

Entry of the Gladiators

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Entry of the Gladiators

by [Thrills \(IWantToRemainASecret\)](#)

Summary

Branzy moves into his new apartment and discovers his neighbour has... unusual music taste.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

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Not read over but dw I will do a read over l8r sorry! Hope you all enjoy and thanks
again for the support recently! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“And this is where the mail will be dropped off, keep in mind any large packages will be dropped by your door or returned to the post office if you don’t pick those up.” The older lady explained, guiding Branzy to what would become his brand-new apartment.

“Got it!” Branzy smiled, carrying a large box with him for unpacking, that he had already forgotten the contents of. (Maybe dinner plates? It was heavy, he should have labelled these...) “Anything else I should know?”

“Hmm...” The stout old woman ran her fingers along her chin in contemplation, settling on shaking her head, “Nothing that comes to mind, but don’t worry! You can always pop in on the bottom floor with any questions you may have.” She laughed, putting in keys to the apartment 2A and swinging the door dramatically open. “Welcome to your new home!”

Branzy side-stepped past her and stepped into the apartment, the sunlight beamed through the open windows, the wind waving the curtains calmly. It was open planned, a kitchen with an island to the left and a living space to the right, maybe Branzy could squeeze in a dining table with some smart planning.

“Wow, awesome! Thanks!” Branzy smiled, looking over his shoulder to smile at the landlord as he placed his box on the counter.

“No problem dearie, I hope you settle in nicely! Don’t worry, I let all the neighbours know you’d be moving in today, so they won’t complain about any noise! Do try to keep it down usually though, Oh!” She gasped, hand covering her mouth and a slightly amused smile settling on her face, “That does remind me...”

“Hmm?” Branzy probed, opening the box and smiling, it was dinner plates, he was right.

“Your neighbour in 2B is... an unusual character. I never really got his name come to think of it, I just call him Clown because he’s always wearing this silly mask!” She laughed joyously, and Branzy smiled nervously in response.

“A... mask? Like a face mask?”

“Oh no like a full face mask! Well, once he was only wearing a face mask when he went to get the mail, it was a silly cartoon grinning mask, very funny.” She giggled again, “But no, he sometimes plays music fairly loudly, it seems to only really reach people on this level though, and he encourages you to just knock on the wall to ask him to stop.” She explained calmly.

“Oh, that seems fine! I tend to be a little bit loud with my video making, so maybe we can work

something out.”

“Fine by me, just make sure not to blast music so loud the whole apartment block can hear it!” She laughed, waving as she started to head out, throwing the apartment keys to Branzy, “Good luck moving in Branzy, I hope you enjoy living here!”

“Thanks, miss!” Branzy called, catching the keys in one hand with a flourish. As he heard her head down the stairs, he poked his head out the doorway, shutting his new apartment door and stepping back.

The place was barren, but had been cleaned a bit for his arrival, and he relished in the lack of dust as he walked across the carpeted floor into his new bedroom. He nodded in approval at the size, and collapsed on the bed, lying like a starfish and grinning giddily at the ceiling.

“Home sweet home.” He mumbled to himself, relishing in the privacy he had earned. He hoisted himself off the bed and rolled his shoulders, “Time to get some boxes.” He smirked confidently.

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The last box was tossed to the side, Branzy eagerly placed the small decorations he had brought along, just dumb little things to make him laugh, a Minecraft goat plush, an obnoxiously gaudy purple flowerpot that he had no flower for and even his brand new ‘Live Laugh Love’ sign, which he bought ironically but now realised he had to display.

He stepped back and admired his apartment, it wasn’t anything fancy or that well decorated, but it was his and his alone. Plus, it had what he needed, he thought as he stepped into his new study.

Branzy was a streamer, and he was making it a point to commit more time to it, this was the first major step. Trying to make it now in his own place with a proper set up and room for it, he added some purple lights to the back too just to make it extra obvious what his career was. His dream setup was finally achieved, and he was excited for this new start to his life.

But... Living in an apartment and not a house did come with different... complications.

Branzy paused in his admiring when he heard soft music through the wall, nothing too obnoxious, a sort of ethereal sound with some clear beats. He listened in silence for a while before he leant his ear up to the wall between him and his neighbour, the strange music continued before it switched entirely to what Branzy could only describe as *circus music*.

He scrunched up his face in confusion, “What the heck?” He murmured. I mean, better than heavy dubstep? But a weird as hell thing to play on the regular, who actually *LIKES* circus music?

His new neighbour, apparently, Branzy shrugged it off and went about settling in. He’d surely grow used to it.

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He did. Surprisingly he had grown accustomed to the frequent bizarre music, ranging from ethereal ominous music with instrumental lifts that made Branzzy feel like dancing to, to classic circus music that Branzzy imagined an elephant would balance on a ball too. (Did circuses still use animals? They really shouldn't.)

The problem, however, with growing accustomed to something unusual, is you often don't see the weirdness in it when you're used to it.

Branzzy was streaming, he was playing Minecraft and talking with his chat, explaining his new apartment and how cool it was to have a place to himself, if a bit lonely.

"It's been super nice, I even got a live, laugh, love sign chat, I've truly peaked." He laughed, and distantly registered the circus music drumming against the wall. "Yeah! It's been great, and, huh? Why are you all spamming 'music?'" Branzzy asked, creasing his brows and looking around himself and on his set up, "I didn't hook any music up to my soundboard yet- Oh."

He laughed as it clicked in his head, "The music! Yeah, that's my neighbour, I haven't met him yet but so far, he just plays circus music all day on and off. No idea why, I've gotten so used to it I didn't even notice it had started again."

He watched the chat spam 'wtf' and 'lol' respectively, giggling to himself about the whole situation.

"Even at night? Thank gosh, no, I haven't heard him play it later than like, 9pm, so I usually sleep soundly without dreaming of circuses." He chuckled, "My landlord lady told me to knock on the wall if it gets too loud, but honestly he hasn't blasted it yet, I'm surprised you guys can hear it."

He nodded along to the chat's comments.

"Wow can't believe you have a clown as a neighbour," He read out, cackling loudly, "it's actually so funny you say that, my land lady said she literally doesn't know his name and just calls him clown because he wears a, and I quote, silly mask."

The chat continued to spam WTF and LMAO as well as a few CURSED APARTMENT comments, Branzzy played along, enjoying the atmosphere.

Then the music abruptly stopped, and a knock was heard through the wall, Branzzy tensed and looked at the wall in fear.

"Sorry!" He said, voice just above speaking level, assuming he had laughed maybe a bit too loudly for his neighbour.

They knocked thrice and Branzzy knocked back as a second attempt at an apology, it must have worked because no more sounds were heard through the door that night.

"Cannot believe he just complained about me laughing yet has the audacity to play circus music all day every day." Branzzy whispered to his mic whilst locking eyes with the wall, as if his neighbour would feel his gaze.

Branzzy slapped a hand over his mouth to muffle his laughter as almost immediately the circus music started up again, Branzzy gestured to the wall aggressively, silently raging as the chat hollered with laughter, (or a chatter's equivalent).

Oh well, made for some lovely comedy.

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This continued for a few weeks, Branzy streaming, managing to now maintain a level of sound that didn't breach their thin barrier, and his neighbour continuing to play circus music and other strange otherworldly songs. It had become a meme in Branzy's community, he even added a honking noise to his soundboard, whenever the music started up again, he would hit it and exclaim "Clown time."

(His chat encouraged him to engage in clown-like behaviour whenever it was clown time.)

Despite the sort of silent agreement, the two had, knocking frequently at each other to establish their sound boundaries, Branzy had never actually seen 'Clown' yet. And he had made an effort to greet all his neighbours on his level, but his neighbour at apartment 2B, never opened his door.

Which was odd, because when he knocked on the wall directly after knocking on his door, he responded.

Maybe he's just shy, Branzy settled on as an explanation.

But that didn't change his drive to make peace with him.

It was a hot day, swelteringly hot, so hot that Branzy had to shut his windows because there was no breeze coming in that didn't feel like the waving heat of a furnace. He simply lay against his wall in a tank top, sipping on cold water and groaning in frustration.

It seemed his neighbour was in a similar situation, he wasn't playing ANY circus music, and he hadn't been all day.

"Hey neighbour," Branzy murmured, slapping the wall lightly, "You okay? Where's your funky music?"

He received, about a minute later, a knock in response.

"Hey!" Branzy greeted, gaining a bit of energy and leaning up slightly to press his face against the wall, "You okay?"

He waited for a bit, only his own tired breathing filling out the empty sound.

"I'm fine." The wall responded, and Branzy grinned.

"No music today?" He called back, making sure he was loud enough to be heard.

"...You can hear the music I play?" He heard the muffled voice respond, and Branzy laughed.

"Of course! You only play it every day!"

"Oh, I assumed you couldn't hear it because you rarely knocked."

"It never bothered me, so I didn't see a reason to." Branzy admitted, smiling as he slumped into the wall, sipping on his water, "Too hot for music?"

He heard a slight chuckle, "Yeah, something like that. Way too hot to move."

“I hear that.” Branzy said, raising his glass up as if cheering.

“What are you always laughing about over there?” His neighbour asked, a teasing edge to his tone.

Branzy blushed in embarrassment, “Oh uh, I, I stream playing games, try to be entertaining.”

“Ah, that makes sense, I just assumed you were crazy, always talking to yourself with no one ever responding.”

“Wha- Hey!” Branzy huffed, and the wall laughed. “You cannot talk, I have no idea what you do but anyone who listens to that much circus music is insane!”

He laughed a bit louder, “I gotta agree, it definitely drives me crazy.”

“Then why do you do it?”

“I need to memorise them.”

Branzy paled, “That sounds like a nightmare, why, why do you need to do that.”

“My job requires me to stay on beat.”

“What the heck is the beat in circus music?!”

“It’s not *always* circus music, well, technically it is, but it isn’t always traditional circus music!”

“What do you mean it’s always circus music?! That wishy washy ominous stuff is also circus music?!”

“Yes!”

“Why?”

“Because I work in a circus!”

Branzy found himself sucking in a breath and holding it, trying to hold in the giggles that threatened to escape as he realised, his neighbour, could definitely be, a legitimate, *clown*.

He failed miserably and exploded with cackles, “Are you actually a Clown???” He asked with a wheeze.

“Professionally? No. In my heart? Yes. The proper term is circus performer.”

Branzy continued to giggle, finding himself calm before thinking about the situation again and reigniting his bouts of laughter. “My chat is gonna laugh so hard at this.”

“They can *ALSO* hear the music?!”

“Yes! These walls are very thin!”

“Clearly! No wonder all my other neighbours kept moving out so fast!”

“They never told you?”

“For some reason after meeting me they just wouldn’t talk to me or knock or anything, no idea why.”

“Weird.” Branzzy muttered.

“Agreed.” He heard something from the other side, “Welp, I’ve got to get back to work, or at least converge with my colleagues, nice talking with you, neighbour.”

“Nice talking with you too, uh, Clown!”

The room's overwhelming heat and awful atmosphere slowly reformed, nearly palpable in its suffocating qualities. Branzzy curled up, frowning slightly, he didn't realise it until actually talking with someone but...

Living alone, was, kinda lonely.

He sighed and tried to stay positive, standing up and deciding to try what Clown was doing and at least get a vid of work done, he could probably edit up some highlights for his Youtube channel. Who knows, maybe with Clown around and willing to talk, it wouldn't be as lonely.

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“I actually have no idea how much he is able to hear now, because he said he could hear me talking to myself, which I am not!” Branzzy said, gasping in mock offense as he retailed the encounter to his chat whilst he waited for some streamer buddies to join his call.

He rolled his eyes at the chats antics, “Chat, stop saying you’re not real- Stop, are you gaslighting me right now? I *know* you’re real! I can see you!” He laughed loudly before he quietened, listening for a knock. He sighed in relief when there was none.

“So yeah, basically, he had no idea I could hear the music, and I had no idea he could hear me.” He explained, humming at a few comments, “Does that mean clown time is over? No, definitely not. He keeps playing music, we’re good, also, get this, he is LITERALLY A CLOWN!” He cackled.

“NO I’M NOT!” A shout said through the wall, and Branzzy screamed, falling off his chair, leg still on it so he was at an awkward angle.

He snorted, and cupped his mouth, “YES YOU ARE, YOU WORK AT A CIRCUS!”

“AS A PERFORMER, NOT A CLOWN! STOP LYING TO YOUR CHAT!”

“THAT’S SOMETHING A CLOWN WOULD SAY!” He yelled back.

“THAT’S IT!”

Branzzy struggled to get back on his chair, before falling off again as circus music was blasted at a far louder frequency than usual, Branzzy covered his ears.

“OKAY NOT A CLOWN!” He shouted over the music, and he sighed in relief as it lowered in volume.

“GOOD.”

Branzzy chuckled quietly, “So uh, yeah, that’s him. The Clown.”

The chat was even more excited during clown time than ever before, knowing that the person on the other side of the wall was reasonably funny.

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Branzy yawned, pulling himself from his bed and fixing himself some coffee, he pulled at his night shirt as he waited for it to brew, and scrubbed a hand over his face and through his hair. He always took a bit to wake up, so the coffee definitely helped.

He decided while he waited, he would check his mail, it had been a good while living in his apartment, to the point he didn't need to call it his 'new' home anymore, just 'home' would do nicely. He knew bills and regular junk mail were sure to be ending up in his letter box by now.

He opened his apartment door and froze instantly, because a man was right outside of it, facing the small black, in-the-wall letter boxes they had, he was sifting through his mail.

Branzy gripped the knob in his hand tightly, confused out of his mind on how he had not met this neighbour yet, he'd surely remember someone so damn HOT.

He was wearing a tank top, a crime to be sure, it was lower at the back exposing beautiful back muscles under slightly tanned skin. He had some leggings on, *leggings*, lord have mercy, that framed his form lovingly. He had dark brown hair around medium length flowing from his head. Branzy gulped, he had already opened the door, he needed to get his mail.

But... The man hadn't turned around yet, so maybe there was still a chance he could just shut the door and not face this gorgeous and intimidating man before him.

Branzy took the slightest step backwards, and his floor creaked. The man's head snapped around to face him and Branzy screamed in surprise, because the face was entirely covered by a horrifically scary mask, displaying a large toothy grin and strange mime-like eyes. Branzy flailed at the jump scare and slammed his door shut, the person on the other side laughed maniacally.

Wait a second... He recognised that laugh!

Branzy opened the door slowly, squinting at the man, whose shoulders still jostled as he continued laughing at Branzy's overreaction. Hang on... Familiar laugh, wearing a 'silly' mask... Branzy stared at the letterbox he was getting his mail from, 2B.

"What the- Clown?!" Branzy hissed, glaring at him, "Is that you?!"

The man, now glaringly obviously being Clown, continued to laugh, leaning on his knees before composing himself, "Yes, obviously, hello neighbour." He waved, and Branzy gaped at him.

"Why- How did the landlord ever describe your mask as 'silly'?! That's terrifying!" Branzy squeaked, hiding his face partially behind his door.

"It is silly! It has a silly little smile, see?" He said, and Branzy could tell he was grinning the same smile beneath the mask.

Branzy sighed and shook his head, smiling despite himself, "You're not the classic party clown at all, you're more like the horror clowns, like in IT!"

Clown chuckled at that, "Mm, I do enjoy my fair share of scary clowns."

"You are one!"

"Not a clown." He corrected with a pointed finger.

"Just accept your title as clown, Clown."

Clown was still for a moment, "I'm rolling my eyes, if you can't tell," He informed, "But I'll accept that title, only because I do love Clowns."

"Good." Branzy grinned smugly, and Clown stepped forward, making his eyes widen.

"Stop looking so scared I'm just trying to get a look of who I've been talking to the past, what, month?"

"Month and a half." Branzy corrected, having kept count of how long he'd been living there.

"Yeah, come on out, I assume you wanted your mail?"

"Uh yeah..." Branzy suddenly felt incredibly self-conscious, the man before him was clearly incredibly fit, very put together, and Branzy was... well he was in his pyjama shirt, boxers, and had the worst case of bed hair imaginable.

Clown stared at him and sighed, "Never pinned you for a scaredy-cat," He grabbed Branzy's mail and held it out to him, "There, happy?"

Branzy took it sheepishly, "Thanks. Sorry, just not well dressed right now."

"I'm literally in my workout clothes and super sweaty and you're worried about being improperly dressed?"

Wow if that's what he thinks is bad then Branzy did not want to imagine him in his regular clothes.

"I never got your name, by the way." Clown said, tilting his head.

"Oh!" Branzy said, pushing the door open slightly more so he could stick out his hand in greeting, "Branzy! Nice to meet you Clown!"

Clown laughed, "It's Pearce, nice to meet you too." He looked up and down and Branzy realised the door was showing a bit more of his shame, he hastily closed it a bit more. "You'll be glad to know I'm going out today, so no circus music, you can be as loud as you want."

Branzy's eyes lit up as he thought of the possibilities, "Oh no, my wall buddy is gone."

"I can tell you're excited."

Branzy smiled guiltily, "I'm excited I get to scream, maybe I'll do a horror stream." He joked.

"Oh no, you gotta do that when I'm here, that'd be hilarious." Clown- Pearce, said, a villainous laugh following.

"You are literally an evil clown."

"You know it!" He said, stepping toward his apartment, "I'll be gone in an hour, have fun streaming Branzy!"

Branzy waved as he shut his apartment door, and then brought his hands to his face to feel his cheeks.

Warm. With dimples from smiling.

Chapter End Notes

Ayup! Something more chill this time round, also HOW CLEVER AM I?!?!
PEARCE?!?!? GET IT??? PEIRCE??? PEARCE??? You get it. Ahhh I felt so smart when I figured that out, def using that as a more human name for him in any works where Clown doesn't exactly work.

Oh also, was gonna post another au after this one, but I think I'll put that on hold and focus on the vigilante au for now, cos I'm fairly invested in that one!

Also fyi, Clown is one of those dudes who do the silk dances and trapezes, and yes, obviously if I continue this I'd have a scene of Branzy watching him how could I NOT??? I will make clown a pretty man in everything I write and you CANNOT STOP ME. Also entry of the gladiators is the name of that classic circus music, badass name for something so goofy am I right? Alright have a good day bye <3

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Branzy learns more about Clown's career.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, so I know I said I'd be focusing on my vigilante au, but my sister found this fic and was PISSED that it wasn't finished LMAO. So she asked me to write another chapter just for her, which I did, and she even edited it for me!!! So yay for once this is beta read and edited!!! :D Isn't that exciting?
Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clown had started to leave the apartment frequently, and it unnerved Branzy in a way he didn't expect. The circus music became a sort of white noise to him, lulling him into familiarity that made him recognise his apartment as home. He didn't feel as alone when he heard it play, knowing Clown was through the wall doing who knows what to the music.

Without Clown, without the music, it felt a bit eerie. It felt lonelier, and Branzy realised he would have to learn to overcome this dilemma fast. He couldn't just rely on Pearce to make sure that he felt safe and homey! He was a grown man! He could be just fine without the knowledge that he was next door doing clown-y activities.

“Argh.” Branzy groaned, he was currently resting on his couch, body lying fully across it and sinking into the seat cushions. He didn't have any friends that lived in this part of town, he'd have to make a few new ones, or drive out to them. Branzy let himself slide further into the couch, or maybe his friends could meet him halfway?

“Come on Branzy,” He mumbled to himself, “Lazing around gets you nowhere.” He forced himself up and stretched out his relaxed bones. He'd stream. No circus music means no interruption, right? He'd have a nice chill stream and be as loud as he pleases! He'd done that the first time Pearce went out, he'd do it again!

He sauntered to his streaming room and got settled in, double checking his mic set-up and volume levels before he went live. He smiled brightly at the camera as he fixed his hair while his stream loaded in. He waved energetically the second it announced he'd connected and was live, and he eagerly greeted his followers as people started piling into the stream.

“Welcome everybody! Welcome!” He greeted with a grin, “Just a chill stream today, gonna play some Minecraft on the server, hopefully some people log on later and we can get up to some mischief.”

He idly ran around the server as he waited for everyone to join, talking about his plans for his Minecraft home, that he wanted to get an axolotl, the regular stuff.

“No clown time today?” He read from the chat and chuckled lightly, “No, Clown’s been going out recently so we can BE AS LOUD AS WE WANT!” He said with a shout. He cackled as the chatters with headphones let out various ‘AAA’s’ at the surprise noise.

“Not gonna lie chat, I got so used to the circus music that it feels weird without it.” Branzzy admitted, fiddling with the collar of his shirt absentmindedly, “Also, I don’t think I told you guys’ last time, but I did meet him in person. He actually does wear a super scary mask!”

The chat continued to ask what it looked like and Branzzy gave in, opening Microsoft paint, drawing a very low-quality version of Clown’s mask from memory. “It looked sort of like this, super big grin, weird eyes...” He mumbled as he sketched it out.

He stared in confusion as his chat suddenly exploded with activity, spamming text that Branzzy could barely keep up with. “CIRQUE DE LA LUNE” “YOU KNOW THE AERIAL SILK GUY???” “OH MY GOD HE IS A REAL CLOWN!!!”

“Woah, woah, slow down guys what are you talking about?” Branzzy asked in confusion, squinting at his screen.

“That’s the mask of the ariel silk guy from Cirque De La Lune!!! Circus of the moon!” He read aloud from the chat, he ran a hand through his hair, “Wait, what? You’re telling me he actually is a circus performer in like, a big circus?”

“Yes, but his real mask has horns.” He read again in a murmur and instantly switched to google typing in the circus name. Scrolling through the images and gaping as he saw, clear as day, his neighbour Pearce. He was dressed in some bizarre red and black attire, hanging from two pieces of silk, posed dramatically with his mask on, including this time, some odd horns attached.

“WHAT THE HELL?!” He sputtered like a dying putt-putt. “You’re telling me my neighbour, this whole time, the clown time guy, is some like, famous circus performer?! WE’VE BEEN MOCKING A FAMOUS CIRCUS PERFORMER?!” He shrieked, pulling at his hair, and pushing himself away from his desk as he spun in his chair, before eventually getting up and pacing in his study.

His chat continued to scream in shock as well as laugh that they had been making fun of his weird neighbour without realising how big he really is.

“Oh my god, that’s why he was so buff, he must be really fit.” Branzzy mumbled, hand coming up to cover his mouth as he remembered his previous encounter and blushed.

His chat spammed “EXCUSE ME???” Until he waved them away with a laugh.

“Shut up chat. Okay so, I’m living next to a literal clown performer person. Great. Okay.” Now he wanted his wall buddy back more then ever, he had to ask him so many questions... Branzzy slid back into his chair and shifted closer to his desk again. He glanced at the silent wall. “...Are any of his performances online?”

His plan for this stream went completely off the rails.

Pearce was exhausted, his muscles ached from gratuitous rehearsals for his next show. His brain felt like it was pushing against his skull from how long he had been upside-down paired with the far louder music blasting as he practiced.

He sighed, relieved to finally be home as he climbed the steps up to his floor with a wince. He enjoyed coming home more these days since his new neighbour moved in, he had never met someone that didn't run after meeting him. Then again, maybe that was his habit to keep wearing his mask during practice and then forget to take it off...

Oh well, point is, Branzy was a new type of person that Pearce heavily enjoyed having in his life. Even if it was just as the sound of laughter and chatter.

At first, he had found it a little distracting and annoying when he got too loud, but now he enjoyed the muffled sounds of joy through the walls. Besides, he had to learn how to block out those sounds so he wouldn't be distracted when performing to a crowd. He was good practice.

Plus, it helped that his laugh was cute.

As he turned the knob on his door after slotting the key in, his head tilted in confusion as he heard much louder shouts than usual. Not that weird, Branzy was likely taking advantage of his absence and having a particularly loud stream. He did hope he wasn't doing a horror stream, he wanted to be there for that, sounded like a riot.

He shut his door behind him and started organising his stuff, dropping his duffel bag of work supplies and outfits, and collapsing on the couch with a sigh of relief.

“I AM NOT THRISTING OVER HIM CHAT!”

Pearce jolted at the sudden noise, clutching his aching head with a groan. He didn't want to ruin Branzy's energy, but he really needed some quiet after today.

He wandered over to the wall and raised his fist until he registered what Branzy had said and paused.

Wait, thirsting for who?

He swiftly shoved his ear against the wall and listened with curiosity on what on earth Branzy was talking about.

“You can't expect me to not be impressed over acrobatics! I had no idea it could look so, so easy! How does he make it look so effortless when he has to hold up his entire body weight?! That's insane! Is that the same for pole dancers? Oh god don't answer that I'm gonna get weird comments.”

He smiled slightly, and almost wanted to respond with a “Yeah actually it takes so much physical work to be a good pole dancer but why are you asking?” Until his question on what this topic was about was answered.

“STOP! I am not thirsting over him! Well, maybe a little bit, but you guys can't say you aren't either. At least I have an excuse because I'm his neighbour and have seen him, you guys have no excuse! We're all guilty here!”

His neighbour- Wait was he talking about him?!

Pearce stepped back in surprise as he tried to figure out what exactly Branzy was on about, then it

clicked. Oh. *Oh he was watching HIS performances! And he was impressed!* Pearce couldn't help but grin, slightly embarrassed that Branzy had somehow figured out his involvement in an actual circus, but also a bit flattered that he was actively watching his work and impressed by it.

“Wow, WOW, I've never seen anyone move their body like that, amazing! Are you seeing this chat?! He's so flexible! Do you think he can do the splits? What am I saying, of course he can.” Branzy said, awe in his voice.

Pearce beamed and decided now was the perfect time to interrupt, he knocked loudly, and as always when he surprised him, Branzy screamed. Pearce heard the sound of something falling over. He laughed loudly.

“To answer your question, I can do the splits. Which performance are you watching?” He called, loud enough for Branzy to hear him.

“Wha- Uh, who said I'm watching you?!” Branzy shouted back, voice squeaky and not at all convincing.

“Are you?” Pearce chuckled.

“...Maybe.” Branzy admitted, a tad quieter so that Pearce had to strain to hear his reply.

He laughed and leant against the wall, “I think only my older stuff is online, so you're definitely not getting my best work.”

“You can do better than this?!” Branzy sputtered from behind the wall.

“Of course! Why do you think I practice all the time?”

There was a lapse of silence for a moment or two as Branzy registered the fact that every time he heard the music Pearce, had in fact, been practicing.

“Oh my god. You practice *so much*.” He said, “How are you not exhausted all the time?!”

“Well I am today; I went in for rehearsals with my fellow performers.” Pearce groaned.

“Oh! You should have a nap or something Clown.” Branzy said through the door, sounding far too concerned and kind for Pearce's liking. He rarely met someone so considerate, let alone a neighbour.

“I may do so, that sounds pretty good.” Pearce mumbled, taking a liking to being called 'clown' so affectionately.

“I'll wrap up the stream here, so you have no noise, sleep well Clown! My chat says they love your performances!”

“Thanks Branzy.” Pearce said through a yawn, “Have a good night, or afternoon, whatever the time is.” He mumbled as he walked away from the wall after giving it a knock goodbye.

He listened to the muffled noises of Branzy thanking subs and wishing everyone a goodnight. He found himself smiling against his wishes as he flopped onto his bed and pulled a pillow against his chest, hiding his face in it.

He liked Branzy, he really, really, liked Branzy.

Branzy was finally out with friends, *finally*. It had only been what, over a month since he last saw them in person? Yeah. Way too long. He had missed hanging out with them and was overjoyed to be out of his home for just a bit.

“Purple icecream, so on brand, but seems so unhealthy.” His friend, Chief, said with a slight laugh. He licked his chocolate icecream.

“Chocolate, so basic, that’s the dirt block of reality.” Branzy scoffed jokingly, “And it’s not unhealthy, it’s a root, taro, therefore: healthy.”

“Potatoes are a root too, Branzy.” Rek added with a smirk, he had lemon flavoured icecream. “Those aren’t particularly healthy.”

“Are we just gonna let him get away with saying ‘dirt block of reality’? implying dirt isn’t in reality?” Chief laughed.

“We are going to ignore that, yes, and also potatoes are not a root Rek! They’re a vegetable.”

“That doesn’t sound correct either, I’m looking this up.” Chief muttered, pulling out his phone as the three strolled down the bustling city street.

“I am fairly sure that they’re a root.” Rek reaffirmed.

“Nope, says here it’s a stem tuber.”

“Yo potatoes are on YouTube? How many subscribers?” Branzy joked.

“Har-har.” Rek rolled his eyes, licking his icecream again and eyeing a few stores up ahead. “Oh, tech shop, mind if we stop by? I’ve been meaning to get some new headphones.”

“Sure thing.” Branzy said, the three sped up their walking as they grew closer, “What happened to your old ones?”

“Just stopped working the other day, now it’s all crackly, super annoying. Thought I’d get new ones before I grow too used to the noise.” Rek chuckled.

“I don’t know, I’ve grown awfully accustomed to circus music, and it doesn’t bother me anymore.” Branzy laughed.

Chief tilted his head in query, raising a brow as a way to ask him to elaborate.

“Dude, Chief, have you not been keeping up with his streams?” Rek said in a false-accusatory tone.

“Yeah Chiefy! I thought we were close, turns out it was all a lie.” Branzy gripped his heart dramatically.

“Oh come on, you stream so often now I can barely keep up! I haven’t had time for a lot of them since you stream when I’m working.” Chief said, shoving Branzy as he pretended to die on him, dropping his weight onto Chief.

“Long story short, my neighbour is a circus performer who blasts circus music all the time.” Branzy summarised.

“Wow. No wonder you’re so unhinged.”

“Hey!”

“No, no, Chief, you forgot he’s always been unhinged.”

“Hey!”

The three laughed as they turned to enter the electronics store, but Branzly paused out the front as he saw a poster that captivated his attention. He stopped mid-walk, letting his friends walk ahead as he eyed the poster with interest, walking toward it and staring intently.

“Branzy?” Rek questioned, poking his head out before joining Branzly by the poster as he got no response. “Oh.” He said, staring with him.

“Guys?” Chief asked, also poking his head out and furrowing his brows, “Something wrong?” The two didn’t respond so he joined them, gazing at the poster.

It was a poster for the new showing of Cirque De La Lune. A colourful poster of reds and blacks, displaying a night sky with multiple red stars dancing across it under the glow of a red moon. There were tiny silhouettes of multiple circus stunts within the moon and backdrop. A trapeze, rope walking, horses, juggling, and silk ropes.

Branzy stared in awe as he read the fine print, showing the multiple acts of the show.

‘Featuring the Killer Clown and his red ropes.’

“He *is* a clown.” Branzly hissed, now slightly offended he kept denying it, when it literally is his title. Maybe it’s not exactly what his career is, but it is literally in his name! Killer *Clown*.

“Oh, is that your neighbour?” Chief asked, pointing to the text.

“Yeah, pretty sure. Can’t believe he didn’t tell me he’d be performing soon.” Branzly huffed, crossing his arms, debating whether or not he should take the poster.

“He’s probably just been busy rehearsing.” Rek reasoned, and Branzly nodded with a sigh.

“Yeah, you’re right, he’s been so exhausted, I hope it goes well.”

“What, you can’t tell me you’re not going?!” Chief gasped, “You gotta support your neighbour! That’s like, in the bible or something!”

“Pretty sure it’s love your neighbour, and Branzly does seem to be doing that.” Rek giggled.

“Hey!” Branzly laughed, glaring playfully at Rek, “Just because I think he looks nice does not mean that- We are getting off topic! It’s like, eighty dollars per ticket! I don’t know if I can afford that right now.”

“What, not rolling in that streamer money?” Chief teased.

Branzy pouted, “I mean, it’d be a bit weird if I just showed up out of the blue at one of his shows, right? It’s like if he watched my streams, it’d be weird.”

“How do you know he’s not watching them now?” Rek asked sincerely, and Branzly rose a finger to retort, before pausing and staring at the poster as he wracked his brain for reasons.

“I- Well it’s just unlikely! He can hear me, there’s no point for him to.”

“As much as I love watching Branzly flounder, Rek, your headphones?” Chief said, alerting the two to get back on track.

“Oh right, yeah let’s get those.” Branzly said with a nod, he and Rek entering the store.

...Branzly slipped outside and stole the poster on their way out.

-

Branzly looked left and right when he returned, poster clutched tightly in his hands, and tape in his other. He tried to withhold his mischievous smile as he prepared himself to stick the poster to Pearce’s door. This was gonna be hilarious. He hadn’t heard the man all day, so it was likely he was out, no music means no clown, and Branzly was excited to hear his reaction when he returned.

He leant against the door and concentrated as he tried to stick the poster as quietly and non-suspiciously as possible. If any other neighbour saw him, it’d probably be a bit weird to be seen doing this. He grumbled to himself as he couldn’t quite get the poster to stay aligned, he leant more on the door, resting his elbow on the doorknob.

“Come on...” He hissed, now fairly annoyed he had rolled up the poster for easy carrying, it had made it very hard to stick down properly.

Then the door opened.

Branzly tumbled into the apartment with a yelp of surprise, hearing the tearing of the poster in his hands, expecting to hit the ground but being caught by the occupant.

“Oh. Well this is a surprise.” A rumbling voice responded, and Branzly flailed back in surprise from the chest and arms that had caught him. “Hey Branzly.” Clown smiled, and his mask was off.

His mask was off.

What.

Branzly stared in shock, Clown was wearing some black jeans, with a red shirt tucked in slightly so that it folded over his waistline. The first three buttons were unbuttoned, yet the sleeves were buttoned just fine. Black stitching of a vine curled around the chest and pocket area. Branzly couldn’t help but marvel at how well it all fit him, it was fairly hard to avert his eyes from the parts of his toned chest that were exposed.

But his face was even more captivating than his outfit. Striking brown eyes, and his brown medium length hair was styled to frame his face, bangs curving around his forehead. He had a sharp nose and a crooked smile, teeth white and bright.

“Branzly? You there? What’s this?” Clown asked, looking past him to see the half-stuck poster on his door, now torn at the end. He laughed, “Seriously? You were sticking my poster to my door? Aw, and you ripped it.” He sighed, tugging the torn piece from Branzly’s hands. “Let me get you a new one.”

Branzy stood numbly in his neighbour's apartment, watching Clown leave the main room and into another. The layout was just like his but flipped to the opposite side. In the middle of the lounge was, instead of a couch or table, two long pieces of silky rope attached to the ceiling. The silks were hanging on this strange, hook like thing, which was attached to a weird swivelling thing.

Branzy marvelled at the pretty red silk and the apartment, which had matching red and black theming throughout, sometimes with a hint of white. It was very nice, the only real mess was the duffel bag of supplies that Branzy couldn't identify, and a few piles of silk as well as outfits near the hanging silk.

"Here we go!" Clown said, reappearing in the room and shocking Branzy back into reality as he walked over and offered him a clean, laminated, poster. "Much nicer."

"Oh. Thank you?" Branzy said, taking the poster with confusion, it was very nice, sturdier too. Maybe he'd hang it in his study, that'd be cool. "Your... your place is nice." He said as he looked around again.

"Thanks! Silk looks cool, doesn't it?" Clown grinned, his smile stretched wide, and Branzy stifled a laugh as he noticed the resemblance to his mask.

"Yeah! I didn't think you'd be able to have silk stuff here."

"A proper set up is definitely better with my usual longer ropes, but I can work with this. I just practice the moves and when I do the full rehearsal I move up and down the rope, combining the dance." He shrugged, like it was no big deal.

"Wow. That's awesome." Branzy breathed, hand slightly reaching toward the silk before pulling back, "Can I- "

"Sure."

He ran his hand along the silk and grinned, it felt so smooth, the light rippled through it as he touched it.

"I didn't know you were in today; I didn't hear any music." Branzy admitted, slightly embarrassed about being caught. But seeing Clown face to face was far better than what he had expected to happen from putting up the poster.

"I took a day off today, been too tired from rehearsals." He admitted with a shrug.

"Wait, you didn't go anywhere today?" Branzy asked, looking over his outfit one more time.

"No, why?" He faced Branzy with a curious expression.

"Y-You look so put together! You just dress like that when you're not expecting to see anyone?"

Clown glanced elsewhere, scratching at his cheek as a blush crept over his cheeks. "Uh, well, um." He cleared his throat and looked away. "Where were you today? I knocked at your door, and you didn't answer."

"I went to the city with a couple friends... Wait." Branzy stared at the back of Clown's head as his brain whirred, a grin broke across his face. "Clown! Did you get all dressed up just to see little ol' me?" Branzy teased, and from the tenseness suddenly in Clown's shoulders, that thought was confirmed. Branzy blushed brightly and laughed joyously.

“Aw! Aw! Pearce! That’s so sweet!” He giggled, and Clown faced him with a sigh, a hand over his face, he split his fingers, so he was looking down at Branzzy through them.

“Well why are you dressed so fancy? You’re wearing a frickin’ vest.”

“Vests are underrated, they’re the best.” Branzzy grinned, tugging at his black vest with delight. The black matched his pants and fingerless gloves, it was very stylish. The purple shirt underneath made his purple shoes pop, he took pride in his style.

Clown hummed in agreement to his vest comment, and Branzzy hoped he wasn’t blushing as much as he thought he was.

“Your face is really pretty.” Branzzy said offhandedly, before flailing his hands, “I mean handsome! Handsome!”

“What, you saying I can’t have a pretty face?” Clown grinned, dropping his hand, slipping it into his pocket instead.

“No! Of course not! You have a *very* pretty face!” Branzzy recovered, and Clown laughed, throwing his head back.

“Why thank you Branzzy, you have a very cute face yourself.”

Branzzy couldn’t hide how his eyes lit up at the compliment, he ducked his head and smiled.

The two jolted as Clown’s notifications went off, he pulled out his phone from his pocket and checked the notification. “Oh, you’re meant to go live in 10 minutes.”

“I am?!” Branzzy yelped, checking his phone, and seeing the time, and that his scheduled tweet to alert people had gone out. “Oh my god I am- Wait, wait since when did you follow me?”

“Since your chat found my twitter and spammed me about how much you were thirsting over me.” Clown said, scrolling through his twitter, looking up slightly in amusement as Branzzy spluttered at the accusation.

“I was not *thirsting* over you! I was just impressed by your skills!”

“Mhm, sure you were.”

“I don’t appreciate what you’re implying mister!”

Clown’s eyes crinkled, “Sure you don’t.”

That sent Branzzy back into a stuttering mess, blushing vibrantly.

“You better get your stream set up Branzzy, I’ll see you later.” Clown chuckled, assuring Branzzy out of his apartment.

“Right, uh, I’ll try to keep it down so you can relax.” Branzzy said apologetically.

“Don’t worry about it,” He smiled, “Enjoy the poster.”

“I will! I’ll hang it up in my streaming room for all to see!” Branzzy called as he quickened his pace so he could set up his stream in time.

He heard Clown chuckling as he finally entered his apartment, smiling uncontrollably as he put the

poster on his wall and started his stream. He had a feeling it was gonna be a fun one.

-

After the stream, Branzy found a ticket slipped under his door, to the next Cirque De La Lune show.

Chapter End Notes

My sister said there wasn't enough thirsting for her tastes. I will take this feedback into the next chapter.

Side note, look at this hideous website I found when doing research on circus lingo:

[IT'S ALL WRITTEN IN COMIC SANS](#)

Hideous.

Oh also the circus is a parody of an actual famous circus! cirque du soleil :) Circus of the sun.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Branzy streams, and looks like he's got a special guest!

Chapter Notes

Hey guys sorry for taking so long I got covid LMAO. Anyway, FEAST MY PIGEONS, CONSUME THIS BREAD.

Also thanks to that one dude on tumblr for wishing me a good day that's so sweet of them. I wish you a good day too, renchant!

I want to thank you all for the recent boom in support I've gotten on these fics... It's actually unreal haha. I don't know how to cope! We've been getting fanart lads!!! Here is some fanart I've seen for this fic!

[This wonderful Clown Time fanart by Project C10V3R! I love how it even has the streamer lights!!!](#)

[This lovely art by that soup good!!! \(He do be simping doe!\)](#)

I'll be posting the fanart for the other fics when I update them next! Anyway, here is some lovely fluff, which is the only thing I ever write as we all know.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Branzy was laughing loudly along with his chat. He was just playing on a Minecraft server with his friends but everyone in the call was in a very goofy mood. The laughter was contagious. Branzy was finding it difficult to keep quiet, giggles slipping out even when he tried to keep them under control. Plus, it was currently Clown Time, and the circus music through the wall just made everything funnier.

Then he heard a scream from next door and stilled. He slipped his headphones off his head, staring at the wall with worry. "Clown?" He called, and a shrill shout replied:

"BRANZY HELP!"

Branzy shot up out of his chair, stumbling over his feet and leaving the cameras view. He was quick to open his apartment door and rush to Pearce's, glad to see his neighbour's door was unlocked. When he opened it, he expected to see something horrific, like maybe blood or broken bones during a bad practice, but instead...

Branzy choked on his own breath and burst out laughing.

Clown's head and arms were pressed against the ceiling, legs wrapped around the silks ropes he clung to, scrambling to get further away from the floor.

Where a tiny, itty bitty, black spider sat, slowly moving toward the silk ropes.

Branzy laughed even louder, leaning on his knees as he cackled at the sight. Clown, who had his mask off, glared at him.

“It’s not funny! Help me!” He hissed and shrieked again when the spider crawled onto the rope. He tried to pull himself higher which was an impressive feat really and Branzy would have admired it if he wasn’t busy laughing his ass off.

Honestly, if he wasn’t preoccupied trying to contain his hysterics, he would probably just be admiring his whole body, he was back to wearing leggings and had a sleeveless black turtleneck to accompany it.

“Branzy!” Clown whined; teeth bared as he stared at the creature with obvious fear.

“Okay, okay, hold on…” Branzy said, letting his laughter die out, he looked around for a container and settled on a glass cup on the kitchen counter. He crept over to the rope, shaking it lightly so the spider lost its grip.

It fell onto his arm, and he screamed.

Clown screamed again in response, watching it crawl up his arm to his shoulder. Branzy swiped madly at it until it flew off and landed on the floor, he dove for it and shoved the glass over it. Branzy sighed in relief, aware he must look ridiculous, sprawled out on the floor clutching a spider in a glass.

Clown seemed to realise how funny the situation actually was and broke out of his moment of fear, slowly chuckling before building into a loud laugh. Branzy pouted and stared up at him over his shoulder, he was now just twirling in a slow circle as he dangled from the ropes laughing, eventually hanging upside-down, letting his legs hold his weight as they coiled in the ropes.

“Well, you’re welcome.” Branzy huffed, getting up and grabbing a spare poster Clown had, slipping it under the cup and taking the spider to the window to release.

“My hero~” Clown mocked, continuing to grin whilst upside-down, watching Branzy and only fully relaxing once the spider was thrown out the window and it was shut again.

“You scared the daylights out of me,” Branzy admitted with a chuckle, “I thought you were being murdered!” He put his hands on his hips and grinned at his neighbour, who rolled his eyes.

“Everyone has a fear, mine just happens to be spiders. I’m man enough to admit that.” He crossed his arms and Branzy couldn’t help but be impressed by how effortlessly strong he looked; dangling upside-down with his arms crossed, legs supporting his entire body as he swayed.

“Well, I’m sure you’ll be glad to know my entire chat heard you scream.” Branzy snorted, realising he was really leaving his viewers in the dark right now.

Clown’s calm smirk dropped in a second, “Y-You’re streaming right now?”

“Yep.” Branzy sung.

Clown groaned, shoving a hand in his hair, “Oh, *great.*”

“Gonna be really funny explaining this one to them…”

Clown sighed, “What do you want in exchange for keeping your mouth shut?”

Branzy's eyes lit up, a mischievous grin forming, "Hmm, that's a good question..." He tapped his chin and jutted out his hip, trying his best to look like he was thinking really hard.

"Keep in mind I gave you a free ticket to a circus performance and have only ever been kind to you." Clown bargained, and Branzy laughed.

"Let's see... What do you have to *offer* me?" Branzy asked, leaning forward with a grin.

Clown furrowed his brows, a slight frown on his face before turning to a grin, he laughed quietly.

"Spiderman kiss?" He said with a joking tone, moving his arms up to hold the ropes near his feet.

Branzy's face went red, and he leaned back, stuttering over his words, "Wha- What, I, Um..." He put a hand to his cheek and continued to mutter to himself.

Clown pulled himself upright, "Hmm, guess not." He mumbled with a sly smile and slid down till he was standing. "Hmm ..." He tapped his chin, "Oh!" He leaned forward with a wide grin, "How about I join your stream one time, that'd probably make your chat happy, right?"

Branzy lit up, his hands clutching each other as he jumped in place, "Oh! Yes!" He beamed, "I'd- They'd love that! They've been hearing about you for so long!"

"Have they now? And I thought they've only been hearing my music..." He looked to the speaker, still blasting circus music.

"Well, I mean... I like to talk about my day when I start my streams and well..." Branzy wrung his hands together, "You feature in a fair few of my days." He smiled sheepishly and Clown chuckled.

"Yeah, I know, I'm just messing with you, I watch your streams." And with that he walked over to his kitchen, putting away the glass Branzy had used for the spider into the sink.

"You... What?"

Clown turned on the water in the sink and pulled out cleaning gloves, "Is that really so surprising? Sometimes I like to know what could possibly be so funny." He explained, stilling before he started washing up, "Oh, you're still streaming, aren't you? Should probably get back to that, could you turn off the speaker on your way out?"

"Oh, yeah sure! Right, oh shit, they've been waiting so long!" Branzy flicked off the speaker and dashed out the door, waving a goodbye.

From his viewers perspective, they heard a scream, saw Branzy run out, heard doors opening and then...heard a lot of loud laughter. All accompanied by the continued insanity that was looping circus music. When Branzy returned, blushing, and smiling, they had responded with appropriate amounts of outrage and curiosity.

Branzy could never really explain what had happened without breaking into giggles.

Branzy was giddy, and his chat had noticed. He could barely focus on what he was meant to be doing, eyes always glancing elsewhere. Branzy was doing his best to ignore their queries, but it was a bit tricky when he was doing a terrible job at being inconspicuous.

“Okay! Okay!” He sighed, seeing the chat spamming him to answer them, “Fine! So, okay, we mayyyy have a special guest today, and I’m not exactly sure when he’s joining...”

He twiddled his thumbs before pointing aggressively at the camera, “But I’m not saying who it is!”

He didn’t need to, there was only one person who made Branzy act like this.

“CLOWN?!?!?” “IRL CLOWN TIME?!?!?” “CLOWN! CLOWN! CLOWN!” “CLOWN TIME INTENSIFIES” The chat screamed and Branzy laughed, trying his best to dissuade their guess.

“Nooo, he’s way too busy with prep for his big show!” Branzy said, waving his hand wildly, a door opened.

“Are you going to go to it?” He read aloud from the chat and wondered if answering truthfully would lead to bullying or excitement. He bit his cheek in thought. “Um...”

His study door slammed open so loud that Branzy flung himself away from it in his chair, toppling to the ground with a yelp.

“He better!” Clown said from the doorway, barely getting the sentence out through a laugh, “Sorry, thought I’d let myself in.” He crouched and offered a hand to Branzy, who stared into his masked face, not yet accepting the help up.

“What are you wearing.” He deadpanned, and Clown grabbed his hand anyway, hoisting him to his feet before stepping back and doing a twirl.

“What? This? Just one of my many outfits. What, don’t like it?”

It was red and black, like most of his clothing, but he was wearing a black vest with a red shirt and black pants. And Branzy slowly begun to glare at him...because he was wearing the exact same outfit, except with a purple shirt.

“You did this on purpose.” He hissed.

“Did what? *Oh.*” Clown said with a fake gasp, “Looks like one of us is gonna have to change!”

Branzy sighed and ran a hand over his face, hiding his smile, “Did you check the stream before you came here just so you could do that?”

“Pfft, no.” Clown lied, swatting away his accusation with a limp wrist.

Branzy folded his hands over his chest, “Well, you’re going to have to change.”

“Surely you jest!” Clown said, mockingly aghast.

Branzy chuckled and gave in, slumping as he started unbuttoning his vest with a grumble. “Fine, but I’m just taking off the vest.”

“Awooga.” Clown whispered under his breath.

Branzy slowly stared up from his chest to Clown who continued to stare with his creepy mask, not taking back the comment.

“Anyway, hi chat.” Clown greeted, stepping toward the camera with a wave.

Branzy struggled with his buttons and shucked off the vest, rolling up the sleeves of his shirt and facing his chat, neglecting to notice Clown watching him. “Yes, anyway. Chat, meet Clown!” He stuck his arms out and did jazz hands toward Clown, who waved madly at the camera.

“Hi!”

The chat was very enthusiastically spamming ‘clown time’, and Branzy laughed at their screams, hitting the clown honking noise a few times to encourage them. He wheeled out a spare chair for Clown, who sat with one leg over the other, poised as if he was about to be interviewed, which wasn’t an unfair assumption. Branzy sat back in his gaming chair, grinning at his neighbour.

“So, Clown, wanna give a little introduction to the chat?”

“Hey chat, I’m Clown, I’m the one who plays the circus music all the time.” He said, waving again, “Come to my next show, I’m gonna do some dancing on ropes.”

“Wow, way to get free promo.” Branzy snorted, “Wanna answer some questions from the chat?”

“Sure!” He leaned forward and looked at the chat, most too excited to even think of any good questions, “Why did you scream?” He read, and he leaned back with a groan. “Not telling.”

Branzy’s lips tugged into a smile, which he quickly smoothed into a poker face. “Also not telling.” He scanned the chat, who were still struggling to come up with questions on such short notice. “Fine, if you guys are having such trouble asking good questions, I’ll just ask some!” He turned to Clown who leaned forward.

“I’m batting my eyelashes beneath this mask.” He said jokingly, and Branzy laughed.

“Okay, hmm,” Branzy tapped his chin, “Do you actually like the circus music you constantly play?”

“Eh, not really.” Clown shrugged, “Some I really like, but the standard circus song I play most gets old fast. I like the routine to it though, so that helps.” He shrugged, “Honestly, my favourite stuff to dance to is swing music.”

Branzy grinned at the confession, “Swing music? For real?”

“Yeah!” Clown chuckled, “It’s so much fun, especially electro swing. Harder beats make it more fun to try and dance in time to it.” Clown clasped his hands together, “What’s your favourite music, Branzy?”

With the attention on him Branzy faltered, “Oh uh, I like... Anything? Pop? I don’t know!” He played with his hair, “Is electro swing in your show?”

Clown put a slender finger over the grin of his mask, “That’s for you to find out, isn’t it?” Clown looked at the chat, then laughed slightly, “What? Branzy, did you not tell your chat I gave you a ticket?” It seemed the chat had been asking.

“Ahh! No! Don’t tell them that!” Branzy said, covering his face, “They’ll call you a simp!”

“Will they now?” Clown laughed, leaning toward the camera, tilting his head, “That’s not such a bad thing, is it?”

“Uh, yes, it is!” Branzy huffed, “They’ll bully you about it forever.” He whined, crossing his arms with a pout.

“Aww, then they can bully both of us, because you’re a simp for me too, right?”

Branzy blushed a brilliant shade of red that matched Clown’s shirt, “Wha- *No.*”

Clown fake cried, curling his fists in an exaggerated crying motion where his eyes would be on the mask. “Wah, wah, wah!”

Letting out a sigh, Branzy reluctantly gave in, smiling exasperatedly, “Fine. Fine. I’ll simp for you if you simp for me.”

“Yay! Awesome. Cool.” Clown cheered, and Branzy ignored him as he looked for a question from chat.

“Horror stream when? Guys, those aren’t the kind of questions I’m looking for-“

“No, actually, yes, let’s do that. Right now.” Clown said, scooting his chair forward.

Branzy looked at him in bewilderment, “What? Now?”

“Yeah! I wanna be there to watch you get scared. Your screams are funny.”

Branzy glared, “Sometimes I think you’re an evil clown.”

“I never denied not being one, just denied being a regular clown.” Clown said cheekily.

Branzy rolled his eyes and saw the enthusiasm from the chat about the idea, “Okay, how about this, we’ll play a really basic horror game and answer questions while we do it.” The chat agreed, and Clown nodded.

“Alright, booting up Slenderman, Clown, wanna turn out the lights for extra spookiness?”

“Yes!” Clown said in a tone laced with bad intentions. The lights clicked off, the purple fairy lights behind Branzy being the only thing illuminating them. Until Clown sat beside him again and flicked something on his mask.

“JESUS-“ Branzy yelped, jolting in his seat as Clown’s eyes glowed red. “You have lights in your mask?!”

“Of course! I rarely turn them on because it’s harder to see, but adds to the atmosphere, doesn’t it?” He sounded very pleased.

“Warn a guy next time!” Branzy laughed, lightly knocking his shoulder.

“Ah, where’s the fun in that?” Clown chuckled, they both looked back to the computer as the game finished downloading (a very small file) and the main menu screen popped up. “So how are we gonna do this?” Clown asked, “Should I just watch or-“

“What?! Of course not! That’s no fun for you!” Branzy argued, “I don’t want you missing out.” Branzy mumbled, thinking through the options that would best make the experience fun for the both of them.

“Hm, what if I just...” Clown scooted even closer than before, shuffling his chair and eventually coming close enough that he could reach over for the keys on the keyboard. “There.” He grunted, he stretched awkwardly to reach the keys. “You do mouse, I do keys?”

“Wow, great idea! But uh, you look a bit uncomfortable.”

Clown looked at Branzy, his red glowing eyes illuminated Branzy’s face. “Hm. Move over?” Clown asked, sounding, (if Branzy really tried to focus on his voice), a touch nervous.

Branzy shuffled over in his seat, and Clown awkwardly climbed in next to him.

“This is not working.” Branzy sighed, giggling slightly as their shoulders bumped and thighs squished together.

“Okay, no, wait, we can work with this, just...” Clown wrapped his arm around Branzy’s shoulder. “There, so now you-“ Branzy repeated the action on Clown, they fit more comfortably.

“Perfect!” Clown cheered, “We are conjoined.”

“Yeah, this works!” Branzy smiled, trying his best to ignore the instant increase in warmth all across his left side. He gulped. It would be hard to get scared when he could barely focus, I mean, Clown had his arm over his shoulder for god’s sake! And it felt...

Branzy felt every slight movement of Clown’s fingers as they tensed and untensed on his shoulder, fiddling with the fabric of his shirt. It felt, weirdly good, weirdly natural, to be this close.

“This would have been a lot easier though if I just sat on your lap or something.” Clown said offhandedly, and Branzy completely jolted at the comment, Clown’s hand jostling with him.

“What?!” Branzy squawked, Clown feigned innocence and ignorance to his concerns.

“What? I mean, you can sit on my lap if that’s what you prefer, you’re pretty small.” He chuckled, tapping his shoulder lightly, he settled his hand on the WASD keys. “Hit enter?”

Branzy did so, clicking with the mouse, but pouting, a playful scowl on his face. “I’m not SMALL.” He grumbled, looking around as Clown moved their character forward, strafing around trees.

“Seriously?” Clown laughed, and Branzy felt it, oh god he didn’t even consider that he could feel Clown’s shoulders. They were so... strong. So muscular, he must have a lot of upper body strength. Oh god, when he laughed, he could feel his shake, the slight movement of his shoulder blades. This was the best idea ever! Or potentially the worst idea if Branzy’s heart gave out!

“What do you mean ‘seriously?’” Branzy said, mocking Clown’s voice, he laughed more, and Branzy decided that’s all he ever wanted to hear forever. “I’m not! I’m fairly average height wise I’d think, and I’m pretty sure you’re only tall because you’ve stretched your body out on ropes!”

“You think I stretched my body out? Like those old medieval torture devices?!” Clown cackled, he made their character stop walking, static grew and Branzy wildly moved the mouse, “Oh oops!” He moved them again, and Branzy sighed in relief. “Oh wait, turn that way again? Bingo. Page.”

Branzy clicked it and grinned. “Yes! We did it!”

“Only seven more to go.”

“Wait, there are eight pages? I thought there were only like, five.”

“No there’s eight it even said on the screen, god, I’m out gamer-ing you right now, Branzy.”

“You are not! I’m just not well versed in horror stuff!” Branzy chuckled, he spotted another page by a truck. “Come to think of it, you kind of look like Slenderman.”

“Hm. Explain how.” Clown deadpanned.

“Tall, white face-mask-thing. Fancy dresser.” Branzy listed, grinning as Clown seemed to groan at each point.

“I have a face though, though I appreciate that you like my dressing- Oh, Branzy, we’re meant to be answering questions.”

“OH RIGHT-“ Branzy yelped, forgetting the chat was even there, and was surprised to see it was mostly people pointing out that Branzy looked flustered. He did not! Anyone would act the way he was acting when put next to someone very pretty and talented!

“Uh, let’s see...” Branzy mumbled, barely focusing on movement as he scanned the chat. Clown’s hand drifted from the keyboard to the small sound deck above it. “First impressions of each other? Hmm, that’s a pretty good one, though pretty sure you all knew my first impressions-“

HONK

Branzy shrieked and would have likely fell off his chair as usual, but since he was currently glued to Clown’s side, he just waved his hands and then tightly gripped Clown as the man beside him cackled, head falling back. He had hit the damn clown time button.

“Clown!” Branzy hissed, “You can’t do that!” He heard static from the video game and panicked, “Ah, shit we’re gonna die-“ Clown made them run away in time and Branzy slumped in relief, hands relaxing.

His hands were on Clown’s chest and shoulder.

“If I knew this was the response I’d have gotten, I would have scared you a long time ago.” Clown snarked, in a whisper, Branzy took slight relief that the red lights from Clown’s mask hid his steadily growing blush.

“Oh my god shut up.” Branzy huffed, pulling his hands off him and whining into his one free hand. “That button is meant to be for *funny* clown time, not *scary* clown time.”

“That was funny!” Clown giggled, Branzy softened completely at the sound.

“Okay, it was a little I guess.” He admitted, smiling lightly and returning to the game. Third page gotten. “You’re scarier than the singular scary aspect of this game.” Branzy snorted humorously.

“I’ll take that as a compliment.” Clown cooed, before turning his attention fully to the game and to the chat. “To answer the question, I thought Branzy was a weirdo talking to himself. Pretty sure he even said that on stream. Bad question chat, I expect better.”

“Hey no! Don’t be mean to them!”

“I will be as mean as I want.” He joked, and Branzy yelped as Slenderman appeared behind them, he moved the mouse terribly and nearly made them run straight back into the tuxedo-dressed

creature, Clown just kept laughing at his obvious panic. “What do you think of him now?” Clown read from the chat, Branzly felt him stiffen, that did not seem like a good sign.

“Good question.” He said slowly, “Hmm...”

“Well, *I* think Clown is a demon!” Branzly cut in, hoping to stop Clown from answering a question he didn’t want to answer. “He may be good at what he does but that doesn’t change the fact that he takes way too much joy in messing with people.”

“I have never messed with you, or anyone, in my life. I never lie.” Clown said robotically, before chuckling quietly. “I think Branzly is the best neighbour I’ve ever had. Mostly because most move out in under a month.”

“Oh wow, I wonder why that is.” Branzly deadpanned, snorting.

Clown turned to him, “Yeah I only recently realised why.”

“Clown, you’re joking.” Branzly said, voice slipping to serious, “You- You know why, right?”

“I think I do now, but honestly, before you, I had no clue. But now I know.”

They stared at each other numbly, then said in sync, “It’s the mask.”

“Yeah, the mask, I figured that out now! I’m just so used to wearing it I don’t even register when I have it on half the time, not my fault people get scared!”

“It’s scary!!! You can’t say that!”

“It isn’t that scary-“

“I screamed when I first saw it!”

“You screamed when I yelled through the wall!”

“Most people scream when they’re yelled at!”

They both screamed, a large horror sting sound effect coming from the computer, as they had completely forgotten the game and were jump-scared and killed by Slenderman, taking them back to the title screen. They clung to each other pathetically, practically hugging as they stared at the screen. They both had pulled their legs up in their fright and were just a ball of energy and limbs.

“Well. That went well.” Clown croaked.

“Definitely, in fact, I don’t think we need to play that again.”

“We practically beat the game.”

“Barely even practically, we basically did.”

“We beat the game.”

“We totally did.”

“We beat Slenderman.”

“Yep.”

They stayed in their terrified position for a moment, as the chat whizzed by, various shouts of amusement and surprise scrolling past at rapid speed. Branzy clenched his eyes shut with a sigh, “Chat is *so*, gonna make fun of me for this.” He detached himself from Clown and groaned, “I would have preferred falling off my chair.”

“Aw, don’t be like that, we can be made fun of together. Except me, I’m sure they all think I’m very cool and manly for not being embarrassed by clinging to my friend in fear.”

“We can be made fun of... Together... Except you.” Branzy repeated with a grumble, and Clown slowly stood up, heading back into his seat.

“Yes.”

“Right, okay, fair enough.” Branzy laughed, “Well, that was a bust, let’s see if we have any new questions...”

He read the chat and picked a new one, “Why the mask? Why do you need to wear it now?”

“It’s my whole persona,” Clown explained, resting an arm over the back of his chair, “Can’t let just anyone see my face.”

Branzy flushed slightly and glanced away, chewing at his lip. *Can’t let just anyone?*

“Has Branzy seen it? Of course he has.” Clown scoffed, then leaned back, “Check it.” He took off his mask with a grin, waving it in front of the camera as he stayed out of frame. He smiled at Branzy who looked at his face with a blush. “Branzy! Tell them what I look like!” He suggested with a chuckle.

God. How could he even begin to describe the face of someone as beautiful as Clown? Sharp jawline and nose, with an equally sharp smile, but his eyes held a softness that made Branzy melt. They had an intensity that rivalled the roar of fire, with the warmth of one too. He wondered if he would be set ablaze if he gazed too long, and from how hot his face got, he wouldn’t doubt it.

But of course, Branzy couldn’t say that.

Branzy played with his shirt’s collar, “Uh, he looks, um, he...” He glanced away from his gaze, “Very cool.”

Clown pouted, “You said I was pretty!”

Branzy dug his face into his hands and screamed into them quietly, “You are!” He submitted. Branzy looked up through his hands and yelled at the chat that was currently spamming.

“I’M NOT THIRSTING CHAT, I’M NOT A SIMP-“ He begun, but Clown’s cackling cut him off.

Branzy yanked the mask from his hands, making the man yelp, he grinned at him and put it on. “Woah, wait, how do you see out of this?” He asked, noticing how everything was darker, like wearing sunglasses.

“Practice.” Clown said, and Branzy jolted forward as his chair was suddenly jostled. He squealed and took the mask off, seeing Clown’s hands on the chair standing a bit away, grinning, face still obscured to the chat. “Mask, please?” He asked, hand out for the mask.

Branzy held it to his chest, smirking, “What if I don’t want to give it back?”

Clown stared, eyes narrowing coldly in a way that made Branzly instantly frown in panic. “Then I’ll just have to make you want it back on.” He said coolly, smile returning quickly, an edge to it.

“What does that mean?” Branzly asked, smiling at him in confusion.

“You’ll see.” He said, then winked, and Branzly’s grip on the mask tightened substantially.

“Huh.”

Clown ran a hand through his hair, mussing it up a bit, Branzly watched, transfixed by the action. Wow, so pretty, it fell so nicely in such perfect waves. Clown was smirking, and Branzly realised that maybe he was staring a bit too openly.

He cleared his throat, “Uh, anyway, chat, any new questions while we hold Clown hostage out of frame?”

“You look *so* cute when you’re flustered.” Clown whispered, and Branzly froze completely.

“Uh.” He said, knowing the chat would not have heard what he said, it was too quiet. “Um, chat asks... Chat asks what your favourite colour is.”

“Red.” He said simply, he pulled his chair out of frame, leaning his arms on it, eyes firmly locked onto Branzly. “Good colour, colour of blood, my silk ropes, roses... Blush.” He grinned evilly as Branzly lightly touched his cheeks. He glared at Clown, trying his best to get him to cut it out, he looked back at the chat.

Clown smiled smugly, eyes alight with mischief.

“Chat asks what type of stream you wanna see next?” Branzly laughed, the tension lightly leaving his shoulder at the simple question.

“Hot tub stream.” He whispered, and Branzly snapped his head back to Clown, face aghast with horror.

“No.” He stated through clenched teeth, and Clown laughed brightly.

“I haven’t even said anything!”

“Just because they can’t hear you doesn’t mean that I can’t either-“ Branzly hissed menacingly.

“Oh, I am very aware of that, Mr Branzly.” Clown cut him off, he rested his head on his arms, grin so wide his canines showed, he ran his tongue along them.

Branzly hid his shudder with a shrug, “Okay, whatever, let’s just- New question!” He stumbled; the chat was alight with confusion.

‘WHAT’S CLOWN DOING???’ ‘BRANZLY YOU GOOD LOL’ ‘IS HE BLUSHING?!’ ‘WHAT DID HE SAY MY VOLUMES TOO LOW’

“He didn’t say anything chat don’t worry; he’s just being dumb.” Branzly said, brushing away their concern. “Any plans of coming on as a guest in the future?” Branzly rolled his eyes, “If he keeps acting like this, doubtful.”

“I’d love to.” Clown said calmly, and kindly, “I rarely get to see you, I’d like to see you more.” He murmured quietly; voice too genuine to be a joke.

Branzy momentarily forgot the chat, the stream, and the entire world existed, instead only seeing Clown. He wasn't looking at him, eyes glancing at the chat, fingers tapping lightly. It gave Branzy pause. He'd like to see him more too.

Now, Branzy had always found Clown attractive, that much was obvious, hell, even Clown clearly knew that and was using it to mess with him. But...

Branzy watched how softly Clown smiled after he spoke, the way his warm eyes watched the chat with appreciation, and how they looked to Branzy with admiration. And Oh. *Oh*. Branzy leant back in his chair, realising, far, far too late, that his attraction for Clown was not just surface level. In fact, he wanted to hear him laugh forever, have him sit next to him forever, watch him dance forever. God. He really was the last person to fully figure this out, wasn't he?

Damn, he's an idiot.

"I'd like to see you more too." Branzy mumbled, hoping chat didn't hear it.

"I'd see way more of you if you did a hot tub stream." Clown shot back in a whisper.

Andddd the mood was ruined. "No!" Branzy shouted, glaring as harshly as he could.

"Come onnnn, I'll even join you! We can wear funny swimsuits~" Clown bargained, and Branzy nearly considered it, then again, he didn't even have a hot tub, how would he even-

"Imagine that, both of us, two bros, chillin' in a hot tub, five feet apart--"

Branzy picked up his discarded vest and threw it at Clown, who dodged with a laugh.

"What?" Clown said innocently, batting his lashes, "Something wrong?" He looked Branzy up and down, and bit his lip, slowly.

"Oh my god HERE--" Branzy screamed through a laugh, throwing the mask back. Clown continued to cackle as he caught it, placing it back on and sliding into the chair boisterously. Branzy pulled his knees to his chest and shoved his head on them, it was useless, his blush reached his ears.

The chat continued to spam "SIMP, SIMP, SIMP" "STOP THIRSTING" as well as what Branzy could only assume were ship names, "CLOWNZY" "BRAWN" (Wow that one was awful) and finally, a lot were asking what Clown was doing off frame.

Branzy refused to tell them, and Clown continued to mess with him.

The rest of the stream was spent teaching Clown how to play Minecraft, as well as asking him questions about his job. Branzy found himself more often than not just staring at Clown as he played, smiling.

It ended with Clown doing the splits, and Branzy excitedly clapping in awe of the display.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact! Originally Branzy was gonna say: God. How could he even begin to describe

the face of an angel? Demon? A... temptress? That's just it isn't it, nothing could compare.

But SOMEONE *stares at my sister* SAID THAT WAS TOO CHEESY-

Nah but fr thank her for beta-reading this. (She hasn't actually read the horror bit tho I added that after, this chap gave me REAL trouble, as the lifesteal brainrotting disc saw first hand lmao.)

Good news! I have figured out Clown's routine for his performance, yay! Now I just need to figure out how to describe the specific moves in an interesting way... But yeah! The circus is next chap! God I really suck at keeping my notes brief. WHATEVER IT'S THE ONLY TIME I GET TO TALK TO YALL HOW ARE WE???

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Branzy goes to the circus

Chapter Notes

Hey guys sorry for the delay. Once again big thanks to my sister for beta reading and editing this.

HERE IS SOME AWESOME FANART WE GOT FROM THE LAST CHAP!!!

[This lovelyyyy art by Clover once again!](#)

[And some sick designs for this au by Bean!](#)

[Slay bestie, by once again Bean LMAO](#)

Also a big thanks to the members of the lifesteal brainrotting discord! One: For forcing me to update this because I stupidly said I would if Zam won the twitter vote (y'all know what I'm talking about. Here Cherri, as promised.)

And two: For providing me with some vital information on how circuses look and such! Thanks to one specific member for helping me out with that! (Thanks BearWrite!)

I def took some creative liberties with it tho lmao.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Branzy paced in front of his bathroom mirror, leveling it with a glare as he thought incredibly hard about the incredibly simple concept of having a crush.

“You,” Branzy said, pointing accusatorily at the mirror with a jutting finger, “Do NOT have the hots for your neighbour.”

Mirror Branzy stared back, looking just as unconvinced. Branzy slumped, groaning. “It’s no use, I can’t just deny it until it goes away.” He slid to the tiled floor and grunted as he leaned into his hand. “I mean, it’s not totally impossible that he likes me too. He’s always flirting with me, so that could be something...” He flushed at the thought, a small smile working its way onto his face.

“What would even happen if we did date? It’s not like we can move in together, we’re practically roommates as is.” He chuckled, he got up and left the dim bathroom into the much brighter living room, making his way to the kitchen with a giggle. “He’s got a pretty busy job anyway, I don’t want to distract him all the time, maybe I should invest in those foam pads for sound proofing...”

He hummed to himself as he fantasied, making himself some lunch and imagining the simple pleasures of a domestic life with Clown.

Washing the dishes together, bumping shoulders as one dries and the other washes... Lazing on a couch together, maybe playing some more games, watching movies late into the night and talking over it with dumb jabs at the protagonists...

Branzy slapped his cheeks, shaking his head, trying to will the thoughts away. “Oh my god, stop, stop being a simp.” He muttered, but the intrusive thoughts of soft love invaded his mind and he found himself giddy. “I wonder if he’d let me hold him if we watched a horror movie- Or, or watch him practice his routine, or, oh! What if we went on a date? Where would we go?!” Branzy squealed, face red.

He dug his face into his hands, neglecting his just made lunch in favour of thinking of locations.

“Museum? No, too boring. A walk around the park? Oh that’d be so nice... Sun on us, walking hand in hand-“ He slammed his head onto the kitchen counter and groaned, “Nooo, don’t be dumb! He’s too cool for that! He needs something way more interesting, maybe a fairground date? He’s a spicy man he needs something really fun.”

He picked up his lunch and sat on the couch, eating with a frustrated expression, “I can’t believe I’m daydreaming about this like a school girl, I haven’t even asked him out! Wait, am I meant to do that?” He pressed a finger to his lip and paused, “D-Do I have to do that? If he likes me, he’d ask me out right?” He groaned yet again, putting his plate in the sink and heading to his office.

“The chat... the chat is smart... The chat might have answers-“ He muttered, noting he was meant to stream in a few minutes, “Wait, no! I can’t ask chat; they’d totally make fun of me...” He got his stream ready to go, sitting in his chair and mulling over possibilities. “Then again...”

He hit start stream and grinned brightly as his viewers rolled in, greeting them energetically and trying to keep his lovey dovey thoughts at bay.

“Okay, so, today we’re just gonna hangout on the Minecraft server, do some building, and chat a bit!” He explained, leaning back to appear chill, “Just a chill, relaxed stream today, cool with you guys?”

The chat shot various forms of agreement at him, and he grinned, beginning his build and asking about the chat’s day.

“It’s your dogs’ birthday?” Branzy read, giggling slightly, “Happy birthday to your dog!” He continued to read the chat, “How am I? Yeah, I’m... I’m great! Yeah, doing good.” He said, but the chat caught on to his apprehension very quickly.

“WHAT’S WRONG?!” “BRANFLAKES MY BELOVED ARE U OK” “GET THIS MAN HIS BF RN!!!” “ARE U OK???”

“Chill chat! I’m fine, I’m fine!” Branzy said with a tense smile, “Uh, just, well, I have a... friend, who is dealing with an issue, but I have no advice for them.”

“WHAT ISSUE???” “WE HAVE ADVICE WE HAVE OPINIONS” “WE CAN HELP!!!”

“Okay, okay! Just, keep this hush-hush, okay?” Branzy said in a whisper, looking around, he put his ear against the wall, no sound from Clown’s apartment. Branzy knew he was out practicing for his big show more often. “Ok. So.” He begun with a deep breath.

“My...” He pointed his hands to the side, “Friend, has a... crush, on someone.”

“ ”FRIEND” ” “OH YEAH SURE, YOUR FRIEND LOL” “SURE KING SURE” “WE BEEN KNEW”

“Shut up guys, it’s my friend, not me.” He pouts, running a hand through his hair with a sigh, “So like, what do I- THEY, what does *my friend* do now? Do they wait for their crush to make a move,

if there is one to be made, or do they... Ask them on a date or something..." He muttered, voice growing quieter and more embarrassed with every word.

"HE DEF LIKES YOU BRANZY JUST ASK HIM OUT!!!" "TELL YOUR "FRIEND" TO CONFESS, YOU CAN DECIDE THE DATE STUFF TOGETHER" "U MEAN TO TELL ME YOU AND CLOWN AIN'T DATING YET?!?!" "COULDA FOOLED ME" "ASK HIM OUTTTT"

"I never said it was a guy and IT ISN'T ME GUYS!!!" Branzly huffed, face flushed red, he hid it with a hand and groaned, "I should never have asked you guys for help, you're as hopeless at this as I am..."

"NOOOO" The chat cried, begging to be listened to.

"Like, listen, even if my friend and their crush did like each other mutually, sometimes it's like, is it even the right time to pursue a relationship? You know? We both got a lot going on- THEY BOTH got a lot going on! Shut up." He said, pre-emptively shutting his chat up. "You guys better not spread this around."

"YOU AIN'T FOOLING ANYONE LOVE." "WE WON'T SAY ANYTHING!!!" "OUR LIPS ARE SEALED!!!"

Branzy snorted, "You guys are so lucky that you can't go make fun of me to Clown right now, that guy is totally booked with preparing for his big show."

"Why would we make fun of you to Clown, Branzly? This is about your friends' crush, not yours." Branzly read from the chat, he covered his face and instantly regretted reading it, "Oh my god, shut up, you guys are the worst."

"THIRSTING BRANZY" "DOWN BAD DOWN BAD" "SIMP SIMP SIMP"

"I'm not a simp!" Branzly whined, "I can appreciate a man's beauty without being a simp!"

"HELLO???" "WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT HOW HE LOOKS?!?!"

"Y-You guys did!" Branzly shot back, the chat roared, and he slumped further into his chair, "I should have never asked for advice, you guys are just the hivemind of a high school bully."

"TRUE LOL" "GET DUNKED ON NERD" "GAY GAY GAY"

"Wow! Look at that, guys!" Branzly said, shifting his pitch to one of forced delight, "My Minecraft base looks awesome, let's turn on shaders and appreciate it? Hmm?" He sat up and pretended everything was fine.

"DON'T IGNORE US!!!" "ASK CLOWN OUT WE KNOW YOU WANT TO!!!" "WE KNOW WHO YOU LIKE BRANZY!!!" "GAY GAY HOMOSEXUAL"

"Wow, those spore blossoms really add a lot, don't they? I love the particles!"

"YOU WILL ACCEPT THE TRUTH SOON ENOUGH!" "I'M NINETY PERCENT SURE CLOWN LIKES YOU TOO BRANZY"

"I'm so glad you guys agree!" Branzly said, grinning evilly, his chat raged on at being ignored, "Maybe add some azalea leaves on the roof? Good idea chat!" Branzly snarked, inventing the chat comment.

“YOU WIN THIS ROUND!!!”

-

“Alright! Twenty-minute break!” Clown’s boss said, letting out a heavy breath as they slumped onto a chair, chugging some water. His co-workers chatted to each other idly, exhausted as they took the opportunity to sit down and rest.

Clown stretched out his limbs, ensuring he wouldn’t end up sore the next day.

“Nice work Pearce!” His co-worker said, leaning an arm on his stretching form. “Your work on those ropes rivals that of an angel.”

“Your stage persona is literally an angel, Ivory.” Clown snorted, sitting on the ground, and stretching out his calves as he stretched toward his toes.

“Well yes, it rivals it but doesn’t match it.” She laughed, soft voice carrying through the vast space of the Cirque De Lune circus, “You excited for the big day?” She crouched to his level.

“Of course! I’m always excited for a performance.” Clown grinned, she cocked her head knowingly.

“And excited for the certain someone finally getting to see it?”

Clown rolled his eyes, lightly shoving her, “Ha-Ha.”

“Come on! This is your chance to really ‘woo’ him!” She encouraged.

“I have been ‘woo’-ing him, he just isn’t exactly taking the hint.”

“I’m sure he is, he’s probably just scared, which is why you should make the first move, just ask him out already!”

“I will, I will...”

Ivory sighed, leveling him with an intense gaze, “How can you dangle at heights that lead to certain death, but not even ask one boy out? Think about it, this is the best chance you have, he’ll have a great night watching an awesome performance, and then you can ask him out while he is in a great mood.”

“But if he rejects me, then it’ll ruin his night and mine.”

“He’s not going to reject you. I watched the VOD of that stream, he’s head over heels, trust me.” She flicked her hair, “I’m an angel.”

Clown chuckled, standing up and grabbing a water bottle, “Fine, I’ll listen to you, that way if it fails, I can blame you.”

She snorted, “Sure, be sure to make me the flower girl at your wedding.”

“What, and not my maid of honour?” Clown teased; Ivory rolled her eyes good-naturedly.

“When do you normally have the chance to chuck flowers at people?” She patted Clown’s back, “Trust me, this will work out, trust in fate.”

Clown laughed, “You can’t keep referring to your stage persona to calm my nerves.”

“I can and I will.” She chuckled.

“Angel of fate! The catcher wants to try another run!” A co-worker called to Ivory with a cupped mouth, “Come chalk your hands!”

“Coming!” Ivory called, “Good luck. By the way, you may want to check twitter, I think it may settle your nerves.” She waved goodbye, skipping toward the trapeze.

“Check twitter?” Clown muttered in confusion, pulling out his phone and checking his notifications. Oh, he had been tagged *a lot* recently.

He clicked the most recent one, it linked to a compilation of clips from Branzzy’s stream today. Clown smiled. Huh, well watching Branzzy would definitely put him in a better mood, if that’s what Ivory meant. He sat on one of the benches, kicking up his legs and watching the clips.

“Shut up guys, it’s my friend, not me.” Screen-Branzy said, and Clown rose a brow, curious. “What do I- THEY,” Okay, so this ‘friend’ is definitely Branzzy, Clown realised, laughing at his failed attempts to cover for himself. He continued to watch the clips, feeling his grin grow wider with each stammered word out of Branzzy’s mouth. By the time he finished watching it, his confidence toward confessing had increased tenfold.

He got up, stretching as the break ended, heading over to rehearse again.

Well then, Branzzy clearly would accept his confession, there would be no problems if Clown asked him out.

Then again... He found himself smirking, where was the fun in that, when he could mess with him until Branzzy caved and confessed first?

He whistled to himself as he got into position, his mischievous energy unnerving his co-workers.

He couldn’t wait for their opening night.

-

The fact Branzzy had been bubbling over with lovey dovey feelings without having seen Clown for the past couple weeks should be a sure sign that he was down bad. He did not need to see his neighbour to be assured in the reality of his crush. In fact the time away from him left him realising he was way too dependent on the comfort he brought.

Branzy relaxed in his office. He was editing some highlights of his latest stream, ignoring the embarrassing crush moments. He bounced a ball against the wall as he mulled over a particular clip, wondering how he could add some more humour using his subtitles.

“Hmm, maybe some light glow? Or making it grow in size?” He murmured, tapping away and then returning to bouncing his ball against the wall, it was kind of nice to be able to do so without

the knowledge he was annoying a clown behind it.

But Clown had been gone for so long, a couple weeks of constant practice at the circus meant Branzy was lonely, and bored.

“Come onnnn, where’s my clown time?” Branzy muttered, hitting the wall with probably more force than necessary. “It’s so borrrringgg without you!” He groaned, smacking the wall, “Distract me from work I don’t want to do itttt.” He drawled, bonking his head against the wall, letting it rest there.

He heard a soft chuckle and jolted.

“You probably should though.” A muffled response came, and Branzy launched backwards.

“Pearce?!” He called in shock, “You’re home?!”

“Got back about an hour ago, I think you were too deep into editing to notice.” His neighbour called, and Branzy flushed.

“You let me bounce a ball against the wall for that long?” Branzy groaned, leaning back in his chair.

“Oh, that’s a ball? I just assumed you were hitting your head against your desk in frustration.” Clown laughed. He heard shuffling and Clown’s voice become clearer. Branzy smiled, knowing he was now sitting against the wall, he dropped to the ground and leaned against it too.

“Har-Har, how’s your rehearsing going?”

“Good, been a lot of fun to go to heights beyond a ceiling.”

Branzy chuckled lightly, staring up at said ceiling. “Opening night tomorrow, right?”

“Yep, can’t wait.” Clown said, and Branzy could hear the grin in his voice.

“Excited to show off?” Branzy joked, nestling closer against the wall.

“Oh *absolutely*, I have to do my best to impress you.”

“Clown, we both know your bare minimum would impress me.”

“Which is why I’m going to knock your socks off... And hopefully knock more than-” Branzy heard him mutter something else but couldn’t quite make it out.

“What was that?”

“Nothing~” Clown said with a teasing tone, Branzy pouted.

“I sense you just made fun of me.”

“You sense wrong, I did the opposite.”

“Huh?”

“How’s your streaming been? Gotten up to anything fun lately?” Clown diverted, and Branzy shrugged off the switched topic.

Then he remembered his recent streams and found himself blushing lightly, “Uh, you know, just general stuff. Some Minecraft, I did a Sims stream a bit ago, they asked me to make you, so I made your sim wear the llama mask all the time.” Branzzy snorted, “Chat was fuming.”

Clown cackled through the wall, “Oh I can imagine, only you get to see what’s behind it.”

Branzy smiled, covering it with a hand and humming with delight. “Mhm…”

“Ohh you like being privy to a secret?” Clown teased, Branzzy dug his hand further into his face.

“Shut up.”

“Simp.”

“You’re as bad as chat!” Branzzy laughed through a groan.

“It’s okay Branzzy, I simp for you too! Remember?”

Branzy snorted, “Yeah, yeah.”

“Say… How do you feel about audience participation?”

Branzy paled, “Clown, if you drag me on stage at your insane circus, I will literally die.”

Clown laughed brightly, “Aww, but it’d be so funny though!”

“Nope! I would simply refuse; you can’t make me.”

“What if I say please?” Clown said, a babying tone in his voice.

“No.” Branzzy laughed.

“What if I gave you a wittle kiss, then would you agree?”

Branzy’s previously paled face returned to colour.

“Uh, well, uh…” He slapped his cheeks, “Still no!”

“Yeah, you’re right, then I’d just get two positives out of it.”

Branzy gaped like a fish and turned to stare at the wall in shock.

“You there?” Clown said when Branzzy didn’t immediately respond.

“Uh, yeah! Yeah, sorry, got distracted by a message.” Branzzy lied, rationalising the comment. Just a joke, he joke-flirts all the time, don’t read too much into it, you can’t even see his face to check his expression.

“No worries, so um, I’m really excited for you to go to our show, you ever been to a circus before?”

“No, never!” Branzzy exclaimed.

Clown explained the general gist and vibe of a circus and what to expect in terms of quality and expectations, before letting Branzzy ask as many questions as he needed.

Branzy desperately tried to keep Clown talking so that he didn’t need to think too hard about the

possibility that he may want to actually kiss him.

He had no idea Clown was a flustered mess on the other side of the wall, ears tinted a soft red and lips firmly stuck in a giddy smile.

-

Branzy was awkward when approaching the circus. Flocks of people lining up and chattering excitedly made him aware of just how big of a deal this event truly was. The tent was huge, absolutely massive, and it baffled him that he was about to go inside such a large structure with thousands of people.

He was pulled back into awareness when the person behind him coughed, making him jolt forward toward the ticket house to get his ticket scanned, the vendor smiled and politely wished him a nice time.

“This is... wow.” He whispered as he stepped in, looking around the benches for a good seat.

All benches were slightly curved, facing the main stage, where some curtains were drawn around the circular stage, shuffling could be heard behind it just under the chatter of the audience.

Branzy sat down and fiddled with his shirt, he checked the programme to see what the opening acts were.

First up was some performance by the ‘Angel of fate’, a trapeze show, it seemed, that sounded exciting. He grinned to himself, pulling out his phone and snapping a picture of the program and the stage behind it, letting his followers know he was at the show.

The lights dimmed, the curtains drew back, and the audience silenced.

Branzy watched in awe as the Angel of fate waved to the audience, white and pink outfit on as she stood at the very top of the trapeze, so high up that Branzy felt nervous for her.

Her performance was fantastic, watching her be thrown from person to person with confidence and beauty made Branzy jolt in his seat at each near miss and clap with joy as she nailed it every time. He grinned at the act as the curtains closed and the next performer got ready to take the stage.

“Who are you most looking forward to seeing?” An older woman asked Branzy as they waited, he smiled at her brightly.

“Clown! I mean uh, the killer clown...”

“Ah yes! I’ve seen him the previous years, he’s truly fantastic, a good choice.” She complimented with a cheerful laugh. “My youngest really likes him, apparently, he’s been sort of ‘humanised’ as he has been making public appearances on some person’s ‘stream’.” She informed, clearly not really understanding what a ‘stream’ is.

Branzy hid his chuckle, laughing slightly as well, “Yeah, I know about that, he’s really funny out of character!”

“Ah, a stark contrast to how murderous he is in his performances.” The woman nodded knowingly.

Branzy frowned curiously, “Murderous?”

The old woman laughed, “Oh, you’ve never seen him before, have you? You’re in for a treat mister.” She giggled mysteriously then shushed Branzy, (who was not talking), as the curtains rose on the next act.

-

Branzy was hyped, it was currently the interval, and he was ecstatic as the next act after the break was Clown. *Finally*. Though the other performers were just as impressive as the first, from balancing acts to death defying feats, he had to admit he couldn’t shake the feeling that Clown would outdo them all.

He was on plenty of their posters after all.

Many people got up and stretched, heading to get some snacks, Branzy instead decided to pull out his phone and check his socials. He was glad to see his fans were very excited to hear his recounting of the events.

He heard someone sit beside him and shifted his gaze, jolting at the masked figure. It was not Clown’s mask.

It was a white mask, sort of pointed ears at the top, with eye sockets and some red streaking down it like a cut. Branzy recognised him from one of the previous acts, it was Rasplin, The Fire Eater.

“Oh!” Branzy said, shoving his phone away and nervously waving at the performer, “Hello! I loved your act!” Branzy glanced around, curious if Rasplin was trying to get somewhere and he was blocking the way.

Nope, everyone had dispersed, it was just him in the seat.

“Thank you.” He said calmly, Branzy wondered if his voice got hoarse from eating fire, honestly, he just wondered how he did it in general.

His whole act was some storytelling and dramatics, with a mix of fire eating. His act focused on him fighting other opponents with spinning fire rods, ending with him doing many fire eating tricks to prove his strength.

“Are you Branzy?” He asked, with a tilt of his head. Branzy startled at the question but smiled.

“Yeah! H-How did you know?”

“Pearce talks about you all the time.”

Branzy flushed, “He-He wha? Haha,” He tugged at his collar, “That’s real sweet.” He tried not to cover his face; certain he would only embarrass himself further if he brought attention to his blush.

“Are you excited for his act?” Rasplin asked, leaning forward with intrigue.

“Of course! Been excited since I first got the ticket.” Branzy nervously chuckled, shifting back a little, “Though the second I hear that circus music with all these speakers I think I might go mad.” Branzy joked.

Rasplin laughed, “Yeah, I can imagine hearing it all the time would drive you insane. Clowns really excited for you to see it though, I promise the insanity from the music will be worth it.” He vowed.

“Well now I’m even more hyped.”

“Good. Though, between you and me, I think you may be a bit more excited for after the show as well.”

Branzy rose a brow, “What happens after the show?”

“You’ll see.” Rasplin said, pushing himself to his feet and waving, “Enjoy the rest of the show, Branzy.”

“Sure?” Branzy said, confusion lacing his reply as he waved back.

The crowd started to rush back in as the announcer declared the interval over, and Branzy grinned as anticipation filled his body.

He watched with barely concealed excitement as the announcer stated the next act: The Killer Clown and his red ropes. He shuffled in his seat, scooting to the edge of it and peering down at the main stage. He was exceptionally excited, and it seemed everyone around him was too.

His head snapped to the left of the stage as two performers danced in, wheeling a large box with them. The spotlight followed the box, and Branzy stared at it in confusion. It was painted red and black, with wavy stripes along its side and Clown’s logo dead centre. But on the side was what looked like... a crank?

The two performers looked to each other with exaggerated movement, hands cupping their ears as they listened for sounds. One yawned, falling back into a dramatic split, the other shushed them aggressively, music picking up and matching their movements. They approached the box cautiously as it shook slowly from left to right. They looked at each other, and bickered, not with actual voices, more so dramatic miming that matched the music.

Neither looked to the hands slowly creeping out of the edge of the box, glistening as if clawed. Branzy gasped, as did the audience, and the performers snapped their heads to the box, the hands quickly went back inside. Branzy noticed a rope being lowered from the ceiling, but it wasn’t in the spotlight, so he turned his attention back to the two actors.

They continued to bicker, miming out what Branzy could assume was certain death coming their way if they open the box. (There was a lot of aggressive hand gestures and fingers sharply sliding against necks to show this.) Then the more stubborn of the two stomped over to the crank, grabbed the handle, and started cranking.

Branzy tensed as he heard the classic circus music begin to play for a moment, before being sharply cut off as the other performer shoved their accomplice away. The box rattled, and they returned to the crank. They wound it slowly, the music increasing in volume and dramatics as it cranked and cranked, everyone glanced at the box, knowing what would happen.

It’s a jack-in-a-box. The greatest fear isn’t what will happen, it’s *when*.

The music rose, and Branzy noticed the ropes that had been lowered were slightly shoved in the box now. He hadn’t even noticed when that had happened, must have been when the performers were arguing.

The music rose and the crank wound around and around and then-

The lid *flew* open! And out popped Clown, launched into the air by the ropes being hauled upwards, his legs extended out in a split with his hands coiled in ropes to keep him upright. The audience screamed at the surprise, startling before bursting into applause.

He swung down, limbs dangling like a stuffed toy and Branzy marvelled at his stage presence and outfit.

Clown was wearing some circus attire similar to what he wore in the videos Branzy had seen, but a bit more updated, with ruffles around the wrists, ankles and neck. The torso was black and buttoned, with high waisted tight-fitting pants that had red and black stripes down them. The sleeves were partially see-through and were in bishop style, hanging fabric that bunched at the end where it tucked in at the wrists.

And of course, he wore his classic mask, with added horns. Branzy clapped wildly, a bit belatedly, but it wasn't noticed.

What then played out was a routine that left Branzy starstruck. The classic circus music continued to play in time with Clown's motions, twirling his body up around the rope as he started to ascend higher and higher. He coiled around the rope like a snake does a tree, rising with the music as it reached its peak.

Branzy found himself transfixed by Clown's body; his climbing and elaborate moves looked as effortless as it did in the videos, he was certain they would be difficult, but he made it look so *easy*. Ropes wrapping around strong thighs and arms out in the air, letting his weight be entirely supported by his core and legs.

He abruptly slid down the rope a bit, startling the audience. Branzy yelped and reached out uselessly. Clown lay still in place for a moment, simply dangling. The performers below, that Branzy had entirely forgotten about since Clown's appearance, cautiously approached the rope, looking to each other with exaggerated fear.

One shoved the other in front, they huffed and reached for the rope, lightly tugging. Clown dropped with a jerk. The performers tugged again, he dropped once more, lifeless. As the performers turned away from him and faced each other, he shifted slowly, head glancing down at them as he moved silently.

He wrapped the rope around one arm, and then his lower leg, extending his other leg and arm out in a magnificent pose. He then dipped his head down and started spinning, the motion causing himself to roll up and up back into the air.

The performers looked back to him, and he stilled. The audience chuckled lightly at their lack of awareness as they huffed in frustration. The music then shifted to what Branzy had described as more 'ethereal' when he first heard it. Still orchestra, but with rising beats that seemed far more malicious compared to the light circus music.

The lights changed to red, and the Clown slowly but surely dropped down, every moment the actors weren't looking. He swung on his ropes, nearing one of the performers, each swing timing with the music.

Branzy leaned forward, intrigued.

"Ohhhh! This is the best part!" The woman beside him squealed quietly.

Clown coiled around the rope before unravelling himself and swinging directly at the actor, he wrapped his thighs around their shoulders and-

A sound effect for a neck snap rang out, cutting the music, the actor dropped dead to the floor, and Clown rose himself back into the air. He stared down at the remaining performer, who backed away slowly.

“Oh wow.” Branzy gasped lightly, eyes wide at the twist. What did he expect though? He is a *killer* clown.

The music switched to something of a higher tempo, the performer ran away, Clown launching his ropes toward them like weapons, near tripping them. He danced his way back up the rope, holding himself up just by his arms as he slid down, kicking at the performer dramatically until he flailed and begun to fall.

Clown switched his position on the rope so that his legs were coiled, and arms were mostly free, reaching out and grabbing the actor before they hit the ground. The ropes lifted into the air, the performer dangling and squirming in his grasp as they soared.

Clown pulled the actor to eye level; they stilled all attempts at escape.

He dropped them, waving delightfully as they fell, the sound of soft, malicious laughter just audible.

Branzy screamed, as did everyone else watching, the actor flailed as they fell before landing just behind the jack-in-a-box that Clown had been in. Branzy tilted his head to the side, trying to see if they had placed a mat behind it when he wasn't looking, he couldn't tell.

Branzy watched as the music switched back to the more ethereal tune, he climbed the ropes, performing multiple incredibly spectacular moves that made Branzy question if Clown could easily chuck him across a room if he wanted. The crowd oo-ed and ahh-ed with each dramatic display of human athleticism.

Clown, fully wrapped up in the ropes like a puppet is held up by strings, jerked forward. Branzy looked up toward the railing and noticed with growing horror that the rope was attached to some kind of track, and it was now moving *away* from the main stage.

The ropes dangled and swayed as they were hoisted further away from the stage until Clown was dangling above the audience.

“Get down!” A voice called, and Branzy's eyes darted to the stage, the performer Clown had dropped was crawling out from behind the box. “Duck! Don't let the killer clown see you!”

The audience all obeyed the order, ducking. A few kids squealed with both delight and fear as Clown slowly but surely moved above the audience, darting to the left and tracking along to the right.

Branzy stayed low, looking up as Clown neared closer.

Wait. Branzy narrowed his eyes, *waitttttt.*

What was it that Clown had said before... Something about audience participation?

Oh I'm going to kill him if he doesn't kill me first. Branzy fumed internally, already sensing what was about to happen.

Clown hovered above Branzzy's general area, fingers wiggling creepily, occasionally pretending to reach for someone.

He stopped just above Branzzy, and slowly lowered himself down further, Branzzy shrunk back, glaring at him.

"No." He hissed between his teeth.

"Please?" Clown whispered, his fingers reached for him, lightly caressing his cheek, trailing along his jaw, Branzzy flushed.

"What do I even have to do?"

"Die for me?" Clown asked reverently, Branzzy felt the hands move to cup his jaw and top of his head.

The cogs in Branzzy's brain slowly whirred before he caught on to what exactly Clown was asked. He tried to hide his smile, "You so owe me for this..."

"I'm sure." He whispered, moving his face closer, Branzzy sucked in a sharp breath, the people around him screamed, excited and slightly fearful. "Three, two..." Clown began to count down. Branzzy nodded minutely.

"One." He twisted his head to the side, and Branzzy turned it sharply, slumping in his seat, pretending to die (very dramatically, mind you).

The people around him yelled in shock as Clown rose once again, the next lot of people he flew over looked far more afraid than before, ducking much lower than prior.

Branzzy cracked his eyes open after a moment and sat up with a laugh, he waved his hands to show the people around him that he was fine, they clapped with excitement.

"How lucky! I've never seen him do that in a performance before!" The older woman beside him crowed, clapping with vigour. Branzzy grinned and rolled his eyes fondly toward Clown, he had finished his dangling display, being moved back toward the main stage.

The act ended with the music fading, Clown lowered himself back into his box, waving coyly at the audience, placing a single finger to his lips as he shut the lid on himself.

The actor who had warned the audience then crawled away, returning with another, gesturing dramatically that Clown had escaped. With Clown nowhere to be seen and his box shut, the other actor lightly smacked the other's head. They grabbed the box and wheeled it away.

Branzzy stood up with the rest of the audience and clapped as hard as he could, grinning proudly.

That's my friend. He thought internally, smug on behalf of Clown for his fantastic performance.

That's my neighbour. He sunk back into his seat, certain the following acts, while good, would never give him the high that Clown's did.

That's my future boyfriend. He thought, hopefully.

"We hope you enjoyed our star performer, The Killer Clown and his Red Ropes! He'll be back again for the final act of our show, so stay excited!"

Branzy perked up, *he had two acts? He didn't know that!* He giddily pulled out his guide and checked what the final act was called.

He squinted.

He reread it.

“What the hell is the wheel of death?!” He shouted.

Chapter End Notes

Circuses DEFINITELY do not allow their performers to dangle above the audience that was all bullshit, but hey it sounded cool in my head and I went with it, realism be damned.

Clown's jack-in-a-box performance was inspired by [This awesome ariel straps performance!](#) The amount of research I put into this yet I still had no idea how to describe 'the angel roll up move' (who named these moves?!)

Also also! I figured out how to open an askbox on my tumblr!

(okaydontjudgemebut.tumblr.com) So idk, come ask me why I always make Clown pretty and I'll try to come up with a different answer each time lol.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The Wheel of Death chap... and a lil somethin somethin else ;)

Chapter Notes

Some fanart for the last chapter:

I literally can't remember if I put this last time by this [epic poster by Astrobee](#)
MORE art [from Clover, what's this, art for literally every chapter? INSANITY.](#)
And this beautiful [art of ivory's circus persona by Xuan! So gorgeous omg!](#)

Sorry for not updating this in uh *checks notes* 3 months? No that can't be right...
Welp! Regardless, hope you like it, with both myself and my beta reader being super
busy these days it's been a struggle getting this out. I hope it's fun and funny though,
hope it lives up to expectations, and hope you have a good time reading it. Ciao!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Branzy's foot was tapping a mile a minute as the final performance drew near, the curtains had closed for the redecoration of the stage. Branzy was literally and metaphorically on the edge of his seat.

Wheel of *death*? What even is that? A giant hamster wheel? Was Clown the hamster? He snorted at the thought. He turned to the older lady beside him, who was happily eating some popcorn, he tapped her lightly on the shoulder.

“Scuse me miss, you said you’ve been to these before? What’s a wheel of death? I didn’t know Clown did anything other than the cool rope tricks.” He asked as politely as he could.

Her eyes squinted up in delighted crows’ feet, deepening as she snickered. “Oh, my dear boy, trust me when I say you want to go in blind on this one.” She patted his shoulder, a mockery of honest kindness, “Just... remember this,” She shrugged with a Cheshire cat’s grin, “It’s all an act, don’t worry!”

That actually made Branzy worry *more*, thank you very much. “Ah, thanks.” He smiled tensely, turning his gaze back to the main stage with more and more building paranoia, and a hint of excitement.

Branzy grinned to himself, shuffling in his seat as the curtains began to pull back and reveal the stage.

What was behind the curtain made Branzy gasp in amazement, it wasn’t just *one* wheel like he had thought, and it definitely didn’t resemble a hamster wheel. It was two wheels, large, metal, hollow cylinders connected by some thin scaffolding between the two. One was on top, the other directly below, a spotlight turned on and highlighted the contraption.

The audiences' murmurs of excitement quietened in an instant, eyes and ears locked on to the events about to unfold before them.

Rasplin walked out, cartwheeling into the spotlight before stopping elegantly at the bottom wheels foot, he stared at it, tilting his head with curiosity.

Branzy heard a gasp and turned to the person beside him who was looking up, he followed their line of sight and jolted in shock as he watched Clown lower himself onto the top wheel using his ropes. He untangled himself as he descended, stopping within the metal wheel. The ropes were pulled up and out of the audience's view.

Clown sat comfortably in the top wheel, crossing his legs and admiring his hands, he held a nail filer and pretended to file them. Eventually, he started filing his horns, startling a laugh from Branzy and some of the audience.

Rasplin looked up at Clown, grabbed the side of his wheel, and shook it.

Clown jolted, dropping his file and grabbing the sides of the wheel with a shout. Branzy stifled his giggles, so far, this felt more comedic than he expected.

"Well..." Clown drawled, and Branzy opened his mouth in surprise, he didn't expect him to talk at all, "That was a little rude, wasn't it, FireEater?"

Rasplin stood just outside his wheel, staring up at the Killer Clown. "Had to get your attention somehow, come down here."

Clown stood, and casually leant against the inside of the wheel, Branzy gripped his seat as he watched the wheel start to turn, starting slow before it dropped harshly and swung side to side so that Clown was facing Rasplin.

"What is it you need, my masked friend?" Clown asked.

"Those who wish to trap you, and kill me, have joined forces." Rasplin explained with a hiss, turning away from Clown to cross his arms. "They said they grew sick of our strength, said we wanted to be gods."

"Well." Clown hummed pleasantly, and he started pacing back and forth, the wheel gaining momentum like a swing does when rocked up and down.

Back and forth, back and forth, the wheel got higher and higher until Clown was back at the top, he slowed his movement until he was standing back in his original position. He spread his arms out wide, the audience cheered.

"I say... If we want to be gods," Clown began as Rasplin hopped into the inside of his wheel, and started to run, "Then let's prove to them we can be gods." Clown laughed. Music faded in dramatically, and Branzy was delighted to find it was *electro swing music*.

Oh. He thought fondly. *Clown's favourite.*

Clown abruptly dropped as the wheel spun faster, they continued to sprint, soon jumping from within the wheel. Branzy gasped as Clown did a flip, looking as if he was being levitated. The music surged with each jump and moment of theatrics, from splits mid-air to leaps and flips. Branzy clapped enthusiastically.

More circus performers ran in, and Branzy noted they were the same actors and actresses as the

ones in Clown's performance and Rasplin's. They ran toward the wheel, leaping out of its path just before it hit them.

"Hold down the fort for me, will you?" Clown spoke, sounding not even the slightest bit out of breath. He began to climb up the sides of his wheel as it spun, Branzy shouted in alarm as he moved to stand on the outside, walking casually on the top of the wheel.

There were no nets, nothing to ensure his safety if he fell, Branzy paled and stopped his clapping as concern overcame him.

Clown ran on the top of the wheel before sliding down and holding the side, much like a koala, the wheel spun faster and faster. Clown kicked at performers when he rounded the bottom, before eventually sliding off the end completely, tackling the remaining performers like they were bowling pins. He jumped high in the air, falling into a split as he faced the audience.

He crawled a bit forward, and lifted his grinning mask, just to reveal his own smug grin underneath it. Branzy heard the audience members who could see gasping in surprise.

Branzy smirked to himself. *Yeah, guess what nerds, I get to see that handsome face **regularly**.*

Clown kicked up his leg as the fallen performers started to get back up and approach him, effortlessly kicking them away before pushing himself to his feet and backflipping toward the wheel. He did a few more high-kicks and twirls in time with the music, looking as stunning and dazzling as Branzy knew he was. He hummed along to the music, microphone just barely picking up on it.

He grabbed the wheel as it came past again, attaching himself so smoothly it looked unreal. He easily climbed back up, running at the top triumphantly.

"Your turn!" He called, sounding a bit cocky.

Rasplin huffed, "You're on!" The man pulled something from his sleeve, a flask, facing the audience and downing the contents of it (which were likely not alcohol at all), he made exaggerated gulping sounds.

He tossed the flask away, hitting his chest then taking a deep breath. Branzy knew what was coming and grinned.

The music stopped, and everyone stilled as they waited for Rasplin's move.

Sure enough, through some trickery Branzy could not figure out, Rasplin pulled up his mask and breathed fire, eliciting a yell from the audience. The fire didn't reach very far, but the performers all dramatically fell to the ground just the same. The fire swirled in the current the wheel created, looking absolutely mesmerising.

Clown started to climb the scaffolding between the two wheels, Rasplin doing the same, they passed each other and swapped wheels, Rasplin crawling inside his and practically walking horizontally as he took the brunt of the pushing. Clown once again stood on the top of his wheel, running, and then, terrifying Branzy, he JUMPED.

JUMPED ON A MOVING WHEEL WITH NOTHING TO CATCH HIM?!

Branzy covered his mouth as fear and excitement filled him, *Oh god, I'm in love with someone who is literally insane.*

Clown continued to perform incredible stunt after stunt, and Branzy felt his terror die down as he landed each leap. Then, as he stuck out his hands, he leant back, like he was struggling to keep up with the wheels force.

Branzy paled, but no one else seemed worried.

He started to wobble as he walked, it looked like he was barely at the top of the wheel at all now, in fact one wrong more and he could slide ride off and fall to his-

And then Clown tripped.

Branzy's heart dropped to his stomach as he lurched forward in his seat, watching the man stumble and then topple over the edge of his wheel.

Branzy jumped to his feet, shouting a "No!" That was drowned out by the cries of the audience. His hand reached out, a useless display that would do nothing to help.

But Clown didn't need help to begin with, as he fell, he grabbed onto the bottom wheel, sliding in smoothly and continuing his walk as Rasplin moved to the one above, switching wheels once more.

Branzy suddenly felt very stupid and relieved at the same time, he let out a soft breath and sunk into his seat with hot embarrassment. The old lady beside him crowed out a laugh at his misfortune.

"Startled me the first time too, don't worry boy!" She cackled, slapping him on the back before returning to her thunderous clapping.

Branzy clapped a little hesitantly, he couldn't tell where Clown was looking due to his mask, but he prayed he didn't witness him being stupid.

A red rope descended from above, Clown clambered back on top once more to snatch it out of the air and started twirling around himself with a flourish before-

OH COME ON NOW.

He was skipping. He was *skipping* rope while on a *spinning* massive *death* wheel.

"Why is he always so extra?" Branzy groaned quietly to himself, hiding his proud grin behind a hand.

Rasplin seemed to have the same thought, as he too grabbed some rope, his black, and started skipping, both trying to outmatch each other.

Eventually, the music rose and rose to a crescendo, with Rasplin jumping off the wheel as it spun low and walking off with a calm whistle. Clown stayed on till it balanced, leaving him at the top once more, he twirled his roped, hooking it on something above, and wrapping it around his body as he slowly rose out of view.

"Well?" He questioned. "Do you think we're worthy of being called gods?"

The audience roared in agreement, Branzy standing to clap louder than he had ever before.

Clown did that dark laugh again, sending a shiver down Branzy's spine. He waved goodbye to the audience.

Branzy, secretly, thought he was waving especially at him.

-

Branzy was giddy after the show, resting a hand over his still racing heart, as he replayed the events of the night. He had no idea the circus could be this thrilling, it had so much action and drama. He wondered why he rarely heard about it these days. Heck, he only knew about it because Clown let him into its dazzling world.

He collected himself and his things, standing up and beginning his shuffle through the aisle and out of the circus, only to be stopped by a hand tapping his shoulder. He turned and found himself grinning as The Angel of Fate stood elegantly behind him, feet posed like a ballerina.

"Angel of fate!" He greeted with a smile, "Hello! My, my, am I going to meet the whole of Clown's crew by the end of the day?"

She giggled, "Not quite, but Clown does want to meet with you, if you'll follow me."

Branzy blushed, smile momentarily vanishing in his surprise. "He wants to see me so soon after performing? He must be exhausted! And sweaty!"

He cringed at his own word choice, "Not that there's anything wrong with him being sweaty! Not to say that I'd want to see him sweaty, I mean, I wouldn't exactly mind- what I'm trying to say is-" He covered his red face with his hands and whined, he removed one to wordlessly flap it towards the angel of fate, "Lead the way." He mumbled with mortification.

The trapeze artist laughed, "Oh my god, you're adorable. I can see why Clown likes you." She said slyly, before turning and walking towards the backstage, Branzy trailing behind, "Don't worry about him being tired and... sweaty. He wanted to see you as soon as he could. He probably already took a quick shower in our portable ones anyway." She explained.

"Cool." Branzy said through a wheeze, slowly removing his hand and trying to will his blush away, "You were amazing out there Angel of Fate, by the way, I was just... paralysed with awe." Branzy complimented.

She started walking backward, hands behind her back and a cheeky grin on her face, "Thank you, I aim to please. Also, just call me Ivory, the title is a bit of a mouthful."

"Alright, oh!" Branzy gasped, "I never even introduced myself, I'm Branzy." He stuck out his hand, which she took and shook with a tight grip that shouldn't have surprised him considering her career, "I mean, I assumed you knew, but it's only polite."

"I did already know, but yes, hello. I watch your streams, so I know a bit about you, I just *had* to find out what had Clown daydreaming at work." She snarked, not unkindly, turning to walk forward. Branzy didn't know if he could get any redder, he tugged at his collar sheepishly, letting out a small laugh.

They passed through the backstage where props were, circus equipment, and a few performers packing up. Branzy waved to the performers, who waved back with knowing smiles. He hid his anxiety by skipping as he walked, the many eyes on him unnerving him as he left and approached a small caravan. It felt like they knew something he didn't.

"Now listen here Branzy," Ivory said, turning on her heel to stare him down, "I care very deeply

about Clown, he's an incredible circus performer and we both motivate each other to attempt more daring stunts and really push ourselves. He's important to me." She hit a fist against her chest as she sized Branzly up.

"I know you likely aren't the type of person to string someone along, but just so you know," She crept closer, placing a hand on Branzly's shoulder as she leant up till her mouth was beside his ear, "If you make him cry, break his heart, or even make him second guess himself once, I will make it my life's goal to destroy you and everything you have worked for." She stepped back with a warm smile, clapping her hands, "Got it?"

Branzy shuddered and nodded hastily, before pausing, "Wait- Wait, break his heart?!" He waved his hands wildly, "What does that even mean? I don't even- I haven't even confessed yet!" He blushed and coughed into his hand, "Not that I... was even planning on that."

"Sure you weren't," She shrugged, before moving behind him and pushing him toward the door, "Now go on! It's Clown time!" She laughed, giving him a final push before turning and waving goodbye, leaving him staring up at the metallic door fearfully.

Branzy wondered if Clown felt even an ounce of the fear he felt now before his performances, really, he was nervous to just approach his friend, how did he do such incredible feats? Branzly took a deep breath, harnessing confidence he was sure Clown must have, he knocked on the door.

"Come in!" Clown called from inside, and Branzly bit his lip as he stepped up onto the metal steps and turned the handle.

As he poked his head in, he really didn't know what to expect but it wasn't *this*. The caravan had a mirror with those classic light bulbs surrounding it, that much was expected, but Branzly didn't realise the sheer number of costumes that would be in such a small space.

They were practically falling off the multiple racks, only staying on due to the other costumes pressing them together. It was an explosion of red and black, Clown's signature colours. It was beautiful in its chaos and in the middle of it all... Was Clown.

Clown, maskless, said mask rested neatly by his mirror. He was applying lipstick and staring at his reflection. His hair was damp, occasional curly strands dripping water onto his blouse, a black see-through garment that had a very low V-neck. It exposed most of his chiselled chest, which now had developed some bruising from his incredible performance. He was wearing more casual pants, leggings still, but less extravagant than his show ones.

Despite the incredible acts Branzly had witnessed, he found himself just as easily breathless when coming face to face with his neighbour.

"Clown," He greeted, suddenly speechless, "Hey."

Clown smiled into the mirror, lip quirking up as he slowly pulled the lipstick from his lips. He capped it and turned to face Branzly, he looked tired, but relaxed. "Branzy." He whispered with a softness that would never match his character as 'the killer clown'. "Did you enjoy the show?"

"Clown it was-" Branzly started, cutting himself off with an indescribable noise of excitement, he grinned widely and leapt forward to hug Clown tightly. "It was incredible! Brilliant! I-I've never been more on the edge of my seat then I was watching you!"

Clown laughed, holding him back but not getting up, "There are other performers you know?"

Branzy pulled back to pout and roll his eyes, Clown's hands still lightly held his arms, "Yeah, but I

didn't come for them, I came for *you*." He smiled cheekily, "And don't tell them this... But you stole the show."

Clown tugged Branzy back into another hug with a giggle, humming to himself as he held him comfortably. "Thank you, thank you, I do try my best. Plus, I had extra incentive to really 'wow' the audience." He booped Branzy's nose.

Branzy laughed with a blush, stepping back and looking around the caravan, "Hmm, I really can't tell what your favourite colour is." He joked sarcastically.

Clown rolled his eyes, "I already told you what my favourite colour is." He smirked, eyeing Branzy up and down, "It looks good on you, you know."

Branzy tilted his head with a confused smile, Clown slowly stood, approaching and dragging a finger down Branzy's cheek. "*Red*." He explained, and Branzy felt a full body shiver run through him.

"Oh, HAH!" He spat out, cringing at his voice, "A-Anyway, why the hell didn't you warn me about that killing me thing?!" Branzy diverted, putting his hands on his hips and glaring at Clown playfully, "I'll have you know; I had a very fulfilling life ahead of me until you killed me."

Clown shrugged carelessly, "Oh yeah, sorry, just wanted to buy out your apartment to turn into a personal gymnasium but couldn't do that with you still alive." He joked, sticking out his tongue and shutting an eye.

Branzy lightly smacked his shoulder with a laugh, "Clearly you can make do without that extra space. You were going insane up there! It was incredible... And the music!" Branzy cackled manically, "The music! I *finally* have the answer to what the hell the routine to it was!"

Clown sunk back into his chair, "Yes, yes, you do. Was it worth the insanity?"

Branzy's eyes crinkled with mirth, "Worth every second of it."

Clown smiled warmly, resting his head on a hand with a sigh. "Mmm, good, I had hoped so."

"And then the wheel of death!" Branzy ranted, beginning to pace enthusiastically, "Y-You were insane! Literally insane! I could hardly handle the stress you put me under, how can I live happily with the knowledge you could just fall off a wheel and die at any second?!"

Clown giggled, an evil glint in his eye, "Oh yeah, you reached for me, don't think I didn't see that."

Branzy stopped his pacing, mouth slamming shut, and face flushing red. "I don't remember doing that actually, I think you imagined it."

"Aww, Branzy, don't be silly, I was watching *you* the whole time after all." He tapped the mask on the counter with a smirk, "This thing is great for disguising what I'm looking at."

Branzy muffled the squeak that left his mouth with a laugh, "What? You shouldn't be looking at me you should be watching what you're doing!"

"I can do both." Clown shrugged, "Just know, when I faced the audience, you were who I was looking for." He started stretching his legs and arms, "It's cute that you worry, I've been doing this my whole life, I'm fine."

Branzy grunted and crossed his arms, “Yeah, yeah, fair, I guess. Just don’t go taking the phrase ‘break a leg’ *literally* and we’ll be just fine.”

Clown laughed and stood, stretching his arms to the caravans ceiling, “Aw, Branzy,” He slumped and smiled at him lazily, “My, my, if I didn’t know any better, I’d think you *cared* about me.”

Branzy stuck his tongue out at him, “Oh hush, as you would say, I’m man enough to admit my weaknesses.”

Clown’s eyes lit up, “Weaknesses you say? I’m your weakness?”

Branzy turned sharply, “T-That’s not what I meant, and you know it!”

“No actually, I don’t, I have no idea what else you could mean.” He grinned happily, he stepped forward into Branzy’s space, eyes glancing over his face. “Care to elaborate?”

Branzy batted him away, “Stop it!” He whined with a laugh, “You’re such a jokester.”

“I *am* a Clown.”

“Hah! I remember when you wouldn’t even admit that.” Branzy grinned triumphantly, “How far we’ve come.”

Clown tilted his head as he grabbed a bag, looking happily nostalgic. “Yeah, how far indeed.” He shucked the bags strap over his shoulder, sighing, “I need some fresh air, care to join me for a walk? There’s a park nearby.”

Branzy beamed, “Sure! I’d love to! You sure you’re not too tired though?” Branzy asked as Clown walked past him to open his door.

“Aw, you really do care,” He mumbled softly, “I’m fine, plus I need to move after such a workout or else I’ll be sore all day tomorrow.”

He held the door open for Branzy, who jokingly curtsied and walked out with a skip in his step, he stumbled when he saw Ivory nearby.

“Catch.” Clown said, tossing his bag to Ivory, “Costume.” He explained to Branzy calmly, “I’m heading off to walk in the park with my Branzy.” Clown called to Ivory.

She grinned toothily, “My Branzy?” She repeated with a giggle.

Clown waved her off, “He’s mine, isn’t he? Catch you later!” He called, tugging Branzy to his side as they started to walk off the circus grounds.

Branzy tried to steady his breathing as his heart beat a mile a minute, he looked up at Clown, who only glanced at him with a smirk.

“What?”

“I’m yours?” Branzy deadpanned, ready to play it off as a joke if need be. They came to the entrance of a rather pleasing park, fresh green elm trees that’s leaves glowed in the light of the evening sun. The shady park grounds were a welcomed change from the stuffiness of the circus.

Clown paused his steps and leaned down to be eyelevel with Branzy, making him stumble back at the fast action, he grinned with sharp teeth, eyes glistening in the afternoon sun like a dimming fire.

“Who’s else would you be, hm?” He asked in a low whisper, his eyes glanced to Branzy’s lips, and leant just the slightest bit forward, Branzy inhaled sharply.

Then he stood up and spun around, walking into the park casually like nothing happened. “Anyway, so what’d you think of Rasplins fire breathing during the wheel of death act? Pretty dang cool, am I right?”

Branzy stood flustered in his spot, he shook his head, scrambling to catch up with Clown. “U-Uh, yeah, yeah it was really cool, was worried he’d burn off some audience’s hair if I’m honest.”

Clown chuckled loudly, “Yeah, that did happen in one of the rehearsals.”

“What?” Branzy laughed with surprise, “Really?!”

“Yeah, someone got just a bit too close, got put out fast. Was super funny.”

“That sounds terrifying.” Branzy snorted, “You ever get burned by him?” The ding of an approaching bike sounded out.

“No way, he’s way too careful for that.” Clown said, he pulled Branzy closer as the bike rode past, leaving his arm resting on his shoulder as they walked.

Branzy furrowed his brows in utter confusion, he didn’t say anything, liking the warmth Clown gave off.

“You, uh, you know how many more of these shows you’re gonna be doing?” Branzy asked, trying to not show how Clown was affecting him.

“Why, miss me?” Clown teased, squeezing Branzy’s shoulder just a touch, “Only a few more, then I’m back for a good while.”

Branzy smiled, “Good, I- Chat’s been missing their Clown Time.”

“They really do act just like you sometimes.” Clown giggled, “I suppose I’ve been missing my Branzy Time too.”

Branzy rolled his eyes, “Too bad Branzy time doesn’t have a theme song like you do.”

“Hmm, maybe, it does have a sound effect though.”

Branzy frowned, “Wha-“

“BOO!” Clown yelled, suddenly shaking Branzy, who screamed in response and flailed his arms as he fell off balance. Clown caught him before he collapsed, cackling to himself loudly. “See?! Your scream is just as iconic!”

Branzy caught his breath with loud huffs, gripping his heart before glaring at Clown, “S-Stop scaring me like that! It’s terrifying!” He turned and stabbed Clown in the chest with a finger, “You’re preying on the weak you know! Not everyone is as strong as you!”

“Aw, but Branzy,” Clown said softly, lightly pulling Branzy’s hand from his chest, cradling it, “No one out there makes greater prey than you.”

Branzy didn’t know whether to feel insulted or flattered or flustered, so he felt all. His expression shifted from startled to flustered to disgusted. “I have no idea what you mean by that.” He muttered, turning away, scrubbing at his cheek with his other hand in an attempt to disguise his

blush.

“What I mean is, you’re *fun*.” Clown mumbled, tugging Branzy back to face him with his still gripped hand, “Just an extra bonus that you’re cute too.”

He gently reached up and tucked some of Branzy’s hair behind his ear, resting his fingers there. His eyes studied Branzy’s, he watched how the shorter man’s cheeks lit up.

Then all at once he released him, this time with a smirk, and continued walking down the parks path. “Such a beautiful day today.” He commented idly.

Branzy blue screened, internally screaming and raging. He squinted at Clown’s retreating form, starting to wonder if he was doing this to him on purpose.

“Don’t you think, babe?” Clown asked, turning to him with a soft smile, framed by the trees overhead and the lush grass around him, he looked stunning.

Branzy was so taken by the scene before him, he almost missed what Clown had said, *almost*, “W- Sorry *what?*”

“Don’t you think, Branzy?” Clown repeated, and *oh- he is totally smirking*.

Branzy grit his teeth and marched up to him, “That is, *not*, what you said.”

“Hmm, what did I say?”

Branzy flushed and averted his eyes, “I- never mind.”

“Sounds like you’re just hearing what you want to hear.” Clown shrugged, continuing to walk before stopping to rest on a park bench.

Branzy stomped after him, spluttering, “W-What the heck does that mean?! If you didn’t actually say what I think you said then that doesn’t make any sense-“

“What did you think I said?” He grinned, smugly, knowing he had won.

Branzy’s eye twitched, he sat beside him stubbornly. “Nothing.”

Clown giggled, “You’re even cuter when mad.”

Branzy stared at him with more shock and frustration than ever before.

Oh he is definitely doing this on purpose.

He narrowed his eyes, deciding that two could play at this game. “You looked absolutely stunning on stage.” He said casually, looking away from Clown so he wouldn’t combust. “You moved so smoothly; it was amazing.” *There, soften the physical compliment with a skill compliment.*

“Aw, thanks Branzy! You looked *heavenly* beneath me.”

Branzy snapped his head back to Clown with a yelp, “I what?!”

“When I was dangling above you?” He elaborated, “You were such a great actor, played the role perfectly. I’ve always wanted to murder someone in the audience. Dream come true!” He grinned. Then his smile fell to a frown after seeing Branzy’s expression, “What, what did you think I meant?”

Branzy looked away from him, face redder than it had ever been, he stared intently at some tree's bark. "Nothing! Nothing at all!" He squeaked, voice cracking.

He heard Clown snort, and subtly glanced at him, noticing he was smiling with the tips of his ears red. Branzy gasped with mock offense, "I knew it! You are doing this on purpose!" He seethed, grinning victoriously at Clown.

"Doing what?" Clown said innocently, face carefully blank.

"T-The!" Branzy sucked in a breath, "The flirting!"

"I've never flirted in my life." Clown said, placing a hand over his heart, he broke his serious expression with a smirk, "Fraid' I have no idea what you mean."

"Oh you *so* do." Branzy hissed, "This is just like the stream we did together, you're a heathen."

"No it's not, in that stream together we were... hmm..." He grabbed Branzy and pulled him closer, tucking him entirely next to his side, "Wait no, we ended up like-" He pulled him onto his lap like Branzy weighed nothing. "*There* we go, now this is just like the stream!"

Branzy was red in the face, spluttering, he covered his face and whined. "Why are you doing this?"

"Oh, I'm not doing anything, besides waiting."

Branzy looked up at Clown through gaps in his fingers, he was holding out his free hand, (the one not holding Branzy's waist) admiring his nails.

"Waiting for what?"

"For you to confess first, obviously."

Branzy dropped his hands to openly gape, "What?"

"Well," He smirked at Branzy, "I'm not going to do it, where's the fun in that?" He sighed dreamily and traced Branzy's jaw, "No, no, just waiting on you." He let his jaw go and rested his arm along the back of the park bench.

Branzy stared at Clown's face, lips tightly together as he mulled over the information.

"Oh, you *suck*."

"Yep." Clown smirked.

"You're a dickhead."

"Yep." Clown beamed.

"You're a demon." He hissed, crossing his arms, hiding his smile as he turned away from Clown.

He was secretly glad Clown had him figured out, because clearly his feelings weren't unrequited. However, Branzy was not just a lovesick idiot, he was a stubborn idiot, and an idiot who did anything for the bit.

And this? This was a pretty funny bit.

"Fine. It's settled then." Branzy huffed.

“What is?”

“I’m never confessing to anything.” He said, tipping his nose up in the air triumphantly.

“Oh, darn, man I never considered that except-“ He got up and let Branzzy drop to the ground, who yelped and tumbled. “Oh nooooo,” Clown drawled, dragging his hands down his face in mock shock, “You fell?! If only you had a strong handsome man to catch you- Too bad, you don’t, you lose!” He waved at Branzzy cheekily and started to prance away.

“Wha- HEY! That’s just rude!” Branzzy shouted, rubbing his rearend and stumbling to his feet, chasing after Clown.

“Oh no, it’s perfectly reasonable, after all, someone who doesn’t harbour *any* romantic feelings towards me was sitting on my lap! I can’t allow something like that, no way Jose!”

“YOU PUT ME ON YOUR LAP!” Branzzy shouted, stifling his laughter, “You’re the weird one for putting someone on your lap!”

“I never did such a thing!” Clown gasped, humming to himself as he walked away smugly. “Such baseless accusations.”

“Stop trying to gaslight me!” Branzzy laughed, reaching for Clown, who ducked out of his way. “So this is how it’s gonna go, huh? You’re gonna deprive me of my much-needed Clown Time™?”

“No, you’re gonna deprive me of my much-needed Branzzy Time...™.”

Branzzy pouted and opened his arms, “I’m right here, you can get your Branzzy Time right now!”

“Unlike you, simp, I have self-restraint.” Clown said with false coolness.

“You admitted to being a simp too!” Branzzy retorted.

“You have no proof-“

“It’s on the VOD! It was streamed.” Branzzy rebutted with a grin, “Hah! So there! I win!” He made grabby hands and frowned, “Come on, at least let me hug you for a job well done.”

“You already hugged me.” Clown snorted fondly, rolling his eyes.

“Yeah, but I want to hug you again, you did so good on stage, you deserve more congratulations.” Branzzy allowed his expression to soften, “You really were outstanding, you know? I’ve never had a greater time in my life.”

Clown rubbed his arm, before sighing and opening them, “Fine, *one* hug, but after that you get nothing until you confe-“

Branzzy took advantage of Clown’s guard being down to grab the back of his neck and tug him towards him, colliding their lips together.

The air was cool, the scattered light from the tree leaves above painting the pair in an array of pleasing colours. The wind blew gently, enough to make the softest sound amongst the waving grass. It was beautiful, a perfect moment in time, and a perfect moment for a first kiss.

Too bad the two idiots were being so competitive that they didn’t even appreciate it.

Clown’s lips were soft and still red from his lipstick, so when he pulled back with a shocked gasp,

Branzy's lips were, too, stained red.

“Y-You fiend!” Clown accused through a stutter, “You tricked me!”

“HAH!” Branzy cried, arms in the air and face alight with triumphant passion. “I WIN!”

“No! No that's so unfair! I was taking *pity* on you.” Clown whined, then grabbed Branzy's arm and tugged him closer, “Now I get a second kiss because you stole one from me-“

Branzy smirked, “Oh no, I'd *hate* that.” He droned.

Clown glared, eye twitching as he saw the flaw in his scheme, “Hm you're right, you still haven't confessed.” He shoved Branzy away, “What a darn shame.”

“Aw, come on Pearceeee.” Branzy whined, “Why don't you just confess, and then you get to kiss me all you like. It's a win-win!” Branzy bargained, doing jazz hands.

“Hmm, no, I like watching you squirm.” He leant against a tree and grinned, “Why don't *you* confess?”

“Isn't a kiss practically a confession?” Branzy huffed.

“Nah, I'd like the three special words please.”

Branzy rose a brow, “What? You are hot?”

Clown's face turned bright red, he coughed and looked away, “Wha-“ He laughed quietly, “Appreciated, but no, not what I'm looking for.”

Branzy pouted and tapped his foot impatiently, debating if he really wanted to give up just yet.

“You have all the opportunity to make it stop.” Clown shrugged, “Hmm, you look good with red lipstick.” He commented cockily.

“Thanks, I applied it myself.”

Clown paused with a risen finger, he dropped it, “I mean- technically, correct?”

Branzy found himself biting back a smile, realising; that his crush and neighbour liked him back, that they were now arguing about who should confess, (as if the very act of doing so isn't a confession) and he was having the best day of his life.

He giggled to himself, before it rose out of him into full blown laughter, Clown watched him with warm amusement.

“What?” He asked with a chuckle.

“I'm just laughing at my own stupidity.” Branzy giggled as his laughter died down, “God, fine. I... I love... I...” He shuffled on his feet. “Gosh, this is uh, this is way harder than it should be.” He mumbled with a nervous chuckle.

He took a deep breath and looked up at Clown, mustering all the warmth in his heart, “I... I love you, Clown. I really, *really*, love you, and... I'd really like to be your boyfriend... If that's okay.”

Clown's perfectly composed face instantly turned beet red, a smile he was forcefully trying to contain breaking onto his face.

“Simp.”

Branzy shook his head fondly, “As if that wasn’t obvious.” He approached Clown, smiling tentatively, “So, do I get my kiss?”

“Hmm...” Clown tapped his chin, Branzy let out a groan and Clown rose his hands up in defense, “Okay! Okay!” He laughed, reaching down to cup Branzy’s face, “But only because I love you too, Branzy.”

Branzy giggled, moving his hands to behind Clown’s neck as the taller man leaned down and connected their lips, both smiling against each other.

This time the kiss was not formed by stubbornness and the drive to outdo one another, because of this, it was slow. And Branzy was determined to take in everything he could about this moment, the softness of Clown’s lips, the comforting nature of his hand carding through his hair, the perfect temperature around them.

Come to think of it, a park really isn’t as dumb a spot for a first date as Branzy had thought. This was actually perfect.

“You’re so beautiful.” Branzy found himself saying without really realising it, he ducked his head into Clown’s shoulder with embarrassment.

Clown kissed his neck, “You’re absolutely stunning,” He mumbled against his skin, smiling when Branzy squeaked at the feeling, “just gorgeous, utterly gorgeous.” He trailed kisses down his neck and his shoulder, “You made my life so much better by simply being in it.”

Branzy let out a giggle as he continued to kiss him, “Stop it, that tickles-“ He yelped, laughing a bit louder and shoving him away by the shoulders. He looked at Clown’s mischievous blushing face as he bit back his smile, “You know, the more I see it on you, I’m starting to think red may be my favourite colour too.” He joked, leaning up to kiss Clown again, gently.

He pressed a kiss to each of his cheeks, then his nose-

“Honk honk.”

Branzy pulled away with a deadpan expression, he rose a brow at Clown as the man grinned at his own stupid joke. “Really?”

He poked his tongue out cheekily, Branzy kissed him again.

The suns golden glow slowly faded, but the two barely noticed time move until the park’s streetlamps turned on automatically as the light of day vanished and the coolness of night replaced it.

At last they broke apart, Clown looking down at Branzy lovingly, he draped an arm around his shoulder. “Well, I’m beat, let’s go home, *darling*.”

Branzy bit his lip to stifle another giggle at the pet name, “Your place or mine?” He joked.

“As if they aren’t practically the same apartment already.” Clown added with a chuckle.

Branzy smiled as they walked in silence for a bit, he shrugged off Clown’s arm, making the man frown for just a second- Before he joined their hands, walking down the path humming Clown’s circus music.

Branzy abruptly groaned, throwing his head back, “Oh man, I just realised chat is sooo gonna flame me for this.”

Clown snorted with amusement, “I don’t really blame them, at least they’ll think their relationship advice for you worked.” He smirked and shook his head fondly, “Why ask chat for advice, of all the people...”

Branzy paled, staring at Clown with dawning horror, memories of that embarrassing stream making him want to shrivel up into a ball. “No.”

“Aw, don’t worry Branzy.” He cooed, leaning down to press a kiss to Branzy’s head, “Your chat didn’t make you mine! You were mine the moment I knocked on your wall.”

“No.” Branzy corrected, “You were *mine* the moment you started playing circus music.”

“That song *has* a name, you know.”

“Don’t care.” Branzy smiled, “It’s officially known as Clown Time now.”

“People would march to wars with that song-“

“Clown Time.”

“It’s actually kinda crazy it ended up being used in circuses-“

“Clown Time.”

“Ok I see what you’re doing here-“

“Clown Time.”

“Honk, honk, bitch.” Clown growled, grabbing Branzy’s face and kissing him harshly just to shut him up.

Chapter End Notes

Though I strive for accuracy, I do embellish a few things but I want to clarify what I made up:

The fire-breathing part, yeah nah I just wanted Rasplin to do something cool LMAO.

The backstage of the circus, I couldn’t find a lot of good sources on what the backstage to smaller circuses looked like. Did find a ton of great documentaries though!

All the walking on top of the wheel, sliding off, skipping and jumping? REAL THEY DO THAT WTF.

Here are some wheel of death acts!

[1](#)

[2](#)

[3](#)

And here is a really good [documentary](#) about the audition process of Cirque Du Soleil. Just so fascinating!!! I do recommend! Watched just for a look into the backstages, and ended up staying the whole 40 mins...

Imagine me watching [this](#) and being utterly bamboozed by a jack-in-a-box as the

opening act. Flabbergasted. I'm elated to find out my idea was actually accurate.
(Jump to 32:46 for an awesome musical number that made me consider making Clown
dance like that awesome skeleton guy)

ANYWAY! Enough citing sources, hope you enjoyed this, I'll be making one more
chapter me thinks. Just some good wholesome vibes and the chats reaction lol.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!