your hand cordially. "I didn't think I'd be seeing you again so soon."

"Not until tomorrow, at least," you reply with a smile. "Thank you for your decision, by the way!"

Here, her face goes pale and her smile tightens. She can barely breathe out an, "Oh." Hyung tries to recover, stammering, "Um- I don't think the decision was much of mine to make, honestly."

"What do you mean?" Your eyebrows scrunch together. "You, Dr. Archer, and Dr. Gaster were supposed to collaborate on it, I thought."

"Yes, that was the original plan." The pursed grin turns to a grimace. "But Gaster ended up having other plans, and I suppose Archer and I had to go along with it. He's..." You watch her nervous gaze dart, around the room, around you, to anywhere but your eyes. Then she enunciates, slowly, "...very persuasive."

You felt strange before, but now you can definitely tell that something is off. No, not off. Wrong.

"Is everything okay?"

"I," she starts, "I don't want to talk about this. It's confidential, regardless." Hyung's already-straight posture stiffens into something stick-like. Out of the corner of your eye you see Joanne exit the restroom and stop once she sees you and the doctor. Your roommate leans against the restaurant wall, waiting, giving you space. Hyung, probably sending that your attention's gone elsewhere, takes a step closer. "I do have some advice for you, though, _____."

Your gaze snaps back to her, "Yes?"

There's a cold, breathless moment of silence while she stares at you, possibly thinking of how to word things. When she does speak, she leans closer and quiet her voice considerably. "While I know Dr. Gaster is very professional, and conducts himself highly, I can't say that I know him or his work very well, or that anyone else at the facility does. He's incredibly secretive, and I've always felt uneasy around him. I don't know what provoked him to pick you as his assistant, but I do know that he acted abruptly, and was extremely insistent on it. I may be overreacting, but something just doesn't seem quite right about this whole thing. So please, _____," she cautions, "Be very careful. With
that being said, Hyung turns on her heels and strides off with her bag.

There’s a split second where you can’t breathe, but it feels like a lifetime. An inexorable feeling of dread settles in the pit of your stomach like a sharp rock. Your arms feel a sudden chill about them and you shudder in your seat.

Joanne finds her seat again. "What was that all about?"

When you find your voice, you manage to squeak, "One of the people that interviewed me this morning."

"Wait, what's wrong, girl?" Joanne's tan, pretty fingertips graze yours as her eyes crinkle with concern. "What'd she say that's got you all shaken up? I'm here for you."

"I think..." As you talk you trail off, your hands searching for a gesture, your face searching for an expression to properly convey what you feel. It's anxiety, it's confusion, it's... "I think I just got a warning."

It's absolute fear.

Chapter End Notes

Imagine me holding up a sign that says "Will Work For Food" but instead of "Food" it says "Comments."

Oh, also, I have a Tumblr too. Pester me at www.grim-dark-adrenaline.tumblr.com
It's a beautiful day outside. Birds are singing, flowers are blooming. On days like these, kids like you...

Should be heading to work.

But no, instead you've decided to order coffee first. Relatively, the café looked empty, so it seemed like a good idea to stop by for a much-needed spot of caffeine. After all, even if you're only part-time there, you still get an employee discount. (Are you still technically employed here? Should you put in your two-weeks' notice? You should see what Gaster intends for your hours to be.) Nevertheless, it should've occurred to you that the temperamental espresso machine would break down in the midst of your order, on the one day you were in a hurry.

"It's almost there, _____. Thanks for being patient," Logan, the cashier, tells you. You give him a nod and prop yourself against the glass window. "Where are you off to, dressed so nice?"

"Um." You look away. "New part-time job."

A voice at the threshold of the café chimes, "Oh? I was under the impression it was full-time." And lo and behold, your new boss is striding into the coffee shop, and quite suddenly too. Your posture freezes as Gaster steps to the counter. He isn't looking at neither you nor Logan. "I was going to advise you to put in your two-weeks' notice today, but I suppose this encounter will suffice." What? You cross your arms. How did he know- Oh. Your résumé. He's placing his order now and leafing through an ancient leather wallet for a black credit card. You don't quite catch what he wants, but it's a blunt drink.

After looking over his shoulder to check for a line, he addresses Logan. "Do I need to consult with your manager on Ms. _____'s resignation? I want to make this as quick and painless as possible, for once." There's a chuckle deep in his throat that sends a chill ghosting across your collarbone and down your shoulders. You can tell your (former?) coworker felt it too. The two of you stand stock-still and sheet-pale, and all the while Dr. Gaster acts as if nothing is amiss. Is this how he always acts?

When several seconds have passed by and Logan still hasn't said anything, the doctor smirks, chiding, "What's the matter with you now? Someone cut your tongue out? I asked you a question, boy." Boy, he says, and it sends you trying to figure his age out once more. Clearly, he's older than
you, but how much? Thirty doesn't seem right, and neither does forty, but when you speculate fifty you feel as if you've gone way too far. How do monsters measure age, and for how long do they live? You make a mental note to ask Gaster, in a more professional manner.

"Um," Logan stammers, "I can just give her your number. She'll be in later today."

"Good," snaps Gaster, and before your eyes a business card appears in the air between the two and lands in the cashier's open hand.

Logan's poor 20-year-old expression tells you he is one more eerie Gaster-happening away from shitting his khakis.

"By the way," the doctor says as he steps from the counter, "your espresso machine just needs the valve replaced. I assume once that's done then you can return to your typical efficiency." The machine behind the counter sputters in what could be considered timely agreement. You're still slack-jawed in your place, and Dr. Gaster joins you against the window to wait for his drink.

"I pulled your class schedule from the university resource department," he murmurs without looking at you. "You should have told me you would be cutting so close to tardiness this morning. I can surely accommodate, dear, this time and any time." His usually-crisp voice goes soft, and when you gaze over at him his expression is, too. "I need you to be completely transparent with me from now on. It's essential to our professional relationship."

Something compels you to say, "Yes sir." He hums appreciatively, cracking a smirk.

Your drinks are served side by side, a frothy espresso nudging a cup filled with scalding liquid as black as the void. Gaster takes his coffee from the counter and immediately sips it without hesitation or mercy.

"Perfect," he sighs. "You said yesterday that you rely on public transportation a majority of the time. Is that the case today?" The doctor prompts for your nod, then continues once he gets it. "Personal vehicles are far more efficient. And less... bacterial." His shoulders shudder back a bit. Is Gaster a germaphobe?

"Public transportation costs less money," you counter, "and it's quite convenient. No parking, either." You sip your perfectly concocted drink, letting your palm rest on a wooden table to balance your pose.

"I am a parking aficionado," he smirks, "I never have to worry about finding a convenient space. In fact," with a lean, jacketed arm, Gaster gestures out the glass window, "I'm parked right out front." Your eyes pan out to the limited parking spaces on the streetside. Which one could he-

Oh. It has to be that one. Your eyes narrow at the glimmering black Rolls-Royce in your immediate line of sight. It's meticulously parked in the exact center of the parking space, with the sunlight glistening off of its immaculate hood. You can't help but suck in a breath when a passing car drifts too close to it. It's dentless and pristine, classic yet modern. The car practically screams 'Gaster.'

Presently he's behind you, your back brushing his chest. He can see over your head to his car and offers, "I can take you if you'd like." When you glance over your shoulder to face him, you see he's much closer than you initially figured. Your eyebrow perks up in an arch at him. Flushing at you, quickly he adds, "To work, I mean. In my car."

"You don't have to. I can take the bus just fine." And though this is true, a bit of want lingers in your stomach, making itself known. The feeling goes to your head, throws a fit, and then you accept the
fact that you just might want to ride in the Rolls-Royce just a little bit more than the bus.

So when Gaster retorts, "Nonsense. Come with me," you say nothing and follow him out to his car. It's even more remarkable up-close, you find as you approach it. The tinted windows of the Rolls-Royce display your reflection prominently, and a part of you feels as if you don't belong like this, here, looking at your reflection in this car. With him.

Pursing your lips, you take a minute to recall Dr. Hyung's warning from yesterday. She said he was secretive and insistent, and thus far she hasn't been wrong about that. In addition, Hyung expressed how uncomfortable she was around Dr. Gaster. Should you feel the same? He stands at your side, eyeing you as you eye his car. From the corners of your vision you see his neutral expression. There's no trace of malice, nor lust, but instead mild amusement. He crosses round your back to the road.

"Shall we?" Gaster opens the passenger door for you, obviously wary of the incoming traffic. Should you? Your curious eyes peer into what is obviously a luxury vehicle. The interior's a lovely grey leather, and there's a crisp, masculine smell you can't quite place wafting. Should you? He's scrutinizing you with those dark eyes again. What is he thinking? Should you?

"We shall." Gripping your purse, you slip into the seat of the Rolls-Royce.

Within a minute, he is in the driver's seat beside you, gloved hands gripping the wheel. "You seemed lost in thought, Ms. ____. I was afraid you'd refuse me the pleasure of doing my new assistant a favor." With the push of a button, a cup holder pops out of the dashboard. Your coffee goes in quite easy.

"Thank you for this," you reply, "You just, you really didn't have to."

"Preposterous. In fact, I think I prefer this. Public transportation is hardly safe, and while I don't doubt you take your own precautions, I know I will be much more at ease if I know you are guaranteed a secure commute each morning and evening. And I assure you, I'm quite secure." Secure, he says. Then why can't you shake the feeling that something's wrong? That he's hiding something? Feelings, intentions, a secret. Something, something isn't right with him. Your heart does frontflips between comfort and anxiety.

"I suggest you buckle your seatbelt, dear ____." Dr. Gaster orders. Then he speeds off into the morning light.
Seemingly

Chapter Summary

You and Gaster get high.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

You don't know how fast you're going. The surrounding city is nothing more than a blur of grey that you watch disappear behind you. Gaster's car is a black bullet that whips and weaves through the morning traffic like it's no problem, and he doesn't seem to think it's much of one, either. All the while you're sitting in the cushy grey passenger seat and thinking about how you would've spent ages on that stupid bus. How you almost did do that. How preposterous, you think, how ridiculous of you to even consider the bus over your boss's luxury car!

He's quiet now, focused on his one-handed steering with only the music to fill the silence. Some Frank Sinatra song drafts through the speakers and mingles with the sophisticated cologne-smell in the air. You might've heard it once or twice, maybe in a Christmas movie or with your mom, but you can't quite place it. Nevertheless, it comforts you and compels you to settle into your seat more. Your body leans back onto the leather, your posture eases, your hand falls onto the console...

And lands oh-so-comfortably right on Dr. Gaster's.

"Shit," you yelp, "sorry! I didn't mean to do that!" Red, you yank your hand away and dare to look up at him.

But his features are eased, his voice velvety. "It's not a problem, _____. No need to fret." You can feel your eyebrows unknitting at his words. "Simple mistakes happen, dear. And nevertheless, it was a sign of your being comfortable in my presence, which I welcome. So please relax. I know your intentions with me are strictly professional." He manages a small, bemused smile, and you attempt one back at him. Yet as you turn back to gaze out the window, your mind clouds in a swarm. Gaster's glove was so soft, you think. Subconsciously your thumb ghosts over your finger in a pseudo-recollection of the silky black fabric. Frank Sinatra's crooning doesn't stop, and neither does your mental replay of what just happened. Over and over, your hand, his glove, his hand...

"Don't you know, little fool,

You never can win

Use your mentality

Wake up to reality..."

The car stops and you realize you're at the facility. Dr. Gaster parks the Rolls-Royce directly in front of the automatic door and, with a few taps of his phone, pauses the music. He opens your door for you.

"Thanks." While you're walking to the door, though, something occurs to you. "Hey, Doctor, won't it look weird if we walk in together?"
But he simply says, "No one will say a word," and for some reason, you believe him.

The start of a sneer appears on Karen’s face when you walk in, but once she catches sight of Gaster at your heels, she goes expressionless. You don’t see the look that the doctor cuts her, and you figure you don’t want to. You’re led to the elevator, and once you’re inside, he turns to you.

"Please tell me if she ever gives you any trouble. I’ve been trying to get that wretch of a woman fired for eternity."

"Oh," you stammer, "yes sir." What did Karen do to Gaster? Did she even do anything? The elevator’s rising high, you realize, incredibly so. You notice that the button for the top floor is lit. The doctor is unflinching to the height, while you shiver upon looking down at the now-minuscule lobby. Is he afraid of anything? You’re about to ask when the elevator comes to a halt and he steps out.

"Come along, ______. We have another floor to climb to."

“But we’re on the-“

Dr. Gaster chuckles, “Oh, my dear, this is a top-secret facility. Nothing is as it seems.” With that, his fingers brush yours and give them a tug. His voice drops to something more raspy, more hypnotic. “Follow me.”

If the doctor weren’t leading you, you would have missed it. Just off the main hallway sits a door that nearly blends in with the grey walls. Upon reaching it, he pulls a card from his lab-coat and slides it into a slot. There’s a clicking noise, so faint you nearly miss it, but then Gaster slides the door open and holds it for you. Half of you wants to ask if you’ll receive an access card of your own, but your other half reckons that if you did, the only response you’d receive is a cryptic one. You keep silent in the room you’re now in, instead opting to take it in. Both length and width-wise, it’s short, nearly claustrophobic, furnished with only a couple vending machines and the beginning of a staircase. However, when you look up, you’re left slack-jawed. The walls of the room seem to stretch to heaven, with the stairs spiraling just as high. The ceiling is entirely glass. There are no windows, you note, but there are windowsills, and flourishing plants sit in each one, thriving, drinking in the sunlight from above. It’s so beautiful...

Your boss has one slender, lean leg on the second step. His grip on the railing is strong and sure, and you can’t help but remember the feel of his hand. You watch him round one spiral and pivot to look at you. There’s warm light reflecting off of his chiseled face, and for a second you catch a flash of indigo in his once-abyssal eyes. One of his fingers crooks. “Come now,” Gaster says.

You come.

At the top of the stairs there’s another door. This one requires a numerical code, and you watch the doctor punch in the code. 3825. You make note of it. Again, the door is held for you. However, you’re not expecting to step into a closet.

You’re certain that that’s what this is. It’s roughly as big as one, and there are shelves on the walls, and as far as you can tell, there isn’t another door in the room. The only one is the one Gaster is shutting and locking behind him.

Shutting and locking? Wait!

Suddenly, the two of you are left alone in the darkness. It gets darker, yet darker.
Oooh, spooky. What's up with Gaster?

Remember to comment/kudos!!
You and Gaster are locked in the closet.

This got p intense for me, if we're being honest. But I still loved writing this, and I love where this is going. Enjoy!

Pitch-black. That’s all it is in here, and no matter how hard you try to focus your vision, it stays just the same. There’s no sound, either.

“Dr. Gaster?” You call out, and get nothing in reply.

Panic seizes up in your chest and grasps at each breath before it can even get to your nose. Where is Gaster? You can’t hear him breathing. Does he even breathe? You’re never sure of monster anatomy.

“Gaster?”

But nobody answers, and nobody comes.

Nevertheless, you seek him out in the dark, finding your breath somewhere along the way. Blindly, yet with purpose, you grasp at whatever’s in front of you, repeating the process almost mechanically. There’s no way he would simply leave you in here, you reason. Even if he did, you’d have heard him. He has to be in here. Sure enough, mere seconds after the thought, your left fingers brush the silky material of a lab-coat. With a gasp you clutch at it, tugging at the sleeve until you’re at the owner.

"Gaster!" You’re flush against his chest. “Why didn’t you answer earlier?!”

But all he says is, “You looked for me instead of the door. Interesting.”

"What?!" You're demanding an answer as he turns the lights on with the snap of a gloved finger.

"It's quite simple, actually. I've performed this test in values on all of my assistants. The room is the same dark, cramped, and unfamiliar one every time. And prior to this, every single one has immediately sought out the door." He's leaning against the aforementioned door now, eyeing you with intrigue. You can make out boxes on the shelves, large ones, sealed ones. What does the doctor have in them? Promptly, he says, "Reasoning, please, my dear."

"Well," you begin, "firstly, I wanted to know if you were alright. But secondly, I knew going for the door would be useless because you're the only one that could unlock it."
"Unlock it?"

You give a quick nod. "Yes sir. I heard you lock it after you shut us in." At this, his eyes widen, but you think nothing of it. "So no matter what, I needed you."

"You needed me." He addresses the phrase as if it were a statement rather than a question.

It leaves you feeling not awkward, per say, but instead slightly unsettled. Trying to brush it off, you give a sheepish shrug and a dry laugh. "Well, yeah. I guess I need you for everything, if I want to get around in here."

The light-heartedness of the statement doesn’t quite seem to reach him, though. "What a fast learner you are," Gaster remarks. "Now, to business." And with that, he closes the distance between the two of you. It happens so fast you can’t even react until you feel his lean, well-dressed form brushing yours. As your face meets his chest and your eyes become well-acquainted with his clothing you note just how well he dresses. The material of the doctor’s suit jacket is so fine, and so intricately made, that you’re left wondering what exactly he’s done to acquire the money to outfit himself so nicely every single day.

"_____," He says, "before I can even permit you to see my laboratory, you and I must have a serious understanding." Somehow, his voice has managed to get deeper. Involuntarily, your head tilts up to meet his eyes. There you find that it wasn’t a trick of the light in the stairwell- his eyes are, in fact, a deep violet, so deep they’re black at first-glance. You’re admitting to yourself how hauntingly beautiful they are when his voice rumbles again. "With this job comes countless perks and a pernicious, yet present, power. You will come to know this gradually, my dear." He prompts for a nod, you give it, and he continues. "However, you have a larger responsibility to me and to our research together, and that is one of confidentiality. Do you understand what this means?"

"Yes sir," you breathe. This discussion is seemingly coming to a close, and with your eased nod you relax your shoulders.

But then Gaster snaps, "I don’t think you do," and you realize that this is nowhere near over. He has a new surge of energy about him, one that nearly alarms you. "This is not confidentiality so much as it is secrecy. ______, it is a secrecy that is confined to the two of us and the two of us only." A black-gloved finger crooks back and forth between the two of you. "The work that goes on in my lab is intricate and crucial on an immense scale, and any slip of information could jeopardize that. I will not have that. You are not to discuss any details of your profession or our research with anyone. Not with friends, nor with family, nor with strangers, and especially not with anyone else working in this facility. Breaching this rule will not only result in your immediate termination, but also in consequences so catastrophic on an immeasurably vast level."

You’re silent, shrunken into your work dress and fixated on the raw sharpness in his eyes.

The doctor goes on. "Aside from the risk of termination, this job is, in its entirety, a permanent one. This concept goes hand-in-hand with the confidentiality rule, for obvious reasons. Retirement is not an option, nor is quitting. If you choose to fully make this commitment, then I will always pay you handsomely. With me you will always have everything you could possibly need, and in addition you will always have a higher goal to aspire to reach. I promise you will not grow bored, but you may grow in your curiosity, or in your fear. Nevertheless, if you choose now to fully accept this job, you are bound to me and to our research. You will work with me until either your demise or mine." He fixes you with a dagger of a look. "Let me emphasize that I am nearly impossible to kill. However, if you are now second-guessing your decision, you may opt to leave now. We can stay in this supply closet for as long as you’d like to think, and then we will either go into the lab or I will let you leave out the facility doors without the bat of an eye. But if you stay, you must know the gravity of this
operation. Do you understand?”

Somehow, someway, you rasp, “I understand.” In the thick silence you contemplate everything he’s just said. This job is, for some reason, risky, so risky you cannot speak about it to anyone. Gaster’s assured you that you will be provided for and paid no matter what, and you don’t doubt him. In fact, there isn’t a doubt in your mind that this is a boring, run-of-the-mill career. It’s in your hands, the solid, scientific career you’ve always wanted. You’ll be a prestigious assistant, and eventually, a doctor!

But for forever. Or not at all. And you don’t even know what research you’ll be dealing with. What’s in Dr. Gaster’s laboratory?

Forever, or not at all. Forever, or not at all. All or nothing?

You don’t know when your hand slid into Gaster’s, or where this spark of confidence came from, or when he started looking so damn impressed. But you’re sure, suddenly, and you go with it.

“Yes,” you tell him. “I’ll take it. The confidentiality, the security, the curiosity. I want it.”

Now it’s his turn to fix you with an arched eyebrow and a hitched breath. “Forever?”

“Forever.”

Chapter End Notes

Kudos sustain me, comments feed me. Forever.
Entities

Chapter Summary

While you look at the lab, Gaster gets contemplative.

Chapter Notes

Now this was something dark to write. Quick warning, there’s mention of suicide towards the end of the chapter. Go to the end notes for a fill-in. Thanks for your support and cooperation!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Honestly, that went better than expected.

Gaster isn’t quite sure why you consented so fast, or why you did so as boldly as you did, but then again, he isn’t quite sure about a lot of you. For a moment he reflects on his words. Sure, he can be persuasive, but he wasn’t even trying to coerce you. No; in fact, he explained the terms of your commitment in a tone that was entirely neutral! That isn’t to say he didn’t want you to agree, that he doesn’t want you working with him, because he does. God, he wants you.

And now he has you. Forever. You’ve got this fire in your eyes now, these flickering sparks that borderline madness when paired with your smile. Madness or brilliance or both. Let it be both, he silently begs any entity listening, please let it be both. Your slender hand squeezes his when you pull it away, and the mere notion of it all just nearly drives the doctor mad himself.

There’s a new eagerness to your voice. “May I see the lab now, Doctor?”

“Of course, _____,” he says, beckoning you with a finger. At the other end of the storage closet there’s a floor-to-ceiling panel, one that he must push aside. You’re at his heels the whole time, and some strange, twisted feeling inside of Gaster enjoys that. He has you.

“Holy shit…” You can barely contain your awe when you walk through the now-accessible doorway. “It’s huge…”

Yes, having the only lab on the true top floor has its perks. Alongside being three times as large as any of the other laboratory spaces in the facility, this space also allows Gaster the privacy he knows he needs. He hopes you can appreciate this as well; isolation could aid you in your confidentiality. You seem to appreciate everything in the lab. Resting a hand on a steel countertop, he watches you flit about excitedly.

“It’s all so much, you have everything in here,” you gape, “and it’s all so new!”

“Close your mouth, dear. Any flies in here are caged, but you’re tempting them.” With this, Dr. Gaster manages to hide his amusement from you.
But you exclaim, “Flies? Alive? You have animals in here?!”

“Yes,” he replies, pointing, “They’re all over there on the-“

“Oh, Wowie!”

“-shelves…” Gaster can’t even finish before you’re off like a rocket towards the other end of the lab. Your sudden enthusiasm reminds him of his youngest brother.

“I don’t even know what some of these are!”

Despite the smile he’s trying very hard to hold back, he knows he should probably warn you. So he rises from his lean on the counter and saunters your way. “Though I know you’re enthusiastic, _____, and for obvious reasons, I do need to advise you not to prod much at any of the specimens. They’re strictly for study, and not all of them are too friendly.”

And with that, it’s as if he flipped a switch, and you’re suddenly aware that you’re at work and not at a pet store. Your once-relaxed posture straightens, your smile straightens, and now Gaster’s looking at a completely different woman. “Oh,” you flush, “Yes sir.” How peculiar. What drove you to change so quickly? What has you so guarded so suddenly? What happened to the _____ he was just exposed to?

He brushes it off. “Feel free to observe and become familiar with your surroundings. I’d prefer for you to learn to navigate for yourself, rather than for me to coddle you.” Though just moments ago, you were the spitting image of a child. “However,” he continues, “I’d be more than content to answer any questions you may have.”

The lie comes out easily enough. Curiosity, in small doses, is fine. In fact, it’s beautiful, it’s useful, and it’s been fueling him for the entire morning. But the doctor’s wary of you, of your brilliance and your wandering eyes, and now he’s all-too-aware of a present issue. Surely, you’re going to find something you probably shouldn’t before the day runs out. When you do, he’ll have to explain. Today, something dark. Inevitably, something darker. All Gaster can do is hope that whatever he shows you doesn’t send you to a gun or a rope tonight. Yes, he has you for forever, but the luster of forever has long since faded for him. How many forevers has he promised, since all this began, since he began?

That was so long ago, and there’s blood and dust alike on his hands. He’s learned the hard way that fear makes forever run out. Not for you, he hopes. There’s something about you, something that sets you apart. Something he can’t lose before he even finds out what the hell it is. He catches himself talking to deities again. Please, not her, let her stay. Out of the corner of his eye, Gaster sees you picking through the lab with a regained grin. You venture around shelves and corners, enthusiastic, determined, curious. That’s what you are, you curious, beautiful little thing. Let me keep her, just for a bit longer than the rest.

He doesn’t know how long he stands there, lost in his mind, before he hears you call. You’re all the way across the lab now, between a stack of notes and a large steel mechanism. God, not that, anything but that. “Gaster?” Your nervous tone is all-too-familiar. Unfortunately, he can’t keep you waiting forever. Forever, how novel.

With a breath he’s been holding for too long, he pivots, taking a step to you. You. Beautiful, curious, mad, brilliant. Please.

Chapter End Notes
For those who skipped the chapter for the suicide mention: You're in the lab now, going a little bonkers over all the cool stuff. In his thoughts, Gaster revealed that you're nowhere near the first assistant he's had, and his work has driven all the others off the edge. While silently praying that you don't find anything too dark today, you find some mechanism that is, judging by his reaction, definitely dark.

Feel free to comment/kudos. Thanks for reading so far!
“Gaster?” You're cautious in watching his slow, deliberate saunter towards you. However, you're even more cautious about this… machine… you’ve stumbled upon. It’s old, very old, and so large you doubt you could even budge it. Its shape is that of an upside-down bulb. There’s a chair-like surface at its base, seemingly-caged by sturdy coils and pipes that spiral above your head. Yes, it’s a cage, your brain confirms after further inspection. Directly in front of the seat of the chair is a break in the coils large enough for a hinged half-door to fit. You try it, only to find that it’s locked. The pipes come together at the top, into what appears to be a chamber. Overall, the thing looks to be extremely durable.

And even more extremely ominous.

“_____, I’d advise for you to step away from that,” Gaster says when he gets to you. That typically-crisp voice of his has taken on an edge of uncertainty. His bonelike forehead is somehow wrinkled in concern. "It’s been very long since its last use, but regardless, one can never be sure when it comes to machinery. Even foolproof machinery that I myself made.” He starts to turn, reaching gently for your hand. “Come along. May I show you something else?”

Upon looking up at his face you see a kind, gentle smile. Now that's alarming. With narrowed eyes, you let your fingers slip out of his.

“But what is this?” You keep eye contact with the doctor as you step even closer to the machine. He blanches with his gloved hands moving erratically, unpredictably.

You watch him try again. “_____, may I suggest-”

“No.” You cut him off, daring, defiant, suddenly. You know what he’s doing. The clacking tiles under your shoes send echoes across the lab as you circle the machine like a shark would a diver: not predatoriely, but instead curiously. “I know you’re allowed your own confidentiality, Doctor, but you’ve already told me that some of the stuff we’d be looking at would be pretty dark. I’m ready for whatever it is you have in here, and I highly doubt that whatever this is will scare me to death. And then, by trying to carefully steer me away, you’re perfectly demonstrating the concept of reverse-psychology, and that just makes me want to look at it more. So there. In conclusion, show me this shit.”

He’s silent, borderline-vapid under your gaze.

You add, “Please, sir. No disrespect intended.”

“None taken,” is what Gaster finally coughs out. You know that he knows that he’s lost this battle, but that can’t explain the intense internal struggle that’s practically oozing from him. After a long,
defeated sigh, he looks into your eyes. “I suggest that you find a comfortable chair.”

There’s a cushioned one not too far away. In the most serious manner you can possibly manage, you sit on the grey upholstery and scoot the swivel chair over to where Gaster now is.

Even while sitting, he towers over you. The doctor sighs again, and then he begins. “I’m sure by now that you’ve heard of the CORE. When all the monsters first emerged from the surface, the Discovery network conducted a rather large news story on it. You’re so knowledgeable, _____, you certainly caught some wind of the project. It was enough to power the entirety of the Underground. Do you know what powered it?”

You’d seen bits and pieces of the documentary, enough to gather your answer. “Ozone?”

“Not quite.” Or so you thought. “That was one component, yes. But if that was all, we wouldn’t be having this conversation. And this beast of a machine- the Dust Harvester- wouldn’t be here.”

"Dust? Wait. How does this pertain to..." Your brain is in overdrive now, solving the puzzle before the doctor can even show the pieces to you. Your mouth runs just as fast. "You mean they used monsters to power the-"

"Ssshhhhhh!" You don't even realize you're yelling until he shushes you. His gloved hands are gentle, yet firm on your shoulders, steadying your unconscious trembling in the chair. “At the end of it all, the majority of those that fell victim this machine were... already fallen. They were not seated in the Dust Harvester until they had been unresponsive for forty-eight hours.”

You counter, "That's just two days! Gaster, that's hardly any time to make that kind of de-"

"For a fallen monster, that's plenty of time to wake up." His tone isn't argumentative, so much as authoritative. It hushes you, at least for the moment. The air's still cold, the lab still sterile. It's clear he has more to tell. You peer into his dark eyes, eager to learn but dreading the knowledge. "I didn't want it to come to that. I truly didn't. The first was an accident, an underling falling into the generator. But the results, by god, they were phenomenal. The electricity no longer flickered. The stability of the CORE no longer fluctuated; everything was even. The discovery was unintentional, but indelible: the Soul, when taken apart, as it is in the form of monster dust, provides a significantly larger amount of energy than expected when it is in its whole form. Within a week, the Harvester was built and its kinks worked out.”

"First we took volunteers. This was in the first 100 years that we were Underground, _____, and depression was simultaneously severe and rampant. You may argue that this is taking advantage of mental illness, and to some degree you are correct. At the time, however, and looking back on it still, it was more civil than dragging unwilling participants into the lab. The process was hardly painful, we observed. We had a steady influx of volunteers, and steady electricity. For the first year, everything went swimmingly; however, our once-constant stream of volunteers trickled. That’s when we at the CORE project made a deal with the Underground Hospital. From that point towards the time of our release just one simple year ago, we abided by the forty-eight hour principle and- oh, _____, dear, are you alright?”

"I..." Pale and shaking, you've had your eyes averted to the ground for the last couple of sentences. The intensity of Dr. Gaster's gaze combined with the mental imagery of the whole endeavor has your head spinning. You think you're going to be sick. You choke out, “This is horrible…”

“Would you like me to stop? Might I remind you that you promised to tolerate this sort of thing, and that you specifically asked about this particular occurrence.”
“No, I just… I need a minute, please.” This request gets you a nod. You take a moment to find your breath and steady it. As you attempt to calm down, your mind carefully, bluntly relays the new information that the documentary you watched left out or glazed over. The CORE was powered by ozone, and the dust and Souls of monsters. There was a specific machine made to acquire and extract said monster remains. This went on right underneath the feet of humanity for thousands and thousands of years. *God, it’s sickening.* Your stomach churns and your balance in the chair threatens to give.

“Okay,” you sigh. “You’re telling me this because you’ve got the machine here, right? And that’s not in use anymore, right?” As you gaze weakly at the doctor, his expression remains stoic, solid. He nods. “And you were a part of this whole process?”

“A part of it?” Dr. Gaster gives a jaded sigh, yet his tone remains lilting, alluring, dizzying. “My dear, I headed the entire project.”

That’s all he needs to say for you to lose your breakfast and coffee. It comes up fast, without warning, and all over the doctor’s leather shoes.

Chapter End Notes

We’re getting darker, yet darker.
Understanding

Chapter Summary

You both need to fix yourselves.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is like. 3 times as long as normal. Y'all, I just started writing and couldn't stop. Oh welllll. Not that you guys are complaining.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

_Breathe in. Breathe out._ Still-shaking fingers press a wet paper towel to your forehead and cheeks. It soothes you, as well as calms the redness all over your face. It's fading now since that incident just moments ago. It'll all be okay, you think to yourself. _Inhale. Exhale._

You think back on your life and can't remember a moment when you've been more embarrassed than you are right now. For Christ's sakes, you threw up on your new boss's shoes! Fuck, they looked expensive, too. His _everything_ looks expensive. Despite the fact that they're possibly ruined, Gaster seemed incredibly calm about the whole issue. After an initial "oh dear," he urged you to compose yourself, and showed you the bathroom adjacent to his laboratory. It's state-of-the-art, too, and remarkably clean, furthering your suspicion that he's a neat-freak. And you just puked all over his neat leather shoes. He's probably the type to get angry after the initial shock. Ha. Haaaaa. _Boy, you're screwed._

Part of you reasons that he did have it coming, though. After all, he was the reason that you... well, that you _did_, in the first place. You couldn't help it, you just couldn't stop yourself from it after picturing all those monsters. All that dust. All because of _Gaster_. The second his name crosses your mind, your face flushes again. You sneer at your reflection as if it were him. Fuck him. No, don't fuck him, not like that. No. Never. _Hell no._

Suddenly, there's a knock on the other side of the bathroom door. "_____? I don't mean to be a bother, but you've been in there for twenty minutes. Are you alright?" His voice is still 100% calm, despite your suspicions.

"I'm fine," you call back, with a slight edge. "It's not like you just confessed to thousands of murders or anything." Is it a good idea to sass your brand-new, slightly-super-scary boss? Probably not. Are you doing it anyway? Yes.

He tries to repress a sigh, you can tell, but you can hear it nonetheless. "_____. I have more to explain. I'm quite sorry for... catching you off guard... like that did. But I do have more to tell you pertaining to the matter, and I can assure you it's not nearly as ugly. But you have to be willing to hear me out."

Your grimacing gaze is locked on your own face. You're silent.
"I can swear to you that you've already heard the worst of things. You have my word." There's another moment where you say nothing. Then you hear, almost incoherent, "_____ please."

Reluctantly, you step out of the bathroom. Upon looking down you see that Gaster's shoes have returned to their formerly-spotless state. You're inclined to believe that he cleaned them himself, as it doesn't make sense that any custodial staff would be allowed in such a high-security part of the facility. The spot on the floor where you threw up is clean as well. Your eyes pan upwards to your boss's face.

"I'm sorry," he sighs. "I've long since realized that I'll never stop apologizing for all that occurred Underground, for all that I've done. But with these apologies I'd like your understanding, and hopefully your forgiveness in time. However, for that to even begin to occur, more needs to be said."

During a pause, he reaches into the pocket of his lab-coat. Moments later he fishes out a paper pamphlet, handing it to you unceremoniously.

You give it a once-over and look up at him with askew eyebrows. "Mikado?"

"We can order to-go if you'd like, but I find the interior aesthetic of the restaurant to be quite tasteful. It's always easier to discuss serious subjects over food."

"Um..." is all you can say, considering you're feeling an odd combination of floored and confused.

Upon seeing your reaction, he stammers a bit, backpedaling. "Oh, pardon my assumption that you'd even agree to it. _____, will you go to lunch with me?"

That's how you end up at the sleek bar of an Asian Fusion restaurant at 12:30 on your first day of work, sitting next to your boss. Your boss, who is a mad scientist. Your boss, who murdered thousands of monsters. Your boss, who is currently ordering pork wontons.

"...and another Bourbon and Ginger, while you're at it, please," he finishes.

The waitress sashays away with your orders, leaving the two of you alone.

"Don't even think about picking up the check when it comes," Gaster tells you, a bemused smirk on his face.

“Now, Doctor,” you counter, “ordering for me was one thing, which was very nice of you. But paying for me is another. Especially considering that I just nearly ruined your shoes.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. I am the entire reason we’re sitting here, and the reason you lost your breakfast earlier. And my shoes are fine, my dear; you saw that I cleaned them off.”

You glance down at his leather shoes. They’re still pristinely shining, the black leather contrasting elegantly against the silver steel of the bar as he taps against it.

“But I should’ve cleaned them for you, since I’m the one that messed them up. And the floor, too.”

Here, he gives a dry, deep laugh. “_____ that’s preposterous! Next are you going to tell me that you expected me to make you lick your vomit up?!”

At this you go pale, nearly choking. Would he? He’s laughing about it. He probably wouldn’t. Probably. It’s a hard subject to even think about in such a nice restaurant. You’re captivated by the tropical plants and the elaborately-curved fish tanks that accent Mikado. All the dishes that you’ve
seen come out of the kitchen are exotically-colored and utterly appetizing. The ambience is set with neon colors reflected off of enormous crystal chandeliers. The thought of vomit does not fit here. The waitress returns timely with your appetizer, as well as a second drink for Dr. Gaster.

“Isn’t it a bit early to be drinking?” You smirk at him. “Also, aren’t we technically on the clock? I saw the Employee Conduct Form.”

On your left, your boss grins. “Firstly, _____, there is a good cocktail for every time of day. Secondly, one would only be in violation of the Form if they were seen under the influence of any substance. And I, dear, can hold my liquor impeccably.” Ah, so he knows the fine print. That’s… that’s good. Part of you wants to ask for a martini, but the other part of you realizes that a) he’s paying and b) you’re a goddamn lightweight. You forget the martini in favor of reaching for a pork wonton. They smell amazing.

“Gaster,” you ask, “why are you eating yours with a fork?” You’ve been watching him stab at the wonton for several moments now.

When he looks up at you his eyes are calculating. “I don’t like to take my gloves off. Typically I only do when I go to bed.”

“So just for sleep?” You probably shouldn’t have asked that with food in your mouth, but oh well.

“When I sleep, when I take a shower, and also when I…” Here, he trails off, snickering at a joke you clearly missed. When else would he take- Oh. Oh. You nearly choke on your wonton (which is damn good, by the way).

As you struggle to recover, you remember your motive for even being here, in this restaurant, with him. “Anyway, I think we have some more discussing to do, Doctor. About… everything. What happened with you. Back then.”

“Ah, yes,” Gaster sighs, “I was enjoying this time with you. But I suppose now is as good of a time as any, considering that now I have my liquid courage.” With a dip of his head he gestures to his drink, and you smile. Does he get nervous? You never guessed him to be the type, but you can understand, especially with situations like these. Situations like these, as if it’s normal to have to explain to someone how you killed people. The waitress arrives with your food and perfect timing. He waits for her to leave, and then with his voice full of resignation asks you, “Shall we begin?”

“I’m listening,” you say, with your attention on your food. You don’t want to listen. But you do anyway.

“Earlier, _____, when I explained things, I should not have acted as if the entire concept of what I was doing didn’t affect me. It did. My god, it did. As the years passed on, and the death tolls piled up and wore on my Soul, I began to grow more and more disturbed by what I was doing, what I had become. To this day I’m not sure if my once-austere demeanor softened, or if I simply gained some damn humanity. Nevertheless, after perhaps two-hundred years of this, this watching my race die all for the sake of energy, I had had enough. First, I attempted to reason with my colleagues. I spent months coming up with a rational, concise argument to stop the insanity that was sacrificing our own.”

“How’d it turn out?”

“Not even half of them ended up siding with me, and some didn’t even do so fully. The years of having constant, bright energy at our fingertips had made the majority of us greedy and entitled. My speech was in vain, and with the issue swept under the rug, we carried on. After that incident, rumors
began to circulate about me. The workers at the CORE said that I had gone soft, that I was betraying them. The more extreme ones said that I was conspiring with the very humans that sealed us away. The day finally came when I hated everything that my CORE had become.”

Your food sits, hardly picked at. It’s delicious, but you’re too engrossed in his story, in him. “What’d you do?”

Dr. Gaster’s voice turns quiet. You notice now that he can hardly meet your eyes. “_____, I ran.”

“What?” He ran? How is that possible when you’re trapped Underground? There’s nowhere to go. It isn’t as if he simply… “Did you disappear?”

“That I did. _____, I’m sure your familiar with the term ‘Boss Monster’ by now. It refers to a monster with extraordinary capabilities. Some have shocking amounts of HoPe. Some can distribute painful attacks when needed. Some possess powers that are simply unheard of.”

“So you can-“

He cuts you off, ”No, my dear, I cannot outright disappear. I can, however, view and jump through space and time, and the place in between.”

“In between?”

“Call it The Void, if you will,” Gaster nods. He swallows a bite of his food, and you take the opportunity to eat more as well. “Inside The Void, you are free from any constraints the material world has on you. Space means nothing where there is nothing. Time is but an illusion when it’s all you have.”

“It sounds torurous.”

“It was, but to me the world I lived in had become worse, so there I lingered. I stayed. And I watched. I watched the time in my universe pass by like cars on a dead highway. Eventually, the story of my disappearance morphed into some tall tale of my falling into my own creation. In my Void I laughed at the ridiculousness of it all.” Then it is as if a switch flips. Something changes in him here, something strange. You watch him sober up, despite the drinks. “You haven’t even heard the worst part.”

“What’s that?”

“Even as I was gone without a trace, nothing changed. The King hired a new Royal Scientist. The CORE functioned as it had before I left. The atrocious work that the rest of the project was doing, it simply continued. _____, have you ever thought about a world where everything is exactly the same, except you don’t exist? Everything functions perfectly without you. I watched it happen.”

His gloved hands rest on the bar, trembling fiercely. Instinctively you reach for the one closest to you. In this moment, to you, it does not matter what your boss has done, nor what he is capable of, nor that he is your boss and you shouldn’t be holding his hand. The only thing going through your head is the fact that Dr. Gaster ceased to exist and watched his world forget about him entirely. He’s still shaking in his recollection. You squeeze around his silk gloves, attempting to steady them against the stainless steel. Through the gloves his fingers feel firm, clearly jointed and skeletal. His hands are much bigger than yours, and for some reason you like that. Shortly, he goes still.

“Thank you for that, _____. Minor comforts like that are… appreciated. I shall go on in a moment, I just… I just need to breathe.”
You manage an easygoing smile. “Gaster, you gave me half an hour to breathe earlier. Take your
time.”

After only a sip of his drink and a few moments, though, he resumes. “The experience made me
realize that running solved nothing. Running only ensured that that beast of a project continued as it
was. If The Void gives you anything, it’s thoughts, answers. Eventually, I realized I needed to return
to my world. But what would everyone say if they knew I’d run away from my own disaster? Would
they even remember me? My solution was to wait for a convenient moment, a moment so robust in
nature that no one would ask too many questions if I suddenly appeared.”

You catch yourself whispering, “When the barrier broke…”

“Smart girl,” Gaster murmurs. “One year ago, I came into existence again. Enough time had passed
for the majority of monsters to forget who I was, or what I had done. My transition back into life was
nearly seamless.”

“Nearly?”

“My brother remembered me,” he whispers.

“That seems like a good thing, though, right?” Not following, you furrow your eyebrows and play
with the straw in your drink.

“____, he remembered everything about me. No one else seemed to recall a damn thing, but Sans?
He didn’t simply remember, he knew. Yet he took me into his new house, with our other brother, and
he didn’t say a word about it.”

“Why do you think that he hasn’t said anything?”

“My best assumption is that he’s still trying to figure everything out. He’s not stupid, nowhere near it.
He’s strategic.”

“I understand. And even a year can’t quite be enough to grasp ahold of such a huge thing
happening,” you nod. “But I don’t want to prod on your family life. I know that’s sensitive with most
people.” With a look down, you see that you’re out of food.

“Thank you for the consideration, _____. I appreciate that. I know this a lot for you to process.”
Never taking his eyes off of you, Dr. Gaster takes the check. He slips his black credit card into the
leather booklet and snaps it shut.

“Okay,” you sigh, still taking everything in. “Is there anything else I need to know?”

His body relaxes, clearly tired. “Know that I regret the whole endeavor. The CORE, the sacrifices,
my disappearance, the strain that’s now on my family. I wish I could take it all back, but…”

When he trails off, you take it upon yourself to finish for him. “But you can’t.” You meet his eyes
with sympathy and your legs brush under the bar. “Gaster, I’m not going to tell you that you’re
forgiven for all that you did. It’s not up to me, it’s not exclusively up to anyone. But I understand.
You thought you were doing the right thing at the time, until it spiraled out of control, and then you
did what everyone wants to do when things spiral. You’re trying to fix it now, and that’s important,
but it’s not instant. This isn’t instant, this thing where you apologize to me and tell me your life story.
Because it’s screwed up, it really is. You know it is. But I get it. I understand, 100%.”

“_____…” Gaster rasps your name. The way it sounds on his tongue is so silky, so divine, you never
thought your name could be said like that. Some small sort of warmth floods your chest. You meet
his eyes and they’re thick with intensity. “That’s the most I’ve ever gotten from anyone. That’s all I want when I tell people. And even then, I’ve hardly told a soul.”

“You’ve told one,” you say with a smile. “Does this mean you trust me?”

“It means I think you’ll stay,” he replies. When the waitress returns with Gaster’s card, the two of you realize just how close you are to each other. You’re the first to pull back, and he follows suit with lavender dusting his angular face. *Oh, that’s handsome on him.*

*Oh, he’s your boss.*

You pull back and struggle to steady your churning stomach. “Can we go back to work now?”

Chapter End Notes

They’re seeing eye to eye now, right?

Comments and kudos are always appreciated.
You and your friends go clubbing.

Soooo this chapter ended up 3 times as long as normal. This is good. I'm on a roll, people.

"So how was it?" Joanne’s waiting for you when you walk into the apartment.

"It was fine," you reply, tone steady. You practiced this conversation all the way here. While he drove you home, Gaster reminded you of the ever-so-important confidentiality rule that you are now held to. You can still remember the austere, stern tone of his voice.

"My dear, I must emphasize the importance of this, especially after-"

"Gaster," you cut him off, “I get it. You killed people and did shady shit. We’re currently doing semi-shady shit.”

He narrowed his eyes at you, one hand on the wheel. “I suppose, in crudest terms, yes. But so much more is at stake than simply-“

"Doctor, please. With all due respect, you need to chill. I’m a secretive person anyway. None of my friends pry much, anyway,” you lied. “I thought you said you trusted me.”

You watched him sigh. Gaster relaxed in the Rolls-Royce. “I suppose you’re correct. However, you look incredibly tense. Something is clearly on your mind as we speak now. You better be able to hold a normal conversation with anyone as soon as you get out of this car. Do you understand?”

"Yes sir."

“Fine?” Joanne asks. “That’s cryptic. C’mon, girlie, let me hear about all that work. All that science.” A wicked smirk splays across her face. “All that man.”

“Gaster?” You ask, feigning intrigue. “I hardly got anything out of him all day. He hardly said a word.” Now that’s the biggest lie you’ve told all day. The doctor’s a regular chatterbox.

“You sure about that?” She fixes you with a skeptical look. Your blood’s running cold when she snickers, “Or was he just too busy with his mouth somewhere else to talk?”

“Oh my god Joanne, we’re not fucking!” You sigh, running a hand through your hair and sinking into the couch. "Please don't insinuate that. He's already a vague tightass as is."
"Oh, you know I'm kidding," she chuckles, slinging a toned arm around your shoulders. "Besides, you know you're gonna get interrogated tonight anyway!" Tonight? Is it Tuesday already? A quick mental check confirms that it is. Ah, your weekly club outing with your friends, or as Joanne’s appropriately dubbed it, *Not-Quite-Girls’-Night*.

“I guess I knew,” you shrug, “I just don’t see what’s so exciting about a new job that I’ve gotta get the third degree over it.” Wow, you sure are glad Gaster gave you that talk in the car. Otherwise you would’ve been driven to insanity and spilled at this point.

“You know we don’t mean anything by it, _____!”

"Oh, I know, I know!" You manage a grin and a laugh, then change the subject. “So, where has Tate’s model-status gotten us into tonight?”

“Somewhere weird and fancy, I’m sure. I think they said it was called The Spacebar?” She’s tapping away on her phone while you walk into your room. “Yeah, that’s it. I’ve pulled the place up, it’s a ten minute drive downtown. Do you want the taxi out front in about twenty minutes?”

“Um,” you snort, “I just got out of a high-clearance science facility, where I’ve been working all day. I’m gonna need more than twenty minutes to get myself together.” For emphasis, you gesture up and down at your exhausted body. “If you’re earlier than me, though, I wouldn’t mind a cup of coffee.”

“Done and done. I just need to get my dress on,” she says with a grin.

You, however, need a lot more work done. It takes a few minutes of rummaging through your chaotic pit of a closet to find just the right little black dress for clubbing. The makeup you put on this morning has surely faded, and as you take it off you triple-check for any signs that you threw up earlier. This includes brushing your teeth harder than typically. For your eye makeup, you use striking shades of silver that match the heels you’ve put on. Your hair only needs a quick brush-through, as it’s messy and voluminous enough to appear “effortlessly sexy” after the fucking day you’ve had. *Effortlessly sexy*, you think, *more like effortlessly exhausted*.

“Joanne,” you call as you walk to get your coffee, “what lipstick should I do?”

Your roommate only needs to glance out at you from her doorway to be able to confidently yell, “Purple!” She’s right. Within minutes you’ve downed your coffee and are admiring the dark, almost-black shade of violet that’s staining your lips. It offsets your outfit just enough to set you apart. For a change, you sample a confident smile in the mirror. It’s crazy, you actually think you look *good*. Damn good, even. You’re ready to go.

Joanne’s predictions of how fast you’d reach the place are correct. *Fuck*, it is packed, astonishingly so for 6:00 on a Tuesday afternoon. Tall, chrome letters at the top of the building spell out *SPACEBAR COSMIC LOUNGE*, giving you more of a clue as to what’s inside. If you can even get inside. Now that you look at it, the line to the front door is quickly dissipating. Nearly everyone is turned away by the burly, intimidating bouncer.

“Are they here yet?” You ask Joanne, whose eyes are on her phone.

“Just texted them. Waiting on a reply. Let’s go ahead and get in the queue.”

While you’re waiting for Joanne’s phone to buzz, you take a minute to savor the budding nightlife. The street lamps are slowly coming alive and tinting the sidewalks with a warm, white glow. Underneath one of them stands a rabbit monster that keeps checking her watch and adjusting her
tube dress. Though it’s only been a year since they’ve surfaced, monsters have become a normal part of society to you. They blend in with the world around you seamlessly, as if they’ve always been there, as if they’re meant to be there. They are. The rabbit looks up, and when you catch her anxious eyes you give her a smile and a wave. You get a wave back. Everything’s more peaceful like this. Sure, not everyone accepts that they’re here, especially not in rural areas, or down South, but it’s easier in a city where communication and cooperation are essential to functionality. Part of you reasons that this is why the majority of monsters haven’t ventured out much, at least not yet.

Buzz.

“Oh, yeah, Tate says they’re already in. Creedy is, too.” Joanne’s remark brings you out of your head. When you look up you notice you’re practically at the front of the line. Just a few more people and…

Before the bouncer can even speak, Joanne strides forward and meets his gaze. “Joanne Hawkins and _____ _____. We should be on the list. Guests of Tate Holstead, model for MTT, Inc.” Her confidence astonishes you. It always does, in the face of situations like these.

The bouncer clearly hasn’t been spoken to like that before. “Oh, um, one second,” he splutters, typing what are probably your names into some touchscreen system he’s holding. You’re able to peek up at the screen enough to see that he finds both names without a hitch. “There you are,” he nods, opening and holding the door for you. "Make sure to keep track of all IDs, cards, and personal belongings. Don’t do anything too stupid and enjoy.” Once he’s finished his spiel, you step into The Spacebar.

Oh hell, it’s like something straight out of a dream. You enter a lavish bar that only shimmers more with every tiny step you take forward. The floor has iridescent crystals embedded into it, while the high-reaching walls are black and lit to mimic stars. The sheer expanse of the place has you believing that they really are. A balcony to your left tells you that there’s an upstairs, which sends your brain reeling. You’re so eager to explore, to discover, to truly enjoy yourself. Even the music has you curious. It’s everywhere with the perfect volume, prevalent but drowning nothing out.

"They got a message from the Action Man

I’m happy, hope you’re happy too

I’ve loved all I’ve needed, love

Sordid details following…”

They’re playing David Bowie in here. Christ, you’re dreaming. You have to be.

From next to you, Joanne exclaims, “There they are! C’mon!” Before you’re even registering her words she’s grabbing your hand and pulling you away from the dance floor and to a sleek alcove of booth seating.

Tate Holstead and their twin sister, Creedy, sit in a booth just near the corner of the club. Creedy’s easiest to pick out, with her bubblegum-pink hair. Tate, on the other hand, has opted to keep their natural platinum shade, and is instead wearing something striking. They’ve donned a glittering romper, which further contrasts with Creedy's all-black ensemble.

“Hey!” Joanne exclaims.

“This place is so cool!” You say as soon as you reach the table. “Tate, did I ever tell you how great it is that you’re a model?”
Your friend laughs, throwing their chest-length hair over a shoulder. “Only every time we go somewhere you like. So basically every week for the past six months.”

“Except that one time back in March,” Creedy chimes in, “when we went to that place and walked into what we thought was the bathroom, only to see some white-collar assholes snorting cocaine off strippers.”

You and Joanne shudder at the memory. Shit, you almost forgot about that one time.

“Okay, let’s not talk about that night. I don’t even want to think about it,” Joanne gives a nervous giggle. “That was one time. And besides, this place is a serious upgrade.”

“It was Mettaton’s treat,” Tate grins, “last week we had a pretty strenuous walk to do, so he figured we could all use a break.” With a wave of their arm they gesture out to the club, saying, “Over half of my work is here right now.”

“Damn, if I could get my work to go to the club, that’d be great,” Creedy snorts. “A bunch of forensics nerds getting hammered, that’d be something to see.”

You don’t mean to snicker so loudly at the mental image she’s given you, but you do.

Then you recognize the wicked glint in Creedy’s eyes, the origin of a smirk pulling at her lips. “Oh, that reminds me! _____, tell us about your new internship.”

“Oh,” you start with a stammer, “it’s actually… not an internship… anymore? I kind of got a promotion?”

“Already?” Tate gasps. “Oh my god, _____, that’s so great! So what are-“

Before you can even begin to think about answering the question that wasn’t even finished, Joanne butts in. “She’s an assistant now, to some super-suave sexy doctor. He’s hella mysterious, but I’m calling it right now, he’s got the hots for her!”

“Joanne!” You fix her with highly arched eyebrows and an incredulously-open mouth.

“It’s true, though!”

“Not entirely,” you groan, “Right now I’m not even sure if we’re friends, let alone-“

“Oh!” Tate suddenly snaps, “I was going to introduce you to somebody, this friend I made at a shoot a few weeks ago! You would love him, he’s such a riot!” Their eyes fill with concern as they scan the crowd around your group. “I can’t see him anymore, though. Give me a second to go get him really quick, okay?” With a gentle smile they stand and begin to exit the booth. It’s then that you notice something, a scrap of fabric showing from underneath their outfit.

You stop them on the way out with a gentle tug of their arm. “Tate,” you whisper, in some attempt at discretion in the club, “While you’re out you might want to go fix your binder. The back of your romper's open, so when your hair moves I can kind of see it.”

“Gotcha,” they nod, giving you another grin before disappearing into the cosmic throng of people.

You sit down, breathing a sigh as you sink into the iridescent silver cushions. Though The Spacebar is full of life, you’re somewhat relaxed in the nightclub. Though you could do without Creedy staring at you through lowered cat-eye glasses.
“Hey. _____,” she breathes, “Tell me more about this hot boss.”

“Oh my god,” you groan. “He’s not even- I mean, he kind of is, in this weird way, but...“ Is he hot? You shouldn’t be thinking about it. So with a guttural huff, you cut yourself off with, “Joanne hasn’t even seen him, so she can’t even say how attractive or unattractive he is!”

A tittering Joanne nods. “Okay, okay, you got me. But he sounds hot, right?”

“True, true. _____, if I were you, I’d be asking this doctor for a full-body examination!” Both girls erupt into a fit of giggles, leaving you to sink into the booth. Okay, okay, Dr. Gaster might be hot, alluring, even, but that doesn’t mean anything. Nothing at all. You can find your boss hot, right? Right?

You’re not sure who or what you expected Tate to come back with, but a skeleton certainly wasn’t it. Sure enough, though, here he stands: tall, extravagantly-dressed (is that a cape?), and oh-so-enthusiastic.

“My cool human friend has more cool human friends?! Wowie!” His eyes are practically sparkling, reflecting off of the astral lights on the walls.

Tate gives a sheepish smile. “_____ , Joanne, Creedy, this is Papyrus. He’s a model for Mettaton, too.”

“Not just a model,” the skeleton says with a wide grin. “He’s also one of my very closest and greatest friends! Now, I know what you’re thinking...” For a moment, you stop to wonder how a model could be friends with their employer. “How could Mettaton be so lucky to be friends with me, The Great Papyrus?! Well, I’ll tell you how, I-“


It’s then that Papyrus is cut off by a loud vibration in his pocket. For some reason, you’re thankful for this. A gut feeling tells you that he’s a hard one to hush. He pulls out a phone and his eyes go wide just by looking at the caller ID.

“Excuse me for just a moment, new human friends! Pardon my rudeness and also my French even though I don’t quite know what that means yet!” He shouts, then picks up his phone.“Hello?” You can only hear his side of the conversation. “What do you mean, ‘where am I?’ I told- He isn’t there?! Did you not call him first to check on my whereabouts? He didn’t?!” You can feel the intensity of the conversation escalating, but you’re only witnessing one half of it. Papyrus’s eyes go wider. His teeth look like they just may begin to chatter. “I’m out with many of my best and closest modeling friends! Mettaton treated us to a fun-filled evening at The Spacebar!” There’s another moment of silence, another moment of waiting. Then, Papyrus pulls away from the phone to look at you and your friends. “Question: Is this a nightclub?”

After exchanging several glances, the four of you nod.

Papyrus returns to the call. “Yes, I have been told by my four very-great but not-as-great-as-me human friends that this is indeed a- Oh? You’re what? Now, there is no need to get mad, as- Oh. Okay, I see this is non-negotiable. Okay. I understand. Good-bye.” With a sigh, the skeleton hangs up and fixes you all with a pained pout.

“That was my brother. He told me I didn’t need to be at such an establishment as a nightclub, no matter how great it may be.”
Creedy’s the first one to react. “Oh shit, what?”

“You did try to assure him that you’d be safe with us, right?” Joanne starts.

Tate sighs, then turns to look at you. “Papyrus’s brother tends to be a bit overprotective when it comes to his safety. That’s understandable, considering he’s so…” When they trail off, certain words come to mind. Innocent. Naive. Good-natured. But Tate finishes with, “…great!” and the three of you nod emphatically.

“Oh well. He may be coming to get me, and he may be teleporting straight in here in the next two minutes, but that only means that he can make friends with my new human friends! We can all be friends! Even if he is not as good of a friend as I am!” Wow, Papyrus, modest much? Nevertheless, his personality and attitude are cute. You conclude that you like him, only after a few short minutes.

Just after you make your conclusion, a commotion causes you to stand up from the booth. In the center of the dance floor, a slit of blackness has formed. You can hardly see over the expanse of people and mass lighting, but you think you can make out a figure stepping from the dark. What you assume to be a portal is closed, leaving only who you can figure to be Papyrus’s brother. You watch the people back away, and Papyrus step forward. In the moment of slight silence, the music thumps louder. It’s not David Bowie anymore, but instead something darker.

"Teacher says that I’ve been naughty
I must learn to concentrate
But the girls, they pull my hair
And with the boys I can’t relate…"

Creedy, too, has edged herself onto the dance floor, attempting to squirm her tiny body through the crowd. She throws her head back and tells your group, “Y’all. Papyrus isn’t the hot brother. This other guy, oh shit. He’s so tall. Like. Daddy.” Jesus, how much has she had to drink? You’ve seen her down a martini while you’ve been here, but… can she really be serious about this guy?

Okay, now you have to get up, with all of her carrying on. You can hardly see his silhouette, and still Creedy has the better spot. “Okay, he is pretty tall.”

“Pretty tall?” Joanne says from next to you. “Girl, he’s like seven feet.”

Wait, seven feet tall? And Papyrus is a skeleton, right? So his brother, a skeleton, who’s seven feet tall… In the darkness, you pale. Oh fuck, it can’t be. It fucking can’t be. He’s talking to Papyrus now, you can hear low murmurs. With some rigid and aggressive maneuvering, you manage to get closer. You catch a good look and oh fuck it totally is.

It’s fucking Gaster. It’s your fucking boss in the fucking nightclub. Of course. Fuck.

Suddenly, Creedy is next to you again, and you’re closer than you initially thought you were. “Shit, he’s so-“

“Creedy!” You try to stage-whisper, but it turns garbled, barely-coherent in your panic, “Please please please don’t try to say anything else! That’s my boss, oh my god, that’s Gaster and he’s my boss and…”

”Don’t you want to
Don’t you want to be the one

Don’t you want to

Bang bang bang bang bang bang bang…”

Your efforts are in vain. He’s turned to survey the people around him, and somehow you’ve managed to catch his glare. He’s eyeing you and your skimpy (read: slutty) black dress up and down, his gaze is widening, he’s stepping towards you...

Just as Creedy exclaims, “Gaster, more like Dadster, am I right, _____?”

Chapter End Notes

I am Creedy and Creedy is me.

The first song in this chapter was "Ashes to Ashes" by David Bowie, and the second was "Bang Bang Bang Bang" by Sohodolls. Normal spacey club stuff, I guess (idk y'all I've never been clubbing)

I hope you enjoyed!!! Feel free to comment!!!! <3
Chapter Summary

Frustration and Confrontation.

Chapter Notes

So there's this song I listened to on repeat while I wrote this, and it's a David Bowie Tribute. (I fucking love David Bowie, don't be surprised.) Anyways, "Space Oddity" by Kittie. It's dreamy and sexy and perfect. Background music while you read, if you're into that?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Gaster, more like Dadster, am I right, _____?"

Of course, she had to say that just loud enough for your boss to hear. You watch his mouth open in what you can only manage to describe as a pleasantly surprised gape, perniciously, slowly. *Something’s wrong here*, your mind tells you. It’s a smirk, a wide, wily one that’s near-harmless at first, until your gaze meets his. That’s what’s so wrong; his smile doesn’t reach his eyes. The longer you stare, the more intense of a conflict in expression. The doctor’s mouth says *amusement*, but his eyes whisper *murder*.

Fuck. Why can't time go any faster? It seems to be reduced to molasses as, across the dance floor, Dr. Gaster stares you up and down. He’s taking you in, gradually, with those eyes traveling up your legs, around your hips, over your bust, and along your neck. You can’t will your legs to move, or your lips to form words, or your brain to even work properly in the moments he's walking up to you. Fuck, he’s walking up to you. His eyes are now locked onto yours, intense, vibrantly violet, the same color as…

As your lipstick.

Finally, he reaches you. That smirk is still plastered on, and his voice is silk. “Oh, _____, hello!” Daunting, it’s syrup laced with venom that only you can feel. "I never expected to see my lovely brand-new assistant out *here*, in this *nightclub*, on a *work night*. Ah, how *interesting*.”

You gulp and will your voice to even out, or work, at the very least. “D-D-Dr. Gaster, it’s such a s-surprise to see you, t-too!” Fuck. Fucking shit. Almost robotically, your arm juts forward for an attempt at a handshake. “It’s a p-pleasure though!”

His hand reaches yours and he shakes, smoothly, too smoothly. “A pleasure indeed.” God, he’s too fluid, and it’s as if he simply *knows* that you and only you know you’re in trouble. You wonder if he likes that kind of thing, if he gets some sick pleasure in silent torment. Probably. Fuck, you're freaking out.

The tension is interrupted by a yell. "Brother! I see you've found my new human friends!" Thank
God for Papyrus. He comes bounding across the dance floor, wildly flinging a skeletal arm around his brother. It's only now that you notice the resemblance between the two. While their demeanors are vastly different, they're both ridiculously tall. Their eyes aren't the same color, but they share that lively spark of curiosity in them. You wonder if Gaster’s ever been as loud as Papyrus is. Probably not, considering that’s quite a decibel level to attain.

“New friends?” Gaster prompts, and you notice that when he addresses his brother he’s gentler, calmer. Like he isn’t about to cut you into pieces and throw your body into a river. Is that a genuine smile you see on his face? “Tell me, Papyrus, how did you meet _____?”

Papyrus begins another tirade and gathers the doctor’s full attention. Amidst your mild appreciation for how polite Gaster is to his brother, you realize that this is a distraction. Though this is surely unintentional on Papyrus’ part, you take advantage of the situation. And by take advantage, you mean that you dart into the ladies’ room while Gaster’s back is turned.

This morning, you never would’ve anticipated that you’d later have a panic attack in a bathroom once, let alone twice today. Yet here you are, leaning over a glass counter, staring into the ethereally-lit mirror like you’ve lost your damn mind. Your gaze lingers on your eyes as if they aren’t your own. What’s wrong with you tonight? Why did you agree to go clubbing when you have work tomorrow? Sure, you reason, you and your friends never stay out too late. You never drink too much, either (usually). It’s a tradition of yours, too, one that you’d rather honor than skip. Quick logic brushes the question aside.

Now, you reckon while you steady yourself, all that’s left are the odds. The fucking odds that Tate works with Papyrus. That they’re friends. That they go clubbing together. That the one time you’re with them both is the one time that Gaster steps in. Unbelievable. Maybe they’re gone, you silently hope as you check your hair in the mirror. Maybe Dr. Gaster reasoned that ten minutes was too long to wait to talk to you and he left with Papyrus. Maybe. Hopefully.

Buzz. From its spot next to you on the counter, your phone vibrates. Buzz. Another text? You glance at the device.

Tate the Great: You okay? You’ve been in there a while… I can send Joanne to come get you if you need?

Tate the Great: I’d send Creedy but she’s… enamored. Yikes.

Enamored? But that must mean… Buzz. Oh Christ.

Tate the Great: Oh, also Gaster and Papyrus are sitting with us now. Because Papyrus didn’t want to leave, and then Gaster said he needed to talk with you anyway.

Fuuuuuuuck he’s still out there. Sighing, you lean back against the glass and compose a reply.

You: Shit. I’ll be out in a sec.

Heaving a sigh, you give yourself another once-over in the mirror. Yes, you still look as exceptional as you did when you left the apartment, albeit a bit frazzled now. A re-application of lipstick gives you the courage you need to move your legs. If you look stunning, then will the doctor spare you some mercy? There’s only one way to find out, and it’s through the door, and into the club for your first employee meeting.
Dr. Gaster is beginning to lose his patience with you.

Sure, it wasn’t easy to keep composure when he emerged in the midst of the pandemonium that is this nightclub, only to set eyes on his new employee in the heart of the mess, but this? This waiting fifteen minutes to find you after unexpectedly losing you? Oh, if he had blood, it’d be boiling, bubbling under his black jacket like an inferno’s hottest lava.

He keeps himself poised with the help of a stiff drink, as well as Papyrus. Around him, it’s as if the doctor is forced to remain collected. No raising of the voice, no stern tones… None of anything that could upset his youngest brother. He supposes that this is beneficial to your friends, too. The three of them sit at the booth with the two skeletons, where Gaster can properly scrutinize them. The blonde one works with Papyrus, they say, and is the nicest to his brother. However, as the time has ticked by, they’ve disregarded him, tapping away at their phone instead. Personally, the doctor prefers the tall one (Joanne, she said her name was?). She’s mature, and attentive, tilting her head this way and that as the group makes conversation. Her gaze is not judgmental, like the blonde one’s, but instead curious. However, there’s one gaze he can’t shake, and it’s the other one’s. She’s got pink hair, and it’s easy for Gaster to tell that she’s the smartest of the three. It’s a shame, though, as the girl doesn’t know how to display that in her mannerisms. She hasn’t once stopped studying him as if he were an object under a microscope. He's briskly sipping his drink now, feeling too exposed for his own comfort and- oh, that’s clever of her.

Where are you?

As soon as he asks himself, he gets his answer. Out of the crowd you come, swaying your hips readily despite the tightness of your dress. Gaster wants to kick himself for noticing it, but it’s impossible to not. The concept of clubwear is revolting, and he finds the aesthetic raunchy, and yet… here, he can’t quite recall a time where anyone look so divine in so little clothing. He tries not to focus too heavily on your saunter, and starts his second drink.

“Hi,” you greet the table, “I’m sorry for taking so long.” Your lips curve into a tight, yet demure smile. And stars, you’re wearing his color too. He’s noticed all too well the deep shade of violet that graces all the refined curves of your mouth. It’s almost reflecting the iridescent club lighting, transfixed Gaster’s sight with purple on purple. What is wrong with him? He’s dizzy, he’s intoxicated… Oh god, he’s starstruck.

All he can manage in this state is to stand. “____, I believe you and I have business to attend to. Please come with me.”

You’re ready for Gaster’s abruptness when you reach your table, but not for the way he looks at you. The daggers you expected are instead feather-dusters. It looks like he’s only barely here… is he drunk? No, no, there’s only one and a half empty glasses in front of him, he can’t be. Then what’s…

Suddenly, he’s standing, glass in hand and gaze only on you. “____, I believe you and I have business to attend to. Please come with me.” It’s not necessary for him to hold a hand out, but he does, and you attribute it to the gentleman in him. You know it’s there, it’s something you’ve easily gathered over the past two days. Your hand is small in his, bare on covered, skin on satin. He grips you gently, curtly, and you look back at your friends for their reactions. Joanne’s unreadable, Creedy’s envious, Tate’s concerned, and Papyrus…

“Have fun, brother!” He calls.

Oh, if only this were going to be fun.
The doctor’s sure that there’s somewhere dark and isolated here. This is a nightclub, after all, and what happens in nightclubs don’t always leave. Together the two of you weave through the fluid crowds and up the neon-lit staircase, though you do slow him a moment to take in the way the lights change color.

You can’t help but notice, too, that you’re attracting quite a few onlookers. They’re unwanted, the stares and the snickers. Do they all think that you’re a… Well, of course they do; you look like an interspecies couple. He’s got your hand and you’re clearly going upstairs in search of some quiet. The mutters, the whispers, the chuckles, they all get louder until they’re suffocating you. You can’t tune them out, you can’t breathe, you can’t...

Gaster doesn’t even look back at you, but still you can hear him speak. “Keep your eyes on me, my dear. Don’t give them the pleasure of even a glance.” How did he… You then realize how tightly you’ve been squeezing his hand on your way up the stairs, and that he’s been squeezing back. Oh. You keep your gaze on him, just as he says, and it seems to work. Your breath steadies. The voices filter out.

Eventually, though, you reach the top. Now face-to-face, the two of you share sighs and tense nods. After a moment, he remembers why you’re even here. Nearly immediately there’s a hallway leading off to the side, to somewhere you can’t see. It’s too dark, too quiet. Too perfect. Even the music is muffled. How eerie, you think, for such a lively place to have such a dark crevice wedged into it.

Gaster follows you into the dark. Darker, yet darker still.

“Oh!” You gasp when you hit a wall. It’s a dead-end. Even creepier. You begin to turn around. “I can’t go any further, so—” You’re jostled when his palm flattens against the wall at your immediate side. He has you pinned without even touching you. Shit, you’re still in trouble.

“Now, _____,” his voice is that sleek purr again, “tell me this: how often do you go out clubbing on work nights?”

Big trouble. “N-not often,” you splutter, “Hardly ever, actually, it’s j-just that this is a thing, it’s a thing me and my friends, we have this thing where it’s…”

“They told me. Every Tuesday evening, correct?”

“Yes sir!” You can feel yourself paling in the darkness. The only light here is his eyes. It’s all you can look to.

“Is that all?” He breathes, traces of a sinister smirk in his voice. “No dancing til’ sunrise, no late mornings, no drunken sprees?” How poetic, you muse despite your panic.

“No sir, none of that!” you manage.

“_____,” All he says is your name. It comes out of his mouth like a wisp, a mere spirit in the blackness of the hallway. You barely register his other hand until you tremble a bit and feel it on the other side of your head. Now you’re trapped. What else could he… “Did it ever occur to you that you could tell me about this? That you could ask for a later start on Wednesday mornings?” What?

“What?” The word slips out before you can catch it.

He bristles at your response, as if no one’s spat out ‘what’ at him his entire life. Nevertheless, his deep voice remains as soft as velvet, as sweet as candy, and just as tempting as both put together. “My dear,” he muses, “what kind of monster do you take me for?”

“I…”
“Now, I’m not thrilled to see you here tonight,” Gaster explains, “nor am I happy to learn that you routinely go out clubbing on work nights. But, that is not why I am here.” Is he closer to you? It feels as if he’s right against your face. “_____, you are my assistant. You have given me your interest, promised me your life. The least I can do after that is accommodate you. If there’s anything you want, any adjustment to your hours, anything in the lab, please ask.” You think he’s smiling. “Do you understand?”

You breathe out a, “Yes sir.”

“Good,” he says, “I’ll be by your apartment at eleven tomorrow morning to pick you up, if you wish.”

Eleven? In the morning? With no public transportation? Oh sweet Jesus. “Yes sir, that’d be amazing. Thank you so much!”

He chuckles in the dark, withdrawing his hands from the wall and releasing you by extension. Silently, the two of you start to walk out of the hall together. You’re about to reach the rest of the club when he takes a light hold on one of your hands. “One more thing, ____.”

“Hm?”

“Trust me.” In the dimness, Dr. Gaster leans down a bit, bringing your hand up to his face. You can barely register what is happening before you feel the lightest brush of a mouth against the top of your wrist. The kiss lingers for a moment before he lets go of your hand, gingerly bringing it back down to your side.

You can’t seem to speak. Words probably can’t even justify what you feel after that. "Gaster..." Shocked. Shaken. Dazed.

“Good night. And my dear, please be careful when you wear things like that. Most creatures out at this hour can’t seem to want to help themselves.”

Starstruck.

Chapter End Notes

Ooooooooooo. Reader done got a hand smooch. Feel free to comment/kudos, they feed me.
Chapter Summary

You get ready for day two with Gaster.

Chapter Notes

The song snippet in this chapter is from "I'm Your Man" by Leonard Cohen, and tbh this song just screams "Gaster" for me, so much that it was the thing that got me to even start this fic. Anyway, enjoy!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next morning, you're pleasantly surprised to be well-rested. You turn out of bed a little before nine, stretching all the while. Upon looking in the mirror you find that getting eight hours of sleep has done you well. You and Joanne returned from The Spacebar shortly after midnight, and you proceeded to jump into the shower before she could question you on what took place at the club. Gaster left nearly immediately following your meeting with a crestfallen Papyrus in tow. You learned fairly quickly that the skeleton’s sadness is almost as contagious as his happiness. Even your boss didn’t seem thrilled to have to take his brother home.

It’s all for the better, you reason. Because if Papyrus didn’t have to come home, then Dr. Gaster wouldn’t have arrived to pick him up, then you wouldn’t have had that discussion with him, and then you wouldn’t have been able to sleep in until nine. Nine in the damn morning, how cool is this! You have over an hour to leisurely get ready. With a freshly-awoken grin, you walk into the kitchen to find Joanne at the counter.

“Sleep well?” She’s got her sports bra and running shoes on, and though they’re bunched into a ponytail, her thick, dark ringlets have a sheen of sweat over them.

“Um, hell yes.” You over-exaggerate a yawn and stretch for her. Should you rub it in that you got a good-night’s rest? Probably not. Are you going to anyway? Probably so. “So well.”

Your roommate snorts, “Rude,” and tries to look mad at you. The attempt at a grimace melts into a wry smile, and she says, “Well, I guess if you’re so well-rested, then you don’t need any coffee, then.” You can only watch as she walks over to the coffeemaker and empties the pot into her mug.

“You’re the one with the strict workout regimen,” you shrug. Is there a coffee-maker at the facility? There should be. After all, didn’t Gaster mention something about getting more coffee on the day that you were interviewed? You’ll be fine. It’ll probably be too strong and there won’t be any of the creamer you like, but you’ll drink it anyway, and you’ll be fine. Hell, you can offer to get the doctor some, too. Isn’t that what assistants do? “And I’m the one with the great boss.”

“Oh, he’s great now? Yesterday he was ‘vague’ and ‘a tightass,’ and now he’s ‘great’?” Oh god, you know where this is going. No no no no, shit… “What happened last night to change that, _____?”
You sigh, already tired of being put on the defense. “Nothing, he just gave me a late start this morning, and every Wednesday morning after this, too.” And a kiss on the hand.

“I dunno,” she teases, “you two were gone for a little longer than a few minutes. And there’s a lot of great things to do in the upstairs of a club…”

Was that kiss great? No. Was it elegant, comforting, and shocking all the while? Yes. “Whatever great things there are to do up there, we didn’t do them. We simply had a discussion.”

The grin you get is shit-eating. “A discussion? In a club? Yeah, right.”

Can’t you get a break? You gesture to the time being shown on the microwave. “It’s 9:15. Don’t you have to be at work in a few minutes, Joanne?”

You hear her mutter an “oh shit” under her breath. Your friend regains composure quickly, though, finding that critical stare and amused quirk of her lips in seconds. “I’m just saying, _____, that’s not the only thing that happened last night. Not with the way he was eyeing you.”

“The fuck’s that supposed to mean?” You arch an eyebrow.

Joanne’s got her weight shifted onto one side, her hip cocked. “Look, I didn’t get much on him, and neither did Creedy, according to her. You’re right, he’s super shifty. But hon, he looked at you like it was a hot summer day and you were the last blue popsicle in the freezer. Or maybe he prefers purple.” With that, she turns and starts toward her room.

“Wait, what?!” You exclaim. “I didn’t see anything like that!”

But she doesn’t answer, leaving you alone in the kitchen. Gaster looked at you like… like a what? And what did she mean about purple? Why does it even matter, how he looked at you? Sighing, you go to get ready yourself. Why is your face so pink? It’s not as if anything that Joanne insinuated is actually true.

You do your makeup with almost begrudging motions, as if you’re functioning in spite of your blush, in spite of what she said. He simply kissed your hand, and here you are blushing as if he’s fucked you into next week. The gesture wasn’t even a romantic one, and hardly even platonic! It was professional and chivalrous, if anything. A professional hand kiss. Those exist, right? It’s 9:32 and your face is red. Shit. You hardly notice what you’re throwing on, only stopping to make sure it’s appropriate for work. Does your skirt match your shoes? Is your top ironed? Who knows? Certainly not you.

You manage to be ready for work at 9:58, despite your emotional turmoil and lack of coffee. There’s a full grocery bag sitting by the door, and you grab it along with your purse. After work yesterday, Dr. Gaster told you that you could bring a few things from home to personalize your desk space in the lab. Your permanent desk space. Permanent, as in, forever. How can a word be both comforting and anxiety-inducing at once? You shrug it off, or try to, as you step into the elevator and descend to the lobby of your apartment complex.

It’s 9:59 and you’re baffled that Gaster has somehow managed to park directly in front of the door. That spot’s never open. How did he even? This is the third time he’s found the perfect parking spot. How? He gets out of the car, to your surprise, isn’t wearing his lab-coat yet. You watch him as he walks around the front of the vehicle to open your door.

“Good morning, Doctor,” you greet him, trying so hard not to read too much into the kiss, or this. “Thanks for the door. And the ride. And all your chivalry in general.” That’s just how he is, you
reason and chide yourself. He’s just a gentleman. The doctor offers his hand for you to brace on as you step your way into the passenger seat. Afterwards, he gingerly shuts your door. Just a gentleman. Doing gentlemanly things. *That hand kiss meant nothing. Even if you can still feel its imprint on your skin. Nothing.*

He steps into the Rolls-Royce himself, “And good morning to you, _____. I trust that you arrived home safely, and are in decent health today?”

“Yes sir, I am. The late morning helped me *so much,* honestly,” you reply with a chuckle.

“How satisfying,” he says, pulling out of the perfect parking spot. “By the way, please direct your attention to your side of the console.”

You start to ask, “What-“ but then you see it. The white cup with the dome lid and the sleeve. It’s full, steaming, and smells familiar. “Wait, how did you…”

“I listened to your order yesterday. My apologies if you’ve already had coffee.”

Okay, if he wasn’t great before, he’s great now. You can’t help yourself from exclaiming, “Holy shit, Gaster!”

From the driver’s seat, he laughs to himself. It’s a melodic, deep laugh that makes your breath catch itself in your throat. “I take it you haven’t had your coffee yet? My dear, it’s already ten!”

“Oh,” you catch your breath and explain, “I was planning on it. But apparently Joanne was jealous of all the sleep I got, and she drank the whole pot of coffee just to spite me.”

“Oh, I’m sure it was all in jest, _____.”

You nod, now aware of the silence settling into the car. You glance out the window and sip your coffee as you watch the surrounding city come to tittering life, as it does in the morning. There’s music in the car at a low volume. Today, Dr. Gaster’s sound system is playing something odd, something with an organ and a singer with a deep, near-gravelly voice.

”*And if you want a doctor*

*I’ll examine every inch of you*

*If you want a driver, climb inside*

*Or if you want to take me for a ride*

*You know you can*

*I’m your man…”*

The near-silence is broken when Gaster clears his throat after a few minutes. “Joanne, she’s incredibly nice, I found. To be frank, she was my favorite amongst your crowd last night.”

At that you sigh, a twinge of jealousy creeping its way into your stomach. This is normal. It’s something you hear too often. Even your boss likes her best. You try desperately to swallow the feeling, put it aside, and sound casual. “She’s everyone’s favorite.”

But then Gaster stops at a red light (the car jolts to a silent halt and throws you forward a bit) and turns to you. “My statement excludes you, of course.”
Of course, he says, like it’s so obvious. That’s so smooth it’s probably a joke. Your throat’s dry in a way that no coffee can fix. All you can manage is a balky stare that probably looks rude. He says nothing. When the light turns green, his long legs stretch in his slacks to press onto the gas. Your gaze turns to your coffee and it’s halfway empty. Shortly, the doctor whips his luxury car into the parking spot at the very front of the facility (seriously, how does he do that?!) and brings it to a halt. You wait for him to turn off the Rolls-Royce and step out, but Gaster remains seated.

His eyes flick over to you, the line of a grimace on his skull. “_____, I’ve only known you for less than a week, and yet you’re simply so striking to me. You’re beautifully brilliant, as well as brilliantly beautiful.”

You stare him in the face, overcome with an intensity that borderlines on dramatic. All you can choke out is, “Is this a joke?”

His scowl only deepens. “My dear, am I laughing?”

Together, the two of you clock in and take the elevator up, and then the steps that spiral to oblivion in a secret space. The sun shines down on the greenery in the stairwell. Does Gaster take care of all these plants? You take the steps two at a time, eager for your first official day at work. You aren’t counting yesterday, considering it was mostly orientation and lunch. And some dark exposition, you tack on, with a glance at your boss. You enter the supply closet, nearly buzzing with excitement. Are you vibrating? You know humans technically can’t vibrate, but you’re about as close as they can come.

Before Gaster slides the panel to the lab open, he gives you the slightest grin of amusement. “There is something for you, on your desk. A small gift, only because I didn’t want you working in anything cheap.”

“What…” you start, but then he opens the panel, and you set eyes on your desk.

Your present’s draped over your chair, standing out against the whiteness of the lab in entirety. Just from looking at it from the other side of the room, you know it’s expensive, probably custom-made. You drop your purse and the grocery bag beside your desk to examine this new gift of yours. With slow, shaking fingers you pick it up, caressing the crisp fabric. It’s black, blacker than night, black as the void itself. Bringing your arms apart, you spread it out and take in its full shape and form.

“My own lab-coat?” You gasp up at the doctor, who’s a few feet away from you, watching you. “May I…”

“Put it on,” he finishes for you.

You slide your arm through one sleeve, then the other, then you start with the buttons and… oh stars, it fits like a glove. The length goes just past the hem of your skirt, flaring at the waist in a manner that you’re not used to seeing on lab-coats. Have you ever even seen a black lab-coat before? It’s got just the right amount of give to it, just the right amount of everything, and oh god it has pockets. “Oh my god, thank y…” When you look up to thank him, though, you’re met with an unexpected sight. He’s sliding a black coat of his own onto his tall, lean body, buttoning it with haste. You’ve seen him in white, and in grey, but in black? The sheer sight of him is riveting in the best way. Still in your tracks, you can feel your eyes going wide. “Dr. Gaster…”

“I saw them in a specialty shop yesterday, nearly right before I had to find Papyrus and our paths crossed.”
You ask him, “Is there a mirror in here? Like a full-sized one?” And you’re led across the expanse of the laboratory. You’ve hardly touched this side so far, what with yesterday’s happenings and all. Sure enough, though, there’s an enormous mirror. It stretches from your toes to nearly eight feet in the air. For half a moment you wonder why it’s so tall, but then you realize who you’re working for and just how tall he is. Incredibly tall, you remind yourself as he steps next to you, and nearly tantalizing in a fitted black lab-coat. Then. Your gaze shifts from his reflection to yours, where you’re just as awed. The coat flatters your every curve and edge, bringing out the color of your eyes with a surprising energy. It has a similar effect on Gaster, bringing out the opalescent white of his skull.

“Whoa,” you sigh, taken aback, “we’re matching, we’re professional, we’re just so…” Your tongue chooses to stop working here, in favor of a gasp.

But Dr. Gaster utters a chuckle, and picks up right where you left off. “Beautiful.” His hand comes to rest on your shoulder. “Brilliantly beautiful.”

The two of you soak in the honeyed silence for a few moments, with your eyes on your reflections in the cluttered lab. Your gaze flicks from your own to his as your body lets his grip become endearing. You know you shouldn’t let your emotions override your brain, especially in a setting like this, but you’re simply filled to the brim with them. This is more than two days of working together, this is coordination, cooperation, companionship and it’s so simply great…

For a second it appeared as if Gaster was in a daze as well, but he seems to have snapped out of it now, moving his hand and nodding at you. “Let’s get to work now, shall we, _____?”

“Yes sir, Doctor.” You turn away from the mirror, following. “What first?” He walks across the lab at a brisk pace. You’re at his heels, flats tracing the footsteps of loafers. Electricity races through you. What remarkable project will he start you on? What theories will you chase?

Abruptly, though, he stops at a series of stainless counters, and turns to face you. You didn’t notice how close you were to him. “First,” he purrs, softly, sweetly, “I need you to lay down flat on the examination table to my right.”

Chapter End Notes

All I can think about when I try to imagine Reader's desk is that board that says "don't forget you're here forever"
Consent

Chapter Summary

It's time to get on the table.

And what's up with Gaster's insides?

Chapter Notes

I wrote half of this in a Denny's.

Alternate chapter title: I Started Sociology and Realized Gaster is Wrong on Lots of Things

Enjoy!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lay on the table? What the actual fuck?

“Excuse me, what?”

Dr. Gaster bristles, replying, “I believe you heard me correctly.” Oh, he definitely doesn’t like being talked to like that. “But if you honestly didn’t comprehend what I was saying, I asked you to lie down on that table.” Your eyes flick over to the table he gestured to and you take an unsteady step towards it. "On your back, please, dear, because it makes everything easier.” Makes what easier?

The steel table sits rectangular and rigid in its spot, and dread creeps its way into your stomach like a shadowy, overgrown spider. It looks new, sterile, untouched. Cold. Your fingers curl unconsciously, gripping at the sides of your coat. You pull it tighter into you, over your body. Despite it, though, you can feel the bumps starting to form on your arm. Lower down, your knees twitch. They’re threatening to give at the thought of the icy metal.

Something in the back of your head tells you that Gaster is beginning to lose his patience. Without any further argument, you step up to the table. You can feel the edge’s glacial touch through your clothes. Your trembling fingers graze the stainless steel and it takes all you have not to recoil. It’s so cold, you shudder, too cold. Not simply cold, but wrong, too. Something’s wrong here, too wrong. What is he doing? What is this? He’s gone still and silent behind you. Is he going to…

No. No. Even if he would, he can’t. You won’t let him. You’re filled with… something.

That something inside you stirs and cuts through the ice of the table. You whirl around to face the doctor, and your voice finds you. “Informed consent.”

Now it’s his turn to balk. “Excuse me, what?”

“You heard me,” you retort. “Any ethical research requires informed consent. Before any research or
experiment can be conducted, the researcher must let the subject know what they will be doing, and acquire their consent for it.” You’re propped against the counter now, with your fingers firm on the table. You can feel your lips curl into a pout for a mock-tease effect. “Doctor, where’s my informed consent?”

You watch his mouth drop open and the violet lights in his sockets widen. His face only stays that way for a fraction of a second before relaxing, but you saw it nevertheless. “When you consented to working for me, you consented to any and all research.” He’s smirking now, as if he never slipped and you never saw it.

“Even though you never exactly told me what we were doing? Which, in itself, violates the mere concept of informed consent?” Oh, you’re feeling ballsy. You’re looking him dead in the eyes. “If you don’t tell me exactly what you’re asking me to do, I’m not going to do it. And no verbal contract or promise of eternity can change that. You’re violating my ethics, Dr. Gaster, and I can’t say I’m into that.”

He glances away for a moment, muttering, “Fair enough,” with the faintest of purples dusting his angular cheeks. You hear something else come out of his mouth, but it’s too quiet and too fast to fully catch. All you can make out is a sharp-tongued “so clever” and “the death of me.”

After another sigh, Gaster turns his attention back to you. “Fine, then, my dear. I’ll obey your silly human ethics if it means you’ll be more cooperative. Do we have a deal?”

You’re giggling at the melodramatic tone he took with the phrase “human ethics” while you nod. You hardly even notice that he’s offered you his hand, but then you set your eyes on his silk gloves and extend yours as well. You have a feeling he likes deals and promises. His hand is smooth in yours and a voice in the back of your head singsongs don’t forget, you’re here forever.

Then he releases you and clears his throat. “Now, if I tell you what I plan to do, will you please do as I ask?”

“Perhaps,” you drawl, teasing, “It depends on what it is.” Nevertheless, you use your hands to boost yourself backwards onto the table. You swing your legs back and forth idly and fix him with an intrigued stare. As your heels hit the metal sides of the counter they clang quietly. The sound reverberates across the table and fills the quiet room. All the while Gaster’s eyeing you curiously, his mouth forming bits of words but never quite enunciating any. Your position on the examination table gives you an inch or so of height, bringing the top of your head almost up to his collarbone. You nearly come eye-to-tie with his suit as he steps closer to you, but about a foot away still.

“Why, _____,” he muses, “I’d like to have a look at your Soul.”

“My Soul?” You gape up at him. “Why do you need to do that? And how does it even work?” Your bright eyes blink oh-so-innocently and Dr. Gaster’s mind goes blank. How else is he to explain this to you? How is he to possibly convey the sheer gravity of what he’s asking while still acquiring your permission to do it? This entire conversation has become so much more difficult than he originally intended! He’s exasperated.

Oh, damn this informed consent business you’ve insisted upon! It wasn’t as if he’d attempt to harm you; stars, he’d never!
“It’s…” he begins. He has to be careful. Careful, careful… “In Monster culture, showing one’s Soul outside of a confrontational context is considered a rather… intimate… process.” As the word “intimate” crosses the threshold of his lips he watches yours quirk up. Oh, you get it now. Of course you do. You flush a bit, your legs stilling against the metal examination table. The gentlest shade of pink crosses your features, and he considers it both a miracle and a curse that you’re still able to hold eye contact with him. He needs you to stay focused so he can persuade you to follow through, but at the same time… Something about your gaze is utterly thought-stopping.

“However, the Soul is brought forth often in experimental studies, mostly magi-biological but not limited to such. It’s a painless process, pulling it out, and it tells the viewer several important things. Health, memories, emotions, thought processes, and that’s not even the beginning… if they know how to read it correctly.”

“Do…” you start, trailing off before quirking an eyebrow up, “Do you know how to read Souls, Gaster?” Your arms fold over your chest and your ankles cross, flaring your knees apart.

“All too well,” he replies with a smile. “In fact, some consider me to be one of the most literate in existence. I’m quite adept at the handling of Souls.”

Your words come out in the form of a wisp in the air. Barely a whisper. “So I can trust you?”

“_____ what did I tell you last night?” He doesn’t recall how or when he leaned forward, but he has, and he is almost at eye level with you.

“To trust you,” you sigh out. Ah, there it is, the pressing theme.

In proving his point, though, the doctor is assailed with a series of flashbacks. His brain reels; he sees you in your dress, on the dance floor, in the darkness of the club hallway. He can feel your hand squeezing his on the fluorescent-lit staircase and then your voice dances its way into his head. Yes sir, you said last night, and this morning, so many times, so much, so obedient, so purring. Yes sir, Dr. Gaster. He can feel the soft skin of your hand on his mouth. God, what a codger he is. He shouldn’t be having such thoughts about his employee, much less now, considering he’s about to examine your Soul!

“I intend on examining your Soul for all the aforementioned purposes, but also so that we may better work together. I need to know how you think under pressure, how you respond to stimuli, what trait is at the center of your personality. These are all things no one can determine without a detailed encounter, like the one I’m requesting. Do you trust me?” He asks you, and you reply without hesitation.

“Yes sir.” Oh, of course you did. Gaster can’t quite discern whether or not you truly trust him, but nevertheless, there’s the consent he needs.

“How wonderful,” he purrs, “Thank you for that, then. With that being said, may we begin by laying you down on your back? A proper Soul examination requires a relaxed vessel.” The word “vessel” is used for lack of a better term, but it still seems too starch to Gaster. Though you do hold your soul, you’re so much more than simply a container. In any way he can, he wants to convey that, especially with such an intimate process. Though it typically would be, the doctor reminds himself with only slight wistfulness that he’s never beheld anyone’s soul outside of a scientific setting.

He helps you to lean back onto the table with a steady hand on your shoulder. Your fingers tremble at first, but he quickly moves another hand to the small of your back. Trust me, he silently pleads, Rest against me. Let me guide you. You stop shaking, and soon you’re able to press your back flat onto the steel examination table. Dr. Gaster steps to the end of the table, where your feet rest, and
watches you move to tug the hem of your skirt lower. How modest. He’s not concerned with your clothes; this can be done with or without them (again, he’s only performed this procedure with it, but he digresses).

“Now,” he tells you, “I need you to simply keep your breath steady. I’m about to bring your Soul out, my dear, and it’s essential that you stay placid.”

“I can do that,” you breathe out as he begins to prepare. The procedure’s beginning requires him to focus on you entirely and solely. He does just that. Your lips are parted slightly, and you’ve tilted your head down a bit to look him in the eyes. All your hair’s splayed out on the table around you, and then there’s the way your blouse has ridden up, exposing the slightest patch of your hips…

Gaster has the feeling he’s making inappropriate observations. When he regards you, though, it’s all he can see, all he can focus on. Oh, you threw him for a loop with your informed consent issue, so he can never get rid of the gravity of your intelligence, and yet… spread out on the examination table, as lovely and obedient as you are, you’re quite the specimen. Something inside him stirs and beats steadily to the observation of your body. So unique, so strange, so intriguing to him, so…

Your Soul comes free without the slightest attempt. Dr. Gaster doesn’t know what to attribute the ease to. How odd, he thinks, he didn’t even think about summoning it yet. That shouldn’t have happened. Is it somehow easier to bring out a human’s Soul? He hadn’t even finished the first portion of the examination. Nevertheless, though, it’s quite pretty. He can see your myriad of colors up close now, swirling around one another in a smooth harmony. As he sees each shade and hue he attempts to attribute a trait to it. Kindness. Determination. One by one he goes. Creativity. Curiosity, oh, so much sweet curiosity. He should be writing this down. There isn’t a pen around him. Oh, to hell with it, he can remember it all. You’re impossible to forget.

There’s so much to behold, so much to observe, he’s nearly overwhelmed, and whatever that beating inside him is, it’s sending him into overdrive. He knows that he must move on to the third stage of the examination. Touching the Soul enables for the examiner to behold statistics, as well as further emotion and deeper meaning within the vessel. Before he does, though, he takes a look at you. You lie still with wide, dazed eyes. Silent, you’re transfixed on your own Soul. All seems fine.

“_____,” he murmurs, almost afraid to disturb the peace, “I’m going to touch you now. Is that acceptable?”

Your lips part only enough to whisper, “Yes, Gaster…” You sound elsewhere, in a daze far off of the material plane. He wonders if it’s euphoric, to experience one’s own Soul after never seeing it for one’s entire life. He’ll never know the feeling for himself. Maybe he’ll ask you, when he finishes.

With a careful, benevolent touch, Gaster wraps his hands around your beautiful little Soul.

Something strong lurches within him.

Your Soul jerks in time to it.

And with a sudden, ragged breath, you begin to scream.

Chapter End Notes

So what's up with Reader and Gaster? Maybe they'll be okay. Maybe.
Reminder to comment/kudos! Any fan art can be sent over here, or at sansualfics.tumblr.com
Don't

Chapter Summary

Whoa, your insides are freaking out. What's up with that?

Chapter Notes

Oh ho ho ho. Now this, this was amazing to write. I enjoyed it so much, there's just so much rawness in it. AAAAAAAA.

ALSO: Warning for panic attacks and dub-con. Because that’s a thing. I’ll summarize things at the end of the chapter!!!

Anyways, enjoy!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Clarity. Oh, sweet clarity.

It’s remarkable. You cannot properly describe nor convey the true purity with which you process your emotions once your Soul springs free. What once were myriads of blurred feelings are now straightforward sentiments that process as easily as thoughts. They come in waves as you lie there on the examination table.

Serenity.

Gaster beholds your Soul before him. He almost looks marveled. This is fine.

Contentment.

You watch his pinprick eyes widen, until the violet from his eyes is so prevalent you cannot ignore it. He’s looking deeper, you can feel it. What is he looking for? What is he looking at?

Curiosity.

Slight unease.

“_____, I’m going to touch you now. Is that acceptable?” He asks you. One of his lean, gloved hands hovers outward, hardly reaching but still aiming to. He’s going to touch you, purposely and deliberately touch you. He’s about to touch your Soul, you reason with yourself, it shouldn’t be bad. After all, he said this process was a harmless one. So you give your approval with a breathy sigh and attempt to calm yourself down.

Complacency.

But what if this isn’t that simple? This is an intimate sort of thing, after all. Intimate. What if it bonds the two of you somehow?
Anxiety.

What if something’s wrong with you? What if he doesn’t like what he sees? Why are you so concerned with him liking your Soul?

Insecurity.

His hands are inches away from you. He’s going to touch you right where you’re most vulnerable, right where no one else has.

Apprehensiveness. Wait. No.

Distrust. That’s it.

The thoughts come at a racing speed now, one after another. He’s close, he’s too close, you don’t want him this close.

So much distrust. It consumes you.

You’re not ready for this. Desperation.

You don’t want this. Defense.

He touches you and it’s so much, too much. The simplest brush of Dr. Gaster’s gloved fingertips sends you into a wanton, wretched overdrive.

Panic.

Fear.

Violation.

No. No. Intruder. Fear.

Adrenaline. Get out.

No. Get out, it’s too close

Get out of me get out get out get

OUT GET OUT MAKE IT STOP NO

NO NO NO GET OUT OF ME

The next thing you know, you’re screaming. Breathless gasps come in between your shrieks as you writhe in such a manner that rivals a demonic vessel. You can’t feel Gaster’s hands on your Soul anymore, you can’t feel a thing at all. On the cold lab table you’re convulsing and shaking with your eyes on the ceiling, unable to process anything other than the blinding light, nothing else (oh no, oh no, no, nothing). You don’t want to process anything else.

“_____?” Even as your hearing goes in and out you make out your name. It’s a far-away sound surrounded by white noise and fog.

“...need you to respond...” You catch segments, snippets of pretty distant words wrapped in the softest, blackest silk you could imagine. “_____, please ans....” Ah, there’s your name again. You’re faintly aware of the feeling gradually returning to your body (but not quite, not quite yet, you’re not
ready yet). You can hear clearer now, and you suspect that if you took your eyes off of the sterile lighting you could see, too.

Suddenly, your source of light is cut off. A dark object that you quickly register as Dr. Gaster’s hand waves in front of your eyes, shielding you from the brightness.

“_____? You’re beginning to worry me;” he says, and at last you turn your head to the side.

“I’m here, I’m...” you sigh, unprepared for the way your voice still shakes. Where is your breath? It’s still gone. Why is it gone? Why can’t you breathe? You’re trembling again on the table. You can see everything (everything is bright) and then you see Gaster (except Gaster, Gaster is dark, so dark), and you feel something within you lurch and curl up. You’re burning and freezing all at once when you set your sights on his violet eyes. They’re filled with as much concern as you’ve seen on him, but nevertheless, electricity surges through your being. You can hardly help the shallow breaths escaping you all-too-quickly.

“Oh, do come here, you fragile little thing;” he sighs, and before you know it, you’re being helped off the table (he’s touching you again, he’s touching you and you don’t know why, or what it’s making you feel) and onto your feet. Aside from the buzzing in your skull you feel one of the doctor's gloved hands across your back, and the other around your arm (he’s squeezing you, why is he touching you, he’s squeezing too hard, too soft, not enough, too much).

You’re walking now (or is he walking you?) over to a door at the other end of the lab. It looks to be more durable than the door to the stairwell and the one to the bathroom. It’s thick, and he opens it effortlessly. To your (albeit-subdued) surprise, there’s another staircase. It leads upward, and you can’t see where it ends. His hand presses against your back, gently urging you forward.

“Where does...” you breathe out, but stop before you can finish. You’re overwhelmed past the point of coherency. You’re hyperventilating again.

“Come now, _____,” is all your boss tells you as he helps you to go up the stairs. Your legs wobble on the way, and you can hardly get your eyes to stay focused. All the while he holds you, supporting you (he keeps touching you, why is he so gentle, so close, so so so). Eventually, though, you do make it to the top of the stairs, where you’re met with another door. This one is almost bigger than the one at the base of the stairs, heavy and silver. It’s sticky, and you’re nearly afraid of falling down the steps, but Gaster opens it easily.

Sunshine. The door opens to somewhere bright, somewhere quiet, somewhere outside. With Dr. Gaster behind you, you step out and onto asphalt. It’s not a large rooftop, but it’s enough to cover the expanse of the lab and then some. A fresh breeze works its way into both your hair and your lungs. At your knees, the hem of your black lab-coat sways and ripples. You set your eyes on the grey-blue sky and instantly feel better.

“Ah, I see that we are breathing again, _____.” Gaster smiles at you with an eye on your now-rising chest. He’s crossed over to face you. “I admit to hardly ever coming up here, but I imagined that you needed the fresh air.”

Slowly, carefully, you nod, forming your words deliberately. “I did. Thank you.”

“To be quite frank,” he furrows a skeletal brow, “I’m not altogether quite sure of what occurred during your examination. Whatever happened with you, I’ve never seen it before.”

And he’s a Soul expert. Oh, that’s alarming.
“It’s evident that you had a severe anxiety attack. After you catch your breath for a few moments, and are able to calm down completely, I’d like to discuss it with you. Don’t rush yourself, my dear.”

“Yes sir,” you sigh, and turn your attention to the sky. The clouds breeze by overhead, slowly, leisurely. They don’t have a care in the world, unlike you. They don’t have panic attacks like you do. Clouds don’t have Souls. They’re just clouds, puffy and pretty and light all the same. You breathe. In. Out.

In.

Out.

“It’s nice out here.”

“That it is,” the doctor replies.

“You know, this roof is isolated from the other lab departments,” you say with a smile. “If you wanted, you could put a garden up here. Make it a bit less stark.”

The doctor hums a noncommittal noise. So much for that. You can just imagine the boxes of flowers, and vegetables, and maybe even a bench or two. But he doesn’t comment anymore. So you stand there. In silence.

You try again. “Thank you for taking care of me.” Ah, and there’s the warmth returning to your face. He seems to be taking care of you quite a bit so far. You’re flushing now, when just moments ago you were hyperventilating like an overworked air conditioner.

Gaster doesn’t answer. He’s staring into space, eyes locked on an empty point in the breezy air. There’s a trace of a bony smile on his opalescent face. Your matching coats flutter and flare back in the wind as you both stare together. A charcoal pigeon flies by. It lands on a nearby power line, sending waves along the black cord. You sigh, relaxed, content, calm.

So at last you say, quietly, gently, “We can talk now if you want.”

His eyes flick over to you. Oh, so that gets his attention. “To begin, I need you to think back to your side of the confrontation.” He pivots to face you, asking, “What do you think happened? What do you remember?”

“Well, I obviously had the panic attack,” you nod along as you speak, “but before that, it was like… I felt everything. But I felt each feeling in like, waves.”

“Arduous is normal.”

Then what isn’t normal? You wrack your still-somewhat-addled brain for details. You remember the feelings. You remember the panic. You remember it got worse as...

“But then something else stands out, too!” You look up at him to see an eye socket quirk upwards. “This may not make any sense, but like… the more you examined me, the closer you got, the more I panicked. And by the time you were touching me,” here, you can’t help but blush, “all my emotions and thoughts were going absolutely nuts. Think screaming, but in your head, and with feelings.”
“So it’s directly related to the contact with me, then,” he concludes.

It’s a bit harsh, sure, but you think he’s right. You nod, only to see his face light up. Oh, god, now it looks like he’s on a roll. It’s so strange, seeing him so excited. Dr. Gaster isn’t someone you’d ever think to describe as excitable.

He asks, “Tell me, now, _____, were you only uncomfortable when the examination began?”

“Um,” you stammer. A change in the wind direction whips your hair into your face, and you raise a hand to keep it out of your eyes. It wasn’t that you were uncomfortable, per se, just… “It was more like I was… nervous? About what was going to happen?” Once you start elaborating, you can’t stop. “And even though you told me to relax, I just couldn’t, and it was just so weird because I guess it was normal to be so anxious and freaked out about it, but I couldn’t figure out why it felt wrong. Because it felt really really wrong. And I thought I didn’t have a problem with it, but then it was like, it’s this intimate process, and I know you didn’t mean it in a sexual way, but it was still at the back of my mind. And with stuff this intimate it kind of requires complete- oh.” Once you realize where the sentence is going, you stop yourself before you even finish. There’s a word hanging off, one you don’t want to say.

It’s in the air, though, and he knows it, too. You watch him recognize what you did, and his once-eager face flattens into something almost sad. No, no, not sad, crestfallen. Melancholy.

Gaster rasps, “You didn’t trust me.”

“Gast-”

“You didn’t trust me, and you still let me do it. And it was in your subconscious, and it got to you, and… Oh, stars, _____! You gave me access to the most vital part of you without even wanting to!” His voice rises as he continues, wavering. “You wouldn’t have had that disastrous anxiety attack if I didn’t insist on examining you!

You can’t help but wince. “Gaster, it’s not that big of a—"

“Don’t tell me that,” he snaps, voice cold as the wind.

“But it’s not!”

He shakes his head, scowling. “You don’t understand.”

“Yes I—"

And he all but growls, “I violated you!”

You sink into your lab-coat, the one he gave you, because you work for him, because you’re his. He violated you. It takes all you’ve got not to look up at him with helpless eyes.

You hear him mutter, “I’m going to be sick,” and he turns, facing the other side of the rooftop. Dr. Gaster walks to the edge, peering out, and then down. While you’re not in a position to look over, you can imagine it’s one hell of a drop to the asphalt. Your mind conjures a splat noise, and you shudder. Heights. Nevertheless, though, you follow him, cautiously and quietly stepping towards his back. You stop a few feet away.

He’s murmuring to himself. As hard as you strain, though, you can’t hear all of it. It’s only pieces. “After all I…” and “…could I think she would…” and “…just a damned codger sociopath.” Some of it almost sounds like a foreign language!
You opt to comfort him, and edge closer, and closer, and…

“Just what do you think you’re doing, sneaking so close to me?” In a flash, the doctor has whipped around to glare at you.

You attempt a weak, “I was just trying to—“

“Trying to what?!” He cuts you off, “Console me for doing something you can’t even comprehend?! Belittle an honest-to-god, raw violation of your being?! Help in desensitizing me to yet another atrocity I’ve committed?!”

You’re trembling now. “Gaster—“

“Don’t,” he snarls, and even as he sneers at you he still remains eloquent, if not also animalistic. “Simply don’t try to rectify this, ____. You cannot. There is no way. Justification is utterly impossible, so completely useless and futile that any attempt on your pitiful part to diffuse the situation will merely make it worse.”

“Okay,” you barely whisper, a lump in your throat. “I’m sor--“

“____, I said don’t. This discussion is over. If you must insist on doing something, then go busy yourself downstairs. Go away from me, lest you want to have a dreadful time.” The wind goes still and in that moment you swear you see a wicked spark in those near-black eyes. Something is conveyed straight from him to your insides, to your Soul, and it’s ice-cold.

With all you can muster, you do as he says. You pivot on your heels, grip the ends of your coat, and go for the door. It’s all you can do to wait until you’re at the bottom of the stairs to cry.

Chapter End Notes

Summary: You experience lots of negative feelings and have a panic attack in the confrontation, which is why you were screaming and freaking out. He takes you to the lab roof to get you to calm down while both of you try and figure out what happened. You both realize it’s because you don’t fully trust Gaster, at least not with your Soul. Gaster gets upset because he, in a sense, violated you, and he’s not okay with that. You try to console him because you don’t quite grasp what he just did because you’re still foreign to Soul stuff and he lashes out and yells at you to leave him be. So now you’re crying in the lab by yourself.

Oh boy this ain’t good, skippy.

And hey, I’ve got an actual fanfic blog you can send fan art and asks to, if you’re into that. www.sansualfics.tumblr.com . Hit me up there, or hit me up here, with them kudos and comments and shit. I hope y’all enjoyed!!! <3
Laughter

Chapter Summary

Gaster resorts to desperate measures to fix things. Meanwhile, you acquire some unexpected attention.

Chapter Notes

Aaaaaaah I'm so sorry for the two-month hiatus, guys. It's been a wild ride. (Not as wild of a ride as you're about to go on, lmao. This one's a doozy.)

I had oodles of fun writing this, though, like I put so much time and effort and emotion into this and HOLY FUCK I love it. So I hope you do too. Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s all Gaster can do to wait until you’re well on your way down the stairs to inhale a deep, sharp sigh. *Stars, what a disaster.* He gazes into the expanse of blue sky surrounding him, feeling as vacant on the inside as his own stare. There are three birds on the power line now, free as possible. He envies them, for simply being able to come and go as they please.

He always could, you know, just come and go from reality. It’d be so simple, too: with just a flick of his hands he could be gone, vanished completely. The siren call of The Void is strong some days. It’s the way the silence consumes him, the way the darkness wraps around his form like an unceasing blanket. On a particularly trying day it will practically tug at his sleeves to return back to that sweet, solitary comfort. He knows in deep in his Soul that it’s maddening, that returning to The Void would drive him absolutely insane. Gaster’s aware that if he leaves, he just may never come back.

But nevertheless, it calls.

Oh, but the ruin it would cause. A year back in existence is already too long, too permanent. He’s made too much of an impact here to even hope for a seamless vanishing. He’d leave so much, too much. Sans, Papyrus, this job, you…

Would you miss him if he were to simply up and leave?

After all he’s done to you? Lied, manipulated, taken, et cetera… And here’s the kicker, he just invaded your Soul! He touched it, violated it, violated you! The mere thought of what he’s done sends wretched shivers up his bony spine.

Once his mind is fixed on it, the flashbacks come. Your glazed-over eyes. Your quivering voice. The soft, silky feel of your Soul against his fingers and the jolt of his own in time with yours. And then the pained, terrifying screams that ripped through whatever strange trance he’d been drawn into.

Gaster violated you.
He needs to fix this, despite what it may take. And oh, he knows what it will take. He takes a gulp, swallows his pride down with it. Where’s his phone? Ah, he knows, it’s… downstairs.

In the lab. Where you most likely ran off to. Stars, of course it is.

There’s at least an attempt made to be quiet when he slips down the stairs. As angry as Gaster is at the situation, he still needs to be mindful of your feelings. You seem sensitive to him, emotionally vulnerable and yet still guarded in an odd way. He typically finds feelings so trivial, and yet… It’s attractive, strangely, to see someone so intelligent so in-touch with their emotions, so… human.

Whatever shade he’s flushing vanishes the moment he walks into the lab and sets eyes on you. You’re slumped at your desk, quivering in your chair with your knees pulled up to your chest. The lab-coat he gave you curls around your hunched, shuddering shoulders like raven’s wings.

Do you even see him?

Rounding the counter, he sets a gloved hand on his phone and oh-so-quietly secures it in his fingers. It’s not secure enough, though, and in a few short moments the phone is slipping from his grip and falling onto the tile with an obnoxious, mocking clat!

From the other side of the lab the doctor watches you jump in your chair. Then you’re pivoting to face the source of the noise, to face him, and then you see him and you’re turning back again, but not before Gaster can catch the shine on your cheeks, and the way your hair is pressed against the side of your face, and that vibrant redness around your swollen eyes. And what can he do, when you’re crying like that, and all he can seem to think is that you’re lovely even when you’re crying, and he knows it should matter more that you’re crying, and that it’s his fault and he’s wrong, he’s all wrong in what he’s done?

So in another hideous moment of shame he leaves, taking his unharmed phone in hand and cursing himself within his mind. You’re silent. The door shuts.

It’s a five minute wait for Gaster before his brother finally drags into the front lobby of the facility. Sans slinks into the lobby in his usual hoodie-and-slipper attire. The taller skeleton always despised that sense of fashion (or lack thereof), but it never seems that things will change. He looks tired, with grey-blue bags under his wide eyes and a slack smile. And as always, he’s smarter than he looks.

“So the kid screamed when you touched her?” Sans looks up as the pair walks to the counter to check him into the facility.

“I’m afraid so,” the doctor replies, “and I do believe that we discovered the cause of that. Simply put, her violent reaction can be attributed to the fact that she did not fully trust me yet with such an intimate process.” He nods matter-of-factly, only to see a crease form between his brother’s sockets.

“That still doesn’t make sense. Even if she didn’t trust you, she shouldn’t have freaked out that much over something that tiny. Souls don’t have that much sensitivity.” Sans’ typical grin slips from his face as sweat beads on his skull, and he adds, “Unless…”

“Unless what?” Gaster asks, and doesn’t receive an answer.

He’s trying to rush him into the elevator so they can go upstairs, but as usual, his brother is taking his sweet time. The lobby is chock-full of people in the midst of a workday. They move like a chaotic current, left and right and forward, always forward, always to somewhere important. Sans’ speed isn’t up to par with the facility’s, and it irks Gaster, especially when he knows he’s capable of moving
much faster.

“How’s she doing now?” Sans asks suddenly, switching the focus. “Gotta know what I need to know first. Take it easy, doc.”

“Well I would be taking it easy if she weren’t crying up there.”

“She’s what?!” The short skeleton’s sockets go black. “Gast, the fuck did you do?”

Gaster feels the shame creeping up his face in the form of violet. “She didn’t comprehend the full severity of what I did. I may have reacted a bit… angrily… when she refused to reprimand me for it. She was upset about the situation, yes, but not with me. Sans, she… it’s almost as if she comforted me. She tried to, at least.”

“God dammit. Okay, give me a second.”

Then, for a short moment, the doctor’s alone, and then he’s not again. Sans has, in the blink of an eye, acquired a bouquet of sunflowers. There’s about six of them, wrapped in a silky blue ribbon at the stem and accented with baby’s breath.

“Where did you get those?” Gaster asks.

All he gets in response is, “Not important. They’re for _____, obviously.”

“Flowers?! Because I violated her Soul?!”

“Well, yeah, and then you made her cry,” his brother says flatly, “and then you ran and left her all alone and now you’ve called me to take care of it for you.” He snickers, making a tch noise with his too-wide smile. “Seems like you run from everything, doc.”

The words strike his Soul like a stinging dagger. Sans always manages to make his statements cut deep, especially when he’s concerned. He mentally prepared himself for some scolding, but this?

“You can’t run from your shit forever, y’know. And I think time’s just about up,” Sans says, and presses the elevator button.

This is what Gaster invited when he called his brother for help.

When the two step into the lab, however, you’re not where the doctor left you. Your swivel chair sits vacant, your desk untouched. You’re not at any of the examination tables, nor are you poking around in any of his old experiments.

Sans eyes him critically, as if it’s his fault you’ve moved.

“Perhaps she’s in the bathroom,” Gaster says, “she’s become quite acquainted with it in times of distress.”

“Distress? Shit, what else did you do?”

The doctor avoids eye contact, murmuring, “She may have vomited yesterday after I told her about the truth of the CORE...”

“Wait, you told her that? All of it?” That only seems makes Sans more uneasy, an eye socket arching up in shock.
“Yes, all of it. Every last bit of the absolute truth.” Gaster smirks self-assuredly. “You see? I’m not running from everything, as you so typically assumed.”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever, you just love being right.”

“Flowers, please,” Gaster says next, but when he holds out a black-gloved hand, he’s met with apprehension.

Sans snorts, “Oh, you think you’re gonna give these to her? And you’re just gonna waltz out of this smelling like roses, huh? Well, I hate to be the thorn in your side, doc, but things like this ain’t that easy.”

“How not?” The doctor asks. “It’s the perfect fix. I apologize, give her the flowers, and-“

“Gast,” Sans cuts him off, “if you really think all that you did to her is gonna be solved all quick and sunny with a thing of flowers, then you’ve got more issues than I figured.”

“But you said-“

“I said they were for her, and I said I’d help you. That’s all you’re getting.” The short skeleton’s cerulean eyes cut up sharply, and he speaks slowly. “Just because you’re my brother doesn’t mean you’re right.”

And that’s the moment you walk out of the restroom, the moment when Sans is slicing a glare straight into Gaster’s confused head. In that moment, the doctor sees you through his brother’s eyes, as if meeting you all over again.

You’re considerably calmer, but your hair looks a bit disheveled. Your makeup, though smeared, was clearly once immaculate. That’s not to say you’re a wreck, of course. Nothing could make you look so messy to the point of unsightliness. Though your figure’s already striking, the black lab-coat accentuates every curve and edge of your form. Your lips are turned into a cordial smile at the sight of someone new, and there’s that oh-so-intelligent spark in your eyes.

The doctor’s caught off-guard and just nearly terrified of just how you appear to him and his brother, simply because you’re so obviously gorgeous, and Sans knows, and Gaster knows that he knows, and he hates it.

“Oh, hello!” You smile at his brother and Gaster feels an unfamiliar twist in his Soul. Or is that his stomach? His body hardly ever has feeling to it, but this is an all-over feeling of... dread, perhaps?

“Hey, you must be the pretty assistant I keep hearing about. The name’s Sans.” Sans holds out a bony hand, giving you a grin.

“_____,” you say as you meet his hand. Gaster knows it’s just a handshake, that’s all it is, just a professional handshake between acquaintances. But it’s the way Sans squeezes your palm in his, his phalanges just fitting around yours, that makes the doctor’s eye twitch. Nothing’s wrong, nothing that he can directly name or place, but nothing’s right here either. His brother is doing something bad, but what?

“_____,” it’s a pleasure. Can’t name a time I was happier to meet someone.”

Oh please, Gaster mentally groans, there’s no need for this ridiculousness. But nevertheless, it gets under his skin when it actually makes you laugh.

“By the way,” Sans says, “thought someone so bright would enjoy these,” and then he’s pulling the
flowers from behind his back. You can’t possibly-

“Oh my god, they’re beautiful!” Oh, you are. You’re blushing and giggling like a schoolgirl as you take the bouquet. “That’s so sweet of you. Let find something to put these in real quick.” You smile at the short skeleton over your shoulder as you turn to rummage through cabinets. Pulling out assorted containers, you keep talking, “You know, I wasn’t having the best day before. And I wasn’t even told we’d be having guests.” Oh, that’s a pointed tone directed straight at Gaster. He hears that prod loud and clear, and he feels it, too. But then you laugh and add, “But this is such a nice surprise! Thank you, Sans!”

You find a large, conical flask in the cabinet and put all the others back before going to a sink. You’re careful with it, holding it with both hands as you wash it. The doctor watches the way your expression relaxes with your methodical cleaning. The flask shines and you dry the outside, then fill it with icy water.

The flowers come next. You don’t need to trim them much, as the flask is plenty tall, but you barely take the ends off over the running water. The blue ribbon around the bouquet is untied, and redone around the glass stem of the flask instead. It’s an elegant fit, the bright bouquet in its makeshift vase. Your deft fingers ghost over the soft, yellow petals, as if you just can’t help touching them.

“There,” you sigh, “perfect.” You pass the skeletons on your way to take the flask to your desk, smiling at one of them. Gaster isn’t even spared a glance.

He stiffens, clears his throat, says what he’s rehearsed. “_____. Sans is here to assist us with the… issue… we’ve discovered.”

You still won’t look at him. “You mean my issue?”

Sans winces. Even he can hear the bitterness in your tone.

So Gaster softens his tone, or tries to. He’s never been one to be… soft. “If it’s an issue of yours, then it’s an issue of ours. Nevertheless, it may not be such a simple dilemma as we assumed.”

“What do you mean?” That makes your eyebrow quirk up.

Sans interjects, “He means I’m a Soul expert, hon. And there’s probably more going on than you thought.”

Your hand goes to the center of your chest. Covering. Protecting. “Like what?”

“We’re gonna see. May not be for the faint-hearted, but whatever it is we’re gonna nip it right in the bud.” When he nods over to the flowers, you giggle again.

Gaster feels that twist within him once more, that sick, angry feeling he can’t quite place. It’s eating him from the inside out like a flourishing parasite.

He grits his bony teeth. “And what do we need to do in order to accomplish that and send you on your way?”

“Don’t have to do anything but let me observe for a bit.” Oh, of course he’s going to make this as difficult as possible. Of course there’s not a simple thing Gaster can do that will just get him out of his laboratory!

But nevertheless, he obliges and gets to work, pretending as if it were simply another day in the lab. Simply another day with his new assistant, who can’t bear to look at him for too long because of
how he’s treated you. Simply another day with his brother in the background, making you laugh like he’s never heard before. You can’t even focus on your work with Sans at your heels. The shorter skeleton’s approach is baffling. How is this helping at all?

“_____,” The doctor calls across the room after approximately an hour of being ignored (if he were counting), “would you mind bringing me my notebook? It’s the black one on that counter over there.”

You stifle your giggles only long enough to say, “Yes sir,” and walk to him holding back a smile. Your expression has sobered by the time you hand him the leather-bound book.

As he has your attention he says, “You know, _____, I can’t help but notice you have a delightful laugh. I don’t think I’ve heard it before.”

Your eyes stay sharp but he swears he sees a pink tone start to overtake your cheeks. Before you can even open your mouth to speak, though, Sans appears at your side.

“Then maybe you should take some notes, doc,” he says, and then redirecting his attention elsewhere, calls, “Hey, _____, did you look at this yet?”

It’s an obvious distraction, but you still take the bait, turning towards the shorter skeleton and following him off to another end of the lab. Gaster doesn’t know what could possibly be so interesting about a failed prototype, but apparently it’s more interesting than him. He wants to call you back to him, to give you numbers to run, even if he has to make them up.

The doctor thinks of you earlier, before this whole mess emerged. So kind, so attentive, so simply yourself in such a natural way that you can’t help but be brilliant in everything you do. Where have you gone? You’re off with his brother, being entertained with his riveting stories and mediocre puns. He cracks a joke and you laugh. And laugh. And laugh. Gaster is your boss, not Sans. You should be here with him. He should be the one making you laugh, with your eyes wrinkling at the ends and your nose scrunching as prettily as they are now. His Soul is practically throbbing in sheer annoyance.

Another twenty minutes passes and Gaster can feel almost his entire body pounding.

Turning to Sans, he calls, “Brother, would you mind coming with me for a moment? I’d like to discuss-“

“Brother?!” You interrupt, “Wait, Sans, you’re his brother?!?” As you glance from skeleton to skeleton, a tiny gasp comes from your mouth. “Oh my god, you really are.” You’re practically jumping as you ramble on. Stars, if you don’t look absolutely ecstatic. “Like I didn’t want to just assume because you’re both skeletons, but oh my god it makes so much sense because you’re both so smart, and observant, and- wait, Sans, that means you’re Papyrus’ brother, too, right?!”

“You know Paps?” Sans asks.

“Yeah, I met him last night! He works with my friend, and oh my god, he’s just so sweet and adorable!”

The short skeleton beams with pride. “I know, right? He’s just the coolest.”

“Awww, you’re such a sweet brother! That’s so cute!”

That’s when Gaster decides to clear his throat. “Sans, that is enough.” He opens the door to the supply closet. “A word, please. Now.”
Sans doesn’t look the least bit unnerved as he turns on his heel. “Be right back-bone, ______. Think you can manage?”

Your voice is silky-smooth and sugary-sweet. “I guess, but I’ll sure be bonely without you.” You giggle one more time, just one more time, and Gaster sees red. It bursts within his Soul and sends wave after wave of rage through his system. All composure is tossed to the side. That’s it, that’s it, this is done, he’s done. That one little laugh of yours, with your melodic voice and sparkling eyes, was the final and prettiest nail in Sans’ coffin. With a growl that borders on primal, Gaster grips his brother by the shoulder and yanks him into the closet, slamming the door behind him.

He’s grabbing onto the collar of his brother’s shirt, pulling him up to glare at him, holding him there. It’s pitch black inside, aside from the raw violet glow of the doctor’s eyes.

“That,” he snarls, “is fucking enough.”

“Surprised you lasted that long, Gast. I’m impressed,” Sans says, cracking a grin in the darkness.

“And what the ever-loving hell do you mean by that?!”

“I mean you’re three times as capable as I thought you’d be.” Even in the position the shorter skeleton is in, he manages to shrug. “Thought you’d only make it thirty minutes before throwing me out in a jealous rage.”

Gaster seethes, “In a what?!” He feels his fury still bubbling up, spewing out his mouth in an angry rasp.

“You heard me.” His brother chuckles, “Wait, don’t tell me you didn’t know you were jealous, doc. It’s so obvious. How you kept looking at her, and trying to get her attention away from me. How you lost your shit when she flirted back a second ago. Yeah, that’s a thing. Did you not know that was a thing?”

The doctor is silent.

Sans says, “That’s hilarious.”

His head spins. For once, Gaster is the one with all the questions. “Why, then? Why do I feel this way? I can’t control it, I can’t stifle it- Stars, it nearly ripped me apart and ate me alive in there like a starving animal! I became an animal. It’s as if I have no control when it comes to her, as if everything I’ve known to be true is gone and there’s nothing I can do about it! There has to be a logical, psychological explanation for this madness!”

Sans sighs, shakes his head, and with that ever-present grin on his face, deadpans, “I mean, it may have something to do with the fact that she’s your Soulmate. But it’s not like I’m an expert or anything.”

Chapter End Notes

Aaaand PLOT BOMB!

I hope y’all like where I’m taking this! Please feel free to comment and kudos and all that jazz because it seriously keeps me going. Seriously.
Confusion

Chapter Summary

You and Gaster both need to sort through some emotions.

(Alternate Summary: Gaster vs. The Radio, Round 2)

Chapter Notes

This just might be the longest chapter I’ve ever written. I think I’m gonna be going for chapters more like this length from now on, or at least that’s the plan. It allows for more content and more plot progression. I hope that’s okay with y’all!!!

The songs in this chapter are, in order:
"Lovefool" by The Cardigans
"L-O-V-E" by Nat King Cole
"Let's Get it On" by Marvin Gaye

But oh wow, I honestly enjoyed writing this one. When you get to the end you’ll see why. ;)

Enjoy and know that I love you all <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

While Dr. Gaster and Sans were in the supply closet, you tried to busy yourself with organizing your desk to pass the time. You set up your cork-board with various tacks and pictures of your friends and family as the minutes ticked by. The flask full of sunflowers was positioned so it could still catch the light filtering from the windows. All in all, it took perhaps fifteen minutes at the most before you were satisfied and the two skeletons exited the closet.

And boy, you’re going to exhaust yourself trying to figure out what the hell happened in there.

Sans seems fine, for the most part, but Gaster? He looks like a mess, and hardly a hot one. The way he walked out of there, with sockets wide and shoulders tense, worries you. Sure, he’s been a complete ass to you these past few hours, but that doesn’t mean that you hate him, or that you’re even terribly angry with him. And after all, he did call Sans in to help you. That’s a good sign, right?

But that doesn’t explain why he won’t come more than five feet near you. If he needs to ask you something, he does so from across the lab. If you step closer to him, he steps away. It’s always discreet, but you always catch it, especially after he’s been so close to you recently. This morning he brushed shoulders at every opportunity, and last night he even dared to kiss your hand, but with the way he keeps his distance now you could convince yourself that those things never happened. It’s not like you wanted to get especially closer to him, considering your argument earlier, but you can’t help but feel a little confused. What’s gotten into him?
You dare to pipe, “Dr. Gaster?” and he looks over at you with wide eyes. He looks… scared? “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine,” he replies, a little too quickly. This makes you roll your eyes, simply for the fact that in modern times, everyone knows that “fine” does not mean “fine.” You can’t discern whether he’s caught on to that, or if he really is, in a literal sense, fine.

“You sure?” You ask, arching an eyebrow.

“Quite.”

Well, he’s certainly talkative. You reflexively pout, and turn back to your work. When you do, you can feel his eyes on you. Sans looks from you to Gaster, his wide smile still plastered across his face. Nevertheless, though, he seems nervous. You know he’s intelligent; after all, he’s Gaster’s brother, and a proclaimed Soul expert. Surely there’s something on his mind.

So you lean across the counter, look up at him, and ask, “What have you figured out so far, Sans? Any progress?”

“Oh, uh,” he stammers for a minute, looking over at Gaster, whose expression you can’t read. “It might take a while, need some more figuring and thinking, kiddo. That’s not a problem, is it?”

“Not at all.” Oh. Is it really that complex? For some reason, you were under the impression that he had a breakthrough. He’d been less talkative, and less… interested? He’s still observing you, undoubtedly, but there seems to be less need to. What if he’s hiding something? What if he really has your issue all figured out?

But perhaps you’re being paranoid.

Sans stays with you and Gaster until the end of the day. It’s a quiet afternoon spent fetching data, running numbers, and logging things on your computer, but nevertheless, you find yourself enjoying it a little. Math has always been comforting to you. It’s a constant, and every formula overlaps another. When the equations get tough, you tie your hair up with a band you find at the bottom of your purse.

At around five-thirty, Dr. Gaster gathers his notebook and computer in his leather bag. He’s still being finicky towards you, but despite that, you managed to get a great deal of work done today.

“Shall we finish up for the day?” He suggests, looking to both you and Sans. “I will drive the both of you home, if that’s acceptable.”

That’s how you end up exiting the facility with two skeletons, one walking briskly ahead of you and the other in tow. As always, you struggle to keep pace with Gaster. Sans doesn’t seem to care about keeping up; he has his own speed, and that speed is slow. Together the three of you reach the Rolls-Royce, and Gaster opens the passenger door for you.

“Thank you,” you murmur, and when you look up, he’s gaping at you. Why is he staring? Your eyebrows furor as you get in the car. Sans is in the back, settled into the middle seat where you can turn and look right back at him.

“What is with him?” You hiss as Gaster is walking around to his side.

You only get a shrug in response. Although you want to press more, you can’t, because in a matter
of seconds the driver’s-side door is opening and the doctor is stepping in. Pursing your lips, you turn forward to face the setting sun through the windshield. You don’t want to look at Sans, it’ll just look odd to Gaster, and you don’t want to look at Gaster, either, because all he’ll do is fix you with that wide-eyed stare.

You watch the horizon-line as the sun sinks into it like a flattened red tomato. The light’s fading from the sky rapidly, and the streetlamps have begun to flicker on. Traffic is slow, of course; it’s the end of the work day in a large city. Ahead of you, the cars are at a slow crawl, their headlights burning a low red. Sighing, you prop your elbow against the side of the door.

Out of the corner of your eye you see Dr. Gaster reach over to turn the radio on. He must be tired of the silence. You assume his phone is out of reach; otherwise, he’d be using his own library. The system finds the nearest station, with the volume on high, and…

"I cry, and I pray, and I beg

Love me, love me

Say that you love me-

A gloved hand quickly taps a button on the steering wheel, and the female voice and bouncy tune are cut off abruptly. The next station is something older, softer, that seems like something Gaster would actually like.

"L is for the way you look at me

O is for the only one I see

V is very, very extraordinary

E is even more than anyone-"

Apparently you’re wrong, because in a matter of thirty seconds he’s changed the station yet again. And you were just starting to like that one, too! He gets through a series of dead stations before the radio picks up another one.

"Let’s get it on

Ah baby, let’s get it on

Let’s love, baby

Let’s-

That’s all you hear before the radio abruptly shuts off. The car is silent again, save for the city outside and the quiet chuckling of the skeleton in the backseat.

When Gaster stops outside your apartment, he’s still giving you the same silent treatment as he’s been giving. With a sigh, you grab your bag and begin to open the door.

“Wait,” he says suddenly, stopping you with a hand. “I’d like to talk with you for a moment. Is that alright?”

Oh, so now he wants to talk? All you can do is arch an eyebrow, but nod nonetheless, because as conflicted as you feel, he is still your boss.
His eyes flicker to the rear-view mirror, where Sans’ grinning face is staring right back. You think you see his sockets narrow, but you’re not sure.

Then he sighs, “Let me walk you up to your apartment.”

So you let him step out first and open the door for you. You walk in with him and don’t miss the gaping face of the receptionist at the desk. He’s not used to monsters being in here, you suppose. Most of everyone living in the complex is human. In addition, Gaster is *ridiculously* tall. He’s not exactly easy to overlook. There isn’t anyone in the lobby, other than him, so the short walk to the elevator is peaceful.

“Your complex is quite nice,” he comments. “Which floor do you live on?”

“The tenth,” you tell him, and he presses the elevator button for you. The doors shut, and you’re alone together, confined in the tight room. You haven’t been alone like this in such a tight space, not even in the supply closet. Even that’s bigger than this tiny box. You stand on opposite sides, facing the doors.

He doesn’t look at you when he starts speaking. “I suppose I should begin now. I’d rather not keep you.”

What in the world is he going to say?

Will he tell you what’s been going on with him?

Has there been something on his mind after all?

Are there answers? God, you need some answers.

He rasps, “I’m sure that you are quite confused, considering the events that have taken place today. As for right now, I’m not certain that I can ease any of your confusion. Frankly, I’m baffled by several things myself. I cannot give you the answers you want at this moment in time, and as your superior I’d like to apologize for that.”

Oh.

“Oh,” you say. “That’s… that’s okay.”

The elevator reaches your floor and you step out ahead of him. The hallway is only so wide, and he’s stuck behind you as you walk to your door. You fish in your purse for your keys, listening for the telltale jingling while you rummage. Your fingers snag on the keyring and you pull them up.

How odd. To think that he’d just walk you up here to tell you he can’t tell you anything.

“Is that all?” You ask. “I can let you get back to your car and your… Sans… If you want?”

The gold key jiggles its way into the lock, turns…

“Wait.”

At his sudden interjection you turn to face him, and it’s the first time you’re able to look into his eyes since your fight on the roof. Gaster looks like a deer caught in headlights, with sockets that wide. He’s gazing straight into your heart—no, straight into your Soul.

“_____, nothing today has gone as expected or desired, and I am completely to blame for that,” he sighs. “The events themselves are utterly baffling. As I said, I have no answers to offer you.
However, my dear, there has been something far worse here than simply a mishap or two, and it’s been my behavior.”

“Sir?” The apartment key slips out of your grip and falls from its lock.

“Please do not object. I cannot even start to entertain the idea that I was anything but appalling to you. To begin with, I asked you to perform a procedure that requires a monumental amount of trust—trust I couldn’t have expected you to have, trust I know you do not have now. Such left you spread and screaming on my lab table, and I simply cannot have that.”

You flush a bit. Surely, he could have chosen those last words better. And yet, your face is heating up. Nevertheless, though, you attempt to stay silent through his talk.

“Following that, I did not handle the situation well emotionally. I proceeded to lash out at you, and act on you out of anger. In reality, though, I was only angry at myself. I never wished to guilt you, or make you believe as if you had done wrong, as you were simply wanting to console me. Correct?”

You give him a nod.

“I then called my brother in order to fix things. This was a ridiculous mistake. Asking minor input would have been acceptable, but to cast the whole issue onto him and expect to not exert any effort into fixing our dynamic? Lazy and despicable. I should have come to you first, ____, to mend our problem myself. I’m sure that with all of this, I’ve made you nothing less than uncomfortable. I’d like to apologize for all of it. That is, if you would accept it.”

He’s... apologizing? For today? For all of it? You can’t seem to find the words to give your boss, so you manage to nod again.

The doctor sighs, “My dear, I am astronomically sorry for all that’s occurred to you. For all that I’ve done to you. I do not expect your forgiveness, but—“

“It’s okay.” The words slip out of your mouth easily and before you can even process them.

“Is it really, though?” His sockets seem to furrow together.

Is it really okay? After all, Gaster said it himself: He doesn’t expect your forgiveness with all he’s done. He violated your trust, lashed out at you, and then asked someone else to fix his mess for him. You’re stressed, angry, confused… Your emotions have been sent through the wringer several times over, just today. You probably aren’t even in your right mind to even consider forgiving him right now.

And yet, you feel...

“Yes sir. I understand completely, and it’s okay.”

Sympathetic? Empathetic? Compassionate?

Something like that.

The doctor begins to open his mouth, possibly to argue, but then closes it. This won’t end up like your confrontation on the roof.

You say, “You’ve had a rough day. We both have. If you lose your cool over something that matters a lot to you, I can’t exactly blame you. You know what you did, and you apologized. There’s no need for me to hold anything against you. And we can just work on that whole trust thing together.”
“Oh. I do suppose we can.” Slowly, the corners of his mouth turn up a bit. “_____, despite how unimpressed this world leaves me, you always manage to keep me intrigued.”

“Thank…you?” You’re starting to flush again, and when you look up you notice he is too. His opalescent face has the lightest violet sheen to it. It’s a nice look on him. Honestly, any look is nice on him. You’re not going to act like that black lab-coat hasn’t been killing you today.

“Ah, um,” Gaster stammers, “there’s no need for that. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?”

“Nothing other than what we already have.” Bending over, you pick your apartment key up from the floor. Your purse is slung over your shoulder. “I don’t want to keep you up for too long. I’m sure you and Sans are ready to get home and all.”

“That’s another thing, _____,” your boss says, “You took quite a liking to Sans, didn’t you?”

“I mean, he’s really funny, if that’s what you mean. And he was extra nice, like with those flowers? They were so pretty. He’s fun to be around, but honestly, it was difficult to get work done with him. He didn’t seem to want to talk or cooperate much. And he seemed… not really shifty, but like maybe he wasn’t telling me something? Like for a moment there I almost felt like he actually knew what was going on with my Soul, but that he just didn’t want me to know?”

Gaster looks… alarmed? Oh, you probably sound ridiculous right now, talking about his brother like that! God, you need to shut up.

You quickly add, “But the feeling passed, and now I think that I was being paranoid about the whole thing. That kind of stuff just sets you on-edge, y’know?”

“Oh, I understand,” he nods, “you simply seemed to enjoy his company quite a bit.”

You shrug, “He’s cool, but not quite my type.”

Not the tall, dominant, dignified type. Not like…

Oh god, your boss is your type. Oh god.

You quickly stammer, “But that aside, I’ll let you get back to him.”

“Yes, of course.” In return he gives you a nod, and another gentle smile. “Thank you for allowing me to apologize properly.”

“And thank you for apologizing. I really appreciate it, Gaster.”

When he holds his hand out, you meet it. He shakes your hand slowly, gingerly, and as he does you can’t help but wonder how he feels without his gloves on. You’ve never touched his bones before; sure, you brushed his face when he kissed your hand at the bar last night, and you’ve shaken Sans’ hand, but you’d love the chance to really examine him, and really touch his-

Whoa, whoa now. That’s a bit much. In a minor state of panic you slip your hand from his.

“I will see you tomorrow, then, ______. Nine a.m., sharp.” With that, the doctor turns on his heels and begins his walk back down the hall. Just before he turns a corner, he glances back to you, waving his long, elegant fingers in your direction. “Sleep well, my dear.”

Your face is burning as you fumble your key back into its lock. Unbelievable. You just got flustered
thinking about touching his bare fucking hand. What are you, a puritan in the 1600s? What’s wrong with you? He’s your boss, your boss that you’ve known for a grand total of three days!

You stumble into the apartment to find that you’re alone. Joanne’s probably working a double-shift today; she tends to overexert herself to make up for the clubbing. Maybe it’s a blessing, then, that she isn’t wandering about and talking.

As your head throbs you throw your purse onto the floor of your cozy living room. You kick your shoes off and practically sling your bra out from under your shirt. There’s one blanket on one end of the sofa, and another on the thrifted armchair. You take both, wrapping one around your shoulders and splaying the other across your body as you lie on the couch.

A nap is in order. You’ve had a Day.

Ascension.

How far you’re going up, you’re unsure of. All you know is the feeling of weightlessness, of the air underneath your work heels.

You’re in the apartment elevator again. It moves smoothly, seamlessly, and unceasingly. You’d like to know how high you’re going, but the buttons that are typically beside the door aren’t there. Are they behind you? You turn...

…and are met by the pristine fabric of a lab-coat. Gaster stands before you, at his slender seven feet of height, head-to-toe in black.

”Doctor,” you exclaim, ”I didn’t know you were there!”

He chuckles, a dark, velvety sound that comes from somewhere deep inside him. “Oh, my dear assistant, I’m everywhere.” His eyes have that look you’re getting familiar with, that purple spark brimming with fascination, with curiosity… with hunger.

”Step back,” he tells you, body pressed to yours. You feel as if you’re floating as your feet effortlessly slink backwards, slipping against the floor until your back is to the elevator wall. Of course, your chest is to him. You feel as if you’re trapped, as if you can’t breathe, and yet, you don’t feel a need to.

Dr. Gaster slips the fingers of one hand between yours and you feel bone. You try to look down to see, to look at his bare skeletal hand, but the other one is suddenly at your neck, tilting your chin up.

”Ah-ah. Eyes up, always,” he chides, and your knees just nearly give out on you, but you obey. He looks so amused with you, with that smirk on his face. You can feel the hand under your chin trail down, pausing at your exposed throat. He’s running his phalanges across your clavicle, slowly, gently.

”Such pretty skin,” he whispers. Though he’s so much taller than you, his voice lands right at your ear.

You can’t help but think that he has so much power over you, pinning you with his body like this. You feel him move his hands to your thighs and grip them both. With a surprisingly deft strength he lifts you, bringing your legs to wrap his torso and making your bodies more even with one another.
Now you hardly have to look up at the man pressed against you.

The doctor curves his defined, statuesque form even more, dipping his skull right into the crook of your neck. “You smell amazing,” he purrs. Your heart hammers in your chest as you feel warm, wanton breath against your skin. There’s a moment of just that, simply his hot respirations as you struggle not to squirm in anticipation. He presses a feathery kiss against your neck, and you can’t help the shameless whimper that comes out of your mouth.

“All that over my teasing?” He chuckles, smirk evident in his voice. More kisses are peppered on your neck, across your shoulders, against your throat, up your jaw, all while you mewl uncontrollably. You can’t help it, it just feels so good.

“Gaster,” you gasp, writhing and turning your head this way and that to try and nudge his face upwards. You want to kiss him, you need his mouth against yours, you need…

But he only laughs and tucks his head lower. It’s all you can do not to whine in frustration as you’re subject to even more teasing. He grazes his teeth against your throat and tightens his grip on your legs. You try to move your hands away from the wall, to hold him tighter, to bring him closer, to maybe pull his head up to kiss him, but they’re stuck to the wall. Gaster kisses up to your ear, just out of reach, and a breathy moan leaves your throat.

He murmurs, “Oh, you poor, needy, beautiful little thing…” You can feel his fingers dragging up your thighs, still supporting you as they make their way up your skirt and inward. “Shall we see just how needy you are?”

“Please,” you rasp. It’s all you can say, all you can manage, with his mouth against your ear and his deft, skilled hands working up and between your legs. You wait for the feel of his slender, bony fingers against your panties, grazing you, touching that soaking heat that’s pooled itself right at your dripping cunt. “Please…”

But it never comes.

The next thing you know, you’re on your couch, eyes on the ceiling. Your body’s dripping with sweat under the blankets you’ve wrapped yourself in. With a gasp for breath, you struggle to free yourself from the cocoon.

You’re slightly disoriented, and confused as hell.

But oh, do you need a cold shower.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not sorry okay. I needed to write that. I NEEDED IT.

But hey, I hope you liked that. I want all of you to know that I immensely appreciate your support and feedback as I write this. I've been working on this for almost a year now and it makes me so happy to see that people still look at it and enjoy it. I love making y'all happy and when y'all are happy I'm happy <3

www.sansualfics.tumblr.com
"It’s just a dream.” You slip your work clothes on, making sure to tuck the blouse into the skirt. You’re monochromatic today, from the inky blackness of your shoes to the dark lab-coat you’re beginning to become familiar with. It’s finely-tailored, yet comfortable, fashionable. That doesn’t mean that it’s calming, or that it alleviates the shaking of your hands and the still-frantic beating of your heart.

“That’s all it was. It was just a dream. Just a dream.” You say it again, now at your bathroom mirror. You need to convince yourself. You need to know.

It’s been your mantra since yesterday, when you woke up on the couch in a hot, needy, sweat. You chalked it up to sexual frustration and went to allay that. A cold shower subdued the initial shock of it all. You even went so far as to engage in a little self-love (literally) to attempt to rid your brain of the memory. It worked, well, up until you climaxed and the thought of your boss’s hand up your skirt resurfaced right as you went over the edge.

That proved to be counterproductive, and today you can’t seem to go five minutes without thinking about it.

“It was all a dream,” you sigh again, brushing eyeshadow across your lid. “I didn’t touch him. He didn’t kiss me. It wasn’t real.”

“Talking to yourself?” Joanne pokes her head into the open doorway. “I know this new job is making you a little nutty, but do I need to cart you off to the psych ward?”

“Nah,” you shake your head, looking back over your shoulder. “I just had a weird dream. It shook me up a little.”

“Was it scary?”

“Terrifying,” you reply, and you aren’t exaggerating in the slightest. No, you certainly weren’t terrified in the dream; in fact, you were quite far from it. But just the thought… Gaster, your fucking
boss, with his hands all over you like that, in a way that was familiar, in a way that you liked…

No. No. This is inappropriate. This is wrong. This is bad. Stop. You need to get ready for work.

Today, you make sure to look impeccable, if only to hide your inner turmoil. You can’t let Dr. Gaster know that you dreamt of him, or that you’re even attracted to him. You can’t. It will be hard, you realize, if he’s going to be as generous and chivalrous as he has been. If yesterday gave you any clue, then he will be. With hope, he will refrain from doing anything overly-shocking, and you can get out of the lab without anymore emotional breakdowns.

Before you run out the door, you’re sure to spritz on a bit of perfume. It’s a sweet scent, almost like candy, but not so overbearing. It goes on your wrists, in the crook of your neck…

"You smell amazing," he practically purred with his mouth right there, right at your throat, just before kissing you so…

It was a dream.

You’re not thinking about this anymore.

At least not for another four minutes.

“She’s your assistant.”

Dr. Gaster grips the marble edges of his counter with an iron hold. His voice echoes across the expanse of his bathroom, bouncing off of the expansive tub and sounding off of the walls.

“That is all she is. That is all she needs to be.” He presses his ungloved hands to his temples, grazing one of the ancient cracks in his skull. He’s had them for so long, he can hardly remember a time when he didn’t. They’re a part of him, a part of his past, a piece of his life. He knows they’re unsightly to look at, that they’re riveting and exclusively for sore eyes. You probably think they’re hideous, too. You probably think he’s hideous.

But why does it matter so much what you think?

“She is your assistant. Simply that.”

He’d spent his evening in his bedroom, a bottle of scotch and his laptop serving as his company. Gaster was partially satisfied by the fact that you had forgiven him again somehow, and yet he was left with a lingering feeling of inadequacy. An apology alone would not suffice, he concluded amidst the scotch. For a good half-hour at the least he lingered on the idea of buying you a bigger, more elaborate bouquet than the one that Sans had given you. You weren’t as simple as sunflowers and ribbons. He perused the local florists’ websites, intrigued and utterly inebriated. There were ones in upwards of triple-digit costs that looked adequate enough for you, and yet…

The doctor woke in the morning with a drained laptop and an ache in his neck from passing out at his desk chair. The ache is gone now, leaving only the aftermath of emotion.

"The fact that she is your Soulmate is irrelevant.”

That’s what he has been telling himself since yesterday, at least. The shock that came to him upon Sans’ revelation was unrivaled by any other emotion he’d ever felt. It gave reason to that strange tugging that had begun to stir within him. It's a feeling he’s detested, that he’s never acknowledged
before. He hates the way it squeezes at him, makes his thoughts swim, turns everything practical into nonsense.

The doctor doesn't have time for such emotions. He never has. There's too much work to be done, too much progress to be made. It's unnecessary, the lot of it.

"_____ is your coworker. You are her boss, she is under you, she will stay under you and- Oh, god dammit!" He slams his hands down, appalled by where his mind was running off to with that wording. Somewhere dark, somewhere with dim lighting and a lovely, familiar silhouette splayed out on his sheets, his hands on either side of you.

Gaster takes a deep breath and stares his reflection down. The monster in front of him has opted to grip the counter again, with narrowed sockets and a clenched jaw. His entire form stiffens. No one will get in the way of his career, not even a pretty human. Not even one with a pull on his Soul.

"No. No. That is all she is and that is all she ever will be. She is simply your assistant and things will fucking stay that way."

He leaves his bathroom with a closed mindset, ready for work. The silence of the house is normal, as Papyrus left for his job hours ago. Sans, however, is just now rolling out of bed and meandering out to the hallway. Gaster catches him by the staircase.

"Sans."

"Mornin, doc," the short skeleton grunts. "Heard you getting pretty heated in the bathroom. Talking to the mirror again, I assume?"

"I was simply…"

"Reflecting?" His brother finishes his sentence with a pun.

Gaster only sighs and walks down the stairs, gloved hands gripping the railing. He is going to need an inhumane amount of black coffee to get him through the day.

His brother follows. "You know, Gast… it's not bad to have feelings."

"Feelings?" The taller skeleton snorts as he turns the coffee maker. With a puff and hiss of steam, the machine comes to life. The finely-ground beans let off a comforting smell, and slowly, coffee drips into the glass pot below. "I don’t have any of those types of feelings that you’re referring to."

"You sure?" Sans shifts his weight from one foot to the other in a near-rhythmic bouncing motion. "You don’t have any weird fluttery feelings? No loss of appetite, or anxiety that you can’t quite place? You don’t notice your Soul beating particularly hard, do you? Or any mood swings?"

Gaster can feel the needy thrumming of his Soul. "No, none of that."

"Alright, doc. Whatever you say." That grin of his is utterly shit-eating. It always is when he becomes smug in his ways.

So the doctor leaves, embarking on his day. It starts out easy enough, with a travel mug and an easy drive through traffic. Picking you up at nine is a far better alternative to clocking in at six. It's easier as well.

He is as far from being a “morning person” as possible. Functionality is a struggle in the early hours. Give him caffeine and he can barely scrape the bottom of the socialization barrel. He’s never been
the best at communicating, regardless of the time of day.

And today is decent until approximately 8:02, when you step out of your apartment building and make your way to the car. Gaster sets his eyes on you and, for the first time in a very long time, forgets what he’s currently doing. He racks his brain for the information, for any sort of cue as to-

“Doctor?” You’re knocking on the passenger window. “Are you alright?”

Stars, the door, he was supposed to get the door for you!

“O-oh!” He scrambles out of the Rolls-Royce, willing himself to walk straight and talk like a competent being. “Allow me, ______.” His fumbling arms are as good as useless to his uncoordinated mind. With only slight struggle he opens the door for you.

“Thank you, Gaster. How was your morning?” You grip your skirt as you slip into the passenger seat, possibly to hold it in place because today it’s short, too short not to ride up as you sit. Too short for Gaster to not notice your legs, as hard as he’s trying to avert his eyes. You’re just his assistant.

When he gets back in the driver’s seat, he finds that you’re fixing him with a thin, teasing smirk.

“And what is that look for?” He inquires.

“You never answered my question.” In your seat you cross your ankles, and the light shining in from the windshield catches on the smooth surface of your calf. You’re lovely.

“Oh, ah,” He can already feel his mind slipping from him, as he can’t even remember what you even asked him. He was too preoccupied with… other matters. It must be a simple question, surely one that can be answered with a simple, “Yes.”

By the way your smirk widens out, he knows he was wrong. You breathe out a snicker, and your teeth show through a part in your soft lips. “So your morning was ‘yes’?”

The doctor stammers, “I, ah,” God, is he floundering! How pathetic must he be for something so simple as the legs of a human girl to distract him! It’s offensive; he is the former Royal Scientist, builder of the CORE, master of The Void, an esteemed researcher of the surface, not some prepubescent grade-school boy!

You only laugh. “I wish my morning was as yes as yours. I’m warning you, now, Dr. Gaster, my brain’s all over the place today.”

“I can understand that, dear.” Oh, if only you knew just how much he understood. If only you were aware of the inner torment within him. He attempts to carry on normally, and hopes that it is convincing. “However, there is no need to fret. Today’s work will not be nearly as… strenuous… as yesterday’s.”

Strenuous, he says lightly, as if he didn’t violate your very Soul. You may have forgiven him, but Gaster certainly hasn’t forgiven himself. He looks over at you while you nod, your gaze wandering out the window of the car as he drives. Your reflection in the glass reminds him of an old photograph, faded at the edges and tinted grey. Your eyes, the brightest things in the picture, are off somewhere in the street. Perhaps it’s good that you don’t notice him staring.

A stoplight forces the doctor to switch his attention to the road. He needs to stop looking at you, as when he starts, he can’t seem to stop. He can’t be distracted like this while he’s driving, much less at work. He’s never been this diverted before, even with you working at his side for the past few days. Today, he might as well be in The Void, for all of the use he’s being!
The doctor has been ultimately fine in your presence until today. There were a few slip-ups, such as the moment he saw you in that wretched nightclub Papyrus went off to, wearing *that dress*. There was also the incident yesterday, when he beheld your Soul. He was astounded, he couldn’t help himself; you were just so-

*She’s your assistant,* a voice within him chides, and he realizes he needs to stop thinking about how attractive you are. Are you attractive? Is *he* even attracted to you?

Are you really even his Soulmate?

The thought seems preposterous, and at first Gaster brushes it off with an *of course you are,* *unfortunately,* but the feeling of doubt won’t quite dismiss itself. After all, he was never able to detect any particular pull to you. You’re intelligent, kind, and creative; why wouldn’t he like you? That’s why he hired you after all, and that’s why he enjoys your company so.

It doesn’t have a thing to do with Soulmates, or attraction, if either of those things exist between you two!

In the driver’s seat he smirks. Sans was certainly playing one of his infamous practical joke on him, trying to fool him into admitting false feelings, or into making a daring move that surely would be rejected! Gaster saw the way that his brother flirted with you, and Sans has been known to think up elaborate schemes. He’s lazy, Gaster will give him that, but this also means that he’s learned to get what he wants without lifting a phalange.

What if he wants you?

It would make sense, then, for Sans to tell Gaster, his only visible competition, an elaborate lie to convince him to do something ridiculous and therefore eliminate him!

Or perhaps…

Perhaps he is overthinking this.

Whether or not you are Gaster's Soulmate is meaningless. The matter is a tug on the Soul, not the heart nor the brain, and it should not matter to him nonetheless.

He gets out of the car and manages to open the door for you. You place one foot gracefully onto the sidewalk, where he catches your hand to make sure you don’t slip.

On your way in, Karen (that wretch of a woman) stops the both of you. Her lips quirk up in a nasty sort of smile, as if the two of you have suffered some hilarious misfortune.

“Dr. Gaster, a delivery arrived for you this morning. It wouldn’t fit in your mailbox, so it’s been placed outside of your laboratory.”

A delivery? The skeleton’s sockets arch up for a moment. What has he ordered in the past week? Has he even made any purchases online? He’s wracking his brain for a possible purchase history as he walks ahead of you to the elevator. The doctor’s in such a state that he forgets to press a floor button, so when the glass doors shut you must reach across him to do so.

It’s not until the two of you enter the stairwell on the twelfth floor and a sweet, earthy aroma reaches him that he recalls exactly how jealous he became of Sans yesterday. Dread creeps up each segment of his spinal cord as he scales the stairs. He remembers how he perused the internet mindlessly to ease his frustration after work last night, and the fantasies of ridiculously large bouquets. And that smell, the smell of nature, it’s flooding the stairwell. Oh, he didn’t, he couldn’t have possibly been so
stupid as to…

“Oh my god, Gaster, look at all this!”

You’ve beat him to the top of the stairs, amidst his worrying. The shock in your voice speaks volumes about what’s on the landing. *How many flowers did he buy? Stars, how drunk was he last night?*

When he reaches the landing, though, there are no bouquets of flowers. Instead, Dr. Gaster is met with planters’ boxes, potting soil, fertilizer, and a ridiculous amount of saplings, along with a variety of gardening tools.

He starts to say, “I didn’t-“

But you’re holding an order form in your slender, soft fingers. The pamphlet’s lightly dusted with soil. “You did. Last night, apparently. Rushed delivery and everything.”

He ordered this. He did not order bouquets of flowers, nor objects of awe, but rather… gardening supplies. The lot of them fills the landing, leaving you and him only room to step and hop about. The smell of the earth infiltrates the otherwise-sterile stairwell, and soil is seeping down the steps. A bench is propped against the door to the lab.

He ordered and rushed the delivery on all of this. Perhaps Papyrus isn’t the one in the family with the impulsive-shopping problem.

*Why did…*

You pick up a plastic package of lavender seeds, glancing to him. “But I thought you didn’t like my idea of putting a garden on the roof!”

*Oh. That’s why.*

He’d honestly almost forgotten about your childish, impulsive, time-consuming idea, the one that you sprang on him yesterday. Apparently, his subconscious hasn’t. He opens his mouth, ready to tell you that it was a drunken mistake and that he’s going to send it all back, but then he catches your expression. There are your eyes, so brilliant and full of life and creativity that it cannot be contained. You’re practically bouncing from one foot to the other, your hands excitedly tapping away at the packet in your hands. And your skin; you seem to be glowing under the sun-drenched skylight of the stairwell.

What’s even brighter, though, brighter than the very burning sun above you, is your smile.

The words that slide involuntarily out of Dr. Gaster’s mouth are a sweet betrayal to himself. “Why, my dear, of course I do.”

Chapter End Notes

**AW HE DONE GOT HER A WHOLE GARDEN.**

I really hope you enjoyed this, and like I said earlier, I’ll be posting the second part of this hopefully within the week, school providing and whatnot.
Feel free to like, comment, kudos, etc! It makes me so happy to see each and every little thing you have to say, and even if I don't reply to everything I most definitely appreciate it!
Denial (2/2)

Chapter Summary

Flowers, nagging thoughts, and getting down and dirty.

Chapter Notes

My most sincere apologies for the 4-month hiatus. College happened, and then family happened, and overall, I need to work better on prioritization. Hopefully I'll be able to put out updates faster now. Nevertheless, thank you for staying with me, and enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He's bought you a garden.

So much for avoiding dramatics, you think as you eye the garden supplies scattered across the stair landing. There’s the planter’s boxes, and the seedlings, and even a bench, for Christ’s sake. He ordered it all last night, paid from his personal account, and then rushed the order. For you. He did it for you.

Is this Gaster's way of apologizing again for yesterday? You’d thought you’d made yourself clear that he was forgiven. You see him out of the corner of your eye, glancing from the delivery form to what you’ve received, most likely taking stock. It never hurts to double-check, you suppose, and from what you’ve learned, the doctor is very thorough.

He could give you a thorough f-

No. Stop that. The thought only crossed your mind because of that dream. You’re not going to think about that dream anymore, especially not when you’re with him, not when you’re at work! You should be more focused on your job anyway, and on the garden that your boss bought for you.

Because that’s normal, for bosses to buy their assistants whole-ass gardens.

“Thank you, by the way,” you tell him. “This really is a lot.” You move to look at the receipt, but the doctor snatches it upwards. Of course, he’s too tall for you to reach that high. You hate height differences sometimes.

Though you seemed to love it yesterday when he was-

No. Nope. No more. You grit your teeth, turning away from both Gaster and the warmth building in your chest.

“So are we doing this, or what?” You hope that as you talk your thoughts will subside.

“You’d like to complete this today?” He asks, eyeing the various boxes.

“Yes sir, or get started, at least” you reply. “The soil and fertilizer might dry out if we wait too long.”
Your boss nods. “And you’d like me to assist you with your little project?”

Oh. It hadn’t even occurred to you that he might’ve actually had something else planned for today. He most likely has an entirely different agenda for himself. After all, it is your project that you asked for, and a side project at that. You wouldn’t be surprised if he had additional tasks for you today, too.

“You don’t have to,” you say, “I understand you probably have plenty of other things to take care of with your research, and if you have anything for me to do then-“

“Hush, now,” Gaster cuts you off with a wave of a gloved hand. “I’ve initiated the actual completion of this project, and given it takes a considerable amount of physical labor, I see no issue with helping you.

“That’s a concise argument,” is all you can say in reply. “If you want, I can go prop open the doors up to the roof while you start the heavier lifting?”

“Smart girl,” he says with a smile. “Yes, I’d like that.”

Soon enough, all of the gardening supplies that Gaster ordered for you (yes, for you, he did this all for you) are atop the grey-tiled rooftop. Even with the large, open space and the sorting, there’s still so much stuff. He really didn’t need to do all this.

And you really need to stop blushing over this.

The planter’s boxes are already assembled, and placed evenly across the span of the roof. All of the seed packets are placed in neat stacks besides their designated boxes. The organization was your idea; judging by the state of the lab, Dr. Gaster doesn’t seem to sort anything.

Using a purple pair of scissors you snagged from your desk, you cut open the first bag of soil. The earthy smell gets even stronger, and you think you see your boss scrunch his face up. How he even manages that with a sort-of-skull, you’ll never know.

“Can you pass me the gloves?” You ask, glancing from him to the open bag in front of you. “I think they’re in that pile behind you.”

He fixes you with an inquisitive look, the hint of a smirk on his face.

“Please?” You add, red working its way onto your cheeks. Do you have to beg for a pair of gloves? You don’t understand him sometimes.

He passes you the package, which you tear open, separating the gardening gloves. They’re black in color, and have a rough texture on the palm. You slip a hand into one and...

“Dr. Gaster?” You call. “Uh…”

When he turns to face you again, he can see the problem. The gloves are much too big. Even with your hand in as far as it can go, there’s so much space, and your fingers only reach about halfway up the five fabric compartments.

“I think these are yours.” You tell him. “I saw two pairs, so mine should be over there somewhere.”

“My apologies, my dear. Here you are.” The second pair he passes you is considerably smaller. You press the already-gloved hand to the one you slide into the proper-fitting one. It’s nearly comical,
how much bigger one is than the other.

Tiny fingers and large ones. Gaster’s hand and yours.

You catch the heat before it rushes to your face and push it back into your stomach, or somewhere else it can’t be seen. The oversized glove comes flying off your hand and onto the ground. You can’t think like this. You shouldn’t. Why are you thinking like this?

“If you’d like, I can set up the bench and the lights while you start pouring soil?” Your boss suggests.

You nod, and with that, you get to work.

The soil cascades down into the first planter’s box like an earthen waterfall, dark and smooth. You spread it across the box until it’s all even and flat. Next come the seeds.

Your eyes can’t help but wander over to where Gaster is. He’s pulling the bench over to the opposite end of the rooftop, arms flexing underneath the lab-coat. The bench came assembled, for the most part. All he has to add are the arms and legs. There’s packets of necessary hardware beside the wooden seat.

Oh, you know he’s going to have a time with that. The joys of assembling furniture never fail to show themselves.

Sure enough, in a matter of minutes, a sigh comes from the other side of the roof. When you look over, the doctor has a tiny screw pinched between his thumb and forefinger. His mouth moves as he mutters something you can’t discern. The rugged appeal of how guttural his voice sounds, however, doesn’t escape you in the slightest. Even if he’s so refined most of the time, he manages to sound nice even when he isn’t.

With a quick shake of your head, you return to your work. Lugging the bag of soil over to the next box is a bit of a chore, but doing the rest isn’t difficult. Even the task of moving the bag around becomes easier once you pour out enough soil. By the time you’re finished, little bits of dirt have trickled into your gloves. They rub against your fingers softly.

Gaster’s still working on the bench twenty minutes later. He’s making progress, sure, but with the irritation evident on his face you’re trying so hard to keep from laughing. It’s cute, almost. The bench looks relatively simple, and yet your genius scientist of a boss is struggling.

“Dr. Gaster?” You call, suppressing a smile. “Do you need help with that?”

“Nonsense,_____. I have this under control.” His scrutinizing expression only narrows itself more. He seems… very focused on that one leg. Should you help him anyway? Or do something to lighten the mood? Oh stars, he’s really struggling with that bench.

You should probably just stay back here and laugh to yourself. That’s a good idea. Do that.

However, quiet chuckles turn into snickers, and one of those turns into a snort. Before you know it, your boss is whirling around to look at you.

“Is something funny, my dear?”

Oh god, he heard that.

With widened eyes and a frozen body, you’re sent into a bit of a panic. When you panic, of course,
you tend to not act as you should. Rationally, you could shake your head, or brush it off with another reason why you’d be snorting with laughter. However, you’re in panic mode, which means you don’t think of that, or anything else remotely reasonable.

So you reply, “Yes,” and still holding your blank expression you toss soil into his face.

When the dirt settles, you can see that Dr. Gaster is fixing you with a rather irate glare. Light brown residue has settled on his lab-coat, spilling from the piles on his shoulders. He blinks- oh no, there’s dirt in his eyes, you threw soil into his fucking eye-sockets!

Jesus Christ, why did you do that?

When he huffs, the stuff puffs out of his nose. Oh god, you’re screwed. You’re so fucked.

His eyes gleam with violet sparks amidst the dirt. “Was that humorous to you?”

Before you can even manage to answer, a shower of dirt falls from above. The pieces scatter about around you, but the majority of it lands atop your head. You brush it out of your eyes and off of your face, only to see your boss smirking at you.

“My hair!” You exclaim, shaking soil from your locks.

Gaster only leans in closer, traces of that smugness on his face. “My sockets.”

“Fair enough.” You’re still struggling to get all the dirt off of you. It’s slipped down the front of your blouse, landed on your skirt, gone everywhere. You want to assume that Gaster got off cleaner than you did, but you’re sure he has his own discomforts. After all, you know next to nothing about his anatomy.

Your dream probably wasn’t even accurate. Who knows what his bare hands feel like, how the touch of his mouth is, how tightly his body could press against yours…

It’s not like you want to know those things or anything.

You don’t have a crush on Dr. Gaster. You’re attracted to him, maybe, but a crush? That’s ridiculous. You’ve known him for four days. You can’t fall for someone you’ve known for four days, much less your employer!

Whatever you’re feeling, this attraction, this pull, you force it down. You bury it within your Soul and tell it with all your might to go away. You can’t have this. You need this job to work, even if you did just throw dirt in your boss’s face.

He’s still fixing you with that look. It’s one you’ve come to know very well, one with just the lightest hint of teasing to it.

“Now, was that plenty fun for you, or would you rather have me push your face into the soil?”

“That was good enough,” you muster, amidst the heat on your face.

Why does he have to look at you like that, with that light in his eyes and mirth in the corners of his mouth? You can’t have it. You can’t take it in for too long, or else you’ll begin to enjoy it.

“Now, if you’d like to clean yourself up, then-“ Gaster is cut off by his phone buzzing. Wordlessly, he fishes it out of the pockets of his slacks and swipes on the screen.

“Got a text?” You ask.
“An e-mail,” he clarifies, “from our CEO. I wonder wh- oh.” His neutral gaze at his phones sharpens into a scowl.

“What is it?” You most likely shouldn’t be prying, and yet, here you are, leaning across the planter’s box with a curiosity you hope he’s used to by now.

“Another mass message to the company,” he sneers, “about that ridiculous banquet.”

“There’s a banquet?” You don’t recall him mentioning it before. You’ve only been here for a few days, but you hope that this really is new information and not something you just didn’t hear.

“It’s more to the tune of an extravagant company party, but yes, my dear. To my understanding, it’s an annual sort of thing. It takes place next month, to mark the facility’s anniversary.”

“Are we going?” You ask. You’re sure you have your own free will to decide whether or not to go, but seeing as you’re only here as Gaster’s assistant, you don’t see much of a point in going if he isn’t.

“I have a strong disdain for parties, but of course, you are welcome to go if you wish.”

Well, that settles it.

“I don’t think I will, either,” you decide with a nod. It’s just a company party, nothing massive. Gaster only said it was extravagant, and the facility is rather fancy, and the word ‘banquet’ implies food, but…

But it’s fine. You’re content with not going to a party you didn’t even know about two minutes ago.

“Oh my.” Your boss still has his eyes on his phone. “It appears as if during the morning, before the banquet in the late evening, there will now be a mandatory laboratory exposition.”

“And?” You arch your eyebrow. You never liked the word ‘mandatory.’

“And it seems as if we’ll be expected to bring our research,” Gaster tells you. “The CEO states that we are to prepare a presentation on our theories, experimentation, and findings to demonstrate our capabilities and success.”

“We get to show off,” you verify.

The doctor only smiles. “Yes, my dear. We will most certainly show off, and we will do it excellently.”

You’ve opted to wait until after you finished the garden to wash up; after all, you’re only going to accumulate more dirt up here. With the bench finally finished and the planter’s boxes set out, you’ve gone to planting while Gaster works on the lighting. You’re thankful that the day isn’t immensely hot, or else you’d be sweating here on the roof.

In two boxes, you plant herbs. There’s lavender, and chamomile, and lemongrass, to name a few. The seeds and saplings are spaced apart from each other with enough room for both growth and neatness.

Next, you move onto the flowers. You’re especially excited for them to bloom later on. Thinking about all the color spread across the barren rooftop only makes you move faster. There’s the
hollyhocks, and the delphinium, and-

“Dr. Gaster, where’d you get these?” With furrowed eyebrows, you hold up packets of a plant you’ve never seen before. *Echoflower.* You’re assuming they’re of monster origin.

“Special order,” he remarks. “Have you ever seen Echoflowers before, _____?”

“No sir.” You ponder the seed packet. The front has a picture of a lovely flower with curving cerulean petals. How interesting.

“They were rampant in parts of the Underground,” Gaster explains, “and popular for the fact that when fully-grown, they repeat the last phrase said around them.”

“Really?” Before you know it, you’re opening the packet.

“Some even say that if you whisper to the seeds when you plant them, they’ll hold onto that phrase for the remainder of their lives.”

“Whoa…”

“That’s just a theory, though, dear. An old wives’ tale, if you will.” He’s smiling at you in that way again. You feel a nagging ache at the pit of your stomach.

Of course, that can’t stop you from gingerly picking up the seeds, one by one, and uttering phrase after careful phrase as you set them into their spot into the dirt. You know exactly what to say to the flowers, each and every last one of them.

Chapter End Notes

So no banquet :( but now we have an expo to work for (and for Gaster to stress over)

Has Reader succeeded in pushing those feelings down? And what’d she say to the flowers? How does it really feel to have dirt in your eye socket? These questions may (or may not) be answered next time!

Comments keep me going, guys. Y’all have no clue how much comments help me. They sustain me. I love them (and all of you) <3

Follow my writing struggles and skeleton love at www.sansualfics.tumblr.com, follow my personal at www.grim-dark-adrenaline.tumblr.com, or buy me a coffee at http://ko-fi.com/sansual

As always, thank you.
Anger/Bargaining

Chapter Summary

You feel emotions like you've never felt before.

Chapter Notes

Oh my god, I am so proud of this chapter. I was FEELING it as I wrote it, like I had to stop for a moment because WOW HOLY FUCK. It came out to around 4K, so hell yeah.

Nevertheless, I hope you enjoy. <3

You’re thankful for having Dr. Gaster as a boss when he allows you to leave in the middle of the workday for class. Your garden effort is mostly completed by the time you take your things and head out of the lab. Your boss is reluctant to just let you take public transport to campus, but he relents when you accept his offer of picking you up after your two-hour class ends.

On your way down to the lobby, you pass Dr. Hyung. She almost seems startled by your presence in the hallway. You suppose you’re a sight, with your black coat on and worn backpack slung over your shoulder. There’s probably still a little dirt in your hair, too. She seems to keep her eyes trained on your mouth, on the smile that, for some reason, refuses to go away.

The bus isn’t even that bad today. It’s fairly quiet amidst the midday noise of the city around you. When you look at the dull shades of grey and brown around you, all you can think of are colorful flower-buds and bright green saplings.

Your professor’s out again today for the umpteenth time, leaving the TA to conduct the lecture. Bradley is only twenty-four, and though he’s surely competent, he doesn’t quite act the part. He shrugs through several slides in the notes, prompting raised hands that he pretends not to see. You try to chime in when you can, but he never responds much to what you have to say.

Class goes by slowly, but surely enough that you don’t fall asleep. However, you do find yourself glancing at the time on your phone. You’re not surprised to realize that you’d rather be at work than here. After all, you’ve been through so much schooling that at this point you feel that these last few classes are almost tedious. Work would definitely be better than just sitting here. You’d probably learn more from being in the lab with Gaster, anyway.

Bradley stumbles over another slide and you suppress a sigh. Yeah, you’d definitely be better off listening to one of Dr. Gaster’s tangents. At least he’s interesting. And attractive, something in your mind supplies.

But you can’t be thinking about that right now. You don’t want to get even more distracted.
The minute class ends, you’re ready to get out of the lecture hall. Hopefully Gaster didn’t have any trouble finding somewhere to park.

You’re almost out the door when a voice calls, “_____.!”

Bradley’s hurrying to catch up to you, throwing a jumble of files and papers into a canvas bag. What could he possibly want?

“Yeah?” You catch the door for both him and yourself.

“I was wondering,” he heaves, fidgeting with the handles of his bag, “what’s with the getup? I mean, not that it’s bad or anything, but y’know, people don’t typically wear office attire to class, and then that lab-coat, wow, I don’t think I’ve ever seen one like that.”

He seems hell-bent on standing still outside the lecture hall, but you have a ride to catch. You keep walking.

“Oh,” you say, beckoning him to keep moving, “I’ve got work right after class. I started a new job earlier this week over at that research institute uptown.”

“The new one? Like the tower with all the glass and stuff around it?”

“Mhm.”

“Must’ve had to pull some strings to land that kind of gig,” he says, and you have to force yourself not to snort. What is that supposed to mean?

It only takes you a moment for you to find Gaster’s car. The Rolls-Royce is right out front, immaculately parked as usual.

“But anyway, here’s my ride,” you tell Bradley. You hope he’ll take the hint and leave you be. You really want to get back to work.

Instead, he stays, regarding the black car with scrutiny.

“Who’s picking you up? They must be loaded.”

“It’s my boss, Dr. Gaster,” you tell him. “He’s very accommodating, but we do need to get back to work.”

When you open the door, your boss peers up at you from the driver’s seat. Oh, are you glad to see him. You can feel your Soul fluttering.

“Good afternoon, _____. Are you ready?” Gaster asks you.

“Yes sir.” You’re about to step into the car when Bradley’s voice pulls you back out. It’s so grating compared to Gaster’s deep, velvety tone.

“Wow, _____. I didn’t expect you’d be working for a monster.”

You whirl around, losing grip on the annoyance you’ve been holding in check. “And what do you mean by that?” Your voice has a noticeable sharpness to it, one that you hope he picks up on.

He runs his free hand through his mop of hair.

“I just meant, uh, that I wouldn’t imagine someone as smart as you working for someone like that.”
“Someone like what?” You fire back, heels digging into the concrete. You already know where this is headed, and you’re ready for it.

Bradley takes a step back from you. “I’m just saying, I wouldn’t understand why you’d put your faith into the research of someone who’s spent the last however-long in the underground. Anything relevant to modern science happened without them, so by default they’re behind.”

You take a step forward, countering his every movement. “Actually, Bradley, if you’d actually paid attention in your Monster Relations studies, you would know that while underground, the monsters made the same scientific advancements as we did on the surface. In addition to that, they made several discoveries aside from the ones we did. The monster race is just as scientifically advanced as we are, if not more so.”

“Okay, okay” Bradley tells you, “I didn’t know-“

“You look your TA in the eyes, curling your lips into a sneer. “But go ahead. Tell me about how superior you are, when you and I both know that if the professor weren’t so busy she’d realize what a fucking idiot you are.”

With that, you pivot, step into the car, and slam the door.

Sighing, you look at Gaster, who is ever-so-quiet in the driver’s seat.

“Can we go back to work now?”

“You’re relieved to get back to the facility, especially after the debacle with Bradley. Despite Gaster’s obvious pride, you can’t help but be embarrassed for losing your cool like that. You were just… so angry. You’d never felt more irritated by anyone’s sheer ignorance as you had today. You’re still flushed when the two of you walk into the laboratory.

“Are you comfortable with working slightly later tonight?” Your boss asks you. “I’m glad we were able to make significant effort on the garden today, but I do have some small things that I’ve been hoping to take care of before tomorrow.”

“You reply. He bought you a garden. He let you off of work for a two-hour class, plus another hour for commuting to campus. You’d probably work until midnight if he asked you to.

However, as you continue to work through the evening you realize that you don’t exactly know what Dr. Gaster is even doing. He walks back and forth from his cluttered desk to some foreign mechanism on a lab table. It’s sleek-looking, compared to his older inventions. There’s a glass screen, and several wires, and… well, that’s about all you can make out right now. It’s clearly unfinished.

You want to ask him about it.
Nevertheless, though, you work on whatever tasks he gives you. They’re odd things, like running numbers through a calculator and fetching various books and small parts from across a lab.

You can’t help but look over your shoulder at him as you flit about the lab. He’s currently hunched over his desk, writing frantically in a notebook you’ve just found for him. It’s an old, leather-bound thing, and the pages have yellowed. How long has he had it, and what’s in it?

You’re his assistant. Surely, he wouldn’t mind if you pried a little bit.

The words “Dr. Gaster” are barely out of your mouth when your phone begins to ring.

You move to answer it, surprised by the caller ID. “Mom?”

“Hi, sweetie, is this a bad time?” Your mother’s ever-jovial voice comes loud over your phone’s speaker, and you have to turn the volume down a bit.

You make eye contact with Gaster.

“Well, I’m at work right now-“

“At seven at night? It’s so late! Practically dinner time, actually.”

You glance at the time and your eyes widen. Is it really seven already? When you catch a glimpse out one of the high-set windows, you see that the sky is a deep, endless shade of blue.

“We were only planning to go a little later than normal, but I guess we've gotten carried away!” You can’t help but laugh a little. You’ve never gotten so wrapped up in work before and actually enjoyed it.

“We? I’m guessing your new boss is still treating you well?”

“He is, he’s very nice,“ you reply, with your eyes on Gaster. Nice indeed. He arches a socket upwards, and moves a gloved finger up to his mouth. You wave him off. As if you’d actually tell your mother anything significant about your job. You’ve barely mentioned Gaster’s name, much less that he’s a monster.

After a moment of silence you hear her say something away from the phone, and you think you hear the grumbling timbre of your father’s voice in the background. Wait, why has she even called you? It’s not like she never talks to you; after all, your relationship’s good enough with both your parents that you talk to them on a regular basis. She just usually does so with an intention. You get your hatred of small talk from her.

You speak up again, bridging the silence. “Mom, is there anything specific you wanted to talk about?”

“Oh!” She gasps, seemingly turning from whatever she was saying to your dad and coming back to your conversation. “Well, your father and I are passing through your part of town tonight, and we were going to ask if you wanted to come to dinner with us…”

“But I’m at work,” you interject.

She continues talking, almost as if you hadn’t said anything, “…but you just mentioned your boss again, and how kind he’s been to you, and I wouldn’t want to steal you from work, so I had an idea that I just ran by your father.”
“And what’s that?” You lean back against one of the lab counters, pencil skirt hitching up just the slightest with your movements. The steel is smooth against your hand, unblemished in its cleanliness.

“Would you like to invite Dr…”

“Gaster?” You supply, and he looks up at you again. His violet irises are bright with curiosity. *Will he ever stop being so interesting to look at?* You’re just nearly frustrated by how often you catch yourself staring.

“Oh, that’s odd, but anyway. Would you like to invite Dr. Gaster to dinner with us? We know you’re on the clock, but… We’d like to thank him for giving you such a wonderful opportunity, and if you two insist on returning to work afterwards then you may. We’ve already got a place picked out; it’s not too far from your office. The reviews are just astounding.”

“Hold on,” you say, and then pull away from the phone. Your parents want to meet Dr. Gaster? They want to *pay for his dinner*? Wherever they’ve picked, you’re sure it’s expensive. They’re workaholics, the both of them, and with their combined incomes it’s too easy for them indulge.

Dr. Gaster and your parents, meeting, talking, *talking about you.* Oh god, what if there’s awkward silence?

Should you ask him? It’d be too easy to simply come back to the phone and say that he’s too busy. But then again, you’re enjoying your time at work (with Gaster), and you *are* hungry. In addition, you’re never opposed to having a fancy meal, especially if it’s being paid for by someone else.

You swallow whatever anxiety is building in your throat and cross the lab.

“Dr. Gaster?” You say his name, and this time you’re actually addressing him. However, when he turns, you feel so on-the-spot that you can’t help but stutter. “So uh, my parents are in town, and they were going to take me out to dinner tonight but, um, but I told them we were working on something and then my mom said she’d like you to come too. She said something about thanking your for your generosity? It’s weird, I know, um, but they’re really insistent and I didn’t want to leave work and we could just come right back to finish the stuff you wanted to finish and—”

“That sounds lovely, actually,” he says curtly, cutting you off. “Where are we going and what time should we arrive?”

You’re thankful that you work in such a high-end facility, because your work attire fits right in at the restaurant. It’s so *formal.* You left your black coat in Gaster’s car, as did he. It’s 7:52, so you’re a bit early. A fish tank sits in the waiting area of the dimly-lit restaurant, its pale blue light and brightly-colored fish attracting you as you wait on your parents.

Before you arrived, you were worried about people staring at Gaster here, given that monsters have only been on the surface for a year. Your parents were fine with monsters, you knew that. Even in the city, though, you can’t fully escape prejudice. Your run-in with Bradley earlier has had you on-edge, and if you’re being honest with yourself, still lit with anger. Luckily, your boss isn’t the only monster in the restaurant. A moldsmal with a business tie sits among their associates, and an entire party of rabbits sits at one of the large center tables. You have a sigh of relief.

Your boss’ hand grazes yours, fingers brushing silk. Part of you wonders what he’d say if you touched him, but a more rational side of you decides that tonight is not a good time to find out.

“Oh, there you two are!” A familiar voice calls, and when you turn around you see your parents
entire the establishment. They’re both wearing black, matching your and Gaster’s attire. Your mother’s dyed her hair again, fighting off the inevitable graying. She doesn’t seem fazed at all by your boss’ appearance.

Introductions are carried out as the four of you are seated by a window. Gaster’s taken the seat beside the glass, but you glance out at the city lights anyway. In the reflection your eyes meet his, and the smile you get is reassuring.

The silence that you were dreading doesn’t even come. After drinks are ordered, your father launches right into conversation.

“Dr. Gaster, I’ve been wondering, what exactly is your field of expertise? We’ve tried asking _____, but she never budges.”

From your seat, you suppress the urge to send a smirk Gaster’s way. See? You wouldn’t break your confidentiality promise.

As always, Gaster uses his hands to gesture as he speaks. “I have a variety of fields that I dabble in, truly, so I can’t claim any single one as my forte. However, I do favor magi-biology, astrophysics, and quantum mechanics, especially its relation to magic use.”

Of course, this gets your father to quirk his head to the side. “Magi-biology? I guess that’s a new one, since you’ve come to the surface and all. What’s that entail?”

You catch your boss shooting you a side-glance, and step in. “Magi-biology is definitely one of the more modernized sciences, and yeah, it’s new to humanity. It deals with magic’s relation to the body and its functions, especially within the psyche. The science of Souls really ties in with a lot of psychology, but it’s definitely not limited to that.”

Dr. Gaster chimes in, “That encompasses most of it, but there’s also a subsection that focuses on the body of the magic itself and its own inner-workings.”

Of course you forgot something. He looks too smug. You dare to gently kick your foot against his underneath the table. He kicks back, still smirking.

Your mother asks, “What looks good on the menu?”

You could tell her what looks good off-menu.

“Everything’s so fancy here,” you remark, “I can’t even pronounce half of this stuff.”

“What do you need help pronouncing?” Gaster murmurs. “I can read the vast majority of it.”

You snort, “Oh, of course you’d know how to speak French.”

“And Spanish, and German,” he adds quietly. He’s still smirking, the ass. If you hadn’t just kicked him, you’d do it now. Besides that, you happen to find him incredibly attractive when he smiles like that.

“In all honesty, though, I can’t decide between this thing—” here, you point to something on the menu, “—and the Shrimp Alfredo.” It’s your go-to when you go out to eat. Reliable, predictable, delicious.

The waiter comes to take your orders. He starts with your mother, who ends up ordering the highest-dollar salad you’ve ever seen on a menu. It’s got truffles in it, apparently. Your dad orders a steak, as
does Gaster, and you…

You still haven’t made up your mind.

“Oh,” you start to stammer, but before you can embarrass yourself in front of the waiter any longer, you’re interrupted by your boss.

“She’ll have the Shrimp Alfredo, please,” Gaster says, his voice deep and lovely as he looks at the waiter. All you can do is drink the ice water in front of you in hopes that your blush will go away. It probably won’t.

After your menu is taken away and the waiter leaves, you whisper a “thank you” that only Dr. Gaster can hear. You never could make decisions very quickly.

“You seem to be willing to help _____ out often, Dr. Gaster,” your mother says, “but she’s your assistant. Does she do her part as well?”

Is she seriously asking if you’re doing well? You’re almost out of college. You really don’t need her asking your superiors for a progress report anymore. The heat’s rushing to your face faster than before.

Oh no, she’s going to learn that in the time you’ve worked for him, you’ve only diverted your boss’s schedule. He’s going to make some witty comment about you being a distraction, with your gardening and your classes and your emotional breakdowns.

“Mom-” you start, but of course, the skeleton monster has you covered yet again.

“Of course she does,” he replies. “_____ is always efficient, helpful, and quick to give the insight I often need. Her creativity and patience are qualities that I wish I had myself. It’s been a mere four days with her working under me, and yet I already feel as if both my work and personal lives are so much more organized, more driven. At the very least, they’re certainly much brighter. I’m immensely glad to have hired her.”

Oh.

You’re not a distraction, you’re not a waste of time. You’re… actually decent, apparently. At the very least, you make him happy.

Dr. Gaster is happy. You make him happy.

You’re lightheaded. Your skin is burning. Your chest feels tight, too tight. You can’t take it anymore.

“Excuse me,” you breathe out, and find the restroom as fast as you can.

Cold water from a deep-set sink meets your cheeks as you flick it onto your face. It does next to nothing to soothe the burning sensation and the deep redness that’s overtaken you, but you can’t do much of anything else, lest you smear your makeup. All you can do is watch the little drops slip down your face as they dry.

Your reflection looks the same as it’s been lately: wide-eyed and breathless. You’ve been having too many emotional breakdown in bathrooms for just one week.
Is this really a breakdown, though? Or a breakthrough?

No matter how many deep breaths you take, your heart just won’t still. It’s never beat this wildly before. What’s wrong with you?

Wait.

The beating’s coming from the middle of your chest, right at the center of your ribcage.

You realize that it’s not your heart, but your Soul. What once was so quiet that you didn’t know of its existence is now making itself known. Its thrum is inescapable.

What does it even mean? Gaster’s the one with the Soul knowledge, not you. You’d ask him about it, but for some reason you have a feeling that asking him wouldn’t help.

Is he the source of it? After all, you’d never felt a thing before you’d met him. And it hasn’t acted up like this before now, before he said how happy you made him.

You make him happy, and something within you likes that. You like that. The mere thought only makes the thrumming faster.

How could you not notice this before?

You’re still so feverish. It’s all you can do to not try again, to strip, plunge your hands into the icy sink, and bathe in the restaurant bathroom. Cold water won’t help. You know this now. You’re burning from the inside out, like a fire that started itself and won’t stop, not now, not ever.

Is Gaster burning too?

Are you in love with your boss?

Could he love you back?

Chapter End Notes

*Alicia Keys voice* THIS GIRL IS ON FIIIIIIIRE

Welp, at least someone’s acknowledging their feelings here! Hopefully Gaster will do the same. You stubborn ass, you.
Interlude

Chapter Summary

A break in the current arc for chick-flick style antics.

Chapter Notes

I’m so happy to be off hiatus, guys! I’m settled back into college and my workload’s so manageable this semester I’ll be able to churn chapters out so much faster.

Two songs in this chapter, the first one is "Somethin’ Stupid" by Frank Sinatra

And the next one isn’t referenced in the chapter, but it’s just a mood for the second part. It’s a remix of Ariana Grande’s "Into You" and it can be found [here].

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The rest of dinner is relatively calm, with your mother having been appeased and subdued by Gaster’s words of approval. You still hold that he thinks too highly of you, though you’re not going to counter it, especially not in a public setting. Nevertheless, though, the tension in your shoulders eases as the meal comes to an end.

You’re packing the remainder of the creamy Shrimp Alfredo into a styrofoam box when your boss leans in close to your ear. His deep voice drops to a refined murmur in what you think is an attempt to be discreet.

“If you’d like, I can drive you back to your apartment after this.”

You’re not sure what gives the two of you away, the fact that he’s not as quiet as you’d hoped, or your blush. Either way, though, it’s evident that you’ve been heard by the widening grin on your mother’s face. Oh, of course she’d get a kick out of the situation. She’s been doting on Dr. Gaster throughout the entire meal.

However, she doesn’t comment on it, and you’re able to rise from your chair peacefully. You almost forget your purse, but Gaster picks it up from the back of your seat and holds it out to you, strap in his gloved hands.

“Oh! Thank you, sir,” you exclaim as you take your bag.

You’re able to leave with the briefest of goodbyes to your parents, to your relief. Your mother still has that smug look on her face, but you aren’t about to overanalyze or attempt to decipher it. It’s been a long day and you’re eager to get home.

Gaster opens the car door for you, and when you step in you’re grateful for the comfort of the grey leather cushioning. The tension in your shoulders eases when you arch against the back of the seat.

“That was exhausting,” you sigh once your boss slips into the driver’s seat. “Sorry you had to endure
my mom and her… pestering.”

“Nonsense,” he waves your remark off. “There was nothing to ‘endure,’ and even if there were, it’s nothing a glass of scotch can’t fix.”

You laugh a bit at that, and he starts to drive. You’re not far from home, perhaps ten minutes at the most. However, you find yourself sinking into that passenger’s seat and wishing for more time. More time with Gaster, that is, despite the fact that you’ve been with him since this morning.

You like him, you tell yourself, like a reminder, You just might love him.

It’s a hard pill to swallow, the kind that tastes tangy and gets stuck on your tongue despite your best efforts. It’s nothing against him, rather your positions. Leave it to you to fall for your boss of all people.

Out of the corner of your eye you watch Gaster’s hand move to turn the radio volume up. He’s got his phone connected to the audio system, you think.

"I know I stand in line
Until you think you have the time
To spend an evening with me
And if we go some place to dance
I know that there’s a chance
You won’t be leaving with me…”

It’s a pleasant tune, and you tap your fingers to the gentle guitar in the background. You’re looking through the windshield, out at the city and the traffic ahead. You’re afraid if you let your eyes wander to Gaster, they’ll give everything away. And yet…

”…And then I go and spoil it all
By saying something stupid
Like ‘I love you’…”

Fuck.

It’s not long at all before you park in front of your apartment building. Your face is so hot that you actually refuse Dr. Gaster’s offer to walk you up like he did yesterday. When he nods and bids you goodnight, you think you hallucinate the disappointed downturn of his mouth.

Leftovers in hand, you make your way up to your floor. Hopefully your blush will die down by the time you get in, lest Joanne pester you. Ugh, she’s probably going to figure out how you feel about Gaster, and that will make everything worse.

When your key is in the lock, though, you can make out multiple voices from inside the apartment. They’re feminine, going back and forth in a playful banter. You don’t analyze it any more, instead opening the door. The strap of your purse has fallen into the crook of your elbow through the jostle of walking in.

“_____! Hi!” Tate calls from their spot on your couch. They lean against one of the arms, slender
legs crossed over the cushions. Their sister is criss-cross on the floor, pink hair in a messy bun.

“You’re home late,” Creedy says, a wicked smirk on her face. “Caught up at the office?” The implication’s clear.

“Oh my god,” you grumble. You set your purse down and pull one arm out of your lab-coat. The other arm comes next, and then the black jacket is hung up on the wall.

“Gaster seems like a classy guy, _____. He bought you dinner first, right?” Joanne walks in from the kitchen with a steaming plate of fried rice. Did they order Chinese? Without you?

“I mean, we did go to dinner…” you start.

“And then?” Joanne prods.

“And then nothing. It was my parents, they invited me out and I was on the clock so then they invited him and-“

Creedy interjects, “Ooh, meeting the parents? Because that’s not serious at all.”

“Oh shit, it wasn’t like that,” you tell the two teasing you.

“Do you want it to be like that?” Joanne asks.

“Does it matter?” You fire back.

That only makes all three of your friends grin from ear to ear.

Did you just give yourself away?

“You like him?” Tate asks, their perfect eyebrows arched, for clarification.

No use hiding it now.

“Okay, sure,” you sigh, “I like Gaster.”

“Ha!” Creedy shouts suddenly, “Didn’t even take a week! I called it!”

Joanne says, “Wow. Like, I’ve been teasing you about it, but I didn’t actually think that you… oh wow.”

“I mean, why wouldn’t she? Did you see the man?” Creedy purses her lips at Joanne. “I mean, he’s so tall, and there’s that voice, and- ugh!”

Tate nudges a glass sitting on the coffee table Creedy’s way.

“Here,” they remark, “for your thirst.”

That makes you laugh, amidst your embarrassment. You finally sit down, on the end of the couch Tate isn’t splayed out over, and sigh.

“I didn’t even realize it until tonight. But he’s been so nice to me, and then my mom was gushing over him, and she said something rude and he defended me, and it was kind of all downhill from there.”

“What are you going to do?” Tate asks.
“Fuck him, obviously!” Creedy exclaims.

“Fuck him?!” You say, “I just said I liked him, I never said I wanted to-“

“You do, though, I can see it on your face! Look at how red _____’s getting!”

You try to keep a straight face against your friend’s accusation. “Well, okay, I wouldn’t be opposed to it, but-“

“Fuck him!”

“Okay, let’s slow down,” Joanne puts a hand on Creedy’s shoulder and you’re grateful for the silence that the pink-haired girl falls into. Joanne uses her other hand to finger-comb through her own kinky curls and clears her throat. “Let’s start with the simple stuff. Is there anything in your employee manual about workplace relationships?”

You reply, “It’s not really prohibited, really, but it’s really discouraged. Something about keeping drama out of the office.”

You’re definitely embarrassed about already knowing the answer to that. Okay, so maybe you looked it up last night (for hypothetical purposes only). The fact of the matter slightly disappoints you. Slightly.

Joanne still seems optimistic, though.

“Okay, so it’s not black-and-white. We can work with that.”

You sigh, “What are we even 'working with'? There’s no relationship to 'work with'. I like him and that’s it.”

“Then that’s the first step,” Joanne points for emphasis. “We need to get that going.”

“What’s with all the ‘we’?” You ask.

Last you checked, this was your issue and your issue only. You love your friends, all three of them, but getting them involved could make things so much more chaotic than they need to be. Why can’t you just quietly pine and let your crush on the doctor die a sad, unnoticed little death a few months down the road?

Yet you have the strangest feeling that your attraction to him isn’t just a crush, that there’s some strong connection that you can’t get rid of. You’ve felt it ever since you met Gaster. You can’t figure it out anymore, or reach any other conclusion about it, at least not yet.

Creedy’s voice knocks you out of your thoughts. “This obviously isn’t going to get anywhere with just your anxious, subby ass, _____. That’s why we’re here!”

“Wow, way to call me out,” you snort.

“Okay, okay, so promise you won’t get mad, but we’ve kind of already talked about this? Like Tate made a separate group chat and everything!”

“You what?!” You ask. They made a group chat without you, all for the sake of your alleged crush on Gaster. Jesus Christ.

Joanne chimes in after eating a forkful of rice. “But this means we have a plan!”
“I tried to reign them in, _____, so it’s at least rational.” Tate smiles at you sheepishly.

“Thanks,” Though your voice is flat, you really do mean it. Tate’s always the considerate one. You can count on them to have your best interests at heart.

“Alright, so…” Joanne has her phone open, scrolling through what you presume is their plotting group chat. Her finger moves over the screen rapidly. How much did they talk about you? “Our first step is to ensure that Gaster is attracted to you too. Now, I think he already is, because girl, did you see how he looked at you at the club? That’s evidence enough. But anyway, Creedy thought we needed to do a little more, just to make sure he notices you, and that couldn’t hurt. Y’know, just to make him look at you more.”

“So what am I doing?” You ask.

Tate’s the one smiling right now, their super-white teeth showing through the grin they can’t hold back. “This was my idea. We’re going shopping on Saturday and picking you out some new work attire!”

“What’s wrong with what I’ve got? Some of it’s new.” You’re suddenly defensive of your wardrobe. Sure, not everything’s brand new, and it’s not really designer, but you’re comfortable in it.

“It’s not about what you’ve got in clothing. It’s what you’ve got in a different department. What you’re hiding. Y’know?” Joanne punctuates her reply with eyebrow waggling.

Oh.

They want you to be more… provocative. Would that really get Doctor Gaster to notice you more? Do you think he’d like that? Would it make him see you as more than just his assistant?

It’s wild, and mildly stupid, like in one of those rom-com chick-flicks.

You wipe your brow and sigh in frustration. “So I’m going to start dressing like some sexy secretary?”

“Not a sexy secretary,” Creedy giggles, “A sexy scientist.”

If that doesn’t sound like a bad Halloween costume, you don’t know what does. But it was Tate’s idea, and it’s got Joanne’s backing, and Creedy’s enthusiasm. They’re your friends and you trust them.

That’s why you find yourself nodding your head in reluctant agreement.

The next day is Friday, and it passes without much incident. Gaster picks you up after your class that morning, you do paperwork for him all day, and he stops work short. He doesn’t act out of the ordinary (though you don’t have much for reference on what “normal” is for him).

However, you can’t seem to stop staring at him. Joanne thinks he already likes you, but how can she be so sure? She based it off of a look he gave you, but what kind of look did she mean? Every time you try to make eye contact, there’s only that ever-present expression of curiosity on his scarred face. After a few attempts, you realize you’re not going to see anything different and call it.

That does make you excited for your shopping trip, though. You’d like to look one day and find something else in his intense gaze. Lust, maybe? Or adoration? Anything will do at this point, just to
ensure that you’re doing something right here.

The outlet mall isn’t ridiculously packed when you arrive there on Saturday morning. The four of you all took Joanne’s car, and you hop out together with a mission in mind.

Tate pulls you into a high-end shop, and you’re reminded of their model perks when you’re immediately put on the priority list by all the store clerks. Apparently, Tate’s a regular here.

Pop music with a runway-ready beat drifts through the speakers. You can’t keep much track of it, though, because you have countless numbers of people handing you things in your size. You don’t know what to make of it all. Every dress is tiny, each skirt is skin-tight. There’s lots of black and purple. Apparently, according to one of the clerks, violet’s your color.

After fifteen minutes of high-paced browsing, you’re like Atlas, nearly crushed under the weight of all the hangers and garments. The dressing room you’re led to has its own waiting room. Creedy, Joanne, and Tate make themselves at home on the rounded white couch while you haul your clothing hoard into the changing stall.

You’ve promised them ahead of time that you won’t look at the price tags. Tate’s discount will cover a majority of the price, and Joanne and Creedy are pitching in as well. Normally, you hate people paying for you, but this was their combined idea, and for today you’re their little project. You’ll keep the promise, no matter how ritzy some of these pieces look.

“Okay,” you say to yourself, voice but a quiet rasp in the boutique, “here we go.”

There are some hits straightaway.

The first thing you try on is a grey cocktail dress covered in lace. It accentuates your hips and leaves your shoulders bare. Luckily, though, you brought your lab-coat with you to try on with the outfits. You slip the black coat on over the dress, pair the outfit with kitten heels, and step out with an attempt at confidence.

“Hell yes!” Creedy yells when she sees you, and Tate has to swat at her to get her to hush. Despite being an adult and a full-time forensic analyst, she struggles a bit with controlling herself in uptight settings.

So that’s a good one. You can’t help getting flustered at so many eyes on you, but you try to straighten up and smile.

The next thing you try on is an outfit, a leather pencil skirt with a plum-colored blouse that shows a little too much cleavage than you’re used to. You’re feeling self conscious, but the lab-coat makes you feel a bit more comfortable. Thank you, Gaster, you think to yourself, but soon have to force yourself to stop thinking about him. Otherwise, all they’ll be able to focus on is your face.

“Thoughts?” You ask upon stepping back out. Your hands are self-consciously crossed over your chest, but Joanne steps up to pull them to your sides.

“Well, when you’re not covering up your titties, it’s perfect.”

“Are you sure?” You keep glancing down and struggling to not cover yourself. “I feel like I should be on a street corner with this.”

“But you’re in a lab, because you're super smart, and experienced with science, and about to seduce a seven-foot-tall skele-man!” Creedy cheers.
Okay, now you’re red.

Tate only smiles in approval, and with the jury’s verdict clear, you pivot and go back into the stall. Time for the next item.

It’s only a few moments before you call out, “Creedy, is this your doing?”

“What?” Your friend asks coyly, “I didn’t do anything.”

You clutch in your hands a black g-string, bedazzled across the hem and with the word “Daddy” scrawled across the crotch. Daddy. You roll your eyes, simply because this is just about the most ridiculous thing you’ve ever- oh shit, are those real diamonds?

You know what? You don’t want to know. You toss the panties over the door to where your friends can see them.

“Oh my god,” Tate says over Joanne's snorting. There’s radio silence from Creedy, at least until the g-string is thrown back over to you.

“Just keep it in the pile if you want it. You don’t have to tell us,” she says, “at least, not unless Dadster says something about them.”

For a moment you want nothing more than to drop dead in this high-end boutique and for your body to be found with this underwear in your hands. At least there won’t be any debate over the cause of death.

You take a deep breath. Okay, moving on.

There’s another dress you particularly love, a black one without a back. Its tone matches up with that of the lab-coat’s perfectly, and it makes you feel rather badass. You could wear it with that one necklace you have at home, and put your hair up. Joanne picked it out, you learn when you step out to show your friends.

Eventually, you actually find yourself feeling better and better about yourself and your body. Sure, this isn’t quite conventional workplace attire, but it’s not like Gaster’s going to reprimand you for it. Something in the back of your mind tells you that if anyone else does, he’ll have something to say to them. He looks after you, always vouching for you endearingly. You’re independent, of course, but you also like the little ways he takes care of you.

You really do adore him.

With every outfit that goes in the “yes” pile, you feel more confident. Maybe this slight change is good for you. All in all, you don’t mind this tiny form of objectification. But is it even objectification if you’re the one in control?

You ask your friends, and amidst your laughter the four of you come to an agreement that it’s not. After all, you’re making the calls on what to wear and how you want to be seen. You’re not an object, and the person you want to see you doesn’t think you are, either. He’s got more humanity in him than that.

It’s settled. You feel warm and pleasant all over when you look in the mirror.

You’re gathering up your “yes” pile when you realize that there’s one dress you haven’t tried on yet. It’s a gown, practically, and the color of deep, dark wine. When did that even get in here? You definitely would’ve noticed it by now.
It’s so stunning, flowing down your body and fanning out with just enough train to make you gape when you look in the mirror. You’re 99% sure that Tate picked this out and snuck it into the stall while you were showing off something else. They always know how to stun.

You don’t put the lab-coat on over it. This isn’t something for the office, not by any means.

You step out. Your friends gasp.

“Holy shit.” Creedy is the first to speak, but she can’t seem to say anything else. “Holy shit.”

Joanne’s silent, gripping the six-point star pendant of her necklace with wide eyes.

Tate’s voice is quiet as ever. “I know it’s not what we were looking for, but I saw it and thought it’d be nice if you ever had to do anything fancy… Did I do good?”

“Good?” Joanne's still gaping, but she finds her voice. “Oh my god, _____, you’re going to kill him.”

You hope that’s a good thing, because when you look at Gaster you can hardly breathe.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter we'll pick up on Monday morning, the start of Reader's second week, and resume with our "Stages of Death" chapters.

Let me know what you thought of this chapter!! Comments keep me going!!!!

My Tumblr

Tip Jar

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