

My New Boyfriend, Reggie

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My New Boyfriend, Reggie

by [xX_DAGGERHEART_Xx](#)

Summary

Sitara catches Marcus cuddling with some blonde guy who he claims is his new boyfriend.

Little does she know that's actually Wrench and she's about to be played like she's never been played before.

Notes

First long Watch Dogs fanfic, I live here now.

And I continue my ancient, time honored tradition of "if I write a m/m fanfic there is an absurd amount of one of their female friends involved because if I go too long without thinking about cute girls I die."

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

Reggie

The jarring, chirping ringtone filled Marcus's otherwise silent apartment.

Well, mostly otherwise silent. Wrench was snoring away next to him, out absolutely cold. With his face shoved into the crook of Marcus's neck it was thunderous.

Marcus shot him an envious stare, jealous that he could sleep through an alarm with such ease.

He always did. Even before this weird, so far somewhat secret, relationship they'd started Wrench would occasionally pass out on his couch and be impossible to wake. First time it happened, Marcus was about two seconds from calling an ambulance until Wrench lazily lolled his head over and whined to be carried to a bed.

Not only had Marcus obliged that night but it became a regular thing. It always ended in Wrench affectionately pressed up against his back, nuzzling against him like an overgrown cat. An interminable sleep snuggler.

After the first night, Marcus made him agree to remove all things pointy before falling asleep though. Mask included. Remember how I said nuzzling? Not so cute if there's a bunch of spikes strapped to the nuzzler's face. Nearly drew blood.

It took only a moment of pause before Wrench decided to go along with it. If it was just him and Marcus, he was okay with it. After that agreement was struck it didn't take long for the relationship to... escalate.

They hadn't told the others yet. There really hadn't been an opening to and honestly they were kind of enjoying the privacy. No way at least Sitara wasn't going to make jokes about it and pry for more details. Hell, Josh would be quietly craning his neck in curiosity too.

Groaning Marcus slammed his hand on where the phone should be only to find it missing. The sound of the call was coming from nearby, probably somewhere on the bed.

Jostling Wrench, Marcus tried to get answers from him, "Where's m'phone?"

Silence. Okay, we've already covered it's not silence it's snoring but still, no answer.

"Wrench," Marcus said more firmly, gently slapping at his face, "You're on my arm, wake the fuck up."

He moved, just a little and for a second Marcus thought he was waking up. However, Wrench just cuddled closer, clung harder, and immediately went back to snoring.

Marcus tried futilely to pull away from Wrench's grasp. Defeated, he dropped his head back on the pillow. Hearing the alarm continue Marcus swore and smacked him on the ass as hard as possible, "Wrench! Up!!"

Barely even caused a pause in the snoring.

Giving up, Marcus tried to grope around the bed to find the phone. Pulling the covers off only made Wrench cling more which was only making the search harder. Normally Marcus found this clinging cute but not today. Okay maybe a little bit. But mostly inconvenient.

It sounded like the call was coming from the foot of the bed. For a second the ringing stopped but immediately started again. Whoever was calling wasn't taking "no" for an answer.

Eventually his foot caught it and he awkwardly managed to kick it up into arm's reach.

Marcus pulled the sheets over the two of them again before turning the phone on and looking at the name.

Sitara. Of course it was Sitara. Who else would be this insistent to talk to him this early in the morning? Hell, who else does he know that's even up this early?

Next to him Wrench started moving. Of course, after all the struggling he'd wake up. Asshole.

"It's Sitara," Marcus warned, finger hovering over the "answer call" button.

Words muffled by the fact Wrench was still smushed into his neck, "What's she want?"

"I don't know, man. Just warning you I'm gonna be talking."

His only reply was a grunt as he all but verbally threatened to go back to sleep. Marcus ignored this, hitting "call accept", holding the phone up to his ear and finally answering the damn call, "Shit, Sitara, what? It's 7AM. Ray better be on fire or some shit."

"Unfortunately not. I just wanted to see if you wanted to get breakfast with me."

"Breakfast is fake and doesn't exist. The meals are lunch, dinner and dinner 2: this time it's personal. If you want lunch, we can get lunch. Later. Not at 7AM."

"Shut up. Also can I stop looking at your ear?"

"What?" Marcus asked, pulling the phone away from his ear without thinking and staring at it in confusion.

It then hit him that this wasn't just a phone call. It was a video call.

A video call where Sitara could clearly see Wrench half asleep, pressed against him. Unaware he was on camera.

Immediately, Marcus's jaw dropped as Sitara's mouth twisted up into a smile.

"Oh my god and whoooooo is this?" Sitara practically sang, "Marcus are you hiding a boyfriend from us or did you pick this guy up from a bar last night? I'm not sure which is more scandalous but holy shit!"

Wrench looked up sharply at that, realizing in an instant that Sitara could actually see him. See his face. His first instinct was to grab his mask but a frantic look around told him it was on the other side of the room, resting on a chair, and far out of reach.

Unlike his boyfriend who had immediately gone into panic mode, Marcus's brain immediately realized two things, both very exciting. One? Sitara didn't realize that the "mystery guy" was Wrench. Two? This was the chance of a lifetime.

Before Wrench could jerk away and get at his mask, probably revealing his immediately telling tattoos, Marcus pinned him against his side under the covers, "Yeah, yeah, laugh it up. This is my new boyfriend."

Wrench looked up at him in trapped confusion while Sitara giggled, “Aaand exactly how long were you going to hide him from us? Wrench is gonna be pissed.”

At his own name, Wrench paused.

It hit him Sitara didn't know who he was.

Wrench stayed perfectly frozen while Marcus talked, pushing his head against him to better hide the tattoo on his neck, “Not hiding, just like... super new. And he's shy.”

“I hope you know this means breakfast is obligatory now.”

“C'mon Sitara, give us until at least lunch.”

“Alright but bring the twink, I need to interrogate him,” she smirked, looking smug as can be.

“Fine, fine, we'll meet you at the sandwich place by the Hackerspace, deal?”

Sitara was still cracking jokes as Marcus hung up on her and looked at the mortified Wrench.

“Dude, what the fuck?” Wrench immediately spat out, “Why are w-”

“Wrench. We've been given an amazing opportunity and we HAVE to take it. This is some 90's sitcom shit.”

“What?” Wrench asked, still dazed by the fact someone else had seen his face.

“We have to- and I DO meant have to- see how long we can keep Sitara thinking you're a different person. I'm talking disguises, I'm talking fake backstory, I'm talking playing her like she's never been played before.”

Confusion finally left Wrench's face, replaced by unbridled excitement as he slapped Marcus in the chest, “Dude!”

“I know! Jack-fucking-pot!”

They allowed themselves only a moment to bump the sides of their fists together before they got to work.

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All of Wrench's clothes were gathered on the bed, a semi-gargantuan effort considering how much of Marcus's apartment was littered with spiked and leather garments. Can't have any hints that Wrench has been in here.

Marcus took a step back and examined him standing there. They'd have to cover his arms and his neck. Stomach and back too, but that's a given.

Right now Wrench was in nothing but his boxers and an oversized Oakland t-shirt of Marcus's.

“Well... we're gonna have to stick to my clothes.”

“Why can't I wear my clothes?” Wrench whined, “Your clothes are all... not hardcore.”

“Your clothes come in two varieties, Wrench,” Marcus said, turning around and digging in his closet for things he doesn't wear as often, “Extremely loud and she'll immediately know it's you.”

And stuff that is so shredded it looks like it's going to disintegrate off your body. Throw out your old clothes, man.”

“Sitara wears clothes with rips and normally I do too. You told me you think it's kinda weirdly sexy that my boxers stick out through my pants. C'mon man, I completely rely on being ‘weird but sexy.’ It's my thing. It's all I've got going for me.”

“There's a huge divide between fashionable rips and the clothes literally falling off your body in pieces, man.”

“Okay but, like, you're into it right?”

“Your normal clothes, yes, the super ancient beat up stuff, no. Makes you look like a hobo got attacked with scissors,” holding up several shirts and jackets to him Marcus continued, “I like your regular look. We just can't use your look right now because it stands out too much.”

Wrench looked at the clothes with disappointment, “Why do you even buy this hipster shit? You don't wear it.”

“I looked good in it in the store and I have poor self control.”

“Fair enough. You do look good in anything,” Wrench conceded starting to change into the clothes presented to him, “How about to pay me back for making me dress like a hipster you wear some of my clothes sometime?”

“Whatever floats your boat, man.”

There was a pause.

“I've still got my outfit from Swelter Skelter.”

“Wrench...”

“Just putting that out there.”

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Wrench uncomfortably fidgeted with the collar of the shirt, unused to and unhappy with wearing a button up. The cutesy fox sweater over it was uncomfortably foreign as well. Way too tight skinny jeans trapped his legs. Marcus had popped the prescription lenses out of some old glasses of his for Wrench to wear.

Knitted fingerless gloves pulled over his hand tattoos were probably his least favorite part of the ensemble, though.

But with Marcus approaching him with a scarf that was probably about to change.

“C'mon, really? A scarf? We're in California, dude.”

Marcus replied with a smirk, “And you're the jackass with the neck tattoo we need to hide.”

It was true. The collared shirt almost covered it but the top of the anarchy ‘A’ still peeked over the top.

“If it makes you feel any better, I think you look cute.”

“Kinda,” Wrench said, still not happy about the additional piece of clothing being wrapped around him.

But, above all, the biggest thing causing him pause was his face being exposed. He hadn’t gone out willingly in public without his mask in... he wasn’t even sure how many years now. Other than when his mask was taken from him. He didn’t quite count that, only Marcus, Dusan and whoever else was in that room had seen and then he’d immediately went into hiding until Marcus got it back for him.

He flinched as Marcus started trying to comb the knots out of his hair. Wrench failed to see the point in that being Sitara was oblivious to the state of his hair other than “blonde probably?” Didn’t make it far in that endeavor before a banging came at the door.

“Alright, remember to try to keep your voice calmer. It sounds different enough without the mask but, like, we don’t wanna take chances,” Marcus added on as a final note.

Keeping his voice mockingly monotone Wrench mocked, “What did you say your name was again? See-tair-ah?”

“Tch, don’t make her smack you upside the head.”

They bumped the sides of their hands again before Marcus got up and answered the door.

Sitara practically shoved past him to get at his “new boyfriend.” Absolutely delighted to see the disguised Wrench slightly curled up on the couch.

Bravado gone, coincidentally making him look more like a different person than even the clothes did. Scratching at the still semi-knotted mass of blonde, trying to cover as much of the birthmark on his face as possible.

Sitara wasn’t concerned about that in the least as she sauntered over, “Hey, I’m Sitara. One of your little boyfriend’s best friends.”

Turns out Marcus’s warning about Wrench disguising his voice was unnecessary, his voice coming out quiet, strained, and nearly monotone, “Marcus has talked a lot about you guys.”

“Good things?” she asked, shooting an accusatory glance back at Marcus.

“Yes,” Wrench replied, plainly. It was obvious how incredibly uncomfortable he was and it certainly didn’t help that Sitara was absolutely scrutinizing him right now.

Sitara kept talking to Marcus instead, giving him a break from her stares, “So does your boyfriend have a name or do I just have to keep calling him ‘Marcus’s boyfriend’?”

Both froze at that. They’d wasted what few hours they had crafting Wrench’s new look. Never bothering to work on anything related to his personality, name, backstory anything. Wrench was entirely frozen but Marcus was still capable of thought.

At least somewhat. In his panic Marcus searched for any name related to Wrench. His brain clicked back to the time he’d joked about his real name, back when there were doxx threats out on them. Suddenly, it was like every other name was dumped out of his memory.

Marcus spoke up, breaking the slightly too long silence, “His name’s Reginald. Everyone just calls him ‘Reggie.’”

It was a good thing Sitara was looking at Marcus, not Wrench, because right now he was getting a look that just screamed, 'Did you just fucking name me Reginald?'

Lunch

Chapter Summary

Sitara gives 'Reggie' the third degree while me and Marcus scramble to make up a backstory for the fictional man.

“It’s nice to meet you Reggie,” Sitara said, finally turning to look at the disguised Wrench again. Holding out a hand for him to shake.

Cautiously accepting, he shook it. The feeling of how weird it is to have your friend of multiple years treat you like a perfect stranger was drowned out by immediate regret at choosing to go along with this.

It was jarringly uncomfortable to see Sitara’s face without his visor. No dark tint over everything. A face he’d seen for hours and hours and he never saw the details. Always thought her makeup was just green. Never realized her nose ring had a pattern on it. Even more piercings up her ears than he thought.

Sitara wasn’t given time to notice that “Reggie” was staring at her like a terrifying alien creature foaming at the mouth. However, Marcus had and it didn’t take a rocket surgeon for him to know why.

Before Sitara could notice too, her ringtone started chirping at her and demanding her attention.

Swearing she pulled it out and looked at it, “It’s Josh. I’ve gotta see what he wants. Gimmie one sec.”

Marcus yelled after her as she stepped outside, “See? Random phone calls can be annoying.”

“Eat me,” was all he got in return as the door closed behind her.

It was a lucky break for the boys though, Marcus rushing over the second she wouldn’t hear him, “Hey, hey, hey, you alright?”

“Marcus, I can’t-”

“Look, if you can’t handle this we can tell Sitara you don’t feel good then make some excuse about breaking up later. Just have to be more careful then because if she sees you again then the lies compou-”

Despite being encouraging it was obvious Marcus was disappointed about the plan falling to pieces almost immediately. Unable to disappoint Marcus in any way ever, Wrench opted to try and divert it, “No just... if... if we keep her here it’ll be fine. Just can’t... do all of it at once. Her and... out there.”

He nodded towards the door, towards the whole of San Francisco.

“You sure?”

“I’m sure.”

“Alright, good thing literally the first thing I made up about ‘Reggie’ is ‘he’s shy,’” Marcus nodded, rubbing Wrench’s arm over the increasingly restrictive-feeling sweater, “I’ll just tell her I’m making lunch then. We’ll stay in the apartment. I promise.”

“Thanks, Marcus,” Wrench said, grabbing up at Marcus to try and give him a kiss.

Marcus obliged, ignoring the hooting that started when the door opened again, “Oh my god, I left you two alone for like five seconds.”

“Jeez Sitara, you’re acting like I’ve got his pants around his ankles, chill,” Marcus said, pulling away from Wrench

“Maybe if I’d waited a couple more minutes you would’ve.”

“We’re not horny teenagers, give us some credit,” Marcus scoffed, grabbing her by the shoulder and steering her towards the dining room.

“Are we eating in? Can you actually cook or that a fact I get to learn about Reggie here?” she said, nodding towards Wrench as he followed after them.

“Hell no, it’s all me. He’d die of malnutrition without me. Everything from a goddamn microwave, it’s not good for him.”

“I’ve made it this far...” Wrench quietly defended himself.

Marcus swung open the fridge praying to whoever’s out there that he had something passable as a nicer meal. Smiling, he remembered pulling out chicken legs earlier. Perfect. He was a mediocre cook at best but it’d be good enough.

Sitara had trapped Wrench at the small table right at the edge of the kitchen area, giving him a not subtle up and down. It was nearly a physical strain for Wrench not to move to cover his face in some way. Especially as curious eyes raked over the red mark.

Of course, Sitara had more tact than to ask ‘hey what the hell happened to your face?’

Instead she asked a nicer question, “So, where’d you meet Marcus?”

Marcus himself interrupted that, “Dating app. It’s hard to meet people who don’t know me from Dedsec.”

“What, don’t want to date within the crew? Never took you as someone who needs a dating app.”

Pausing, Marcus tried to explain it in a way that wouldn’t insult his real relationship, “It gets messy, you know? Especially since we’re kinda like... their bosses? Our little group? I’d feel like I was taking advantage of anyone outside of it and that’s pretty much the only people I interact with.”

Sitara nodded, “That is... a solid point. Guess if I ever wanna settle down I’ll have to do that too. Considering with you being taken my remaining options are Josh and Wrench. Or, like, Ray if I want a really shitty sugar daddy. More like a splenda daddy. Use him to buy me Taco Bell and moderately priced clothing from Walmart.”

Marcus laughed, “A’ight but if you had to choose between the three-”

“Josh. He’s a sweetheart. Ray’s too old and god knows what Wrench’s whole situation is. None of us know where he came from, who is or, hell, even what he looks like. Unless you’re holding out on us, Marcus?”

Wrench looked nervously at Marcus, partially from Sitara talking about him, partially from just general discomfort.

“I wouldn’t tell you even if I knew,” Marcus lied with a smirk, “And, what, don’t think he’d be gorgeous under there?”

“If I had to guess, I’d say he’s probably a fairly normal looking guy that just wanted to look more mysterious or something. He’s dramatic enough, I’d buy it just being for the aesthetic. Speaking of Wrench being dramatic, he know about Reggie yet?”

“We’ve met a few times,” Wrench said, immediately jumping to his own defense, “He seemed really cool, why would he be weird about me?”

“I think he thought he was being subtle but it’s pretty obvious he has-slash-had a crush on Marcus. All but humps his leg sometimes. Guess he just knows when to back off, at least when it comes to people dating. Not entirely surprising, he’s not a bad guy, just comes on about a hundred times stronger than he probably should.”

Wrench was still regarding Sitara with caution when Marcus joined them after slamming the chicken in the oven, “It’ll be like fifteen minutes. And Wrench’s fine with it, don’t worry about him.”

“He’s high strung and self destructive, what’s not to worry about?” Sitara replied, resting her head on her hand, “Besides, I worry about all you guys. You’ve all given me plenty of reasons to, especially you Mr. I-Nearly-Got-Crushed-In-A-”

Abruptly, Sitara stopped talking and stared at ‘Reggie’ before looking at Marcus.

Starting again, she spoke under her breathe to Marcus, “Hey, uhh, actually does he... how much does he know about what we do?”

Correcting quickly, Marcus spoke up, “Oh, yeah, he knows all about Dedsec and everything.”

Sitara was a bit wary at that, looking from Marcus to ‘Reggie’ and back.

Marcus smacked her on the arm, “C’mon Sitara, he’s cool don’t make it weird.”

“Fine, fine, but I really need to know more about him considering he apparently knows everything about my baby,” she said, returning her attention to ‘Reggie’, “What do you do?”

Wrench was smart enough to know he shouldn’t venture too far away from what he knows, letting him answer pretty quickly, “I build computers.”

“Figures Marcus would at least stay in the tech field. I take it you like all the nerdy-ass movies and games he likes then? If not I hope you’re ready for him to sit you down and make you do that shit with him anyways.”

“I made you watch one movie, Sitara. One,” Marcus defended himself.

“It was like three hours long.”

“One movie.”

“I like them,” Wrench spoke up.

“Got any other hobbies?” Sitara continued to probe.

“Just... regular guy stuff. Video games. You know.”

Yeah he really didn't have many hobbies that transferred to a normal person. Can't exactly say “I like playing with pyrotechnics” or “I like making new 3-D printed gun prototypes.” Too weird. Too specific.

“And, uh, cars?” he added on. Not exactly a hobby but he could do some car shit. Enough that he could cover his ass on the topic if need be.

Sitara looked at him again, noticing the tiniest flinch when she did. Unsatisfied with the fact she was unable to drag more than a few words out of the ‘new’ man at a time, she tried to ask a more in depth question. Well, at least a question that'd be longer if the answer wasn't just ‘yes.’ She decided on, “Did you grow up here in San Francisco?”

“No, I haven't been here long. I've been all over the place. Foster care. Not... not a great time. Eventually an eccentric rich couple in Newport Beach decided they wanted to keep me and I got some real parents.”

“Why'd you decide to move here then?”

Wrench didn't have a good answer for that, at least as ‘Reggie’. As Wrench he knew why he came here but the answer was ‘All the better to fight Blume, my dear.’ Not exactly the answer a normal, average joe would have.

“Change of pace.”

“Well, maybe next time we can leave the house and I'll show you some of my favorite places. Deal?” Sitara said.

“Al-alright,” Wrench agreed automatically, even though his mind was screaming already.

Before Sitara could prod at him anymore there was a beeping noise behind them as the chicken screamed that it's ready. Marcus pushed himself up, “Alright, no more of the third degree for Reggie. Food's ready.”

Of course, Sitara wasn't truly deterred but the direct, rapid fire questions were halted. Making small talk she told Wrench things he already knew about her, quietly inviting him to share things about himself. Sometimes he did but honestly? At this point he was concerned about keeping so many details about the ‘Reggie’ persona straight right off the bat.

Marcus's food was adequate, he'd admit himself he's not the best cook ever but it was serviceable. Sitara certainly wasn't complaining and Wrench can't make anything not microwaveable so he literally has zero right to complain about food given to him ever.

Wrench was wavering pretty violently between getting more comfortable then realizing he's letting his guard down which was making him more and more uncomfortable.

Eventually, slightly concerned that Wrench was going to work himself into a heart attack, Marcus managed to shuffle Sitara out while she tried to continue talking to ‘Reggie.’ Marcus all but

pushing her out the door manually as his hand on her back assertively guided her out.

Before he could close the door, Sitara managed to stop him to at least get in one more sentence, “It was nice to meet you, Reggie. We’ll hang out again, okay?”

Wrench just nodded as Marcus pretty much shoved Sitara all the way through the door.

As it closed, Marcus turned to him, “She’s never gonna let this go, you know that? You okay with that? It’s still an option to back out. Or, hell, we pulled it off. We can tell her it’s a prank now if you want.”

Not really listening, Wrench was already clawing at his hipster Reggie trappings. Despite being mentally exhausted, he was really making short work of getting back to being him. He didn’t bother answering Marcus’s questions until he’d already stripped down to his bright red boxers and was lying facedown on the couch. Granted, his answer was too muffled to understand but it was an answer.

“Good thing I speak Wrenchinese,” Marcus said, rolling him over and picking him up, “And that meant ‘We’ll talk about this later, Marcus. My immaculately perfect and gorgeous boyfriend. Light of my life. Apple of my eye. Carry me to our bed in your big strong arms so I can take a stress nap in your loving embrace.’”

Wrench’s only response was a thumbs up as he smushed his face into Marcus’s neck further.

Outside

Chapter Summary

Marcus knows that Sitara won't stay happy with only seeing "Reggie" inside his apartment and drags a reluctant Wrench outside the house to try and get him accustomed to being in public as his fake persona.

Chapter Notes

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

The next day, Wrench woke up alone. Looking at the clock it was about 1PM so this wasn't surprising; Marcus wasn't an early bird but he at least was usually up by noon at the very latest.

Sitting up there were some surprises though. He found there was a small, neatly folded pile of clothes next to him. Topped by the 'Reggie' glasses. Clearly intended for him to put on.

Picking up the green sweater and examining the horse on it, Wrench carried it out and waved it accusingly at Marcus sitting on the couch, "Look, if this is how you're telling me you have a hipster fetish I need you to know I have some issues with that."

"No, no, I just have a proposition for you," Marcus smiled.

"Your mouth is saying no but your use of the word 'proposition' says 'put on the lensless glasses and skinny jeans or I can't get it up'," Wrench accused with a crude gesture.

"A non-sexy proposition. Those exist you know. Unless you want it to be and YOU'RE the one with a being-a-hipster fetish and are aggressively projecting on poor, innocent Marcus Holloway. Local angel."

Looking down at the sweater with disdain, Wrench spat out a, "Fuck no, dude."

"Alright, fair enough, but you remember how yesterday you said you couldn't deal with both Sitara and going outside?"

"Yeah?"

"Well, if we keep this up she going to want to go places."

Looking back at the glasses sitting on the bed, it clicked.

"Reggie's going outside," Wrench mumbled, not sounding hot on the idea.

Marcus stood up, pushing Wrench back towards the pile of clothes on the bed, "It'll be okay, we're just gonna have to get you used to going outside without the mask. We'll go to the waffle house with the ocean view."

"Fuck, I love waffles," Wrench conceded.

"Yeah you do. Get changed and we'll get you as many waffles as you can eat. We'll have a nice

time, just you and me, then we can head right home. Plus you won't have to shove the food up your mask which I imagine is annoying and possibly slightly to very disgusting."

"You get really used to it, it's not that hard. But one time I threw up with my mask on. That was insanely disgusting."

"Thanks... thanks for that information."

"You're welcome."

- - -

Wrench stood in the doorway for a nearly shamefully long amount of time, Marcus patiently leaning against the bottom of the stairs to wait for him.

Eventually, Wrench started moving. Walking down the stairs like an alien desperately trying to pass for human. By the time he made it to the bottom he was nearly hyperventilating.

"You okay?" Marcus asked, patting his shoulder.

"I'm dying from the inside out."

"That's the spirit," Marcus smiled, "C'mon you can cling the entire bike ride just like you like."

The thought of being able to cling to Marcus did calm him down a bit. Even got a laugh out of him getting a look at the newest paint job Marcus had gotten on his bike.

It was a wonder the man hadn't been drastically easier for Blume and the police to hunt down considering his obsession with plastering Sitara's Dedsec art all over every customizable item he could possibly own. The bright green bike stood out, "OMG IT'S DEDSEC!!" plastered on it.

"Is being unsubtle about being Dedsec your kink, Marcus?" Wrench accused in a near whisper, still somewhat aware of how horrific it was to be outside.

Marcus contemplated fighting that but he knew from the Dedsec reaper hat on his head to his "Night of the Dedsec" shirt to the custom Dedsec jacket to the Dedsec screaming lady bag to the Dedsec pants to... well, no one could see his underwear or socks but they were Dedsec brand too.

"You paint me with such a broad brush, I'm a complex dude," Marcus said, mock offended.

"You are but you're also a walking Dedsec billboard."

"Man, fuck you," Marcus laughed, swinging a leg over his bike.

"Really? Because we can right back upstairs and get on that and frankly I'd be a lot happier to do that then get stared at by randos."

"Get on the bike, 'Reggie.'"

With a groan, Wrench complied.

- - -

The bike ride was pleasant enough. To some degree, Wrench almost enjoyed it. Pressed up against Marcus, wind on his face for the first time in god knows how many years, nobody to look at him.

But it ended far quicker than he'd like as they pulled into a parking lot by the waffle house.

He could see the people through the window. Not a very busy day but there were still a couple families inside. Children. Adults. Old people.

Marcus patted his hand which was currently twisting his jacket sleeve almost painfully, "You'll be okay. Nobody's probably even going to notice you, everyone always thinks other people pay more attention to them than they ever do."

"Yeah, well, most people don't have a huge red mark over half their face."

"I know you're sensitive about that but it doesn't mean your face is wrecked or anything."

Wrench just grunted in reply.

Pushing open the door, Marcus waved his boyfriend through, "Besides, you've got the best possible distraction."

"What?" Wrench mumbled as he walked in.

"My gorgeously distracting face, everyone's just gonna be looking at me."

That at least got a laugh out of Wrench while he nodded, "That's true. Why would anyone look at me when you're right there?"

"Exactly. Now let's get you full of waffles."

Thankfully, there was no one rude. The tired waitress barely even looked at them, her short purple hair covering one of her eyes like an early 2000's scene kid. Make up also of that era.

Sitting down, Wrench immediately took the opportunity to prop up his menu and hide behind it. Even though he knew what he was going to get. That promised land of "waffles until I puke." Marcus hooked a finger over the top and pulled it down, "Hey, c'mon, we're not having a conversation through a menu. Don't make it weird, man."

Reluctantly Wrench put the menu down. Downside? People could see him. Upside? He could see Marcus.

He flinched as the same waitress lazily sauntered over to take their order.

Marcus answered for the both of them, handing the menus back to her, "Just keep bringing him waffles until he looks like he's gonna die. I'll take the blueberry pancakes. Normal human amount."

"Alright, man. Comin' right up," she nodded dumbly as she wandered away again.

The second the waitress was out of earshot Marcus started talking about, "By the way, good job making up shit to answer Sitara's questions. That bit with the eccentric foster parents was brilliant."

"I didn't make that up."

"What?"

Wrench pulled out his phone and fiddled around with it for a few seconds before handing it to Marcus. On the screen was a young Wrench, even scrawnier and spikier than he is now, being

flanked by two unfamiliar people outside an obscenely nice house.

The couple were Asian, clearly not biologically related to the man sitting in front of him. The wife was tall and thin, very made up but in a odd outfit. Multiple clashing fabrics hung loosely off her as she perched on her husband's shoulder. He was dressed much more normal but the tie of his designer suit was made of one of the garish fabrics adorning his wife.

“Ho-ho-holy fuck, dude,” Marcus laughed, “Shit, you really grew up with rich adoptive parents? Didn't know I was dating little orphan Annie.”

Wrench jerked his phone back in a pang of paranoia as the scene chick waitress returned and set the plates on front of them. Not that she paid them any mind as she immediately walked away to lurk by the greeter's stand.

“Not an orphan and grew up with? No. Ended up with them eventually? Yes. Whatever you were picturing for my childhood was probably pretty accurate up until then.”

“Always kinda assumed you were poor like me.”

Wrench nodded, “Trailer park to a couple of drug addicts. Eventually CPS took me away. Got bounced from foster home to foster home. Then the Jins took me in. I didn't trust them at first but they were determined. Apparently they'd lost their son a few years back and he would have been my age.”

“There is... shockingly little I know about you, isn't there?”

“Oh absolutely,” Wrench nodded, “I mean how am I supposed to keep my sexy aura of mystery if you get to know everything about me all at once? Not like I know much about you either.”

“Well, uh, grew up in Oakland with my parents. We never had much money growing up but my parents always tried to give me and my sisters every opportunity they could. Learned to work with computers through a community program. Then, well, you know everything that happened to me with being falsely accused of a crime and you were there for everything else.”

Mirroring Wrench before, Marcus opened a folder of photos and handed it to his boyfriend. Taking it, Wrench flicked through a fairly large gallery of a smiling family around a clearly small and over cramped house.

His mom and dad looked tired but not miserable, both occasionally wearing work clothes. There was no doubt which sister was his younger and older one though. The elder one looked a couple years older than Marcus and was devastatingly beautiful and the younger one looked much, much younger. Somewhere in the ballpark of pre/early teens, right in the middle of her ugly duckling stage. Endearing, in her own way, but all braces and unfashionable glasses. A very, very tiny old woman was often tottering around in the background.

Marcus tapped the screen, zooming in on the old lady, “That's my grandma. She'd love you. Back in the day she was a freedom fighter herself and when she found out I was working with Dedsec she just smiled and said ‘The revolution skips a generation.’ She loves that vaguely ominous, dramatic shit.”

Flicking it to the side brought up an old, black and white photo from the 70's. It didn't take a genius to surmise that the very small, smiling lady was the grandmother but much younger. A vaguely surly man stood next to her and glared into the camera. Dressed not unlike Wrench himself, all spikes and leather. A bat with nails going through it hung lazily from his hand.

“That was Grandpa Marcus. Grandma practically held my parents hostage until they agreed to name me after him, in his memory. Died right before my dad would have been born. Grandma always would say she ‘misses her porcupine.’ She’ll probably be happy I found one of my own.”

“So don’t wear this hipster getup when I meet her?” Wrench quasi-joked, cutting off a too big piece of waffle and shoving it in his mouth ungracefully.

“No, hell no. Wear even more spikes than you usually do,” Marcus smirked.

It was almost like Wrench had completely forgotten he was in a public space with his face exposed. Marcus’s smirk became more of a smile at that.

“What do your parents think about Dedsec?” Wrench asked.

“Oh, they fucking hate it and hate I’m doing it. Wanted me to work with the FBI and be above the table and shit. Pretty not happy I’m getting shot at by them instead but we’re still on good terms as long as I don’t bring it up in front of them,” Marcus laughed, clearly not too perturbed by it, “What about yours?”

Wrench shrugged, “I could become a literal super villain and Mom and Dad would probably buy me a custom engraved death laser for my birthday. They’re cool. To a vaguely alarming degree.”

“So,” Marcus smirked, gesturing with pancake hanging off his fork, “Your real name obviously isn’t Wrench. And it ain’t Reginald. In the spirit of sharing our pasts, what is it?”

Wrench shook his head and held out his left hand, palm down and ring finger extended. Batting his eyes and resting a hand impishly over his heart.

Marcus smacked away his hand with a laugh, “C’mon man, I gotta put a ring on it to get to know your name? Don’t you think that’s a bit extreme?”

“You can find out a lot about someone with just their birth name, don’t need you finding out any further details about my past. Gotta keep the mystery or the romance will fizzle out, you know?”

“You’re making me feel like I’m in an absurdly hard dating sim right now. Like, I gotta increase my approval rating with you by giving you gifts or some shit. These waffles doing anything for you? How many points am I getting?”

“Plus ten heart points per waffle,” Wrench immediately answered, “It’s a lot of heart points to unlock my backstory and even more for my name. You already got enough to see me maskless so you’re making progress.”

“You know more about dating sims than I’d think, you actually play them?”

“Hell no, just watch people play them online and make jokes about them and shit,” Wrench said, next sentence an accusation, “What, do you?”

There was an extremely telling dead silence for a few seconds.

“Marcus. Are you cheating on me with drawings of busty anime women?”

“You’ll pry my waifus from my cold dead hands.”

The badly hidden smile threatening to crack Marcus’s face in half was telling, only amplified by Wrench’s false offense at this.

“Oh my god, it’s like I don’t even know you,” Wrench said, collapsing back into the booth, “My boyfriend. The goddamn weeaboo.”

“We prefer the term ‘Otaku.’”

“I am... going to put these waffles in unspeakable places on your body if you say one more goddamn weeb-ass word, Marcus,” Wrench said, holding up a piece of waffle threateningly.

Marcus was quiet for a second before stuttering out through giggles, “I didn’t know you were such a tsundere type.”

Unsurprisingly, in desperate need to make some part of his joke a reality, Wrench launched himself across the table at Marcus.

- - -

Upon being kicked out of the waffle house by the scene chick waitress, Wrench regained his composure.

Mostly because it brought about the thing he’d been worried about- the entire restaurant had turned around to stare at them as they left, whispering among themselves about the two boys.

Once outside, Wrench tried to make a beeline for the bike to leave but found Marcus dragging him towards the nearly abandoned beach. Wordlessly, he tried to make a bid for freedom but at the end of the day literally all Marcus does is run around and climb shit constantly and is drastically stronger than him.

Physically giving up, Wrench let himself be dragged by his hand towards the water’s edge even though he started complaining, “You told me we’d go home after the waffles.”

“C’mon, we never got to go on any normal dates before Sitara saw you. Plus, I’ve even got you outside without your mask. Don’t think I’ll be getting to walk around with actual you without it any time soon.”

They were quiet for a while as they walked hand-in-hand. Cold, grey clouds up above threatened to rain, accounting for the basically empty beach.

Wrench broke the silence, “You don’t like it, do you?”

“What?” Marcus asked looking over.

“Me wearing my mask.”

He carefully turned words over in his head to get an answer that hopefully wouldn’t be upsetting, “I don’t hate it. In some ways I kinda like that only I really get to see your face, makes me feel special. But...”

“I don’t like ‘but’s.’”

“Yes you do, you’re goddamn obsessed with butts,” Marcus laughed, “Butts are your favorite thing.”

“Shut up, dude, you know what I mean.”

“But humans tend to, you know, like to look at each other faces when we talk. Aside from like this,” Marcus said, gesturing to Wrench’s current ‘Reggie’ get up, “Any vaguely public

conversation with you is through a screen.”

Immediately, Wrench looked down at the ground.

Sighing, Marcus tried to comfort him, “I mean, I’m not gonna like... make you stop wearing it or anything. Especially not in public places.”

He continued to look straight down, kicking at seashells.

“I just like your face is all,” Marcus said, nudging and jostling him to try and get a laugh.

It worked, gaining him a punch on the shoulder too, “Shut up. I like your face too.”

For a while they continued to walk the abandoned beach, making dumb jokes and nearly falling into the water several times. Until the sudden, aggressive, onslaught of rain sent them desperately running back to the motorcycle before they got soaked.

It was too late though, they were drenched by the time they made it back to the parking lot across from the waffle house.

The scene chick waitress lazily wandered out as her shift ended, just in time to see the very boys she’d just kicked out earlier nearly trip over each other as they yelled and tried to get on the bike.

“Fuckin’ weirdos...” she muttered to herself as she unlocked her car.

Chapter End Notes

i had my headcanon that codename "retr0" is in regards to "retro anime" not "retro video games" for exactly twenty-four hours before putting it in my fanfic yolo

Sitara

Chapter Summary

Wrench is dragged out of the house again but this time, Sitara is the one doing the dragging.

Chapter Notes

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

For the next three solid days Wrench refused to leave the house, with or without the mask.

Marcus figured he'd earned it. Couple hours outside maskless had really taken a lot out of him, more than he'd originally thought.

Granted, the rain probably hadn't helped. If they'd been drenched by the time they made it to the bike, their body compositions were 10% more water by the time they got home. Maybe they should have checked the weather.

Whereas Marcus had waited to take his clothes off and toss them in the basket, Wrench had left a trail of wet clothes ending in him passed out naked on the bed.

And so he stayed for the next three days, leaving the bed only to shower and get food.

On the night of the fourth day, Marcus leaned in the doorway of the bedroom, "Are you just gonna, like, live in my bed now?"

"Don't pretend you don't love it," Wrench mumbled, sprawling out in what he thought was a seductive pose. Made him look more like a drunk party goer, insisting they were good to drive. Equal in sloppiness and inability to convince anyone of what they're saying.

"I've hit a point where your nudity is just neutral. This is just what my boyfriend looks like now. Bare ass naked."

Giving up on trying to look sexy, he pushed himself up to point accusingly at Marcus, "That's a lie, we made love last night."

"First of all, you promised me you'd never call sex that again. Second of all, that's different. You weren't covered in dorito dust and reeking of beer at the time. Third of all, your bare ass and/or junk has touched everything in my goddamn apartment will you at least put on some boxers?"

"Fine, fine, throw me some," Wrench whined as he fell on his back, making a grabby hand at the dresser.

Marcus grabbed a pair of black, skull covered boxers and chucked them at him, "You're gonna need more than that soon. Sitara wants to get coffee in a day or two. With Reggie, not Wrench."

"Does she want to banish me to hibernation? Outside AND Sitara? In one go? I won't leave this apartment for months," Wrench mumbled as he pulled on the boxers.

“I’m gonna start charging you rent,” Marcus shook his head, “Not even kidding at this point.”

“Oh no, I don’t have any money,” Wrench said, immediately ready to remove the boxers again, “How will I ever pay you, my way too stern and unforgiving landlord?”

“This isn’t a porno, Wrench. You can’t dick your way out of this.”

Wrench frowned, “This is the least romantic way you could have asked me to move in.”

“I’m not even asking you to move in, you just decided you wanted to. You’re like a squatter getting grandfathered in at this point.”

The frowning had escalated to full blown pouting by now, Wrench looking up at him.

Marcus sighed, “You wanna be asked to move in nice, don’t you?”

Wrench just nodded, coy smile crossing his lips.

“Fine, Wrench, my dorito stained love, do you want to be my live in boyfriend?” Marcus said, sliding onto the bed and hooking an arm around his shoulders. Pulling him into a combination hug/headlock.

“I would love to,” Wrench nodded, despite his containment, “Also I’ve been living in the Dedsec garage for the past month when I’m not here.”

“Wrench! Why?”

“Forgot to pay rent.”

“Oh good,” Marcus laughed, “I’m inviting my deadbeat boyfriend to live with me.”

“I’ve got the money, I just don’t remember shit,” Wrench defended himself, “Plus my offer to pay you in a more pornographic way stands.”

“It’s not leverage if you’ll sleep with me anyways.”

“It was worth a shot though.”

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“I don’t know what’s more horrible, the fact you own this sweater or the fact you’re making me wear it,” Wrench complained, decrying his newest ‘Reggie’ outfit.

“I think you look cute,” Marcus said, before grabbing the sleeves of the white shirt and rolling them down, “But stop doing this, the whole point of the long sleeved shirts is to cover your tattoos, remember?”

Wrench groaned, “I hate long sleeves.”

“Well, you should have thought of that before you got tattoos.”

“Oh yeah, should have used my psychic powers to know about this extremely specific scenario in which I shouldn’t have my easily identifiable tattoos on display. Besides, you told me you like my tattoos.”

“For the millionth time, I like your default look,” Marcus reassured him, almost literally for the

millionth time, “I like the spikes, mask, tattoos, all of it.”

“You should get a tattoo of my n-”

“I’m not getting a tramp stamp of your name, stop suggesting it,” Marcus laughed, “In no universe, no world, no way.”

“Killjoy. What if I get your name done too?”

“Hey man, you wanna be branded ‘Marcus’ forever that’s your business. I don’t want a tool tattoo’d on me for the rest of my life. Spend my entire life explaining ‘no, my boyfriend’s name is Wrench’ every single time someone sees it.”

Wrench smiled mischievously as Marcus put the glasses on him, “What about my normal people name?”

“Hell no. What if you’re an ‘Elmer’ or a ‘Sheldon’ or something?”

Grabbing Marcus’s arm in mock horror Wrench joked, “Or a ‘Reginald.’”

Outside the door, Sitara could hear the boys’ laughing before she could even knock.

Smiling, Sitara knocked on the door and waited.

It had been an honest surprise for her that Marcus had gone and gotten himself a boyfriend. Granted, he’d always been a bit cagey about some personal details but honestly who of them wasn’t? She was somewhat open about most of her life but kept it to broad, relevant details unless asked directly.

For the members of Dedsec it was a sliding scale of paranoid secrecy. Sitara imagined it wasn’t necessarily a lack of trust between them rather than fear of it leaking into the hands of someone who would be willing to use it against them.

Josh was the most open. He’ll answer nearly anything if asked by someone he trusts, his only saving grace being he never offers any information of his own volition.

She was probably the second most open. Honestly? Her family was rich and in another country, having moved back after she left. Not like she had much to worry about.

Marcus would be third. Vague information. Born in Oakland, poor family, got blamed for a crime he didn’t do, likes puppies, hates mint ice cream.

Ray... exists. Is from Chicago. Hacker since the dark ages. Caused a bunch of fatalities.

Wrench? Who the fucking fuck knows. Has a mask, makes too many dick jokes. Possibly has fucked his laptop.

Speaking of, Sitara hadn’t seen him in like a week. She was starting to get vaguely concerned. It wasn’t entirely unusual for him to disappear for a couple weeks, doing god knows what, but the timing was somewhat concerning.

As far as she was concerned it was completely obvious that Wrench was absolutely head over heels about Marcus. Apparently he’d already met Reggie at some point. Sitara found it suspicious that he’d immediately gone missing afterwards.

Best case scenario? He was lurking in his home, wherever that may be, sulking about Marcus finding someone else while fucking around with his electronics. Worst case scenario? Drunk and high in a McDonald's, harassing anyone who tries to make him leave. Demanding more chicken nuggets than reasonable.

Well, actually the very worst case scenario is that Wrench is dead in a ditch but frankly that was just kind of always a concern of hers when he disappears.

But as Marcus opened the door she figured she'd check Wrench's usual haunts later to try and find him.

"Hey Marcus, you guys ready to go?" she said, jingling her keys at him, "My treat."

He smiled back at her, more than accustomed to everything being her treat. Sitara always insisted on paying. Nodding, he gestured for the man lurking behind him to follow.

Reggie looked deeply uncomfortable, escalating as he actually stepped outside.

Sitara eyed him up again, just as she had earlier this week. Marcus really hadn't been kidding when he said the poor guy was shy, he looked just about ready to bolt back inside.

For a second she wondered if anyone had ever been cruel to him about that red mark on his face. He seemed overly preoccupied with trying to cover it the best he could with his hair but it was cut far too short to hide much more than his forehead.

He should grow his hair out then, long bangs to cover it. Not like there's anything else you can do to cover something that big up.

Well, a mask would do the trick, but Sitara wasn't thinking that.

"So, where you dragging us?" Marcus asked.

"Don't know what he likes," Sitara said, nodding at Reggie, "So just a burger place. Who the hell doesn't like burgers? Or at least tolerate them."

"Fair enough," he replied nodding.

- - -

Reggie had seemed to calm down a bit once in the car.

Sitara really didn't know what to make of it, he wasn't the chattiest dude in the apartment but out here? Dead silence.

Unsurprisingly, Marcus rode shotgun like he always did, leaving his boyfriend to lurk in the back.

The second they arrived and stepped back out, Reggie resumed looking horrified.

Leaning in, Sitara whispered to Marcus, "Hey... is Reggie like, okay? He looks like he's on the verge of a mental breakdown."

"Yeah, he just does that," Marcus replied, maybe a bit too nonchalant, "He doesn't like to be in public."

Sitara watched as Marcus went over to take care of that, letting Reggie curl himself around his arm like an overgrown koala. Being considerably taller than him, it forced him to hunch over but he

seemed to be immediately comforted by clinging to his boyfriend.

Whatever, if it worked, it worked. Even as they were seated outside the restaurant Reggie kept himself pressed tightly against Marcus's side. Chairs pushed as close together as possible.

The sun was starting to set, leaving a beautiful orangey-red tint over the beach. Sitara has always been a sucker for aesthetics, even when choosing where to eat. Why not have the food AND the view be good?

To her surprise, the waitress who walked up instead of asking question just started with, "Not you two again."

Looking at the exasperated woman with confusion, Sitara didn't recognize her and her nametag reading "Violet" wasn't ringing any bells either. Purple hair and an outdated scene chick style. Nope, nothing. However, the guilty look on Marcus and Reggie's faces said they knew her.

Sitara flicked her eyes from the purple haired woman to the boys and back with evident glee, "Ha ha, oh my god, what did you do?"

"I had to kick them out of the pancake house like a week ago or something," she accused, looking at them with a hand on her hip, "I work there half my mornings. Almost got in trouble for that too, you two better not cause trouble again."

This only made Sitara sit more forward in her seat, singing in delight, "But what did they do, though?"

Slightly agitated, Violet answered, "Roughhousing. Being obnoxious boys."

"Don't worry, ma'am, I'll keep the idiots in check this time," Sitara promised with a coy smile.

Violet seemed to appreciate, returning the smile, "Alright then, I like your face so I'll trust you. What can I get you guys then? Or do you need a minute?"

Rushing to scrape their eyes over the menu they placed their orders. BBQ for Marcus, an ungodly quadruple decker for Reggie (where the fuck does he put it) and Sitara went with one of their specialty burgers.

As Violet walked back inside, Sitara turned to the boys, "So Reggie has personality traits other than shy, huh? Wouldn't expect roughhousing from him."

Reggie just shrugged at that, "Just... gotta force me open first."

Sitara choked back any possible dirty jokes, "So obviously Marcus has hit that point already then."

"Of course I have, I'm a delight," Marcus smiled, wiggling his eyebrows.

Reggie just nodded along complacently, patting Marcus's arm, "Maybe force isn't always necessary to get close to me."

In mock offense, Sitara put a hand to her sternum, "Oh but for me I have to try?"

Reggie looked down for a second before looking up and nodding with a tense smile.

"Not like I'm not use to it," she replied, "Hell, I barely know shit about most of my friends and they hardly know shit about me."

“Yeah what’s up with that?” Marcus cut in, “Reggie gets the third degree but I’ve only ever got second degree information about you. Usually from Horatio.”

Sitara tried to divert focus off herself, “Mystery is just part of my brand. We’ve all got something to hide and don’t like prying. Would you ask Ray where he lives? Would you ask Josh what secret project he’s working on? Would you ask Wrench to take off his mask? Nah. We’ve all made our lines.”

“Why’s Reggie so different then?”

“Because he’s normal,” Sitara nodded at him, “Not one of us weirdos. Doesn’t seem like he has anything to hide.”

“C’mon, give us something,” Marcus insisted.

Sighing and rolling her eyes, Sitara complied, “Fiiine, jeez. My parents are from India. Rich as fuck. Moved to L.A. and got stuck in a bunch of private schools. Got older, then they started shoving me in the most expensive colleges. I tolerated it for a few years until I saved up enough on my own to move out.”

She groaned as Marcus gestured for her to go on.

“Obnoxious,” she sneered, but continued, “Anyways, I moved out. I couldn’t really completely afford it myself so I had to get a roommates. Took a total gamble and just took the first guy who applied.”

“Jesus Sitara, did you want to be murdered? Was that you goal?”

Embellishing with her hands, Sitara weaved her tale, “Oh, yeah, it was a horrible. Total stalker. Made my life hell over the next few years. He still follows me. I catch him out of the corner of my eye sometimes. Waiting.”

Despite his silence, Reggie was looking increasingly concerned. Marcus was a bit more vocal, “Why the fuck didn’t you tell us earlier?”

“Because I’m fucking with you,” she answered smugly, “My gambled upon roommate just turned out to be Josh so I won that toss of the dice.”

Sometimes over the past week Marcus had felt bad about tricking Sitara with ‘Reggie’ but right now he felt a little vindicated, “You’re an ass, you know that right?”

“Yuhp,” she smiled, continuing her story unprompted, “His parents always babied him, even though he graduated high school several years early, so the second he turned eighteen he wanted to move out. Had a whole presentation prepared to convince me that he was a viable option. Kinda blew his mind when I just automatically handed him the key.”

“So the reason we’re all together is basically because you didn’t bother to vet your first roommate literally at all.”

“You got it. Technically Josh is why I’m hacking at all. I’d only learned to code to make a website for my art, my parents pushed it in college, but he’s the one who showed me the benefits of being a little more... questionable with my computer skills.”

“Looks like we owe Josh a round. Except he doesn’t drink. So I guess just a case of soda or something.”

Ignoring Marcus, Sitara leaned over at Reggie, “Is that enough Sitara information for you?”

He nodded, still unspeaking. Sitara couldn't help but wonder how long it would be before he'd actually start talking to her. Another part of her wondered how long he'd even be around. The more she thought about it, the less she realized she knew about Marcus and Reggie. This mysterious boyfriend had just shown up one day, who knew if he'd just disappear the same.

She supposed this was just a gamble, same as immediately accepting Josh as her roommate was. Might as well go all in.

Tipping her head at Reggie she said, “You should bring him around the Hackerspace to meet Josh and Ray.”

The look the two boys exchanged was weird and Sitara didn't know what to make of it.

However, it didn't trouble her as she remembered another issue she wanted to bring up, “By the way, Marcus, have you seen Wrench at all in the past couple weeks? I'm kind of starting to worry he's dead.”

Chapter End Notes

god i hope no one named reginald, elmer or sheldon is reading this

Hackerspace

Chapter Summary

Wrench has to go and "meet" Josh and Ray as "Reggie."

"I don't want to," Wrench complained, facedown on Marcus's bed.

Marcus sat on the edge of the bed, his arms crossed, "Wrench, you have to. Both things. You gotta go as Wrench first, then we'll arrange for Reggie to go."

"But I don't want to," Wrench replied, turning his head and giving Marcus his best puppy dog face.

"Sitara thinks you're simultaneously possibly dead and my boyfriend and both of those necessitate that Wrench AND Reggie need to show up in the Hackerspace if you want the Reggie Ruse to keep going.

Groaning, Wrench pushed himself up, "Can't I just stay here forever now?"

Scratching at the base of Wrench's hair, Marcus shook his head, "Not an option this time. We don't have to keep this up if you can't handle it though. Either way Sitara at least needs to know you're not lying in a ditch somewhere."

"No, no, I want to," Wrench protested, even as he leaned into having his hair scratched, "But I think this is going to be the end."

"How come?"

"Josh."

"What about him?"

"C'mon Marcus," Wrench said, gesturing to the general direction of the Hackerspace, "Josh is a goddamn genius. He's gonna figure it out."

"Sitara's a genius too and she's falling for it."

"She is but not like Josh is. He picks up on everything, there's no way I'm not going to walk down the stairs and he's gonna be like..." Wrench said, switching his voice to imitate Josh, "Hey Wrench, why are you dressed weird? Where's your mask? Why does Sitara look so pissed?"

"You... you have a point."

"I do! He's probably gonna like. Notice how I open doors weird or something."

Marcus laughed, "Do you open doors weird?"

"Fuck! I don't know! Maybe! Ask Josh!"

"Either way you're putting the kart in front of the Mario," Marcus said, handing Wrench his mask,

“Before anything else, go let her know Wrench isn’t dead or drinking his liver out of his body.”

“Fine, fine,” Wrench conceded, putting the mask on and letting it cycle through its various emoticons as it booted up, “But if I can’t stay at home I want something special when I get back.”

“And exactly what is it you want, you absolute princess?”

“I dunno. A candy bar?”

Patting him on the back with a laugh, Marcus nodded, “Okay, man. We’ll get you a candy bar. I thought I was going to end up in your Swelter Skelter outfit again.”

“Wait, I can request sexy things for this?” Wrench said, flashing a set of ‘!’s at Marcus as he draped himself over his shoulders and carefully pressed the front of the mask against his cheek, “I take it back, I want the sexy things! And the candy bar.”

“Psh, you’re spoiled you know that?” Marcus said, smacking him in the center of the chest.

“Is that a yes? That sounds like a yes.”

“Alright but only because it means I get laid too. No outfit though.”

“Can I have two candy bars then?”

Marcus laughed, “You’re lucky you’re cute, you know that right?”

“Yuhp, even if only to you,” Wrench said, putting himself down as he got himself up.

Putting on his normal clothes felt like a relief. Despite being drastically less physically comfortable they were considerably more mentally comfortable to him.

Ignoring Marcus trying to refute his self deprecatory joke, Wrench just waved, “I’ll be back in like... an hour. Grab some shit off my bench, tell Sitara I’m working on some big project, disappear into the night without her worrying about me anymore.”

- - -

Lying on her stomach, Sitara swung her legs like a teenage cliché while she typed something out on her computer.

She didn’t like when the Hackerspace was like this. Quiet. Empty. With Marcus busy with Reggie and Wrench completely AWOL it meant Josh and Ray often didn’t come in too much either.

There were many nights when it was just her here all by her lonesome. Just like now.

But she could hear the sound of the door opening overhead.

Listening, she knew she could tell before she’d see. Fast? Marcus, always in a rush. Perfectly timed, like a metronome? Josh. Slow, probably complaining about the fact we have to have stairs in the first place? Ray.

Instead of all those though, the steps shambling and heavy. Wrench.

Setting down her laptop and rolling off the couch, Sitara vaulted herself over it to jab him accusingly in the middle of the chest, “Where the fuck have you been?”

“Aww, Sitara! You care,” he said, trapping her in an affectionate headlock that smushed her face into as many spikes as possible.

Failing to push him away, Sitara just glared up at him, “Last time you disappeared for that long I found you half dead from alcohol poisoning in your apartment. I went there several times this week, no answer. Where the hell were you?”

“Doin’ Wrench stuff.”

“Meaning?”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“I do worry about it though,” Sitara said as she managed to twist her way to freedom without losing an eye, “Especially considering the timing.”

He stared at her blankly, at least she supposed her was as she only had two ‘O’s glowing at her. He tilted his head, “What?”

“Look, I know I can not notice shit sometimes but I’m not an idiot,” Sitara pointed up at him, “It’s extremely obvious that you disappeared the second Marcus got a boyfriend.”

‘X’s stayed over his eyes, leaving his emotions a mystery to Sitara, “What?”

“Don’t play dumb, Wrench, I know you’re not stupid either. I don’t know if you thought you were being subtle but all you ever did has find every single excuse to be in physical contact with Marcus and practically beg for his approval.”

‘X’s switched to ‘\ /’ as he got defensive, “Good to know you think I’m a pathetic loser, Sitara. Appreciate it.”

Turning around, he was completely ready to stomp away if not for Sitara holding onto his wrist, “Look, I wasn’t trying to insult you or anything. I’m just saying. You just pretty obviously have a thing for Marcus.”

He didn’t really answer that, just turning his head away. When she tried to sidestep and get a look at what emoticon was on the mask he just used his height to his advantage by looking straight up.

Wrench’s head jerked down as she lightly socked him in the stomach. For a split second she thought she saw a ‘^ ^’ before it flickered to a ‘> <’ but that didn’t make any sense. She shook it off as he stared at her with a blank set of ‘X’s.

“That’s none of your business,” Wrench simply said, “Now that I’ve shown you I’m alive like Marcus told me to I’m going to go.”

Sitara hung onto his sleeve though, not letting him go, “So you’re talking to Marcus at least?”

“Of course I am, he’s my best friend,” Wrench said, tilting his head again.

Frequently, Sitara found Wrench’s insistence on constantly wearing a mask vexing. Right now she was feeling that more than ever as she stared him down, trying to scrutinize what he was thinking behind that mask.

But all she got were two brightly glowing ‘X’s in return.

“Are you really okay with Marcus having a boyfriend?”

“Yeah. Can I go now?”

Sitara didn't let go though as she continued to speak, “I invited Reggie to come visit the Hackerspace, are you going to be here anytime this week? I'd feel better if I saw you interact normal with them.”

Wrench shook his head though with a wink, “Nah, working on a big, secret project. I'm gonna be pretty scarce for the next few months.”

This time he committed to escaping Sitara's grasp, snatching some tools off his bench, disappearing back up the stairs and leaving her feeling no more comforted than she was before he showed up.

- - -

A few days later Wrench stood at the top of those stairs again.

He was beginning to wonder if there was an end to the itchy, animal-themed sweaters Marcus owned.

This one was covered with kittens. He felt like an ass in it but frankly he always felt like an ass whenever he donned any of the Reggie disguise. But the kittens weren't helping.

Neither was the fact Wrench was certain this was going to crash and burn right here and now and he'd be stuck out maskless surrounded by people who actually know him. It was bad enough strangers could see him but at least they'd just forget.

That was something he hadn't considered when he'd happily gone along with the Reggie plan. Sitara is very far from stupid and she's going to figure it out eventually. If they'd just owned up to it when she'd first seen him sleeping by Marcus it would be just her knowing what he looked like. Eventually, now all of them would.

Of course, that could literally be what happens today. There was every possibility he was going to walk down those stairs and Josh would immediately out him as Wrench.

With hesitation he followed after Marcus, holding on tightly to his hand as he cautiously crept after him.

The table in the middle of the room was an array of snacks and drinks. Sitara was already walking over to greet them, Josh staring blankly at them. Ray seemed largely disinterested in the whole affair, barely looking up from his laptop to wave at them.

Hand on Reggie and Marcus's shoulders, Sitara steered them towards the very small gathering, “I was starting to think you guys weren't going to show up.”

“You know I'm always fashionably late,” Marcus replied, already scooping a handful of chips to munch on.

“Ray, put your laptop away,” Sitara said, tapping on it.

“I'm just finishin' something then leavin' ,” Ray protested, typing faster, “Leave you kids alone.”

Sitara crossed her arms, “First Wrench, now you?”

“He's got shit to do, I got shit to do,” Ray replied, looking up at Reggie and giving him a

noncommittal once over, “Nothing against you, kid. If Marcus likes you you’re alright in my books.”

“Thanks...” Reggie mumbled. Extra uncomfortable as Sitara addressed the man currently staring him down with a stare that didn’t betray a single one of his emotions.

“Anyways, yeah, that’s Ray,” she waved away the old man before pointing at their extremely focused friend, “And this here is Josh. I’m sure Marcus has told you all about him.”

Of course, Wrench knew a lot about Josh but Marcus had never needed to tell him anything. Obviously. Hell, Wrench has known Josh longer than Marcus has.

And right now, as Wrench shook hands with Josh, he felt like his disguise was shittier than ever.

Josh was never a creature of subtlety even though he was clearly trying very hard to be. His grip on Wrench’s hand was inescapable, twisting oddly.

It was also going on significantly longer than a handshake is supposed to.

Sitara was the one who eventually grabbed Josh’s wrist and made him let go.

“Alright, that’s enough. Now let’s get this extremely mild, nerdy party started,” Sitara said with a smile, pulling out a bunch of board games they usually kept stored under the table.

The rest of the night passed amicably, except for the fact Josh was clearly staring pointedly at Reggie the entire night. Not in a hostile way but clearly focusing very hard on something. Being quiet even by his standards as Sitara cut out the middleman by describing everything she’d been told about Reggie ever.

Frankly, it was incredibly helpful as Wrench had already forgotten some details he’d made up. He didn’t talk much and nobody seemed to notice or care that the conversation was nearly one hundred percent dominated Sitara, Marcus and Ray.

Speaking of Ray, his promise to finish his work and go had faded quickly. By a game or two in, he’d completely put his laptop away and was boisterously insisting ‘he’d show these kids how it’s done.’

And honestly? He did. The man’s a wizard at board games.

But eventually things wound down.

Wrench hadn’t unwound a bit, even as the others did. Him and Josh were locked in some weird stand off, both barely speaking.

It only made Wrench more uncomfortable as Josh insisted that he, Reggie and Marcus could clean up themselves. Watching Sitara bounce up the stairs with Ray lumbering after her increased the awkwardness.

Josh watched them like a hawk, waiting until there was the sound of the door locking behind them before turning his head back down and addressing them, “Why are we pretending Wrench isn’t Wrench?”

“Tch, what are y-” Marcus started, trying to defend their ruse.

Josh cut him off immediately, “No, that’s Wrench.”

Marcus tried not to smile and failed immediately, “Jesus, Josh, how the hell did you figure it out so quickly?”

“Voice. Height. Posture. I guessed immediately, checked for tattoos to confirm,” Josh explained calm before grabbing Wrench hand again, twisting it a bit like before to show a small strip of skin showing between the sweater and the knitted fingerless gloves. Telltale black lines running over the pale exposed wrist.

“Joshlock Holmes over here,” Marcus laughed, “Anything else?”

“Those are your clothes, Marcus. You posted a picture of you wearing them to that fashion blog you have.”

Wrench put a hand on Marcus’s chest, talking for the first time since Sitara and Ray had left, “Wait, since when do you have a fashion blog?”

“I- that- look, no one was supposed to find that blog,” Marcus stuttered, trying to figure out how Josh had managed to come across a blog not connected by name or face to him. The whole thing was nothing but neck down shots of outfits.

“No, no, I need a link. Apparently you’ve been hiding a secret blog from me.”

Fumbling with his phone for a second Marcus flashed the page on it to Wrench, “Look, just-”

He didn’t get to protest anymore as his boyfriend snatched the phone out of his hand to scroll through the blog. It shut him up again though as he walked away with it to prevent Marcus taking it back.

Accepting his phones disappearance, Marcus turned back to Josh, “Are you going to tell Sitara?”

“Not necessarily,” Josh replied then repeated himself, “But why are we pretending Wrench isn’t Wrench?”

Marcus quickly ran over the situation to Josh while Wrench sat in the distance fiddling with the stolen phone.

Josh was quiet, mulling it over for a second before speaking, “So it’s a prank.”

Marcus nodded, “Yeah, pretty much.”

As it always was, Josh’s laugh as abrupt and subdued.

“So you’re gonna play along, right?” Marcus smiled, very lightly punching Josh’s arm.

“Sure. It won’t be hard. I’ve been told I have an amazing poker face.”

Josh gestured at his almost always perfectly neutral face. Smiling, Marcus patted him on the shoulder, “Well, they’re not wrong. We need to take you to a casino some time, teach you to count cards. Hell, all five of us can do it. We’ll win every round.”

As that, Marcus and Josh said their goodbyes. Josh disappeared up the stairs, leaving them to finish cleaning up by themselves.

Marcus sidled up to Wrench, curled up on the couch with his pilfered prize, “Can I have my phone back now?”

“I’m not done looking at all this,” Wrench said, rolling away to guard Marcus’s phone, “You take a lot of pictures of yourself.”

“They don’t even have my face in them, they’re not that interesting.”

“I like ‘em and you write cute little things in the comments,” Wrench smiled, pulling the phone away from Marcus’s outstretched hand, “And I can never get enough of you and apparently you’ve been hiding something from me. Why keep it a secret?”

“It’s dorky, right?” Marcus admitted, still trying to recover his stolen phone, “Or self absorbed? I don’t know, gimme my phone back.”

Wrench, ever a weasel of a human, twisted and squirmed away as Marcus tried to grab him around the waist. Gleefully, he nearly sang, “You took pictures in my clothes too?”

“Wrench! Give it back!” Marcus yelled, nearly crawling over him to grab at it.

“No, no, no! I love it!” Wrench said, already texting himself the pictures as he managed to backflip off the couch to freedom, “You should wear my clothes more often. Mrow!”

Marcus gave up, lying on the couch in defeat as he watched Wrench fiddle around with the phone. He sighed as he heard Wrench’s phone go off in his pocket, “You sent yourself the pictures?”

“And the link!” Wrench smiled, handing the phone back, “If you stop updating it now you’ll make me sad so, like, don’t.”

“Fine, you know all my secrets now. Happy?”

“Extremely.”

Art Show

Chapter Summary

Sitara invites Marcus and Wrench to her latest art show.

“Hey, Reggie. Guess who wants to see you again?”

It had only been a few days, making this the second time in a week Sitara reached out to them.

The look Wrench gave him almost made Marcus immediately want to turn down their friend’s offer. Just sheer exhaustion from continually having to go out maskless. Marcus ponied up pretty quickly though.

“You know, most people have to deal with things they don’t like on a daily basis. You’re pretty lucky you don’t usually.”

“I don’t like change,” Wrench conceded as he curled around a pillow defensively. He was getting very, very tired of getting bugged about going out while in the safety of his own home. Er, his boyfriend’s home that he’s kinda commandeered.

He seemed to cheer up immediately as Marcus curled up against him on the couch, “I know, I know. To be fair, I don’t think we’re going to be able to keep this up too much longer.”

“How come?” Wrench said, abandoning his pillow to roll over to cuddle up to him better.

“Well, either Sitara finds out or, I mean, we’ve gotta tell her eventually right?”

“We do?” Wrench laughed, “I thought we were just gonna keep this up until Sitara’s on her deathbed. Then we tell her on her dying breath that Reggie has been Wrench all along.”

“C’mon, like you’re gonna wanna stick with this that long. You’re already getting tired of it.”

Wrench nodded, having to concede that, “I... like the prank but yeah... being Reggie is... tiring.”

“Exactly, I say we tell her at the month mark if she doesn’t figure it out by then.”

“Absolutely,” Wrench nodded into Marcus’s chest, “And then I’m never wearing your clothes ever again. Except maybe your jacket if it’s cold.”

“Speaking of wearing each other’s clothes...”

“Yeah?”

“Last week you brought up wanting me to wear your clothes more.”

Wrench snickered, “What? Now you want to steal my style?”

“No, It’s just...” Marcus tried to find a non-weird way to propose this but he was coming up empty, “I’ve always been curious about-”

Wrench pushed himself back to stare accusingly at Marcus, “Oh my god, you want to wear my mask.”

“Look! Who wouldn’t wanna try it on? The only thing keeping Sitara or Josh or Ray from asking is they aren’t banging you and feel like they don’t have the right to.”

Dramatically rolling onto his back Wrench faked lamenting, “I knew it, you’re only with me to get at my mask. I should have seen this coming.”

“You are the biggest drama queen I’ve ever met in my life.”

“It’s so personal, I don’t ask you to wear your underwear.”

“No, you don’t ask, you just do it. You’re literally wearing a pair of my boxers right now.”

“I am n-” Wrench said before looking down at the emoji covered shorts on his scrawny ass, “Actually, I plead the fifth.”

“Exactly,” Marcus said, pushing himself up, “Pretty please?”

Wrench cackled, scooting over to the edge of the bed and grabbing his mask off the side table. Handing it to Marcus with a smile, “Honestly, all joking aside, I’m surprised you didn’t ask sooner.”

“Didn’t wanna make it awkward, you know?” Marcus said, lifting the mask to his face and trying to figure out the clasps, “It IS something you keep strapped to your skull literally any time you leave the house. Pretty personal.”

Reaching around Marcus’s head, Wrench affixed the mask with practiced ease, “Yeah, honestly if anyone else asked I’d be offended. Kinda. Either way I wouldn’t let them. Anyways, how’s it treating you?”

Marcus adjusted it, jumping as the mask turned on and started cycling through the emoticons. He’d never really thought about how those looked from the other side and the answer was very jarring and distracting.

“I can’t see and it’s hard to breathe,” Marcus replied, trying to make it more comfortable but still found it digging into the side of his jaw. Clearly made for a thinner face.

“Yeah that sounds about right,” Wrench nodded.

“How do the-” Marcus started but his question was immediately answered as he started making faces. Flashes of white further distorting his very limited view as the mask accommodated.

“It’s facial recognition tech, you don’t really have to think about it.”

Eager to get it back off, Marcus managed to get it off fairly quickly after a brief struggle. Handing it back to Wrench he shook his head, “Yeah, I’ll, uh, leave the whole mask schtick to you. Not a fan.”

“What? Not a fan of breathing out of tiny holes and having no peripheral vision?”

“How do you stand wearing that all the time, dude?”

“I got used to it a long, long time ago. Plus it’s, you know, made to fit me so it’s slightly more comfortable for me than it would be for anyone else.”

Marcus carefully approached a subject he'd avoided until now, "Why... why do you? I mean, it's not just the birthmark, is it?"

Wrench was quiet for a bit, staring down at his mask before replying, "I... won't pretend that's not a big part of it. You can only be asked 'what happened to your face?' so many times before you want to make sure no one ever asks you that again."

"And?" Marcus asked, cautiously.

"It's easier to talk to people. And stuff. Also, I don't want to be recognized."

"If you're looking not to be recognized, maybe a very distinct mask and the world's loudest outfit isn't the way to go."

"Face recognized, not... general... me... recognized?"

"Well if you're getting recognized either way, does it matter if it's your face or not?"

Wrench was quiet for long enough that Marcus was regretting asking him. Right before Marcus could take his question back, Wrench answered, "Remember how somewhere out there I've got an abusive drug addict dad? I'd rather he didn't find me again."

"Do you think he's trying?"

"Hell no. But if he thought he could get something out of it? He would. And he'd think he could get something out of a high ranking member of Dedsec. So now I'm just Wrench not--"

He cut himself off, barely dodging saying his old name.

Marcus whined, "Oh come on, man! I really don't get to know your birth name? I'll tell you mine."

"I already know it, you told me when you were drunk. It's Marcia."

"Damn it," Marcus swore, "That was my only leverage."

Again, Wrench held out his left hand with the ring finger sticking out, "No it's not!"

"Someday I'm gonna call your bluff with that. What're you gonna do then?"

"Smile, put the ring on, tell you my name, then we get married and have two-point-five kids and a dog."

"You hate dogs, Wrench."

"Hate kids too."

Even though he didn't like it, Wrench was vaguely getting more comfortable being out maskless. Given the choice he wouldn't be but he wasn't paralyzed as Marcus led him through the gallery.

It wasn't hard to find Sitara's place in the art show. While most of the exhibits were more sterile and framed, she'd completely plastered her pieces over the white wall they'd been given. Cheap TV screens also adorned the tables and chairs she'd been given, playing her videos.

Marcus leaned in to Wrench, "You know, the feds gotta be pretty shit at their jobs if they can't

find us. Yeah, I may not be subtle but Sitara's on a whole new level."

Given Wrench could see Sitara with a backdrop twice or thrice her size with 'Dedsec' loudly splashed across it this was obvious. He snickered, leaning in even closer, "If they were even mildly competent she'd be the first in cuffs."

They were quickly flagged down by her, smiling as she approached them. Immediately she tugged on Marcus's sleeve, clearly wearing one of her jackets, "I like that you dressed for the occasion. It's like having a walking display with you sometimes. Love that."

"Even got Reggie all dolled up in your duds," Marcus smiled, nodding towards Wrench.

Honestly? This outfit was the closest Wrench had ever been to comfortable in his Reggie disguise. Instead of an animal themed sweater, he got to wear a t-shirt with one of Sitara's skeleton designs on it. Long sleeves underneath, sure, and he still had to wear a scarf and fingerless gloves but it was much closer to what he'd willingly wear.

"Hey, if you ever want more, hit me up," she said, smiling and lightly punching Wrench on the arm, "I've always got a lot of extras lying around."

Wrench just smiled awkwardly in response, managing to nearly stutter out, "That'd be cool."

But before they could go any further, Marcus's phone went off in his pocket. Pausing to pull it out he swore. Backing towards the exit, "Hey, so Josh says there's some security breach issues. Nothing major but he needs a hand."

Instinctually trying to follow Marcus, Reggie started to leave too. A hand grabbing his wrist stopped him.

"You go help Josh but why not have Reggie stay?" Sitara suggested.

A look best described as mild terror crossed Wrench's face. Marcus couldn't help but feel a bit bad but he honestly couldn't think of a good excuse to keep Wrench by his side.

"Yeah, uh, Reggie you can stay with Sitara. I'll be back in a bit," Marcus said, continuing as he tried to placate Wrench who looked ready to run, "I'll come back as fast as I can, okay?"

"Don't worry about it, just get done what you need to get done," Sitara replied, assuming his assurances he would be back were about not missing her show.

Wrench tensed up even more as Marcus disappeared in the crowd. The fact this art show was outdoors wasn't helping Wrench's instinct to start running away, they were pretty close to a forest he could just disappear in it. Really the only thing stopping him was Sitara wrapping herself around his arm.

"I've got a couple members of Dedsec manning my stall, wanna look around?"

Tersely, Wrench nodded for lack of a better response.

He let himself be led around by the arm through the show, flinching at people bumping into him. Despite being a little obtuse when it comes to others, Sitara noticed his discomfort and tried to avoid the bigger crowds of people migrating from open air booth to open air booth.

"Have you ever gone to an art show before?" Sitara asked.

“No,” Wrench answered. This was actually true, he’d never gone to one of Sitara’s shows before even as himself. Although she invited him often.

As if she was psychic she started speaking about that topic, “Yeah, not a lot of people have. I mean, most of my friends don’t even come to my shows.”

“That sucks...” Wrench mumbled, avoiding eye contact as she looked up at him, “Maybe they’re just busy.”

“Well... Marcus is. I don’t really blame Marcus for not being able to come very often. He tries to come when he can but everyone in Dedsec really relies on him to help. Also, he forgets a lot because he’s usually got too much on his mind.”

Wrench nodded, “Yeah, even when we’re at home Marcus is always answering messages and dealing with Dedsec business.”

Sitara’s ears perked up at that, repeating and questioning him, “When WE’RE at home? Do you live with Marcus?”

Caught up in his mistake, Wrench immediately spat out the truth before he could stop and think that that’s maybe not a great idea, “Yeah, we live together. Since like a week ago.”

“Really? Haven’t you only been dating for like... a couple months or something?”

Panicking, Wrench just continued to spit out the truth, “I got kicked out of my apartment and he offered for me to stay.”

Exercising some tact, Sitara didn’t probe into why Reggie apparently can’t keep an apartment, “Oh, okay, yeah, Marcus doesn’t seem like the type to let his significant other end up out on the street. Or, well, you said you have rich parents I guess you just would have had to go back and live with them?”

“Yeah and I don’t want to leave San Francisco.”

It got a bit quiet and they just looked around at the art around them. Honestly? A lot of it was pretentious bullshit.

Looking at it, Wrench remembered why he always turned down Sitara’s invitations. He was literally looking at an upturned can of spaghetti-o’s on a table. There were ants on it. Man, fuck modern art.

Sitara continued on her previous thread, “Josh comes to these sometimes but I don’t think he really gets it. But he comes if I ask. I kinda worry that I’m steamrolling him into it. Ray comes more than the others but that’s because he’s IN the shows with me sometimes.”

Not knowing what to say, Wrench nodded. But then it turned to him. Not “Reggie” him, actual him.

“And Wrench has never once said yes. I don’t know why. It’s not like he’s really doing anything when I ask half the time. One time he literally was just lying on the couch, watching a movie I know he’s seen hundreds of times. I even offered to drive him but he still said no.”

“Oh that...” Wrench said, immediately feeling guilty. He remembered that night. Literally the only reason he’d said no is he genuinely didn’t want to go to the art show. He didn’t even have an excuse. He’d just said no. He didn’t even know how to end his sentence this time, stumbling

through something generic, “That’s not cool.”

‘Wrench just... doesn’t care. About a lot of things. He doesn’t let people in and doesn’t try to get into other people’s lives either.’

None of this helped to make Wrench feel any better. If there’s a word for feeling scared, guilty, and insulted all at once he didn’t know it but he felt like he was going to throw up. His Reggie get up felt even more restrictive and uncomfortable than ever.

“You really don’t like him do you?” he said through the lump in his throat.

“Of course I like him, he’s one of my best friends. Why would I keep inviting him to these things if he wasn’t? And like... fuck, I wish he WOULD come fucking look at that,” Sitara said, pointing at what appeared to be shattered jolly ranchers badly rearranged into the form of a sad clown, “I want him to come and make fun of dumb shit with me but he won’t. He’s peak manchild. Or... well honestly he could be a literal child I have no idea how old he is. He could be a teenager. Okay, that’s a weird thought. God, I hope we aren’t giving a teenager guns and letting him commit arson.”

“Marcus said Wrench was the oldest in Dedsec.”

“Oh fuck, he wasn’t including Ray was he? I really don’t think I could handle Wrench being in his fifties or sixties under there. Although, if he is honestly he’s impressively spry and youthful..”

“No, no, just like... the young ones.”

Sitara considered that, “Okay that’s not as bad as a teenager or a grandpa but he’s older than me? That’s still weird. God, do you have any idea how weird it is to be friends with someone for years and know nothing about them? And, well, while we’re on the subject do you... do you really get along with Wrench?”

It was very jarring for Wrench to carry out this conversation again but this as Reggie. Unsure and desperately wishing Marcus would come back, “Yes, why do you ask?”

Sitara got quiet. She wasn’t about to spew out ‘hey yeah so your boyfriend’s best friend is in love with him and I’m worried he’s unraveling because you’re together.’ Sighing she just shrugged, “He’s just acting weird and he kind of relies on Marcus and now he’s... look I’m not blaming you or anything but... fuck I’ve dug myself a hole I can’t pull myself out of haven’t I?”

Wrench had already been on the verge of completely shutting down, this being the final straw. Between the pressure of pretending to be Reggie, not having Marcus, dealing with Sitara thinking he’s two different people, being surrounded by a crowd, being maskless.

Abruptly pulling away from Sitara and fumbling his phone out of his pocket, Wrench nearly dropped it as he tried to turn it on.

“I, uh, shit I have to get home. I was supposed to... to send my mom h-her birthday gift.”

Wrench didn’t even wait for Sitara to reply before taking off, nearly taking out a hipster covered in macaroni and cheese pretending to be an obscene statue over in the process.

Sitara sighed and started wandering towards the food area, “Well good job, Sitara. You just scared away your friend’s boyfriend in an absolute panic because you’re being paranoid. Good job. Up top. The bar here better have stronger beer than last time.”

Wrench

Chapter Summary

Frustrated and upset with the stress of being Reggie, Wrench cracks a little.

Marcus takes him on a nice date to get him to calm down.

Chapter Notes

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

By the time Marcus managed to make his way back to the art show things had already gone downhill.

Marcus eventually found Sitara sitting on the ground behind her booth, drunk. Despite her inebriation she managed to sputter out that Reggie had left in a panic about an hour ago. She also tried to apologize but honestly had gotten herself pretty wasted.

Mercifully, it wasn't hard to find Wrench considering all he'd done was go home.

There was also a trail of Reggie clothes thrown around wildly, making finding Wrench even easier. Curled up in a ball on their bed, cocooned in blankets.

Although Wrench had aggressively abandoned his Reggie get up he'd still immediately changed into other clothes of Marcus's. He much preferred one of his beat up band shirts and yet another pair of borrowed boxers to the obnoxious hipster getup.

But much more notably, despite being home he was wearing his mask. Two 'Z's glowed in the dark of the room to let Marcus know he'd managed to pass out like that.

Carefully, Marcus sat on the bed next to him and jostled him lightly, "Wrench?"

Nothing. Oh right, his boyfriend sleeps like a goddamn corpse.

Shaking him harder, Marcus borderline shouted at him, "Yo Wrench, get up!"

'Z's turned to a bright set of 'o o' as Wrench complied, looking around confused. Probably by the fact he wasn't used to waking up with his mask on, at least not anymore.

"Fuck, how long have I been out?"

It hit Marcus that there were a lot of empty beer bottles around the bed. Suddenly, it made a lot more sense that Wrench had managed to fall asleep with leather and spikes over his face.

"Wrench, hey, what happened? First I find Sitara drunk, now I find you drunk."

"I'm done," Wrench said, adjusting his mask before pulling the blankets over his head.

Picking up the edge and looking down at him, Marcus asked, "What?"

"No more Reggie," Wrench mumbled, bundling himself more.

“Alright, that’s fine,” Marcus said, sliding off the bed to change into pajamas himself, “I’m gonna get comfy, you’re gonna take off your mask so you can get comfy too, we’re gonna cuddle then for the love of god someone is going to tell me what happened. And that someone is you.”

There was a clunk as Wrench set the mask on the side table, peeking out to watch Marcus change, “Things went to hell, dude.”

Of course Wrench would stick his head out to peep. Smirking, Marcus started changing slower. Maybe that would cheer Wrench up. He spoke while his boyfriend leered happily at him, “Elaborate please?”

“Well, first, you left your batshit crazy boyfriend alone in a large crowd in a disguise with your oblivious friend.”

“Way to make me sound like an ass in this.”

“Look, Marcus, you’re the heroic protagonist twenty-four-seven. Just play the bad guy for one whole sentence. Anyways, you left me, your poor defenseless light of your life-”

There was a muffled scream as Marcus hopped on the bed with cocoon Wrench, putting him in a headlock. Now comfortably clothed in a skull t-shirt and red boxers with white stars, both decidedly not his own. After a few minutes of half hearted wrestling they managed to get the blanket around the both of them, Wrench managing to have crawled his bony ass onto Marcus’s lap.

“You gonna stop being a dick, now?” Marcus asked.

“Mm-hmm,” Wrench mumbled, immediately content, “But after you left she just... kept talking about me. Actual me.”

“Yeah?” Marcus mumbled, rubbing his back a little.

“I’m a shitty friend, aren’t I?”

Marcus was quiet for long enough for Wrench to have an idea of his answer. Sighing, he answered, “You could... do things better. Sometimes. You’ve always been good with me but you can just... not think about others sometimes. Unless you’re really intent on making them like you.”

In reply, Wrench just shoved his face further into Marcus’s shoulder.

“If it upsets you, I mean, you can take being Reggie as a learning experience?” Marcus said, “There’s nothing wrong with knowing you’ve made mistakes and then fixing ‘em. This Reggie prank is gonna be ending, maybe just try and get to know Sitara better as yourself?”

“Yeah I just... it kept coming up and then she starts asking if ‘Reggie’ gets along with ‘Wrench’ and I don’t know I just panicked and I ran away.”

Marcus laughed, “Handled that real well.”

“I’m a nearly thirty year old man who wears a fucking animated emoticon mask every second I’m outside my house, does that sound like the description of someone who handles things well?!”

“How about tomorrow, we go out-”

“I don’t want to be Regg-”

“Let me finish! As yourself. Just the two of us. There’s a food festival in town tomorrow, we can have a nice time, walk around, eat ourselves sick, then spend a romantic evening together at home. Watch some movies. Get cheap delivery Chinese if we’re still hungry.”

“That sounds great,” Wrench smiled, pushing Marcus onto his back and curled up against his side, “But right now, I’m going the fuck to sleep and you are too ‘cause I don’t want to sleep alone.”

“Perfect,” Marcus said, expending some effort as he tried to flick off the light with a grown man hanging off him like a tired sloth.

- - -

Seeing Wrench out in the sunlight without his Reggie get up was like night and day. From meek and subdued to bouncing around like an excited child.

The festival was held at night, which Wrench always seemed to prefer anyways. Decently lit, it wasn’t hard to walk around though and with a much smaller crowd than Marcus had expected. Wrench still pressed himself tightly to his boyfriend’s side anyways.

Marcus just smiled and let himself be dragged around by the hand from food stall to food stall. Excitedly trying everything from typical american fare to delicious foreign food to combinations of the two to the downright bizarre.

Despite the mask keeping him calm, it was ungainly for Wrench to hold the mask up to shove little pieces of food up there.

The sight of Wrench happy again made Marcus smile though. Especially as he cheerfully shared what little food he wasn’t cramming under his mask, feeding it to Marcus as he flashed ‘<3’s at him.

Even prior to their whole Reggie ruse, Marcus and Wrench really hadn’t gone on anything resembling a real date. Considering their relationship had started basically as ‘my best friend keeps sleeping over oops we’re kissing now’ and just stayed private like that. Content to be alone. Hell, they’d stayed like that for months before this whole elaborate prank had gone on.

After his was all over, Marcus figured it’d be nice to go on some more normal dates like this. Maybe some cliché ones. Take his overeager boyfriend to see a shitty movie. Eat mediocre pasta from a chain restaurant. Picnic on the beach where he’ll have to fist fight seagulls just to eat.

Marcus was brought back to the present by the way of some obnoxiously hipster burger being shoved in his face.

“Eat,” Wrench ordered with a bright ‘^^’ beaming down at him.

Complying, Marcus took a big bite. Despite the ridiculously pretentious ingredients he had to admit it was delicious. Nodding, he watched Wrench try to awkwardly maneuver the burger under his mask with very limited success.

He held it up to Marcus again, “Hey, I can’t get something this big past my mask. Take a bite then spit it into my mouth like a baby bird.”

“Fucking hell, Wrench, that’s the worst thing anyone has ever said to me ever in my life.”

“I’m hungry, are you gonna let me starve?”

“Use your hands, you’re not a fucking animal,” Marcus laughed.

Wrench continued to struggle with his food, growing increasingly frustrated. Abruptly, Wrench put it back in the wrapper and grabbed Marcus’s hand to drag him to one of the various seating areas.

The efficiency with which Wrench found the least populated one was amazing. Slamming himself down he spread out the food on the table and gestured for Marcus to join him. As he sat, he was surprised to see Wrench reach up and unlatch his mask. Setting it down on the table with a dull thunk.

“Wrench! Growing as a person? Holy crap,” Marcus marvelled, in shock as he was handed half the hamburger.

With gusto, Wrench bit into his half. Barely chewing, he swallowed just enough to talk, “You were right. Earlier. Being Reggie can be a learning experience. For example, I’ve learned how much I goddamn hate eating with my mask on.”

“Well I take it you already knew that-”

“But now I just... fuck it, I ate without it in public and I didn’t die. I can do it.”

“I’m proud of you,” Marcus said, opting not to bring up that Wrench had found some place where no one could see them anyways and that his hoodie was still pulled low over his face.

Chewing slowly, Wrench eventually offered up more, “And just... I know you’d rather I didn’t wear the mask on dates and... stuff...”

Marcus reached out and grabbed one of Wrench’s hands, “I also told you that you don’t have to do that for me.”

“Well... what if I want to? Maybe I wanna be better. For like, you. And stuff.”

This moment was exactly one of the reasons Marcus prefers the mask to stay off. Wrench was trying to instinctively cover his now bright red face with his free hand, failing to cover the nervous smile as he looked over his shoulder at nothing.

Marcus leaned over the small, rickety table and planted a kiss on Wrench’s forehead, “I think that’s the sweetest thing anyone’s ever said to me.”

This only made Wrench even more red faced as he put his head down on the table, curling his free arm around his head as Marcus also kissed his trapped hand.

Eventually, Wench sat back up and they finished their burgers. Marcus being sent back to bring back food from other stalls. Several times. He always wondered where the hell Wrench put it because no matter how much he’d eat he always stayed rail thin.

To his surprise, Wrench continued to hold his mask at his side as Marcus dragging him towards the beach.

Maybe not too much surprise considering there was absolutely nobody out here. Everyone was a few hundred feet away, gorging themselves on all the food at the festival.

Unlike the event, the beach was only lit by the full moon. It was still bright enough for them to see though, as they walked down the quiet beach together.

“We should walk around at night more,” Marcus said, “No one’s around, just how you like it.”

“Plus maybe we can start a rumor I’m a vampire!” Wrench smiled, “How kick ass would that be?”

“I dunno, I think it would kind of-”

“Marcus, no!”

“Suck.”

Despite his protest, Wrench laughed, “No but seriously, I can be your Edward.”

“You’re going to bring the series-that-shall-not-be-named into this? Can’t you at least be Lestat in this weird vampire fantasy you’ve constructed?”

“You think I’m a Lestat?”

“Well you sure as hell ain’t a Louis.”

“And who do you think you are?”

Marcus pointed, “I’m a Lem. Not gonna be one of you pasty, bloodsmeared motherfuckers.”

“Okay, alright, you’ve displayed to me that you clearly know too many vampire characters and now I’m entirely uncomfortable with being your sexy vampire boyfriend.”

“Oh please, not only was that only four characters but if I asked you to indulge a vampire fetish you’d be on my neck in a heartbeat and you know it. Plastic fangs and all. You’re nothing if not eager to please.”

Despite seeing it coming, Marcus didn’t dodge fast enough to get away from Wrench lunging at him and biting his neck. Announcing loudly in a bad vampire accent, “I want to suck your dick!!”

Pushing him off through a fit of laughter, Marcus managed to choke out, “C’mon man, I don’t want to find out if I DO secretly have a vampire fetish in public. I don’t want to learn things about myself this way.”

“So apparently you’re open to the idea?”

“Man, do you want me to throw you in the water?”

Wrench relented but again draped himself across his boyfriend’s shoulders as they continued to walk, “I just have a Marcus fetish.”

“No, you’re into weird shit and I firsthand know it. Also having a ‘Marcus fetish’ sounds like it’d consist more of, like, what someone who doesn’t know me thinks I am. Just sneaking in through their window, face mask pulled up, thunderball in hand, on the prowl for more than just illegal data downloads and corporate takedowns.”

Marcus was nearly clotheslined as Wrench suddenly stopped, dead in his tracks. Before he could even ask what the fuck he knew with just one glance at Wrench’s barely visible face. Obviously bright red even in the moonlight, a somewhat creepy smile plastered across his mouth.

“Oh my god, Wrench, don’t even-”

“Look, I don’t ask for much but if you don’t do that for me you’re gonna break my heart.”

Punching him in the chest, Marcus tried to conceal the smile on his face, “Oh yeah, that won’t end in the neighbors calling the police.”

“You can just lurk in from the other room, doesn’t have to be a window! I can suspend disbelief for that.”

Marcus sighed, “You’re really set on this now, aren’t you? Fine.”

“I sure am. Also your thunderball would make the perfect ball gag.”

“Goddamn it, Wrench,” Marcus laughed, “Fine, fine, I’ll let you get your weird ass ‘Marcus kink’ fantasy.”

“Score!” Wrench yelled, fist pumping.

Settling down, they continued to walk quietly along the moonlit beach for a little while longer. It really was a beautiful night out, not too hot, not too cold. Absolutely no one else wandering around, too distracted by the event slowly disappearing in the distance.

Breaking the silence, Marcus bumped against Wrench’s hip with a smile, “So, anyways, on a less perverted note. If you’re gonna be walking around without your mask sometimes. You know. Opening up a little...”

“That sounds like an infinitely more perverted note but yeah?” Wrench asked.

“And you want to do things to make me happy...”

“... yeah? Still sounds like we’re heading back into pervert land. Not complaining.”

“Soooo, what’s your birth name?”

He laughed as Wrench shoved at him, “C’mon, man, are you ever going to give up on that? You know my conditions!”

Wrench barely had time to hold up his hand, ring finger extended before Marcus quickly grabbed his hand. Quickly, with practice, snatching something from his jacket pocket and putting it on Wrench’s bony finger. For a second, it left Wrench dazed and confused as to what was happening until he got a look at the black metal encircling his finger, three spiked diamonds sticking out from it.

Staring at it dumbly for a second, Marcus was the one to break the spell with a smirk on his face, “I told you I was gonna call your bluff one of these times. Tell me your fucking birth name now.”

Stuttering and stumbling over a few failed sentences as he stared at the engagement ring on his finger, Wrench eventually managed an incredulous, “What? Seriously?!”

“Yeah, dude, I don’t go and get custom made rings for a joke,” Marcus smiled, patting Wrench’s shoulder.

As it sunk in Wrench jumped away from Marcus, bouncing up and down and brandishing it at him, “No way, dude! Fuck man, if you were a cop and I were a prostitute that move would have been entrapment!”

“Is that a yes, then?” Marcus asked.

“Fuck yeah it’s a yes!” Wrench yelled, nearly tackling his now fiancé to the ground in a vice grip

stranglehold of a hug.

Hugging him back tightly around the waist, "I love you, man."

"I love you, too," Wrench said, muffled by his face crammed into the crook of Marcus's neck.

"Now what's your fucking birth name?"

- - -

After Wrench finally leaned in and divulged his secret, they walked back and had a brief bike ride home. Now Marcus and Wrench were sauntering together side-by-side. Marcus's arm over Wrench's shoulders, Wrench's arm around Marcus's waist.

Wrench had long since put his mask back on, '^ ^' glowing brightly on his face as he admired the ring on his finger happily.

Blissfully unaware, they got within a remarkably close distance to their front door before realizing there was someone there.

Sitara was barely lit by the dim light, watching them with some surprise, "Hey, uh, Marcus. I came to apologize to Reggie. I'm... sure he told you what happened. I knocked but I don't think he's home and... neither were you. I figured I'd wait a while."

Awkwardly she just kinda gestured towards the door with her phone, which she'd been previously fiddling around with. As if she was trying to justify standing there.

Marcus figured this moment was as good as any to tell Sitara, since Wrench didn't want to keep up the ruse anymore. But before he could fess up, Wrench interrupted him, "Reggie had to visit his family real quick, something about his mom's birthday."

Always quick on his feet, Marcus played along, "Yeah and I've gotten used to having someone to talk to at night. Figured me and Wrench could hang out like old times."

Although Sitara was relieved to Marcus and Wrench getting along, she still had a plan in mind to make sure Wrench and Reggie really were friends. But for right now she just pushed herself up to get ready to go, "Alright, I'll get out of your hair but Reggie's not... mad at me, is he?"

"Nah, he's fine. Just got too nervous. He doesn't like crowds and he especially doesn't like crowds without me."

"I'll still apologize when he comes back, text me when he is?"

"Sure, sure, it'll probably be a week or something."

Patting him on the shoulder as she passed, Sitara said her goodbyes and started walking away.

Sitara stole a glance over her shoulder though, noticing Wrench was going in with Marcus. Weird. It was pretty late. Maybe they were going to watch a movie? Wrench seems to be a night owl.

Something seemed off though, something about the way those two had been nearly hanging off each other. It was almost... too affectionate.

Shrugging it off, Sitara slid into her car. Seeing her friends still so close was good and hopefully her next machination would put her mind completely at ease.

Chapter End Notes

if i don't fulfill my quota of "and then they get married" in my fics i actually die
despite this chapter being completely unplanned it's my personal favorite in this fic \o/

Truth

Chapter Summary

Sitara has something up her sleeve to try and get what she wants but it backfires, hard.

Chapter Notes

Aaaand we're done! This chapter was so fucking complicated to write because I didn't want to leave any hanging threads.

I'll probably write more Watch Dogs stuff sometime soon and considering the lack of pairing options, it's reasonable to assume it'll probably be more Marcus/Wrench. I do have a few choice ideas I'm kicking around.

More notes after the chapter.

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

After Sitara had disappeared from view Wrench had gotten even more lovey-dovey with Marcus, pressing the front of his mask affectionately against Marcus's cheek. The second the door closed behind him, Marcus got it off him before losing an eye to one of the spikes.

It didn't matter too much as Wrench nearly danced away, humming happily to himself.

"Well, somebody's reinvigorated. What happened to 'I'm not gonna be Reggie anymore'? 'Cause I think Sitara's got something planned so whatever's next you gotta be ready for it. Either way, she's getting agitated."

Wrench was too busy happily examining the ring on his finger to answer for a second, eventually replying, "Yeah, well, I'm happier. I say we hang onto the prank just a little bit longer. We can take whatever Sitara's working on, if she is. She might just be catching on, who knows?"

"Alright, as long as it's not gonna make you burn out again."

"I'll be fine," Wrench asserted, gently punching Marcus in the chest, "I'm tough, right?"

"Yeah, yeah, you're my big tough boyfriend who I definitely haven't watched cry at a Disney movie."

"Hey, fuck you, you know I can't handle the part where Quasimodo is holding Esmeralda up and yelling 'SANCTUARY!' and I'll thank you not to hold it against me."

"Alright, you're the ultimate badass, you happy?" Marcus joked before immediately bursting Wrench's bubble a bit, "You know that being Reggie for a while longer means you can't wear the ring in public until then, right?"

Marcus couldn't help but laugh at how suddenly Wrench's face fell.

- - -

Turns out Marcus absolutely correct about Sitara having planned something.

About a week later, two invitations showed up in the mail. One addressed to Marcus and Reggie and a second one, redirected from his old apartment, for Wrench. Before Marcus could even suggest an excuse for Wrench not to show up, he could see the manic glint in his now fiancé's eyes.

"I don't like the look your face right now. Or maybe I do. Depends on what's going on up there."

Holding up the two invites, Wrench leaned forwards with a smile, "This is going to be our grand finale. Wrench AND Reggie are going to this party."

Leaning in too and arching his fingers over his mouth, Marcus nodded, "Alright, I'm listening. Explain."

"We're going to have to scope out this location," Wrench said, tapping on the address on the invite, "We'll pick a good place, out of sight, where I can switch between the two. Periodically you and me'll disappear so you can help me change."

"You really think that's gonna work?" Marcus asked.

"It sounds like Sitara's invited a lot of people," Wrench replied, "This warehouse place she rented out has a massive capacity and considering she labeled it a 'Dedsec' party she's probably invited as many people in it as possible."

Laughing and clapping his hands together, Marcus leaned against the back of the couch, "Oh man, if we actually pull this all off Sitara's gonna kill us."

"I know right?! The perfect ending. Then let's just like... go and find her the next day and tell her because even though I'm riding the high of this proposal, it's not gonna last if we keep this up too long."

"I could keep making grand romantic gestures? You wanna a pony? I could buy you a pony."

"I don't trust horses and you know that."

Marcus stood up with a smile, "Alright, well, this party's only a couple days away. Let's figure everything out to a 'T' beforehand. Pick which outfits are easiest to swap in and out of."

"Got it, you want to watch me strip. We don't have a pole but I'll do my best."

Ignoring Wrench's dirty joke, Marcus continued to list off what they'd need, "We'll go and scope out the place and store said clothes somewhere."

Determined to get a rise out of him, Wrench continued, "Yep, find a small room for me to be your personal stripper in."

Smacking him on the arm, Marcus tried not to smile as he knew that would only encourage it, "C'mon, man, we're working on a plan here. Stop getting distracted."

"You proposed to me a couple hours ago and this is our first moment in private since then. Excuse me for wanting to seduce you and give you a night of unbelievable passion in response. Right now. Plan later," Wrench pouted as he slid against the pillow, trying to slide his vest off with very

limited success.

“Alright, alright, you’ve got me. We’ll work on this tomorrow,” Marcus conceded, pushing himself up and extending a hand to Wrench.

Daintily, Wrench held his hand up, “Oh, Mister Holloway! What will the neighbors think? Our families?! The scandal!!”

“In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed,” Marcus quoted, pulling Wrench up, “You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.”

Wrench looked dumbstruck at that, blushing and stumbling out a stupid, “What?”

“What? Did I make this faux Jane Austen roleplay too authentic?”

“I’m a trailer trash looking motherfucker do I look like I’ve ever picked up a Jane Austen novel in my life? Hell, sometimes people are surprised I can read.”

“Good to know I apparently need to sit you down with one of the Pride and Prejudice movies.”

“Man, I don’t wanna watch that shit.”

“Tch, you’ll probably love it.”

“Nuh-uh, I’ll probably fall asl-”

Marcus didn’t give Wrench time to retaliate further, picking him up easily bridal style, “We’re getting off topic, we gonna go have some fun or what?”

“Hell yeah!” Wrench yelled, punching an arm into the air. Nearly making Marcus drop him.

“Fuck, how the hell are you so heavy? You’re skinny as fuck.”

“My clothes are covered in a shitload of metal, dude.”

- - -

Despite their extensive planning, Wrench was still nervous as they approached the already raging party.

Sitara really had invited all of Dedsec and all sorts of hackers and nerds were clamoring around inside, wasted and dancing excitedly and very, very poorly. The idea of going in there maskless was terrifying. Respite how tightly Wrench had grabbing his arm, Marcus managed to keep his cool and lead Wrench towards the entrance.

“It’ll be okay,” Marcus said, leaning in to whisper to Wrench, “And remember, I won’t blame you if you want to run.”

That had of course come up over the course of their planning for this. The last time Wrench had been forced into a crowded place as Reggie had ended with him running away and Sitara’s art show had been much, much less populated than this.

“Just... stay close to me and I’ll be fine.”

Smiling, Marcus smooched him on the cheek, “It’s cute when you’re nervous and clingy.”

“You’ll love the stalker shrine I have to you hidden in my closet then.”

“Man, shut up. You know there’s no room in our closet.”

Ignoring that, Wrench continued, “Pieces of your hair, used toothbrushes, stolen underwear, the works.”

Smushing Wrench’s face into his chest he dragged himself inside to go find Sitara, “Shh, go back to being shy and quiet for a bit.”

Muffled protests stopped when they entered the party. Loud noises, blinding lights, way too many people. Wrench’s grip tightened again and Marcus led him around, trying to avoid larger clumps of people.

Thankfully, Sitara was invested in finding them as well. It didn’t take long for her to shove through the crowd and get to them.

“Marcus! Reggie! You made it.”

“Sure did,” Marcus answered, “And so did all of Dedsec, apparently.”

“Nah, not all. Missing a few. Josh didn’t come and honestly that’s probably a good thing. Way too many people, way too loud. He’d be freaking out. Speaking of freaking out, he okay?”

She pointed at Wrench who was hanging off Marcus even more than usual.

“Yeah, I’m fine…”

“By the way,” Sitara continued, “Sorry for like… just everything that happened at the art show. I didn’t mean to put you on the spot.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Wrench nodded.

Of course, Sitara had machinations in mind.

“I’m pretty sure Wrench is lurking around here somewhere, he said he’d come and he’s usually fairly on time and makes a surprisingly quiet entrance to parties.”

“Yeah, he texted me he was here a while ago but I had to be fashionably late ya know?” Marcus smiled.

“C’mon, nerd. Let’s go find the pointier nerd.”

Facetiously, they helped her to look for a while. Making the rounds, Marcus was constantly being called out to by people in the crowd who recognized him. That puffed Wrench up though, even in disguise he really did like being the one that Marcus chose out the adoring mob of fanboys, girls, and otherwise always vying for his attention.

Frankly, he was looking forward to this Reggie affair being over because then everyone would get to see him as himself being Marcus’s favorite person. Wrench. Not annoying. Loved by the most loveable person.

Eventually, Marcus made an excuse to branch off from Sitara. Wrench didn’t catch it over the din of the party but he was being quickly shoved towards the closet where they’d stored his change of clothes.

The change was quick and practiced and honestly? Wrench immediately felt better with his mask strapped to his face.

He turned to Marcus with ‘^^’ on his face as he struck a cheesy pose, “Like my magical girl transformation?”

“Sure do,” Marcus laughed, “Hope you know we have to be Sailor Moon and Tuxedo Mask next Halloween now though.”

“You say that like I’m not incredibly into it,” Wrench said, tilting his head with a pair of ‘?’s.

At that they headed back out, Wrench already missing getting to hang off Marcus’s arm.

Their hideaway wasn’t too out of the way from the actual party, just tucked back into a hallway opposite of the bathrooms.

Making their way back to the massive room of people, they found an oddly familiar face leaning against the door frame at the very edge of the dancing. Judgemental eyes with heavy black makeup staring emptily at them past outdated, purple scene bangs.

“Oh, hey, uh, waitress from the pancake house...” Marcus stuttered out.

“Violet,” she corrected, not tremendously surprised they didn’t remember her name.

“Yeah, uh, Violet. Didn’t... didn’t know you were in Dedsec.”

“I’m in a lot of things. I didn’t know you were Marcus Holloway until that night at the burger place either so I guess we’re even.”

Their corner of the party was deafeningly silent as she stared at them.

“Enjoying the party?” he awkwardly asked her.

She didn’t answer, just flatly asking with a nod towards Wrench, “So, like, what’s you and the scrawny guy’s deal?”

“This is my best friend, Wrench.”

“And your boyfriend. Whatever you named him when he changes clothes.”

Violet just blinked at them, slowly and with intent.

Marcus threw his hands up, fessing up considering they were ending the whole deal tomorrow anyway, “Alright, alright, we’re playing a prank on our frie-”

“Sitara,” she interrupted.

“Wait, you said that night at the burger place you didn’t recognize him. Did you... did you seriously recognize Sitara over Marcus?” Wrench cut in, weirdly offended on Marcus’s behalf.

“I’m a fan of her work,” Violet nodded.

“Okay... why aren’t you trying to talk to her then?” Marcus asked.

“Well, I could try and talk to the extremely popular woman constantly surrounded by people at a large party she’s throwing, unprompted, only to be brushed off or...”

“Or what?” Marcus said, crossing his arms.

“Or two of her closest friends could set her up on a blind date with me. She’s single, right?”

Marcus gave her a tilted smile, “You’re blackmailing our prank?”

“Well, yeah,” Violet nodded, “I can bet you anything she would listen to me if I walked over and told her about this she’d listen.”

Staring at each other for a second Marcus relented, “Alright, to be fair, you did have to kick us out of a pancake house. I’ll set something up with her. If she doesn’t kill us when she finds out about this prank.”

Quickly, the two of them exchanged phones, putting each other’s numbers in. For the first time, they saw Violet smile for a second as she walked away.

Wrench leaned in, “You know, the prank’s ending tomorrow you could just wait it out.”

“Fuck it, maybe getting Sitara a date will make her less angry at us after we tell her.”

“Sure. Should we split up to make this less suspicious?” Wrench asked.

“Absolutely, go find Sitara.”

Nodding they bumped the sides of their fists together before splitting up.

It wasn’t hard for Wrench to find Sitara, who was being held up by people trying to get her attention.

The second he got in arm’s reach of her, she latched on, “Wrench! Me, Marcus and Reggie were just looking for you.”

“I’m not surprised, I’m in high demand,” Wrench nodded, bragging with a ‘- -’ on his face.

Hiding her intentions, she started pulling him towards where she’d last seen the other ‘two’, “C’mon, let’s get the main crew together.”

Wrench let himself be dragged around by her until she managed to find Marcus. Alone, obviously.

Shoving down her frustration, Sitara asked through slightly gritted teeth, “Where’d Reggie go?”

“He said the bathroom but I think he got lost ‘cause he went the wrong way,” Marcus replied.

Sitara, of course, suggested they go and find him. As if sharing the same mind, Marcus and Wrench agreed to help her but managed to separate from her as they crossed the dance floor. Meeting up on the same side, their friend shoved to the other side of the crowd.

“You know, we’re pretty great at this. We should take up tricking people for a living.”

Marcus nudged him, “Isn’t that basically our job anyways? How many disguises have y’all put me in so far?”

“True,” Wrench nodded, “Should I go change again?”

“Yeah, let’s just start heading back that way.”

They didn't make it terribly far before being accosted by another familiar face. This one much more familiar though. Like, 'we see this weird old man daily' familiar.

"You kids having fun?" Ray asked, suspending himself between the two of them by his arms draped over her shoulders. A mostly empty beer bottle hung off his left hand, hanging right by Marcus's face.

Moving the offending item away from his face, Marcus patted him on the back, "Yeah, Ray, you surviving being surrounded by so many damn kids?"

"Lots of brats," Ray conceded, "But a lot of smart cookies. Mixed bag. But I've been helpin' Sitara with some of this set up. Well, a lot of it. Really wanted to see Wrench and Reggie interactin'."

Marcus and Wrench exchanged glances but Ray was quicker.

"She ain't gettin' what she wants though, right?"

The two of them got quiet, wondering how they'd managed to fool anyone at all.

"Alright, I'll let you boys get back to the party. Marcus. Reggie."

Pushing himself back up, Ray started drunkenly shuffled away.

Calling out to him over the music, Marcus shrugged, "Man, how'd YOU figure it out?"

"I'm fifty-fuckin'-seven. I'm gettin' old, I know things."

"How does that--"

"Also Josh told me because he said he was feelin' guilty lying to Sitara and I'm pretty sure if he didn't tell someone he was going to die."

At that, Ray laughed as he made his exit. Given his general direction, he was probably going to go and graze at the food table. But they decided to leave him be.

Marcus and Wrench resumed working their way back to their hidey-hole. It was difficult moving through the loud, bustling room like this. As Marcus and Reggie it was ironically easier to stick together, given Wrench could hang off his arm. Right now, the crowd kept pushing them apart.

Eventually, after the third time being shoved away, Marcus heard a quiet 'fuck it' from behind Wrench's mask as his fiance grabbed his hand.

That certainly made travelling across the room easier. In no time they'd ducked back into the hallway again to change.

When the door to their supply closet hideaway closed behind them, Wrench just sort of let himself fall back against the wall. Scratching noises of metal on painted brick as Wrench slid to the ground.

Marcus crouched to talk to him, "You doin' okay?"

"Man, fuckin' everyone knows," Wrench said, mask pointed at the ground with '- -' and a sigh.

"Well, to be completely fair, I'm surprised Sitara's falling for Reggie being someone el--"

"No, I mean just... everyone knows what I look like now," Wrench continued, gesturing vaguely and frustratedly at his mask.

“Is that really so bad? I mean, it’s not like anyone outside our specific ring of friends really knows. Except that Violet chick. Your identity is still pretty damn secure.”

Wrench started trying to curl into a ball but was stopped by Marcus grabbing his ankle and pulling his legs straight. Before Wrench could find a reason to complain, Marcus swung a leg over his thighs to straddle his lap. Immediately the mask switched to a bright pair of ‘<3’s glowing at him as Wrench happily put his arms around his waist.

“You feel better now?” Marcus asked.

“A little,” Wrench nodded, tightening his grip.

“Well,” Marcus said, ignoring how unfortunately pointy his boyfriend is in his current state as he cuddled in closer, “I think you’re overthinking about other people judging you. Besides, does anyone’s opinion other than mine really matter?”

“No, not really,” Wrench mumbled, blushing behind his mask.

“See? Doesn’t really matter that they know. I also think they sincerely don’t care, other than maybe their curiosity about what you look like being sated.”

“I guess…” he replied.

Pinning the now giggling Wrench against the wall, Marcus continued, “And they’re not here right now so why don’t we get that mask off you an-”

Sudden yelling behind them made Wrench bang the back of his head against the wall, “Marcus! What the fuck?!”

Jerking around, Marcus found himself look up at a very angry Sitara. Wrench peeking from behind him with a ‘o o’ look on his mask. The heavy door hadn’t made a single sound when she’d opened it.

Marcus didn’t really have a good explanation for this situation but honestly how are you supposed to justify straddling someone in a secluded, secretive closet when you supposedly have a boyfriend lurking somewhere in the exact same building? He didn’t even have a chance to awkwardly bumble something out in his defense.

Sitara continued to yell at them, “Fucking hell, Marcus, in a million years I wouldn’t have thought you were the type to cheat on your goddamn boyfriend!”

He was only given a second to open his mouth before he was cut off again. At least it was someone else’s turn for her wrath.

“And you! No wonder you weren’t fucking upset about Reggie. Didn’t stop you did it?” she pointed accusingly at Wrench, “You can be a little dodgy but I thought loyalty meant something to you!”

At that, Sitara abruptly turned face and started stomping off. Marcus and Wrench managed to scramble up after her. Finally finding his words, Marcus yelled to her, “Sitara! Come back, we’ve gott-”

“Shut the fuck up!” she shouted back, middle finger raised, “Apparently, I’ve gotta go find poor fucking Reggie and tell him that apparently you have a massive secret scumbag side.”

At that, Sitara stomped out into the party with the boys hot on her heels. Easily, she ducked around people, leading them in circles as she tried and failed to find Reggie because of course she wasn't going to find Reggie.

"Goddamn, why is she so fast?!" Wrench gasped behind his mask, not exactly built for running long distances with that on.

Nearly knocking over one of the dancers, Marcus just caught a glance of her disappearing out the door on the opposite side of the dance floor, "She's an ex-track star! She spent her entire highschool career literally lapping people! Of course she's outrunning us! You didn't do shit in highschool and I was in fucking anime club!"

As they struggled to catch up to her they'd seen that she'd thankfully stopped moving, fucking around on her phone outside.

Sitara didn't even react as they eventually burst out after her, panting.

"Don't even try to defe-" Sitara started.

"Fuck, I can't even," Marcus spat out between gasps, pointing back at the loud party raging behind them "That's a huge dance floor, how did you even get across it that fast?"

"What? Why does that even matter?" Sitara asked, barely looking up from her phone, "Whatever, I'm texting Reggie. He's in there somewhere but I can't find him. Either way, I'm telling him right no-"

She had already hit the send button in the middle of her sentence leaving the end to be cut off by the sound of Wrench's phone going off in his pocket. He was still doubled over, woozy and close to passing out from panting under the cover of his mask. Fuck, why did he think the only ventilation he needed in this fucking thing was a few small holes?

Confused, Sitara looked at him. Coldly spitting, "What did you steal his phone too while you stole his boyfriend?"

Wrench just held up a finger in response as he stumbled forward, still failing very hard at catching his breath.

Sitara's lip curled as Marcus put a hand on Wrench's back, rubbing it as he tried to help him. Her disgust turned to confused shock as Marcus spoke though, "Hey man, the jig's up anyways. Take your mask off before you pass the fuck out."

Watching Wrench reach up and start removing the mask was downright surreal for Sitara.

And it only made her more confused when she actually recognized the face underneath. Albeit, bright red and sweatier from chasing her around than she was used to seeing.

"Why... why is Reggie dressed as Wrench?" she managed to bumble out, still dazed.

Figuring Wrench was okay now that he wasn't in immediate danger of passing out Marcus walked next to Sitara, resting a hand over her shoulder and gesturing proudly at his boyfriend, "There is no Reggie."

It slowly dawned on her as Wrench managed to stop gasping for air and started raspily laughing, Marcus snickering next to her.

“You absolute fucks. I’m friends with absolute fucks.”

“You got it now, don’t you?” Marcus smirked, “We played you, man! Straight played you!”

The look Sitara gave him was technically a smile but it looked like she was absolutely planning where to dump their bodies, “I’m going to kill the both of you.”

“C’mon Sitara, you gotta admit it’s funny. At least a little bit,” Wrench finally spoke up between gasps that were slowly spacing out.

Looking pained, Sitara nodded, “It physically hurts to say this but... fuck, you know I have to get you back somehow now? How the fuck do I top something like this? How did you even pull this off?”

“Shit, you should be telling us,” Marcus said, patting her across her back, “How did you not realize? Did it ever even vaguely click in your mind something was off?”

“Not really,” Sitara admitted, “Fuck, I had no reason not to trust Marcus ‘Everyone’s Hero’ Holloway at face value”

“Ohhh, don’t put it that way, that stings a little,” Marcus retorted, looking a bit hurt.

“For like three weeks you’ve been parading Wrench around in a weird ass hipster get up to fuck with me, you better feel a little bad.”

Sitara tried and failed to lean out of the hug Marcus was trapped in her, “You know you’re not gonna stay mad at us so maybe a laugh and some actual props? This was a production and being out without his mask really fucked Wrench up for a few days there. That running away in a panic wasn’t acting. He ain’t that good an actor.”

“Ffffine, get asshole over here too,” Sitara said, reaching out to gesture for Wrench to come into the hug too. After he complied, effectively turning this hug into a Sitara sandwich she sighed, “It was a good prank. Even though I’m definitely going to kill you both because you two are fucking assholes.”

“We sure are! Literally and figuratively. You know, like,” Wrench sneered reaching awkwardly around them to make an extremely crude gesture with his hands, yelping as Sitara immediately shot her hand up and slapped it over his mouth so he couldn’t talk.

“Oh my god, never say words again,” Sitara said, firmly keeping her hand there, “Also wear your mask less because wow it’s great being able to make you shut up like this.”

Whatever Wrench said in response was too muffled to understand and it may as well have been music to her ears.

She didn’t get her other hand up fast enough to stop Marcus’s dirty comment though, “Yeah I love making him shut up too. Except usually we’re both wearing a lot less clothing when it’s happening though.”

“Augh!” Sitara yelled, pushing them both away from from her, “You’re both disgusting!”

- - -

A week later, Sitara was still a bit irritated but honestly it was quickly becoming more at herself than them.

I mean, she always knew she overlooked details in favor of the big picture but seeing Marcus and Wrench together now it was... obvious. Same build, same height. Probably should have known what her friend of god knows how many years' hair color. Could have sworn Wrench's hair was brown.

To be completely fair, Sitara never could have guessed how much differently Wrench would be without his mask and she definitely didn't think he was capable of acting convincingly enough to pass for a different person.

Because, as she'd found out, he wasn't really acting.

After finding out that Reggie is in fact Wrench, Sitara had taken to trying to convince him to ditch the mask.

While that had largely been a failure, at least when he's in public, Wrench had eventually agreed to go without when hanging out at the Hackerspace. Sometimes. Sitara had also started hanging around their apartment more where he consistently was comfortable enough to be without it.

But regardless of where he was maskless, Sitara still found he was a lot more subdued. Less at their home though, where he'd nearly get as rambunctious as he normally did with the mask.

The one constant from now on though, regardless of whether or not he had his mask, Wrench was the most obnoxiously overly affectionate boyfriend ever. Like, Sitara had thought he was over-the-top when him and Marcus were just friends but fucking hell, this was some next level shit.

If Wrench wasn't sitting on his lap or draped over Marcus, he was at least trying to hold his hand. Like a human sized dog, desperate for attention. Didn't help that it wasn't entirely uncommon for Marcus to pat him on the head in response.

Right now Wrench had curled up on Marcus's lap, arms wrapped tightly around his shoulders. Sitting on the other side of the couch, commandeering the giant bowl of popcorn intended to be share, was Sitara.

One handful of popcorn was in her claw, another jammed in her mouth. Sitara spoke through it nonetheless, "So, like, do you guys want me to leave you alone? Because I can't tell you to get a room because you have a room, I'm just in it."

"What, don't want to watch?" Wrench quipped, slightly muffled from resting his head on Marcus's.

The response was a fistful of popcorn flung in their general direction, "Don't think I've forgotten what you guys did to me."

Marcus spoke up this time, "Are you implying you were down to watch until we tricked you?"

"I'm saying I either need to get you guys back or you need to make it up to me," Sitara said, absentmindedly picking up a few pieces she'd thrown at them.

Remembering what he'd said to Violet back at the party, Marcus figured now was as good a time as any, "Well... now that you say it. I maybe met someone for you while all this shit was going on."

"Good to know you're wingmanning even as you're pranking me."

"Nah, but seriously, you interested?"

Sighing Sitara rolled her eyes, “Fine, whatever. I’ll count it in your favor but I’m leaving it to you to set it up. If I’m going on a blind date, I wanna go in full blind.”

“Can do and for now? I’m gonna make more popcorn,” Marcus said, trying to shove Wrench off his lap so he could stand. He struggled with that for a second before finally managing to get out of a fairly impressive stranglehold for someone as out of shape as Wrench.

In another small attempt to gain Sitara’s favor again, Marcus plucked the nearly empty bowl of popcorn away from her.

Disappearing to the other room, Marcus left Sitara and Wrench alone.

Not really paying attention, Sitara picked up the stack of DVDs on the coffee table. God, why are there so many Jimmy Siska movies? Not just here but like, in general.

It surprised her to hear Wrench actually speak up, “Hey Sitara... I’m... I’m sorry.”

Confused, she tried to run over the events of the day. Why would he be apologizing? She squinted her eyes at him as she found nothing, “It’s okay? Honestly, I don’t know why the hell you’re apologizing?”

“Just... do you remember what we talked about back at the art show?”

“Not really? All I remember is freaking you out so bad you ran away but I don’t really think you’d be the one needing to apologize for that.”

“No, before that. How you always wanted me to come to your art shows.”

Sitara didn’t really know how to respond to that because it was honestly still a sore spot. It was hard to hide the bite in her voice, “Why have you always said no?”

“I dunno, I’m a shithead?” Wrench replied, leaning back into the couch, “I always thought it was going to be a lot more serious and I didn’t want to have to pretend I liked or got the dumb shit too. Didn’t know you wanted me to laugh at it with you.”

Wrench was pointedly avoiding eye contact, trying very hard not to instinctively cover his face. Crossing her arms, Sitara shrugged, “Well... if I told you I had another one in a couple weeks, would you go?”

Even though he was still looking at the ground, Wrench nodded before holding his arms up for a hug.

“We’re not at the point that hugs are reinstated yet, Reggie.”

Not taking no for an answer, he grabbed Sitara’s wrist and dragged her over until she was trapped in a hug anyways. Whatever she was yelling at him was muffled by his shoulder and the sound of her slapping at his back in self defense.

Eventually, he let go of her so she could dramatically push herself away and pretend to gasp for air.

“Augh, you feel better no-” Sitara started, beginning to scoot away and back to the safety of her side of the couch before her hair was painfully pulled.

Swearing, Wrench reached over to try and untangle a long piece of her hair which had caught on a certain diamond spiked object around his finger, “Shit, one second, hold still. Your ponytail is

caught on my ring.”

“Since when the hell do you wear rings?” Sitara asked before the strands were painfully pulled free.

She found the answer to her own question as she realized said ring was around his left ring finger. It doesn't take a rocket surgeon to recognize an engagement ring.

Wrench tried not to laugh at her shocked reaction, wiggling his fingers in a downright mocking wave.

It was right about now that Marcus made his way back to the living room, only to find Sitara beating the shit out of Wrench with a pillow yelling something about “what the hell else aren't you telling me?!”

“What the fuck's going on in here?!” Marcus yelled, trying to grab the pillow whipping around to no avail.

Sitara twisted back to point at him accusingly, throw pillow still balled in her fist, “Cram it! You're next, Holloway!”

Chapter End Notes

I ended up getting more attached to Violet than intended and really hadn't planned on the Sitara crush thing but I guess that's just how it do. I'm gonna miss my one-off OC that ended up showing up way more than she should have lol.

I probably should have cut this into two pieces because this chapter is monstrously long compared to literally every other chapter in this but eh.

As always, you can keep up with stuff I'm doing and help support me as a writer/artist on my tumblr, [catisacat](#).

End Notes

To see more of my writing and art check out my tumblr maybe? [catisacat](#)

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